

Statement by UN Watch
UPR Report on Maldives
Agenda Item 6, UNHRC 30th Session
Delivered by Kimron Flicker, 24 September 2015

Thank you, Mister President.

UN Watch is gravely concerned about the human rights situation in the Maldives. In regard to the report that is before us today, we call attention to two areas of particular concern.

First, UN Watch condemns the unlawful incarceration of former President Mohamed Nasheed. In 2008, President Nasheed was elected in the Maldives' first free and democratic elections, following the 30-year rule of former president Maumoon Gayoom. In 2012, Mr. Nasheed was arrested on unsubstantiated terrorism charges following the arrest of a corrupt judge to which Nasheed has no connection. Nasheed was denied the opportunity to submit evidence in his case, and the presiding judge served simultaneously as the key witness.

In February of this year, President Nasheed was sentenced to 13 years in prison. This has been condemned by the international community, including by the US and the European Parliament.

Earlier this month, the government of the Maldives eavesdropped on a conversation between Mr. Nasheed and his legal team. The incumbent president, Abdullah Yameen, is the brother of former president Gayoom. Many members of the opposition are currently awaiting trial or in prison following government crackdowns on political dissidents.

Sheikh Imran, the leader of the Adalaath Islamic party, has been imprisoned for more than four months without charge.

Second, UN Watch is concerned at how rape victims are frequently punished for the abuse they suffer, with corporal punishment often employed as a penalty. Survivors of sexual violence, the overwhelming majority of whom are women, are prosecuted for "fornication" and subjected to flogging as legal punishment.

Mr. President, UN Watch calls on the Maldives to release former president Nasheed from prison immediately, and to hold free and fair elections.

It is time for the Maldives to be held accountable, and to respect basic human rights — including the basic rights of women.

Thank you, Mr. President.