

Religious NGOs to hold “protest to protect Islam” on December 23

Posted By [Ahmed Nazeer](#) On December 1, 2011 @ 6:38 PM In [Politics](#) | [38 Comments](#)

A coalition of religious NGOs have claimed that 100,000 people will join a protest in December “to protect Islam”, and called on “all Maldivians to take part”.

Speaking to the press at the Maldives National Broadcasting Corporation (MNBC) studio, President of the NGO Coalition Mohamed Didi said that more than 127 local NGOs, music clubs, political parties and Island Councils would take part in the protest on December 23.

According to MNBC, Didi said the protest was not a movement against the government but a movement “against all un-Islamic ideas.”

Opposition Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP) Deputy Leader Ibrahim ‘Mavota’ Shareef warned that “our faith will not be shaken by something someone says, but because of these things it might turn the non-muslims living in neighboring countries against us.”

MNBC reported that the People’s Alliance Party (PA) had called on parents to bring children to the gathering.

Local newspaper Sun quoted Didi as saying that the government had been conducting many activities with the motive of erasing Islam from the country, and claimed that the NGO coalition was “left with no other choice but to protest to protect Islam.”

Senior officials from the Adhaalath Party, Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM), Dhivehi Qaumeey Party (DQP) and Jumhoreey Party (JP) were present at today’s meeting.

Claims that [national monuments placed in Addu](#) ^[1] for the SAARC Summit were idolatrous and [hostility](#) ^[2] towards a call by UN Human Rights Ambassador Navi Pillay for a national debate on flogging sparked protests in Male’ recently.

“This practice constitutes one of the most inhumane and degrading forms of violence against women, and should have no place in the legal framework of a democratic country,” Pillay said, referring to the practice of flogging a punishment for fornication.

Press Secretary for the President Mohamed Zuhair did not respond to Minivan News at time of press.

Article printed from Minivan News: <http://minivannews.com>

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[2] hostility: <http://minivannews.com/politics/flogging-for-fornication-inhumane-and-degrading-violence-against-women-navi-pillay-tells-majlis-28616>

6 political parties, 130 NGOs will participate in Dec 23 mass demonstrations- Civil Society Coalition

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28TH, 2011

Shaheeda Saeed

The Civil Society Coalition, a network of 127 registered NGOs has announced that 6 political parties and 130 NGOs will participate in the mass protest against Islamophobes on December 23, 2011.



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In view of the comments of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navanethem Pillay stating that flogging the fornicator is degrading and called the Maldivian authorities to open public debates over the Shariah punishments, the Civil Society Coalition said that the government of President Mohamed Nasheed has been trying to wipe out the Islamic faith of the people of Maldives by trying to indoctrinate the people by using different means.

In a press conference held yesterday at the Social Center, President of the coalition, Mohamed Didi said that the NGOs would not sit back and watch while the government plots to legalize apostasy and to allow other faiths in Maldives.

“The people of Maldives have been Muslims for the last 900 years. If these few people cannot digest the religion of the people of Maldives then it is better that they leave this country immediately,” he said.

Mohamed Didi said that the government should never give opportunities for Islamophobes to lecture in the Maldives. He said that this is prohibited by Islam and is also an act of crime according to the Constitution of Maldives. He said that the MPs elected by the people who have taken a vow to respect and uphold Islam and the Constitution should be ashamed of themselves for allowing the visiting UN Human Rights High Commissioner to make unconstitutional comments against the aspects of the religion of Islam.

He also highlighted on the issue of the idolatrous idols placed in Addu City as monuments of the member states of SAARC. He said that the people are concerned over the anti-Islamic plots of the government.

The NGOs said that they are organizing to hold a mass protest against the government. The coalition said that it is believed that more than hundred thousand people would participate in the protest.

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Comment: Operation Haram to Halal – the Islamist role in replacing Nasheed with Waheed

Posted By [Azra Naseem](#) On February 18, 2012 @ 4:28 PM In [Politics,Society](#) | [72 Comments](#)

'Since Mohamed Nasheed of Kenereege who held the post of the President of the Maldives is an anti-Islamic, corrupt, authoritarian, and violent individual who abused the Constitution; and given that Vice President Dr Mohamed Waheed Hassan Manik is the man to steer the country to a safe harbour, the Consultative Committee of Adhaalath Party has taken the unanimous decision to pledge allegiance to Dr Waheed and to support his government until 2013'. – Adhaalath Party, 7 February 2012

Maldivian Islamists played an instrumental role in the events of 7 February 2012, which forced the country's first democratically elected president Mohamed Nasheed to 'resign.' Coup Deniers and followers of Islamists vehemently object to any such claim. The Islamists themselves, however, have been very public, and very publicly proud, of the 'religious duty' they performed by facilitating the removal from power of Nasheed – in their opinion an anti-Islamic heretic.

This is clear from the many proclamations and announcements they made in the lead up to and in the aftermath of Nasheed's 'resignation'. Having declared Nasheed a heretic on 7 February, Adhaalath Party put out a press release on 8 February, the worst day of violence since transition to democracy. It called on people to stand up against Nasheed, "with swords and guns" if needs be. Any Maldivian who failed to do so was a sinner, and had no right to live in the country. Fight Nasheed or emigrate; Jihad against him or be eternally damned, it said. The 'truth' of their words was bolstered by selective quotations from Islamic teachings. Accepting Waheed—"a just ruler"—was portrayed as a religious duty of Maldivian Muslims.

Replacing Nasheed with Waheed, the 'haram' president with the 'halal' president, appears to be what Adhaalath President Sheikh Imran Abdulla [referred to on 31 January](#) ^[1] as 'Phase Two' of 'the work we have been doing until today.' What was the work Adhaalath and its allies had been doing until then?

Setting the stage: grooming the population

Out of necessity, Nasheed had to include Adhaalath Party in the coalition government he put together in 2008. To put it mildly, the liberal minded president and the ultra-conservative Adhaalath Party had nothing in common. Despite the frequent clashes over various issues—selling alcohol on inhabited islands, making Islam an optional rather than a compulsory subject in secondary school, introduction of 'religious unity regulations', provision of land for an Islamic College in Male'—Nasheed had no choice but to stick to his coalition agreement. The turbulent political marriage of convenience came to an end only in September 2011 when Adhaalath voted to sever the coalition agreement citing Nasheed's lack of cooperation in its efforts to 'strengthen' Islam in the Maldives.

In the intervening period, driven by pragmatic reasons and by an oversimplified belief that freedom of expression is sacrosanct—no matter what the consequences—Nasheed failed to impose any restrictions on the increasingly extremist and hardline rhetoric of the Islamists. With Adhaalath's Dr Abdul Majid Abdul Bari at the helm of the Islamic Ministry, radical preachers from abroad and from within the country were given free-reign, and funds from the public coffer, to address the Maldivian population. 2010 saw, for example, the Indian televangelist Dr Zakir Naik, as well as Jamaican Dr Bilal Philips and British Sheikh Abdurraheem Green address the Maldivian public. In addition to the foreign preachers, Maldivian missionaries trained at madhrasaas in Pakistan and ultra-conservative schools and universities in India, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere bombarded Maldivians with radical rhetoric from every available public platform.

Anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and intolerance of other religions became a part of daily discourse, broadcast on national television, played incessantly in public spaces from taxis and ferries to loudspeakers on the streets. Close to 90 percent of books stocked in most Maldivian bookshops during this period came to be those authored by the extremists whose words were designed to influence every little detail of a Maldivian's life from toilet to conjugal relations. While extremist literature flourished and their voice took over the public sphere, the liberal voice floundered. When concerned liberals approached Nasheed asking for his help in countering the voices of extremism, his response was—more or less—to tell them 'do it yourselves.' The government, he said, could not impose restrictions on speech.

Despite the strong civil society that flourished during Nasheed's government, the extremist movement had become too strong by then for individuals—acting without any support from the State—to organise against it. The labels of apostasy, heresy and anti-Islamic agent' had become too powerful as political tools by then for any anti-extremist group or movement to be able to get a foothold in the public sphere. Many individuals attempted to organise into groups, but were

shut down as anti-Islamic before they could become a coherent voice in society. Anyone who expressed doubt about their faith in Islam was branded an apostate and ostracised. The strength of these prevailing sentiments was seen in [the suicide of Ismail Mohamed Didi](#) ^[2], a 25-year-old man who hanged himself in July 2010 after being hounded by friends and family for expressing doubt over his belief in Islam. The extremists were determined that the myth of 'Maldives is a hundred percent Muslim nation' will be maintained, even if it meant the oppression and death of those who did not believe.

Phase One: Nasheed as heretic

The push to drive Nasheed out began in earnest at the end of 2011. Many incidents towards the end of the year proved fortuitous for the extremists. In November Maldives hosted the annual summit meeting of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation). Among bilateral gifts exchanged were various monuments and statues depicting the culture and traditions of the gifting country. In the spirit of 'building bridges', the summit theme, Maldives displayed a welcome banner at the airport in which religious figures dear to all members of SAARC were included. An image of Jesus was on the banner. Alleging that the banner promoted Christianity and that several of the gifts—including one from Pakistan—were anti-Islamic idols of worship, religious organisation and parties galvanised the public into what can aptly be described as mass-hysteria. The banner was taken down, and the monuments were put under police protection [until they were destroyed](#) ^[3]. All in the name of protecting Islam.

On 24 November 2011, visiting UN Human Rights Commissioner Navi Pillay [addressed the Maldivian parliament](#) ^[4] and spoke out against the practice of flogging, which continues to this day. The public furore incited over the 'idols' had not yet died down. Islamists saw another opportunity to keep the hysteria alive. They led about a hundred or so angry people to the doors of the UN building to protest against Pillay's call for a humanitarian approach to punishment. Although Nasheed's Islamic Ministry unequivocally condemned the speech, Nasheed himself spoke in favour of Pillay's stance. For the ultra-conservatives in Parliament and in socio-political positions of power, it was a sure sign that Nasheed was an anti-Islamic 'Western puppet.'

The next plum opportunity for the Islamists came on 10 December, the International Human Rights Day, when a handful of young Maldivians staged a minor 'silent protest' against the growing religious intolerance in the country. Despite the fact that Nasheed's government [imprisoned one of the protesters](#) ^[5], the Maldives' only openly gay activist, religious conservatives were furious with Nasheed for not meting out severe punishment against the protesters. It was deemed as further evidence of Nasheed's heresy.

It is against this backdrop, and armed with these pretexts, that the campaign to depose Nasheed was launched. Its first [major public display](#) ^[6] was on 23 December in the form of a protest under the banner: 'Maldivians Defending Islam.' Having been bombarded since November by messages that Nasheed is a threat to their faith, and convinced by the relentless extremist rhetoric of years, thousands of Maldivians spilled onto the streets of Male' in 'defence of Islam'. What a majority of the people had not had the time or space to understand is that the threat to Maldivians' faith has come not from Nasheed but from the extremists.

For hundreds of years, insulated as the country had been from the rest of the world, Maldivians were largely ignorant of the various conflicts within and around the 'Islamic world'. The Islam that Maldivians practised was personal—a deeply held faith that did not need mediation by 'scholars' or preachers. Public displays of piety, such as having women shrouded in black or men hiding behind waist-length beards, were never part of the Maldivian belief system. Suppression of women as second-class citizens, violence in the name of religion, disputes over which prayer to be said at what time, insistence on imposing the death sentence, child brides, sex slaves—these were not part of the fabric of 'Maldivian Islam.' The extremists introduced such ideology and practices into the Maldives, and spread it across the country using the very freedoms of democracy they rally against. The success of the extremists had been their ability to use its newfound freedom of expression as a tool for convincing an unsuspecting population that until the arrival of these missionaries, Maldives had been ignorant of the 'right Islam'.

It was in the defence of this extremism, which Nasheed had failed to act against—and which he was now being accused of threatening—that thousands of Maldivians gathered in Male' on 23 December.

Phase One, Stage Two: the unholy alliance between 'democrats' and Islamists

It would be a mistake to assume that the Islamists, as widespread and powerful as their influence among the general population has been, would have been able to successfully depose Nasheed on their own. Rather, this occurred when opposition parties, having proven time and again their penchant for regarding Islam—and democracy itself for that matter—as open to opportunistic appropriation, allied with the Islamists with this very goal in mind.

Eight opposition parties of the Maldives and allied NGOs put their organisational and rallying tools behind the 23 December protests. That this was an alliance, for the political parties at least, wholly devoid of any Islamic piety is clear from who appeared as its leading members. A core group of them were resort owners—rich tycoons who have no qualms being purveyors of alcohol,

pork, and 'hedonistic' pleasures to 'infidels'. What smacked of hypocrisy and opportunism even more was the involvement of figures who had previously spoken out against the rising extremism in the country. Present among them were, for example, Dr Hassan Saeed who co-authored the book 'Freedom of Religion, Apostasy and Islam' which argues that Islam is a religion of tolerance. He is now the newly appointed President Waheed's special advisor.

Former President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom had a statement read out in favour of the protests despite his long career being rich with seminars and papers arguing the tolerance and liberalism of Islam. Without the easy manner in which these figures dismissed their own convictions for the sake of political power, the Islamists would not have been able to push their agenda onto the Maldivian people so easily. It was a case of political parasites feeding off each other.

The next step was the [publication of a pamphlet](#) ^[7] by Dhivehi Qaume'e Party (DQP), or Maldivian National Party, that provided alleged details of a secret agenda pursued by Nasheed to undermine Maldivians' Islamic faith. The 30-page pamphlet, ironically, can easily rival Dutch politician Geert Wilder's hate-filled anti-Islamic film 'Fitna' in its use of the Qur'an to incite hatred. There was very little that matters to Muslims that was not exploited for political gain in the publication. Nasheed government's decision to foster business with Israel was depicted as an 'alliance with Jews' at the expense of Palestinians and his bilateral ties with Western governments was portrayed as friendships with 'enemies of Islam'. Blatant lies, such as Christian priests being appointed as Nasheed's emissaries, were mixed in with facts that were twisted beyond recognition.

While using the democratic principle of freedom of expression, freely granted by Nasheed, it sought to convince Maldivians that modernity and Islam are diametrically opposed to each other. Equating the overthrow of Nasheed's government with a religious duty, it called on all Maldivians to do what they can to unseat the immoral heretic from power. Dr Hassan Saeed, author of the book 'Freedom of Religion, Apostasy and Islam', is the deputy leader of DQP. Its leader is Dr Mohamed Jameel Ahmed. He is now the Minister of Home Affairs in Dr Waheed's newly formed cabinet. In 2007 Dr Jameel was Gayoom's Justice Minister, and resigned seemingly in protest against Gayoom's failure to reign in the increasing Islamic militancy in the country. Less than five years later, his supposedly staunch principles were nowhere in sight as he pushed Maldivians to protest against Nasheed's liberal government and embrace Sharia.

Phase One, Stage Three

Nasheed's orders to have Judge Abdulla Mohamed arrested on 16 January 2012 was like a manna from heaven for the politico-religious coalition which was now calling itself the December 23 Alliance. Here was an opportunity to marry Nasheed's alleged anti-Islamic activities with his violation of the constitution. Not one member of the opposition, nor the self-proclaimed champion of the constitution, President Waheed, has ever spoken out against the unconstitutional acts that has allowed Judge Abdulla to remain on the bench. The very same leaders, who now bellowed and whipped the people into a frenzy over the Judge's detention, had presided over—and evidence exists, orchestrated—the events which allowed convicted criminals and sex offenders to remain on the bench in violation of Article 285 of the Constitution.

Deleted from public discourse, and therefore missing from public understanding, was the sad truth that at the time of Judge Abdulla's arrest there were no democratic institutions capable of reigning in his many unlawful acts on the bench. He had no scruples over letting dangerous criminals walk free, espousing political views, and displaying sexual depravity in the courtroom. And he bestowed on himself the authority to overrule the Judicial Service Commission, the independent institution established by the Constitution to oversee the ethical and professional standards of the judiciary. That the opposition's use of the judge's arrest for inciting public protests was nothing more than political opportunism becomes clear in the fact that following Judge Abdulla's release—on the same day that Nasheed was deposed—there has been no move to investigate [the charges against him](#) ^[8]. Nor has President Waheed, taken any steps to initiate an investigation into the failures of the JSC. It is as if Judge Abdulla has no pending complaints of judicial misconduct against him, [nor a criminal background](#) ^[9]. Exhausted by the 'ordeal' in which he seems to have had no role to play, he is now on a month-long holiday.

Phase Two: in the name of God and country

The two hundred or so members of the public who came out to protest against Judge Abdulla's arrest for 22 consecutive nights were a motley crew. Some were there to defend extremism, others were there to defend the Constitution and demand the freedom of a politically biased, criminally convicted judge who remained on the bench in violation of the Constitution. It was their honestly held belief that reinstating a judge found guilty of political bias was the way to give themselves an independent judiciary. The rest were people who would protest the opening of an envelope, social deviants, and hired thugs egged on by opposition MPs and party leaders who incited them to continued violence daily for three weeks.

On 31 January, a week before Nasheed was forced to resign, the 23 December Alliance met in the wee hours of the morning. Presiding over the meeting was the President of Adhaalath Party Sheikh Imran Abdulla. At his side, displaying proudly the alliance between the political opportunists and the Islamists, is the Vice President of former president Gayoom's new Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) [Umar Naseer](#) ^[10]. They both announced that since Nasheed

had stepped outside of the boundaries of the constitution, their alliance had made a unanimous decision to pledge their allegiance to the Vice President. Their decision was reached, they said, after meeting with Vice President Waheed earlier that night. Umar Naseer, who had repeatedly incited violence during the weeks of protests, calmly called upon the armed forces of the country to refuse to obey any orders by their Commander in Chief Nasheed as he had 'violated the Constitution.' Umar Naseer appeared not to know—or not to care—that calling on the nation's security forces to disobey their leader did not figure anywhere in the constitution either. Giving credence and weight to this call to unlawful acts, at least for those who were convinced Nasheed was also a heretic, was Sheikh Imran and other religious 'scholars'.

Would the mutinying police and military officers that joined them have helped overthrow Nasheed's government were they not convinced they were acting, not just for the country, but for Allah too? It is possible—for reports suggest that Allah was not the only God worshiped on that day; Mammon, too, commanded much devotion. Yet, it is Allah that the men in uniform who took over the state broadcaster with such violence thanked loudly for their success. 'Allah Akbar, Allah Akbar!' is what a band of military men marching on the streets of Male' on that day were calling out in unison. It is Allah's name that 2013 presidential candidate and owner of the Villa Resorts chain took when announcing Nasheed's resignation to the public before it happened. One of the first acts of violence carried out on 8 February was the destruction of Buddhist relics from the pre-Islamic history of the Maldives dating back to the eleventh century. It is not the first time that Madivian Islamists have emulated the Taliban in their actions, and it will not be the last for many are disciples of the same form of Islam practised by the Taliban and several are alumni of the same madhrassas and universities Taliban leaders attended.

It cannot be denied that a large number of those who celebrated the departure of Nasheed were glad to see him go 'because he violated the constitution.' But those who do genuinely believe in the constitution, and are convinced that following it is the way forward for the country, know that deposing a democratically elected president by a coup is hardly constitutional. They are the many hundreds who have taken to the streets in 'colourless' protests—they are not supporters of MDP, nor necessarily of Nasheed. They, however, disagree with how the democratically elected leader has been forced out.

Apart from the diehard supporters of former president Gayoom and his allies, paid-for supporters of Gasim, and other tycoons who have the country's politics in a stranglehold, the only people who remain jubilant at the overthrow of Nasheed are those convinced beyond any reasonable doubt that he was an anti-Islamic heretic. In helping depose him, in celebrating his departure, they have performed a religious duty. Replacing the haram Nasheed with the halal Waheed may not be democratic but it has assured them of a place in heaven. Little do they understand that, in this life, the rewards of their toil will be reaped not by them or their children but by those who have so shamelessly exploited their belief in Allah.

Phase Three?

President Waheed denies any knowledge of a coup, and refutes all allegations that he was party to the plot that forced Nasheed from office. Even if he is given the benefit of the doubt, and under the unlikely circumstance that he is, indeed, ignorant of the machinations of the politico-religious alliance that facilitated his assumption of office, he should be aware that his position is precarious indeed. The only reason he has been given the seal of approval, Adhaalath has made clear, is because he has not openly sided with Nasheed in his many stand-offs with the extremists.

Reading between the lines of [President Waheed's utterances](#) ^[11] since assuming office, this was not out of choice—Nasheed did not allow him to participate in any decisions that mattered. This is, in fact, President Waheed's biggest gripes against Nasheed, seemingly on a par with the deposed president's unconstitutional arrest of the judge.

President Waheed has close to him as his Special Advisor Dr Hassan Saeed and as his Home Minister Dr Mohamed Jameel Ahmed. Two leaders of the party that authored the [pamphlet](#) ^[7] of hate against Nasheed. One of the 'sins' the pamphlet alleges former president Gayoom committed as a leader was not forcing his wife to cover-up, and not bringing his children in line with hard-line Islamic principles. For this, the pamphlet condemns Gayoom. President Waheed's wife is guilty of the same 'sin', and his children, Western-educated and brought up in the United States, are unlikely to heed any paternal demands to toe an ultra-conservative Islamist line. At least one of his children is a liberal and an outspoken supporter of democracy. Already, President Waheed is treading a thin line.

It is only a matter of time before the Islamists begin re-instating their position, and President Waheed becomes the focus of their ire. It makes little sense for them to have brought down 'Nasheed the Heretic' if not for a promised bounty that is not yet known. In their 8 February press release, it quotes from Islamic teachings as saying:

'It is the duty of every Muslim to wage a Jihad against those who apply any law other than that of Islamic Sharia. And, until such time as they have accepted Sharia and begun applying Sharia among the people, it is your duty to wage war against them. '

Clearly, the Islamists' work has only begun. Would President Waheed, who describes himself as committed to democracy, allow Islamic extremism to further takeover the country and destroy hundreds of years of peaceful, traditional Maldivian Islam? Would he stand up for his principles?

Or would he allow them to be sacrificed at the altar of his political ambitions? It remains to be seen. As do details of the deal that was done between political opportunists and the Islamists to ensure Nasheed the haram president was replaced by Waheed the halal president.

Azra Naseem holds a doctorate in International Relations.

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[1] referred to on 31 January: <http://minivannews.com/politics/we-call-on-the-police-and-the-army-to-pledge-allegiance-to-the-vice-president-umar-naseer-jan-31-31948>

[2] the suicide of Ismail Mohamed Didi: <http://minivannews.com/society/hanged-air-traffic-controller-sought-asylum-for-fear-of-religious-persecution-9381>

[3] until they were destroyed: <http://minivannews.com/politics/addu-city-council-begins-taking-down-idolatrous-saarc-monuments-30791>

[4] addressed the Maldivian parliament: <http://minivannews.com/society/islamic-minister-mps-ppm-and-and-religious-groups-condemn-human-rights-commissioner-28687>

[5] imprisoned one of the protesters: <http://minivannews.com/politics/hilath-arrested-as-religious-protests-interrogated-both-ways-29417>

[6] major public display: <http://minivannews.com/politics/protests-proceed-peacefully-as-a-majority-defends-islam-29826>

[7] publication of a pamphlet: <http://minivannews.com/politics/translation-president-nasheed%E2%80%99s-deviuous-plot-to-destroy-the-islamic-faith-of-maldivians-30991>

[8] the charges against him: <http://minivannews.com/politics/chief-judge-took-entire-criminal-justice-system-in-his-fist-afeef-30926>

[9] nor a criminal background: <http://minivannews.com/politics/qa-we-talking-about-not-having-a-judiciary-says-aishath-vezineez-31158>

[10] Umar Naseer: <http://minivannews.com/politics/i-told-them-to-surrender-otherwise-he-might-lose-life-umar-naseer-tells-ppm-rally-32062>

[11] President Waheed's utterances: <http://minivannews.com/politics/qa-president-dr-mohamed-waheed-hassan-32268>



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February 8, 2012

The Dregs of Dictatorship

By MOHAMED NASHEED

Male, Maldives

DICTATORSHIPS don't always die when the dictator leaves office. The wave of revolutions that toppled autocrats in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen last year was certainly cause for hope. But the people of those countries should be aware that, long after the revolutions, powerful networks of regime loyalists can remain behind and can attempt to strangle their nascent democracies.

I learned this lesson quickly. My country, the Maldives, voted out President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, its iron-fisted ruler, back in 2008, in historic elections that swept away three decades of his authoritarian rule. And yet the dictatorship bequeathed to the infant democracy a looted treasury, a ballooning budget deficit and a rotten judiciary.

I was elected that year, and with the help of the International Monetary Fund, my government worked to cut the deficit, while also building a modern tax base. For the first time in its history, the Maldives — a group of islands in the Indian Ocean — had a democratically elected president, parliament and local councils.

But it also had a judiciary handpicked by the former president, which was now hiding behind a democratic constitution. These powerful judges provided protection for the former president, his family members and political allies, many of whom are accused of corruption, embezzlement and human rights crimes.

At the same time, new laws guaranteeing freedom of speech were abused by a new force in Maldivian politics: Islamic extremists. The former president's cabinet members threw anti-Semitic and anti-Christian slurs at my government, branding as apostates anyone who tried to defend the country's liberal Islamic traditions and claiming that democracy granted them and their allies license to call for violent jihad and indulge in hate speech.

In response to these issues, my government asked the United Nations to help us investigate judicial abuses and ordered the arrest of Abdulla Mohamed, the chief judge of the criminal court, on charges of protecting the former president and corrupting the judicial system. However, in a [dramatic turn of events on Tuesday](#), the former president's supporters protested in the streets, and police officers and army personnel loyal to the old government mutinied and forced me, at gunpoint, to resign. To avoid bloodshed, I did so. I believe this to be a coup d'état and suspect that my vice president, who has since been sworn into office, helped to plan it.

Choosing to stand up to the judge was a controversial decision, but I feel I had no choice but to do what I did — to have taken no action, and passively watched the country's democracy strangled, would have been the greatest injustice of all.

The problems we are facing in the Maldives are a warning for other Muslim nations undergoing democratic reform. At times, dealing with the corrupt system of patronage the former regime left behind can feel like wrestling with a Hydra: when you remove one head, two more grow back. With patience and determination, the beast can be slain. But let the Maldives be a lesson for aspiring democrats everywhere: the dictator can be removed in a day, but it can take years to stamp out the lingering remnants of his dictatorship.

Reference: 4

Mohamed Nasheed was president of the Maldives from 2008 until Feb. 7.



Following parliamentary elections in 2011, the Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN) launched the Political Violence Watch website with support from IFES and the United States Agency for International Development. MDN

Political background

In October 2008 the Maldives held its first-ever multi-party, multi-candidate presidential election. After 30 years under President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, opposition leader Mohamed Nasheed was brought to power.

During his four years in office, President Nasheed highlighted the threat of climate change to the Maldives and to the international community. He held an underwater cabinet meeting to draw international attention to climate change and set about implementing economic reforms. In January 2012, President Nasheed ordered the arrest of a prominent judge loyal to former President Gayoom, which resulted in weeks of political unrest and the ultimate resignation of the president on February 7, 2012. Vice President Mohamed Waheed Hassan Manik assumed the post for the last 21 months of the presidential term.

In the period following the transfer of power, supporters of Waheed and Nasheed clashed on the streets of the capital city, Malé. Protestors set fire to police stations, court houses and television studios throughout the country. Excessive use of force by police, injuries and vandalism were reported by both Maldivian and international media. The last few weeks have seen a significant decrease in the frequency of protests and the level of violence. However, hate speech, intimidation, verbal threats, vandalism of private property, gang violence and crime are still rampant.

Chronic political conflict, under President Gayoom and after the 2008 elections, led the Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN) to recognize that violence escalates around elections, and there was a need for long-term political violence monitoring and analysis between electoral events. With technical assistance from IFES, MDN started its *Political Violence Monitoring (PVM)* project in April 2011. MDN focused on monitoring trends and causes of violence, and started working with local organizations, the government, police and other stakeholders to create conflict mitigation strategies in advance of the 2013 elections.

The unrest following Nasheed's resignation in February has unfortunately demonstrated how serious the political conflict has become in the Maldives. It also demonstrates the link between chronic political conflict and electoral violence. Working to reduce ongoing political conflicts can help reduce the risk of electoral violence, and support the process of democratic consolidation.

Maldivian Democracy Network

MDN is a non-partisan local organization that promotes human rights and democracy in the Maldives. MDN has carried out a wide range of awareness-raising, monitoring, reporting and advocacy work since 2004. The organization coordinates a network of human rights defenders (HRDs) – individuals trained in human rights monitoring and reporting – who advocate for human rights and regularly report on violations within their communities.

Over the past two years, MDN has successfully advocated to parliament to incorporate a set of recommendations and comments into a number of bills, including the recently passed Domestic Violence Bill, where MDN was part of the NGO working group that worked on the draft bill. MDN's advocacy, awareness and grassroots activities have been carried out by the country-wide network of HRDs (150 HRDs in 15 atolls) who monitor and report human rights violations and violence. The HRDs played a crucial role in providing MDN with information from outer atolls following the transfer of power in February 2012.

With a new government in place, MDN has been collaborating with local organizations to put forward a set of recommendations to ensure transparency and credibility in the ongoing investigation by the National Inquiry Commission (NIC). The NIC is examining the events which led up to the resignation of former President Nasheed. With both the president and NIC having agreed to the recommendations in principle, MDN is now actively engaging both in implementing these throughout the investigation process.

MDN initiated the PVM project, noted above, with IFES and USAID support in 2011 following parliamentary elections. Through the PVM project, MDN trained over 75 HRDs and developed a website (www.politicalviolencewatch.org) to systematically track and map threats and incidents of political violence throughout the country. The site offers an interactive map for users to view locations of incidents and obtain detailed descriptions of these events, including the impact of the violence. This is a very unique tool available to all stakeholders, media and international community members to quickly view trends in political violence in the Maldives. Reports from HRDs, the media and the public are displayed online as they are received and verified.

Since April 2011, MDN has documented 132 incidents of political violence. In 2011, most of the 59 incidents reported were directly from the media. So far, in 2012 over half (35) of the 73 incidents have been reported by HRDs. Out of the 73 incidents, only seven were in January and the rest took place between February and April 2012. The scale of political unrest is stark when compared to the low levels of incidents before February 8, 2012. In 2011, MDN recorded an average of seven incidents per month, compared to an average of nearly one per day in the first four months of 2012.

Most incidents, however, happened in very concentrated timeframes. There were 42 incidents in February; 24 of which occurred on February 8. The following month there was another spike, with nine incidents on March 19, 2012, in Malé. The reports of political violence were highest in Malé (with 44 incidents in 2012), followed by Hithadhoo Island (largely in Addu City) with 16 incidents reported in 2012.

The types of violence in 2011 and 2012 have been surprisingly consistent; however, a wider variety of incidents were recorded across fewer reports in 2011. The proportion of property damage, physical harm and barriers to state activity were similar and were the most frequently reported acts in each year, both before and after the February 2012 political unrest.

Looking Ahead

In anticipation of the 2013 election cycle, MDN will focus on electoral and political violence monitoring, election observation and voter awareness. MDN is also looking to expand their network by establishing branches in the islands, aiming to increase outreach, monitoring and advocacy efforts, and to put a support system in place for HRDs. MDN would like to develop and build the capacity of HRDs so they can better monitor and report violence in their communities. Beyond increasing their knowledge, skill building in communication and management will be included in future trainings for HRDs to provide more in-depth guidance on how to present comprehensive analytical reports about human rights violations and political violence.

Ruling coalition demand MDP “stop use of black magic, sexual and erotic tools”, “not walk in groups of more than 10”

Posted By [JJ Robinson](#) On June 4, 2012 @ 4:02 PM In [Politics](#) | [31 Comments](#)

Parties in the ruling coalition presented the ousted Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) with a list of 30 demands to “resolve the problem of public disturbances”, during the [weekend’s All-Party Talks](#) [1].

Resolving the country’s political turmoil was the first item on the six point agenda for the talks, which were to conclude with setting a date for fresh presidential elections.

The MDP has demanded early elections following the police-and-military led mutiny on February 7 that led to the resignation of President Mohamed Nasheed in what the party alleges was a “coup d’état” orchestrated by parties loyal to former President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom.

The list, obtained by Minivan News, includes demands that the MDP “stop practicing black magic and sorcery”, “stop the use of sexual and erotic tools”, and “not walk in groups of more than 10”.

The list also demands that the MDP “not keep crows and other animals in public areas”, “not participate in protests in an intoxicated condition”, and “not defame the country both domestically and internationally”.

MDP representative at the talks, former Tourism Minister Dr Mariyam Zulfa, said other parties involved in the talks “were adamant from the beginning that under no circumstances would there be early elections. There was a lot of rhetoric and mockery against the MDP,” she said.

“It was up to the party leaderships to ensure that the people who were present [at the talks] were open minded. MDP was the only party to go into the talks with any sort of professional preparation – we had our national leadership committee prepare a way forward for all items on the agenda,” she said.

“But the spirit of working together was not there. It manifested in their tone – mocking and sarcastic. They gave no seriousness to the discussion of any point.”

President’s Office Spokesperson and Jumhoree Party (JP) representative at the talks, Abbas Adil Riza, said he believed the drafting and discussion of the 30 points was itself a “major achievement”.

“I think the MDP are taking the talks seriously,” he said. “We have to understand that they have certain grievances, but they are having a difficult time with their leadership. They basically have to consult with Nasheed all the time. I was happy with their attitude, and I think things will be fast-tracked in the new few weeks.”

Riza said UN mediation expert Pierre Yves Monett, who assisted with the talks, was “very helpful and brought a lot of experience. If not for him we’d have walked out a long time before.”

“30 things that could be done to resolve the political turbulence in the country” (rough translation – [original Dhivehi](#) [2])

1. Stopping the attacks on security services, the media and the general public during protests held on streets and other public areas, which initiate from a certain area.
2. Not obstruct political party rallies and political figures who visit the islands
3. Not obstruct religious scholars during their visits to the islands
4. Not attack public property
5. Not harass political figures, physically or verbally
6. Not attack the media
7. Not conduct business without proper authorisation from the authorities
8. Stop conducting illicit activities in public parks after hoisting the party flag
9. Not make noises that disturb and obstruct pedestrians and drivers on the streets, and stop snatching things from them
10. Not to keep crows and other animals in public areas
11. Stop the use of sexual and erotic tools
12. Not make ‘Musaafiruhaanaa’ (a type of bed used by crews to sleep on Maldivian vessels) in public areas
13. Not hang swings that obstruct pavements
14. Not provoke and harass those visiting islands
15. Not participate in protests in an intoxicated condition
16. Not conduct political party activities on streets and on the street pavements
17. Not defame the country both domestically and locally
18. Not obstruct parliament sessions

Reference 6

19. Not provide false information to the public over TV and radio
20. Not involve minors in protests and not use any logos of foreign groups in protests
21. While coming and going from peaceful political rallies, to not to shout and disturb the public, and not to walk in groups of more than 10
22. Stop the use of mega phones in both protests and street activities
23. Not hold trials without submitting to the High Court
24. Not to mislead court actions
25. Stop interpreting laws on the streets
26. Not hold rallies on the street
27. All political parties to stop practicing black magic and sorcery
28. Stop arson attacks
29. Stop calling out filth in public neighborhoods
30. Stop political party leaders making false statements

Article printed from Minivan News: <http://minivannews.com>

URL to article: <http://minivannews.com/politics/ruling-coalition-demand-mdp-stop-use-of-black-magic-sexual-and-erotic-tools-not-walk-in-groups-of-more-than-10-38514>

URLs in this post:

[1] weekend's All-Party Talks: <http://minivannews.com/politics/all-party-talks-to-continue-at-bandos-this-weekend-38136>

[2] original Dhivehi: http://dl.dropbox.com/u/58139472/issues_MPPTS.pdf

Heirs want death penalty for Ayyubey's murderers

Muizzu Ibrahim, Haveeru Online
Jun 05, 2012 - 09:05



Ali 'Ayyubey' Hassan: Heirs have asked for the death penalty for Ayyubey's murderers.

Five heirs of Ali 'Ayyubey' Hassan of Samandharu, Dhaal Atoll Kudahuvadho, who was stabbed to death in January, have asked for the death penalty for the underage children being tried for Ayyubey

The State had charged three children for Ayyubey's murder. Reporters are not allowed into the courtroom during the hearing as they are not of age.

Out of the three accused of the murder, two are being tried for accessory to murder in the first degree while the other is being charged with murder in the first degree.

Both the two children being tried as accessories to murder in the first degree have confessed to their role in the crime in court.

An official from the Juvenile Court revealed that all five heirs of Ayyubey who were presented in court yesterday had asked for the death penalty. Official added that as there more heirs, the court would hear their views as well.

Official further detailed that the court had given two more days to the child who has been accused of murder in the first degree as the final opportunity to appoint an attorney.

In addition to the three underage children, the State had filed charges against three men in Criminal Court in relation to Ayyubey's murder. All three men from Kudahuvadho include Maaveli, Ibrahim Waseem, Fanas, Fauzan Mohamed, and Ranakuri, Ibrahim Majid.

Out of the three men, Ibrahim Waseem who is step-grandchild of Ayyubey had confessed to the murder during the trial at the Criminal Court.

Ali 'Ayyube' Hassan, the alleged sorcerer was found brutally murdered in Dhaal Atoll Kudahuvadho on January 8.

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“Be courageous; Today you are all mujaheddin”: President Dr Waheed

Posted By [Minivan News](#) On February 26, 2012 @ 6:05 PM In [Society](#) | [51 Comments](#)

The following is a speech given by President Dr Mohamed Waheed Hassan at the pro-government ‘National Symposium’ at the artificial beach on February 24.

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate and the Most Merciful... Assalaam Alaikum.

All praise and thanks are due only to one: Allah Subahanahoo Wata-aalaa.

All praise and thanks be to Him for brining the Light of Islam to the Maldives and for sustaining the Maldives as an Islamic nation. All praise and thanks be to Allah for protecting till now the Maldivian nationhood, customs and Maldivianness.

Why are you all here today, coming from various places? You have come here because you love the nation; in order to maintain Islam in the Maldives; in order to maintain its nationhood and customs; and to overcome strife in the nation.

We can't allow strife in the Maldives. Anyone who loves the Maldives will not incite strife in the Maldives. Anyone who loves this nation will not torch public places and destroy them. There is no place for such people in this nation. There is no place in this land for those who cause strife.

We are steadfast... to defend the nation and to protect Islam and nationhood. Till the last drop of our blood, we will defend this nation. We are not afraid. We are not afraid to die as martyrs. We are not afraid of the enemies we face.

We must be sad that the enemies and traitors of the Maldives are spreading lies in various places of the world to tarnish the country's image. They are the real conspirators. Those who defame the Maldives to destroy its industries and tourism are enemies of this country. Such people have no place in the Maldives.

You all be courageous. This is no longer the age of colonialism. Today no foreign country can influence the Maldives. Today we will maintain our sovereignty with bravery.

Be courageous. We will not back down an inch. Today, the change [in power] in the Maldives is what Allah has willed. This did not happen because of one or two people coming out into the streets. Nobody had been waiting for this. Nobody even saw this day. This change came because Allah willed to protect Islam and the decent Maldivian norms.

Be courageous. Today you are all mujaheddin [those who fight jihad] who love the nation. We will overcome all dangers faced by the nation with steadfastness.

Today's government will be kind to the people and love the people. It will bring justice to the people. This government will do everything possible to ensure that the people would enjoy all rights enshrined in the Constitution. It is the duty of every government to provide housing, healthcare and education. We will also do that.

Be courageous. Never be frightened. Never be swayed. We are fulfilled. We are brave. We are steadfast. Two or three people who want to cause strife in the Maldives can't sway us. When [they] see all of you who are gathered here, [they] will feel nervous. With your help and God's will this nation will advance forward. [Gasim Ibrahim: "Be careful..."]

Our government will be a lawful government. We are upholding the Constitution and obeying the laws. We are ready to maintain justice. We will be steadfast in continuing the journey of democracy that we started.

Never step back. Be brave. We are with you. If you remain determined, we will be too.

My prayer is for the Light of Islam to shine in the Maldives forever, and for all Maldivians to have good health and well-being. I pray there be sense of brotherhood in the hearts of all Maldivians and there be the spirit of unity and oneness. I pray the Maldives be a prosperous, peaceful and harmonious place. May Allah bless all Maldivians. Wasallaamalaikum...

Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) response:

In response to Dr Waheed's speech, the MDP issued statement expressing "alarm at the use of extremist Islamic rhetoric at the heart of the governing regime, including on the part of Mohamed Dr Waheed who appears increasingly beholden to religious groups and known extremists."

"There is now a clear pattern whereby supporters of the former autocratic president, Maumoon

Abdul Gayoom, are using claims of internal and external threats against Islam as a means of asserting political control. There is now a very real threat of the democratic gains of the last few years being rolled back," the party stated.

"Sheikh Imran, President of the religious Adhaalath Party and a man who has in the past called for a jihad against the MDP Government and its supporters and for "the slaughter of anyone against Islam", said: 'They are [now] on their knees in front of their constitution as a result of their attempt to get rid of Islam from the Maldives'; while Gasim Ibrahim, a leading financial backer of the new regime, called MDP supporters 'mentally disabled', and said 'we are ready to sacrifice everything for Dr Waheed'," the MDP claimed.

Other figures addressing the crowd on February 24 included the leader of the Dhivehi Qaume Party (DQP) Dr Hassan Saeed, Attorney-General under former President Gayoom and now Nasheed's political advisor, and Deputy Leader of DQP, Dr Mohamed Jameel, former Justice Minister under former President's Gayoom's administration and now Home Minister.

Saeed, Jameel and their DQP party were [the authors of a political pamphlet](#) ^[1] entitled "President Nasheed's devious plot to destroy the Islamic faith of Maldivians", in which they invoked perceived attacks against Islam in the Maldives, especially by "Christians and Jews".

"Never has the dividing line been clearer between those who believe in democracy and tolerance, and those who believe in power through force and religious dogma," said MDP's spokesperson Hamid Abdul Ghafoor.

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[1] the authors of a political pamphlet: <http://minivannews.com/politics/translation-president-nasheed%E2%80%99s-devious-plot-to-destroy-the-islamic-faith-of-maldivians-30991>

MDP “terrorists”, says President Waheed: “We will not step back in giving them their rightful punishment”

Posted By [Zaheena Rasheed](#) On May 6, 2012 @ 8:08 PM In [Politics](#) | [34 Comments](#)

President Dr Mohamed Waheed Hassan has launched a scathing attack on his predecessor Mohamed Nasheed, accusing him of corruption, hijacking the Majlis, destroying the judiciary, and called him “a liar lacking in any sincerity”.

Waheed made his remarks at a rally on the island of Kulhudhufushi in Haa Dhaal Atoll on Saturday, after Nasheed’s Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) supporters mobbed his car calling him a “traitor.” The MDP alleges Waheed came to power on February 7 following a coup d’état carried out by mutinous elements of the police and military.

Meanwhile, local councils controlled by the MDP have refused to engage with Waheed’s administration. Several MDP councilors rejected meetings with Waheed during his tour of Haa Dhaal Atoll over the weekend.

Speaking on Hanimadhoo island before his visit to Kulhudhufushi, Waheed had appealed to local councils to engage with and support his administration in order to continue providing services to the public.

However, Kulhudhufushi Council President Ibrahim Rameez said he was “ashamed” as an elected representative to meet with an “unelected” president. Waheed was Nasheed’s Vice- President.

Moreover, Rameez claimed he could not support President Waheed as his administration had stopped all development projects in the area. In March, the Economic Ministry halted all [public-private-partnership programmes](#) ^[1] claiming the legality of the contracts needed to be reviewed.

“How can Kenereege Nasheed love the people?”

In his Kulhudhufushi speech, President Waheed painted Nasheed as an authoritarian and corrupt leader who could not tolerate dissent.

“Kenereege Mohamed Nasheed won that election because I became his running mate. Today, he does not understand that,” Waheed said. Further, Nasheed had spurned all the political leaders who had backed him against Maumoon Abdul Gayoom during the 2008 election and “beat” them out of the coalition government established after the election.

Waheed said Nasheed was unable to work with the MDP leadership, forcing consecutive party presidents out of power. The MDP last week took a [vote of no confidence](#) ^[2] against the party’s president Dr Ibrahim Didi and vice-president Alhan Fahmy, a motion that received 95 percent support from the party’s 73-strong national council.

“All the issues MDP faces today are because President Nasheed has hijacked the party and has not allowed young leaders to rule the party,” he said.

He went on to accuse Nasheed’s supporters of “terrorism”, and said he would bring them to justice.

“What kind of democratic party is this? This is not a type of democratic party that we know. But they think there are none more democratic than they are, they shout and scream on the streets, they set fire to and vandalise public property, what kind of democrats are these? These are not democrats. I say they are terrorists. We will not step back in giving them their rightful punishment.”

MDP supporters are alleged to have [set fire to court buildings and vandalised government property](#) ^[3] throughout the Maldives on February 8 after police tear gassed and brutally beat MDP demonstrators in Malé.

“If the events of February 7 had not transpired the way they did with God’s will, we would not have a judiciary now. He had decided to destroy the judiciary then. He had decided to abolish the lower courts. Reduce numbers in the higher courts. He had sent the police a list of 60 people to be arrested,” Waheed said.

“Afterwards, he tried to beat down the courageous people who have worked for Islam and the country. He planned for a few thugs within the MDP to attack them. When they tried to attack, our beloved police force came out to stop them. But then he ordered the police not to do so. He ordered the police to leave, and tried to get the military to intervene. He tried to do all of these things, and all his plans exploded in his hands. At that point, he did not know what to do, he knew the people were not with him, he knew there was no longer a police or military officer who would

obey him any longer, so he resigned and went home," Waheed continued.

Reference: 9

"Then, he did not think all the people who he'd made promises to, made companies for, given resorts to would lose everything. He thought of that only 24 hours later. He understood after 24 hours had passed. He understood and woke up, and said 'I have lost everything. This should not happen like this.' And then all these people he'd made promises to came to see him. Asked 'Where is the island you gave me? Where is that company you made me? What have you done?'"

"So he had to make up an excuse. Make up some sort of story. So at that point, he said, 'Let me tell you, the military has established a military government, the military rule the Maldives now.' He spread this all over the world. Told tourists they must not to go to the Maldives any longer. Nobody should go to the Maldives. There is military rule in the Maldives. He lies, he has no sincerity and now he says he wants to come back to power. Said hold an early election. He says hold an early election. What election can we have?" Waheed said.

The [Commonwealth and EU](#) ^[4] have called for early elections in the Maldives within 2012 to provide legitimacy to those who govern the Maldives. However, Waheed said the earliest date permitted by the constitution for elections was July 2013.

Tension has been rising between the Commonwealth and the Maldivian government after the Commonwealth warned of "[stronger measures](#)" ^[5] against the country if Waheed failed to review the composition and mandate of the Commission of National Inquiry (CNI) to investigate the transfer of power. MPs supporting Waheed have submitted a bill to Majlis to preemptively [withdraw from the Commonwealth](#) ^[6].

Engagement with councils

During his tour of Haa Dhaal Atoll, Waheed appealed to local councils to engage with and support his administration.

Waheed said the majority of the public and majority of parliament supported his administration and that he was "saddened by the small number of people who question this government's legitimacy and who refuse to accept this government."

Waheed is backed by all the major political parties in the Maldives except the MDP. The coalition includes President Gayoom's Progressive Party of the Maldives (PPM), Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP), Jumhooree Party (JP), Dhivehi Qaumees Party (DQP) and the Adhaalath Party.

"I do not believe the Maldivian constitution allows for the existence of state institutions which do not recognize the lawful government. Some councils and councilors have to consider and accept this," he said.

"Council members play an important role in providing services to the public. We can only provide those services if council members engage with the different institutions and ministries of the government and the president. We want to engage with everyone," Waheed added.

However, Kulhudhufushi councilor Ibrahim Rameez said Waheed's administration had stopped all development work in the area, including the installation of water and sewerage systems, harbor development, road construction and housing projects. The development of a international port in Kulhudhufushi had also come to a halt, Rameez claimed.

"So how can we support this government?" Rameez said.

In his fiery speech, Waheed pledged to complete Kulhudhufushi road construction by the end of the year, and improve services at the regional hospital on the island.

Earlier in his tour, Waheed had told Nolvivaram and Hanimadhoo islanders that development contracts were under review, and said he would resume projects if the state budget allowed for it. However, he assured financial assistance to the elderly, single mothers and disabled persons would continue under his administration.

"Even though there has been a lot of infrastructure development, that can turn to ashes in a moment. We have seen that happen very recently. That is because good behavioral norms, unity and friendliness have deteriorated amongst us," Waheed told Nolvivaram residents.

Hence, Waheed said he had started a [civic education program](#) ^[7] to promote unity in the Maldives.

On Hirimaradhoo island Waheed said he would allocate Rf 30 million (US\$1.9 million) in the 2013 state budget for development, but that the citizens must decide how to best use the funds.

"I will not lie to you. I will not make promises I cannot fulfill," Waheed said, and promised not to discriminate based on political party affiliation.

The Addu City Council has also cut off ties with the Waheed administration. At first, the council had released a statement pledging support for Waheed on February 8.

Reference 9
"We hope all development projects in this city, including road development, housing, and water and sewerage, and harbor development projects will continue under your presidency," the statement read.

However, in the evening on the same day, several police stations and court buildings were set on fire in the city. Four of the six MDP councilors and one MDP MP were arrested. The Mayor Abdulla Sodiq's arm was broken in an attack. A few weeks later, the council said it would no longer support Waheed. Sodiq has also said all development projects in Addu city have been suspended.

"Traitor", allege protesters

Waheed's visits within the Maldives and in Malé have been marred by MDP protests. During his outings, Waheed is often accompanied by a heavy police force.

In his visit to Addu city in late February, several MDP supporters, including women, claimed [police used tear gas and batons](#) [8] to subdue protests against Waheed. Amnesty International [obtained testimonies from several women](#) [9] who said they had been beaten and released a statement condemning the MNDF for the attacks.

Video footage of the Kulhudhufushi protest show several hundred protestors carrying yellow MDP flags calling Waheed "baagee" ("traitor"). One woman shouts "Leave this island. We don't want you here," while another voice calls for Waheed to be hanged. Protesters also held placards calling for early elections.

Police in riot gear hold the crowd back as Waheed passes through in a Maldives National Defense Force (MNDF) truck.

Since taking office, Waheed has visited Addu Atoll, Fuvamulah Atoll, Laamu Atoll, Shaviyani Atoll and Haa Dhaal Atoll.

MDP protesters mob President Mohamed Waheed Hassan's car in Kulhudhufushi on Saturday:

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[3] set fire to court buildings and vandalised government property: <http://minivannews.com/politics/live-mohamed-nasheed-reported-injured-as-mdp-supporters-clash-with-security-forces-31688>

[4] Commonwealth and EU: <http://minivannews.com/politics/commonwealth-reiterates-call-for-2012-elections-government-says-july-2013-35827>

[5] "stronger measures" : <http://minivannews.com/politics/cmag-warns-of-stronger-measures-against-government-unless-cni-is-reformed-35618>

[6] withdraw from the Commonwealth: <http://minivannews.com/politics/mps-debate-leaving-commonwealth-in-parliament-35995>

[7] civic education program: <http://minivannews.com/politics/government-launches-civil-education-program-to-promote-values-of-civilised-society-36467>

[8] police used tear gas and batons: <http://minivannews.com/politics/police-use-teargas-batons-to-subdue-demonstrators-in-addu-32614>

[9] obtained testimonies from several women: <http://minivannews.com/politics/amnesty-condemns-violent-mndf-attacks-on-peaceful-women-protesters-in-addu-32709>

28 March 2012

Maldives must investigate sexual harassment of detained women protesters



The rally on 19 March was a protest about the opening of parliament where new President Dr Waheed was to speak © AFP/Getty Images

Maldives authorities must immediately investigate allegations that police beat and sexually harassed four women detained during an anti-government rally, Amnesty International said.

According to testimony gathered by Amnesty International, the women, who were arrested on 19 March, were beaten during and after their arrest.

While in detention they were forced to undergo naked body checks on the spurious suspicion of concealing drugs in their genitals. They were forced to strip and squat several times while in prison.

"The Maldives has an image as a luxury holiday destination, and over the past few years, it had established a positive track record on human rights. But the fact is at the moment, not only is repression of peaceful political protest an everyday reality, it has taken an appalling new twist with this cruel and degrading treatment," said Amnesty International's Maldives researcher Abbas Faiz.

"The government of Maldives must ensure that these allegations are investigated and that those found to be responsible are brought to justice.

"The beating and sexual harassment of political detainees under the pretext that they are suspected of possessing drugs must end. None of the four women detainees had been arrested on that suspicion so there was no justification for the searches."

The rally on 19 March was organized by the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) to protest about the opening of parliament where the new President, Dr Waheed was to give a speech.

Protests have continued in the capital Malé and other cities since 7 February in support of former president, Mohamed Nasheed who was ousted after a police and military mutiny.

There is no indication that the women protesters were involved in any acts of violence during the rally. Their detention therefore was arbitrary.

Cases of molestation and other humiliating sexual acts against women have been reported in the past, but these latest allegations highlight a new police drive to suppress political activity under the pretext of body searching female detainees for alleged possession of drugs.

Maldives police has denied the allegations and said those aggrieved should ask Maldives Human Rights Commission (MHRC) to investigate their allegations.

But the MHRC has told Amnesty International that they have serious limitations in terms of trained investigative staff and dealing with human rights issues in a highly politicized environment is an overwhelming challenge for them.

The MHRC has yet to complete investigations into the alleged sexual harassment of female detainees in 2004.

256

315

3

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The beating and sexual harassment of political detainees under the pretext that they are suspected of possessing drugs must end. None of the four women detainees had been arrested on that suspicion so there was no justification for the searches.

”

Abbas Faiz, Amnesty International's Maldives researcher

Wed, 28/03/2012

"By referring cases of police abuse of power to the MHRC, when it is clear that such investigations are beyond its capacity, the government is in effect forfeiting its own responsibility to enforce respect for human rights within the police force," said Abbas Faiz

"This is the wrong message to give to the police as it will encourage police officers to violate human rights with impunity. The Maldives government must ensure that the right to freedom of assembly and expression is protected at all times."

Case testimonies

Yusra Hussein, 22, told Amnesty International that four women police officers arrested her around lunch time on 19 March, near the Maldivian Democratic Party offices. She said: "They beat me as they handcuffed me. They beat me on my stomach, which was very painful as I had had a caesarean section in the past. They grabbed my breasts and twisted them."

They then took her from the police station to the Dhoonidoo detention centre, on an island about 5km north-west of Malé.

"They beat me there with electric cables. I still have marks of their beating on my body. They then forced me to strip naked and made me squat on the floor. They took a urine test and did a body check on me.

"They forced me to sit in that position for a body check several times. Each time I felt sick but they paid no attention. They just wanted to humiliate me as they were shouting filthy words at me all the while."

Aishath Muna, said police arrested her after she had taken another female protester to hospital. Police had pepper sprayed the protester and she had been feeling sick. When Aishath Muna returned to the MDP offices, two policewomen arrested her. She said the handcuffs which they used on her were very tight. She complained but they took no notice. She was then taken to Dhoonidoo detention centre where she was forced to take off her clothes and undergo a body check.

Mariyam Waheeda, 44, told Amnesty International that two women police officers who detained her on 19 March beat her and dragged her along the floor. They grabbed her breasts and twisted them while handcuffing her. She said they took her to the police station and only released her after she convinced them she had not taken part in the protest rallies.

Aishath Aniya said she had been forced to undergo a urine test, was made to take off her T shirt, bra and jeans, and was told to squat three times.

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[Blog: Maldives security forces assault women protesters](#) (Blog, 29 February 2012)

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Islamic Minister, MPs, PPM and religious groups condemn UN Human Rights Commissioner

Posted By [Ahmed Naish](#) On November 27, 2011 @ 12:06 AM In [Society](#) | [39 Comments](#)

Statements by visiting UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay calling for a moratorium on flogging as a punishment for fornication and criticising the Muslim-only clause for citizenship in the Maldivian constitution have been widely condemned by religious NGOs, public officials and political parties.

In an [address delivered in parliament](#) ^[1] last Thursday, Pillay said the practice of flogging women found guilty of extra-marital sex "constitutes one of the most inhumane and degrading forms of violence against women, and should have no place in the legal framework of a democratic country."

The UN human rights chief called for a public debate "on this issue of major concern." In a press conference later in the day, Pillay called on the judiciary and the executive to issue a moratorium on flogging.

On article 9(d) of the constitution, which states "a non-Muslim may not become a citizen of the Maldives," Pillay said the provision was "discriminatory and does not comply with international standards."

Local media widely misreported Pillay as stating during Thursday evening's press conference that she did not believe the Maldives had a Constitution, which prompted a great deal of public outrage. Her comment, however, was in response to a challenge from Miadhu Editor Gabbe Latheef, who asked "if you believe we have a Constitution, why are you speaking against our Constitution?"

"I don't *believe* you have a Constitution, you *have* a constitution. The constitution conforms in many respects to universally respected human rights. Let me assure you that these human rights conform with Islam," Pillay said on Minivan News's recording of the press conference, however her phrasing was widely misinterpreted by the media.

Shortly after Pillay's speech in parliament, Islamic Minister Dr Abdul Majeed Abdul Bari told local media that "a tenet of Islam cannot be changed" and flogging was a *hudud* punishment prescribed in the Quran (24: 2) and "revealed down to us from seven heavens."

Bari noted that article 10 of the constitution established Islam as "the basis of all the laws of the Maldives" and prohibited the enactment of any law "contrary to any tenet of Islam," adding that the Maldives has acceded to international conventions with reservations on religious matters such as marriage equality.

In his Friday prayer sermon the following day, Bari asserted that "no international institution or foreign nation" had the right to challenge the practice of Islam and adherence to its tenets in the Maldives.

Meanwhile, the religious conservative Adhaalath Party issued [a statement](#) ^[2] on Thursday contending that tenets of Islam and the principles of Shariah were not subject to modification or change through public debate or democratic processes.

Adhaalath Party suggested that senior government officials invited a foreign dignitary to make statements that they supported but were "hesitant to say in public."

The party called on President Mohamed Nasheed to condemn Pillay's statements "at least to show to the people that there is no irreligious agenda of President Nasheed and senior government officials behind this."

The Adhaalath statement also criticised Speaker Abdulla Shahid and MPs in attendance on Thursday for neither informing Pillay that she "could not make such statements" nor making any attempt to stop her or object to the remarks.

The party insisted that Pillay's statements and the SAARC monuments in Addu City were "not isolated incidents" but part of a "broad scheme" by the government to "pulverize Islam in the Maldives and introduce false religions".

Later that night, the Civil Society Coalition – a network of NGOs that [campaigns successfully](#) ^[3] against regulations to allow sale of alcohol in city hotels to non-Muslims last year – announced a nation-wide mass protest on December 23 against the government's alleged efforts to secularise the country.

Spokesperson Mohamed Didi claimed the current administration was pursuing an agenda to "wipe out the Islamic faith of the Maldivian people" through indoctrination and "plots" to legalize apostasy and allow freedom of religion.

He suggested that "the few people who cannot digest the religion of the people should immediately leave the country."

The NGO coalition said it expected "over a 100,000 people" to participate in the planned protest.

Former President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom's Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) announced today that it would join the protest. PPM interim council member and religious scholar MP Dr Afrashim Ali told newspaper Haveeru that Pillay "can't say that to us" and condemned the statements on behalf of the party.

Afrashim called on the executive, parliament and judiciary to enact a law prohibiting any statements that "opposes the principles of Islam."

In [a statement](#) ^[4] today, religious NGO Islamic Foundation of Maldives (IFM) strongly condemned Pillay's remarks and criticised MPs for not objecting at Thursday's event.

Pillay's statements in parliament amounted to calling on MPs "to legalize fornication and gay marriage," IFM contended.

"Therefore, anyone who agrees to this surely becomes an apostate," the statement reads. "And if this [fornication and homosexuality] is spread anywhere, Almighty God has warned that fire will be rained upon them from the seven heavens."

Meanwhile, a [Facebook group](#) ^[5] was formed yesterday with members calling for her to be "slain and driven out of the country." The group currently has 207 members.

One member posted a banner to open a public debate on whether citizens should rise up and either "kill or lynch" those who "deny the Quran, not tolerate Islam and undermine the constitution."

The opposition Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP) also issued a statement calling on the government not to accept Pillay's suggestion for a public debate on flogging.

Although DRP Leader Ahmed Thasmeen Ali was the first to shake Pillay's hand after her address, the party's statement argued that "neither a Maldivian nor a foreigner has the right to consider the enforcement of a punishment specified in Islam a violation of human rights."

Independent MP Mohamed 'Kutti' Nasheed meanwhile [told newspaper Haveeru](#) ^[6] that Speaker Abdulla Shahid had to "bear full responsibility" for allowing Pillay to "talk about changing penalties of Islam in front of Muslims," adding that Dhivehi translations of her address were distributed to MPs in advance.

"This is a very serious problem. You can't say flogging is a form of violence against women," he said.

Nasheed explained that Pillay's remarks were tantamount to proclaiming in the Indian parliament that "worshiping cows is so uncivilised."

Echoing Nasheed's sentiments, MP Abdulla Abdul Raheem of the ruling Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) said allowing Pillay to make her statements was "a mockery of parliament", arguing that the Speaker's decision to allow her "to openly speak against the constitution" violated parliamentary rules of procedure.

Local daily Haveeru also published an [op-ed by editor Moosa Latheef](#) ^[7] censuring Speaker Abdulla Shahid and the MPs in attendance for not objecting to Pillay as her call for a public debate on flogging "made it very clear that she was working to shake the main pillar of Maldivians."

Speaking at a UNDP event yesterday, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Ahmed Faiz noted that the constitution placed limits on free speech and the right to free expression "cannot be used under any circumstances outside of Islamic principles or in violation of a tenet of Islam."

Protests led by religious groups that began outside the UN building yesterday are set to continue tonight near the tsunami memorial.

Article printed from Minivan News: <http://minivannews.com>

URL to article: <http://minivannews.com/society/islamic-minister-mps-ppm-and-and-religious-groups-condemn-human-rights-commissioner-28687>

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[1] address delivered in parliament: <http://minivannews.com/politics/flogging-for-fornication-inhumane-and-degrading-violence-against-women-navi-pillay-tells->

Allegations against Chief Judge first sent to Gayoom in 2005

Posted By [JJ Robinson](#) On January 26, 2012 @ 8:29 PM In [Politics,Society](#) | [35 Comments](#)

The first complaints filed against Chief Judge of the Criminal Court Abdulla Mohamed in July 2005 included allegations of misogyny, sexual deviancy, and throwing out an assault case despite the confession of the accused, Minivan News has learned.

A letter sent to President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom by then Attorney General Hassan Saeed, obtained by Minivan News (page [1](#) ^[1], [2](#) ^[2]), outlined three specific allegations against Abdulla Mohamed.

While presiding over a sexual offence case against Azeem Abdullah of Chaandhaneege, G.A.Kanduhulhudhoo, on May 19, 2005, Saeed told Gayoom that Abdulla Mohamed "made the two children who were summoned as witnesses against the accused stand in front [of the court] and asked them to look at the people present.

"He then made the children identify the individuals they were looking at. Although the children said in court that the accused performed the indecent act he was accused of, the Judge made the children act out the indecent act in the presence of the perpetrator and the rest of the court."

Saeed's second allegation concerned the hearing of physical assault case on June 6, 2005, against Ibrahim Ali of H. Saaroakaage.

"The case was submitted based on the admission of the accused that he had committed the assault, but Judge Abdulla Mohamed of the Criminal Court dismissed the case, stating that there was no case against the accused," Saeed wrote.

In Saeed's third allegation, concerning a criminal case on June 6, 2005, against Ahmed Naeem of Male' Municipality Special Register, "after completing the sentencing of the defendant, Abdulla Mohamed said, '...very few men ever meet women who love them. You may meet a woman who loves and cares for you. You should not run after a woman who does not love you. It is also stated in Holy Quran that women are very deceptive.'"

The Judicial Services Commission (JSC), the judicial watchdog, eventually formed a complaints committee to investigate the cases against Judge Abdulla in December 2009, which met 44 times but had failed to present a single report as of March 2011.

Speaking at an opposition rally on January 24 against the detention of Abdulla Mohamed, Saeed acknowledged that he was "not satisfied with Judge Abdulla's actions either."

"[But] he did not have to do things to my satisfaction. I submitted the legal points I noticed [related to the judge's conduct] to the head of the judiciary at the time, President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom. I could have removed Judge Abdulla from the post through pressure. But I did not do it because it was not my responsibility," Dr Saeed said.

"The constitution today forbids influencing judges. So, looking at the current scenario, the country has gone ten years backward."

The current judicial crisis was sparked after Abdulla Mohamed filed a case in the Civil Court which granted him an injunction halting his further investigation by the JSC. This was following by a High Court ruling against a police summons on January 16, which prompted police to request the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) take the judge into custody.

Home Minister Hassan Afeef subsequently accused the judge of "taking the entire criminal justice system in his fist", [listing 14 cases of obstruction](#) ^[3] of police duty including withholding warrants for up to four days, ordering police to conduct unlawful investigations and disregarding decisions by higher courts.

Afeef accused the judge of "deliberately" holding up cases involving opposition figures, barring media from corruption trials, ordering the release of suspects detained for serious crimes "without a single hearing", and maintaining "suspicious ties" with family members of convicts sentenced for dangerous crimes.

The judge also released a murder suspect "in the name of holding ministers accountable", who went on to kill another victim.

Vice President of the Maldives Dr Mohamed Waheed Hassan opposed the judge's detention, stating on his blog that "I am ashamed and totally devastated by the fact that this is happening in a government in which I am the elected Vice President."

The government then [requested assistance](#) ^[4] from the international community to reform the

Reference 12
judiciary. Observing that judicial reform “really should come from the Judicial Services Commission (JSC),” Foreign Minister Ahmed Naseem said the commission’s shortcomings are “now an issue of national security.”

“We have been working to improve the judiciary since we came to power, but we have not succeeded,” said Naseem. “We have asked the international community to assist us in this effort several times, and we find that they are willing to help at this point,” he explained.

A group of lawyers have meanwhile sent a case to the International Criminal Court (ICC), appealing that the judge’s detention is an “enforced disappearance” under the ICC’s Rome Statute.

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URL to article: <http://minivannews.com/politics/allegations-against-chief-judge-first-sent-to-gayoom-in-2005-31241>

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[1] 1: <http://minivannews.com/cmsMUIH10/..files/2012/01/hassansaeedletter1.jpg>

[2] 2: <http://minivannews.com/cmsMUIH10/..files/2012/01/hassansaeedletter2.jpg>

[3] listing 14 cases of obstruction: <http://minivannews.com/politics/chief-judge-took-entire-criminal-justice-system-in-his-fist-afeef-30926>

[4] requested assistance: <http://minivannews.com/politics/government-requests-international-legal-assistance-to-clean-up-judiciary-31057>

Calls for religious tolerance “shocked the nation”: Chief Justice Faiz

Posted By [Eleanor Johnstone](#) On January 1, 2012 @ 7:11 PM In [Society](#) | [22 Comments](#)

The December 10 silent protest for religious tolerance is a “warning” of the Maldives’ weakening Islamic faith, Chief Justice Ahmed Faiz Hussein has said.

Faiz’s claim that the demonstration “shocked the nation” was made yesterday at the opening of the Islamic Scholars Symposium, reports local media.

“It was a warning that showed us the increased role religious scholars are required to play and the work they need to do,” he said.

Recommending that the scholars focus on strengthening the Islamic faith rather than debate contentious issues, Faiz said students and lawmakers required further education about the Shariah penal code.

The [December 10 demonstration](#) ^[1] was originally planned for International Human Rights Day as a peaceful, silent protest. However, the 30 participants were attacked with stones, and blogger Ismail ‘Khilath’ Rasheed was taken to the hospital with head injuries.

Rasheed was subsequently [arrested](#) ^[2] without charges following requests from religious NGOs and ruling Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) MP ‘Reeko’ Moosa Manik that police [investigate the demonstration](#) ^[3].

Rasheed’s detention was [extended](#) ^[4] a second time last week, after Reporters Without Borders (RSF) [criticised](#) ^[5] the claim that the gathering had violated national laws, and Amnesty International [declared](#) ^[6] Rasheed a prisoner of conscience.

Meanwhile, Islamic Minister Dr Abdul Majeed Abdul Bari has [requested](#) ^[7] the parliamentary National Security Committee to include appropriate punishments for those who call for religious freedom in the nation’s penal code. In discussions, he said the punishments available under Penal Code Article 88(a), (b) and (c) were “soft.”

Bari previously ordered the Communications Authority of Maldives (CAM) to [shut down Rasheed’s blog](#) ^[8] on the grounds that it contained anti-Islamic content.

This weekend’s Scholars Symposium is attended by 60 scholars who are debating seven key points of contention, reports Haveeru.

Points include the method for handling controversial religious issues; the formation of prayer rows between mosque pillars; alms payment; the Qunooth prayer; and the traditions of the Prophet Mohamed.

According to local media, the conference is the biggest of its kind to be held in the Maldives. Originally scheduled for January it was allegedly postponed for reasons unspecified.

The conference comes one week after a coalition of religious NGOs and opposition parties rallied thousands across the country to “defend Islam”, setting off a game of chicken with the government which has lately put the tourism industry on the chopping block.

President Mohamed Nasheed attended yesterday’s opening ceremony.

Religious conservative Adhaalath Party President Sheikh Imran Abdulla and several other scholars from the party are participating in the conference.

Members of Adhaalath Party and Minister Bari were unavailable for comment at time of press.

Article printed from Minivan News: <http://minivannews.com>

URL to article: <http://minivannews.com/society/calls-for-religious-tolerance-shocked-the-nation-chief-justice-faiz-30174>

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[1] December 10 demonstration : <http://minivannews.com/society/protesters-calling-for-religious-tolerance-attacked-with-stones-threatened-with-death-29260>

[2] arrested: <http://minivannews.com/politics/hilath-arrested-as-religious-protests-interrogated-both-ways-29417>

New religious unity regulations crack down on extremist preaching in Maldives

Posted By [JJ Robinson](#) and [Ahmed Naish](#) On September 18, 2011 @ 5:37 PM In [Society](#) | [54 Comments](#)

New [religious unity regulations](#) ^[1] have been published in the government's gazette cracking down on extremist and unlicensed preaching of Islam in the Maldives.

The regulations reflect the enforcement of the Religious Unity Act and were originally put forward by the Islamic Ministry, but have undergone numerous drafts and revisions over the past year. The penalty for violating the regulations under the Act is 2-5 years imprisonment, banishment or house arrest.

Under the regulations – the government's interpretation of the Act – scholars foreign or local must be licensed to preach in the Maldives by the Islamic Ministry, and have received at least a first degree at one of 36 listed universities.

None of these are Maldivian institutions, although the regulations stipulate that new institutions would be evaluated on a case by case basis, and the list reviewed every three months.

The regulations contain general principles for the delivery of religious sermons. These include an emphasis on specifically referencing the Quran when statements are made, and clarifying the authenticity of Hadith.

Preachers are instructed not to express anything "against general agreement" reached among Islamic scholars, or provide any information "about issues disputed among Islamic scholars that serves to create disunity among the people and result in internal conflicts."

The regulations also require preachers to refrain "from passing off as Islam one's personal stand – that may result in obstruction of human progress and development and hinder modern findings and intellectual advancements."

Controversially, preachers are also asked not to preach in a manner that flaunts human dignity, that may be interpreted as racial and gender discrimination, prevent people from education or health services in the name of Islam, or demeans the character or creates hatred towards people of any other religion.

Foreign scholars preaching in the Maldives "should not talk against Maldives' social norms, nor should they criticise Maldives' domestic policies and laws," the regulations state.

It remains illegal to propagate any other religion other than Islam, and to carry or display in public books on religions other than Islam, "and the translation into Dhivehi language such books and writings on other religions." Proselytising by foreigners remains punishable by deportation.

Articles involving comparisons between Islam and other religions, "and description of sayings and expressions about Islam by people of other religions, and dissemination of Muslim expressions on other religions", are exempt, according to the regulations.

Media is banned from producing or publicising programs, talking about or disseminating audio "that humiliates Allah or his prophets or the holy Quran or the Sunnah of the Prophet (Mohamed) or the Islamic faith."

"This also includes the broadcasting of material (on other religions) produced by others and recording of such programs by the local broadcaster, and broadcasting such material by the unilateral decision of the local broadcaster," the regulations stipulate.

Reaction

At a press conference today, the Islamic Foundation of Maldives (IFM) contended that the regulations conflicted with both the Maldivian constitution and the Quran.

In February this year, the IFM [filed a case at the High Court](#) ^[2] requesting that outdated provisions in the [Protection of Religious Unity Act of 1994](#) ^[3] be abolished.

Article 2(b) of the Act states that permission to preach or offer instruction in religious matters must be sought in writing with the President.

Islamic Foundation Lawyer Shaheem Ahmed argued today that the Act conflicted with article 27 of the constitution, which states that, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought and the freedom to communicate opinions and expressions in a manner that is not contrary to any tenet of Islam."

Reference: 15
"Sadly however no hearings have been conducted in this case so far. We don't know why this is so," he said.

In addition, Shaheem argued, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs did not have the legal authority to enact regulations that restricts or limits fundamental rights and freedoms enumerated in chapter two of the constitution.

Article 16 states that the rights and freedoms contained in the chapter could be restricted "only to such reasonable limits prescribed by a law enacted by the People's Majlis".

"After this regulation was approved, from this day onward no one without a degree could teach Islam in any school in the country," he said, adding that imparting knowledge of Islam by a person without a degree would also be illegal.

As provision 5(l) of the regulations prohibits speech that could "incite hatred among the public, demean or undermine the human dignity of followers of another religion," Shaheem noted that the Quran described Jews as "evil people and liars" and cautioned against "taking Jews as your friends."

"Would expressing something like this from the Quran incite hatred or love towards us from Jews?" he asked. "The people who formulated this regulation should consider that the basis of Islam is the Quran."

Quran 2:120 states that, "Never will the Jews or Christians be pleased with you till you follow their religion" while 5:51 reads, "Take not the Jews and the Christians as Auliya' (friends, protectors, helpers, etc.), they are but Auliya' to one another. And if any amongst you takes them as Auliya', then surely he is one of them. Verily, Allah guides not those people who are the Zalimun (polytheists and wrong-doers and unjust)."

Sheikh Ibrahim Fareed Ahmed meanwhile called on Islamic Minister Dr Abdul Majeed Bari to "repent" for approving a regulation that conflicted with the Quran.

"[The regulations] obstruct the freedom granted by Almighty God to spread Islam. It is therefore completely void," he claimed.

Fareed called on the government to review the regulations and reconsider enforcing the new rules, urging Islamic Minister Bari to consult religious scholars who were not Adhaalath party members and "not make such decisions on your own."

"We urge very respectfully and with affection, to reconsider this and change [the regulations] so that it does not conflict with the Quran," he said. "And don't try to narrow Islamic matters in the country."

IFM President Ibrahim Fauzee meanwhile revealed that the foundation was preparing to mount a legal challenge to the regulations at the Supreme Court.

Adhaalath Party condemns regulations

The Adhaalath Party, which controls the Islamic Ministry, issued a [press statement](#) ^[4] today criticising the removal of "very important principles" from the [original draft](#) ^[5], and distanced the party's religious scholars from the regulations.

The statement notes that the regulations were drafted by a legal team from police and 11 prominent religious scholars and approved by three Attorney Generals.

"We would like to inform the beloved Maldivian people that the party condemns [the changes] in the harshest terms and the party's religious scholars and members renounces the gazetted regulations," it reads.

"We note that provisions from English law have been added that were not in the regulations before and are not suited to a 100 percent Islamic community. We also note that other dangerous changes have been made to the regulations," reads the statement signed by Sheikh Ilyas Hussein, vice-president of Adhaalath party's council of religious scholars.

"While the Minister of Islamic Affairs [Dr Bari, president of the religious scholars council] was requested to not agree to publishing the regulations in the gazette without consultation with the party's scholars, we want to reveal that the regulations were brought out in the form it is in the gazette without any discussion at all with Adhaalath party's council of religious scholars."

Among the clauses that were removed were provisions outlining criteria for issuing preaching licenses, and prohibitions on broadcasting "un-Islamic" material.

These included provisions that preachers must be Sunni, and according to the Adhaalath Party, a provision requiring that religious fatwas (edicts or rulings) must be issued in accordance with the Sunni sect was also removed, and so-called 'blasphemy' laws appeared to be toned down.

Laws forbidding independent prayer congregations were also scrapped.

Reference: 15

The amendment regulations published in the government gazette yesterday was made up of 12 provisions, whereas [previous drafts](#) ^[5] contained 40 provisions and a number of sub-clauses.

A more 'academic' approach

Former member of the Special Majlis and the new Constitution's drafting committee, Ibrahim 'Ibra' Ismail, who was involved in redrafting the regulations, told Minivan News that they set out a more "academic" approach to preaching Islam in the Maldives, and were targeted at curbing the spread of extremism.

"[The regulations] do not impinge on freedom of expression, compared to the first draft, and I believe we have taken out those elements," Ibra said.

"We have observed in this country and elsewhere that there are people who misquote the Quran and twist it around to propagate their agenda. These provisions curb that," he explained.

"What in effect we are ensuring is that preachers should not say whatever comes to their mind. We say that if those preaching religion must refer to sources – the Quran and the Prophet's sayings – so someone can independently verify if they wish.

"Where scholars deliver sources on areas and issues that are in dispute, these regulations require that they should state that," he said.

"We put in a provision that prohibits hate speech, such as no one should propagate xenophobia or negative sentiments towards other religious."

The criminalisation of those who violated the Act was not stipulated by the regulations, but in law, he explained.

"Currently the parliament is reviewing the relevant legislation (the Religious Unity Act), what we are doing is simply setting out how this can be enforced," Ibra said, confirming that 2-5 years sentences was "more or less" what was in the Act.

Enforcement would ultimately be a court decision, he explained, with the Islamic Ministry only having the right to temporarily suspend preaching license pending the outcome of the court decision.

Ibra suggested that religious groups active in the Maldives – such as the Islamic Foundation of the Maldives and Jamiyyath-al-Salaf – should welcome the regulations, "as until now there has been a move by some people to silence them. These regulations do not silence them, but ask them to engage and follow procedures in their work. There are no ramifications for any particular group – again this different to what was originally proposed."

He disputed that outlawing extremist preaching would drive the practice underground, and lead to a repeat of [the 2007 Himandhoo incident](#) ^[6], in which islanders donned red motorcycle helmets and armed themselves with batons and knives to defend the Dhar al Khuir mosque from a police crackdown.

In the ensuing skirmish, a policeman was taken captive and another's hand was severed. Shortly afterwards a video discovered on an Al Qaeda forum was found to contain footage taken inside the Dhar-al-khuir mosque moments before it was raided by police.

"Himandhoo was not based on religion – those were highly politicised times," Ibra said. "What I believe is that this will allow liberal-minded thinkers to convince people of the middle ground. Initially there may be some reactions, but I'm optimistic."

Download an unofficial translation of the new regulations ([English](#) ^[1])

Article printed from Minivan News: <http://minivannews.com>

URL to article: <http://minivannews.com/society/new-religious-unity-regulations-crack-down-on-extremist-preaching-in-maldives-25734>

URLs in this post:

[1] religious unity regulations: <http://minivannews.com/cmsMUIH10/./files/2011/09/Translation-of-Religious-Unity-Regulation.docx>

[2] filed a case at the High Court: <http://minivannews.com/society/license-to-preach-regulation-contradicts-freedom-of-speech-argues-islamic-foundation-16109>

[3] Protection of Religious Unity Act of 1994: <http://www.mvlaw.gov.mv/pdf/ganoon/chapterII/6-94.pdf>

[4] press statement: <http://adhaalath.org.mv/?p=2745>

Protesters calling for religious tolerance attacked with stones, threatened with death

Posted By [JJ Robinson](#) On December 10, 2011 @ 11:55 PM In [Society](#) | [105 Comments](#)

Police are investigating a violent attack on a 'silent protest' calling for religious tolerance, held at the Artificial Beach to mark Human Rights Day.

Witnesses said a group of men threw rocks at the 15-30 demonstrators, calling out threats and vowing to kill them.

One witness who took photos of the attacked said he was "threatened with death if these pictures were leaked. He said we should never be seen in the streets or we will be sorry."

Among those injured in the attack was Ismail 'Khilath' Rasheed, a controversial blogger whose website was [recently blocked](#) ^[1] by the Communications Authority of the Maldives (CAM) on the order of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs.

Rasheed suffered a head injury and was rushed to Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital (IGMH).

"They started hitting us with bricks. They were aiming at our heads – we could tell they were serious and wanted to kill us," Rasheed told Minivan News from hospital. "I was taken on a motorcycle to IGMH, but I could see them behind me still hitting my friends."

Police Sub-Inspector Ahmed Shiyam said police attended the scene after the attackers had departed, and were currently investigating the cause of the violence. No arrests had yet been made, he added.

The protesters, calling themselves 'Silent Solidarity', had earlier issued a press release stating that their intention was to "make the Maldives and the international community aware of the rising religious intolerance in the Maldives, and to condemn the Constitutionally endorsed suppression of religious freedom. We also denounce the increasing use being made of Islam as a tool of political power."

"Silent Solidarity will be protesting against discrimination of all races, gender, sexual preferences and religious beliefs and supporting freedom of thought and expression. In our silence, we speak volumes," the group's statement said.

The Maldives has come under increasing international scrutiny following an apparent rise in religious intolerance.

Several monuments gifted to the Maldives by other SAARC countries during the recent summit in Addu have [been defaced](#) ^[2] or stolen on the grounds that they are idolatrous. Islamic Minister Dr Abdul Majeed Abdul Bari has condemned the monuments while the opposition has hailed the vandals as "national heroes".

Protests also [erupted last month](#) ^[3] after UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay [spoke in parliament](#) ^[4] calling for the government and the judiciary to issue a moratorium and debate on flogging as a punishment for extra-marital sex.

"This practice constitutes one of the most inhumane and degrading forms of violence against women and should have no place in the legal framework of a democratic country," Pillay said.

"The issue needs to be examined, and therefore I called for a countrywide discussion. It is much better if the issue is transparent and debated."

Pillay also stated that requirement under the Maldivian constitution that all Maldivians be Muslim "is discriminatory, and does not comply with international standards. I would urge a debate again on the issue to open up entrance of the constitution to all."

Challenged by a local journalist that the Maldives was both obliged to protect the religion of Islam, she replied: "You have a constitution which conforms in many respects to universal human rights. Let me assure you that these human rights conform with Islam."

She added that the Maldives had signed international treaties that are legally-binding obligations, "and such a practice conflicts with these obligations undertaken by the Maldives."

The following day protesters gathered outside the UN building, carrying placards stating "Islam is not a toy", "Ban UN" and "Flog Pillay", and called on authorities to arrest the UN High Commissioner.

MPs roundly condemned Pillay's statements.

Reference: 16

"What we should be worried about holding discussions against the fundamentals of Islam in a 100 percent Muslim country such as the Maldives is that we may start questioning about worshipping God Almighty tomorrow," said opposition Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP) MP Dr Afrashim Ali.

Ruling Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) MP Mohamed 'Colonel' Nasheed said the Maldives "will never ever open doors for religions other than Islam in the Maldives. We'll not give the opportunity to speak against the fundamentals and principles of Islam in the parliament."

MP Riyaz Rasheed, from the opposition-aligen Dhivehi Qaumeey Party (DQP) condemned the Speaker Abdulla Shahid from allowing Pillay to complete her address.

"There is a good chance for us to directly say that Abdulla Shahid has made a good deal with this government to wipe out the religion of Islam from this country," MP Rasheed said.

President Mohamed Nasheed has meanwhile said that Maldivians "should have the self-belief and resolve not to have our faith shaken by listening to statements or opinions expressed by others."

"That the punishments and rulings of Islamic Sharia are not inhumane is very clear to us," Nasheed said. "We have the opportunity to show the whole world how noble and civilised Sharia is. That is because we are the only Islamic nation with a democratically-elected government.

"Wasting that opportunity in a Jihadi spirit" with the claim of "defending Islam" was unacceptable, Nasheed said. "Opposition parties will always attack us by using religion as a weapon. [But] I believe that this country is the only Islamic nation where Islamic Sharia has been practiced uninterrupted for 700 years."

Religious sentiment in the Maldives can often be vocal and heated, but has rarely led to physical violence.

In late May 2010, well-known Islamic preacher Dr Zakir Naik visited the Maldives and delivered a sermon in the capital Male'. During a question-and-answer session 37 year-old Mohamed Nazim stood up and declared himself "Maldivian and not a Muslim".

Nazim's [declaration](#) ^[5] angered the 11,000 strong crowd, and he was escorted from the venue by police and officials from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs amid calls for his execution.

After two days of religious counselling in police custody, Nazim appeared before television cameras at an Islamic Ministry press conference and gave Shahada – the Muslim testimony of belief – and apologised for causing "agony for the Maldivian people" and requested that the community accept him back into society.

In July 2010, 25 year-old air traffic controller Ismail Mohamed Didi was [found hanged from the control tower of Male' International Airport](#) ^[6] in an apparent suicide, after seeking asylum in the UK for fear of persecution over his stated lack of religious belief.

"Maldivians are proud of their religious homogeneity and I am learning the hard way that there is no place for non-Muslim Maldivians in this society," Didi wrote in a letter to an international humanitarian organisation, prior to his death.

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URL to article: <http://minivannews.com/society/protesters-calling-for-religious-tolerance-attacked-with-stones-threatened-with-death-29260>

URLs in this post:

[1] recently blocked: <http://minivannews.com/politics/blog-crack-down-is-just-the-beginning-warns-censored-blogger-28433>

[2] been defaced: <http://minivannews.com/society/pakistans-idolatrous-saarc-monument-set-ablaze-by-protesters-28172>

[3] erupted last month: <http://minivannews.com/politics/maldivian-islamic-groups-call-for-arrest-of-un-high-commissioner-on-human-rights-28676>

[4] spoke in parliament: <http://minivannews.com/politics/flogging-for-fornication-inhumane-and-degrading-violence-against-women-navi-pillay-tells-majlis-28616>

[5] declaration : <http://minivannews.com/society/revelations-of-a-former-apostate-mohamed-nazim-speaks-to-minivan-11617>

[6] found hanged from the control tower of Male' International Airport: <http://minivannews.com/society/hanged-air-traffic-controller-sought-asylum-for-fear-of-religious-persecution-9381>

Prominent blogger Hilath Rasheed in critical condition after stabbing

Posted By [JJ Robinson](#) On June 5, 2012 @ 12:38 AM In [Society](#) | [52 Comments](#)

Prominent Maldivian blogger and journalist Ismail 'Hilath' Rasheed is in a critical condition after he was stabbed in the neck near his house in Male' on Monday evening.

Police Sub-Inspector Hassan Haneef confirmed that Rasheed was stabbed around 8:15pm and was undergoing emergency treatment in ADK hospital.

No arrests have been made, "however there is CCTV in the area and we are trying to get something on it," Haneef stated.

Police had cordoned off the area around the blood-stained pavement at time of press. There was on Monday evening no indication as to the motivation of the attack.

An informed source at ADK hospital said Rasheed was bleeding but conscious when he was brought to the hospital, and that he was expected to remain in surgery until 2:30am.

"They slit his throat clean through the trachea, and missed a vital artery by millimetres," the source said, around 11:30pm, giving Rasheed a "five percent chance ... It doesn't look good."

Early on Tuesday morning the source reported that Rasheed's condition had stabilised: "He'll be in intensive care for a couple of days. He's breathing through a tube now."

Sub-Inspector Haneef said a second individual was stabbed in the back at 11:00pm near Male's garbage dump and had been taken to Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital (IGMH) in a critical condition. Local media reported that the victim was believed to be a Bangladeshi national.

Second attack

Rasheed, a once outspoken blogger against extremism and former editor of newspaper Haveeru, was previously attacked by a group of men on December 10, 2011 – Human Rights Day – while attending a protest calling for religious tolerance.

A group of men attacked the protesters with stones, and Rasheed was taken to IGMH with a fractured skull.

He was subsequently [arrested by police](#) ^[1] for questioning over his involvement in the protest gathering, and jailed for over three weeks.

Amnesty International [declared him a 'prisoner of conscience'](#) ^[2], and said it was "dismayed that instead of defending Ismail 'Khilath' Rasheed, who has peacefully exercised his right to freedom of the expression, the government of Maldives has detained him. Moreover, the government has taken no action to bring to justice those who attacked the 'silent' demonstrators, even though there is credible photographic evidence of the attack."

The Foreign Ministry subsequently [called for an investigation](#) ^[3] "by relevant authorities" into the attack on the protest.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) also condemned both the December 10 attack on Rasheed and his arrest, noting that he was not only one of the country's leading free speech advocates, but one of the few Maldivians bloggers to write under his own name.

"The Maldivian constitution bans the promotion of any religion other than Islam but guarantees freedom of assembly and expression as long as it does not contravene Islam. Rasheed professes to be an adherent of Sufism, which emphasises the inner, spiritual dimension of Islam," RSF stated at the time.

Censored blogger

Rasheed's popular and controversial blog, www.hilath.com ^[4], was [blocked in November 2011](#) ^[5] by the Communications Authority of the Maldives (CAM) on the order of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs. The Ministry made the request on the grounds that the site contained anti-Islamic material, CAM confirmed at the time.

Hilath claimed he was being censored for expressing his version of Islam, and called for more freedom of interpretation within the faith.

"I call upon all concerned to amend the clause in the constitution which requires all Maldivians to be Sunni Muslims only," his statement read. "Unto you your religion and unto me my religion,"

and 'There is no compulsion in religion'," he said, quoting Qur'an 109:6 and 2:256.

Reference: 17

Hilath claimed at the time that the blocking of his website had a political edge: "If Sunni Muslims are the conservatives, then the Sufi Muslims are the liberals," he told Minivan News. "I think this is a conservative attack on the site. They think if you're not a Sunni, you're an unbeliever."

Following the blocking of his blog and his attack in December, Rasheed became less outspoken on the subject of religion and withdrew from the public spotlight.

On May 12 he [tweeted](#) ^[6] his intention to stop blogging altogether, and stated that he had "repented and am now a Muslim. But a very tolerant one at that."

Article printed from Minivan News: <http://minivannews.com>

URL to article: <http://minivannews.com/society/prominent-blogger-hilath-rasheed-in-critical-condition-after-stabbing-38564>

URLs in this post:

[1] arrested by police: <http://minivannews.com/politics/hilath-arrested-as-religious-protests-interrogated-both-ways-29417>

[2] declared him a 'prisoner of conscience': <http://minivannews.com/society/amnesty-declares-imprisoned-blogger-a-prisoner-of-conscience-29766>

[3] called for an investigation: <http://minivannews.com/politics/foreign-ministry-calls-for-investigation-of-attack-on-silent-protest-30731>

[4] www.hilath.com: <http://www.hilath.com/>

[5] blocked in November 2011: <http://minivannews.com/politics/blog-crack-down-is-just-the-beginning-warns-censored-blogger-28433>

[6] tweeted: <http://twitter.com/#!/hilath>

Two arrested in connection with the stabbing of Bangladeshi man

Posted By [Ahmed Nazeer](#) On June 11, 2012 @ 6:20 PM In [Society](#) | [No Comments](#)

Police have arrested two Maldivian men who were allegedly involved in the stabbing of a Bangladeshi man last night at about 12:30am, while he was near Personal Computers, a computer shop in the Maafanu ward of Male'.

The names and identity of the pair arrested were not disclosed to the media but police said one man was 18 and the other was 19 years-old.

Police said they have confiscated the sharp weapon the assailants used near Maafannu Vakkaru house, with blood on it.

According to police the Bangladeshi man was stabbed in the neck from behind, and he was taken to Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital (IGMH) for treatment.

A statement police issued today said that the man's condition was improving.

Police Sub-Inspector Hassan Haneef today told Minivan News that police have information that four persons were involved in the attack on the Bangladeshi man.

"We are searching for the other two involved," Haneef said. "We are not very clear on the motive behind the attack."

The stabbing is the latest in a wave of similar incidents across Male', some of which have proven fatal.

Early last week, prominent Maldivian blogger and journalist Ismail 'Hilath' Rasheed was left in a critical condition after his throat was slashed outside his house in Male'. A Bangladeshi man was also stabbed the same evening and suffered minor injuries.

On May 30, the dead body of 16 year-old Mohamed Arham was discovered by police inside the park behind Kulliyathul Dhirasathul Islamiyya.

On May 31, 65 year-old Hassan Abubakur was found murdered inside his own house on the island of Maafaru in Noonu Atoll.

Police have arrested suspects for every stabbing incident with the exception of the attack on Hilath.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) [have condemned](#) ^[1] the attack on the journalist, describing it as having "all the hallmarks of a targeted murder attempt."

"Rasheed has made many enemies through his outspoken blogging. The authorities in charge of the investigation should not rule out the possibility that this was linked to his journalistic activity. He is a well-known journalist who has repeatedly been censored, arrested and threatened," RSF said in a statement.

"The police must, as a matter of urgency, put a stop to the harassment of Rasheed and take the issue of his safety seriously. Any lack of response on their part will constitute a criminal failure to assist a person in danger."

Article printed from Minivan News: <http://minivannews.com>

URL to article: <http://minivannews.com/society/two-arrested-in-connection-with-the-stabbing-of-bangladeshi-man-38858>

URLs in this post:

[1] have condemned: <http://minivannews.com/politics/reporters-without-borders-condemns-stabbing-of-hilath-rasheed-all-the-hallmarks-of-a-targeted-murder-attempt-38609>

Maldives: Pro-Sharia Islamic supremacist party topples govt with pamphlet accusing it of teaching "good things about the Jews"

Note here again the appeals to Islamic authenticity and frequent quotes from the Qur'an and invocations of Islam. Yet these are the people whom their coreligionists in the West would claim are misunderstanding their peaceful, non-political, non-supremacist religion. No explanation of this obvious contradiction has ever been forthcoming.

"Pamphlet By Maldivian Islamist Party That Triggered Coup Against Reformist President Nasheed: 'No Law Contrary to Islam Can Be Enacted in the Maldives'; Government Taught 'Good Things About the Jews,'" from [MEMRI](#), February 27 (thanks to Wimpy):

A 30-page pamphlet published by the Maldives opposition Dhivehi Qaume Party (DQP), which accused the government of pursuing anti-Islam policies and of establishing diplomatic relations with Israel, triggered what has been described as a coup leading to the ouster of reformist President Mohamed Nasheed. The document accused the Nasheed government of supporting Western governments in international forums, and claimed that it was teaching "good things about the Jews." Mohamed Nasheed headed the first elected democratic government of the Maldives, a group of islands situated about 400 km southwest of India.

As part of the protests triggered by the DQP pamphlet, on February 7, 2012, the Adhaalath Party, an Islamist party that had been part of the ruling coalition, declared President Nasheed as haram (a person or thing not permitted by Islam) and Vice President Dr. Mohamed Waheed as halal (permitted by Islam), leading to Nasheed's ouster and the swearing-in of Dr. Waheed as the country's new president.

Below are excerpts from the DQP pamphlet,[1] and from two articles, one by political commentator Azra Naseem on the rise of Islamists in Maldives,[2] and one by Indian journalist Indrani Bagchi on the infiltration of Pakistani jihadist groups into the country, the arrest of Maldivian militants in Pakistan, and lectures by Islamist scholars from India, Pakistan and the Middle Eastern countries.[3]

Pamphlet published by the Maldives opposition Dhivehi Qaume Party

The DQP Pamphlet

"No Law Contrary to Islam Can Be Enacted in the Maldives; Only Muslims Can Be Citizens of the Maldives; Article 67(g) of the Constitution Obliges All Citizens to Preserve and Protect Islam"

"President Nasheed's devious plot to destroy the Islamic faith of Maldivians

"This book [let] was prepared by the Dhivehi Qaume Party in consideration of the devious plans of this government to erase the age-old holy religion of Islam from the hearts of the Maldivians, provide opportunities for religions other than Islam, and demolish the religious unity and faith of Maldivians. The book [let] sheds light on the government's actions against Islam so far.

"The high honor accorded to Islam

"It is certain that the religion that we have followed without wavering for over 800 [years] is the true religion and the last religion revealed by God Almighty. In verse five [sic; the correct verse is three] of the Al-Maida Surah [chapter] of the Holy Quran, God reveals, '[...] and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.'

"And in verse 19 of the Al-Imran Surah, God reveals, 'The only religion approved by God is Submission [Islam].'

"Constitutional role of Islam in the Maldives

"The Maldives is a nation based on Islamic principles. Islam is the state religion. Islam is the main basis of Maldivian law. No law contrary to Islam can be enacted in the Maldives. Only Muslims can be citizens of the Maldives.

"Even the fundamental rights guaranteed in the constitution can be protected in a manner that is not contrary to any tenet of Islam. No one has the right to commit any act that is forbidden under Islamic Shariah. Freedom of expression is provided to citizens as long as it is not used in a manner contrary to any tenet of Islam.

"Submitting to Islam, obeying and inducing love for it is encouraged in the education system."

Reference: 19

"The constitution does not stop at according with fluent phrases a high status for Islam. Article 67(g) of the constitution obliges all citizens to preserve and protect Islam. This constitutional responsibility is entrusted the most to the head of state as the nation's ruler."

"[Despite His Education at Al-Azhar, Nasheed] Was Saying Openly That Penalties Clearly Stated in Islamic Shariah Were Unsited For the Times... That Such Things As Wearing the Veil Were Not Compulsory..."

"Degree of Islamic faith in the Maldives when Nasheed took office

"Religious matters had not been handled ideally when Nasheed took office. We had to spend over 19 years without a Dhivehi[-language] translation of our most sacred book, the Holy Quran. Permission to give sermons and counsel was granted [only] to those who shared the government's thought and philosophy.

"People were locked up and punished over issues like Qunooth [invocation in times of adversity] where scholars of different sects disagree. The beards of religious scholars were shaved with chilli sauce.

"Although the head of state was an al-Azhar University-educated scholar, he said openly that penalties clearly stated in Islamic Shariah were unsited for the times. In addition to saying that such things as wearing the veil were not compulsory, he showed it to the people in deed through his wife and children.

"Nasheed's golden opportunity and how he used it

"Nasheed became the ruler of this Islamic state on November 11, 2008 through the hard work and prayer of many political, religious and social organizations as well as many sincere citizens. Who among us has forgotten Sheikh Ilyas [Hussein's] emotional prayer in the pouring rain on the last night of the second round of the presidential campaign?

"Nasheed had a golden opportunity to take all of those individuals and groups along, change the way religion was treated before, strengthen Maldivians' Islamic faith and spread the bright light of Islam all across the country. However he missed this golden opportunity. Instead of strengthening the Islamic faith of Maldivians, he tried to weaken it. Instead of preserving the Islamic identity of Maldivians, he worked in ways that would allow other religions [to exist] on this Maldivian soil.

"Instead of aiding Muslims and the Islamic Ummah (community), he tried to please adversaries of Islam and aid them. As a result, the state of affairs has deteriorated to the point where we question whether our over-800- year-old Islamic nation would remain an Islamic nation. Today, visitors to our country have been encouraged to challenge our religion, Shariah and constitution in the most high places of this Islamic state.

"Nasheed's big project to wipe out Maldivians' religious identity

"Since assuming office Nasheed has been working ceaselessly to weaken the Islamic faith of Maldivians, allow space for other religions, and make irreligious and sinful behavior common. And to show that necessary characteristics a ruler and senior officials of an Islamic state must possess are not important, to reduce ties and relations with Muslims and Islamic nations and foster relations with adversaries of Islamic nations."

"Nasheed's Government Established Diplomatic Relations With the Nation [i.e. Israel] That is the Biggest Adversary of Muslims; It Was Agreed to Teach Young Maldivian Children Good Things About the Jews – At the State's Expense"

"Weakening the Islamic faith of Maldivians

"From the day Nasheed took office to the present day, he has undertaken many efforts to weaken the Islamic faith of Maldivians, especially the younger generation of Maldivians. Below are some of these efforts,

"Nasheed began the work of weakening Maldivians' Islamic faith by targeting young children. When Nasheed's government established diplomatic relations [in 2009] with the nation [i.e. Israel] that is the biggest adversary of Muslims, it was agreed to teach young Maldivian children good things about the Jews at the state's expense, by including it in school curricula..."

Posted by [Robert](#) on February 27, 2012 7:58 PM | [7 Comments](#)

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Condoms and black magic: police raid Usfasgandu

Posted By [JJ Robinson](#) On May 29, 2012 @ 2:55 PM In [Politics](#) | [36 Comments](#)

Additional reporting by Daniel Bosley

Police raided the opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) protest camp at Usfasgandu this morning, after obtaining a search warrant from the Criminal Court and cordoning off the area from MDP demonstrators.

MDP MP Mariya Ahmed Didi was inside the cordon showing the warrant to a group of media representatives shortly after 8:00am, as dozens of police began to gather in the area.

Reasons for the search as stated on the warrant included: "suspected criminal activity", "damage to public property", and "suspected black magic performed in the area".

Under evidence, the warrant alleged that people in the Usfasgandu area verbally abused police officers and damaged a police vehicle on April 20, obstructed a Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) exercise of May 9, and on May 25 "MDP protesters threw a cursed rooster at MNDF officers."

As blue-gloved officers from the Drug Enforcement Department (DED) arrived, a group of largely female protesters began to gather at the barricades set up near the STELCO building. The barricade was itself lightly manned by police, however a group of police stationed further back near the Dharubaaruge convention centre were equipped with riot shields, gas masks and rubber bullet guns.



[1]

The crowd was noisy and upset, but non-violent. An altercation erupted at the front between a group of women and several young men, whom protesters claimed had been sent by a government-affiliated party to provoke the crowd. Minivan News later observed one of these men being arrested by police after trying to break through the barricade.

Meanwhile, DED officers fanned out at the Usfasgandu site and began poking through plants and debris around the padlocked container under the main stage. A large group of police on the other side were picking through rocks along the seawall, while a police boat waited outside the harbour.

Media raced over to photograph the first discovery, retrieved from a nearby bush: cigarette butts and a brown substance wrapped in an MDP membership form. Police near the stage had meanwhile lifted up a wooden board and found a small plastic baggie containing the remnants of a dried substance.

A major find occurred after police broke open the container, searching through old paint tins and debris before reaching into a ceiling cavity, triumphantly producing a packet of condoms ('Moods' ultrathin).

The Usfasgandu area had been given to the MDP by the (MDP-dominated) Male' City Council, after it was evicted by police from its previous camp just metres down the road at the tsunami monument. Police at the time claimed the area was being used as a hub for criminal activity and assorted deviancy, and a similar raid uncovered beer and condoms. The camp was immediately dismantled by the police and MNDF, and walls were painted over grey to remove all trace of the MDP from the area.



[2]

The Usfasgandu raid this morning ends a stalemate between the Home Ministry – headed by former Justice Minister during Maumoon Abdul Gayoom's rule, Dr Mohamed Jameel – and Male' City Council.

The Housing Ministry initially sought to repossess the area from the Council, which refused to cooperate. The Home Ministry then [instructed police](#) ^[3] to retake the area, who approached the Criminal Court for a warrant. The court initially denied this warrant, stating that the repossession was a civil matter and not within its jurisdiction.

Reference: 20

Right days later and Home Minister Jameel yesterday [announced](#) ^[4] that the Ministry had received complaints of criminal activity in the area: "No complaints of any criminal activities had been raised with us at the time [of the original court order request]. But now many complaints have been received including criminal offences," he told local media.



[5]

Police Spokesperson Sub-inspector Hassan Haneef said that following a search of the area a decision would be taken on whether to shut down the site.

"If there is reasonable evidence of crimes being committed there, we would look to close the area," he said.

Male City Mayor Ali 'Maizaan' Manik was standing next to a cage full of crows – kept on the site by the MDP demonstrators to mock President Mohamed Waheed, who is caricatured as a crow on the popular Maakaanaa Show.

"I'm too angry to talk right now," he told Minivan News, as police were left to pick through the area after media scurried to protect their cameras from the sudden downpour.

Back through the police barricades, one visibly upset protester expressed frustration at what he described as "a police state".

"We just want somewhere to peacefully protest," he said. "They are just going to plant something, like drugs or explosives, so they can blame us. What can we do? We are helpless."

An older man came up, put his hand on his shoulder, and led him out of the rain.

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URLs in this post:

[1] Image: <http://minivannews.com/cmsMUIH10/..files/2012/05/usfasgandu3.jpg>

[2] Image: <http://minivannews.com/cmsMUIH10/..files/2012/05/usfasgandu6.jpg>

[3] instructed police: <http://minivannews.com/news-in-brief/housing-ministry-ask-police-to-take-over-usfasgandu-area-37660>

[4] announced: <http://minivannews.com/politics/home-minister-claims-reports-of-criminal-activity-in-usfasgandu-after-criminal-court-drops-complaint-38095>

[5] Image: <http://minivannews.com/cmsMUIH10/..files/2012/05/usfasgandu4.jpg>

Independent MP Ismail Abdul Hameed found guilty of corruption, banished

Posted By [Ahmed Nazeer](#) On August 29, 2011 @ 6:54 PM In [Politics,Society](#) | [9 Comments](#)

The Criminal Court today sentenced Independent MP for Kaashidhoo, Ismail Abdul Hameed, to one year and six months banishment after he was found guilty of corruption.

Banishment is a traditional punishment in the Maldives in which those sentenced are forbidden to leave a designated island.

The Prosecutor General pressed corruption charges against Hameed alleging that he had abused his authority as the former Director of Waste Management at the Male' municipality to financially benefit a Singaporean company named Island Logistics in a deal to purchase a barge.

According to local media reports, Judge Abdulla Didi noted in [the verdict](#) ^[1] that the agreement stipulated the barge was to be delivered within 90 days of signing the agreement, upon which 50 percent of the value was to be paid to Island Logistics.

Although the barge arrived in the Maldives on October 23, 2008, Hameed had however signed a document claiming that the barge was delivered on schedule on April 28, 2008.

The judge ruled that Hameed's actions were intentional and in violation of the Anti-Corruption Act.

Under article 73(c)(3) of the constitution, MPs found guilty of a criminal offence "and sentenced to a term of more than twelve months" would be stripped of their seat.

Article 78 of the constitution meanwhile states that "whenever there is a vacancy among the members of The People's Majlis, an election shall be held within sixty days from the date of the vacancy. A by-election shall not be held within six months prior to a general election."

Deputy Elections Commissioner Hassan Fayaz told Minivan News that the Elections Commission (EC) will commence work to hold the election of the vacant seat when the parliament officially informs the commission that a seat is vacant.

"If a seat is vacant the commission will hold the election to elect a member, but the parliament haven't officially informed the commission about a vacant seat," he said. "I think it will take some time because he has the right appeal the verdict in superior courts."

However, according to media reports, Hameed has not indicated that he will appeal the verdict at the High Court or not. The MP for Kaafu Atoll Kaashidhoo was not present for today's vote on the government's Goods and Services Tax.

Hameed had voted with the ruling Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) in most votes during the past two years.

Speaking at a press conference today, ruling Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) Chairperson 'Reeko' Moosa Manik criticised the judiciary and accused the Criminal Court of imposing double standards on MPs facing court cases.

Moosa claimed that Deputy Speaker Ahmed Nazim of the opposition People's Alliance (PA) had dodged court summons eight times.

When Nazim finally appeared at court, said Moosa, the [court barred journalists](#) ^[2] from observing the trial.

"If a parliament seat becomes vacant in any constituency of the Maldives, God willing, we at the MDP will do everything we can to win the seat," he said.

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URLs in this post:

[1] the verdict: <http://criminalcourt.gov.mv/images/stories/567-Cr-C-2010.pdf>

[2] court barred journalists: <http://minivannews.com/politics/journalists-banned-from-deputy-speaker-corruption-trial-24668>

Supreme Court strips Mohamed Musthafa of MP post

Feb 20, 2012 - 04:47 3 comments



Mohamed Musthafa speaking to the press after the Supreme Court stripped off his MP post today. PHOTO/ IBRAHIM FAID

The Supreme Court has delivered a verdict that Mohamed Musthafa was no longer considered to be a member of parliament as he no longer fulfilled the criteria needed to hold the position.

The verdict was delivered at a hearing held today following a court case filed by a member of the interim council of the Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) Umar Naseer at the Supreme Court to disqualify Musthafa who was the MP for Thimarafushi constituency and member of the Maldivian Democratic Party's (MDP) parliamentary group from his position.

Article 73 of the constitution states that an elected member of parliament would be disqualified if found to have a decreed debt which is not being paid as provided in the judgment.

The area was sealed off by the police during the progress of the hearing. Musthafa had claimed at the MDP rally last night that "the Supreme Court cannot do anything."

The case filed by Umar states that Musthafa had not repaid a loan of \$31,231.66 (MVR 481,952) borrowed from the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) which was formerly run in the country, as per a court order and thus it stripped him off his title and post of MP.

Before this, a hearing was held at the Supreme Court on October 20, 2011 and before that on March 17, 2011 which a year after the last hearing regarding the case was held.

Musthafa at the hearing on that day had said that the lower court had on August 26, 1997 ordered his company Seafood and Trade International to repay the loan, but that to this day the loan had not been repaid.

The verdict was delivered through a majority of four judges out of the seven presiding over the case.

The remaining three Judges had issued two different dissenting opinions pertaining to the case.

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22 Feb 2012 08:53

Criminal Court dismisses corruption case against Deputy Speaker Nazim

Posted By [Hawwa Lubna](#) On February 20, 2012 @ 6:51 PM In [Politics](#) | [21 Comments](#)

The Criminal Court ruled today that the Deputy Speaker of Parliament Ahmed Nazim cannot be prosecuted on charges of defrauding the now-defunct Ministry of Atolls Development, in the purchase of 220 harbour lights worth Rf1.95 million (US\$126,000) in 2004.

Minority opposition People Alliance (PA) Leader and MP Nazim, along with MP Ahmed "Redwave" Saleem (then-finance director at the ministry) and Abdullah Hameed, former Atolls Minister and half brother of Gayoom was charged in late 2009 on [multiple counts of conspiracy to defraud the Atolls Ministry](#).^[1]

The scam – first flagged in an [audit report](#)^[2] released in early 2009 – involved paper companies allegedly set up by the defendants to win bids for projects worth several hundred thousands dollars, including the fraudulent purchase of harbour lights, national flags and mosque sound systems.

The prosecution began in late 2009, after police uncovered evidence that implicated Hameed, Saleem and Nazim in a number of fraudulent transactions.

At a press conference in August 2009, police exhibited numerous quotations, agreements, tender documents, receipts, bank statements and forged cheques showing that Nazim received over US\$400,000 in the scam.

A hard disk seized during a raid of Nazim's office in May 2009 allegedly contained copies of forged documents and bogus letterheads.

Police maintained that money was channelled through the scam to Nazim who laundered cash through Namira Engineering and unregistered companies.

The first count focused on charges that Nazim used equipments and employees of Namira Engineering while he was the company's Managing Director to submit bids in the name of two companies called Tech Media Service Pvt Ltd and Standard Electric Works Pvt Ltd to provide 220 harbour lights to the Atolls Ministry without the company's prior knowledge in 2004.

The prosecutors requested the court to recover the money paid to Nazim for the supply on the grounds he defrauded the ministry.

However, during the trial Nazim had submitted six witnesses to prove the companies were aware of the submission of bid and presented Saleem as a witness to establish that the ministry received the 220 harbour lights.

The prosecution meanwhile presented as evidence the police investigation report, cheques issued by the state and bogus letterheads found during a police raid on Namira Engineering in May 2009.

Further, the prosecutors presented employees of Namira as key witnesses to prove they are acting on Nazim's orders.

However, Judge Saeed Ibrahim today dismissed the testimonies of the prosecutor's witnesses on the grounds that they were the employees who had prepared the fraudulent bid estimates which were submitted.

Even though the witnesses had told the court that they had prepared the bid estimates on Nazim's order, the judge concluded that it does not mean Nazim had ordered them to prepare the bids fraudulently.

Judge Ibrahim also argued that the act of asking was not enough to prove criminal intent.

Therefore, in reference to article 51 of the constitution which guarantees the rights of the accused, the judge concluded that the charges cannot be filed against Nazim.

Multiple counts

However Nazim is also facing other counts of fraud for setting up four paper companies to win a bid worth US\$110,000 to provide 15,000 national flags for the former atolls ministry in 2003.

In the ongoing case, prosecutors are heavily relying on the findings stated in the audit report, which concludes that the four companies which submitted the bid to the project were connected to Nazim's Namira Company.

Reference 23
According to the report, the documents of Malegam Tailors, the company which won the bid, show that it shared the same phone number as Namira. Fast Tailors, another company that applied also shared a different phone number registered under Namira.

The other company Needlework Tailors that submitted the bid had an employee of Namira sign the documents as the General Manager while the fourth company named "Seaview Maldives Private Maldives" did not have any record of its existence, according to the report.

However, the auditors noted that Seaview bid documents had an exact date error found on Fast Tailors documents, which according to the auditors prove same people had prepared both company's bids.

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[1] multiple counts of conspiracy to defraud the Atolls Ministry.: <http://minivannews.com/politics/deputy-speaker-of-parliament-pleads-not-guilty-to-conspiracy-to-defraud-4528>

[2] audit report: <http://minivannews.com/files/2011/08/Ministry-of-Atolls-Development-2007-Audit-Report.pdf>

Criminal Court acquits MP 'Red Wave' Saleem

Posted By [Ahmed Nazeer](#) On February 28, 2012 @ 8:43 PM In [Politics,Society](#) | [22 Comments](#)

The Criminal Court today [ruled](#) ^[1] that MP 'Red Wave' Ahmed Saleem not guilty in the corruption case filed by the state, accusing him of paying Neyza Enterprises Private Limited 50 percent of the money given to the former atolls ministry to buy sound systems for mosques in the islands.

"Redwave" Saleem, who was the former director of finance at the Atolls Ministry, faced charges of [conspiracy to defraud the former Atolls Ministry](#) ^[2] in the purchase of the mosque sound systems.

The alleged corruption was uncovered in the audit report of the now defunct Atolls Ministry, released in 2009.

The court ruled that according to witnesses and statements, Saleem was not the person assigned to make announcements for bids.

The court also ruled that none of the statements or witnesses produced to the court proved that Saleem has abused his position to defraud the Atolls Ministry.

Following a police investigation requested by the Presidential Commission, the Prosecutor General's Office had charged Deputy Speaker Ahmed Nazim, MP Saleem and former Atolls Minister Abdulla Hameed with three counts of conspiracy to defraud, abuse of power and violation of the state finance and asset regulations.

According to newspaper 'Sun', witnesses told the court that Saleem was not the person who was announcing for bids. The person who handled that duty, witnesses said, was Naseema Moosa, who was dead.

Last week the Criminal Court [dropped all charges](#) ^[3] against Nazim, an MP in the party headed by Gayoom's half-brother, Abdulla Yameen.

The dismissed the three remaining counts of fraud against Nazim, stating that his "acts were not enough to criminalise him".

The Supreme Court has disqualified former ruling Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) MP Mohamed Musthafa over a decreed debt which the court concluded makes him constitutionally ineligible to remain in the seat.

MDP MP Mohamed Musthafa was also that week [disqualified from his seat](#) ^[4] by the Supreme Court which upheld a verdict concerning a decreed debt, which the court concluded made him constitutionally ineligible to remain in the seat.

Two judges, including the Chief of Justice Ahmed Faiz, concluded that it cannot be ruled Musthafa had a decreed debt as the loan had been taken on the name of Musthafa's company Seafood and Trade International and added that in August 1997 the lower court had ordered the "company" to repay the loan.

Earlier this week the Supreme Court upheld criminal charges against Independent MP for Kaashidhoo Ismail Abdul Hameed, who has a record of voting alongside the MDP, and also stripped him from his seat.

The Criminal Court had last year sentenced the Independent MP to one and a half years banishment for corruption. The charges were upheld by the High Court in November.

The MDP meanwhile today accused the Dr Waheed's government of using the courts to "purge" parliament of MDP MPs and MDP-leaning MPs, "in order to secure a controlling majority.

"While in government, MDP consistently maintained that key parts of the judiciary are in the hands of the supporters of former President Gayoom. Now we are seeing the truth of that claim. Dr Waheed's regime is using the courts to settle old scores, to reduce MDP's parliamentary majority and to wipe the slate clean for government supporters," claimed MDP Spokesperson Hamid Abdul Ghafoor.

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