

FW: Activity Report of the Japanese Observers

Commissioner's Bureau

Fri 9/22/2023 4:59 PM

To: Info Email Shared <info@elections.gov.mv>;

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Activity Report of the Japanese Observers.docx;

Entry

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Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 2:14 PM

To: Commissioner's Bureau <bureau@elections.gov.mv>

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Subject: Activity Report of the Japanese Observers

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find the Activity Report of the Japanese Observers regarding the Presidential Election on 9 September 2023 as attached. We hope our findings could be helpful for your esteemed institution.


On behalf of the delegation, it was a honor to participate to this process of democracy in the Maldives.

Thank you very much indeed for your kind attention regarding this matter.

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Ambassador of Japan in Maldives
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[Outlook for iOS](#) を入手

Handwritten signature:
[Signature]
29-09-23

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<p>ತಾರೀಖು: _____</p>	<p>ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: _____</p>

Election Observation Report

September 22, 2023

The Election Observation Mission of Japan, composed of a total of 9 members (as shown below), headed by H. E. Mr. Takei Shunsuke, former State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, inspected the operation and the implementation of voting and vote counting of the Maldives Presidential Election held on September 9, 2023.

1. Information of the Election Observation Mission of Japan

(1) Members

- H.E. Mr. Takei Shunsuke, former State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- H.E. Ms. Takeuchi Midori, Ambassador of Japan to the Maldives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. Kuroda Kazutaka, Staff Member, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. Inoue Takehito, Counsellor, Embassy of Japan in the Maldives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. Shinto Yasuharu, Regional Coordinator, Southwest Asia Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. Ando Toshiaki, Executive Assistant for the former State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. Miyakawa Takashi, First-Secretary, Embassy of Japan in the Maldives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. Maeyama Tomoya, Official of Southwest Asia Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

(2) Schedule

September 8 (Fri)

- Arrive at the Maldives
- Courtesy call on the Chairman of the Election Commission

September 9 (Sat)

- Monitoring the voting process at 9 polling stations (scattered on 3 islands)
- Monitoring the vote counting process

September 10 (Sun)

- Meetings with professors at Maldives National University
- Departure of the head of the mission

September 11 (Mon)

- Plenary meeting of the Election Observation Mission and Press conference *

2. Evaluation of the president election

(1) Ways of monitoring

The mission visited a total of nine polling stations on polling days and monitored the entire voting process until the end of the vote counting. The election monitoring mission was carried out under the liaison and coordination by the Election Commission of Maldives (hereinafter referred to as ECM).

At the polling stations, surveillance activities were conducted according to the checklist of monitoring items prepared in advance by the Embassy of Japan in the Maldives. Since direct questioning to polling station staff was not permitted, any question raised by the observers was recorded and transmitted via the ECM liaison officer.

(2) Up to polling day

While many countries have a "blackout period" which prohibits campaigning on the day before polling day, in the Maldives, campaigning is conducted calmly until 6 p.m. of the day before polling day. This seems to have a positive effect in encouraging people to vote. No disorder or disturbances were observed, and the gatherings of each candidate's supporters were peaceful. There were no clashes between supporters or undue encouragement to voters by political party activists, as is the frequent case in other countries. The colors and formats of election posters and other publicity materials were arranged in accordance with the provisions of the bylaws. As, ECM explained, these measures helped voters to easily distinguish each candidate before deciding whom to vote, even though the number of candidates increased from two in the previous election to eight this time.

(3) The vote process

The mission visited and monitored the voting process at 9 polling stations. The locations of the stations were as follows;

Polling Station (1): Kaafu Atoll, Malé Island Ballot Box No. 174, Majeediyya Primary School, Classroom 1

Polling Station (2): Kaafu Atoll, Malé Island Polling Box No. 174, Majeediyya Primary School, Auditorium

- Voting proceeded with high standards in all aspects, including voter flow, preparation and management of voting materials, security conditions, and ensuring voters' secret ballots.
- Regarding (1), no problems were found in any of the checklist items, except that the opening of the polling place was delayed because the total number of ballots distributed to the polling place had not been verified as of 8:00 a.m.
- Regarding (2), no problems were found in any of the checklist items.

Polling Station (3): Kaafu Atoll, Malé Island, Ballot Box No. 514, Classroom 1A, Kalaafaanu School

Polling Station (4): Kaafu Atoll, Male' Island Ballot Box No. 519, Corridor, Classroom, Kalaafaanu School

- No problems were found in any of the checklist items.
- The neighborhood around the polling station was crowded with motorcycles carrying voters, but order was well-maintained.
- From inside the polling station, we could see huge posters of the candidates displayed on the street outside. In other countries, the election bylaws strictly prohibit posting of promotional materials within a 100-meter radius around polling stations. We would like to suggest that this issue be considered in future revisions of the bylaws, with reference to other countries' examples such as those of Japan, by which posting posters are allowed only in designated areas.

Polling Station (5): Kaafu Atoll, Hulhumale Island Phase 1 Ballot Box No. 572, Rehendhi Primary School, Classroom UKG3

Polling Station (6): Kaafu Atoll, Hulhumaleh Island Phase 1 Ballot Box No. 575, Rehendhi Primary School, Auditorium West Side 1

- No problems were found in any of the checklist items.
- It is appreciated to provide writing materials at the polling stations. Until the previous election, voters were allowed to vote using their own writing utensils, but it was changed in this election to avoid some irregularities such as voting with colored pens.

Polling Station (7): Kaafu Atoll, Hulhumale Island Phase 2 Ballot Box No. 165 Karmil Didi School

- No problems were found in any of the checklist items.

Polling Station (8): Kaafu Atoll, Villimare Island Ballot Box No. 218, Muhiiddin School, Classroom 2A

Polling Station (9): Kahu Atoll, Vilimare Island, Ballot Box No. 218, Muhiiddin School, Classroom 2A

- No problems were found in any of the checklist items.
- Two MNP party witnesses entered the room but left immediately.
- The voting booths at the polling station were white plastic stands and were shaped to set up on a desk. The height of these booths were slightly low. From the viewpoint of ensuring secret ballots for voters, the equipment could be improved.

3. vote counting

- At 16:00 (the time of the prescribed poll closing time), there were no voters waiting outside the polling place. The polling place was punctually closed and preparations were made to the vote counting.

- No problems were found in any of the checklist items.

4. Overall summery

ECM prepared election administration very thoroughly, simplifying unnecessary administrative procedures at the same time. The overall procedures were well streamlined. Measures were also taken to ensure equal opportunity for candidates in their election activities. In addition, voters were given due consideration: ballots were printed with the candidate's photo and party/candidate symbols in color, and voting instructions and candidate lists posted outside of any polling stations. All voting and procedures were clearly stated in the manuals. They helped Maldivian people easily understand the voting process. All the voting materials in each polling station were the same and posted in the same way. This suggests that the polling station attendants are well trained by ECM in advance.

The officers at each polling station worked smoothly. The elections were also peaceful and solemn in the way the results were accepted. There was no tense atmosphere among the police officers guarding the neighborhood at all the polling places the mission visited, and the high level of public consciousness of the citizens was reflected in their voting behavior during the elections.

The smooth operation of the vote counting and the rapid announcement of the result of the Presidential election by the ECM enabled Maldivian people to accept the results.

The practice of ECM in this election can be a good reference for elections in other countries.

(End)