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## Maldives: Former President Yameen Arrested Finally:

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When former President Yameen lost the election in end September last year, it was believed that the Solih Government would soon investigate various allegations against him of corruption and money laundering involving millions of dollars of Government money.

It was therefore not a surprise that finally law caught up with Yameen. The surprise was that Yameen despite all his misdoings continued to stay in Male and is said to have even attempted to float a new party to contest the Parliamentary elections.

In this particular case, Yameen was accused of allegedly receiving one million US Dollars of Government money through a private company SOF (Pvt) Ltd Male. The State Attorney Aishath Mohamed sought a Court order to detain Yameen after the latter was questioned in the court relating to illegal transfer of funds.

The Attorney said that Yameen attempted to influence the witnesses and had sufficient evidence to show that huge amounts were offered on behalf of Yameen to the witnesses to alter their statements.

Yameen told the Court that he did not know the people who testified against him and made an unbelievable statement that he did not even know that US dollars one million had been transferred to him!

The Court after hearing the case ordered that Yameen should be detained till the completion of the trial.

Yameen was immediately transferred to the Special Protection Unit of Maafushi Prison where he will be detained pending the outcome of the

money laundering case.

Maafushi, it may be called is the notorious prison near Male where Yameen had incarcerated many of the opposition political leaders during his regime under “terrorism charges”.

This case had begun in 2016 when the State’s Anti Corruption Commission found that SOF a company launched by former Vice President and earlier Tourism Minister was used to launder more than 92 million US dollars from the Maldives Marketing & Public Relations Corporation.

This case could not have come to light if one of the Executives of Bank of Maldives , Gasim Abdul Karim had not revealed the transactions. What Yameen did was to promptly arrest the whistle blower himself for data theft and illegal disclosure and Karim was sentenced to eight months and twelve days. He was released after he had spent nine months even in the pre-trial days. Kareem declared on his release- “ Take risks for the sake of the nation. I have done my part”

A total of 65 million US dollars that was collected as acquisition costs for leasing islands, lagoons and plots of land was diverted into private bank accounts in two stages. The amount was first transferred into the Bank of Maldives Account SOF Pvt. Ltd owned by Mohamed Allam Latheef ‘Moho’, a close Associate of now jailed and forer Vice President Ahmed Adeen. Later smaller amounts were transferred as brokerage charges to President Yameen’s accounts and many other party members.

It is likely that funds were diverted to many more prominent politicians. One such name that came to surface is that of Minister of Youth and Sports Ahmed Mahoof. According Gasim Karee who first revealed the transactions, a total of 84 million US dollars had passed through the accounts of SOF company.

Parliamentary elections are due on April 6. It is hoped that Yameen will continue to be in detention lest he creates mischief in that election too.

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