

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 29/002/2004

UA 54/04

Medical Concern/ Prisoners of Conscience

11 February 2004

MALDIVES

Ahmed Ibrahim Didi (m)  
Mohamed Zaki (m)

---

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the health of the two prisoners of conscience named above. Their health is reportedly deteriorating and they require urgent medical treatment at a hospital with adequate medical facilities.

Ahmed Ibrahim Didi was reportedly hospitalised for unspecified heart problems on 10 February. He is a registered heart patient and a panel of government doctors have reportedly recommended his transfer to a hospital abroad for further examination and treatment. This is because such facilities are not available in the Maldives. The government however has not allowed the transfer to take place.

Mohamed Zaki is reportedly suffering from a bladder condition which in the last few weeks has become more serious. Following a sudden deterioration in his health, the government allowed him about a week ago to be transferred from Maafushi Island Prison to the hospital in the capital Malé at his own cost. His situation has not improved and he is in urgent need of adequate medical treatment for which the Malé hospital is reportedly ill-equipped.

Mohamed Zaki and Ahmed Ibrahim Didi have been detained since the end of January 2002 on charges related to their involvement in the production of a clandestine internet e-mail magazine, *Sandhaanu*. It contained articles which were critical of the government and was circulated widely amongst Maldivians. The prisoners of conscience were sentenced to life imprisonment in July 2002 following grossly unfair trials. They have been periodically held under conditions that have amounted to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

In 2003, their sentences were reduced to 15 years' imprisonment. Following the escape from prison of another prisoner of conscience in May 2003, Mohamed Zaki and Ahmed Ibrahim Didi were transferred from Maafushi prison to the Dhoonidhoo detention centre in Malé for interrogation. They were held there for about six months during which time they were reportedly held in solitary confinement, frequently interrogated and subjected to ill-treatment. Their complaints of ill-health during this period were reportedly ignored by the government. There are fears that their current health conditions may deteriorate further unless the government takes immediate action to provide them with adequate medical treatment.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:**

- expressing serious concern that the health of Ahmed Ibrahim Didi and Mohamed Zaki is reportedly deteriorating and that they are not receiving adequate medical treatment;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to provide both men with adequate medical treatment at a place which is equipped with the necessary medical facilities and expertise, especially following the recommendations of a panel of government doctors in the case of Ahmed Ibrahim Didi;
- urging the government to institute an independent, impartial and competent inquiry into the reports that their complaints of ill-health were ignored by the authorities until their conditions deteriorated in recent weeks, and to bring those found responsible for negligence to justice;
- reminding the government that Ahmed Ibrahim Didi and Mohamed Zaki are prisoners of conscience and should be released immediately and unconditionally.

**APPEALS TO:**

President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom  
The President's Palace  
Maafannu Theemuge

Malé 2002

Republic of Maldives

**Telegrams: President Gayoom, Male, Maldives**

**Faxes: + 960 32 5500**

**Salutation: Dear President Gayoom**

**COPIES TO:** Diplomatic representatives of The Maldives accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 23 March 2004.