



Plenary sitting

B8-0168/2018

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 Verts/ALE Group

B8-0168/2018

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

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous reports and resolutions on the Maldives, in particular its resolution of 30 April 2015, 17 December 2015 and 5 October 2017 on the situation in the Maldives,

- having regard to the EU Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of 26 February 2018,

- having regard to the statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, at the 37th session of the UN Human Rights Council on 7 March 2018, and his previous statement of 7 February 2018 on the concentration of powers in the hands of the president as a result of the declaration of the state of emergency,

- having regard to the Statement by the HRVP Spokesperson on the declaration of the state of emergency of 6 February 2018,

- having regard to the Statement by the Chair of the South Asia Delegation of 6 February 2018 on the situation in the Maldives,

- having regard to the Statement by the HRVP Spokesperson on the decision of the Supreme Court of the Maldives of 2 February 2018,

- having regard to the statement by the EU Delegation to Sri Lanka and the Maldives of 25 July 2017 on the situation in the Maldives,

- having regard to the meeting of the UN Secretary-General with Mohamed Asim, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Maldives on 28 September 2017 expressing concern over the political situation in the country,

- having regard to the statement by United Nations Secretary-General of 27 July 2017 on the Maldives, citing the gradual erosion of basic democratic norms and principles in the country, and calling on the Government “to uphold the constitutionally guaranteed rights of speech and assembly”,

- having regard to the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review Second cycle of the Maldives of May 2015, of which the government accepted 198 and rejected 60,

- having regard to the Maldives' withdrawal from the Commonwealth over disagreements on human rights on 14 October 2016,

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

A. Whereas the EU has long-standing relations with the Maldives, notably in areas such as the fight against climate change, and hundreds of thousands of European tourists travel to the Maldives every year;

B. Whereas the first democratic elections in 2008 and the adoption of a new constitution had raised high hopes that the country would overcome decades of authoritarian rule towards a democratic system but the recent developments are seriously threatening this perspective;

C. Whereas, after President Abdulla Yameen, leader of the Progressive Party of the Maldives (PPD) came to power on 17 November 2013, concerns have steadily increased over human rights violations, corruption, lack of independence of the judiciary and the detention of political opponents, with all opposition leaders now in self-imposed exile or in jail; whereas the military has blocked twice the Parliament in order to prevent the members of voting on a motion of impeachment;

D. Whereas on 25 August 2017, the last remaining opposition leader, Qasim Ibrahim head of the Jumhooree Party, was sentenced to 38 months in jail, thus disqualified from holding a seat in Parliament, on allegations of bribery for calling on members of Parliament to join the opposition for an impeachment vote against the Parliament's speaker; whereas out of the 85 member parliament, 10 opposition lawmakers are on trial, three have had their passports confiscated and at least one remains arbitrarily detained; whereas parliamentary elections are scheduled for 2018;

E. Whereas the Maldives Democratic Party (MDP) took more than 300 seats in the country's third municipal elections of 6 May 2017- including almost all seats in the three cities -while the ruling Progressive Party of Maldives won 191 seats; whereas the government dominated Parliament had since 2014 gradually stripped the opposition dominated city councils of their competences, including salary cuts to half;

F. Whereas the Government of the Maldives failed to comply with the Supreme Court ruling of 1st February 2018, rescinding their earlier rulings, and which new rulings ordered the release of nine detained political leaders, including former President Nasheed and to reinstate 12 suspended opposition Members of Parliament;

G. Whereas following the arrest of the country's two senior judges after these rulings, including the Chief Justice, who is now facing a charge of bribery, the rulings of the 1st February have been revoked by the now three-member Supreme Court and the earlier decisions of the Court have been restored;

H. Whereas on 5 February 2018 the Government declared a state of emergency to investigate an alleged "coup" against the President - suspending key rights, as well as the entire Criminal Procedure Code and the measure was followed by a wave of arrests, including of 80-year-old

former President Gayoom and Members of Parliament; whereas the State of Emergency was renewed on 21 February 2018;

I. Whereas on February 6th, former President Nasheed called on the international community to intervene, including a call on the Government of India to send "an envoy, backed by its military" but India has made clear its intention to work with other countries for a solution; whereas China has also expressed its desire for the international community to play a constructive role in promoting the Maldives' stability and development;

J. Whereas the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, urged the complete reversal of recent measures undermining the rule of law, following the Government's declaration of a state of emergency last month which suspended key right and opened the door to completely arbitrary decisions;

K. Whereas a joint statement was delivered at the 37th Session of the Human Rights Council on behalf of over 40 countries, including all EU Member States, on 8 March 2018, calling on the Government to restore constitutional rights and the independence of the Courts, as well as supporting the proper functioning of the Parliament and urging the release of political prisoners and their families;

L. Whereas the current political situation is not only jeopardizing the country's credibility on the international stage but also affecting its economy, with an estimated USD 20 million loss per day since the start of the state of emergency and numerous countries, including China, the United States and India have issued travel advisories concerning the situation;

M. Whereas the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2017 published by Transparency International on 21 February 2018, shows that the Maldives has made little to no progress in its efforts to combat corruption, falling 17 positions in country rankings (112 out of 180);

N. Whereas the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) have released a joint statement on 15 February 2018 expressing their deep concern for the restrictions and threats on media and press freedom in the Maldives; whereas, on February 4, the deputy leader of the ruling Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM), Abdul Raheem Abdullah, called on the security forces to immediately shut down *Raajje TV*, accusing it of giving airtime to the opposition leaders;

1. Expresses its grave concern about the dramatic deterioration of democracy, rule of law and freedom of expression in the Maldives;
2. Recalls that successive governments have recognized the need to improve the quality of the legal system within the country at all levels and is deeply concerned about the persistent politisation of the judiciary and the security forces, systematic violations of the rules of conduct and excessive use of force;
3. Calls for the end of the state of emergency and the reinstatement of the full competences of the Parliament, its ability to sit and operate in all its functions;

4. Urges the Government of the Maldives to ensure the freedom of the judiciary and that lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference and shall not suffer from, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognised professional duties, standards and ethics;
5. Calls on the Maldivian Government to release all those held on political charges and to revoke all charges against and convictions of law makers, lawyers, journalists and members of civil society, where those charges relate to political activity;
6. Calls on the Government to guarantee media to be allowed to operate freely and without sanctions designed to curtail their independence and viability;
7. Calls on the Government of the Maldives to improve anti-corruption measures;
8. Calls for inclusive UN-mediated political talks to be set in motion without delay to find a solution out of the crisis and bring about political progress, especially in light of the upcoming elections scheduled for September 2018;
9. Urges all political parties to engage in such constructive dialogue as being in the best interests of the people of the Maldives, rather than aiming to engage bilateral interlocutors which may increase tensions rather than reducing them;
10. Recognises that under the Constitution elections must be held in 2018; underlines that immediate actions should be undertaken to ensure that those are transparent and credible, that voters are given a genuine choice and that parties are able to campaign freely.
11. Calls for the preparation of a list of targeted sanctions against individuals engaged in the curtailment of fundamental freedoms and for the international community to engage with the Maldives to pursue alleged cases of corruption;
12. Underlines that if the government does not make decisive moves to re-establish the rule of law in the country according to international standards and the country's own constitution, there will be a longer -term negative impact on the tourist industry and the country's economy;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission, the Council, the Commission, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Secretary General, the UN Human Rights Council and the Government and Parliament of the Maldives.