



**ANTI  
DEATH  
PENALTY  
ASIA  
NETWORK**



**CAPITAL PUNISHMENT  
JUSTICE PROJECT**  
Ending the death penalty.



**The Maldives  
Stakeholder Report for the United Nations Universal Periodic Review**

**Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights,**  
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

**The Maldivian Democracy Network**

**Anti Death Penalty Asia Network**

**Capital Punishment Justice Project**

and

**The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty**

**for the 50th Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review  
5 November 2025**

**Submitted 7 April 2025**

**The Advocates for Human Rights** (The Advocates) is a volunteer-based non-governmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law since its founding in 1983. The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publication. The Advocates is the primary provider of legal services to low-income asylum seekers in the Upper Midwest region of the United States. In 1991, The Advocates adopted a formal commitment to oppose the death penalty worldwide and organized a death penalty project to provide pro bono assistance on post-conviction appeals, as well as education and advocacy to end capital punishment. The Advocates currently holds a seat on the Steering Committee of the World Coalition against the Death Penalty.

**The Maldivian Democracy Network** (MDN) is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation advocating for human rights and democracy in the Maldives. MDN was formed in 2004, allowed to register in the Maldives in 2006, and arbitrarily shut down following blasphemy allegations by the Government of Maldives in 2019. MDN currently works in exile.

**Anti Death Penalty Asia Network** (ADPAN) is the peak regional body for organisations committed to the abolition of the death penalty across Asia-Pacific, with members from 20 countries within the region. As such, ADPAN maintains that the death penalty violates the right to life, that it is the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishment and that the death penalty should be entirely abolished internationally.

**Capital Punishment Justice Project** (CPJP) is an Australian based NGO that stands for a world without the death penalty or other forms of state-sanctioned killing. We are a human rights organisation made up predominantly of passionate legal experts and campaigners who volunteer their time to develop legal and policy solutions that help save lives. CPJP works closely with partners in Asia – where over 90 per cent of the world’s executions take place – to support the defence of people facing the death penalty, assist local anti-death penalty civil society

organisations, and campaign to convince governments to abolish the death penalty. Australia has identified abolition of the death penalty as one of its human rights priority areas, and we see the work we do as imperative to ensuring that Australia is a leading voice on abolition.

**The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty** is a membership-based global network committed to strengthen the international dimension of the fight against the death penalty. Established in 2002, its ultimate objective is to obtain the universal abolition of the death penalty. To achieve its goal, the World Coalition advocates for a definitive end to death sentences and executions in those countries where the death penalty is in force. In some countries, it is seeking to obtain a reduction in the use of capital punishment as a first step towards abolition. The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty is committed to making visible gender and intersectional discrimination at work in capital punishment as well as to strengthen the protection of women and gender and sexual minorities facing the death penalty.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report addresses the Maldives' compliance with its international human rights obligations regarding the death penalty and related issues, such as gender-based violence, access to justice, conditions of detention, and freedom of religion. At present, the Maldives retains the death penalty and has not yet ratified the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
2. For women in conflict with the law, the criminal legal system perpetuates negative stereotypes and reinforces discriminatory gender roles, including in capital cases. Additionally, the threat of the death penalty discourages human rights defenders from engaging in advocacy, including on women's rights issues.
3. The Maldives has made marked improvements in ensuring access to justice by strengthening its legal frameworks, enhancing judicial training, decentralizing legal services, and leveraging digital tools to increase accessibility and efficiency. It has also taken action to improve prison conditions by trying to reduce overcrowding and embracing non-custodial alternatives. Reports, however, indicate that detention conditions are still inadequate due to low maintenance, lack of initiative to revisit extreme sentences under the Maldives' old drug law, and the judiciary's failure to implement non-custodial sentencing.
4. The Maldives has made virtually no progress with respect to freedom of religion. Maldivian law does not allow for the practice of faiths other than Islam.

### I. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

#### Acceptance of international norms

##### **Status of Implementation: Not Accepted, Not Implemented**

5. In its third-cycle Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the Maldives noted nine recommendations to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (OP2).<sup>1</sup>
6. In noting the recommendations, the Maldives explained that the "death penalty cannot be abolished without preceding domestic legislation and wider public consultation on the issue."<sup>2</sup> The Maldives has made no progress toward ratification of OP2 since 2020.

#### Death penalty

##### **Status of Implementation: Not Accepted, Partially Implemented**

7. In its third-cycle UPR, the Maldives noted all twenty-five<sup>3</sup> recommendations it received relating to the death penalty, including twelve recommendations to maintain its moratorium on the death penalty.<sup>4</sup>
8. The Maldivian government's position on the death penalty has changed frequently over the last decade, but the country has maintained a fragile *de facto* moratorium on executions. In 2014, former president Abdulla Yameen lifted a six-decade moratorium on executions.<sup>5</sup>

Four years later, former President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih seemed to informally shift position, with the Maldives orally pledging at the United Nations that it would maintain the moratorium.<sup>6</sup> During the third-cycle UPR in 2020, the Maldives reiterated its “commitment to uphold the informal moratorium on the application of [the] death penalty,” explaining that “effecting judicial reform, and implementing measures to enhance the underlying legal framework of the criminal justice system takes precedence over resuming executions.”<sup>7</sup> Despite these oral assurances, people under sentence of death never received notice that authorities had reinstated the informal moratorium and they continued to expect that they could be executed any day. Toward the end of 2023, the government announced that it planned to resume executions.<sup>8</sup> Despite the announcement, however, it does not appear that authorities have in fact resumed executions. In December 2024, the Maldives again voted against the UN General Assembly resolution calling for a global moratorium on the death penalty.<sup>9</sup>

9. The Penal Code authorizes the death penalty “only for the most egregious imaginable form of a purposeful killing of another person in the most cruel and heinous manner.”<sup>10</sup> In 2022, the Maldives represented to the Human Rights Committee that in practice, courts impose the death penalty only for murder,<sup>11</sup> but the death penalty appears to be an available penalty for treason, *hudud* offenses (including apostasy and sexual intercourse outside of marriage), and terrorism-related offenses resulting in death.<sup>12</sup> As recently as 2019, a court sentenced a woman to death for adultery.<sup>13</sup>
10. In response to an inquiry from the Steering Committee of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty about the safeguards in place to ensure the use of capital punishment complies with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Maldives indicated that death sentences are subject to automatic appeal and must be confirmed by the Supreme Court, adding that the President has the discretion to pardon people sentenced to death. Section 5(a)(1) of the Clemency Act, however, renders murder a non-pardonable offense.<sup>14</sup>
11. Amnesty International reports that courts finalized at least two death sentences in 2021 and 2022, and as of the end of 2023, 21 individuals were known to be on death row.<sup>15</sup> The Maldives’ last known execution took place in 1954.<sup>16</sup>
12. Amnesty International further reports that as of the end of 2023, “[p]eople who were below 18 years of age at the time of the offence for which they had been convicted remained under sentence of death in Maldives.”<sup>17</sup> Indeed, in its 2021 addendum to the Report of the UPR Working Group, the Maldives seemed to confirm that while domestic law prohibits execution of minors, authorities may execute juvenile offenders after they become adults: “Concerning use of death penalty on minors, sections 29(d) and (e) of the newly enacted Child Rights Protection Act explicitly prohibits the implementation of death penalty against a minor below 18 years of age, and therefore the Maldives considers [Portugal’s recommendation to ‘immediately forbid [the death penalty’s] use on those below 18 years of age at the time of the crime’] as implemented.”<sup>18</sup> Resumption of executions would mean

that children as young as seven years old could be sentenced to death and then executed after turning eighteen.<sup>19</sup>

13. Amnesty International also found that “[p]eople with mental or intellectual disabilities were under sentence of death.”<sup>20</sup>
14. The imposition of the death penalty in the Maldives is not mandatory. Although Sharia law may require the death penalty for murder,<sup>21</sup> courts have discretion to impose a sentence other than death, but only if the victim’s surviving relatives inform the court that they do not wish to implement the execution as one option under the *qisas* (retribution) scheme. The Supreme Court makes a final ruling as to whether the alleged offender committed the murder, but if the court determines that the alleged offender did in fact commit murder, the victim’s family makes the final sentencing determination.<sup>22</sup> There is no opportunity for a court to consider mitigating circumstances in favor of a penalty other than death.
15. Judges who preside over murder cases typically fail to take any initiative to explain how *qisas* works, despite multiple trainings and other efforts at judicial capacity-building, as described in paragraphs 29 through 31 below, including regarding gender stereotypes. Judges simply ask families “whether they wish for an execution or not.” They do not explain the process, the different types of *qisas* (forgiveness, compensation, execution), or the fact that regardless of the family’s decision on *qisas*, a person convicted of murder will receive a sentence of life imprisonment adjacent to any potential death penalty. They take no initiative to explain or hear evidence of potential mitigating circumstances that might persuade the family to opt out of execution.

### **Discrimination and violence against women**

#### **Status of Implementation: Accepted, Partially Implemented**

16. In its third-cycle UPR, the Maldives accepted all twenty-six recommendations it received relating to gender-based violence.<sup>23</sup>
17. Since that time, the Maldives appears to have made some progress—at least on paper—regarding women’s rights. In 2021, authorities amended the Sexual Offenses Act so that the offenses of rape, sexual injury, and sexual assault extended to married couples.<sup>24</sup>
18. Despite these nominal legislative changes, discrimination and violence against women loom large.<sup>25</sup> The retention of the death penalty perpetuates gender-based discrimination in the Maldivian legal system. The death penalty invites discriminatory sentences against women for morality crimes such as adultery, as well as for their alleged involvement in crimes committed by male counterparts. Around the world, women on death row for murder might not themselves have committed an intentional killing; they are sometimes sentenced as accomplices to their intimate male partners or other male figures.<sup>26</sup>
19. For example, in July 2015, a Maldivian court sentenced Fathimath Hana to death for murder. Hana’s boyfriend killed a lawyer, claiming that the lawyer had threatened to assault Hana. At the time of the murder, Hana was asleep. Her lawyer argued that a death sentence would be disproportionate to her involvement in the murder. The High Court in 2016 upheld the sentence, asserting that while Hana may have been asleep at the time of

murder, she planned the murder with her boyfriend, and thus, a death sentence was appropriate.<sup>27</sup>

20. Gender stereotypes can influence sentencing for violent crimes. Courts generally impose lesser sentences upon women when the courts perceive them as conforming to their societal gender roles, such as being a caring mother or an innocent victim. Courts tend to impose harsher sentences on women who are perceived as deviating from these roles.<sup>28</sup> The fact that Hana and her boyfriend were unmarried and that she had consumed alcohol before falling asleep at the time of the murder may have influenced the court's decision to sentence her to death.
21. As mentioned in paragraph 9, courts have also sentenced women to death for adultery.<sup>29</sup> The Penal Code and related laws do not expressly authorize the death penalty for such offenses. In 2014, however, a lower court sentenced a woman convicted of adultery to death by stoning. She had admitted to the crime of adultery after giving birth. The Supreme Court later annulled the sentence.<sup>30</sup> In a 2019 case, the Naifaru magistrate court sentenced a woman to death for fornication outside of marriage.<sup>31</sup> Health workers had reported the case to the police after delivering the woman's child, believing the child was conceived through unlawful sexual relations. Court proceedings did not mention the male partner.<sup>32</sup>
22. These cases provide evidence of gender-based discrimination in the Maldivian legal system, including with respect to the death penalty. The Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide reports that, "[i]n some Shariah jurisdictions, offenses against sexual morality, or zina, appear gender-neutral on their face, but in practice are applied in a discriminatory manner against women."<sup>33</sup>
23. Using the death penalty to punish women for perceived sexual immorality exemplifies and promotes harmful gender stereotypes. Women often receive harsher sentences when perceived as deviating from gender roles such as the peaceful caregiver or dutiful wife and embodying negative gender stereotypes such as the "femme fatale" who seduces men.<sup>34</sup>
24. In addition, the possibility of facing a death sentence, or an otherwise harsh sentence, for adultery can discourage women from reporting sexual assault.<sup>35</sup>
25. One in three women in the Maldives report experiencing violence in their lifetime, with one in four reporting intimate partner violence.<sup>36</sup> The pervasive nature of the problem is rooted in harmful cultural norms and patriarchal attitudes—26% of women believe that certain circumstances justify a partner's acts of violence.<sup>37</sup>
26. Crime statistics show that sexual offense cases have declined in recent years. These statistics, however, are not necessarily indicative of the actual incidence of these offences, as victims can be reluctant to report sexual assault.<sup>38</sup> In addition, cases of physical abuse and femicide have increased in recent years.<sup>39</sup>
27. According to Human Rights Watch, as of 2025, the Maldives has no law prohibiting female genital mutilation.<sup>40</sup> A 2016 survey revealed that 17% of women who have heard of FGM

reported having undergone the procedure.<sup>41</sup> Over 80% of reported acts of FGM were perpetrated on girls under age 5.<sup>42</sup>

## **Access to justice & remedy**

### **Status of Implementation: Accepted, Partially Implemented**

28. In its third-cycle UPR, the Maldives accepted all 17 recommendations it received relating to access to justice.<sup>43</sup> The Maldives is actively bolstering its legal frameworks and expanding access to justice by enhancing the capabilities of its legal institutions to ensure no one is left behind.
29. In 2020, the Maldives Judicial Academy partnered with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to evaluate the current judicial training curriculum and programs.<sup>44</sup> The program targeted gaps in knowledge, skills, and training needs. The UNDP, together with the Judicial Academy, identified the following priority areas: procedure; substantive law; sexual and gender-based violence, including interactions with victims and witnesses; and professional ethics and conduct.<sup>45</sup>
30. The UNDP and Judicial Academy held a three-day Training of Judicial Trainers program in 2021. The program provided judges from supreme, apex, and magistrate courts with extensive training to enhance their knowledge and skills.<sup>46</sup> The UNDP Maldives Representative stated that “judicial education is paramount in the fair administration and dispensation of justice for all.”<sup>47</sup>
31. In 2021, the Maldives UNDP made strides towards decentralizing judicial services. The Maldives UNDP, with the support of the British High Commission in the Maldives, provided the Department of Judicial Administration with digital equipment for the Magistrate Courts to facilitate remote legal services and increase access to justice for communities.<sup>48</sup> The UNDP Maldives Representative stated that the “UNDP is proud to ensure that justice institutions are responsive to the rights and needs of all populations during this pandemic and beyond. It is important to consider the access to justice services that needs to be provided for hard to reach and vulnerable populations, including access to legal aid and information, to comprehensive services for victims and survivors of violence, to protection of migrants and displaced populations.”<sup>49</sup>
32. In November of 2023, the Maldives UNDP launched a revamped “MVLAW Website,” adding some additional search functions. The website had been designed to transform public accessibility to the laws of the Maldives. The website was also designed to assist legal practitioners by improving the efficiency of their legal research.<sup>50</sup> The website, however, is not accessible to people with visual impairments, even though accessibility tools such as text to speech are common and readily available in the Maldives. This government website is not unique in its failure to accommodate persons with disabilities.
33. In 2024, the Maldives furthered its efforts of digitizing and decentralizing legal information. The Department of Judicial Administration and the Maldives UNDP launched an Integrated Court Management System (ICMS).<sup>51</sup> The UNDP reported the launch as a significant milestone in the Maldivian judiciary’s digital transformation efforts. The system seeks to strengthen the Maldivian justice system “by facilitating equitable access

to justice and upholding human rights,” “emphasiz[ing] the program’s commitment to enhancing governance through transparency, fairness, and societal cohesion.”<sup>52</sup>

34. In March 2024, the European Union and Maldives UNDP signed a partnership agreement for a 4-year “Accountability and Integrity Matters – AIM project.”<sup>53</sup> While the overall objective of the partnership agreement is to strengthen the rule of law and enhance transparency and integrity in the Maldives, one of the key outcomes is “supporting the country in developing an effective, accountable and inclusive justice system.”<sup>54</sup> The Attorney General stated that the government “has a strong commitment towards upholding democratic principles, promoting and protecting human rights and accelerating access to justice to all.”<sup>55</sup>
35. Financial support for increasing the capacity of the judiciary does not seem to have had much effect in expanding access to justice and the right to a fair trial on the ground. A civil case can take up to 3 years to reach resolution in the superior courts and up to 5 years in the appellate courts. These delays violate the Civil Procedure Code.
36. In recent years, some court Registrars have overreached their authority by rejecting cases submitted to courts, for example by *sua sponte* taking on the role of judge and rejecting cases based on their own view of the arguments presented, rather than making a ministerial determination about whether the case satisfied the relevant administrative requirements. Claimants are typically unaware of the Registrar’s official role and accept these determinations of “inadmissibility,” even though they go to the merits and are beyond the Registrar’s authority. In rare cases where a claimant challenges a Registrar’s decision, the court usually overturns the Registrar’s decision and allows the case to proceed.

### **Conditions of detention**

#### **Status of Implementation: Accepted, Partially Implemented**

37. The Maldives accepted four recommendations to improve conditions of detention, including improving the treatment of prisoners in accordance with internationally recognized standards, such as the Nelson Mandela Rules and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules).<sup>56</sup>
38. Since that time, the Maldives has taken steps to address detention conditions.<sup>57</sup> Authorities have undertaken efforts reduce overcrowding and improve the material conditions of prisons.<sup>58</sup> For example, the Maldives built a special management unit, with a capacity of 100, to house people convicted of major crimes.<sup>59</sup>
39. As an alternative to combatting overcrowding, the Maldives reports it is committed to rehabilitation and implementing non-custodial measures.<sup>60</sup> In 2022, it launched the first prison-based drug rehabilitation program, and 32 prisoners completed the program and were granted a Presidential Pardon with the condition of completing community-based rehabilitation under the National Drug Agency.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, the Maldives has adopted the Regulation on Administering Non-Custodial Measures, providing non-custodial



options, including community service and community service in accompaniment with house arrest or incarceration.<sup>62</sup>

40. Even though non-custodial sentencing is the law, the judiciary has by and large refused to implement it. Moreover, many people are serving multiple extreme sentences under the old Drug Law (which mandated long prison sentences for possession of even 1 gram of cannabis, for example), and they have not been considered for release under the current Drug Law, which does not have such extreme sentences for relatively minor crimes.
41. Rather than pursue these readily available options for reducing the prison population, the government has embraced expansion of institutionalization, announcing via presidential decree the construction of a larger “prison complex.”<sup>63</sup>
42. The Maldives also reports it has established a new medical center in the Maafushi Prison staffed by a small medical team, including a psychiatrist and psychologist. The center offers simple tests and investigations.<sup>64</sup>
43. Detention conditions remain harsh due to extreme overcrowding and inadequate sanitary conditions and medical care.<sup>65</sup> In a recent visit to the portion of Maafushi Prison that detains women, the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) observed poor cell conditions, namely a lack of cleanliness due to low maintenance and high temperatures in the cells.<sup>66</sup> In 2021, Amnesty International reported instances of torture of prisoners, including a death in custody that was not investigated.<sup>67</sup> Prisoners reportedly have complained that they do not have timely access to medical care, resulting in extended delays in access to specialist physicians.<sup>68</sup> The NPM observed that many women in detention displayed mental health conditions requiring intervention and medication, including several instances of self-harm.<sup>69</sup>

## **Freedom of religion**

### **Status of Implementation: Not Accepted, Not Implemented**

44. In its third-cycle UPR, the Maldives noted all 16 recommendations it received relating to freedom of religion.<sup>70</sup>
45. Authorities severely restrict freedom of religion. The Constitution designates Islam as the national religion, requires all citizens to be Muslim, and requires the President, Members of Parliament, members of the Cabinet, and judges to be Sunni Muslims.<sup>71</sup> The Constitution limits rights and freedoms “to protect and maintain the tenets of Islam”<sup>72</sup> and neither provides for religious freedom, nor identifies religion as a basis for which discrimination is prohibited.
46. Due to lack of religious freedom, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and other religious minorities experience persecution. The Maldives has a significant migrant worker population, and many of these people are Hindus and Buddhists who are not allowed to practice their religion openly or to possess religious symbols. In its 2025 World Watch List Report on religious freedom around the world, Open Doors ranked the Maldives as the 16th worst place for Christians to live.<sup>73</sup> Maldivian citizens are not permitted to possess non-Muslim religious literature or build or attend non-Islamic places of worship.

Foreigners, including tourists, are often required to remove non-Muslim religious symbols and are warned against conducting non-Muslim religious activities in their guesthouses. Members of religious minority groups feel compelled to keep their faith a secret; one person explained: “It is as if we submerge beneath the sea and breathe through a straw to avoid being seen.”<sup>74</sup>

47. The 2016 Defamation and Freedom of Speech Act criminalized any speech, remarks, writings, or conduct that targets Islam, authorizing fines or up to six months in prison. Due to widespread international criticism, authorities later repealed the law.<sup>75</sup> Nonetheless, the Penal Code still prohibits “criticism of Islam” and speech “in a manner likely to cause religious segregation,”<sup>76</sup> and authorizes Sharia punishments for such offenses, including flogging, stoning, and amputation of hands.<sup>77</sup> The Penal Code also criminalizes production, possession, distribution, and importation of any idol of worship.<sup>78</sup>
48. In the Addendum to the third-cycle UPR Report of the Working Group, the Maldives stated that, while Maldivian law does not allow for the practice of faiths other than Islam, it would “take measures to combat religious extremism and xenophobia, especially among youth.”<sup>79</sup>

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS

49. This stakeholder report suggests the following recommendations for the Government of the Maldives:
- Abolish the death penalty and replace it with penalties that are fair, proportionate, and consistent with international human rights standards.
  - Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the CCPR.
  - In the interim:
    - Adopt a *de jure* moratorium on the death penalty.
    - Ensure that no person is sentenced to death for any crime other than murder, including engaging in sexual activity outside of marriage, and issue a directive to all judges to ensure compliance with this mandate.
    - Commute the death sentence of any person not proven to have been at least 18 years of age at the time of the offense for which the person was sentenced to death.
  - Promulgate a regulation to require a representative of the state to engage with the heirs or other family members of murder victims who are summoned to court to decide on *qisas* to ensure they have adequate information about the three types of *qisas*, as well as the fact that any person found guilty of murder in the Maldives will face non-pardonable life imprisonment, regardless of the family’s *qisas* decision, and ensure family members have sufficient time to consider their options and make an informed decision.
  - In collaboration with civil society organizations, conduct a nationwide public consultation campaign about the death penalty, human rights concerns surrounding the use of the death penalty, and alternatives to the death penalty.
  - Amend Section 5(a)(1) of the Clemency Act to ensure that murder and all other capital crimes are pardonable offenses.

- On an annual basis, publish comprehensive data about people sentenced to death and people currently under sentence of death, disaggregated by gender/sex, nationality, race/ethnicity, disability, age of any dependent children, crimes of conviction, age on the date of the alleged offense, relationship to any victims or codefendants, status of any appellate proceedings or requests for pardon, and current location, to facilitate analysis of the demographics of women on death row.
- Take steps to provide fair trial and due process safeguards in capital cases involving women defendants, including by providing them with access to effective legal representation and safeguards prohibiting admissibility of evidence obtained through torture or other ill-treatment.
- Codify gender-specific defenses and mitigation in capital trials, encompassing trauma, gender-based violence, economic pressures, human trafficking, and family caretaking responsibilities.
- Require that court-appointed attorneys in capital cases against women defendants have prior experience in capital cases and have training regarding gender-based violence, gender-specific defenses, and gender-specific mitigation.
- Establish mandatory trainings for all judges who may oversee capital cases regarding gender-based discrimination, domestic violence, gender-based violence, and tactics of coercive control that can lead to women committing death-eligible offenses.
- Implement legislative reforms to prevent application of the death penalty when women who experience gender-based violence act against their abusers.
- Request technical assistance to conduct trauma-informed gender sensitization training for all judges handling serious criminal cases.
- Guarantee that each woman receives an individualized judicial process and is not charged through association with a male spouse, partner, family member, or other codefendant.
- Ensure that all women accused of capital crimes have access to free and effective legal representation by attorneys who specialize in capital representation.
- Commute the sentences of any women sentenced to death for killing close family members who perpetrated gender-based violence against them.
- Commute the sentence of every woman sentenced to death for an offense that does not involve an intentional killing that the woman herself carried out.
- Ensure that sentencing judges accord mitigating weight to defendants' experiences of trauma, gender-based violence, economic pressures, duress, human trafficking, and family caretaking responsibilities.
- Take steps to ensure that women human rights defenders are able to carry out their work without fear of harassment, violence, criminal investigations, or other reprisals.
- Take measures to prevent threats against women human rights defenders and hold perpetrators accountable.

- Continue judicial reform efforts to restore public trust in the integrity and independence of the judicial system, prioritizing courts handling capital cases and topics of gender-based violence and coercive control.
- Earmark dedicated resources to the Human Rights Commission of Maldives regarding human rights concerns about the death penalty and related human rights violations.
- Bring the juvenile justice system fully into line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant standards by prohibiting courts from issuing death sentences against persons who were not proven to be at least 18 years of age at the time of the offense.
- Strengthen the independence of the Judicial Service Commission to eliminate corruption and increase the fairness of judicial proceedings.
- Request technical assistance dedicated to building the capacity of the judiciary to prioritize non-custodial sentencing, to expedite resentencing of persons sentenced under the previous Drug Law, and to increase efficiency in adjudication of civil cases.
- Issue a directive to the judiciary to step up oversight of Registrars.
- Step up efforts to make government websites accessible to people with visual impairments, prioritizing any websites that promote access to justice.
- Strengthen efforts to ensure effective investigation, prosecution, and punishment for all acts of torture and ill-treatment and provide access to justice and rehabilitation for victims of torture.
- Continue efforts aimed at fighting impunity while modernizing the judicial system and fighting corruption.
- Ensure that all prison authorities adopt gender-sensitive policies in relation to women's detention, based on the Bangkok Rules and the Nelson Mandela Rules, ensuring women's safety and security pre-trial, during admission to any detention facility, and while incarcerated.
- Ensure that the traditional Sharia mediation process in murder cases does not result in discrimination against individuals based on their socio-economic status.
- Amend the Constitution to ensure that people of all faiths can become lawful citizens of the Maldives and to ensure that people of all faiths can hold office.
- Amend the Penal Code to allow people of all faiths to open places of worship, conduct religious activities, produce, possess, and distribute religious materials, and exercise their faith freely without fear of punishment.

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Maldives* (15 Dec. 2020), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/46/10, ¶ 133.1 Ratify Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at abolition of death penalty (Armenia) (Chile) (France) (Spain); ¶ 133.3 Consider ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Ukraine); ¶ 133.12 Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Germany); ¶ 133.14 Sign and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to

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the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Honduras); ¶ 133.17 Consider ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Latvia); ¶ 133.21 Accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Namibia); ¶ 133.24 Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Panama); ¶ 133.95 Maintain its moratorium on executions, amend legislation to remove the death penalty for any crime and accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Australia); ¶ 133.103 Fully abolish the death penalty and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Iceland); ¶ 133.106 Introduce a de jure moratorium on executions with a view to fully abolishing the death penalty, and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Italy).

<sup>2</sup> Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Maldives, Addendum (22 Dec. 2020), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/46/10/Add.1, ¶ 133.1.

<sup>3</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Maldives* (15 Dec. 2020), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/46/10, ¶ 133.1 Ratify Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at abolition of death penalty (Armenia) (Chile) (France) (Spain); ¶ 133.3 Consider ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Ukraine); ¶ 133.12 Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Germany); ¶ 133.14 Sign and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Honduras); ¶ 133.17 Consider ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Latvia); ¶ 133.21 Accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Namibia); ¶ 133.24 Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Panama); ¶ 133.92 Impose an official moratorium on the death penalty, with a view to its abolition (Albania); ¶ 133.94 Maintain the moratorium on the death penalty and consider the possibility of commuting all remaining death sentences, and look into the possibility of amending its legislation in order to abolish the death penalty for all crimes (Argentina); ¶ 133.95 Maintain its moratorium on executions, amend legislation to remove the death penalty for any crime and accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Australia); ¶ 133.96 Maintain the moratorium on the application of the death penalty (Belgium); 133.97 Consider abolishing the death penalty (Fiji); ¶ 133.101 Consider extending the moratorium on the application of the death penalty, with a view to its permanent abolition (Holy See); ¶ 133.102 Impose an official moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty (Switzerland); ¶ 133.103 Fully abolish the death penalty and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Iceland); ¶ 133.105 Adopt a formal moratorium on the death penalty while moving towards the abolition of the death penalty for all crimes (Ireland); ¶ 133.106 Introduce a de jure moratorium on executions with a view to fully abolishing the death penalty, and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Italy); ¶ 133.107 Retain the moratorium on the death penalty in all circumstances, in particular for juvenile offenders, and work towards the complete abolition of the death penalty (Latvia); ¶ 133.108 Continue the moratorium on the application of death penalty with a view to its abolition for all offences (Luxembourg); ¶ 133.109 Abolish the death penalty (Marshall Islands); ¶ 133.111 Ensure that the sentences of persons who remain under sentence of death are commuted without delay (Namibia); ¶ 133.112 Continue the de facto moratorium on the death penalty and consider steps towards its legal abolition (Nepal); ¶ 133.114 Take further steps towards the formal

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abolition of the death penalty (New Zealand); ¶ 133.115 Establish an official moratorium to the use of the death penalty, with a view to its abolition, and immediately forbid its use on those below 18 years of age at the time of the crime (Portugal); ¶ 133.116 Continue the necessary steps aimed at advancing towards the complete abolition of the death penalty (Romania); ¶ 133.118 Abolish the death penalty for all crimes (Timor-Leste).

<sup>4</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Maldives* (15 Dec. 2020), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/46/10, ¶133.92 Impose an official moratorium on the death penalty, with a view to its abolition (Albania); ¶ 133.94 Maintain the moratorium on the death penalty and consider the possibility of commuting all remaining death sentences, and look into the possibility of amending its legislation in order to abolish the death penalty for all crimes (Argentina); ¶ 133.95 Maintain its moratorium on executions, amend legislation to remove the death penalty for any crime and accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Australia); ¶ 133.96 Maintain the moratorium on the application of the death penalty (Belgium); ¶ 133.101 Consider extending the moratorium on the application of the death penalty, with a view to its permanent abolition (Holy See); ¶ 133.102 Impose an official moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty (Switzerland); ¶ 133.105 Adopt a formal moratorium on the death penalty while moving towards the abolition of the death penalty for all crimes (Ireland); ¶ 133.106 Introduce a de jure moratorium on executions with a view to fully abolishing the death penalty, and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Italy); ¶ 133.107 Retain the moratorium on the death penalty in all circumstances, in particular for juvenile offenders, and work towards the complete abolition of the death penalty (Latvia); ¶ 133.108 Continue the moratorium on the application of death penalty with a view to its abolition for all offences (Luxembourg); ¶ 133.112 Continue the de facto moratorium on the death penalty and consider steps towards its legal abolition (Nepal); ¶ 133.115 Establish an official moratorium to the use of the death penalty, with a view to its abolition, and immediately forbid its use on those below 18 years of age at the time of the crime (Portugal).

<sup>5</sup> *Maldives pledges to uphold moratorium on death penalty*, Maldives Independent (27 Nov. 2018), <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/maldives-pledges-to-uphold-moratorium-on-death-penalty-142971>.

<sup>6</sup> *Maldives pledges to uphold moratorium on death penalty*, Maldives Independent (27 Nov. 2018), <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/maldives-pledges-to-uphold-moratorium-on-death-penalty-142971>.

<sup>7</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Maldives, Addendum* (22 Dec. 2020), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/46/10/Add.1, at 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Maldives: Reverse Plans to Reinstate Death Penalty*, Human Rights Watch (21 Dec. 2023), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/21/maldives-reverse-plans-reinstate-death-penalty>.

<sup>9</sup> International Commission Against the Death Penalty, UNGA Moratorium Resolution Table, <https://icomdp.org/map-unga/> (last visited 30 Mar. 2025).

<sup>10</sup> Maldives Penal Code, § 92(k).

<sup>11</sup> Human Rights Committee, *Second periodic report submitted by Maldives under article 40 of the Convention pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2021*, (Dec. 7, 2022), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/MDV/2, ¶ 117.

<sup>12</sup> The Advocates for Human Rights et al., *The Maldives' Compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: Suggested List of Issues Prior to Reporting Relating to the Death Penalty*, 17 Aug. 2020, [https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/Res/maldives\\_tahr\\_wcadp\\_cpjp\\_adpan\\_death\\_penalty\\_loipr.pdf](https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/Res/maldives_tahr_wcadp_cpjp_adpan_death_penalty_loipr.pdf), ¶ 4.

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., *Maldives: Naifaru court sentences woman in absentia to death by stoning*. Hands Off Cain. 08 January 2019. <http://www.handsoffcain.info/notizia/maldives-naifaru-court-sentences-woman-in-absentia-to-death-by-stoning-40300121>. See also Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. *Sixth periodic report submitted by Maldives under article 18 of the Convention*, due in 2019, (28 Oct. 2019), U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/MDV/6, ¶ 98 (conceding that the law prohibits sexual relations outside of marriage).

<sup>14</sup> Act No.: 2/2010 (Clemency Act), <https://www.drugcourt.gov.mv/DCOLDBACKUP/documents/laws/CB.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Amnesty International, *Death sentences and executions 2022*, ACT 50/6548/2023, 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/6548/2023/en>.

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- <sup>16</sup> World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, *Maldives*, last visited 30 Mar. 2025, <https://worldcoalition.org/pays/maldives/>.
- <sup>17</sup> Amnesty International, *Death sentences and executions 2023* (2024), at 25, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/7952/2024/en>.
- <sup>18</sup> Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Maldives, Addendum (22 Dec. 2020), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/46/10/Add.1, at 6; Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Maldives* (15 Dec. 2020), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/46/10, ¶ 133.115.
- <sup>19</sup> *Death Penalty: The Maldives turns its back on history and children's rights*, International Federation for Human Rights, (21 May 2014). <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/asia/maldives/15361-death-penalty-the-maldives-turns-its-back-on-history-and-children-s-rights>.
- <sup>20</sup> Amnesty International, *Death sentences and executions 2023* (2024), at 13, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/7952/2024/en>.
- <sup>21</sup> International Commission Against the Death Penalty, *The death penalty and the "most serious crimes"* (Jan. 2013) 7, [http://www.icomdp.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Most-serious-crimes\\_final\\_6Feb2013.pdf](http://www.icomdp.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Most-serious-crimes_final_6Feb2013.pdf).
- <sup>22</sup> Amnesty International, *Maldives: Halt Plans to Carry Out First Execution in More than Six Decades* (30 June 2016), ASA 29/4364/2016.
- <sup>23</sup> Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Maldives (15 Dec. 2020), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/46/10, at 6, ¶ 133.45, ¶ 133.49 ¶ 133.53-54, ¶ 133.128-129, ¶ 133.136, ¶ 133.202-205, ¶ 133.209-211, ¶ 133.215, ¶ 133.217-218, ¶ 133.222, ¶ 133.228-229, ¶ 133.231, ¶ 133.233-235. Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Maldives, Addendum (22 Dec. 2020), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/46/10/Add.1, at 6, ¶ 133.45, ¶ 133.49 ¶ 133.53-54, ¶ 133.128-129, ¶ 133.136, ¶ 133.202-205, ¶ 133.209-211, ¶ 133.215, ¶ 133.217-218, ¶ 133.222, ¶ 133.228-229, ¶ 133.231, ¶ 133.233-235.
- <sup>24</sup> Comprehensive national-level review on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing +30 Review), Ministry of Social and Family Development, Republic of Maldives, at 6 (1 June 2024), [https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/b30\\_report\\_maldives\\_en.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/b30_report_maldives_en.pdf).
- <sup>25</sup> *Gender-Based Violence & Social Norm Change*, UNFPA, <https://maldives.unfpa.org/en/topics/gender-based-violence-social-norm-change#:~:text=Tragically%2C%20in%20203%20women,justify%20a%20partner's%20violent%20actions> (last accessed 24 Feb. 2025).
- <sup>26</sup> *Judged for More Than Her Crime: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty*, Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, (Sept. 2018), at 8, <https://www.deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Judged-More-Than-Her-Crime.pdf>.
- <sup>27</sup> *Court Upholds Sentence for Murder Accomplice*. Maldives Independent (10 May 2016), <https://maldivesindependent.com/crime-2/court-upholds-death-sentence-for-murder-accomplice-124155>.
- <sup>28</sup> *Judged for More Than Her Crime: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty*, Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, Sept. 2018, at 6, <https://www.deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Judged-More-Than-Her-Crime.pdf>.
- <sup>29</sup> See, e.g., *Maldives: Naifaru court sentences woman in absentia to death by stoning*. Hands Off Cain. 08 January 2019. <http://www.handsoffcain.info/notizia/maldives-naifaru-court-sentences-woman-in-absentia-to-death-by-stoning-40300121>; see also Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. *Sixth periodic report submitted by Maldives under article 18 of the Convention*, due in 2019, (28 Oct. 2019), U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/MDV/6, ¶ 98 (conceding that the law prohibits sexual relations outside of marriage).
- <sup>30</sup> *Maldives woman convicted for adultery wins reprieve from death by stoning*, First Post (19 Oct. 2015), <https://www.firstpost.com/world/maldives-woman-convicted-for-adultery-wins-reprieve-from-death-by-stoning-2473822.html>.
- <sup>31</sup> *Maldives: Naifaru court sentences woman in absentia to death by stoning*. Hands Off Cain. 08 January 2019. <http://www.handsoffcain.info/notizia/maldives-naifaru-court-sentences-woman-in-absentia-to-death-by-stoning-40300121>.

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<sup>32</sup> *Maldives: Naifaru court sentences woman in absentia to death by stoning*, Hands Off Cain, 08 January 2019, <http://www.handsoffcain.info/notizia/maldives-naifaru-court-sentences-woman-in-absentia-to-death-by-stoning-40300121>.

<sup>33</sup>, *Judged for More Than Her Crime: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty*, Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide (Sept. 2018), at 13, <https://www.deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Judged-More-Than-Her-Crime.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> *Judged for More Than Her Crime: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty*, Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide (Sept. 2018), at 6, <https://www.deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Judged-More-Than-Her-Crime.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> *Judged for More Than Her Crime: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty*, Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide (Sept. 2018), at 13, <https://www.deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Judged-More-Than-Her-Crime.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> *Gender-Based Violence & Social Norm Change*, UNFPA, <https://maldives.unfpa.org/en/topics/gender-based-violence-social-norm-change#:~:text=Tragically%2C%201%20in%203%20women,justify%20a%20partner's%20violent%20actions> (last accessed 24 Feb. 2025).

<sup>37</sup> *Gender-Based Violence & Social Norm Change*, UNFPA, <https://maldives.unfpa.org/en/topics/gender-based-violence-social-norm-change#:~:text=Tragically%2C%201%20in%203%20women,justify%20a%20partner's%20violent%20actions> (last accessed 24 Feb. 2025).

<sup>38</sup> Comprehensive national-level review on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing +30 Review), Ministry of Social and Family Development, Republic of Maldives, at 38-39 (1 June 2024), [https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/b30\\_report\\_maldives\\_en.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/b30_report_maldives_en.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> Comprehensive national-level review on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing +30 Review), Ministry of Social and Family Development, Republic of Maldives, at 38-39 (1 June 2024), [https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/b30\\_report\\_maldives\\_en.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/b30_report_maldives_en.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> World Report 2025, Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/maldives#:~:text=Women's%20rights,-Despite%20a%20strong&text=Reports%20indicate%20that%20around%2012,to%20obtain%20protection%20and%20justice>.

<sup>41</sup> *Harmful Cultural Traditions: An Analysis of Female Circumcision Practice in Maldives*, DHS Working Papers, USAID, at 11 (Sept. 2022), <https://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/WP187/WP187.pdf>.

<sup>42</sup> *Harmful Cultural Traditions: An Analysis of Female Circumcision Practice in Maldives*, DHS Working Papers, USAID, at 2 (Sept. 2022), <https://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/WP187/WP187.pdf>.

43 Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Maldives (15 Dec. 2020), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/46/10, ¶ 133.41 Increase the resources of the Human Rights Commission of Maldives (Albania); ¶ 133.42 Strengthen the independence, accountability and functioning of the Human Rights Commission of Maldives, including with adequate funding and staffing in full compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) (Australia); ¶ 133.43 Accelerate efforts towards the establishment of a national mechanism for implementation, reporting and follow-up as a standing government structure mandated to coordinate reporting to, as well as follow-up to and implementation of recommendations made by, international human rights bodies and mechanisms (Bahamas); ¶ 133.44 Continue to strengthen the role of its national mechanisms and institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in the country (Bangladesh); ¶ 133.127 Bring the juvenile justice system fully into line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant standards (Ukraine); ¶ 133.127 Continue efforts to reform the judiciary within the government plan (Bahrain); ¶ 133.123 Institutionalize adequate training and strengthen the independence of the Judicial Service Commission to eliminate corruption and increase the fairness of judicial proceedings (United States of America); ¶ 133.132 Support the independence of the judiciary and introduce the legislative amendments needed to restructure courts and to promote programs of capacity-building with a view to



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reforming and improving the efficiency of the judicial system (Egypt); ¶ 133.133 Strengthen efforts to ensure effective investigation, prosecution and punishment for all acts of torture and ill-treatment, and provide access to justice and rehabilitation for victims of torture (Fiji); ¶ 133.134 Continue efforts aimed at fighting impunity while modernizing the judicial system and fighting corruption (France); ¶ 133.135 Intensify efforts to form an independent judiciary that guarantees access for all citizens (Iraq); ¶ 133.136 Provide adequate gender-sensitive training to all judges to ensure effective implementation of gender equality legislation and the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, and ensure that all judicial proceedings conform to international fair trial standards (Ireland); ¶ 133.138 Continue its ongoing efforts to reform the judicial system and ensure its independence (Libya); ¶ 133.139 Continue its efforts towards judicial reform to restore public trust in the integrity and independence of the judicial system (Malta); ¶ 133.141 Continue efforts to ensure access to justice and the protection of the rights of persons in vulnerable situations (Nigeria); ¶ 133.142 Proceed further in developing and strengthening the evidence and testimonies system (Oman); ¶ 133.143 Strengthen the judicial reform and judicial independence (Somalia).

<sup>44</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Continuing the Journey Toward Justice for All (19 Sept. 2021), <https://www.undp.org/maldives/news/continuing-journey-towards-justice-all>.

<sup>45</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Continuing the Journey Toward Justice for All (19 Sept. 2021), <https://www.undp.org/maldives/news/continuing-journey-towards-justice-all>.

<sup>46</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Continuing the Journey Toward Justice for All (19 Sept. 2021), <https://www.undp.org/maldives/news/continuing-journey-towards-justice-all/>

<sup>47</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Continuing the Journey Toward Justice for All (19 Sept. 2021), <https://www.undp.org/maldives/news/continuing-journey-towards-justice-all>.

<sup>48</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Support Continues to Digitalization Efforts of the Maldives Judiciary to Bridge the Gap Between the Justice System and Communities, (7 Jul. 2021), <https://www.undp.org/maldives/press-releases/support-continues-digitalization-efforts-maldives-judiciary-bridge-gap-between-justice-system-and-communities>.

<sup>49</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Support Continues to Digitalization Efforts of the Maldives Judiciary to Bridge the Gap Between the Justice System and Communities, (7 Jul. 2021), <https://www.undp.org/maldives/press-releases/support-continues-digitalization-efforts-maldives-judiciary-bridge-gap-between-justice-system-and-communities>.

<sup>50</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Attorney General's Office Launches the New MVLAW Website, (1 Nov. 2023), <https://www.undp.org/maldives/press-releases/attorney-generals-office-launches-new-mvlaw-website>.

<sup>51</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Maldives Launches Integrated Court Management System to Enhance Judicial Efficiency and Access to Justice, (28 Apr. 2024), <https://www.undp.org/maldives/press-releases/maldives-launches-integrated-court-management-system-enhance-judicial-efficiency-and-access-justice>.

<sup>52</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Maldives Launches Integrated Court Management System to Enhance Judicial Efficiency and Access to Justice, (28 Apr. 2024), <https://www.undp.org/maldives/press-releases/maldives-launches-integrated-court-management-system-enhance-judicial-efficiency-and-access-justice>.

<sup>53</sup> United Nations Development Programme, European Union and UNDP Sign Partnership Agreement Towards Enhancing Access to Justice, Accountability, and Transparency in the Maldives, (20 Mar. 2024), <https://www.undp.org/maldives/press-releases/european-union-and-undp-sign-partnership-agreement-towards-enhancing-access-justice-accountability-and-transparency-maldives>.

<sup>54</sup> United Nations Development Programme, European Union and UNDP Sign Partnership Agreement Towards Enhancing Access to Justice, Accountability, and Transparency in the Maldives, (20 Mar. 2024), <https://www.undp.org/maldives/press-releases/european-union-and-undp-sign-partnership-agreement-towards-enhancing-access-justice-accountability-and-transparency-maldives>.

<sup>55</sup> United Nations Development Programme, European Union and UNDP Sign Partnership Agreement Towards Enhancing Access to Justice, Accountability, and Transparency in the Maldives, (20 Mar. 2024), <https://www.undp.org/maldives/press-releases/european-union-and-undp-sign-partnership-agreement-towards-enhancing-access-justice-accountability-and-transparency-maldives>.

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<sup>56</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Maldives* (15 Dec. 2020), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/46/10, ¶ 133.98 Improve detention conditions (France); ¶ 133.100 Allocate sufficient resources to improve the conditions of detention towards full implementation of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) (Greece); 133.122 Enforce the registration of short-term detainees, define “probable and reasonable grounds” for arrest procedures within the Anti-Terrorism Act, and resolve overcrowding, poor ventilation and inadequate health standards in prisons (United States of America); ¶ 133.137 Ensure the effectiveness of the Prison Reform Monitoring Committee and continue to improve the treatment of prisoners in line with related internationally adopted standards, including the Nelson Mandela Rules and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules), on which Thailand stands ready to provide technical assistance (Thailand).

<sup>57</sup> Committee Against Torture, Second periodic report submitted by Maldives under article 19 of the Convention, due in 2024, ( 16 Feb. 2024), U.N. Doc. CAT/C/MDV/2, ¶¶ [135].

<sup>58</sup> Committee Against Torture, Second periodic report submitted by Maldives under article 19 of the Convention, due in 2024, (16 Feb. 2024 ), U.N. Doc. CAT/C/MDV/2, ¶¶ [138].

<sup>59</sup> Committee Against Torture, Second periodic report submitted by Maldives under article 19 of the Convention, due in 2024, (16 Feb. 2024 ), U.N. Doc. CAT/C/MDV/2, ¶¶ [138].

<sup>60</sup> Committee Against Torture, Second periodic report submitted by Maldives under article 19 of the Convention, due in 2024, (16 Feb. 2024 ), U.N. Doc. CAT/C/MDV/2, ¶¶ [140].

<sup>61</sup> Committee Against Torture, Second periodic report submitted by Maldives under article 19 of the Convention, due in 2024, (16 Feb. 2024 ), U.N. Doc. CAT/C/MDV/2, ¶¶ [140].

<sup>62</sup> Committee Against Torture, Second periodic report submitted by Maldives under article 19 of the Convention, due in 2024, (16 Feb. 2024 ), U.N. Doc. CAT/C/MDV/2, ¶¶ [138]; *Community Service to serve as punishment effective today*, The Times of Addu, (January 16, 2022), available at <https://timesofaddu.com/2022/01/16/community-service-to-serve-as-punishment-effective-today/>.

<sup>63</sup> Gazette Vol. 54, Issue 54, 2025/6, <https://gazette.gov.mv/gazette/7221>.

<sup>64</sup> *Women in Prison: Maldives*, Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (Sept. 2024), [https://www.apt.ch/sites/default/files/2024-12/maldives\\_country\\_report.pdf](https://www.apt.ch/sites/default/files/2024-12/maldives_country_report.pdf).

<sup>65</sup> Confidential Source, 2023, on file with The Advocates for Human Rights.

<sup>66</sup> *Women in Prison: Maldives*, Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (Sept. 2024), [https://www.apt.ch/sites/default/files/2024-12/maldives\\_country\\_report.pdf](https://www.apt.ch/sites/default/files/2024-12/maldives_country_report.pdf).

<sup>67</sup> *Women in Prison: Maldives*, Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (Sept. 2024), [https://www.apt.ch/sites/default/files/2024-12/maldives\\_country\\_report.pdf](https://www.apt.ch/sites/default/files/2024-12/maldives_country_report.pdf).

<sup>68</sup> Amnesty International, *Maldives: Investigate death of prisoner and allegations of torture in custody* (20 Sept. 2021), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/09/maldives-investigate-death-in-custody-and-allegations-of-torture-on-individuals-in-custody/#:~:text=Mohamed%20Aslam%2C%2040%2C%20a%20native,where%20he%20was%20declared%20dead.>

<sup>69</sup> *Women in Prison: Maldives*, Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (Sept.2024), [https://www.apt.ch/sites/default/files/2024-12/maldives\\_country\\_report.pdf](https://www.apt.ch/sites/default/files/2024-12/maldives_country_report.pdf).

<sup>70</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Maldives* (15 Dec. 2020), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/46/10, ¶ 133.30 Reconsider its reservations to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (on article 18 – freedom of thought, conscience and religion) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (on all clauses related to adoption and on article 14.1 – freedom of thought, conscience and religion) (Vanuatu); ¶ 133.31 Withdraw reservations to article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and cease to restrict the freedom to hold a religion or belief of one’s choice (Austria); ¶ 133.55 Adapt articles 9 and 19 of the Constitution so that it protects the right to freedom of religion or belief in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Netherlands); ¶ 133.57 Introduce legislative measures to prevent and eliminate all forms of religious intolerance and discrimination on the basis of religion or belief and effectively address hate

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speech on the Internet (Panama); ¶ 133.58 Consider eliminating all legal provisions that limit freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Peru); ¶ 133.75 Remove from Maldivian law all provisions that discriminate on the basis of religion, namely those regarding citizenship, and accede to the United Nations conventions on statelessness (Portugal); ¶ 133.76 Substantively revise discriminatory legislation, particularly all provisions that discriminate on the basis of religion, and safeguard the rights to freedom of opinion and expression as required under international law (Sierra Leone); ¶ 133.145 Take further measures to protect freedom of religion or belief, creating an equal democratic space for all communities (Ukraine); ¶ 133.152 Take additional measures to ensure freedom of religion for all (Dominican Republic); ¶ 133.157 Take all political, social, economic and cultural measures necessary to fight religious intolerance towards non-Muslims, including reversing religious extremism, with a view to fostering an environment of religious harmony and cooperation, in follow-up to numerous recommendations in the report of the Working Group from the second cycle on freedom of religion and belief (Haiti); ¶ 133.159 Ensure freedom of expression, religion and belief for all religious minorities, providing them access to legal protection and redress (Holy See); ¶ 133.164 Remove legal provisions that restrict the right to freedom of religion or belief, guarantee the right to manifest one's religion or belief, and combat discrimination and intolerance against persons belonging to religious minorities (Italy); ¶ 133.167 Repeal legal provisions that limit and criminalize freedom of belief, combat religious extremism in all its forms and manifestations, and combat attacks against human rights defenders who promote freedom of religion and expression (Mexico); ¶ 133.168 Redouble its efforts to ensure that the rights of individuals, including children, are not violated on the basis of their chosen belief (Myanmar); ¶ 133.169 Enhance measures to promote interfaith dialogues and public debates on religious issues, and effectively address the spread of religious extremist ideologies and xenophobia, especially among youth (Myanmar); ¶ 133.172 Safeguard the right to freedom to have or adopt a religion or belief, and ensure that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is duly recognized and respected in accordance with relevant national human rights law (South Sudan).

<sup>71</sup> Confidential Source, 2022, on file with The Advocates for Human Rights; Constitution of the Republic of Maldives (2008), Article 9(d), 73(a), 109(b).

<sup>72</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Maldives (2008), Article 16(b).

<sup>73</sup> *World Watch List: Maldives*, Open Doors, <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/persecution/countries/maldives> (last accessed 11 Feb. 2025).

<sup>74</sup> *About Christian persecution in the Maldives*, Global Christian Relief, <https://globalchristianrelief.org/christian-persecution/countries/maldives> (last accessed 11 Feb. 2025).

<sup>75</sup> *Anti-defamation law repealed*, Maldives Independent, (24 Nov. 2018), <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/anti-defamation-law-repealed-142649>.

<sup>76</sup> Maldives Penal Code, § 617.

<sup>77</sup> Confidential Source 2, 2023, on file with The Advocates for Human Rights.

<sup>78</sup> Maldives Penal Code, § 617.

<sup>79</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Maldives, Addendum* (22 Dec. 2020), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/46/10/Add.1, ¶ 133.169.