

# From sunrise to sunset: Maldives backtracking on democracy

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fidh

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## FROM SUNRISE TO SUNSET Maldives backtracking on democracy

### Description:

Paris, 10 September 2012. While a Commission of National Inquiry (CoNI) has concluded that the transfer of power in February was not a coup, FIDH reviews the current state of democracy and human rights in the archipelago of the Maldives. In a [press release](#) released today, "From Sunrise to Sunset: Maldives backtracking on democracy"

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Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. Article 2: Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty. Article 3: Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. Article 4: No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms. Article 5: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel,

Paris, 10 September 2012. While a Commission of National Inquiry (CoNI) has concluded that the transfer of power in February was not a coup, FIDH reviews the current state of democracy and human rights in the archipelago of the Maldives. In a [report](#) released today, "From Sunrise to Sunset: Maldives backtracking on democracy", FIDH outlines the recent repression of pro-democracy demonstrations, the failure to respect separation of powers and the rise of fundamentalism.

In 2008, the adoption of a new constitution ended decades of dictatorship in the Maldives. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, in power since 1978, relinquished the presidential seat to the newly elected president Mohamed Nasheed, which led to a smooth democratic transition.

Following his accession to power, despite important progress in human rights, President Nasheed was soon confronted with a strong opposition founded on the ongoing political divide and corruption. At the end of 2011, the opposition came together in the name of Islam, and formed, together with radical groups, "the 23 December Coalition for the protection Islam". Following weeks of demonstrations, the police turned against Mohamed Nasheed, who resigned on 7th February 2012. He was replaced by his Vice-President, Mohamed Waheed.

During its fact-finding mission in the Maldives last August, FIDH was able to ascertain the deterioration of freedom of assembly and freedom of press, and collected accounts of victims of police brutality and arbitrary arrests. Most importantly, FIDH was able to witness the influence of radical groups detrimental to women's rights, among others, as demonstrated on 4th September with the sentencing of a 16-year old girl to flogging. These groups also call for the implementation of the death penalty as condoned in Sharia, by reversing the moratorium in place since 1953. The blogger and human rights defender Hilath Rasheed, an advocate of religious tolerance, was stabbed in the neck last June. Invited by FIDH in Paris and Geneva this week, he stated about this attack: "Extremists attacked me cowardly on 4th June. I narrowly survived and they tried to kill me again while I was in hospital. Although I am now in exile, I ask the Maldivian authorities to launch an investigations, which is yet to be done.", said Hilath Rasheed.

The appointment of close allies of the former dictator Gayoom the new administration these past months, is another worrying sign that questions the respect for democratic principles and the rule of law in the country.

"FIDH calls on the authorities to immediately end the current climate of impunity that has prevailed since last February. The Government must demonstrate its willingness to respect democratic gains, notably through the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of National Inquiry in a transparent manner and in collaboration with the international community, and as a priority the strengthening of institutions", stated Souhayr Belhassen, FIDH president.