

Inter-Parliamentary Union Press Release



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IPU Mission Calls for Serious Commitment to Healing National Divide in Maldives

A just-ended IPU mission has called for calm and a serious national commitment to healing the political divide in a heavily polarized Maldives after a Supreme Court decision postponed the second-round of presidential elections.

IPU is urging all sides to end the political impasse and focus on addressing urgent economic and social issues the Maldives is facing and fulfil their responsibility to the people.

"There can be no place for a winner-takes-all mentality in the Maldives. The political polarization in the country has left the Maldives hamstrung, on the verge of bankruptcy and facing serious social problems. The Maldives cannot afford to continue as it has been if there is a genuine desire and commitment to building a peaceful and democratic society," says Paul East, New Zealand MP and member of the IPU delegation.

Welcoming the successful holding of a first-round in presidential elections on 9th November, the IPU mission that concluded last week, is calling for authorities to ensure a second round on 16th November will be honoured. A new president should then work to represent all the people in the country.

The IPU mission is similarly concerned by the Supreme Court's undermining of the parliamentary mandate. This includes over-turning a parliamentary resolution on an interim head of state when President Waheed's term expired on 10th November. Instead, the incumbent was kept in the post, contrary to the Constitution and in contradiction of President Waheed's repeated and public statements that he would not continue as president beyond his exact term in office.

The political chaos caused by the interference in the presidential elections could have long-term ramifications in upcoming local and then national parliamentary elections.

IPU has repeatedly called for the rule of law to be respected in the Maldives and for the independent functioning of the executive government, the parliament and the judiciary. Following the mission, it is particularly concerned by what appears to be politically motivated attacks and threats against MPs, including the Speaker of Parliament and the stripping of opposition MPs of their parliamentary mandate.

As well as calling for authorities to investigate and hold to account those responsible for the attacks, IPU is also urging all parties in the legislative body to urgently put aside political partisanship and animosity and work together constructively to fulfil their democratic mandate.

The Organization remains committed to supporting the Maldives in its transition to democracy, including the establishment of an on-the-ground presence in the country to provide continual practical assistance. This would include strengthening parliament so it can work independently of the judiciary and executive government.

The global organization of parliaments, IPU works to establish democracy, peace and cooperation among peoples. The world's oldest international political organization, established in 1889, IPU is the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue. It brings together 163 member Parliaments and ten associate regional assemblies.

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