

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

**AI Index: ASA 13/15/93  
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**19 October 1993**

**Further information on UA 364/93 (ASA 13/14/93, 11 October 1993) - Death threats**

**BANGLADESH:Taslima Nasrin (female), novelist**

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It has been reported that two armed police guards have now started a round-the-clock vigil outside the home of Taslima Nasrin. If true, Amnesty International welcomes this move by the Bangladeshi police to protect the novelist. She is under a death threat by an Islamist group, the Council of Soldiers of Islam, who reportedly called for her death for blasephemy in her writing of a novel about the situation of a Hindu family in Bangladesh. Amnesty International continues to be concerned that the Government of Bangladesh has taken no action to bring to justice those issuing the threat. The Islamist group has apparently denied any intention to kill her, but it has said it will organize campaigns to urge the government to give Taslima Nasrin "exemplary punishment and impound her writing". Taslima Nasrin is reported to have expressed fears that playing down the death threat may be a tactic by the Council of Soldiers of Islam to prepare the grounds for a future attack.

Other reports suggest that the Bangladeshi police may file a criminal case against Taslima Nasrin for alleged espionage, but Amnesty International has not been able to verify these. However, the organization would consider such charges to be politically motivated if they were made solely on the basis of Taslima Nasrin's writings. Under these circumstances, Amnesty International would call for the Government of Bangladesh to drop the charges so that Taslima Nasrin would not become a prisoner of conscience.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express and airmail letters:**

- welcoming the reports that police protection has been provided to Taslima Nasrin, seeking confirmation of this;
- expressing concern that no action has been taken yet to bring to justice those calling for her death;
- expressing concern that the Bangladeshi police are reportedly considering charging Taslima Nasrin with alleged espionage on unsubstantiated grounds, and urging the government to drop any politically-motivated charges so as to ensure that Taslima Nasrin does not become a prisoner of conscience.

**APPEALS TO**

1) President

President Abdur Rahman Biswas  
Presidential Secretariat  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Telegrams: President Biswas, Dhaka, Bangladesh**

**Faxes: +880 2 813 243**

**Salutation: Dear President**

2) Prime Minister

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Telegrams: Prime Minister Zia, Dhaka, Bangladesh**

**Faxes: +880 2 811 0115 (PM's residence)**

**+880 2 813 244 (PM's office)**

**+880 2 813 243 (PM's Press Secretary)**

**Salutation: Dear Prime Minister**

3) Minister of Home Affairs

Abdul Matin Chowdhury  
Minister of Home Affairs  
Bangladesh Secretariat  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Telegrams: Minister Home Affairs, Dhaka, Bangladesh**

**Faxes: +880 2 813 243**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS 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 29 November 1993.