

Rebellion of the Southern Atolls

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Introduction

During the Second World War, the British used Gan Island in Addu Atoll as an air and naval base. Looking back at this period, we can see that it was marked by conflicts between the Addu people and the Maldivian central Government in Male’. It was said that the reason for these conflicts was the rules laid down by the Maldivian Government on the islanders, in their relations with the British at the base. The Maldivian Government laid down these rules because of problems encountered during the early days after the arrival of the British. The Maldivians in Addu were not used to having foreigners in the islands, and the British also needed to know the ways and customs of the people. To



Aerial photograph of Gan Island.

correct the situation, the Maldivian Government sent Mr. Hussain Hilmy Didi, the Maldivian Government Representative in Ceylon (later Sri Lanka) to Addu Atoll to formulate a set of rules for interaction with the foreigners and these rules were explained to all concerned.

The rules were supposed to apply to all Maldivians, but it was noted that some of the officials sent by the Government to Addu Atoll were indulging in trade, and accepting gifts from the officers. During World War II, the

Maldivian Government had given the use of Gan Island gratis to the British. The first British forces landed in Addu Atoll on 29th September 1941. Since then the close contacts between the people of the atoll and the British had led to many problem-creating incidents. More problems arose in 1944, and Mr Hassan Fareed travelled to the atoll in March 1944, on board the ill-fated British minesweeper, the Maaloy, to solve the disputes. It was on his way back to Colombo from this mission that the vessel was lost with all on board, torpedoed by a German U-boat. Soon afterwards, Mr. Muhammad Ameen travelled to Addu and conducted the inquiry which found many of the leaders guilty; one of these was Mr. Abdulla Afeef who afterwards became the leader of the later rebellion

The rebellion of the southern atolls of Maldives, Huvadhu, Fuah Mulaku and Addu Atolls, was one of the most difficult episodes of the twentieth century for Maldives. In 1959 these three atolls decided to secede from Maldives and declared their own republic, United Suvadive Islands.

When the events that led to the declaration of a separatist government in these southern atolls are studied, it becomes evident that behind the movement there was encouragement from the British, who had a base in Gan Island in Addu Atoll. Some of the events during this rebellion can be seen to have been planned ahead.

The members of the Maldivian Cabinet during the period leading to this event, i.e. in 1955, were as follows:

Prime Minister.....	Amir Ibrahim Faamuladeyri Kilegefaanu
Minister of Home Affairs	Amir Ibrahim Faamuladeyri Kilegefaanu
Minister of External Affairs.....	Amir Ibrahim Faamuladeyri Kilegefaanu
Minister of Finance.....	Mr. Ibrahim Muhammad Didi
Minister of Defense.....	Mr. Ibrahim Muhammad Didi
Minister of Education	Mr. Ibrahim Fareed Didi
Minister of Endowments.....	Shaikh Ibrahim Rushdee
Minister of Health.....	Mr. Abdul Wahab
Minister of Trade.....	Mr. Ibrahim Hassan Didi
Attorney General.....	Mr. Ahmed Kamil Didi
Minister of Justice.....	Sheikh Muhammad Jameel Didi
Minister for Religious Guidance.....	Mr. Ibrahim Shihab
Minister of Labour.....	Mr. Hussain Habeeb
Maldivian Government Representative in Colombo...	Mr. Muhammad Zaki

On 10th April 1955, Mr. Muhammad Zaki, Mr. Ibrahim Nasir, Mr. Muhammad Ibrahim Didi and Mr. Umar Maniku were made Ministers of State. On 29th June 1956, the following changes were made to the Cabinet:-

Minister of Justice.....	Mr. Ahmed Kamil Didi
Minister of Education	Mr. Ibrahim Shihab
Minister of Defense.....	Mr. Ibrahim Nasir
Attorney General.....	Sheikh Muhammad Jameel Didi

Mr. Ibrahim Fareed Didi, Mr. Ahmed Kamil Didi and Mr. Hussain Habeeb were made Ministers of State.

In 1956, the British negotiated with the then Prime Minister Amir Ibrahim Faamuladeyri Kilegefaanu to lease Gan Island for a period of 100 years. The initial agreement was for the Maldives to lease Gan Island in Addu Atoll to the British for a sum of sterling pounds 2000 per annum. The Maldivian sultan at the time was Sultan Muhammad Fareed I. This initial agreement was discussed during a visit of the Maldivian Prime Minister to Colombo before consultation with the Maldivian Cabinet and the Parliament.

The Ceylon Government and the British had decided that the British bases in Ceylon would be returned to Ceylon the following year and hence the necessity for the British to acquire a base in Maldives, which would be a strategic alternative.

On his return from Colombo, the Prime Minister consulted with his Cabinet on the initial agreement with the British and the proposed draft of the final agreement. The cabinet members discussed the matter and agreed to pass the initial document, but did not agree on the final draft. This final agreement would have to be passed by the Cabinet and by the Majlis and also by a referendum held among the people. In the meantime, on 25th November 1955, the first group of British consisting of 13 men arrived in Addu Atoll.

The British Deputy High Commissioner in Ceylon Mr. Coster arrived in Male' by an R.A.F. flight on 13th December 1956, for discussions on the British base in Gan in Addu Atoll. The initial agreement was signed on 15th December 1956, between Maldivian Prime Minister Amir Ibrahim Faamuladheyri Kilegefaanu and the Deputy British High Commissioner in Ceylon.

The initial agreement was based on Article 4 of an agreement signed between the Maldivian and British Governments on 1st January 1953. In this article it was stated that if the protection of any Commonwealth country or the Maldives required the presence of British forces in the islands, the Maldives would make their stay possible.

With the problem of the agreement with the British, a group of Maldivians started their demands for Maldives' independence from the British, an end to the state of being a British protectorate. Chief among these were Mr. Ibrahim Nasir and Sheikh Ibrahim Rushdee. Sheikh Ibrahim Rushdee wanted to do away with agreements and gain full and complete independence for Maldives. There were many who seconded his call. Among these were Mr. Ahmed Zaki, Mr. Ibrahim Rasheed, Mr. Ibrahim Shihab, Mr. Hassan Zareer, Mr. Muhammad Imaduddin, Mr. Farooq Ismail, Mr. Jaufar Kamaluddin, Mr. Adnan Hussain, Sheikh Muhammad Jameel, Mr. Muhammad Ismail Didi and elder academic Mr. Malim Muhammad Didi. Regarding this decision, Mr. Malim Muhammad Didi is reported to have said; "So far we have been saying 'yes sir', so let us also see what happens when we say 'no sir'".

Soon afterwards Prime Minister Amir Ibrahim Faamuladheyri Kilegefaanu visited Addu Atoll where some young people of the Atoll too expressed their opposition to the agreement with the British.

A short time later, the British High Commission in Colombo sent a final copy of the agreement they had drafted for the Sultan's ratification. The High Commissioner in Colombo was now Mr. Alexander Morley. The British Liaison Officer stationed in Gan was Major Phillips.

The first incident in the rebellion took place on the night of 31st December 1958. A group of the local people tried to attack the Maldivian staff, but all except one member of the team were taken to safety in Gan Island by the British. The one member who did not escape was Mr. Anwar Hilmy Didi who was mistaken for Mr. Ahmed Zaki and was attacked by the mob. He was seriously injured before he too was rescued by the British.

As a result of signing the initial agreement, the population of Gan and Feydhoo were displaced. The Maldivian Government magistrate in Addu Atoll was Mr. Abdullah Afeef. His assistants, chosen by the Maldivian Government were, Mr. Moosa Anwar, Mr. Muhammad Saeed and Mr. Ahmed Didi (Ibrahim Beyyage).

Agreement on Lease of Gan and Territory in Addu

During 1956, with the impending handover of the British naval and air bases in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) to the Ceylon Government, the British felt the necessity of having an alternative base in the region. The geographical position of Maldives in relation to the countries of the region made the islands a good alternative. During the Second World War, Britain had used the Gan Island base successfully, and this may have been one of the reasons for choosing the island for an air base. During the war, in addition to the air base, they had also used the natural harbour enclosed by the islands of Addu Atoll.

In 1956, the British held discussions in Colombo with the then Maldivian Prime Minister Amir Ibrahim Faamuladeyri Kilegefaanu on a new agreement, by which Maldives would lease Gan and 110 acres of land in Hithadhoo to them for a period of 100 years, for a sum of 2000 sterling pounds per annum. The heads of agreement was discussed in Colombo between the British authorities and the Maldivian Prime Minister Amir Ibrahim Faamuladeyri Kilegefaanu, and passed by the Cabinet later in Male'. The heads of agreement quoted an article in a previous agreement made between Maldives and Britain on 1st January 1953, which stated that if the need for protection of any Commonwealth country or the Maldives arose, the Maldivian Government would facilitate the use of her territory by the British. Based on this agreement there were many other clauses in the heads of agreement, paving the way for a more comprehensive final agreement. The heads of agreement also stated that Maldives could consider the sale of the land to the British. This agreement was initialled by the British Deputy High Commissioner Mr. Costar and the Maldivian Prime Minister on 15th December 1956 in Male'.

The Maldivian Cabinet were not in favour of leasing Gan for such a long period and did not pass the draft of the final agreement which was sent to Male' at a later date. By then the British had come to Gan and started work on the airbase, and on a wireless station on Maamendoo.

Re-location

Gan Island had to be evacuated to make way for the construction of the airbase. The population of Gan Island was to be moved to neighbouring Feydhoo, and the Feydhoo islanders moved to Maradhoo. The new housing was to be provided by the British Government.

The relocation was not a move welcomed by the people of the island. On 16th November Feydhoo islanders' relocation to the eastern part of Maradhoo Island began. By 28th December the removal was complete. The occupants of sixteen houses belonging to the

original population of Maradhoo were moved to a new location in Maradhoo. The evacuation of the Gan Islanders to Feydhoo began on 8th December 1957. But after the riots of 31st December 1958, the Maldivian Government called for a temporary halt to this process. The cost of this evacuation was borne by the Maldivian Government.

The Maldivian Government had proposed that the Gan Islanders be re-located in Gan in Huvadhu Atoll instead of Feydhoo so as not have to re-locate the population of Feydhoo and Maradhoo, but the Gan islanders did not like this idea, as they wished to be as close as possible to their original home.

Resignation of Amir Ibrahim Faamuladeyri Kilegefaanu

The Prime Minister Amir Ibrahim Faamuladeyri Kilegefaanu resigned on 10th December 1957, for reasons of ill-health, and Mr. Ibrahim Nasir was elected as the new Prime Minister of Maldives.



**Amir Ibrahim Faamuladeyri
Kilegefaanu**

On 5th March 1958, the British High Commissioner in Ceylon Mr. Morley arrived in Male', with their final draft of the agreement, but this draft was not acceptable to the Maldivian Government. Accompanying Mr. Morley was the Commander-in-Chief of the East Indies, Admiral H. W. Biggs and the First Secretary of the British High Commission in Colombo. During their four-day stay, more discussions were held on the Addu problem. The ship departed on 9th March 1958, leaving behind the First Secretary of the British High Commission in Colombo Mr. Kenneth A. East, for more discussions with the Government. Mr. Morley returned to Male' on 15th March 1958. The revised agreement drafted by the Maldivian Government was presented to the Majlis and it was then decided to present this draft to the British High Commissioner. Discussions were held between the British and the Maldivian Government regarding this draft, but the High Commissioner left for Colombo on 1st April 1958, without the two sides reaching an agreement.

At about this time, the Maldivian Government engaged the services of Mr. K.C. Nadarajah, a British-educated Ceylonese (Sri Lankan) barrister to advise them. Since the heads of agreement about Gan were initialled, the R.A.F. had been proceeding with work there, but Mr. Nadarajah, who had been consulting international lawyers in Geneva, claimed their authority for the view that at that time the R.A.F. were trespassing, since no final agreement had been signed. The Maldivian Government requested the R.A.F. not to use Maldivian labour until an agreement was signed, but the British riposted by raising their wages. The Maldivian Government asked the R.A.F. for aid for its police force, to enable it to deal with the revolt in the southern atolls. This, the Maldivian Government felt, would demonstrate to the world that, contrary to widely held suspicions, Britain had no sympathy with the insurgents who had professed for the R.A.F. in their dispute with the legitimate Government in Male'. (The Times, London, 1st May 1959).

A permanent committee to deal with the Addu situation was formed on 6th November 1958. On 18th December 1958, the Liaison Office in Addu Atoll was brought under the Office of the Maldivian Government Representative in Colombo.

Rebellion in Addu

On 30th December 1958, the Maldivian Government Representative in Ceylon Mr. Ahmed Zaki arrived in Addu Atoll, with a directive from the Government, for Maldivian labourers to stop working for the British. Besides this order, the letter said that the duty which was routinely paid by all boats in Maldives was to be levied on boats in Addu as well. He was accompanied by Mr. Anwar Hilmy.

The Government orders played into the hands of people who wanted trouble between the Maldivian Government and the Addu population. The letter containing the above information was read out by Mr. Abdulla Afeef, the magistrate of the Maldivian Government in Addu, to the population of Hithadhoo on the night of 31 December 1958. Such letters were routinely read to the people after Friday prayers, but this time the arrangement was made to read it at night, which in itself was reason for the Maldivian Government to suspect that the intention was to cause rioting among the people. As expected, this led to a riot that ended with violent demonstrations, and an inflamed mob heading in their boats to Gan. They attacked “Maaran’ga” the Government office in Gan, looted the premises, set the place on fire and then went off in search of Mr. Zaki, who was given refuge on a British ship in the harbor. It was noted by people who witnessed the event that the British officers stood by while the office premises were torched, without attempting to stop any of the rioters. Adduans who were at the site, said that the whole episode had been arranged earlier. Each man seemed to know their particular part in the “drama.” Although the senior members of the British did not act openly in this way, encouragement was given to these activities by some of the others, including members working for the Costaines construction company. Major Phillips, the British Liaison Officer, was also thought by some Adduans to have played a part in encouraging these activities.



Mr. Ahmed Zaki

On 9th January, a commission of high level members of the Government went to Addu to check on the situation there and to see for themselves the condition of the people who had been re-located. They were not happy with the accommodation prepared for the evacuees. On the day of their departure from Addu, 12th January 1959, there was another riot by the Gan Islanders ending in a bodily attack on the members of the Commission. Again the R.A.F. men stood by and watched the proceedings while people from the other three islands saved the Government officials. The members of the Commission returned to Male’ leaving behind Mr. Abdul Majeed Mahir as Liaison Officer. The Atoll Chief was Mr. Muhammad Zahir.

On 11th January, a committee was chosen by the Maldivian Government to negotiate with the British on Addu Atoll. The committee members were the following:-

1. Mr. Hassan Zareer (Chairman)....Deputy Prime Minister
2. Mr. Farouk Ismail.....Minister of Justice
3. Mr. Ibrahim Shihab.....Minister of Education
4. Shaikh Ibrahim Rushdee.....Minister of Endowments
5. Mr. Ahmed Hilmy Didi..... Minister of Health
6. Mr. Ahmed Zaki.....Maldivian Government Representative in Ceylon
7. Mr. Ibrahim Rasheed.....Under-Secretary of Ministry of Home Affairs.

The committee members left for Colombo on 14th January 1959. Negotiations soon began between the British and the Maldivian Government regarding the agreement on the lease of Gan. A committee drawn from the People's Majlis was given the mandate to study and work on a Maldivian draft of the Addu agreement. This amended draft was completed on 24th March 1958 and was presented to the Majlis where each point was debated and passed. This draft was presented to the British High Commissioner on 1st April 1959.

Secession of the three Southern Atolls

The leaders of the rebellion in Addu sent delegates to the neighbouring atolls of Fua Mulaku and Huvadhu, to persuade them to join in seceding from the Maldivian Government. In February of the same year, these two atolls also joined in the rebellion, and the three atolls formed the United Suvadive Islands, declaring themselves independent of the Government in Male'. Fua Mulaku Atoll joined on 6th February and Huvadhu Atoll on 17th February. The Government in Male' heard of this secession on 13th March when the news was broadcast over the radio channels. Throughout this period, the British maintained close relations with the breakaway factions, while carrying on their work on Gan and Hithadhoo.

Negotiations were going on in Colombo between the ministerial delegation from Maldives and the British. The Maldivian Government requested the reduction of the period of the lease from 100 years to a shorter period. The British were keen to finish the negotiations and the business of resettling the Gan Islanders so that work on the base could be completed, and come to a proper agreement on the lease of Gan. When the news of the secession of the three southern atolls was announced, the Maldivian delegation broke off the talks and returned to Male' for further briefing.

The Maldivian Government noted with concern that there was evidence of indirect encouragement by the British in Gan to increase the frustrations of the people of Addu. By now, the Addu people were working under the British, on construction as well as other jobs. This made them feel that they would be better off with the British than with the government in Male'.

The rebels of Huvadho Atoll said that there was famine in the atoll and many people had died of hunger and this story was widely circulated. They reported that they had had no rice for the last six months and that about 40 people had died of hunger. The British sent the ship, the Starline Trader to Havaru Thinadhoo with food. An inward telegram to the Commonwealth Relations Office on the 22nd of March 1959 from Gan stated that the German Captain of the ship, who went ashore on the island, saw no obvious signs of starvation. To the contrary, he “was given lunch, and was presented with 16 chickens, 100 eggs, coconuts and bananas”. The R.A.F. Police Corporal who witnessed unloading of the food items and surveyed the shore through binoculars confirmed that starvation was not present.

On 30th March the Maldivian Government sent a vessel, the “Elizabeth Boye” to Fua Mulaku, with some officers under the command of Mr. Moosa Maniku, to try to take back the island. But they were met with stiff resistance from the island and the ship returned to Male’.

Referendum of 4th April 1959

On 4th April 1959, the Prime Minister’s office issued a notice explaining the Addu situation and the existing relations with the British. The government had decided to elect a leader to be given the authority for conducting the operations required to resolve the very difficult situation in the southern atolls. The voting was held in Male’ and in all the atolls of Maldives excepting the three southern atolls. The results were declared on 9th May 1959. 48 names were polled in the votes, out of which 83% of the votes polled were for the Prime Minister Mr. Ibrahim Nasir. Mr. Nasir was therefore chosen to be the leader in conducting the necessary operations to resolve the situation in the southern atolls.

Huvadho Invasion

On 9th July 1959, the Ministry of Defense called for volunteers to accompany the Government mission to the southern atolls. The Maldivian Government vessel, the Maldive Star was prepared for the mission and a total of 700 volunteers and army personnel were chosen. Accompanying this small force were Mr. Gadhdho Ali Kaeyfaanu and Gadhdho Khatheeb Hussain Maniku, two of the leaders from Huvadho Atoll who had come to Male’ earlier to report on the situation in the atoll. The “Maldive Star” left Male’ on 14th July 1959, travelling first to Haddumathi, and then on to Gadhdho in Huvadho Atoll.

It must be noted here that the population of Gadhdho were loyal to the Maldivian Government and played a significant role in keeping the Male’ Government informed of the situation in the atoll. The leaders of this group were Ali Kaleyfaanu, Gadhdho Khatheeb Hussain Maniku, and Ahmed Thakurufaanu. The island of Gadhdho was targeted for punishment by the dissidents, possibly because they exhibited their loyalty to the Maldivian government.

When the ship arrived in Gadhdhoo harbour, hostile activities were instigated by members of a “military force” from Havaru Thinadhoo, the capital of the atoll, who had been in charge of Gadhdhoo Island since the beginning of the rebellion. These were about 200 men from Havaru Thinadhoo, calling themselves “sifain” (soldiers) who had roamed the island, looting and terrifying the islanders, consisting mainly of women and children, after most of the able bodied men had been captured and taken away. Soon afterwards, the men from Havaru Thinadhoo capitulated and were handed over to the ship by the islanders. Essential food items were off-loaded from the Maldive Star, which then left for Havaru Thinadhoo.

The population of Havaru Thinadhoo was quite hostile to the Maldivian Government. Letters were sent ashore to the leaders of the rebellion, and orders were given the islanders to submit peacefully and that no harm would come to them, but these orders had no effect. When the Maldivian force led by Mr. Ibrahim Nasir, some Government officials, Maldivian army officers and volunteers, arrived in the island harbor, there was a skirmish in which three of the islanders were injured. It was Friday, and at prayer time the Government force went back to their vessel telling the islanders to submit and come in peace after the Friday prayers. After prayers, the Maldivian force went back to the island and eventually the dissidents gave up, and the leaders of the rebellion in the atoll were brought to the “Maldive Star”. The rest of the day and most of the night were spent in unloading necessary foodstuffs from the boat to the island.

The Atoll Chief Mr. N.T. Hassan Didi, who had been in Havaru Thinadhoo when the rebellion took place, had been imprisoned, beaten up, and badly mistreated by the rebels, was also brought to the vessel, where he received a very warm welcome. After picking up the leaders of the rebels, the ship left for Male’ on 18th July 1959. Fifty army personnel and one hundred civilians who had come aboard the ship from Male’ were to stay in Havaru Thinadhoo to look after matters in the atoll.

The rebellion in Fua Mulaku ended formally when a delegation from the atoll came to Male’, and the Maldivian Government pardoned the rebel leaders who had joined the other two atolls in seceding from the Maldivian Government. The separation of Huvadhoo and Fua Mulaku isolated Addu Atoll.

The 1960 Agreement (The Alport Agreement)



Mr. Ibrahim Nasir

The talks between the Maldivian Government and Britain which had halted in early 1959 with the political problems in the southern atolls were started again on 13th January 1960.

The Maldivian Government was represented by the Prime Minister Mr. Ibrahim Nasir, Mr. Ibrahim Shihab, the Acting Maldivian Government Representative in Ceylon Mr. Ahmed Hilmy Didi, Mr. Ahmed Zaki and Mr. Abdul Sathar Moosa Didi. The British team included the British High Commissioner in Ceylon Sir A.F. Morley, the Assistant Under-Secretary to the Secretary of State Mr. W.W. Clark, Lord Bendon and Mr. Kenneth East.

These talks ended with the Maldivian Government granting the British free use of the base at Gan and other required land in Addu Atoll, for a period of thirty years. The other points on which discussions were held were also brought to a mutual agreement, and the first drafts were initialled. This new agreement allowed for a representative of Britain to stay in Male', the protection of Maldives by Britain when required, and an aid package of 850,000 sterling pounds to be used in improving health, education, communications and the fisheries industry. Of this amount, 100,000 pounds would be a direct grant to the Maldivian Government budget and the rest would be given for the development projects. The problem of the Addu rebellion would be solved and the atoll brought under the Maldivian Government through British mediation over a period of time.

An invitation to Male' for the signing of the formal agreement on 14th February 1960 was extended to the Minister of State for Commonwealth Relations Mr. C. J. M. Alport by the Maldivian Prime Minister Mr. Ibrahim Nasir. Mr. Alport arrived in Male' on the 13th of February in H.M.S. Gambia and the formal signing ceremony was held on the following day, 14th February 1960.

On 8th October 1960, the first British Representative in the Maldives, Mr. Arthington Davy arrived in Male'. His residence was on the island of Dhoonidhoo, an island lying very close to Male', the capital.

Second rebellion

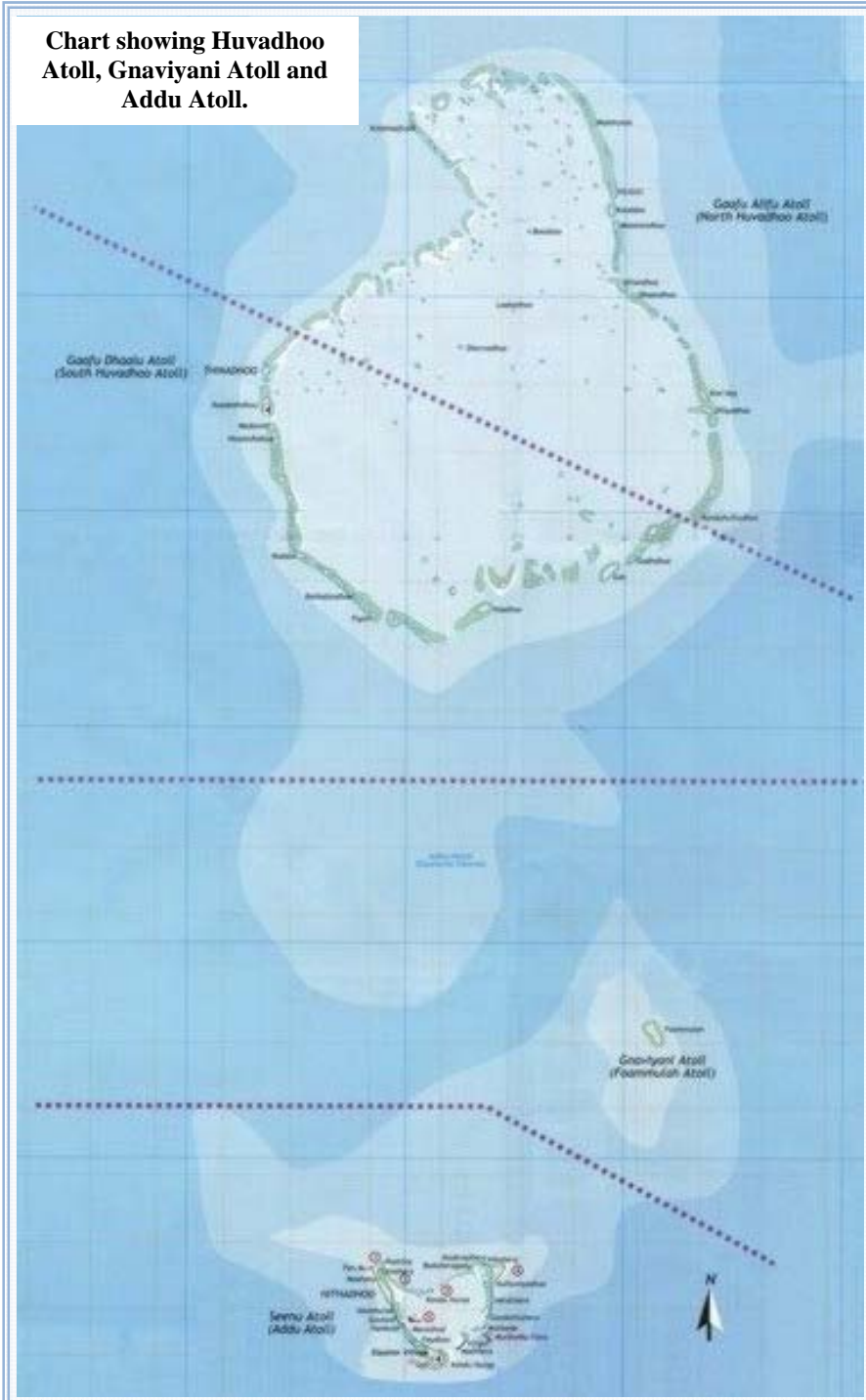
The Maldivian Government had felt that Huvadho Atoll was too large for one atoll office to administer. It had therefore been decided that the atoll would be divided into two administrative regions, one to be the western region under the present atoll office in Havaru Thinadhoo and the other, the eastern region, the atoll office of which was to be situated in Vilin'gili Island in the north east of the atoll. The change was to be made on 1st Muharram 1381(15th June 1961). The Atoll Chief for the eastern region was already in Vilingili, getting his new office ready for work.

On 14th June 1961, there was another rebellion in Huvadho atoll. The plans for this rebellion had been made at meetings organized in Addu Atoll and attended by many people from Huvadho Atoll. Meetings had also been held in Havaru Thinadhoo. The plan was to once again form a separate government in the three southern atolls as they had done in the first rebellion at the beginning of 1959.

On the night of 14th June 1961, a group of people had come in eight boats from Addu to Havaru Thinadhoo. They attacked and captured the Atoll Chief, the wireless operator, ten people who had been housed in the army quarters and the staff in the generator room, and took them back to Addu Atoll as prisoners.

Many houses and the premises of the Huvadho Branch of the Qaume Kunfuni (a national trading company) in Havaru Thinadhoo were looted and all the money and goods had been taken. According to available figures there were goods and money worth more than 364,000 rufiyaa in the office at the time. One of the senior staff of the

Chart showing Huvadhoon Atoll, Gnaviyani Atoll and Addu Atoll.



company, Ranvikkaa Thuththu Maniku, was killed and many others were seriously injured.

Two hundred men and some of the leaders of the rebellion then travelled in dhonis to Gadhdhoo and beat up the people of the island. They looted homes and took valuables from the terrified population, and then went around the island destroying the houses and buildings. The rebels had sent a boat to Vilingili in the north of the atoll to take the Atoll Chief and the two other administrative staff prisoner and take them back to Addu Atoll.

On 18th June the rebellion spread to Fua Mulaku and a group of rebels attacked and injured Mr. Hilihilaage Muhammad Didi and Mr. Mugurige Dhon Maniku, two Fisheries Advisory Board members who were in the atoll, and other Government staff in the Atoll Office. They were then tied up and taken as prisoners to Addu Atoll.

The news of the rebellion in Huvadhoo Atoll was given to the Maldivian Government Representative's Office in Colombo, from where the information was sent to the Prime Minister's Office in Male'. The first information from Huvadhoo atoll reached Male' on 17th June, when a Gadhdhoo boat arrived at 11 o'clock that night with the news and a letter from the Atoll Chief of the Eastern region of the atoll, Mr. Kuda Ahmed Kaleyfaanu, giving the details he had gathered from atoll sources.

The rebellion which had started in Havaru Thinadhoo, spread from island to island and finally involved all of Huvadhoo Atoll. The Atoll Chief of the Eastern region of Huvadhoo atoll, Mr. Kuda Muhammad Kaleyfaanu who was in the administrative office in Vilingili, was also made a prisoner and taken to Addu. Stories of the events that had occurred in the two atolls were brought to Male' by people who had fled the atoll.

The British authorities in Gan took charge of the people taken to Addu as prisoners and treated those who had been injured. They assured the Maldivian Government that these people would be returned safely to Male'. There were thirty prisoners who were returned to Male' by the British within the next two weeks, some of them had very severe injuries.

End of Rebellion in Huvadhoo Atoll

On 28th January 1962, the Prime Minister Ibrahim Nasir left Male' for the atolls in the yacht "Silver Crest", accompanied by Mr. Ahmed Hilmy Didi, Mr. Ahmed Zaki, Mr. Muhammad Imadhudhdhin and Mr. Maizan Ibrahim Maniku. Others accompanying him were the navigator Mr. Maalimee Muhammad Maniku and the wireless operator Mr. Maizan Umar Maniku. It was assumed by people in Male' that this was one of the regular trips the Prime Minister had been making to different atolls.

"Silver Crest" headed south and reached Feali in North Nilande Atoll where it made its first stop. On 29th January it travelled to Maamendhoo in Hadhdhunmathi. The yacht picked up nine army officers who were at the island and set sail at 2 o'clock in the morning of 30th January, heading towards Huvadhoo Atoll. At this time those on board came to know that the yacht was carrying some sub-machine guns. The yacht reached

Havaru Thinadhoo at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. At 10 o'clock the next morning Mr. Ibrahim Nasir, Mr. Ahmed Zaki, Mr. Ahmed Hilmy and Mr. Muhammad Imadhudhdhin set off in a dhoni to Havaru Thinadhoo. As the dhoni came closer to the island calling for the people to surrender, the mob gathered on the beach threw rocks and came running to attack the people in the boat with various weapons. A sub-machine gun was fired from the boat and immediately the mob stopped their attack, and then they started to flee the island.

The leaders of the rebellion were captured and brought back to a dhoni tied to "Silver Crest", to be taken back to Male' for trial. During the skirmish and the gunfire from the boat, one man from Thinadhoo was killed. The chief instigator of the rebellion, Muhammad Waheed of Thinadhoo fled to Addu Atoll.

After this second rebellion, it was decided that the island of Thinadhoo should be vacated and the people dispersed to other islands. The population of the island was asked to take their belongings and leave the island. Many of them travelled to other nearby islands to make their temporary home. The process of evacuation took many days, and when everyone had left, Thinadhoo became an unpopulated island. Gadhdhoo Island was made the administrative centre of Huvadhoo atoll.

Huvadhoo Atoll was again divided administratively into two sections, this time into a northern and a southern region, with Gadhdhoo as the southern administrative island and Vilingili as the northern administrative island. Atoll Chiefs were appointed to the two sections and atoll committees were elected, thus putting in place the atolls' administrative network. All the prisoners taken in Huvadhoo were sent to Male'. On 14th February 1962 "Silver Crest" returned to Male'

The detainees from Huvadhoo were housed in the prison in Male'. In mid-March, an epidemic of dysentery broke out in the section that housed these prisoners, and they were moved to new quarters built on Vilingili in Male' Atoll. Some deaths occurred from the disease, including that of Muhammad Saeed, one of the leaders of the rebellion.

Referendum of 16th March 1962

The Prime Minister wished to have a referendum taken to see if he had the confidence of the public on how matters relating to the problem of the southern atolls had been handled. On 16th March 1962, a referendum was held in Male' and in all atolls of Maldives, except for the three southern atolls. The results showed that a majority of 81.285% had confidence in the Prime Minister.

Improving Relations

During the period after the signing of the 1960 Agreement, there were signs of improving relations between the British and the Maldives. On 21st March 1962, the British High Commissioner in Ceylon, Sir A.F. Morley paid a visit to Maldives on the ship H.M.S. Eastbourne. Lady Morley accompanied him, and the visit turned out to be a very cordial

one, with many functions carefully planned by the Maldivian authorities. The chief purpose of this visit was to present His Highness the Sultan of Maldives Muhammad Fareed I, with the medal of K.C.M.G. awarded by Queen Elizabeth II of England.

On 14th February 1962, Prime Minister Ibrahim Nasir sent a letter to the British High Commissioner in Colombo, Sir Alexander Morley, stating that the Maldivian Government would send their officials to Addu Atoll only when the problems regarding the Atoll were settled in a satisfactory manner for both parties. In his reply of 21st March, the High Commissioner stated that the British Government felt that there should be no more delay in sending Maldivian officials to the atoll. He also felt that the Maldivian Government should now grant a pardon to the Addu people with no pre-conditions attached. He also felt that the number of personnel sent at first should not be more than six, and that it would be better not to include any police or army officers in this group. In his reply to this letter, Prime Minister Nasir accepted the suggestions made by the Ambassador, saying that if the Addu people accepted the authority of the Maldivian Government and the conditions stated in the Maldivian Government's letter of 7th July 1961 an unconditional pardon would be given to them. This letter was sent to the High Commissioner through Mr. Arthington Davy, the British Representative in Maldives.

In accordance with the matters agreed to in the letters exchanged between Male' and the British Ambassador in Colombo, on 15th April 1962 the following Maldivian officials were sent to Addu Atoll. They were:

1. Mr. Ibrahim Haleem.....as acting Atoll Chief
2. Mr. Ali Rizaas acting Liaison Officer
3. Mr. Ali Ibrahim Maniku.....secretary
4. Mr. Sikka Thuththu Didi.....storekeeper
5. Mr. Zakariyya of Kinilhus.....cook
6. Mr. Abdul Rahman.....general workman.

This team carried with them part of the general documentation necessary to re-open the Addu Atoll Office.

On the first day of their arrival in Gan, Mr. Arthington Davy and Mr. Abdullah Afeef and the British commander in charge of the base met them. However, there was no chance for any negotiations to take place because throughout the one and a half days of their stay, there were screaming mobs shouting obscenities at the Maldivian Government and the visitors from Male', even screaming for their blood. There were mobs made up of island women too. The British seemed unable to control them and Afeef made no effort at all to stop the mob. On Mr. Arthington Davy saying that he could not guarantee their safety, the official in charge of the Male' team, Mr. Ibrahim Haleem, decided to leave the atoll and return to Male', as they were unable to carry out their work.



Mr. Abdullah Afeef

A New Committee

A new committee was chosen by the Prime Minister on 16th April 1962, to work with the British authorities with the aim of resolving the problems in Addu, arising from the establishment of a British base in the Atoll. This committee consisted of the following members:-

1. Mr. Ibrahim Shihab
2. Mr. Ahmed Zaki
3. Mr. Ahmed Hilmy Didi

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of the Commonwealth Relations Office in Britain, the Duke of Devonshire arrived in Male' on 18th April and was met at Hulhule by Mr. Arthington Davy and the Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Abdullah Khaleel. The Duke met the consultative committee on Addu, in Male' on the 19th April 1962. The Duke explained that he was in Male' to ask for more assistance from the Maldivian Government. This was to request the Maldivian Government to give a longer period for the lease of Gan and also to lease more land from the atoll. The Committee's reply was that the Maldivian Government had been patient for six years since the problems began at Addu, and it was not possible to discuss any new matters before the existing problems had been resolved. Two days later on the 21st of April, the Duke met the Committee again, but again the Committee was unwilling to discuss other issues until existing matters were sorted out.

In the last week of July 1962, the Prime Minister Mr. Ibrahim Nasir wrote to the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan regarding a solution to the long standing Addu problem. In reply Mr. Macmillan said that he would be sending a representative to Male' to discuss and settle the Addu problem in October 1962 if the time was convenient to the Maldivian Government. The time was confirmed and the discussions were agreed to be held in October.

Arrival of Sir Arthur Snelling K.C.M.G.

On 19th October 1962 the Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth Relations Office Sir Arthur Snelling arrived in Male'. Sir Arthur Snelling is in Maldives as the emissary of the British Prime Minister for discussions with the Maldivian Government on the Addu issue. Mr. L. S. Howard of the Air Ministry accompanied him as his advisor. Sir Arthur Snelling met with the Maldivian officials for the discussions on Addu. The members consisted of the following:-

1. Mr. Ibrahim Nasir.....Prime Minister
2. Mr. Ibrahim Rasheed.....Minister of Home Affairs.
3. Mr. Ibrahim Shihab.....Attorney General
4. Mr. Abdullah Khaleel.....Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
5. Mr. Ahmed Zaki.....Minister of Justice (Mr. Zaki interpreted
During the discussions).

6. The British Government was represented by Sir Arthur Snelling, Mr. Howard and Mr. Arthington - Davy the British Representative in Maldives. These were discussions were held over many days. During the discussions, the Prime Minister proposed the abrogation of all articles of the agreement signed in 1960 between the Maldivian Government and the British, except for the article regarding the use of the staging post. This proposal was made at the fifth session of discussions held on 4th November 1962. There was no agreement on the new issue raised by the Maldivian Government.

Soon after this there were large demonstrations called by women of Male', who held rallies expressing their discontent and anger at the British refusal to give complete freedom to the Maldives. The residence of the British Representative was in the island of Dhoonidhoo, and after shouting slogans and demonstrating in Male', the women made their way close to the island in dhonis. They were unable to disembark because the Maldivian police did not allow them, but they shouted slogans from the dhonis, making sure that their displeasure came to the notice of the people in Dhoonidhoo.

The day after the demonstrations a British Navy ship arrived and cast anchor close to Dhoonidhoo. The Government had not been informed of this ship's arrival, in the usual manner. Later, the British Ambassador informed the Maldivian Representative in Colombo that Sir Arthur Snelling felt that the Navy ship had come to Maldives in connection with the discussions on the Addu problem. However, Mr. Arthington Davy the British Representative in Maldives told the Foreign Ministry that the ship was there for the protection of Dhoonidhoo Island. This ship the "H.M.S. Lockfada" was followed by the "H.M.S. Caesar" which was followed by the "H.M.S. Casembra" and thereafter by "H.M.S. Blackpool" and "H.M.S. Caprice". These Navy ships were posted in Male' harbour ready to evacuate British personnel in case of danger. During the following months, a British Navy ship always had a ship in Male' harbour anchored close to Dhoonidhoo. H.M.S. Whitby and H.M.S. Cavendish were two of the other ships that carried out these duties during the next few months.

The Maldivian Government apologized for the women's demonstrations, but it became obvious to all concerned that the people in other regions of Maldives also wished to demonstrate their feelings of frustration. These scenes of anger were directed mainly towards the British Representative Mr. Davy, the reason being that in spite of the years gone by, no solution had been reached regarding the Addu issue.

During this time there was some speculation in the media that Russia wished to lease the Gan Island base in Maldives. At the same time there were also many overtures of friendship by the Russians towards the Maldives.

A visit by the British Secretary of State for the Colonies and Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations Mr. Duncan Sandys was announced for early September 1963. He arrived on 7th September 1963. Accompanying him were Mrs. Sandys, the British High Commissioner in Colombo Sir Michael Walker and Lady Walker, Mr. Heap, Miss Smith Private Secretary, and Mr. Roundthwaite, an official from the British High

Commission in Colombo. The British officials taking part in the discussions were the following:-

1. Mr. Duncan Sandys.....British Secretary of State for the Colonies and Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations
2. Sir Michael Walker.....British High Commissioner in Colombo
3. Mr. Arthington Davy.....British Representative in Maldives.
4. Mr. Heap.....First Secretary of the British High Commission in Colombo.
5. Mr. Roundthwaite..... from the British High Commission in Colombo

The Maldivian officials taking part in the discussions were the following:-

1. Mr. Ibrahim Nasir.....Prime Minister.
2. Mr. Ibrahim Rasheed.....Minister of Home Affairs
3. Mr. Ibrahim Shihab.....Attorney General
4. Mr. Ahmed Zaki.....Minister of Justice
5. Mr. Ahmed Hilmy Didi.....Minister of Health
6. Mr. Abdullah Khaleel.....Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Ahmed Zaki acted as interpreter during the discussions. Three sessions were held during which Mr. Sandys assured the Maldivian Government that the Addu problem would be resolved. He also requested that the individuals who had staged the rebellion should be given a pardon for their actions before the re-establishment of Maldivian authority over Addu Atoll. He also requested the Maldivian Government to give an additional land in Hithadhoo for the establishment of a British Broadcasting Service relay station.



**Lord Duncan Sandys
in Hulhule'**

The Maldivian Government proposed certain changes to the Agreement of 1960 and asked for a reply to the Government's earlier request for full and complete independence from Britain. Mr. Duncan Sandys (later Lord Duncan Sandys) gave his assurance that the Addu problem would be settled before the 31st of December of that year, but the matter of full independence for Maldives was one he would have to discuss with his Government after his return to Britain. He asked that the Maldivian Government send the request formally to the British Government.

The final discussions with Mr. Sandys were held on 8th September 1963 and the following agreement was reached:

AGREEMENT

The Maldivian Prime Minister, Mr. Ibrahim Nasir, and the British Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Mr. Duncan Sandys, have, on behalf of their respective Governments, agreed as follows:

- (a) The British Government agrees to take such steps as may be necessary to re-establish the authority of the Maldivian Government in Addu Atoll not later than 31st December, 1963.
- (b) To facilitate the smooth implementation of this decision, the Maldivian Government agrees to grant an unqualified pardon and indemnity to all the inhabitants of Addu Atoll in respect of all acts connected with or arising from the revolt of the atoll, up to the date of the re-establishment of the Maldivian Government's authority.
- (c) With effect from the date of the re-establishment of the Maldivian Government's authority in Addu Atoll, the Maldivian Government agrees to make available to the British Government such additional land on Hithadhoo as the British Government may require for the establishment , operation and maintenance of further radio installations by them or by the British Broadcasting Corporation, on the same terms, regarding the tenure of the land and the status of the necessary personnel (whether military or civilian) as those set out in the agreement of 1960.

A joint communiqué to this effect was issued on 9th September 1963 by the Maldivian Prime Minister and the British Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations.

Mr. Duncan Sandys and his party left Male' for Addu Atoll on 9th September. At Hulhule' Airport Mr. Sandys requested Mr. Ibrahim Rasheed, the Minister of Home Affairs to provide him with a Maldivian flag as he might not be able to get one in Addu Atoll. Before his departure he said that, the Maldivian flag he had just received would be flying in Addu that day.

In Addu Atoll Mr. Sandys issued the following press release on the same day:

Press Note issued from Gan by Mr. Duncan Sandys, 9 September 1963

“The British Government have, for a long time, made it clear to the people of Addu Atoll that it was their intention to re-establish the Authority of the Maldivian Government here. The British Government are convinced that it is in the best interests of the people of Addu and of the people of Maldives as a whole, that normal relations should be re-established with the Central government in Male' and that the present unnatural division between these two sections of the Maldivian people should be brought to an end.

I have just returned from a visit to Male', where I have had talks with Maldivian Ministers. After full discussions we decided that the time had now come to restore the Authority of the Maldivian Government in Addu Atoll as quickly as possible, and in any case not later than the end of this year. The necessary preparations will begin at once.

The Maldivian Government have given a solemn undertaking to the British Government that a full pardon will be granted in respect of all acts committed in the past in connection with the revolt in Addu Atoll. I ask all the people of Addu Atoll to co-operate fully in the preparations for the return of the Maldivian Government. No-one who co-operates now

need have any fear or anxiety that they will suffer in any way for acts which they may have committed in the past in connection with the revolt. The pardon granted by the Maldivian government is a formal Agreement with the British Government and I have every confidence that it will be implemented to the full.

The restoration of the authority of the Maldivian Government in Addu Atoll will, of course, not affect in any way the position of the British Forces in Gan and Hithadhoo, or their happy relations with the inhabitants. The Political Advisor, Mr. Roundthwaite, will make contact with each of the villages as soon as possible, to explain the position, and to answer any questions. I assure the people of Addu Atoll of the firm friendship of the British Government and of the British Forces here, and of our desire to see you all continue to live happily in peace and prosperity.”

On 29th September 1963 the Maldivian Prime Minister chose a Committee which was given the mandate to hold discussions with the British in order to settle the Addu problem. The members were the following:

1. Mr. Ibrahim Rasheed.....Minister of Home Affairs.
2. Mr. Ibrahim Shihab.....Attorney General
3. Mr. Ahmed Zaki.....Minister of Justice
4. Mr. Ahmed Hilmy Didi.....Minister of Health.

British Government gives Afeef Asylum in Seychelles

On 29th September 1963, Mr. Arthington Davy, the British Representative in Maldives, informed the Prime Minister of Maldives that Mr. Afeef, the leader of the revolt in Addu Atoll, and his family was to be given asylum in Seychelles. The Prime Minister said that this would amount to the British Government interfering in Maldives’ internal affairs, which was in direct opposition to the agreement the British had signed with Maldives. However, on 1st October 1963, Mr. Abdullah Afeef and his family were taken to Seychelles by the British and given political asylum in that country.

Although promises had been made by the British to settle the Addu problem before the end of the year, this did not happen, and the fact that Britain gave Mr. Afeef asylum in the Seychelles served to anger the local population against the British. The population of Male’ showed opposition to the British Representative, through demonstrations, and by causing damage to British property in Male’ and Hulhule’.

Fua Mulaku surrenders

On 1st November 1963 Fua Mulaku surrendered to the Maldivian Government, ending more than two years of rebellion. When a delegation from the atoll came to Male’ to inform the Government of their surrender, they gave the news that there was flooding in the atoll due to very heavy rain. They had not been able to grow the yams which were part of their staple diet, because of flooding, and things were very difficult in the atoll. The Government sent emergency food rations and started a fund for assistance to the

atoll. An Atoll Shop was opened for Fua Mulaku, as had been done for the other atolls, to give the atoll additional income. Until an Atoll Chief could be chosen, two of the most dependable leaders in the Atoll were asked to look after Fua Mulaku Atoll's affairs.

Adduans start arriving in Male'

Mr. Roundthwaite who had been working in Addu to settle the Addu problem, informed Mr. Arthington Davy that a group of Adduans who wished to accept Maldivian Government rule, had left Addu to come to Male'. Mr. Arthington Davy informed the Maldivian government of this development on 7th November 1963. In December more people from Addu arrived in Male' at various times, declaring their loyalty to the Maldivian Government. Many of the leading members of the Atoll's population came to Male' during this period of change.

In late December, an Atoll Committee to direct activities in the Atoll was elected in Addu. This was in line with the regulations for all atolls. The people in charge of the newly elected Committee were two reliable leaders who had come to Male' declaring their allegiance to the Maldivian Government. When they arrived in Addu to hold the elections, they found many people beaten up and imprisoned in Maaran'ga. Since this building was one of those being used by the British this incident raised doubts about their intentions, and complicity in the activities of those people opposed to the Maldivian Government.

As more people arrived from Addu, the real situation of the people in the atoll was revealed to the Government in Male'. The Atoll had no law and order, and people were afraid to go about their normal affairs because of their fear of attack by unruly groups. There was a lack of the main food items, rice, flour and sugar. The dried fish, copra and coir rope made by the people on the instruction of Mr. Afeef had not been exported and were rotting in the warehouses. Less Maldivian labour was required on the British base after its completion and therefore there were fewer people receiving payment from the British. All these factors together caused the Adduans great difficulty.

With the arrival of the Addu people in Male', the Government stepped in to protect them from angry locals. The Ministry of Defense even declared it an offence to use abusive language at these new arrivals.

After five years of rebellion, Addu Atoll did not have the administrative infrastructure in place as in the other atolls. After the Government pardoned the people of the Atoll, and since there now were inhabitants of the atoll who wanted the Maldivian Government to take charge, the Government decided that it was time to delegate responsibility to an atoll chief and the elected Atoll Committee. Mr. Moosa Ali Didi of Hithadhoo was given the post of Acting Atoll Chief and the Atoll Committee was asked to assist in all administrative matters. These appointments took place on 4th January 1964.

Economic activities were gradually started, at first under some restrictions. The Addu Atoll Shop in Male' was started under the management of Mr. Moosa Ahmed Didi of Hithadhoo.

Independence for Maldives

The Maldivian Government had formally requested the British Government to grant independence to Maldives in a letter addressed to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Mr. Duncan Sandys on 25th September 1963. The British Government wanted assurances that the Maldivian Government would honour the terms of the Agreement. After the British sent Mr. Afeef and his family to Seychelles without the consent of the Maldivian Government, the Maldivians felt that the British had not acted according to the terms of the Agreement. Therefore they were not agreeable to discussing any other matters until these matters had been cleared.

Assurances were given by the British Representative in Maldives, Mr. Arthington Davy at a meeting with the Maldivian Prime Minister, on 4th April 1964, that the British Government would be willing to grant full independence to Maldives if the Maldives would assure them that the conditions under which Gan and the land in Hithadhoo had been leased to the British remained the same. He extended an invitation to the Maldivian Prime Minister or any member of his Cabinet to come to Britain for direct discussions with the British Government. The Maldivian Prime Minister said that since the same discussions had been conducted recently in Maldives, the most important matter for the Maldivian Government now was the granting of full independence to Maldives. He suggested that a draft of the agreement could be made, and discussions held, based on the contents of the draft. He felt that travelling to Britain for these discussions were unnecessary.

The main problem the British wanted to discuss at this time was the payment of salaries to Maldivian workers in Maldivian currency. But since such an arrangement would be completely against the interests of the Addu people and a huge economic loss to them, the Prime Minister refused to discuss this point any further.

During this period there were other incidents that caused bad feelings between the British and the Maldivians. This included an incident where officers from H.M.S. Leopard boarded and searched a Maldivian fishing vessel, and the problem of the British Government transporting Maldivian citizens to the Seychelles without the permission of the Maldivian Government. Protests were held in Male' against these actions of the British Authorities, and the Government sent a strong letter of protest to the British Representative in Maldives regarding these incidents. The letter also stated that the

Maldivian Government would not hold any further discussions regarding Addu Atoll until full independence was granted to Maldives.

Formal talks on a new agreement granting Maldives full independence from the British began in Colombo on 13th January 1964. A draft for the new agreement had been proposed by the British and another by the Maldivian Government. The draft proposed by the Maldivian Government was aimed at gaining full and complete independence from Britain. The Maldivian Government Representative in Colombo, Mr. Abdul Sathar Moosa Didi, and the Third Secretary Mr. Ahmed Ismail, represented the Maldivian



Signing of agreement granting Independence to Maldives.

Maldivian Prime Minister Ibrahim Nasir seated left, and the High commissioner for Great Britain in Colombo Sir Michael Walker seated right.

Government and the British High Commissioner in Colombo, Mr. Michael Walker represented Britain.

Britain eventually agreed to Maldives' demands for full independence and the agreement was formally signed on 26th July 1965 at 10 AM, at the residence of the British High Commissioner in Colombo. The agreement granting Maldives full and complete independence, was signed by Maldivian Prime Minister Ibrahim Nasir and the High Commissioner for Great Britain in Colombo Sir Michael Walker. With her new found freedom, Maldives became a member of the United Nations on 21st September 1965.

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