



Plenary sitting

B8-0175/2018

13.3.2018

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in the Maldives
(2018/2630(RSP))

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

B8-0175/2018

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in the Maldives
(2018/2630(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- Having regard to its previous resolutions on the Maldives, particularly those of 30 April 2015, 17 December 2015 and 4 September 2017

- Having regard to the the Foreign Affairs Council adopted conclusions on the Maldives of the 26 February 2018 which assess the recent deterioration of the situation in the country.

– having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the EU has long-standing relations with the Maldives

B. whereas the human rights situation in the Maldives has deteriorated dramatically since the country's first democratic elections in 2008 and since its first democratically elected president, Mohamed Nasheed, was ousted in 2012;

C. whereas rather than comply with a Supreme Court ruling which ordered the release of nine arbitrarily detained political leaders, Maldives President Abdulla Yameen declared a state of emergency on 5th February 2018 – suspending key rights, as well as the entire Criminal Procedure Code; whereas the emergency was extended for another 30 days on February 20.

D. Whereas the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has called on the Maldives to completely reverse measures that curtail democratic principles and human rights taken under its ongoing state of emergency.

E. Whereas, although there have been no executions since the early 1950s, it is estimated there are at least 20 people still on death row in the Maldives.

1. Expresses its concern at the deteriorating political and human rights situation in the Maldives and the increasingly authoritarian rule of President Abdulla Yameen and his government, despite international condemnation; abhors in particular the continued use of emergency powers to make arrests, search and seize property and restrict freedom of assembly.

2. Condemns the storming of the Supreme Court by security forces and the arrest of two judges and a top opposition politician, following the Government's declaration of a state of emergency, after the decision of the Supreme Court to free several imprisoned opposition politicians. Demands that the competent Maldivian institutions immediately lift the State of Emergency, and restore all constitutionally guaranteed rights;

3. Notes the decision of the Supreme Court of the Maldives, on 1st February 2018 to call into

question the validity of criminal proceedings against leading political figures and to order their immediate release; calls on the Judiciary to be enabled to return to their normal functioning in accordance with the Constitution.

4. Calls on the Government of the Maldives to respect and fully support the right to protest, freedom of expression including access to social media), association and assembly, and freedom of conscience and freedom of religion and belief, irrespective of the majority religion;

5. Expresses concern about the possible impact of the current situation also on the security of foreign residents and visitors; Calls on the HR/VP, the EU delegation to the Maldives and member states' delegations to closely coordinate their travel advice in this regard; Calls on the Commission and the Member States to issue comprehensive warnings about the Maldives' human rights record to tourists planning to go to the country; Denounces the cynical policy of the Government of the Maldives, with the complicity of European tour operators and travel agencies, whereby on one the hand 428. 000 inhabitants of the Maldives are actually subjected to a dictatorship, and on the other 1.3 million tourists, among them hundreds of thousands of European citizens, who visit the archipelago each year are unaware of this fact, because everything is done to ensure both populations do not mix with each other;

6. Condemns the continued attacks, intimidation of and threats against journalists, bloggers and human rights defenders in the Maldives, the arrests of reporters, and the raids on and forced closures of news organisations; condemns the excessive use of force against peaceful protestors; Reiterates the EU's firm opposition to the death penalty, in all cases and without exception; calls on the Government and Parliament of the Maldives to respect the moratorium on the death penalty which has been in place for more than 60 years;

7. Calls on the Maldivian authorities to ensure that the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives, the National Integrity Commission and the electoral commissions can operate independently and without government interference; calls on the Government of the Maldives to fully cooperate with UN human rights mechanisms

8. Calls on the EU to make full use of all instruments at its disposal in order to promote respect for human rights and democratic principles in the Maldives, including considering the possibility of suspending EU financial assistance to the Maldives, subject to the resumption of the rule of law and democratic principles in the country, and calls on the Council to introduce targeted measures and sanctions against those undermining human rights and to freeze the assets abroad of certain members of the Maldivian Government and their leading supporters in the Maldivian business community, whilst imposing travel bans on them;

9. Calls on the on the Government of the Maldives to engage with the leaders of the opposition in a genuine dialogue that paves the way for credible, transparent and inclusive Presidential elections and welcomes the Council's offer to support UN facilitation of such a dialogue; Calls on the Governments of India and China to show restraint and work with EU countries to help deliver political & democratic stability in the Maldives;

10. Notes with deep concern that the Maldives are at the centre of a geopolitical showdown between India and China and notes with concern the Maldives archipelago's growing economic dependence on the Chinese government, which holds 80% of its external debt, at

about 2 billion dollars;

11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European External Action Service, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the OSCE/ODHIR, the Council of Europe and the Government of the Maldives.