

**39<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council**  
**Item 10: General Debate on technical assistance and capacity building**  
**Oral Statement Delivered by Ahmed Adam on behalf of**  
**Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)**

**Thursday, 27 September, 2018**

Mr. President. We acknowledge the outcome of the Presidential Election in Maldives and call on the incoming government to seek technical assistance to address long-standing human rights concerns. We welcome the President's acceptance of the result and call on the government to respect the wishes of the people and ensure peaceful transfer of power.

Despite the peaceful polls on Sunday, the environment in which the elections took place was marred by restrictions on media freedoms and fundamental rights, as well as serious allegations of obstruction of the opposition, abuse of state resources, as well as, interference in the Elections Commission, judiciary and other independent institutions.

In the last 7 years, freedoms of assembly, association and expression have greatly suffered in Maldives with repressive legislation such as Anti-Defamation and Freedom of Expression Act and Freedom of Peaceful Assembly Act. The high voter turn-out and the election results demonstrate people's belief in democracy, freedom, and human rights as opposed to authoritarianism and corruption. The incoming government should live up to this belief and demonstrate its commitment to human rights by urgently reforming repressive legislation and establishing the independence of the judiciary and other independent institutions.

To this end we call on the incoming government to actively seek the assistance of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UN Special Procedure mechanisms at the earliest.

The incoming government must take immediate steps in close cooperation with the Council's human rights mechanisms to end impunity for attacks against human rights defenders and journalists. It should further conduct independent, transparent and credible investigations into the disappearance of journalist Ahmed Rilwan Abdulla, and the murder of human rights defender Yameen Rasheed and hold those found responsible to account.

Thank you.