

## 4 years since Rilwan's abduction

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8 August 2018

**Press by Ahmed Rilwan Abdulla's Family**

We, the family of Ahmed Rilwan Abdulla, are outraged and dismayed by the insensitive and deeply distressing comments President Abdulla Yameen made yesterday claiming that our loved one, who was forcibly disappeared on August 2014, is “dead without a doubt.”

In the four years since his disappearance, the Maldivian authorities have not been able to explain to us what happened to Rilwan. The police denied any link between Rilwan's disappearance and the abduction reported outside his house on 8 August 2014 for nearly two years after the incident. In that time period, key suspects were allowed to leave the country and crucial evidence was tampered with or lost.

The Maldives' law enforcement agencies must question President Abdulla Yameen and his former deputy, Ahmed Adeeb, over Rilwan's disappearance, and the parliament must investigate the role high-level public officials played in covering up this premeditated crime and obstructing justice for Rilwan.

On August 2, a week before the fourth anniversary of Rilwan's abduction, the Criminal Court acquitted all three suspects charged with terrorism over Rilwan's enforced disappearance. Given the police negligence during the investigation, the seriously flawed trial that followed and the comments made by Yameen and Adeeb, it is our firm belief that senior state and government officials are, at a minimum, complicit in Rilwan's disappearance.

The authorities have repeatedly disregarded our calls for a credible investigation, and must be held to account for the unreasonable delays in investigating a crime that required utmost urgency. Our repeated calls to publicise his disappearance were ignored while requests to update us on the investigation were treated with disdain.

President Yameen and members of his cabinet must urgently reveal all details they have about Rilwan's disappearance and explain why they have failed to answer our questions for four years. At this opportunity we also call on Maldivian politicians not to further trivialise this case, demean the loss of Rilwan, or disrespect our family for short-term political gain.

On behalf of the family Fathimath Shehenaz and Moosa Rilwan.

END