

URGENT ACTION

HEALTH FEARS FOR DETAINEE WITHOUT ACCESS TO LAWYER

Lahiru Manikkuadura, a Sri Lankan citizen, has been detained in the Maldives without a trial date since September 2016 and, following recent and restrictive changes in legal procedures, is being denied any access to his lawyer. Deplorable prison conditions have further raised serious concerns for his health and well-being.

Lahiru Manikkuadura is currently being held in Maafushi prison in the Maldives on the charge of “knowingly taking part in a conspiracy to murder the President of Maldives”. Lahiru Manikkuadura due to fly home to Sri Lanka when he was arrested at the airport on 23 October 2015. Initially arrested on the suspicion of inciting violence, for allegedly distributing money to gangs, eight months later, he was charged with the attempted assassination of the President. His detention was extended for four months and the authorities failed to provide him with legal aid during all these remand hearings or interrogations which were conducted in Dhivehi, a language he does not speak.

The Maldives Criminal Court started hearing Lahiru Manikkuadura’s case on 10 August 2016 and, after four hearings, decided on 22 September that the parties would be given the next trial date once the Prosecutor General had summoned another witness. No developments have since been communicated. Since May 2018, the prison authorities have denied his lawyer access, saying she would need letters from the Criminal Court confirming that she is his lawyer and stating the next trial date – which has not been given.

Lahiru Manikkuadura is sharing a prison cell with six others, in a space designed for two people and it was only after four days of complaining of chest pain, that he was provided with medical attention. In addition, despite international and Maldivian law that all prisoners are entitled to at least one hour of exercise and fresh air, Lahiru Manikkuadura is not allowed outside of his cell and has started to lose his eyesight. A Buddhist, he has not been allowed to practice his faith and has been coerced into following Islamic practices, including fasting for the month of Ramadan.

Please write immediately in English or Dhivehi urging the authorities to:

- Release Lahiru Manikkuadura unless there is sufficient credible and admissible evidence that he has committed an internationally recognized offence, he is remanded by an independent court and is promptly granted a fair trial in line with international law and standards;
- Immediately provide adequate medical treatment to Lahiru Manikkuadura according to the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), Rules 24-7;
- Ensure that Lahiru Manikkuadura has immediate, confidential and frequent access to a lawyer as well as frequent access to his family and, call for all religious coercion to stop and for him to be allowed to exercise his right to freedom of religion.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 AUGUST 2018 TO:

Attorney General

Mohamed Anil,
6 Floor, Velaanaage,
Ameeru Ahmed Magu,
20096, Male, Maldives
Fax: +96 03 314 109
Email: info@agoffice.gov.mv

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

Prosecutor General

Aishath Bisham,
Prosecutor General’s Office,
Majeedhee Magu Road,
Male, Maldives
Email: pgoffice@pgoffice.gov.mv

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

And copies to:

Commissioner of Prisons

Ahmed Shihan,
Gaazee Building,
1st Floor,
Male, Maldives
Fax: +96 03 313 727
Email: info@corrections.gov.mv

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR AHMED SHIAAN *High Commissioner*, High Commission of the Republic of Maldives, 22 Nottingham Place W1U 5NJ, 020 7224 2135, Fax 020 7224 2157,

www.maldiveshighcommission.org

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Lahiru Manikkuadura was in the Maldives for a job as a driver which fell through. This job was arranged by another Sri Lankan who was in contact with a group of people who are close to the former Vice President of the Maldives, Ahmed Adeen, who is also accused of conspiracy to murder.

Previously, Lahiru Manikkuadura was given a five-minute phone call every fortnight to his family in Sri Lanka where his wife, son and parents live, but for the last six months, he has not been allowed to contact his family. This emotional isolation has resulted in depression, further impacting his well-being.

Incidents of medical negligence in prisons and custodial deaths have long been ignored and denied by the authorities in the Maldives. Amnesty International Prisoner of Conscience Ahmed Mahloof from the Maldives stated that 11 people have died in custody due to medical negligence within a period of 18 months, in January 2018, for which he was accused of providing false. Since then, two other prisoners were reported dead in custody in Maldives, due to medical negligence. While the high-profile cases draw international attention when they are denied medical attention, these deaths have received little notice in the international community. According to the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2017 for the Maldives published by the USA Department of State, there were seven cases of unexplained deaths in custody from August 2016 to October 2017. The Human Rights Commission of Maldives has concluded that two of those cases were natural deaths.

Human rights violations have become a serious concern in the Maldives ever since President Abdulla Yameen came to power in 2013. In addition to custodial negligence, the country is facing a crackdown on human rights, with increasing levels of corruption, restricting religions freedom, freedom of expression and association. All major opposition figures are either behind bars or languishing in exile.

On 1 February 2018, in a surprise decision, the Maldivian Supreme Court ruled that former President Mohamed Nasheed and eight other opposition politicians had been wrongly imprisoned, following flawed trials that did not meet international standards. This decision to release the nine political prisoners was never implemented as the President of Maldives declared a State of Emergency and arrested the Chief Justice, another Supreme Court judge and several politicians in early February 2018. Among these wrongly incarcerated the Supreme Court decision referred to, is Ahmed Adeen, who is facing several charges, one of which is attempting to assassinate the President of Maldives, along with Lahiru Manikkuadura.

Furthermore, according to the Prisons and Parole Act of Maldives, convicted prisoners should be held separately other detainees, which is not followed by the authorities, due to which those in remand custody are treated the same way as convicted prisoners, which is the situation Lahiru Manikkuadura is in. According to the Human Rights Commission of Maldives, the detainees are not allowed to leave their cells except for visitation, and in some prisons, the detainees have reportedly not been allowed outside to exercise for more than a year. The Commission also reported poor ventilation and lack of electricity in cells in some custodial centres where solitary confinement is practiced.

Name: Lahiru Madushanka Manikkuadura

Gender m/f: M

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