

# FOCUS MALDIVES

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## **Ex-Prez Mohamed Nasheed Knocks UN's Door to Get His Political Rights Restored Before 2018 Presidential Elections**

*Former Maldives President Mohamed Nasheed filed a formal complaint to the UN Human Rights Committee, seeking to restore his political rights that were illegally removed by operation of his wrongful conviction on bogus terrorism charges*

By Focus Maldives Bureau

With Presidential elections due in 2018 and amid growing resentment in the Maldives due to dictatorial nature of the government, former President Mohamed Nasheed has moved to United Nations seeking to restore his political rights that were “illegally” removed by “wrongful” conviction.

The poster boy of the Maldivian democracy, Nasheed in a formal complaint asked UN Human Rights Committee to restore his political rights to lead his opposition Maldivian Democratic Party ahead of 2018 presidential election.

Nasheed, who is currently in the United Kingdom in exile, was automatically disqualified from running for political office under the country's Constitution and from holding a leadership position in a political party under the Amendment to the Prison and Parole Act after he was convicted for 13-years in prison on the charges of terrorism.

“Today, counsel for former Maldives President Mohamed Nasheed filed a formal complaint to the UN Human Rights Committee, seeking to restore his political rights that were illegally removed by operation of his wrongful conviction on bogus terrorism charges,” a statement released on Friday said adding “This includes his right to participate in the 2018 presidential elections and to lead his opposition political party, the Maldivian Democratic Party.”

The Maldives is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), a treaty that is binding on its government under international law.

Articles 25 and 22 of that treaty provide for the rights to political participation and to freedom of association, respectively. The Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, to which the Maldives is also a party, provides an individual complaint mechanism for violations of the treaty.

In his 20-page submission, Nasheed also highlighted UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention's findings which said that Nasheed's arrest, conviction, sentence, and imprisonment on terrorism charges was "arbitrary" and in "violation" of international law.

On the submission, Nasheed's lawyer Jared Genser said:

"We have filed our complaint before the Human Rights Committee because any disqualification from running for office or leading a political party emanating from what has been found to be an arbitrary detention by an independent and impartial international tribunal is fruit of the poisonous tree and hence null and void by the standards of international law."

The first democratically elected President of the Maldives, Nasheed was convicted of terrorism in March 2015 on terrorism charges for 13 years for kidnapping a judge which was later upheld by the Supreme Court stripping him of any political rights.