

Nasheed seeks Indian military intervention in Maldives

Crackdown continues: Opposition supporters scuffle with security officers during a protest in Male late last week. APMohamed Sharuhaan

Exiled former President of the Maldives Mohamed Nasheed on Tuesday sought India's military intervention in the country to release dissidents in prison.

"We would like the Indian government to send an envoy, backed by its military, to free the judges and the political detainees, including former President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, from their detention and to bring them to their homes. We are asking for a physical presence," he said in a statement.

Mr. Nasheed's appeal came a day after President Abdulla Yameen declared a state of emergency in the Maldives, following a Supreme Court ruling last week that has put the Indian Ocean island back on the boil. The apex court ordered the release of nine Opposition leaders, including Mr. Nasheed, and the reinstatement of 12 expelled MPs.

The turbulence in the country over the last few days prompted some countries to issue travel advisories and security alerts citing potential violence, but President Yameen told the nation in a televised address on Tuesday that there was no enforcement of a curfew, and that neither general movements, services and businesses, nor travel in and out of or within the country was affected. The government put out a detailed statement justifying the emergency rule, saying President Yameen had "exhausted all venues available to him, legally and protocol wise."

Amendment to decree

On Tuesday, President Yameen also revised and issued a second amendment to the Presidential decree concerning the state of emergency, lifting an Article in the Constitution that said: "the Supreme Court shall be the final authority on the interpretation of the Constitution, the law, or any other matter dealt with by a court of law."

"This is not a state of war, epidemic or natural disaster. This is something more dangerous," President Yameen said on the national television, the Associated Press reported. "This is an obstruction of the very ability of the state to function."

The President added that the apex court overstepped its authority in ordering the politicians released. "This state of emergency is the only way I can determine how deep this plot, this coup, goes," Mr. Yameen said.

Accusing the President of declaring martial law illegally, Mr. Nasheed said: "We must remove him from power. The people of the Maldives have a legitimate request to world governments, especially to India and the U.S.," calling on Washington to stop all financial transactions of regime leaders.

Opposition MPs in Male said they feared being arrested, in the wake of the arrests of a former President, the Chief Justice, and a Supreme Court judge, hours after the government declared emergency on Monday.

According to Husnu Suood, President of the Maldives Bar Association and a former Attorney-General, President Yameen needs to send his reasons for declaring emergency within 48 hours to Parliament for its approval. "If it is not approved by Parliament, the state of emergency will lapse.

For that reason, [Opposition] parliamentarians are expected to be arrested," he told *The Hindu* . The restoration of the 12 MPs into the body, as per the Supreme Court order, would effectively give the Opposition a majority in Parliament.

Attempts to obtain a comment from the President's Office were unsuccessful. "There is an imminent threat [to us]," Opposition MP and lawyer Ali Hussain told *The Hindu* from Male. "The military takeover of the Parliament house and the Supreme Court shows that the President may order just anything he wants to be carried out."

Call from UN

Meanwhile, United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres called on the government in Male to lift the state of emergency and guarantee safety for its citizens, "including members of the judiciary". Guterres "urges" the Maldivian government "to uphold the constitution and rule of law, lift the state of emergency as soon as possible, and take all measures to ensure the safety and security of the people in the country, including members of the judiciary," a statement from his spokesman Stephane Dujarric read.

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com