

[ADDRESS OF CONSTITUENT]

[NAME OF MINISTER] MP

[ADDRESS]

[DATE]

Dear [MINISTER],

As one of your constituents, I am writing to you on a matter of great concern. As I am sure you know, the actions of the government of Maldives has been widely criticised by the international community. The governing Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) has been associated with numerous human rights violations, and there are alarming reports of institutionalised violence, police brutality, and the persecution of members of the opposition, many of whom are in prison or under house arrest. PPM overturned a 50-year moratorium on the death penalty, allowing for the execution of minors. The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Bar Human Rights Committee (BHRC), Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) and Amnesty International have all raised concerns about the situation in Maldives. Please also see the enclosed Friends of Maldives brief for more information.

The European Parliament passed a resolution on the situation in Maldives on 30 April 2015, and called on member states to 'issue thorough warnings about the Maldives' human rights record to tourists planning to go to the country,' to impose a travel ban on members of the Maldives Government and their leading supporters in the Maldivian business community, and to freeze their assets abroad in the event of 'continuing democratic backsliding and deterioration of the human rights situation in Maldives'. The European Parliament also called for the immediate release of opposition leader and former President Mohamed Nasheed, and former Defence Ministers Tholath Ibrahim and Mohamed Nazim. The legitimacy of their respective trials has been widely discredited and is believed to be politically motivated.

Amnesty International's report, *Maldives: Assault on Civil and Political Rights* outlines the human rights violations, infringement on civil liberties and intimidation of opposition parties endured by the country in recent years. Amnesty International criticised PPM for jailing opposition leaders, resuming executions, judicial floggings and impunity for police and army officers responsible for "unnecessary or excessive use of force".

The Maldivian Government recently engaged Cherie Blair's firm, Omnia Strategy, to assist with its strategy for 'democracy consolidation'. I am not confident that this recent development signals the governing PPM's commitment to strengthening the country's democratic institutions, and I am concerned that it is in fact an effort to whitewash the political crisis, and the party's association with human rights abuses. In direct contradiction to the testimony of a BHRC international observer, Omnia Strategy's Toby Cadman claimed that former president Mohamed

Nasheed had been able to access legal representation throughout his trial, and went on to suggest that the charges against Mohamed Nasheed should have resulted in life imprisonment for the former President.

Following a meeting with Amal Clooney on 24 June, Prime Minister David Cameron called for dialogue among the parties, and the release of all political prisoners. We hope that you will join international human rights groups in calling for sanctions on the Republic of Maldives, for the release of all political prisoners, for a travel ban on Maldives Government officials and for the FCO to update travel advice for Maldives with warnings for UK visitors about the country's human rights record.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,

[NAME OF CONSTITUENT]