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**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**Supreme Court Annuls the First Round of the Presidential Election**

*07 October 2013, Male'* - The Supreme Court of the Maldives has just announced its verdict on the case filed by the leader of the Jumhooree Party (JP) of Maldives, Mr. Qasim Ibrahim alleging serious irregularities in the first round of the Presidential Election that was held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2013. Whilst the voting had been largely peaceful and orderly as noted by foreign and local observers, JP had raised issues of serious irregularities relating to the voter register and other matters that could question the outcome of the first round of the Election. The Progressive Party of Maldives had also submitted a case to the Supreme Court requesting for a postponement of the election in order to ensure that the irregularities in the Electoral Register are properly rectified.

The Supreme Court has annulled the first round of the Presidential Election that was held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2013 by majority decision. As per the Article 113 of the Maldivian Constitution, the Supreme Court of the Maldives is the highest authority in deciding any disputes in relation to the Elections. Hence all Political Parties and Candidates have to abide by the ruling of the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court's judgment was based on the fact that 5623 votes were cast fraudulently. These include votes cast using false ID cards, in the name of the deceased, by minors, votes cast without a valid ID card, issues of double voting, votes cast using ID cards with conflicting permanent addresses and name differences as well as votes cast by those not registered under the Department of National Registration. It was held that these 5623 votes are sufficient to significantly alter the positions of the candidates that came 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Election which was 2677 votes.

The Supreme Court directed that the first round of fresh Presidential Election be held before the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2013 and the second round (if to be held) to be held before the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2013.

The Supreme Court also declared guidelines on how to proceed with the fresh Presidential Election. These include ensuring the right of every citizen above the age of 18 to cast their vote as well as developing the voter register according to the Department of National Registration's

database. The voter list must also be signed and finger-printed by all the Presidential Candidates and be visibly displayed to all. Furthermore it was held that the security features of ballot slips must be enhanced. It was also held that the Elections Commission and the relevant state entities must collaborate on how to proceed within 72 hours of this verdict.

Following the Verdict of the Supreme Court the Government of Maldives assures its full commitment for the timely implementation of the decision and support to all relevant authorities including the Elections Commission in carrying out their mandatory duties in accordance with the ruling, and smooth transfer of power to the President-Elect.

The Government of President Dr. Waheed wishes to assure that it would do everything possible to ensure that the Supreme Court ruling is respected and that election process is completed in a peaceful and transparent manner as soon as possible and a smooth transfer of power takes place on 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2013 as prescribed by the Constitution. The Government further seeks support of friendly governments and International Organizations to assist the Government and all related parties including the Election Commission, and encourage everyone concerned to respect and abide by the Supreme Court ruling.

*ENDS...*