



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

" dedicated since 1952 to the primacy, coherence and implementation of international law and principles that advance human rights "

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Maldives: ICJ renews call for the immediate, unconditional release of Jennifer Latheef

On the eve of Jennifer Latheef's appeal hearing the International Commission of Jurists today renewed its call on the Government of the Maldives to order the immediate, unconditional release of Jennifer Latheef.

On 18 October 2005 Jennifer Latheef was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for encouraging others to commit acts of terrorism. At the time of the sentencing the ICJ said it believed the sentencing of Jennifer Latheef was politically motivated and the trial not compliant with international fair trial standards.

ICJ's trial observer Faisz Musthapha, former Sri Lankan High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and former Chairman of the Sri Lankan National Human Rights Commission, will be observing the appeal hearing that is scheduled to take place before a judge, on Sunday, 2 April, for compliance with international fair trial standards.

Presently, President Gayoom is head of both the executive and the judiciary. This situation makes it very difficult to have a fair trial when politically sensitive charges of terrorism are being considered. The ICJ urges the Government to allow the judge to carry out his function independently in accordance with international fair trial standards.

Jennifer Latheef was one of thousands of people who peacefully took to the streets in Malé in September 2003 to protest against gross human rights violations in the country. Although some acts of violence occurred during the protest, there has been no persuasive evidence to suggest that Jennifer Latheef was amongst those responsible nor that she encouraged others to commit acts of terrorism.

For further information please contact Susan Appleyard: +41 76 4382 653.

The ICJ is an international non-governmental organisation comprising sixty of the world's most eminent jurists and has a worldwide network of national sections and affiliated organisations

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