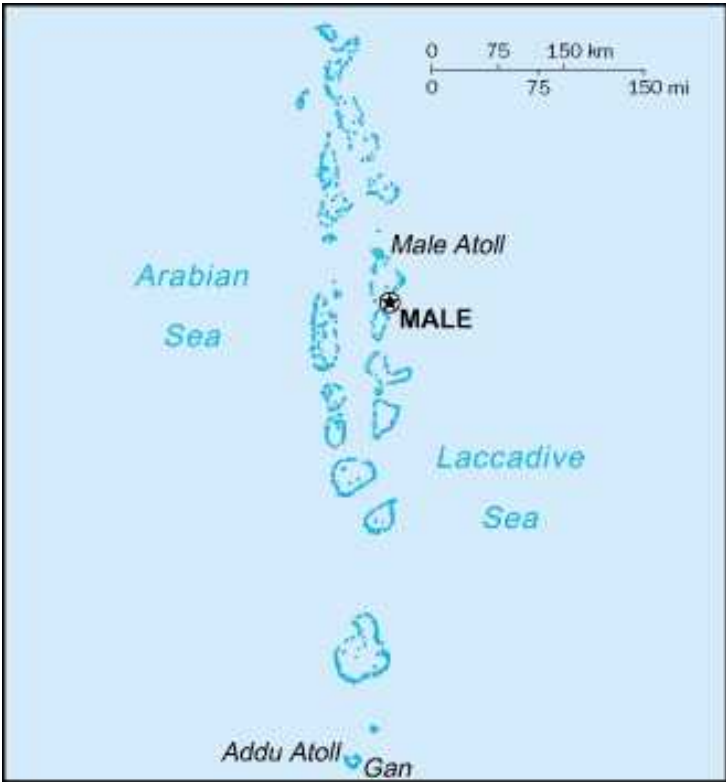




Maldives



Background	<p>A sultanate since the 12th century, the Maldives became a British protectorate in 1887 and a republic in 1968, three years after independence. President Maumoon Abdul GAYOOM dominated Maldives' political scene for 30 years, elected to six successive terms by single-party referendums. After political demonstrations in the capital Male in 2003, GAYOOM and his government pledged to embark upon a process of liberalization and democratic reforms, including a more representative political system and expanded political freedoms. Political parties were legalized in 2005.</p> <p>In 2008, a constituent assembly -- termed the "Special Majlis" -- finalized a new constitution ratified by GAYOOM. The first-ever presidential elections under a multi-candidate, multi-party system were held later that year. GAYOOM was defeated in a runoff by Mohamed NASHEED, a political activist whom the regime had jailed several years earlier. In 2012, after several weeks of street protests in response to a top judge's arrest, NASHEED resigned the presidency and handed over power to Vice President Mohammed WAHEED Hassan Maniku. A government-appointed Commission of National Inquiry concluded that there was no evidence of a coup, but NASHEED contended that police and military personnel forced him to resign. NASHEED, WAHEED, and Abdulla YAMEEN Abdul Gayoom ran in the 2013 elections with YAMEEN ultimately winning the presidency after three rounds of voting. In 2018, YAMEEN lost his reelection bid to parliamentarian Ibrahim Mohamed SOLIH. YAMEEN was arrested and jailed in 2022 on corruption charges. Maldives' fourth democratic election was held in September 2023. The winner, Male City Mayor Dr. Mohamed MUIZZU, campaigned on a platform of Maldivian sovereignty, vowing to remove Indian military personnel from the country. MUIZZU represents a joint Progressive Pary of Maldives and People's National Congress (PPM/PNC) coalition.</p>
Capital	name: Malé
Government type	presidential republic
Area	total : 298 sq km land: 298 sq km water: 0 sq km
Climate	tropical; hot, humid; dry, northeast monsoon (November to March); rainy, southwest monsoon (June to August)
Natural resources	fish
Population	total: 388,858 (2024 est.)
Population growth rate	-0.2% (2024 est.)
Ethnic groups	homogeneous mixture of Sinhalese, Dravidian, Arab, Australasian, and African resulting from historical changes in regional hegemony over marine trade routes

Religions	Sunni Muslim (official)
Languages	Dhivehi (official, closely related to Sinhala, script derived from Arabic), English (spoken by most government officials)
Executive branch	chief of state: President Mohamed MUIZZU (since 17 November 2023) head of government: President Mohamed MUIZZU (since 17 November 2023)
Legislative branch	legislature name: People's Majlis (Majlis)
Diplomatic representation in the US	chief of mission: Ambassador Abdul GHAFUOR Mohamed (since 15 June 2023)
Diplomatic representation from the US	chief of mission: Ambassador Hugo Yue-Ho YON (since 6 September 2023); note - Ambassador YON is the first resident US ambassador to the Republic of Maldives
Economic overview	upper middle-income Indian Ocean island economy; major tourism, fishing, and shipping industries; high public debt; systemic corruption; crippled by COVID-19; ongoing deflation; poverty has tripled since pandemic began
Real GDP (purchasing power parity)	\$12.325 billion (2024 est.) \$11.723 billion (2023 est.) \$11.194 billion (2022 est.)
Real GDP per capita	\$23,400 (2024 est.) \$22,300 (2023 est.) \$21,400 (2022 est.)
Exports	\$5.413 billion (2024 est.) \$4.88 billion (2023 est.) \$5.096 billion (2022 est.)
Exports - partners	Thailand 32%, India 21%, Singapore 9%, UK 7%, Germany 5% (2023)
Exports - commodities	fish, aircraft, refined petroleum, scrap iron, natural gas (2023)
Imports	\$5.344 billion (2024 est.) \$4.984 billion (2023 est.) \$4.939 billion (2022 est.)
Imports - partners	India 15%, UAE 15%, Oman 14%, China 12%, Singapore 8% (2023)
Imports - commodities	refined petroleum, plastic products, aircraft, granite, ships (2023)

Population Pyramid

