

MALDIVES TO LOSE MILLIONS DUE TO POLITICAL UNREST



Recent political upheaval has caused unrest for locals in the Maldives and is now beginning to deter incoming tourists from visiting the islands.

When tourists visit the Maldives, they rarely come into contact with the locals or local life. Indeed, not many have to even think about the fact that the inhabitants of the islands are predominantly Muslim, with minority faiths not featuring in everyday life.

A holiday in the Maldives usually involves being taken from the airport by seaplane to a hotel, where one enjoys the stunning turquoise beaches without thinking of much else. However, the political unrest in the Maldives in recent times is threatening to ruin this peaceful method of enjoying a holiday.

Anti-semitic remarks from local politicians along with the protests of president Mohammed Nasheed who was overthrown by an army coup have led to 500 or so recent cancellations in over a hundred Maldives resorts. These cancellations and general damage to reputation could cost the Maldives up to \$100 million over the next 6 months.

The main problem is that the media is now portraying the Maldives as a hardcore Islamic country, which is putting people off.

Tourism currently accounts for around a third of the country's national output, meaning the situation must be rectified as soon as possible. Tourism has done wonders for the nation: in 1972 it was a sleepy fishing nation yet its natural resources have turned it into the richest country per capita in South Asia.

One has to hope that the current problems won't last and the wealth of the Maldives will be secured for the future.

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