

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 29/002/2002

UA 41/02

Fear for Safety/ Fear of Torture  
or ill-treatment

11 February 2002

REPUBLIC OF Mohamed Zaki (m)] businessman

MALDIVES

Ismail Zaki (m) ] businessman

Ibrahim Luthfee (m)] businessman

Naushad Waheed (m)] artist/cartoonist

Two students (m) - names unknown

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All of those listed above, except Ibrahim Luthfee, are believed to be held at Dhoonidhoo detention centre, on a small island approximately five kilometres from Male'. There are fears they may have been tortured or ill-treated while in custody. Amnesty International is concerned for their safety and that of Ibrahim Luthfee whose current whereabouts are unknown.

Brothers Mohamed and Ismail Zaki as well as Ibrahim Luthfee, who used to run a computer-related company, were reportedly arrested on 31 January 2002 in the capital Male'. Artist and cartoonist, Naushad Waheed and two students, both of whom had been studying in Malaysia, were reportedly arrested on 9 December 2001, also in Male'.

Mohamed Zaki currently resides in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. While he was in Male', at the time of his arrest, Malaysian police reportedly searched his home and took away his computer. One of his sons was reportedly arrested by the Malaysian police without a warrant and taken for questioning, but was released on bail 24 hours later.

It is believed the four men named above and the students may have been arrested because of their alleged involvement in an Internet bulletin, called *Sandhaanu*, which is circulated by e-mail and reportedly contains articles that are critical of the government. Their relatives have not been able to make inquiries about them, because they fear being arrested themselves.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There has been a wave of arrests in recent months believed to be in connection with the circulation of *Sandhaanu*. In what Amnesty International believes to be a politically motivated arrest Mohamed Nasheed, MP for Male' was detained on 8 October 2001 and questioned about his efforts to set up a political party in the Maldives and any information he had about the Internet bulletin *Sandhaanu*, among other things. (See UA 274/01, ASA 29/003/2001, 26 October 2001 and update ASA 29/004/2001, 12 November 2001). After a short trial, he was sentenced to two and half year's banishment for the theft of unspecified government property.

The government does not allow political parties to function in the Maldives. The legislative assembly, known as the *People's Majlis*, (People's Council or parliament) comprises 50 members who are elected every five years.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Ibrahim Luthfee, who has not been seen since 31 January and urging the authorities to take all measures necessary to establish his whereabouts;
- expressing concern for the safety of Mohamed Zaki and his brother, Ismail, who were reportedly arrested on 31 January 2002 as well as Naushad Waheed and two students (names unknown), reportedly arrested on 9 December 2001;
- urging the government to provide information about the reasons for their arrest and to charge them with a recognizable criminal offence or release them;
- asking the authorities to ensure that the detainees are not tortured or ill-treated in custody;
- urging that they be given access to lawyers, their families and medical treatment should they need it;

**APPEALS TO:**

President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom  
The President's Palace  
Maafannu Theemuge  
Male' 2002

Republic of Maldives

**Telegrams: President Gayoom, Male' Republic of Maldives**

**Faxes: + 960 32 55 00**

**Salutation: Dear President Gayoom**

Ismail Shafeeu  
Minister of Home Affairs  
Ministry of Home Affairs  
Huravee building, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor,  
Ameer Ahmed Magu  
Male' 2005

Republic of Maldives

**Telegrams: Minister of Home Affairs, Male', Republic of Maldives**

**Faxes: + 960 32 47 39 (the phone may ring for a while before connecting)**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

Diplomatic representatives of Maldives accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 March 2002.