

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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**Further information (2) on UA 115/95 (ASA 29/02/95, 25 May 1995) and follow-up
ASA 29/03/95, 15 June 1995 - Possible Prisoners of Conscience / Health Concern**

This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 20 per section.

**REPUBLIC OF MALDIVESAhamed Shafeeq, aged 67, former civil servant, writer
Ali Moosa Didi, writer and politician
Mohamed Shafeeq, former civil servant
and one other (name unknown)**

Amnesty International remains concerned about the health of Ahamed Shafeeq and Ali Moosa Didi who were arrested on 21 April 1995.

Ahamed Shafeeq was transferred from Male' police headquarters to house arrest on 1 July. He is now permitted to receive visitors and use the telephone. To date, he has not been charged or brought before a court. He is said to be an asthma-sufferer and to have a lung infection. He has also been diagnosed by a psychiatrist as suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and has been advised to avoid stressful situations; Amnesty International is concerned that anxiety caused to Ahamed Shafeeq by being held under house arrest may aggravate his already poor physical and mental condition.

Ali Moosa Didi returned to Male' from hospital treatment in Trivandrum, India on 10 July. He was immediately taken to Dhoonidhoo detention centre. To Amnesty International's knowledge, his relatives have not been allowed to see him.

Reports have also been received that Ahamed Shafeeq's son, Mohammed Shafeeq, was arrested on 17 July. He was seen being taken to Dhoonidoo detention centre on that day. Amnesty International is concerned that Ali Moosa Didi and Mohamed Shafeeq may be subjected to torture or ill-treatment while in custody at Dhoonidhoo detention centre.

Amnesty International has also learned that a third person, who was present at the time of Ahamed Shafeeq's and Ali Moosa Didi's arrest in April, was taken into custody in early July. The organization is currently seeking more information from the government about his arrest.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over the last few years, Amnesty International has received several reports that political and other prisoners have been subjected to torture or ill-treatment and that confessions were made under duress. Before they are brought to trial, political prisoners are either kept at Male' police headquarters or at Dhoonidhoo detention centre, which also comes under the direct responsibility of the police. Several prisoners who have been held at Dhoonidhoo have complained of ill-treatment there during the period of their interrogation. Some say they were held in solitary confinement for several months after denying knowledge of the charges against them. Some were held in solitary confinement for as long as 18 or 24 months. Some say that for up to about six weeks, during the period of solitary confinement, they were held in handcuffs joined together by a single hinge which greatly restricted their movement, interfering with their ability to eat and to keep themselves clean.

These restraints chafed the skin, and some prisoners complained of lasting stiffness and weakness in their limbs as a result. They report that the cells in which they were held were very small - about four or five feet by seven or eight feet - and made from corrugated iron sheets which became very hot.

In a reply to members of Amnesty International who sent urgent appeals on behalf of Ahamed Shafeeq and Ali Moosa Didi, the Director of the Ministry of Information and Culture in the Maldives stated: *"The [above] two men have been taken into custody on charges of having contravened the law and are not prisoners of conscience. Investigations into their case are under way. While it is true that Mr. Shafeeq was sent to Madras for medical treatment, I wish to inform you that he was sent to India for treatment at the expense of the Government of the Maldives."*

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:

- acknowledging the reply from the Director of the Ministry of Information and Culture to members of Amnesty International on the case of Ahamed Shafeeq and Ali Moosa Didi;
- expressing concern about the arrest and detention of Mohamed Shafeeq and Ali Moosa Didi;
- requesting that, while held in Dhoonidhoo detention centre, they be treated humanely and not subjected to ill-treatment or torture;
- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of the four detained men, if they are not to be charged with recognizable criminal offences.

APPEALS TO:

President Maummon Abdul Gayoom
The President's Office
Marine Drive (North)
Male'

Republic of Maldives

Faxes: + 960 32 55 00

Telegrams: President Gayoom, Male, Maldives

Salutation: Dear President

Lt Colonel Adam Zahir
Officer in Charge
Police Headquarters
Bandeyrige
Male'

Republic of Maldives

Telegrams: Lt Colonel Zahir, Police Headquarters, Male, Maldives

Salutation: Dear Lt Colonel

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Abdulla Hameed
Speaker
Office of the Citizens' Majlis
Naadi, Ameer Ahmed Magu
Male', Republic of Maldives

and to diplomatic representatives of Republic of Maldives accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International secretariat, or your section office if sending appeals after 1 September 1995.