

Newsletter

Maldivian Democratic Party

1 - 15 February 2004

Covering up murder

The regime of Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, in power for the last 25 years, has had a long a history of human rights abuse. The regime has reached an amazing level of comfort in covering up torture and ill treatment in jail. The most basic human rights of the people are routinely denied to the people. In September of last year, the regime became so complacent as to dump the tortured remains of Hassan Evan Naseem in the central hospital in the capital Male'. This sparked unprecedented riots both in Male and Maafushi jail. To add insult to injury the security personnel in the jail opened fire killing three more people. "The killing of at least three prisoners by the National Security Services (NSS) and the injury of a dozen more in Maafushi Prison, is only the latest chapter in a catalogue of human rights violations in the country by the NSS personal who function under the President's command"

"I have omitted parts of the report", President Gayoom presenting the commission report on the findings of torture and killing of Hassan Evan Naseem and the Shootings and killing of three inmates.



Tortured remains of Hassan Evan Naseem

said Amnesty International commenting on the incident.

What has come to be known as the Sattar Report is the report of the commission appointed by Gayoom to investigate the torture and the killing of Evan and the subsequent shooting of prisoners. In December the Commission presented its finding to Gayoom who now refuses to publicize the Report in the form that it was presented to him. On 27th January 2004, Gayoom admitted in parliament that what he presented to them is only a partial report.

The Maldivian Democratic Party calls upon the President to publish the entire report and to come out clean. Omitting and hiding parts of the report will only lead to more resentment among the people. This would force MDP to reluctantly raise the stakes in its attempts to get the full report published.

Gayoom's former cabinet ministers joins MDP

Dr. Mohamed Munawar (MP) and Mr. Ibrahim Hussain Zaki (MP) both former cabinet ministers have joining the MDP. They are now seeking election in the forthcoming party elections. Dr. Munawar is the former Attorney General. Mr. Zaki has been a long serving civil servant who served as Secretary General of SAARC.

Soon after Gayoom's inauguration for a 6th term, Gayoom offered Mr. Zaki the post of chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives with a cabinet rank, which he refused. Dr. Munawar was offered to head the Highest Legal Council with a cabinet ranking. He too refused the offer. They first contacted with the MDP in December 2003.

MDP welcomes them to the party and hopes that their contribution to the party's efforts of establishing multiparty democracy in the Maldives would be productive.

MDP Meets the German Ambassador

On the 22nd of January 2004 MDP officials met with the German Ambassador for Sri Lanka and the Maldives, His Excellency Mr. Juergen Elias. The discussions at the meeting focused on the situation in the Maldives - specially on MDP's fear of another uprising in Male', if the President continues to cover up the incidents of torture and the shootings in Maafushi jail. MDP made it very clear that the party has no intention of destabilizing Maldivian society. MDP expressed concern that the regimes continued disregard for the rule of law would destabilize the country. Given such a possibility, MDP will have no choice but to explore all other options on pressurizing the government to let the party function in the country. MDP also assured the Ambassador that the party had no intention of following any violent path.

MDP delegates were most reassured with the German government's sincere concern about the welfare of the people of the Maldives.

MDP Council Elections

Given the present broadened status of the party, with enough members and contributory funds, the members of the party have decided to call for an election for a 15 member council. All members wishing to be nominated for the council are required to submit their nomination before the 10th of February 2004. As of 30/01/04, the following members have nominated themselves as candidates:

Abdulla Jinaah Ahmed,	Asdhoo, N. Velidhoo.
Abdulla Saeed,	Ma. Kosheege,
Abdulla Shafeeu,	Kalhagaarige, S. Hithadhoo.
Adam Abdul Gafoor,	H. Kuredhimaage, Male'.
Ahmed Abbas,	G. Bamboo, Male'.
Ahmed Ali Naseer,	G. Fithuroanuge, Male'.
Ahmed Mausoom,	G. Pleasant Waves, Male'.
Ahmed Nazim Sattar,	G. Kenereyge, Male'.
Ahmed Shafeeq,	M. Maafusheege, Male'.
Aiminath Najeeb,	M. Nedunge, Male'.
Ali Hashim,	Ma. Hithilaage, Male'.
Fidhaa Waheed,	M. Javahiru Vadhee, Male'.
Ibrahim Ismail,	Ma. Boagan Villa, Male'.
Ibrahim Hussain Zaki,	H. Hilihilaage, Male'.
Ismail Zila,	H. Graphite,
Jennifer Latheef,	M. Nedhunge, Male'.
Mohamed Latheef,	M. Chandhanee Villa, Male'.
Mohamed Mahir,	H. Green, Male'.
Mohamed Nasheed,	G. Kenereyge, Male'.
Mohamed Ziyad,	M. Saljamuge, Male'.
Muad Mohamed Zaki,	M. Ahamadee Abaad, Male'.
Mohamed Munnawar, Dr.	H. Hasankarige, Male'.
Maakun Ahmed Fala,	M. Kudaveyomatheege'.
Widhadh Waheed,	M. Javahiru Vadhee, Male'.
Zia Abbas,	M. Sylver Cloud

MDP Holds Press Conference

MDP held its first press conference in India at the Indian Women's Press Corps in Delhi on 28th January 2004. Leading media organizations from India as well as international news organization, including BBC and Time International, attended the conference.

The topics covered included:

- Torture and endemic Human Rights Abuse,
- Gayoom's blatant attempt at denying the truth behind the custodial death of Evan Naseem and the subsequent shooting to death of unarmed prisoners.
- Gayoom's continuing oppression of MDP members. Supporters were being harassed for the mere act of wearing a T shirt in support of the MDP even as the conference was going on. MDP website is blocked.
- Widespread corruption and abuse of power by Gayoom's relatives and stooges of the regime.
- The regime's disregard for the rule of law and the constitution.

- Gayoom's use of Islam as a tool of oppression
- The regime's control of and continuing suppression of freedom of expression. The Reporters Sans Frontieres listing of Maldives among the top 5 countries that suppress independent news websites was highlighted
- Gayoom's insensitive, extravagant life style, while 42% of Maldivians live below poverty.

MDP meets SAHRDC

The endemic abuse of basic civil, social, political and economical right of the people of Maldives during quarter century of Gayoom's rule is a matter of the most serious concern to MDP. The Party is in the process of compiling cases of human rights abuse perpetrated under Gayoom. To this effect a member of MDP visited the South Asian Human Rights Documentation Centre in Delhi on 28th January. SAHRDC is a well respected NGO that documents human rights abuse in South Asia. MDP believes that Gayoom's Human Right Commission is just one more tool to cover-up his blatant abuse of people's basic rights.

Reducing the Parliament

Ahmed Ali Naseer

Sattar Commission findings were presented to the Majlis on January 27, 2003 by President Gayoom, in a carefully stage-managed ceremony. When Gayoom finished making his speech, his brother Abdulla Hameed, the Speaker thanked the president and reiterated the confidence and close relations that exist between the Majlis and the President.

This, as MDP reported in its 4th Newsletter, is simply a public relations gimmick by Gayoom to cover up gross human rights abuses, and his blatant disregard for the Constitution. Gayoom must understand that the Majlis is not a ready-made audience chamber for his presidential revelations. It is also apparent, by today's performance broadcast live by the local media, that the people's

representatives in the current Majlis are no longer fit to hold their chairs. As the Sattar Report is now with the Attorney General, the Majlis is not in a position to even evaluate these findings. Gayoom is certainly inviting Members to give him their opinions. However, the Majlis, again is not a think-tank or government consultant to form opinions and serve as advisor to the president. Most staggering of all insults to the rule of law, Gayoom declared that the people of Maldives did not have the right to know the truth, by editing out parts of the findings, and withholding information from the representatives of the very people that Gayoom considers 'elected him' by a popular vote. A discontented NSS officer, remarked that

the possible repercussions of the publication of the Sattar Report were considered and police presence on the streets of Male' were beefed up.

With discontent and outright rebellion in the NSS ranks, Gayoom has decided to ignore the writing on the wall. His arrogance to own up to his failed responsibilities and the total subversion of the law of the nation certainly make him guilty of misrule and high treason, in the eyes of the people.

Factions within the NSS who are dissatisfied may, one day find it paramount to arrest their Commander-in-Chief for deceiving the public and breaking the law. A resignation may not now be able to save this president, as he is determined to utter lies under oath.

Evan's Mother Questioned

On 27th January 2003, Hassan Evan Naseem's mother Mariyam Manike received a copy of the Presidential Commissions investigation report on her son's murder. The report on Evan's death had parts omitted by President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom. Excerpts of how her son was brutally murdered and other factual findings were hidden from the public.

Mariyam Manike, on the 28th January 2003 while at IGMH came to know Captain Adam Mohamed, the Officer in Charge of Maafushi Jail at the time of Evan's death and the Maafushi shootings was also at the hospital. Upon meeting him, a heated confrontation sparked between Mariyam and Captain Adam Mohamed with her demanding to know the reasons for her son's brutal death as well as Adam Mohamed's participation and negligence of the incidence. She questioned him on why NSS officers and those in higher ranking posts were unable to prevent such atrocities. The angry confrontation was witnessed by two civilians, Ahmed Falah and Zia Abbass. MDP has come to know that Mariyam Manike has been asked to come to the police station for questioning on 29th January. Both Ahmed Falah and Zia Abbass were taken to NSS Headquarters, reportedly for questioning on whether Mariyam Manike physically assaulted the NSS officer Adam Mohamed.

Letters

■ Thank you for your mail with Newsletter 4. I hope you will carry out your crusade to the end and wish you luck in every way. This letter printed on this edition also shows the opinion of how some of us feels towards your effort in bringing change to our law and order.

■ People will have to understand that when people rise up and attempt to dislodge a regime such as Gayoom's they will use all sorts of tactics. We should be proud of ourselves that no one is talking about violence. For those who say that what the MDP is doing is harming tourism and the economy, the answer is very simple. Let's make this as quick as possible. The business community can advise Gayoom to legitimize MDP and call for free and fair elections. People have tried all other means. They have tried to bring out newspapers at home (Sangu, Hukuru and Manthiri) but were shut down and brutally suppressed. They have tried to work within the system by getting like minded people elected to the parliament After September 20th a lot of people from MDP realized that they can no longer go on like this and I believe a lot

of people advised Latheef and Anni to go abroad and start the work abroad. There are limits that people can stand. When they have to do all this from abroad they are having to do it very loudly and in the process so many others are hearing what they are saying. Some have raised concern about the possibility of MDP being hijacked by big business. The rules of procedures of MDP is very clear. One person one vote. The extent of ones financial contribution to the party will have nothing to do with the influence one courts in the party. Most members of MDP are with the view that the business community are backing the MDP mainly because they now know that the amount of funds that they have to dump as bribes, if things continue as they are, can easily exceed their returns. It is in their interest to have a clean society.

■ We are currently compiling a list of frequently asked questions and the answers to them. Please Email any specific questions or comments you may have to secretariat@maldiviandemocraticparty.org

We welcome all comments and thank you for your participation in our work for a more democratic Maldives.

