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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **The Human Rights Commission of the Maldives and the Association for the Prevention of Torture renew cooperation to prevent torture in the Maldives**

The Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM) and the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) today to renew bilateral cooperation to strengthen institutional capacity of HRCM, in preventing torture and ill-treatment, in particular for women deprived of liberty. The cooperation framework between HRCM and APT began in 2008.

The MoU was signed at the HRCM-APT High-Level Dialogue in Malé led by Ms. Mariyam Muna, President of HRCM, and Ms. Veronica Filippeschi, Vulnerabilities and Policy Senior Adviser of APT.

The MoU builds on HRCM's firm commitment to fight against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in the Maldives. The Maldives ratified the UN Convention against Torture in 2004 and its Optional Protocol the following year, and established its National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) under the Optional Protocol within HRCM in 2007. The Maldives adopted its Anti-Torture Act as well as the Prison and Parole Act in 2013, codifying international law and generally accepted international rules and regulations on torture prevention into the domestic legal framework.

Women deprived of their liberty in the Maldives face significant challenges and are particularly vulnerable to ill treatment and discrimination, primarily due to the absence of special protection measures and lack of implementation of gender specific policies. The cooperation framework under the MoU will focus on enhancing NPM's capacity to identify and address risks faced by women in the criminal justice system including gender-based violence and other forms of discrimination based on gender. The methodology of activities will include sharing good practices through face to face and online trainings, awareness-raising initiatives and constructive dialogues with national authorities and civil society organizations.

APT and HRCM are grateful for the generous support provided by the Government of Canada in facilitating this cooperation framework.



### **About the APT**

The APT is an international non-governmental organisation based in Geneva, Switzerland, with 45 years of experience in working for societies without torture or ill-treatment. We collaborate with and supporting national human rights institutions, national preventive mechanisms, national authorities and civil society organisations globally in their efforts to prevent torture.

For more details about the APT, visit: <https://www.apr.ch/en>

### **About the HRCM**

The Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM) was established on 10th December, 2003 as an independent and autonomous statutory body created by a decree by the President of the Republic of the Maldives. The Commission is mandated to protect, promote, and sustain human rights in the Maldives, assist, and support non-governmental organization working in the human rights area. According to Act No 6/2006, the HRCM has a President, a Vice President, and three Commissioners, all full-time members of the Commission.

