

# Amnesty UK South Asia

**September 2025**



## South Asia Coordinator Team

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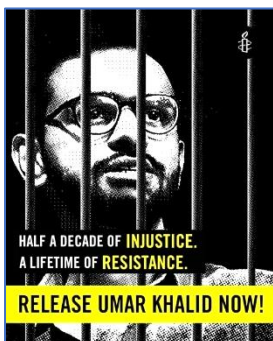
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Thank you for your support.

Cherry, Jerry, Irfan, Faissal & Will

## INDIA

### Umar Khalid's five-year imprisonment without trial exemplifies derailment of justice in India



The day before the five-year anniversary of Umar Khalid's imprisonment for his part in protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), Amnesty International and six other international human rights organisations released a joint statement calling on the Government of India to immediately release him. Amnesty India's Chair of the board, Aakar Patel said: *"The Government of India must immediately and unconditionally release human rights defender and student activist Umar Khalid who has been incarcerated for five long years without trial on politically motivated charges. Starved of justice, Khalid's prolonged persecution exemplifies the derailment of justice in India as it makes a mockery of international human rights principles. The repeated bail denials combined with persistent delays, and the continued absence of trial proceedings, amount to a violation of Khalid's right to a fair and speedy trial, guaranteed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which India is a state party, as well as under the Constitution of India."*

In a press release, Amnesty International said that "over the past five years, Umar Khalid's bail applications have been [denied](#) at least four times by trial and appellate courts, most recently on 2 September and his petition before

the Supreme Court of India was [adjourned](#) at least 14 times in eleven months, ultimately leading him to withdraw his petition. Other students and human rights activists, including Gulfisha Fatima, Sharjeel Imam, Khalid Saifi, Shifa-ur-Rehman and Meeran Haider, also remain in detention for their peaceful opposition to the CAA, while police officials and political leaders responsible for [incitement or complicity](#) in violence that followed the anti-CAA protests in 2020 continue to enjoy impunity. These are clear cases of selective prosecution aimed at criminalizing and chilling dissent in India.”

On the day of the anniversary, Amnesty International posted on X “Five years ago today, Umar Khalid was unjustly put behind bars. Amnesty International, along with six other INGOs, calls for his immediate & unconditional release.”

Read the joint statement [here](#).

## High Court criticises authorities for not honouring BK16 prisoner bail order

Asking if the State has put 'humanity' to rest, the Bombay High Court criticised the Maharashtra Police and the Prison Authorities for not releasing Ramesh Gaichor, one of the accused in the Bhima Koregaon - Elgar Parishad case, who was last month granted a temporary bail of three days to meet his ailing father in Pune. A division bench of Justices was irked to find that, despite a clear order granting three days bail to Gaichor on August 26, the Superintendent of Prisons, Talaja Central Jail, did not release him, citing the recent week-long public holidays. "We made it clear in our order that we are considering his plea on humanitarian grounds. So humanity is put to rest? Why did you not release him? Is this all just to harass him? Why did you not comply with our orders? From where does the Superintendent come and ask for a release warrant of Magistrate?" the bench questioned Public Prosecutor Mankunwar Deshmukh.



Read the report by Livelaw [here](#).

## Campaign against misuse of JCB equipment



As noted in previous S. Asia newsletters JCB equipment is used for punitive and discriminatory destruction of housing and small business properties in India, including Kashmir, as well as Palestine.

Local group members active in the campaign to make JCB accountable for these human rights violations demonstrated outside the Utilita Arena in Birmingham during the weekend 12/14 September, where JCB was sponsoring their “Monster Jam Ramped Up” equipment show. Members of Bournville Amnesty / West Midlands PSC demonstrated, talked with passers-by, and handed out flyers designed by Amnesty. People also took photos of the banner displayed. Members of Mid-Warwickshire Amnesty and Justice for Palestinians also raised awareness at the bottom of the entrance to the Utilita Arena, but were moved on by security guards.

On 4 October, the JCB Academy has an Open Day which is also an opportunity for demonstration. Anyone interested in joining this should contact Astrid Laich ([astridlaich@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:astridlaich@blueyonder.co.uk)).

## JCB cycle event action

On 18 May 2025, members of the *JCB: Stop Bulldozer Genocide* [campaign](#), attended the JCB Sportive cycle ride starting from the company’s headquarters near Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, UK.

The event was sponsored by JCB to celebrate its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, as a fundraiser for the British child protection charity, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). The campaigners held a protest condemning JCB's hypocrisy in supporting a children's charity whilst producing bulldozers which are used in the ethnic cleansing and genocide of children in Palestine, India and Kashmir. This complicity has been detailed in a [report](#) produced by the campaign in early 2025.

Read the account and reflections by an activist [here](#).

## Villagers evicted for tigers

In May 2025, dozens of Jenu Kuruba people stood at the entrance to the Nagarhole tiger reserve to meet tourists with a message: "you are entering our home". Their aim was to draw tourists' attention to the fact that their safari tours to see the tigers has meant the eviction of Jenu Kuruba from their ancestral homes in the name of conservation. The Jenu Kuruba are one of [India's "scheduled tribes"](#), or *Adivasis*, known for gathering forest honey, but they were forced out of Nagarhole during the 1980s when it was declared a tiger reserve. They say the move stripped them of their homes and religious sites, giving them few options other than low paid work on coffee



plantations. After decades of failed legal battles, dozens of families decided to take matters into their own hands: setting up camps on the land they claim as their own and picketing the day-trippers. "How are tourists taken into the forests while we are forcefully evicted and our rights arbitrarily rejected?" asks JA Shivu, a Jenu Kuruba activist involved in the protests. "This isn't conservation – it is money-making under the mask of conservation," adds Shivu, who is a member of the Community Network Against Protected Areas (CNAPEA).

Read the Guardian article [here](#).

## Modi finally visits Manipur

Prime Minister Modi called for the people of Manipur to maintain peace during his first visit to the northeastern state in two years, since ethnic violence erupted in May 2023 between the majority Hindu Meitei community and mostly Christian Kuki people, who are one of India's scheduled tribes. Violent clashes sparked from controversy over a Manipur court order that seemed to recommend a change in status for the Meitei, which could allow them to buy land in the hills populated by Kukis and other tribal groups and get a share of reserved government jobs. During this time more than 250 people have been killed, and over 60,000 displaced, with nearly 200 cases of heinous crimes, including rape, arson, loot, and murder filed with special investigation teams constituted by India's apex court.

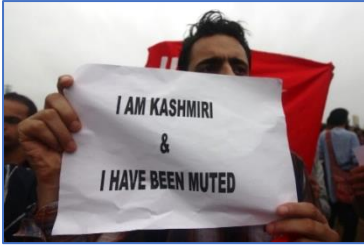


Criticism has been levelled at the PM by opposition parties for his failure to visit the area during the crisis, which is still not resolved. Even now, his visit was only part of a tour of a number of Eastern states to inaugurate new developments ahead of state elections.

Read the al Jazeera article [here](#).

# KASHMIR

## After Pahalgam



Local contacts say Kashmir is now effectively a police state, with almost complete control of people's lives. Sadly, despite the election victory in September/ October 2024 which resulted in the appointment of a Kashmiri Chief Minister (Omar Abdullah) the state government has no real power, as all matters of importance, certainly related to security and including appointment of officials, are controlled by the Lieutenant Governor, who is appointed by and answers to Delhi. Freedom of speech is non-existent and there is no right to freedom of assembly. No journalists can publish anything even slightly critical of the Indian government.

## Access to natural resources

Security patrols in rural areas have increased considerably. Permission is required for anyone to move around, even to graze livestock in the traditional summer mountain grasslands and forests. Farmers and shepherds must go through a lengthy and complex process which may not result in permission being given. Even when permission is given, there may be night visits by security forces. Inability to graze animals on common ground has significant effects on livelihoods and may make a farm unviable, as the average landholding is only 1 acre, making common-land grazing an important supplement.



## Impacts of infrastructure development



There is a huge Indian programme of infrastructure development (roads, railways etc) promoting extraction of natural resources and trade links. This too has significant impacts on local farmers, who are forced to give up land and suffer from the polluting effects of the construction work. Again, the loss of even a small piece of land can make a farm unviable. Compensation is minimal or non-existent.

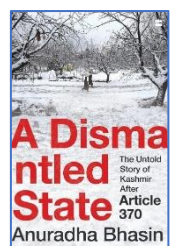
## The legal situation

Last year the Supreme Court of India passed the judgement that the abrogation of article 370 in 2019 (which removed the special status of J&K as India's only Muslim majority state and downgraded to two union territories) was not illegal. However, it also passed a directive that Kashmir's statehood should be restored. There is no sign of this happening, despite the fact that it would be easy for the central government to do and would not significantly change the power and control it exercises

## Books to be banned

Amnesty posted on X "The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has banned 25 books, accusing them of 'glorifying terrorism and inciting violence'. But many are written by respected journalists, historians, feminists, and peace scholars. Let's talk about what's really being silenced." Read the post [here](#).

Also on X, Amnesty posted that "Six years after Jammu & Kashmir was deprived of its special status & statehood in 2019, journalists, lawyers and activists continue to face arbitrary detention under the abusive Public Safety Act (PSA) and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)"





## Residence of Yasin Malak raided



It was reported in the (Pakistani) Dawn newspaper that the home of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) leader, Muhammad Yasin Malik, was raided by the Srinagar Investigation Agency. His mother and sister were harassed during the search. In a statement, the JKLF's spokesperson Muhammad Rafiq Dar said the Srinagar Investigation Agency had been tasked with reopening decades-old "fictitious" cases and was being used by New Delhi to further its "anti-Kashmir agenda" targeting anti-India leaders. Yasin Malak, who forswore violence in 1994 and has advocated peaceful approaches to resolving the problems of the region, was sentenced in 2019 to two lifetimes in prison and is currently held in Tihar jail in Delhi.

The JKLF vowed to intensify campaigns at home and abroad to highlight India's "inhumane" treatment of Yasin Malik. "The JKLF is determined to continue its struggle until the complete freedom of Kashmiris from Indian subjugation.

Read the report in Dawn newspaper [here](#).

## NEPAL

### Nepal erupts into violence after banning of social media platforms

Amnesty International strongly condemned the use of lethal force by security agencies on the streets of Nepal, which resulted in the deaths of over 70 people and serious injury of many more. They also called for the immediate de-escalation of the situation and urged the government to adopt a rights-respecting approach in the policing of protests, including conducting a thorough, independent and impartial investigation into the deaths, to hold all those found responsible fully accountable.



Read the full statement by Amnesty International Nepal [here](#).

The situation is complex, stemming from long-standing frustration of the people of Nepal with the endemic corruption throughout institutions in the country. The Government's decision on 4 September to block access to major social media and messaging platforms, including Facebook and Instagram, was a sweeping and disproportionate measure to stop any kind of dissent on this and other matters, and this is not the first time such measures have been employed. Such bans have repeatedly been wielded as political tools, often imposed when government is rattled by criticism or facing public backlash. The official reason behind the ban was that these companies were not registered in Nepal and did not have an "office" to "regulate and monitor" content.

The social media ban was the final straw for many in Nepal, but the protests were driven by widespread frustration with corruption. Young people, particularly Gen Z, were at the forefront, calling for transparency and accountability, and declaring "enough is enough." However, the situation escalated alarmingly, as a more violent element joined the street action. There was extensive vandalization of government institutions, including the parliamentary building, burning down of the homes of politicians, and destruction of business premises perceived to be linked with corruption. Jails were broken into, leading to the escape of inmates, some of whom joined the general destruction. A former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba who is 80 years old, was badly beaten up and he and his wife are now thought to be receiving treatment in the Military Hospital.

Key ministers, including the Prime Minister and Home Minister resigned, resulting in the Nepal Army immediately taking charge of government. An interim Prime Minister, Sushila Karki (pictured), has now been appointed. She has stated her intention to hold elections within six months. This seems like a tall order and there are concerns about how achievable this is and whether it will result in the clean sweep and major changes needed. Ms Karki, a lawyer by background with no political experience, and her cabinet, will face multiple challenges, including restoring law and order, rebuilding parliament and other key buildings that were attacked (with important papers burned). They will also need to reassure the Gen Z protesters who want change, and others in Nepal who are fearful its young democracy and constitutional order may be derailed.



Swastika Shrestha, co-founder and CEO of **Teach for Nepal** wrote:



*For my generation and the ones before, the memories of the movement for democracy, the more recent civil war, and the struggle for a federal republic remain vivid. We have witnessed the extent of violence, government atrocities, and the betrayal of our shared humanity. But every generation hopes that the sacrifices they made will ensure that the younger generation does not have to suffer the same fate.*

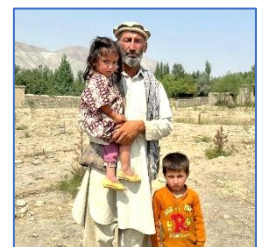
*But when a generation of unsuspecting youth, forced by the unprecedented corruption and lack of accountability of leaders, walked into the streets to protest as part of their democratic right, it was heartbreaking to witness the very institutions we entrust to protect us turn their power against these youth. It was a painful reminder of the gap between the ideals of democracy and the reality of those entrusted to uphold it.*

Teach for Nepal is the Nepali branch of Teach First, which does wonderful work enabling young graduates to work for two years in under-privileged rural schools. For more information see their website [here](#).

## AFGHANISTAN

### Devastating impact of aid cuts on the poorest families

A BBC report highlights the devastating impact that Western aid cuts have had on people in Afghanistan, particularly women and children, who are increasingly unable to access the health services they desperately need. Abdul (pictured) took his wife, Shahnaz, to the clinic when she was in labour and having difficulty, only to find it was closed. She and the baby died soon afterwards, leaving her existing children with no mother. The clinic is one of more than 400 medical facilities that closed down in Afghanistan after the Trump administration cut nearly all US aid to the country earlier this year, in an abrupt move following the dismantling of the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The US insists no one has died because of the aid cuts. Shahnaz and her baby's deaths are not recorded anywhere. Neither are countless others. The UK has also implemented massive cuts to its aid budget. Western governments seem not to realise that as they try to stem the flow of desperate asylum seekers, the only way to sensibly address the issue is to provide the aid people need in their own countries to enable them to live dignified lives that fulfil their basic human rights.



Read the BBC article [here](#).

## Earthquake shatters lives and homes



As if the people of Afghanistan don't have enough problems, the recent devastating earthquake in one of the most remote areas of the country further exacerbated the human rights crisis. The recent mass deportation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan and Iran has also put huge pressure on services and the ability of the country to cope. This on top of the Taliban government's shrinking of humanitarian work by international aid agencies. A statement from Amnesty International calls on the

Taliban de facto authorities "to ensure immediate and unimpeded access for all humanitarian organisations and to remove administrative barriers delaying needs assessments. They must attend to the needs of the affected communities and ensure that rescue and relief efforts are carried out without discrimination. Special measures must be put in place to ensure that the human rights of the most at-risks groups who often face compounded challenges in crisis situations, including women, children, older persons, and people with disabilities, are guaranteed in relief and recovery efforts."

Read the full statement [here](#).

## Urgent Action

Amnesty has now paused efforts to stop the deportations by the Pakistan authorities as the deportations have gone ahead. However, there is still a live action calling on the Iran government to stop its expulsions and provide Afghans living in Iran with protection from arbitrary arrests, torture and other ill-treatment and discrimination.

Take action [here](#).

## Open letter to UN Permanent Representatives

Grave concerns about the deepening human rights and humanitarian crises in Afghanistan are expressed in this letter signed by 86 Afghan organisations and 22 International agencies, including Amnesty International. The letter calls on the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) to establish an independent international accountability mechanism for Afghanistan, to support accountability for gross and systematic human rights violations and abuses and crimes under international law, including those committed in the past and those that continue to be committed across Afghanistan.

Since 2021, a growing number of Afghan and international civil society organisations have been calling for this mechanism, with a mandate to investigate, collect, preserve and analyse evidence of crimes under international law and other grave human rights violations and abuses in Afghanistan.

Read the letter in full [here](#).

## Four years of Taliban rule leaves Afghans in legal darkness

A press release by Amnesty International marking four years of Taliban rule highlights the problems caused by the dismantling of Afghanistan's legal framework by the Taliban authorities. It calls on them to reinstate a formal constitutional and legal framework and the rule of law and immediately end the arbitrary and unfair delivery of justice, in accordance with Afghanistan's international human rights obligations. Since the Taliban took power in August 2021, Afghanistan's legal framework has been entirely replaced with a religiously grounded system shaped by the Taliban's strict interpretation of Islamic Sharia law. The system is riddled with inconsistency, pervasive impunity and



unaccountability; arbitrary, unfair and closed trials; and personal bias in the carrying out of punishments such as public flogging and other forms of torture and other ill-treatment.

Read the press release [here](#).

## Push to deport failed Afghan asylum seekers from Europe could benefit the Taliban

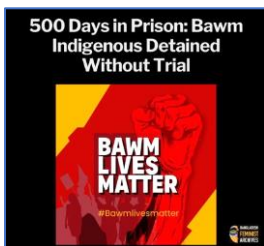
A comment published by thinktank Chatham House, written by Hameed Hakimi, says that four years after returning to power in Afghanistan, “the Taliban regime marked the occasion as ‘Victory Day’. In the absence of any meaningful and sustained opposition, domestic or otherwise, the Taliban regime has consolidated its power in the years since 2021. Despite horrendous restrictions on women and girls, including a ban on female education beyond grade six, the Taliban regime’s power is buoyed by a combination of pragmatic, tacit and genuine endorsement at the regional level.” He notes that other countries are gradually beginning to do business with the regime, Russia being the first to officially recognise them. Cooperating with Western powers seeking to deport Afghan asylum seekers may also be cynically viewed by the Taliban as a way back to relations.

Read the comment in full [here](#).

# BANGLADESH

## Bawm Prisoners Individuals at Risk Case

Please read the new report: [“We always live in fear”: In Bangladesh’s hills, army’s quiet war on a tiny Bawm nation](#). It details the arrests including women. A bank robbery was used as an excuse to arrest women and children and yet witnesses state that the perpetrators were young men. Amnesty International said: “There is CCTV footage of the robbery that shows who robbed the banks,” “Instead of using it to identify the perpetrators, your government is persecuting an entire Indigenous community.” It is collective punishment. Since April 2024, 126 Indigenous Bawm people, including 30 women and children, have been arbitrarily arrested as part of an ongoing military operation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in southeastern Bangladesh. Three of the Bawm prisoners have died in jail.



**Please take action:** The Bawn prisoners need your support. We are asking that you help to raise awareness of these prisoners by writing a letter or email to your MP. Suggested text is with a summary description is available from [jerry.allen@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:jerry.allen@amnesty.org.uk)

## A disturbing pattern of politically motivated prosecutions

[Please see the Blog on the Amnesty International UK site](#)

This blog focuses on the arrests of Khasirul, Haque, Shahrir Kabir and Shomi Kaiser.





Since the previous government was overthrown in August 2024, the unelected interim government has overseen a wave of prosecutions targeting individuals linked, or perceived to be linked, to the previous Awami League government. Families of those killed during the 2024 uprising filed murder complaints naming dozens or even hundreds of people without clear individual evidence. These cases have resulted in arrests of former government officials, legal professionals, civil society members, and cultural figures including individuals with no formal political affiliations. Courts have routinely denied bail, and key figures have been detained based on vague or politically charged allegations.

[PEN has voiced concern](#) over the detention of 16 individuals, including journalists and academics following their participation in a discussion. They were arrested under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

## **Amnesty's response to the Interim Government statement**

The interim government made a statement to mark the anniversary of the 5<sup>th</sup> August coup in which goals and aspirations were stated. [In response Amnesty published a public statement](#). It included:

“the track record of the interim government over the past twelve months have not aligned with these aspirations.”

“concerns around adhering to due process safeguards, arbitrary arrests, the availability of sufficient admissible evidence of individual criminal wrongdoing remain. “

## **Chittagong Hill Tracks Commission report on situation in the Chittagong Hills – 11<sup>th</sup> September**

A report by the Chittagong Hill Tracks Commission documents the situation since August 2024:

- Settler and fundamentalist groups are more organised
- Those opposed to the CHT Accord has achieved more power
- More incidents of children from remote areas being converted
- More restrictions on travel to the CHT.
- Increase in gender-based violence.

# **SRI LANKA**

## **Police target families of ‘Disappeared’**

[Human Rights Watch have produced a report on the families of the disappeared.](#)

“Sri Lankan security forces still harass families of victims of forced disappearances and misuse the country’s draconian counterterrorism law a year since President Anura Kumara Dissanayake took office with promises of reform,” Human Rights Watch said today. The United Nations Human Rights Council should renew the mandates for the UN to collect and analyse evidence of abuses in Sri Lanka, along with continued monitoring and reporting on the situation.



On August 13, 2025, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [reported](#) that there had been almost no progress in accountability for [widespread abuses](#) by government forces and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam during the 1983-2009 civil war, and that “the structural conditions that led to past violations persist.” Tens of thousands of victims of [enforced disappearances](#), many last seen in military custody, remain unaccounted for.”

[Please see the full report.](#)

## Joint Statement on the Report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Sri Lanka Core Group, which includes the UK delivered a statement on the human rights situation in Sri Lanka. [In a joint statement](#), Amnesty International and other organisations remain greatly concerned that the minimal measures taken by the government are not tailored to meet the human rights challenge. The measures will not be effective in making progress towards effective accountability for allegations of serious human rights violations and abuses during the armed conflict. “16 years since the armed conflict ended, there have been no credible steps taken towards accountability.” [See the joint statement](#).

### [UN Human Rights Council Core Group Statement on the Report of OHCHR on the Human Rights Situation in Sri Lanka](#)

raised the human rights violations and abuses, including unlawful killings, enforced disappearances, sexual and gender-based violence and arbitrary detentions. “It is crucial that investigations at mass grave sites are carried out in line with international standards and that journalists, human rights defenders and civil society organisations can operate freely and safely.”

## PAKISTAN

### Imran Khan remains in jail and his supporters also tried by military courts

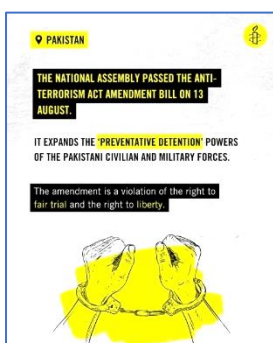
Former Prime Minister Imran Khan has now been held in detention for over two years. His family have raised concerns about his treatment by prison authorities, particularly denying his access to legal counsel and certain family members. Supporters and leaders of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party have been similarly targeted. Over a hundred members, including senior party leaders, of the PTI were convicted by anti-terrorism courts in relation to the 9 May 2023 protests. Previously, 85 civilians were tried and convicted by military courts for the protests. These trials by anti-terrorism and military courts raise serious concerns regarding the right to due process. Severe restrictions have been placed on party members and supporters, particularly in relation to exercising their right to freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association.

Amnesty International is calling on the Pakistani authorities to respect the right to protest and facilitate peaceful assembly. They must also ensure that Imran Khan and PTI party members and supporters are afforded the right to due process and provided the opportunity to challenge the lawfulness of their detention through a public and fair hearing before a competent, independent and impartial court. The authorities must end military trials of civilians in Pakistan as they are incompatible with Pakistan’s obligations under international human rights law.

Read Amnesty’s post on X [here](#).

There is also a post about the detention of a senior member of the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM). **Ali Wazir** previously spent over two years in unlawful detention from 2020. Read the post [here](#).

### Anti-terrorism law expands detention powers



The Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Bill passed by the Pakistan National Assembly this week expands the administrative detention powers of civilian and military forces, signalling increased risks to civil liberties in the country. The broad and discretionary powers vested in the armed forces further threaten the right to liberty and fair trial guaranteed by international human rights law and Pakistan’s own constitution.

Read the Amnesty International post on X [here](#).

# MALDIVES

## **Alarm at proposed death penalty for drug trafficking**

Amnesty International and eight other organisations expressed their alarm at the statement by Dr Mohamed Muizzu, President of the Republic of the Maldives, on 30 July 2025, seeking legislative amendments to introduce the death penalty for drug trafficking. The Maldives is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the expansion of the scope of the death penalty for drug trafficking would result in new violations of international law and standards, adding to the ones already documented. We urge the authorities to desist from pursuing these amendments and abolish this cruel punishment.

Read the full report [here](#).