



Language

The 400,000 people of the Maldives islands in the Indian Ocean had been subject to the autocratic and corrupt rule of President Maumoon Gayoom for 30 years, when, in 2008, he was defeated by opposition party leader, Mohamed Nasheed. This was the first multi-party presidential election. The election of Nasheed, representative of the Maldivian Democratic Party founded some years earlier in exile, was the culmination of a movement of resistance which took off in 2004, when the first demonstrations took place. Internal opposition succeeded by 2007 in prompting defections among some members of the government, and was supported transnationally by calls for a selective boycott of tourist resorts where commercial interests were closest to the regime. Nasheed, who started protesting in the 1980s, spent 5 years as a political prisoner, and his election was hailed as a victory for a peaceful campaign of civil resistance.

However, in office Nasheed met with obstruction from sections of the old regime. He was ousted in a coup by military and police in February 2012, when the Vice-President, rumoured to have the support of the former dictator, officially took over. Nasheed has since been indicted on what his supporters claim are trumped-up charges, and was imprisoned after defying a travel ban. There have been public protests and arrests of activists since the coup. New presidential elections are scheduled for 2013 – the outcome remains uncertain.

Kunzru, Hari, [Welcome to Paradise](#) [1], The Guardian, 16/12/2006,

Shaheed, Ahmed, [Future Prospects for Islam and Democracy: a view from the Maldives](#) [2], Arches Quarterly, Vol. 3, issue 4, 2009, pp. 53-60

Then foreign minister addresses the question 'how did a 100% Muslim country, acting in tandem with the international community, ... peacefully turn centuries of autocratic rule into something resembling a functioning liberal democracy?'

Shaheed, Ahmed ; Upton, Jonathan, [Maldives: Reform Deferred? Challenges and Lost Opportunities for Democratic Transition](#) [3], Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy, 2008

Pre-2008 elections. Includes sections 'Repression of Peaceful Opposition and New Media 1999-2002' and on attempted reforms.

Websites recommended

[MINIVAN NEWS - Independent News in the Maldives](#) [4] - <http://minivannews.com/> [5]

[South Asia Analysis Group](#) [6] - <http://saag.org/maldives> [7] ,

Usually brief comments on developments on the Maldives.

(635.)[Stephen Zunes's articles on the Maldives \(written for Huffington Post and Open Democracy\)](#) [8] - <http://stephenzunes.org/index.php?s=Maldives> [9]



[and-10](#)

Links

[1] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2006/welcome-paradise> [2] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2009/future-prospects-islam-and-democracy-view-maldives> [3] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2008/maldives-reform-deferred-challenges-and-lost-opportunities-democratic-transition> [4] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/0/minivan-news-independent-news-maldives> [5] <http://minivannews.com/> [6] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/0/south-asia-analysis-group> [7] <http://saag.org/maldives> [8] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/0/stephen-zuness-articles-maldives-written-huffington-post-and-open-democracy> [9] <http://stephenzunes.org/index.php?s=Maldives>