



21 February 2013

Friends of Maldives statement in response to FCO:

It's something of a head-in-the-sand statement from the FCO today regarding UK support for the Maldives Police Service.

That Alistair Burt is having serious concerns about police brutality is to be welcomed – but what will he do about it? Remember the British tax payer is on the hook, currently supporting a notorious bunch of thugs who continue to perpetrate what Amnesty International is calling a human rights crisis. This is a police force which beats and tortures innocent civilians. And its officers are trained in Scotland. It is now using these links with the Scottish Police College purely as a badge of legitimacy. It is anything but legitimate.

And despite the hopes expressed in the FCO's statement that UK involvement will deliver a slowly-but-surely, positive impact – the track record doesn't look good. 16 years of official ties between the Scottish police and the Maldives Chief of Police have delivered what exactly? Torture, deaths in custody, sexual assault of prisoners. That's what. Improvement seems very slow in coming. I would ask the SPC whether it's certain its trainees are actually listening during the Policing and Human Rights sessions?

The bottom line is it's time to suspend this training contract between the SPC and the Maldives Police Service. At least until free, fair and inclusive elections are held and a democratic government in the Maldives can tackle the serious job of Police Reform.

Friends of Maldives has now begun the process of contacting members of the Scottish Parliament and other relevant authorities in Scotland in an effort to alert them to the real nature of those the Scottish Police is doing business with. Our hope is a delegation will visit Holyrood in the near future as part of those efforts.