

Transparency Maldives condemns the recent arrest of journalists and clamping down on press freedom.

PRESS RELEASE - April 4, 2016

Transparency Maldives condemns the recent spate of reprisals against journalists and media outlets by the State, particularly the arrest of a group of journalists from 6 different media outlets on 3 April 2016. The journalists were protesting against recent developments that further stifled media freedom in the country.

Despite repeated concerns raised by international actors, local and international civil society, journalists and political parties, media conditions continue to deteriorate with numerous incidents of harassment and violence against journalists reported, compounded with a host of legal restrictions placed on press freedom. This includes the move to criminalise defamation, a recent court order to halt the publication of Haveeru News - longest running newspaper in the country - and the arrest of 16 journalists who were calling for press freedom.

We appeal to the Government of Maldives to uphold its State obligation towards freedom of speech and association (ICCPR and its First Optional Protocol (acceded to in 2006), and immediately withdraw the Defamation Bill from the Parliament and open up space for press freedom in the Maldives as enshrined in Article 28 of the Maldivian Constitution.

ENDS

For all media queries, please contact Program Manager, Thoriq Hamid (00 960 7999268).