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**PRESS RELEASE**  
**MALE, 14 FEBRUARY 2012**

President Dr Waheed of the Maldives spoke today on the TODAY programme of BBC Radio, which is the morning programme heard by millions in the UK and other parts of the world. The interview clarifies the recent events in the country which made the previous President, Mohammed Nasheed, realize that he had lost the confidence of the people as well as that of his own administration, in particular the critical law and order enforcement arms. On his own accord, he submitted his resignation, although he later claimed he had been ousted in a violent 'coup'.

President Hassan was ex-president Nasheed's running mate in the 2008 general election, the country's first, which they won, defeating President Gayoom who had been ruling the country for 30 years with an iron hand.

Following is a transcript of the interview:

**BBC:**

Were you involved in the coup yourself?

**President Waheed:**

Absolutely not. And I deny any allegation that there has been a coup here; you are most welcome to come to find out for yourself. I welcome anyone who wants to come and find out the facts on the ground. You know, we are all open for you to look at what happened...

**BBC:**

(interrupting) Well....

**President Waheed:**

... there has been a whole series of events that have led to this situation. I was not prepared, it was thrust on me, I performed the constitutional duty to be sworn in when the President, Nasheed, decided to resign ...

**BBC:**

(interrupting) well...

**President Waheed:**

... it was entirely voluntary...

**BBC (interrupting):**

Well, you say it was entirely voluntarily, but he says that he was forced to resign at gunpoint by police and army officers and indeed, a military spokesman...

**President Waheed:**

(interrupting) That is not true.

**BBC:**

All right, but a military spokesman, Ibrahim Azim, confirmed that Mr Nasheed had received some injuries and had been taken to hospital.

**President Waheed:**

No, that is not true... you should look at the events as they happened. He has suffered no injury. At the time when he had resigned he voluntarily went to his own office, he met with his cabinet, and he dressed himself in a suit, came out and then he wrote the letter, by himself, and in front of the camera, he resigned. He could have said at that time and he changed his mind 24 hours later and he said he was resigning at gunpoint. So send somebody, whoever you want, to come and find out the situation here.

**BBC:**

Well, even if that is the case, just as you described it, on what authority are you now President yourself?

**President Waheed:**

I am on the authority of the Constitution of the Maldives which says if an incumbent president resigns, then the serving Vice President should be sworn-in as the new President of the country. When President Nasheed submitted his resignation, the Speaker of the Parliament called me and asked me to come to the Majlis, the parliament chambers, and there the Chief Justice of the Maldives was the one who performed the oath of office for me...

**BBC:**

All right...

**President Waheed:**

... completely constitutional.

**BBC:**

But would you accept that there must now be an election because clearly you were not voted in for circumstances that you just described. You were not, as you just described, voted in by the people of the Maldives. If so, would you agree that there must now be proper democratic elections, possibly for some sort of unity government?

**President Waheed:**

Absolutely. I will tell you that I was voted in, I was the running mate of President Nasheed, we were on the same ticket, and we went to the elections together, and we got the same number of votes together, we were elected in 2008, and the Constitution has an arrangement where, if the President for

any reason is not able to perform, I step in as the vice president, the first elected Vice President of the country. If an election now is going to solve the problem, I will certainly welcome it. But I don't think this is the time for it. There are deep rifts and polarization in politics in the Maldives. I think what needs to be done first is to try to catch up, try to create some kind of unity government, and I am completely committed to this. I have said to everybody, I don't want anybody from my party to be in the cabinet. I have 8 political parties who have come onboard and they have all nominated people. I have also extended my hand to President Nasheed's party and said please join us and I will keep some posts and portfolios for them...

**BBC:**

All right ...

**President Waheed:**

... I want to move forward in the unity government to stabilize the situation so that we continue the march towards democracy that we all started together, and then make sure that law and order is maintained, rule of law is upheld, and we respect the constitution and the separation of powers in our country.

End of interview.

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This interview dispels former president Mohammed Nasheed's concocted story that he was forced out of office by a military coup.

Further, President Waheed's clarification demonstrates his commitment to the formation of a national unity government and to take the democratic process forward to its ultimate goal. The need of the hour, therefore, is for the former president's party to respond positively and work hand in hand with the national unity government for the larger interest of the Maldives.

Ends