



**33<sup>rd</sup> Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council**  
**Item 4: Human rights situations that require the Council's attention – General Debate**

**Oral Statement Delivered by Ahmed Adam**  
**On behalf of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)**

**Monday, 19 September 2016**

Mr President, we draw the Council's attention to deteriorating human rights situations in several Asian countries.

We are alarmed by reports of excessive use of force on unarmed protesters and restrictions on fundamental freedoms in Indian administered Jammu and Kashmir. On 14 September, Indian immigration officials at Delhi airport prevented Kashmiri human rights defender Khurram Parvez from flying to Geneva to attend this session of the Council.<sup>1</sup> Two days later he was arrested from his home in Srinagar and placed under preventive detention. Mr. Parvez has been vocal about human rights issues in Jammu and Kashmir, no clear reasons have been disclosed for his detention. We call on you Mr. President to address this allegation of reprisal. We call on the Indian government to release Mr. Parvez and comply with the 2015 Delhi High Court judgement that disqualifies restrictions on the travel of civil society actors.<sup>2</sup>

In Maldives, fundamental freedoms and civic space remain under threat. The recent Freedom of Expression and Anti-Defamation Act criminalises defamation while imposing serious restrictions on freedom of the press. The government has threatened to use the law against anyone commenting on recent allegations of corruption and abuse of power against senior government officials including the President.<sup>3</sup> A new amendment to the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly Act legitimises the existing restrictions on street protests in the capital making prior police permission mandatory. On 7 September, in a clear attempt at intimidation, police raided offices of the Maldivian Democracy Network, a prominent human rights NGO, and Maldives Independent, an online newspaper, on trumped up charges of plotting to overthrow the government and creating discord and unrest in Male.<sup>4</sup> We call on the government to restore freedoms of assembly, association and expression in the country.

Last month in Thailand, the military government conducted a referendum on a draft constitution after proscribing public debate on the draft. Several people await criminal trials for allegedly violating military decrees that outlaw public gatherings and free speech. We call on Thailand to drop all charges against political activists and human rights defenders, and to release those jailed for critiquing the draft constitution.

Thank you Mr President.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.forum-asia.org/?p=21523>

<sup>2</sup> Priya Parameswaran Pillai v Union of India & Ors. (March 2015)

<sup>3</sup> <http://en.mihaaru.com/maldives-govt-warns-legal-action-over-false-info-to-al-jazeera-graft-documentary/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.forum-asia.org/?p=21535>