

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 29/003/2001

UA 274/01

Fear of torture/fear for safety

26 October 2001

MALDIVES

Mohamed Nasheed, MP for Male'

Member of parliament Mohamed Nasheed was arrested on 8 October, and reportedly taken to Male' police station. He has been held incommunicado since 14 October, and Amnesty International is concerned for his safety, as detainees are frequently tortured while held incommunicado in police custody. He has reportedly not been charged or allowed to see a lawyer.

Mohamed Nasheed is the member of parliament for Male'. It is not clear why he was arrested, but Amnesty International fears that his arrest may have been politically motivated. Amnesty International wrote to the government seeking information about the reasons for his arrest on 12 October, but has received no response to date.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mohamed Nasheed was a signatory to a petition handed over to the Minister of Home Affairs on 28 February 2001, requesting permission to set up a political party, the Maldivian Democratic Party. So far, such permission has not been granted. At least one other parliamentarian was detained for several days in July 2001, reportedly because of his leading role in the formation of this party.

Mohamed Nasheed has been arrested several times before for political reasons. Amnesty International adopted him as a prisoner of conscience in April 1996 after he was sentenced to two years' imprisonment on charges in connection with his activities as a freelance journalist.

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

- expressing concern that Mohamed Nasheed, MP for Male', appears to have been arrested solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- calling upon the authorities to reveal where he is held and why he has been arrested;
- urging the authorities that if he is not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence, he should be released immediately and unconditionally;
- urging the authorities to allow him access to his family and a lawyer of his choosing.

APPEALS TO:

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

Telegrams: President Gayoom, Maldives

Faxes: + 960 32 55 00

Salutation: Dear President Gayoom

The Maldives High Commissioner
25 Melbourne Avenue
Colombo
Sri Lanka

Fax: + 94 1 581 200

Salutation: Dear High Commissioner

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 7 December 2001.