



The Office of President Mohamed Nasheed

President Mohamed Nasheed Returns to the Maldives Following Over Two Years in Exile



November 1, 2018, London — President Mohamed Nasheed, the first democratically elected leader of the Maldives, returned safely home to the Maldives today after living in exile for two and a half years. Thousands of supporters flooded the streets to celebrate his historic return, and the return of a democratically elected leadership to the country. On his flight from Colombo, Sri Lanka, to Malé, Maldives, President Nasheed was accompanied by President-Elect Ibrahim Solih and his wife, Madame Laila Ali.

On Tuesday, October 30, the Supreme Court of the Maldives [suspended](#) President Nasheed's 13-year sentence, which was denounced by the international community — including the U.S., India, The U.K., European Parliament, The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, [The UN Human Rights Committee](#), The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and others — as being politically motivated, clearing a legal pathway for his return.

Since his release from prison in January 2016, President Nasheed has lived in exile between Colombo, Sri Lanka and London, where he has mobilized a united, multi-party political opposition movement to the authoritarian government of President Abdulla Yameen, who jailed all of his political opponents and repressed independent media, freedom of speech and freedom of assembly.

Last month, Yameen lost his bid for re-election in a landslide victory for the opposition.

Since Yameen's defeat, political prisoners have been freed and exiles have returned from abroad as the Maldives prepares a transition to a new leadership to occur at the inauguration of President-Elect Solih on November 17.

Yameen has been criticized for hijacking Maldivian institutions, including the judiciary, parliament, the National Human Rights Commission, the Attorney General's office, the Maldives National Defence Force and the police for both political and personal monetary gain. His regime was denounced around the world for gross human rights abuses and grand corruption at the expense of the Maldivian people.

Upon the inauguration of President-Elect Solih, it will be important for the government conduct a full review of its institutions, as well as its constitution and Maldivian laws in order to identify the reforms necessary to strengthen the independence and functioning of democracy, to return to the rule of law, to guarantee the universal human and civil rights of all Maldivians and to ensure that authoritarian rule cannot return to the Maldives.



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To access photos of President Mohamed Nasheed's return to the Maldives, click [here](#).