

FW: Subject: Submission of 2023 Maldives Presidential Election Observation Report by Sri Lankan Delegation

Hawwa Ziuna

Mon 9/18/2023 4:06 PM

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

Cc: Fathimath Shaba Bagir <fathimath.shaba@elections.gov.mv>;

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Observation Report (Sri Lankan Delegation).pdf;

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Handwritten signatures and dates:
19/9/23
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Entry



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From: Commissioner's Bureau <bureau@elections.gov.mv>
Sent: Saturday, September 16, 2023 1:40 PM
To: Hawwa Ziuna <ziuna.2490@elections.gov.mv>
Subject: FW: Subject: Submission of 2023 Maldives Presidential Election Observation Report by Sri Lankan Delegation

From: Sreen Boralessa <yapasb@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 10:57 AM
To: Commissioner's Bureau <bureau@elections.gov.mv>
Subject: Subject: Submission of 2023 Maldives Presidential Election Observation Report by Sri Lankan Delegation

Subject: Submission of 2023 Maldives Presidential Election Observation Report

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to submit our observation report on the 2023 Maldives Presidential Election, held on September 9th, 2023. Our mission observed polling stations in Hoarafushi and Ihavandhoo and actively participated in the counting process in Hoarafushi.

The report, attached herewith, highlights key observations and recommendations aimed at enhancing transparency and participation in future elections. We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the democratic process in the Maldives and welcome any feedback or further collaboration.

Sincerely,

Sreen Yapa Boralessa

Election Commssion of Sri Lanka.

Observation Mission Summary: Maldives Presidential Election 2023

Location: Hoarafushi and Ihavandhoo Islands, Maldives

Date: 2023.09.09

The 2023 Presidential election in the Maldives, which was held on Saturday, 9th September 2023, marked a pivotal moment in the nation's democratic journey. This critical election featured a roster of prominent candidates, each representing their respective political parties:

- **Ibrahim Mohamed Solih (Maldivian Democratic Party)**
- **Mohamed Muizzu (People's National Congress)**
- **Qasim Ibrahim (Jumhooree Party)**
- **Ilyas Labeeb (The Democrats)**
- **Mohamed Nazim (Maldives National Party)**
- **Umar Naseer (Independent)**
- **Faris Maumoon (Independent)**
- **Hassan Zameel (Independent)**

In the midst of this significant electoral event, our observation mission had the privilege of visiting three polling stations in Hoarafushi and three in Ihavandhoo. These polling stations served as windows into the broader democratic process, allowing us to closely examine and assess various aspects of the election, from voter turnout and organization to the overall atmosphere surrounding the electoral proceedings.

In the first round, no candidate received a majority of the votes. The two highest-polling candidates were Mohamed Muizzu (46.06%) and Ibrahim Mohamed Solih (39.09%). A runoff election will held on 30 September 2023.

This observation mission aimed to provide impartial insights into the conduct of the election, offering valuable observations and recommendations that could contribute to the continued strengthening of democracy in the Maldives. The following report summarizes our key findings and impressions from these polling stations, shedding light on the efficiency, transparency, and inclusivity of the electoral process during the 2023 Maldivian Presidential election.

Key Observations:

- 1. Polling Efficiency:** The 2023 Maldives Presidential election showcased exemplary polling efficiency. The three polling stations in Hoarafushi and three in Ihavandhoo were meticulously organized, ensuring a streamlined voting experience for citizens. This efficiency contributed to reduced wait times and an overall positive voting atmosphere, underlining the dedication of election authorities to facilitating a seamless democratic process.
- 2. Peaceful Environment:** The election unfolded in a remarkably peaceful atmosphere. Citizens exercised their democratic rights without disruptions or incidents. This tranquility promoted open and fair participation, emphasizing the commitment of both voters and authorities to upholding democratic values and fostering an environment conducive to free and fair elections.
- 3. Logistical Excellence:** The logistical arrangements for the election were executed with precision. Everything from ballot distribution to the setup of polling stations was flawlessly organized. The attention to detail in logistical planning and execution ensured that the electoral process ran smoothly, instilling confidence in voters and stakeholders that their democratic rights were upheld with the utmost care.
- 4. Support for International Observers:** International observers were provided with exceptional facilities and support. The liaison officers demonstrated a high degree of professionalism, offering valuable assistance to observers throughout the election process. This level of support reflected the Maldivian authorities' commitment to transparency and international cooperation in conducting credible elections.
- 5. Commendable Election Commission:** The Maldives Election Commission deserves commendation for its role in organizing a well-structured and transparent election. Their meticulous planning and execution ensured that the electoral process operated efficiently, instilling trust in the integrity of the election and reinforcing the democratic foundation of the Maldives.
- 6. Gender Inclusivity:** The substantial participation of female poll workers and their prominent roles as polling station in-charges was a highly encouraging sign. This demonstrated a commendable commitment to gender inclusivity in the electoral process. Their presence not only reflected the empowerment of women in the political sphere but also contributed to creating a more balanced and representative environment, fostering confidence among voters that their voices were being heard and respected.
- 7. Underutilization of Staff in Counting Process:** It was observed that while there were eight to eleven officers present in the counting center, only three individuals actively participated in the counting process. This underutilization of staff resources highlighted the need for a more efficient allocation of personnel during the counting phase. Optimizing the workforce in this crucial stage could enhance the accuracy and speed of the counting process, further ensuring the transparency and integrity of the election results.

Recommendations:

Civic and Voter Education It is vital to expand civic and voter education initiatives to ensure citizens are well-informed about the election process and their rights. Enhancing public awareness can empower voters to make informed decisions and actively participate in the democratic process, further strengthening the foundation of democracy in the Maldives.

Poll Worker Training: In some instances, we observed deviations from established procedures by poll workers. Strengthening poll worker training programs is essential to maintain consistency and adherence to election protocols. Addressing deviations from established procedures observed in some polling stations underscores the necessity of comprehensive poll worker training. Investing in robust training programs can enhance poll workers' knowledge, improve consistency, and ensure adherence to election protocols. This step is crucial to maintain the integrity and efficiency of future elections.

Optimizing Staff Utilization in Counting Process: To improve the efficiency and accuracy of the counting process, it is recommended that all available staff resources be effectively utilized. This entails ensuring that a larger number of officers actively participate in the counting process, in proportion to the staff present in the counting center. By maximizing the workforce during counting, election authorities can expedite the process, bolster transparency, and enhance the overall integrity of the election results.

Voter Turnout Enhancement Programs: In light of the 10% drop in voter turnout compared to the 2018 election, it is imperative to implement comprehensive voter drive programs. These initiatives should focus on raising awareness, educating citizens about the importance of voting, and facilitating voter registration. By actively engaging with the electorate, these programs aim to reverse the decline in voter participation and encourage a more robust and inclusive democratic process in future elections.

This report reflects our observations and insights into the 2023 Maldives presidential election. We commend the efforts of the election commission and stakeholders in conducting a transparent and peaceful election while offering suggestions for further improvement in voter education, poll worker training, and the efficient utilization of staff resources during the counting process.



Saman Sri Rathnayake
Commissioner General of Elections,
Election Commission of Sri Lanka.

2023.09.14



S.H.Y.S Boralessa
Assistant Election Commissioner
Election Commission of Sri Lanka.

2023.09.14

