

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 13/06/00

21 August 2000

Further information on UA 173/00 (ASA 13/05/00, 22 June 2000) - Fear for Safety

BANGLADESH Rowshan Ara Begum, her family, lawyers and prosecution witnesses

Rowshan Ara Begum, an elected member of the Union Parishad (local council), was raped in her home in the Kishorgonj District of Dhaka by two men and three accomplices on 1 May 1999. The five accused were subsequently arrested, but three were released on bail. Since their release, the men have threatened Rowshan Ara Begum, her children and her lawyers. At least one prosecution witness has failed to appear in the trial for fear of reprisal. Amnesty International has called on the Government of Bangladesh to ensure the safety of Rowshan Ara Begum, her family, lawyers and prosecution witnesses.

The Government of Bangladesh has responded to some of Amnesty International's appeals on the Rowshan Ara Begum case. Following the original Urgent Action appeal on this case, the Government of Bangladesh has taken some steps to ensure Rowshan Ara Begum's safety, including providing her with a flat. Also, the Prime Minister's Office has instructed the local administration to ensure adequate safety for Rowshan Ara Begum.

While the Government of Bangladesh has assured Amnesty International that it has taken adequate steps to address her needs for security and protection, Amnesty International believes that she is still at risk because she, her family and selected prosecution witnesses continue to receive threats from the three accused who were released on bail. To Amnesty International's knowledge, the police have not responded to complaints registered with them requesting that they act to ensure Rowshan Ara Begum's personal safety.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or in your own language:

**In all your appeals, please include the case reference number: Case Number: Nari O Shishu Nirjatan, Mumla, 107/99, Kishorgonj.- welcome the response received by Amnesty International from the Government of Bangladesh stating that they have taken steps to address the organization's concerns;

- urge the Government of Bangladesh to ensure that Rowshan Ara Begum, her lawyers, family, and prosecution witnesses are adequately and durably protected from harassment, threats and attack;
- urge the Government of Bangladesh to ensure that the police take appropriate action on complaints registered against those allegedly threatening or harassing Rowshan Ara Begum, her lawyers, family or prosecution witnesses.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina
Office of the Prime Minister
Gona Bhaba
Sher-e Bangla Nagar
Dhaka
Bangladesh

Telegrams: Prime Minister Hasina, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Fax: + 880 2 811 3243

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Mr. Nurul Huda
Inspector-General of Police
Police Headquarter
Fulbaria
Dhaka
Bangladesh

Telegrams: Inspector-General Huda, Fulbaria, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Fax: + 880 2 956 3362

Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

diplomatic representatives of Bangladesh accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 October 2000.