



BAR HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMITTEE OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

London, 14th October 2013

Statement

BHRC expresses concern at the annulment of the first round of presidential elections in the Maldives

The Bar Human Rights Committee (BHRC) expresses concern at the annulment of the first round of presidential elections in the Maldives.

On 7th October 2013, the Maldives Supreme Court annulled the first round of presidential elections, held on 7 September, which had resulted in a victory for ousted former President Mohamed Nasheed and his Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), citing irregularities. The challenge to the election result was made by rival presidential candidate Gasim Ibrahim from the Jumhooree Party, who had finished in third-place.

A re-run of the first round has been scheduled for the 20th October 2013.

BHRC notes that the Court's verdict runs contrary to the conclusions of national and international election monitors, including the expert Commonwealth Observer Group, which confirmed that the electoral process was free, fair, well-organised and transparent. BHRC further notes with concern that the Court's verdict appears to have been based on an unsubstantiated and as yet undisclosed police report.

Such a verdict is particularly troubling in the context of the ongoing international criticism concerning the lack of independence of the Maldivian judiciary and the lack of adequate separation of powers.¹

Recent reports indicating that on the 10th October the Progressive Party of Maldives filed a petition to the Supreme Court to invalidate the candidacy of Mr Nasheed are also cause for concern.

BHRC further expresses its serious concern at recent reports of intimidation and unlawful arrests of protestors, including the former Minister of Education, in the wake of the arrests. Reports of an arson attack on the pro-MDP Raajje TV television station are also troubling.

¹ [Report of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers on her mission to Maldives, May 2013](#); [BHRC trial observation report, November 2012](#); [BHRC trial observation report, February 2013](#).

BHRC urges the Maldivian national authorities to conduct prompt and effective investigations into these incidents, and to ensure that human rights, electoral freedoms and respect for the rule of law, including for Constitutional provisions, are respected at all times, not least in the current uncertain electoral climate.

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BHRC website

<http://www.barhumanrights.org.uk/>

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales (“BHRC”) is the international human rights arm of the Bar of England and Wales. It is an independent body concerned with protecting the rights of advocates, judges and human rights defenders around the world. The Committee is concerned with defending the rule of law and internationally recognised legal standards relating to human rights and the right to a fair trial. The remit of BHRC extends to all countries of the world, apart from its own jurisdiction of England & Wales. This reflects the Committee's need to maintain its role as an independent but legally qualified observer, critic and advisor, with internationally accepted rule of law principles at the heart of its agenda.