

I am writing this to express my grave concern on five people who have been arrested, following a recent Supreme Court decision to release and re-try imprisoned opposition leaders. Their arrests appears to be an act of repression by the government to silence political opposition.

Those who arrested are Chief Justice Abdulla Saeed, Supreme Court Justice Ali Hameed, Head of Department of Judicial Administration (DJA) chief Hassan Saeed, former President of Maldives Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, and his son-in-law Mohamed Nadheem.

On 5 February, President Yameen declared a State of Emergency, suspending several clauses of the constitution. He has justified the state of emergency by saying that the Supreme Court's order would have disrupted "the system of checks and balances".

So I urge you to order the immediate release of the five people who have been arbitrarily arrested unless they are to be charged with a recognizable criminal offence, in line with international law and standards.

I also urge you to uphold the Supreme Court decision to release and re-try members of the political opposition.

The last but not the least, I urge you ensure that activists, human rights defenders, journalists, academics and members of the political opposition are able to peacefully exercise their human rights without fear of punishment, reprisal or intimidation.

Your prompt attention on this matter would be highly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,