



Global Nonviolent Action Database

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Maldivians demand resignation of the president, 2011

- Arab Awakening (2011)

1 May

2011

to: 7 February

2012

Country: Maldives

Location City/State/Province: *Male*

Goals:

To make the president resign

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Methods in 2nd segment:

Methods in 3rd segment:

Methods in 4th segment:

Methods in 5th segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 020. Prayer and worship

Methods in 6th segment:

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 048. Protest meetings
- 147. Deliberate inefficiency and selective noncooperation by enforcement agents
- 148. Mutiny

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Democracy

Economic Justice

Group characterization:

- Maldivians
- Muslims

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Not known

Partners:

Police and Military

External allies:

Not known

Involvement of social elites:

Not known

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

Groups in 2nd Segment:

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

- Gaumee Party
- and the Adhaalath Party (Islamist party)
- the Jumhoory Party
- two other parties and NGOs

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

- Police and Military members

Segment Length: 50 days

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

Maldives Government, President Nasheed

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

Pro-Nasheed rallies

Campaigner violence:

Not known

Repressive Violence:

Ordering police, National Defense Forces, and the military to disperse peaceful protests; hundreds of arrests; use of tear gas

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

6 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

3 points out of 3 points

The Republic of the Maldives is a chain of islands in the Indian Ocean southwest of Sri Lanka. The country is threatened by becoming completely covered by the sea because of climate change.

In 2008, after thirty years of one-party rule, Maldivians created a new constitution and held multi-party elections. They participated in direct presidential elections for the first time. The new government of President Mohamed Nasheed faced many challenges, including huge debts left by the previous government and the continuing impact of a 2004 tsunami. Nasheed accepted the advice of the International Monetary Fund to institute an austerity program aimed at lowering the country's deficit. Prices of food and other goods rose by 20%. The government blamed the global economy for the rise in commodity goods prices, but during the Arab Awakening (2011) people began to protest against declining living standards.

Maldivians initially protested for a week from 1 May to 6 May 2011, holding the government accountable for mismanagement of the economy. They demanded the resignation of the President Nasheed. Thousands gathered on each night in various locations, such as Republican Square in the capital city, Male, and Artificial Beach.

Police used tear gas and batons to disperse the protesters and arrested more than 300 people. Presidential supporters also went into the streets to demonstrate against the opposition.

Between May and December Nasheed's opposition re-formed with a new framing, charging that the government was not in alignment with Islamic values. The alliance, including some who initially supported Nasheed in the 2008 election, was made of six political parties and some nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Unified by their belief that they needed to protect their faith, they organized two mass rallies. On 23 December 2011 campaigners rallied to defend Islam and the next day to support "moderate Islam."

Thousands of demonstrators attended each event. They flew banners and Maldivian flags, wore t-shirts and yelled slogans including, "We stand united for Islam and the nation," and "No idols in this holy land."

Police and the MNDF (National Defense Forces) maintained a close watch on the protests but this time did not intervene.

On 16 January 2012 President Nasheed ordered the arrest of the chief justice of the Maldives Criminal Court, complaining that he inadequately prosecuted the corruption practiced by the former president. This arrest led to multiple protests that lasted 22 days. Protesters demanded the judge's release and the resignation of President Nasheed.

On 7 February Maldivian police defied government orders to break up the protests and joined the protesters' side. President Nasheed realized he had lost the loyalty of the military when it also refused to disperse the crowd. The president resigned his office later that same day.

Research Notes

Influences:

Arab Spring (1)

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