



7 October 2013

**FOM condemns the attack on free media in the Maldives.**

**Independent TV station torched and burnt down.**

Friends of Maldives (FOM) strongly condemns the attack on free media in the Maldives and the growing repression of basic human rights in the country, since the coup d'état of 7 February 2012.

Raajje Television (RTV), the only independent TV station in the country, was torched last night by a group of masked men armed with machetes, iron rods and petrol cans, destroying its television studio and equipment.

RTV has sustained continuous attacks including vandalism and attacks on its journalists, some of which were life threatening. In August 2012, the station was vandalized, forcing the station off-air.<sup>1</sup> In February 2013, RTV's Head of News, Ibrahim Asward Waheed was attacked with iron rods and had to be taken to hospital in neighbouring Sri Lanka for urgent medical treatment.<sup>2</sup>

FOM is also extremely concerned that the Maldives police appear to have failed to provide any response or protection to the station after RTV reported the threats it had received, in writing to the police. The government of Maldives has stopped cooperating with RTV, and its journalists often report assault by police officers and arbitrary arrest. In February 2013, a civil court ruled that the decision of the Maldives Police Service to stop cooperating and providing RTV with protection was "unconstitutional".<sup>3</sup>

Friends of Maldives (FOM) was established in the UK, focusing on bringing human rights abuse and poor governance in the Maldives to the attention of the international community.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://en.rsf.org/maldives-opposition-tv-station-sabotaged-as-09-08-2012.43189.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://commonwealthjournalists.org/cja-condemns-attack-on-maldives-journalist/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://minivannews.com/politics/police-decision-to-ostracise-raajje-tv-unconstitutional-rules-civil-court-52386>