



Covering events from January - December 2000

MALDIVES

Republic of Maldives

Head of state and government: Maumoon

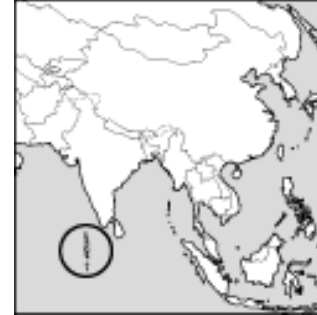
Abdul Gayoom

Capital: Male

Population: 0.3 million

Official language: Maldivian Dhivehi

Death penalty: abolitionist in practice



Prisoners of conscience continued to be held. There were continued allegations of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners.

Background

As in previous years, political parties were not allowed to function. The media and the judiciary remained tightly controlled by the government.

Prisoners of conscience

Prisoner of conscience Umar Jamal was arrested on 29 October 1999 by plainclothes police. He was held in various detention centres until April 2000 when he was put under house arrest. Umar Jamal was reportedly charged with attempting to discredit the government. A rival candidate closely linked to the government alleged that Umar Jamal had said that "although this is called a democracy it is a kingdom and there is no freedom". Fourteen witnesses reportedly testified to the authorities that Umar Jamal had not made the incriminating statement, with three of them giving statements to that effect to the police, and others writing to the President, the Defence Minister and the Attorney General. The court hearings against Umar Jamal were closed to the public and, in an apparent attempt to conceal the unfair nature of the trial, the court reportedly did not make a record of its own proceedings. The outcome of the proceedings was not known at the end of the year.

- Ismail Saadiq, who had been in detention or under house arrest since June 1996 on politically motivated grounds and had suffered from deteriorating health while denied adequate medical treatment, was allowed to go to Thailand in August 2000 to visit his daughter who was in hospital. He was accompanied by a Maldivian police officer instructed to stay with him at all times, and was not allowed to visit his wife, resident in Thailand, or to obtain medical treatment for himself. In Thailand, Ismail Saadiq applied to a third country for protection and was granted asylum.

Torture/ill-treatment

Torture/ill-treatment

There were continued allegations of torture of prisoners. Information came to light that at least three parliamentary candidates detained in the run up to the November 1999 parliamentary elections were tortured or ill-treated in custody. Ibrahim Ahmed Maniku and Abdul Rasheed were held in Dhoonidhoo detention centre in early November 1999 where they were deprived of sleep for several days, forced to sit on stools in the rain, and beaten every time they fell asleep.
