



## **Press Statement**

30<sup>th</sup> August 2012

The Maldivian Democracy Network has been observing the protests of the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) held in Male' in response to the report by the Commission of National Inquiry, and the actions of the Maldives Police Service in relation to these protests. Based on our observations, we are deeply concerned about the following actions of the Maldives Police Service:

1. Barricading and closing down roads ahead of time and obstructing protestors' ability to assemble (in areas permitted by the Law);
2. Preventing the video and photo documentation of protests by stopping those who do so and ordering them to delete their photos and videos;
3. Though the regulations regarding the Uniform of the Police may permit them to cover up their faces during certain circumstances, at the least not having a service number visible on their uniform (which could be utilized to identify individual Police officers);
4. Using inappropriate language when dealing and communicating with the protestors.

Article 27 and Article 32 of the Maldivian Constitution guarantees the freedom of expression and the freedom of peaceful assembly, respectively, and everyone is entitled and has the right to enjoy these freedoms. Since the duty to protect and promote the rights enshrined in the Constitution falls upon the State, we would like to emphasize that is also the responsibility of the state to **facilitate** for the enjoyment of these rights by all.

Citing International Best Practices, we would like to note that the violent actions of a few members within a protest, is not a reason to declare a whole protest or assembly “violent”. In such circumstances, the best course of action would be to arrest those responsible and allow for the continuation of the protest.

We call upon the protestors to exercise the rights guaranteed in the Constitution in a responsible manner and the organizers of protests to not incite violence.

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