



PRAY FOR PERSECUTED BROTHERS & SISTERS

Pray for the Persecuted Christians in Maldives

Christian Population: Thousands, unspecified
Total Population: 452,000

Radical Muslims Control Society

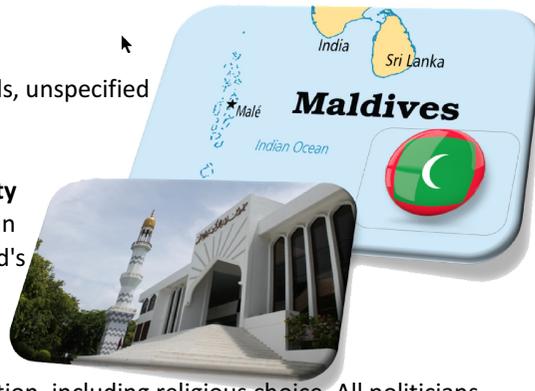
The Maldives, especially its main island, Malé, is one of the world's most densely-populated countries. The close-knit, homogeneous communities are naturally alert to any deviation, including religious choice. All politicians tirelessly announce that they are keeping the Maldives 100 percent Muslim, leaving effectively no space for any other expression of religious faith.

The Maldives' constitution requires all citizens to be Muslim. Conversion from Islam means that someone can be stripped of their citizenship and punished under Shariah law. Even foreign workers who are Christians are closely watched, which makes church life extremely difficult and practically non-existent. Churches are outlawed, and openly carrying the Bible is illegal. The country is so tightly controlled by Islamic law that there is not even a Bible fully translated into the native language of most citizens of the Maldives.

How Christians Are Suffering in the Maldives

Maldivian Christians must keep their faith completely secret. There have been cases where spouses have only discovered after years that both of them were active Christians, as they had hidden their faith from one another. If they are discovered, they will lose their citizenship. Even owning a Bible can result in imprisonment. In practice, no church meetings are possible.

Most Christians in the Maldives are expatriates, and most prefer not to organize meetings out of fear of repercussions. Sharing the gospel with Muslims is illegal and can result in deportation.



Some Recent Examples of Persecution

Since Christianity is forbidden in the country, baptisms of converts cannot take place and would have to be done outside of the Maldives-and even then in secret, so the conversion is not made known.

Children of converts are shunned and harassed at school, if the conversion is discovered. They may also be forced to leave school and may have no other option but to attend a school abroad, if they want to continue their studies (and their parents can afford it). This is an option many expatriate Christians choose for their children, just to avoid the everyday pressure on Christians. At work, coworkers apply constant pressure on expatriate Christians to persuade them to convert to Islam. They try to prove to Christian migrant workers that Jesus is not the Savior and even use money or promises of promotion at times. Converts try to blend in with the majority of people around them in their efforts to hide their faith.

Pray for Maldives

- Because the government is currently engaged in a political struggle with opposition forces, any perceived threat (like Christianity) is quickly and harshly eradicated. Pray the hearts of those in power will be softened toward Christians.
- Former President Mohamed Nasheed was elected as speaker of the parliament in May 2019. This formalizes his reappearance on the political stage in the Maldives and increases hopes for change, including in the area of human rights, including religious freedom. However, these are hopes for the long-term, not the short-term. Pray the hopes for human rights are realized.
- Pray that God would help secret believers to find fellowship.
- The language of the Maldives is Dhivehi: the complete Bible in this language is not yet available. Pray believers will have access to the Bible in their language.