

CONCERN OVER DIRECTIVE TO RELOCATE SAFARI VESSELS FROM HULHUMALE HARBOR WITHOUT ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) expresses its concern over the recent directive requiring safari vessels to vacate Hulhumale' Harbor to make way for land reclamation works to be carried out by Housing Development Corporation (HDC). While we understand the importance of national development projects and the need for urban expansion, the absence of a designated alternative harbor space for these vessels presents significant operational and safety challenges to our members.

It is important to note that this directive comes at a time when the southwest monsoon season is in full swing. This season is typically marked by rough seas, high winds, and unpredictable weather patterns, making vessel relocation and anchorage particularly risky. Moving these safari vessels without the provision of a secure and sheltered harbor puts the vessels, their crews, and the associated operations at considerable risk.

The liveaboard and safari vessel sector has long been a cornerstone of the Maldivian tourism industry, contributing to employment, guest experience, and economic activity across the nation. Abrupt displacement without viable alternatives not only threatens the physical integrity of the vessels but also disrupts scheduled operations, impacting the livelihoods of those who depend on them.

NBAM respectfully urges the relevant government authorities and HDC to consider postponing the relocation until a designated and safe alternative harbor area is identified and made available. We remain fully supportive of national development efforts, but we believe that such initiatives must go hand-in-hand with adequate planning and stakeholder engagement to avoid undue hardship on industry partners.

We remain committed to working in close collaboration with the government to ensure the sustainable growth of the Maldives' maritime and tourism sectors.