

Press Release

24 April 2017

The brutal murder of blogger and human rights defender Yameen Rasheed

We call on the international community to assist in the investigation of the brutal murder of Yameen Rasheed, blogger and human rights defender. Yameen is not the first blogger to come under fatal attack and we fear that the local authorities need all the assistance available in this matter. We do not wish for a delayed investigation as that of journalist Rilwan's disappearance, which has taken almost three years with no lead.

We are outraged over the brutal maiming and killing of one of the most courageous and dedicated human rights defenders in the Maldives, blogger and satirist Yameen Rasheed, who was killed by unknown assailants. Yameen independently criticised and satirised repression and regression in society on his blog *The Daily Panic*. While it appears to be a premeditated attack on an individual who has received numerous death threats in the past, it is alarming that so far no arrests have been made.

Yameen became a moving target for radicalised gang members colluding with the regime due to his liberal views and unrelenting struggle to find out what happened to his friend, missing journalist Ahmed Rilwan, believed to have been disappeared by force in August 2014. Yameen was reportedly stabbed 16 times. According to local media reports, his wounded body was discovered in the stairwell of his home at around 3am on the 23rd April 2017.

Yameen is a beaming example for Maldivian youth; brave, dedicated to values of human rights, unapologetically outspoken and sincere in his unwavering commitment to assure

all Maldivians a dignified life. He volunteered with the Red Crescent during the water shortage crisis in Male' and was a dedicated volunteer with MDN at a time when journalists and bloggers have regularly received death threats. He was among the hundreds of pro-democracy protesters arrested on 1 May 2015 following a brutal police crackdown on a historic pro-democracy rally in the Maldives. He was held in detention for 21 days, including 5 days of house arrest. He recounted his time in detention in his blog.

The Maldivian Democracy Network will dispend all its resources to ensure the role of watchdog over domestic authorities in this matter despite the state of human rights in the Maldives, and we appeal the public to support us in this regard with whatever information or assistance you may be able to contribute.

ENDS.