



Press releases

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Maldives: Police violence as ex-president is arrested

Police in the Maldives used excessive force when arresting former President Mohamad Nasheed on Monday, said Amnesty International.

Nasheed was arrested in Fares-Maathoda in southern Maldives this morning for allegedly ignoring a court summons. Eyewitnesses told Amnesty International that during the arrest police vandalised the house where Nasheed was staying, and then attacked supporters peacefully protesting outside including former foreign minister Ahmed Naseem who was kicked and pepper sprayed in the face.

“We are deeply concerned about the reports of some police using violence around Mohamad Nasheed’s arrest, despite neither him nor his supporters offering any resistance,” said Abbas Faiz, Amnesty International’s Researcher on Maldives.

Nasheed is to stand trial for the alleged arrest of a judge, Abdulla Mohamed, during his presidency. While it is positive the Maldivian authorities are investigating the case, Amnesty International is concerned that the current authorities are turning a blind eye to human rights violations during the presidencies of Maumoon Abdul Gayoom (1978-2008) and Mohamed Waheed (since February 2012).

“Investigations into past abuses are always welcome. However, accountability must not be selective – all authorities including former presidents should be held accountable for human rights violations. The focus on human rights violations during only Nasheed’s presidency appears politically motivated,” said Faiz.

Amnesty International has **repeatedly raised concerns about police brutality against peaceful protesters** this year under the new government. Not a single person has been held accountable for these violations.

During the presidency of Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, his political opponents were routinely arbitrarily arrested and tortured. His government was able for the most part to evade accountability for the many human rights violations during his time.