

ISAS Working Paper

No. 276 – 17 November 2017

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The Maldives: On a Complex Political Trajectory¹

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The political identity of contemporary Maldives, an archipelagic state in the Indian Ocean region, is the outcome of long periods of independent existence, interspersed with episodes of colonial rule. During centuries of its independent status, the country witnessed various forms of government – monarchy, authoritarianism, and controlled democracy. In recent years, there has been a rise of Islamists forces in the Maldives. They have introduced pre-modern values in the society. Under their influence, a few Maldivians have even joined the militant and terrorist groups to participate in ‘jihad’ in foreign territories. If the Maldives is to continue to practise democratic norms, it must tackle this phenomenon. The region and the world at large must help.

¹ The Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), an autonomous research institute at the National University of Singapore (NUS), is dedicated to research on contemporary South Asia. It seeks to promote understanding of this vital region of the world, and to communicate knowledge and insights about it to policy makers, the business community, academia and civil society in Singapore and beyond. As part of this ongoing process, ISAS has launched a series of commemorative essays on each of the eight South Asian countries to coincide with their respective national days. The objective is to present a snapshot of the successes and challenges of the countries in South Asia, a sub-optimally integrated region with a globalising aspiration. This fourth essay focuses on the Maldives which celebrates its National Day on 19 November 2017. For further reading on the Maldives, please refer to Amit Ranjan, *Rise of the Islamists in the Maldives*, ISAS Insights No. 425, 27 June 2017. <https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/ISAS%20Reports/ISAS%20Insights%20No.%20425-%20Rise%20of%20Islamists%20in%20Maldives.pdf>. Some of the paragraphs from that *Insights* have been re-produced in this paper.

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The Maldives is less discussed among the eight countries of south Asia, although it is located along an important trade route in the Indian Ocean. In recent years, the Maldives has received global attention because of the rising sea level around the numerous islands that constitute the country, the strengthening of Islamists on its shores, its growing closeness to Saudi Arabia and the Maldivian government's perceived attempt to suppress human rights and democracy at home. All these developments, therefore, force one to look beyond the idyllic beaches and tourist centres of the country.

History of the Archipelago Nation

The Maldives is an archipelago of about 1,200 coral islands, out of which only one-sixth is inhabited by the country's population of 375,489 people. About 98 per cent of the Maldivians are Muslims, belonging mainly to the Sunni sect. The other ethnic groups in the country are the Sinhalese, Dravidian, Arab and African. The 1998 Constitution of the Maldives defined Islam as the state religion, and barred non-Muslims from public office or even becoming citizens. In 2008, the present Constitution came into effect. It replaced and repealed the 1998 Constitution. Article 109 of the 2008 Constitution maintains that the President, who is the Head of the State, should "be a Muslim and a follower of a Sunni school of Islam"³. Even a member of the cabinet, according to Article 130 has to be "a Muslim and a follower of a Sunni school of Islam".⁴ On the issue of citizenship, the Constitution, under Article 9(d) states that, "a non-Muslim may not become a citizen of the Maldives".⁵

However, in ancient times, the people in the Maldives were possibly Buddhists – this claim is substantiated by the discovery of remains of stupas on various islands. Some other Buddhist relics were also discovered during excavation in the 1980s.⁶ According to the historical records, in 1153, the then Maldivian king converted to Islam which simultaneously also led to conversion of his subjects. The records show that the king was converted to Islam either by Yusuf Shamsuddin of Tabriz or by Abul Barakat the 'Berber'. Tracing developments since

³ Constitution of the Maldives, Retrieved from <http://www.majlis.gov.mv/en/wp-content/uploads/Constitution-english.pdf>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Robinson, Francis (1989), *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and The Maldives*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, New York.

that time, there is a written history of the sultanate, compiled in Arabic, originally in 1725, supplemented by a few records in Dhivehi (Maldivian language).⁷ A lengthy description of some islands of the Maldives can also be found in the records of the North African traveller, Ibn Batuta, who resided there from 1343 to 1344 (when he became the Qazi or Chief Justice) and in 1346.⁸ Unlike most of the Islamic countries of the world, the Maldives had been ruled by a number of queens. An early instance of this is found in the description by a merchant, Suleman, who in pre-Islamic days in the 9th century, noted that his country was ruled by a female.⁹

In 1558, the Maldives was captured by the Portuguese who directly ruled over it for 15 years.¹⁰ In 1573, the Muhammad Thakurufaanu Al Auzam-led Maldivian Army defeated the Portuguese. As the day of victory fell on the 1st of *Rabee ul Awwal*,¹¹ since then, the Maldivians celebrate the anniversary of that event as their National Day. As the timing of Maldives National Day is based on the Islamic calendar, which is a lunar calendar, the date keeps changing each year, according to the sighting of the moon. This year, it falls on 19 November. Officially, in Dhivehi language, it is known as “Qaume Dhuvas”.

Later, in 17th century, the Maldives came under the Dutch followed by the British, although neither of the two colonial powers could establish their administration in the archipelagic nation. In 19th century, under threats and pressure from the colonial powers, the then-Sultan of Maldives accepted an alliance with the British and his country became a British protectorate in 1887. Consequently, the British assumed control over the Maldives’ foreign affairs and defence while the Sultan retained his hold over the domestic affairs of the country.¹² During the Second World War (1939-1945), a few of the Maldivian islands were used as a base by the British Navy.¹³ Finally, on 26 July 1965, the Maldives shed its protectorate status, and attained full sovereignty. However, the British, through an agreement,

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Mitra, Subrata K, Siegfried O. Wolf & Jivanta Schottli (2006) *A Political and Economic Dictionary of South Asia*. London & New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

¹¹ It is considered to be the third month of the Islamic calendar. This day is celebrated as the birthday of Prophet Muhammad.

¹² Mitra, Subrata K, Siegfried O. Wolf & Jivanta Schottli (2006) *A Political and Economic Dictionary of South Asia*, op. cit.

¹³ Robinson, Francis (1989), *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and The Maldives*, op. cit.

retained Gan Island. It was eventually handed over to the government of the Maldives in 1975.

Domestically, in 1932, due to dissatisfaction among the people against the monarchy, Sultan of the Maldives – Mohammad Shamsuddin III – was compelled by *befulhus* (political elites) to accept rule by the constitution. He was later deposed and exiled.¹⁴ After the Second World War, Mohammad Amin Didi took charge of the country and introduced many reforms. In January 1953, he changed the country's constitution – the country transitioned from a monarchy to a republic, with Didi as the first President of the country. However, soon in a political coup, Didi was overthrown by his opponents – they attacked him, resulting in his death in December 1953. Afterwards, the monarchy was restored and it remained in place until 1968 when a second republic was set up.¹⁵

In 1968, Ibrahim Nasir became the President. He started the modernisation process in the country. A significant development which transformed the economy and has had a socio-political impact was turning the Maldives into a tourist destination in the 1970s. In 1972, the Maldives leased its fish processing rights to a Japanese company after Sri Lanka discontinued the purchase of dried fish from the Maldives. This meant a greater reliance on tourism, which soon helped in boosting the country's economy, due to the increased international air connectivity to the archipelago.¹⁶

In 1978, Ibrahim Nasir was replaced by Maumoon Abdul Gayoom as President of the country. Gayoom remained President until 2008. He faced three coup attempts, in 1980, 1983 and 1988 respectively. The first two were not serious but the one in 1988 challenged his political survival. According to reports, it was organised by the Sri Lankan mercenaries associated with People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam.¹⁷ They were hired by the Maldivian business interest groups under the leadership of Abdullah Luthufi. "Around 80 sea-borne armed forces landed in Male and attempted to gain control over various key government installations, supported by some 80 others who had infiltrated the country

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Mitra, Subrata K, Siegfried O Wolf & Jivanta Schottli (2006), *A Political and Economic Dictionary of South Asia*, op. cit.

disguised as tourists”.¹⁸ To overcome the situation, Gayoom appealed to India’s then-Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi who dispatched paratroopers to help him. Within 24 hours, the Indian paratroopers cleared the capital and restored law and order in Male.¹⁹

In the presidential elections of 2008, Mohammed Nasheed succeeded Gayoom. He was considered to be a liberal political leader. Due to his policies, he faced a lot of problems from the Islamists.

On 7 February 2012, Nasheed resigned following protests by the opposition political parties who were joined by a significant number of members from the military and police forces. He was replaced by Mohammed Waheed Hassan who was then succeeded by the present president, Mohammed Yameen, in 2013. Yameen is half-brother of Abdul Gayoom.

Rise of the Islamists

Over the years, the archipelago has turned into a fertile recruiting ground for militants including the Islamic State (IS) jihadists.²⁰ In an interview with *The Independent*, former president, Nasheed, revealed that up to 200 Maldivians are engaged in fighting for IS in Iraq and Syria.²¹ This figure is also supported by a study on the presence of foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria carried out in 2015 by The SOUFAN Group.²² Earlier in 2014 there was a pro-IS rally featuring banners that called for the introduction of Shariah law in the country.²³

¹⁸ Ibid, p 218.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ “Islamic State: The Maldives – a recruiting paradise for jihadists”, Wright, Oliver, *The Independent*, 13 September 2014. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/islamic-state-the-maldives-a-recruiting-paradise-for-jihadists-9731574.html>. Accessed on 10 June 2017.

²¹ Ibid.

²² The SOUFAN group provides security- and intelligence-related information to governments and multinational corporations. As the number of such study groups has proliferated in many conflict zones, one can use the data, but not without further verifications about their objectivity. In the case of the Maldives the former President’s statement on the number of Maldivian nationals fighting alongside the IS supports the data. For details of the report, see ‘Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters in Iraq and Syria’. Retrieved from http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_Foreign_FightersUpdate3.pdf. Accessed on 19 June 2017.

²³ “Islamic State: The Maldives – a recruiting paradise for jihadists”, op. cit.

In the interview mentioned above, Nasheed claimed that there were links between the jihadist groups and the country's military as well as the police force. He said, "Radical Islam is getting very, very strong in the Maldives...Their strength in the military and in the police is very significant. They have people in strategic positions within both...Of the 200 people who have gone to jihad, the vast majority are ex-military."²⁴ He added that the Maldivian "society had become much more conservative because of the influx of Saudi money – paying for Wahhabi imams and mosques, and spreading a deeply conservative view of Islam at odds with the islands' traditions."²⁵

On the relationship between the tourism industry and radicalism, Nasheed mentioned that, "They (Islamists) don't want to hit the tourism industry because they are getting such good 'milk' out of it. They are able to launder their money through it. They are able to recruit people. The government wants the money out of tourism. Everybody wants the money out of that. How the tourists behave on their uninhabited islands is nothing to do with us apparently."²⁶

Adding to the former president's concerns and revelations about the political situation in the country, Shauna Aminath, a human rights activist, points out, "Since 2012, the democratic environment in the Maldives has severely declined. Amidst corruption allegations and increasing Islamist extremism, President Abdulla Yameen is under severe pressure to step down. Along with curbs on press freedom and free speech, the government has left no room for political dissent. Independent institutions have been politicised, defamation is criminalised and judges are corrupt. In recent years, an increasing number of opposition leaders are facing criminal charges for participating in anti-government protests, receiving jail time or are in exile".²⁷ The situation, if one were to go by her account, is such that "Around the island[s], it is impossible to criticise radical Islam or call out the undemocratic practices of the government."²⁸ She further goes on to say, "A new strand of Saudi Salafism is strengthening its roots in Maldivian society. An increasing strategic partnership between the Yameen government and Saudi Arabia has led to more investments in the island's energy,

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Maldives Opposition looks towards India to keep democracy. <http://www.orfonline.org/research/maldives-opposition-looks-towards-india-keep-up-democracy/>. Accessed on 22 June 2017.

²⁸ Ibid.

transport and health sector[s]. Simultaneously, Saudi Arabia has donated US\$100,000 [S\$139,000] for the establishment of Islamic University of Maldives, along with a generous US\$1.2 million [S\$1.67 million] fund for the construction of ten mosques all over the islands.”²⁹

One of the reasons for the growing radicalism in the Maldives is said to be the interactions of the Maldivians studying in a foreign country (unnamed here) with the Islamists there. Out of only about six per cent of the Maldivians studying abroad, a significant number of them have been trained in religion. Earlier in the 1990s, many went to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia at the state’s expense. Later, the educational destinations changed because of disturbances in Pakistan. At present, most of the Islamic scholars and preachers in the Maldives were educated in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan or Egypt.³⁰ During their study, a few of them got attracted towards the militant activities in other parts of the world. One of the early signs of Maldivian youth being indoctrinated to fight jihad can be traced to the period between 1998 and 2003, when a few of them were found fighting in the Kashmir valley.³¹ They were trained by the Pakistan-based militant group, Lashkar-i-Taiba, to fight ‘jihad’ against India.³² Some of the others, after their study abroad, went back to the Maldives with a militant set of religious values and a new hero to eulogise. For example, in 2003, posters appeared on the walls of a school on the Edhyafushi Island, praising Osama bin Laden.³³

The effects of such learning have been violence. An early sign was noticed on 29 September 2007, when a bomb blast occurred in the Sultan Park in Male. It was the first-ever ‘Islamist’ terror-strike in the Maldives.³⁴ Three men were arrested and sentenced for carrying out the blast, while a few other suspects escaped from the country. The investigation of the bombing pointed to a link “between the Maldivian national, Ahmed Zaki, and Lashkar-i-Taiba madrassas in the Kashmir valley, and the Maldivians belonging to a group known as Jama-

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Shauna Aminath and Thoriq Hamid informed the author about this in their respective comments in the first draft of the author’s Insights, *Rise of the Islamists in the Maldives*, ISAS Insights No. 425, op. cit. They communicated their comments via an electronic mail on 18 June 2017.

³¹ “Maldives: militant Islamists on rise”, *The Hindu Swami*, Praveen, 24 November 2007. <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/Maldives-militant-Islamists-on-the-rise/article14881607.ece>. Accessed on 10 June 2017.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

ah-tul-Muslimeen and individuals participating in an anti-American Islamic extremist online forum called Tibyan Publications.”³⁵

Afterwards, a few other incidents have taken place, arguably radicalising the Maldivian society, albeit gradually. The latest incident happened on 22 April 2017. A young ‘liberal’ blogger, Yameen Rasheed, was stabbed to death near his apartment in Male.³⁶ According to media reports, he had earlier received threats from the Islamists and he reported it to the police. The manner of his killing was similar to the pattern of the killings of bloggers in Bangladesh in 2015. Even the reasons for Rasheed’s killing and that of the bloggers in Bangladesh were also similar – they opposed the Islamists and were promoting ‘liberal’ views through their blogs.

The rise of the Islamists has led to an increasing influence of religion over the Maldivian society. On the changing social behaviour of the Maldivians, Aishath Velazinee writes, “A few islands even reverted to ‘the Prophet’s time’, attempting to emulate the Arabian dress and lifestyles of the time of Prophet Muhammad. Men grew beards and hair, took to wearing loose robes and pyjamas, and crowned their heads with Arab-style cloth. Women were wrapped in black robes. Goats were imported and fishermen gave up their vocation to become ‘shepherds’.”³⁷ Thoriq Hamid sees this goat story as an exaggeration of the prevailing ground situation in the country. But he agrees that, due to the rising influence of conservative ideas, many children have not been vaccinated. The rise of Islamists has deeply affected the status of women in the country which was, as mentioned above, embellished historically by the reign of many queens. Citing the 2015 Human Rights report of the Maldives, Thoriq says that, “There is also a growing concern that, with increase in religious conservatism practices, home based education is sometimes preferred by parents leading to restricting girls’ access to formal education at school.”³⁸ At another level, under the influence of pre-modern values, “Young girls were taken out of school and married off in their early

³⁵ Robinson, J J, (2015) *The Maldives: Islamic Republic, Tropical Autocracy*, London: Hurst Publications.

³⁶ Hasan, Moosa & Kai Schuz (23 April 2017), ‘Outspoken Maldivian blogger who challenged radical Islamists is killed. Retrieved from *The New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/23/world/asia/yameen-rasheed-dead-maldives-blogger-dead.html?_r=1.

³⁷ Cited in “Maldives: militant Islamists on rise”, op. cit.

³⁸ See ‘Submission from Human Rights Commission of the Maldives for the combined Fourth and Fifth Periodic Report of the Republic of Maldives to the United Nations Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Committee January 2015. Retrieved from <http://hrcm.org.mv/publications/otherreports/HRCMCEDAWShadowReport%2012January2015.pdf>. Accessed on 19 June 2017.

teens in religious ceremonies said to be sanctioned by Islam.”³⁹ The Islamists are all against anything they consider ‘foreign’. In December 1999, “Islamists launched incendiary attacks on the regime, arguing that the planned millennium celebrations were part of a plot to spread Christianity. At Male, a shop displaying Santa Claus was attacked in 2005.”⁴⁰ Due to the rising impact of Islamists, the Maldivian political elites have presented themselves as defenders of puritanical Islam, protecting it from the influences of other religions. It has paid them political dividend in the form of votes and public support. To make people Islamic in their attitude, spiritual preachers and religious leaders from various parts of the world have been commissioned by the Maldivian Ministry of Islamic Affairs to deliver sermons on Islam. These preachers include Zakir Naik of India.⁴¹

Political Tensions in Recent Years

Soon after Yameen assumed power, in 2014 the Maldives ended the moratorium on capital punishment. This was seen by many as a means to punish his political opponents or spread fear among them. In 2015, the former president Nasheed was arrested on terrorism charges that sparked mass protests by his supporters. He was jailed for 13 years by the court which found him guilty on terrorism charges. There was global opposition to it. Later, Nasheed was allowed to go for 30 days to London for spinal cord surgery.⁴² Once in Britain, he requested for a political refugee status which was granted in May 2016.

In November 2015, Yameen declared a state of emergency, arguably to establish his hold over the country and control over the activities of the opposition. Seven articles of the constitution, including those guaranteeing the rights of assembly, free expression, freedom from arbitrary detention and freedom of movement were curtailed. It was announced that the emergency would be in force for only 30 days without the imposition of curfew. However,

³⁹ Cited in “Maldives: militant Islamists on rise”, op. cit.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Robinson, J J, *The Maldives: Islamic Republic, Tropical Autocracy*, London: Hurst Publications.

⁴² “Maldives ex-leader Mohamed Nasheed arrives in UK”, *BBC News*, 21 January 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-35369018>. Accessed on 8 November 2017.

amidst global criticism the government was forced to revoke it within a week of its imposition.⁴³

The internal politics of ‘fear’ in the Maldives has united the opposition members. In the Council elections for 664 seats, held in May 2017, the Maldives United Opposition won more than 300 seats while Yameen’s Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) won only 191. Of the PPM’s coalition partners, the Maldives Development Alliance won 18 seats and the Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party won a solitary seat. At present, the opposition consists of the Maldivian Democratic Party, a faction of the PPM, the Jumhooree Party and the pro-Islamist Adhaalath Party (the self-proclaimed branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Maldives).⁴⁴

Confident after the electoral performance, on 24 July 2017, the united opposition gave a notice to move a no-confidence resolution to impeach the Speaker of the Maldivian Parliament (Majlis) – Abdulla Maseeh. On the following day, the security personnel were called in to barricade the parliament complex. Even on 26 July 2017 which was celebrated as the 52nd anniversary of getting freedom from its protectorate status in 1965, at which then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif, was the chief guest, troops barricaded the Parliament. The members of opposition were not allowed to enter the House.⁴⁵

Many members of this opposition coalition had, in fact, supported Yameen during the presidential election of 2013 and even afterwards. They do not have any political or ideological differences with the President. They are in the opposition only because the government attacked their political or economic interests. For example, Gayoom, whose faction of the PPM has now joined the opposition coalition, was actively engaged in removing Nasheed from power. He turned against Yameen only after he too was politically attacked by the government. In January 2017, he was denied permission by the government to hold a peaceful meeting with PPM members in Male. Then, in March 2017, his son, Faris, was arrested by the government. Other than Gayoom, Jumhooree Party leader and

⁴³ “Maldives revokes state of emergency amid global outcry and tourism worries”, *The Guardian*, 10 November 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/10/maldives-revokes-state-of-emergency>. Accessed on 12 October 2017.

⁴⁴ “What is happening in the Maldives: All you need to know”, *Indian Express*, Jyoti Malhotra, 26 July 2017. <http://indianexpress.com/article/what-is/what-is-happening-in-the-maldives-all-you-need-to-know/>. Accessed on 12 October 2017.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

businessman, Qasim Ibrahim too has been more vocal against the president because of personal reasons. Once he joined the MDP-led opposition, in 2014 the government took back Kaadehdhoo Airport operated by his company, Villa Group, since 2013, and downgraded the status of Villa International Airport in Maamigili Island to a domestic airport. The group was also slapped with a fine of US\$90.4 million (S\$123.2 million).⁴⁶ The Villa Group moved to the court against the seizure. Eventually, the airport was returned to the company, mainly because Ibrahim decided to censor himself from making harsh comments against the government.⁴⁷ In January 2017, the government re-seized the operation of Kaadehdhoo Airport from the Villa group.⁴⁸

All these political developments impacted on the foreign policy of the Maldives. In 2016, it announced that it was leaving the Commonwealth. This was because the organisation was pressing the government to promote democracy in the country. Later, following Saudi Arabia, and to impress the Islamists at home, Yameen's government severed ties with Iran in 2016. In 2017, the Maldives joined Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt to sever diplomatic relations with Qatar.

Conclusion

For all practical purposes, the current President of the Maldives apparently runs an authoritarian system. There is also a strong impression that his stay in office depends more on his relationship with the security forces of the country rather than the electoral base or popular support that he commands. The security forces have reportedly been used to stop the opposition parties from carrying out their constitutional functions. The security forces have been also used by the political leadership to silence voices of dissent expressed by the civil society activists.

⁴⁶ "Govt, seizes Airport from Villa, converts another to domestic Airport", *Miharu.Com*, Fathimath Shaaunaz, 19 January 2017. <http://en.mihaaru.com/govt-seizes-airport-from-villa-converts-another-to-domestic-airport/>. Accessed on 9 November 2017.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ "Development of Kaadehdhoo Airport will be very costly", *Miharu.Com*. Aminath Farah Ahmed, 29 October 2017. <http://en.mihaaru.com/development-of-kaadedhoo-airport-will-be-very-costly/>. Accessed on 9 November 2017.

The political existence of a leader in the Maldives depends upon his or her relationship with the Islamists. For example, Nasheed was removed from office because he did not support the Islamists. He rolled back many of the repressive laws which had been hailed by the Islamists, and tried to bolster democratic institutions of the country. Yameen, on the other hand, seems to support the causes of the Islamists. Under their influence, the Yameen government has taken certain steps in foreign policy like severing of diplomatic ties with Iran and Qatar, respectively. However, it is important for the regional powers and the world that a modicum of democratic norm is restored in the Maldives. As Iftekhhar Ahmed Chowdhury writes, “The world is not ready to see a ‘paradise lost’ in these otherwise serene and idyllic isles”.⁴⁹

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⁴⁹ Chowdhury, Iftekhhar Ahmed, *The Maldives: A Paradise in Peril?*, ISAS Brief No. 105, 28 April 2009. Retrieved from <https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/ISAS%20Reports/ISAS%20Brief%20105%20-%20Email%20-%20The%20Maldives%20-%20Paradise%20in%20Peril.pdf> . Accessed on 23 October 2017.