



UK Mission to the
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Item 2- General Debate

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

This statement (as of June 7) was supported by: Austria, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Latvia, Lichtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States.

Thank you Mr President

High Commissioner,

I am making this statement on behalf of over 30 countries in response to concerns you have raised with regard to the Maldives in a recent public statement, as well as concerns expressed by a number of Special Procedures.

The Constitution of the Maldives contains strong guarantees for freedom of expression. We regret that in practice, this freedom is being increasingly curtailed in a manner contrary to both the Constitution of the Maldives' and its international human rights obligations,

We welcome the Government's commitment to ensuring, an objective and impartial investigation into the killing of blogger and prominent human rights defender, Yameen Rasheed. Our condolences go to the family of Mr Rasheed, whose father is present today. Mr Rasheed had repeatedly drawn attention to the threats he was facing. And he had visited this Council to raise awareness of the shrinking space for freedom of expression, as well as the abduction and disappearance of fellow blogger Ahmed Rilwan, whose fate remains unknown. We encourage the Maldives

Government to take steps to prevent the intimidation of human rights defenders including by those promoting violent extremism.

We also emphasise the importance of allowing activities by opposition parties and political leaders, and space for the expression of diverse political views. Legitimate opposition remains a vital component of a healthy democracy, and it is essential that the freedoms of assembly and expression are granted to all.

It is equally important that the Maldives enhance the independence of its judiciary and other domestic institutions and ensure that they provide the checks and balances which are essential for any democracy.

We further encourage the Government to fix dates to allow a number of outstanding visit requests by Special Procedures. We hope that the Maldives will engage with this Council, and the international community as it looks to improve its human rights situation. We further encourage you, High Commissioner, and the Maldives Government to engage in genuine dialogue in order to help address human rights challenges in the Maldives. We, the Governments of the signatory delegations to this statement, stand ready to offer constructive support in this endeavour.

Thank you.