Maldives ex-leader Mohamed Nasheed due to arrive in UK

Former Maldivian president Mohamed Nasheed is due to arrive in the UK for surgery after a stopover in Sri Lanka, according to his party.

Nasheed, who was controversially jailed last year, is seeking urgent treatment for his spinal cord.

The Maldivian government has attracted criticism for asking for a guarantor who would be criminally liable if Nasheed did not return.

After tense negotiations the government finally agreed to waive that condition.

Nasheed – the opposition leader – was jailed for 13 years under anti-terror laws. The government has said Nasheed must return after 30 days to serve the remainder of his sentence.

He left the Maldives on Monday and spent several days in the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo. He is travelling under what diplomatic sources called a deal brokered by India, Sri Lanka and Britain, according to the Maldivian government.

Mr Nasheed's supporters said he met with ambassadors of several Western countries including the UK, Norway, Australia, France and Canada in Colombo to discuss his country's political situation.



Maldivian MP Eva Abdulla said Mr Nasheed met with ambassadors of several Western countries in Colombo to discuss his country's political situation

Controversial trip

The Maldivian government came under international criticism in recent months for not allowing Nasheed to seek treatment abroad.

It agreed to the trip last weekend, but days later it insisted that he nominate a family member

to stay in the capital Male to guarantee his return. Nasheed's party and lawyers called it "blackmail", but Maldivian foreign minister Dunya Maumoon said it was "standard procedure" for any prisoner travelling abroad for medical treatment to sign a guarantee.

A compromise was eventually reached and the government waived criminal liability for the guarantor. Nasheed's brother is acting as guarantor.

A former human rights campaigner, Nasheed became the nation's first democratically elected leader in 2008, ending three decades of rule by former strongman Maumoon Abdul Gayoom.

In 2012, he was detained after being accused of ordering the arrest of a judge.

He resigned months later amid an army mutiny and public protests over the judge's fate.

Nasheed alleged that he had been removed by a coup, but this was denied by his vice-president, who replaced him.

The current President Abdulla Yameen was elected in controversial polls in 2013 and is the half-brother of Mr Gayoom.