

# URGENT ACTION

## 15-YEAR-OLD GIRL'S FLOGGING SENTENCE QUASHED

**A Maldives High Court has quashed the sentence of 100 lashes and house arrest imposed on a 15-year-old girl for the “offence” of extra-marital sex. This follows a campaign by Amnesty International, among other international organizations.**

In February 2013, the Juvenile Court in Malé, the capital, sentenced a 15-year-old girl to eight months' house arrest and 100 lashes, for extra-marital sex. The conviction, which defied international human rights law, provoked worldwide outrage. Amnesty International issued press statements and urgent actions on her case, and also raised her case in a meeting with the President of the Maldives in April 2013. Simultaneously, the case also received international media attention and over two million signatures on a petition by the online campaign group, Avaaz.

In the midst of these concerns, the Office of the Maldives President issued a statement acknowledging that the girl was a victim of sexual abuse and should therefore be treated as a victim, with her rights “fully protected”.

Following continued pressure, the Attorney-General filed an appeal against the sentence passed by the Juvenile Court, and on 21 August 2013, the High Court in the Maldives quashed the conviction and sentence and the girl is now free and no longer at risk of being flogged.

The girl was first arrested after the body of a baby she had given birth to was found buried outside her house on Feydhoo Island in Maldives in June 2012. The girl's step-father has reportedly been charged with sexual abuse and murder, and her mother for concealing a crime. During their investigation, however, authorities brought charges of “fornication” against the girl for a separate incident. The Juvenile Court had sentenced her to flogging and house arrest on that charge, which was then overruled by the High Court.

Amnesty International has welcomed the High Court's decision to quash the sentence, while highlighting that to comply with its international law obligations, the government of the Maldives must urgently establish a moratorium on flogging, annul all outstanding flogging sentences, and make sure that the penal code does not permit prosecution or punishment for “fornication”.

**Thank you to everyone who sent in appeals. No further action is requested from the UA network.**

This is the second update of UA 55/13. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA29/004/2013/en>

Name: 15-year-old girl  
Gender m/f: F

Further information on UA: 55/13 Index: ASA 29/006/2013 Issue Date: 28 August 2013