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**Conservative Human Rights Commission**

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***PRESS RELEASE: For Immediate Release***

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**CONSERVATIVE PARTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CONDEMNS MALDIVES ‘COUP D’ETAT’ AND EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT THE SAFETY OF MOHAMED NASHEED**

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission today expressed grave concern over the political crisis in the Maldives, and condemned the coup d’état which forced the country’s first democratically elected president, Mohamed Nasheed, from office at gunpoint on Tuesday.

Robert Buckland MP, Chairman of the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission, said:

“We are deeply concerned about the safety of Mohamed Nasheed and his supporters. In the Maldives, there has been a severe setback for democracy and human rights in the past three days. We understand that President Nasheed was forced to resign at gunpoint, was subsequently detained, and that when he addressed supporters of his party, the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), he was beaten and gassed by police, along with other MDP members.

“Today, we have learned that a warrant has been issued for his arrest. We condemn these actions in the strongest possible terms, and urge the Maldivian Government to return to the path of democracy and human rights, to guarantee the safety, security and freedom of Mohamed Nasheed and his supporters. We also urge the Government to ensure that the MDP and other political parties and activists can engage in the political process free from fear and repression, and to hold new free and fair elections as soon as possible, which Mohamed Nasheed and his party can contest.

“We encourage the British Government, the European Union, the Commonwealth and the international community to do everything possible to support the protection and promotion of democracy and human rights in the Maldives, and to seek guarantees for the freedom and security of Mohamed Nasheed.”

The Conservative Party has had a long relationship with the MDP. In 2006, the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission visited Mohamed Nasheed when he was the leader of the opposition held under house arrest. The Commission’s report contributed to securing his release and encouraging the transition to democracy. The Conservative Party’s International Office then developed a relationship with the MDP, and in 2009 President Nasheed addressed the Conservative Party Conference.

**For further information, contact Rachel Earle, researcher to Robert Buckland MP, on 0207 219 7167 or email** **rachel.earle@parliament.uk**

**Notes to Editors:**

1. For a copy of the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission report on the Maldives, June 2006, see <http://www.conservativehumanrights.com/pdf/CPHRC_Maldives_Visit_Report.pdf>
2. To see Mohamed Nasheed’s address to a Conservative Party Human Rights Commission fringe meeting, 2007, see <http://www.conservativehumanrights.com/reports/conference_events/conference07.html>
3. To see President Nasheed’s address to the Conservative Party Conference in 2009, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plIahNJBsy0>