

JOHN McCAIN, ARIZONA, CHAIRMAN

JAMES M. INHOFE, OKLAHOMA
JEFF SESSIONS, ALABAMA
ROGER F. WICKER, MISSISSIPPI
KELLY AYOTTE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEB FISCHER, NEBRASKA
TOM COTTON, ARKANSAS
MIKE ROUNDS, SOUTH DAKOTA
JONI ERNST, IOWA
THOM TILLIS, NORTH CAROLINA
DAN SULLIVAN, ALASKA
MIKE LEE, UTAH
LINDSEY GRAHAM, SOUTH CAROLINA
TED CRUZ, TEXAS

JACK REED, RHODE ISLAND
BILL NELSON, FLORIDA
CLAIRE McCASKILL, MISSOURI
JOE MANCHIN III, WEST VIRGINIA
JEANNE SHAHEEN, NEW HAMPSHIRE
KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, NEW YORK
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, CONNECTICUT
JOE DONNELLY, INDIANA
MAZIE HIRONO, HAWAII
TIM Kaine, VIRGINIA
ANGUS S. KING, JR., MAINE
MARTIN HEINRICH, NEW MEXICO

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

CHRISTIAN D. BROSE, STAFF DIRECTOR
ELIZABETH L. KING, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

April 12, 2016

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

Dear Secretary Kerry:

We wrote you last June to express our deep concern about the deteriorating political situation in the Maldives. Since then, the situation has unfortunately continued to deteriorate and we write again to urge you to consider measures that would encourage the Government of the Maldives to end its crackdown on rule of law and democratic processes, and reaffirm its commitment to governance by the rule of law.

We remain extremely concerned about the state of democracy and rule of law in Maldives. In 2015, a number of high-ranking government officials were arrested and subjected to trials that have drawn widespread criticism for due process violation. As we have seen around the world, repression of democratic rights and rule of law is a leading contributor to violent extremism.

While we appreciate the relationship that the Government of the Maldives has developed with the Department of Defense and the extensive defense cooperation that our two countries engage in, particularly in the areas of counterterrorism, we are discouraged that the government has taken numerous actions in the domestic sphere that do not comport with the actions of democratic nations.

Over the past year, we have seen little progress in the Maldives with respect to strengthening democracy and the rule of law. Compounded by a lack of higher educational opportunities and high youth unemployment, violent extremism has found fertile ground for growth. We are greatly worried by reports of foreign terrorist fighters from the Maldives flowing to the Middle East.

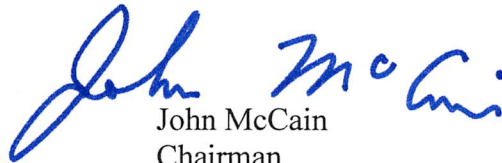
Despite the administration's efforts to urge the Yameen government to reverse course and demonstrate its commitment to respect fundamental freedoms and due process, we continue to witness a negative trajectory. We note with dismay that politically-motivated arrests and trials continue unabated.

We would urge the administration to consider all of the options at its disposal, which might be effective in influencing the government's behavior. Together, we want to encourage the Maldives to take steps to restore confidence in its democratic path and judicial independence.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed
Ranking Member



John McCain
Chairman