

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 13/018/2002

03 December 2002

FURTHER INFORMATION on UA 342/02 (ASA 13/017/2002, 27 November 2002) Fear of torture/ill-treatment/ possible prisoners of conscience/legal concern

BANGLADESH

**Saleem Samad (m), Bangladeshi journalist.
Zaiba Malik (f), British national, Channel 4 journalist
Bruno Sorrentino (m), Italian national, Channel 4 director
Pricila Raj (f), Bangladeshi national, interpreter
Mujib (m), Bangladeshi national, driver**

Saleem Samad, a Bangladeshi journalist and local correspondent for the international press freedom organization *Reporteurs sans Frontiers* (Reporters without Borders), was arrested on 29 November. He was placed on remand for five days and there are fears that he may be at risk of torture or ill-treatment whilst in detention. He is thought to be held at the Detective Branch Headquarters in Dhaka.

Saleem Samad was detained in connection with the earlier arrests on 25 November of two foreign journalists and their two local associates. Zaiba Malik, Bruno Sorrentino and Pricila Raj have since been accused of "anti-state activities". It is thought that Mujib, the journalists' driver, is a witness in the case. It is unclear if Mujib is still in detention or facing any criminal charges. Saleem Samad had reportedly spent some time with the Channel 4 journalists as a guide and interpreter and there are fears he may also face "anti-state" charges.

On 28 November, according to local and international media reports, a court specifically granted lawyers permission to see Zaiba Malik and Bruno Sorrentino. However when they tried to meet the detainees on 29 and 30 November, the police denied them access to their clients. Eight days after their arrest, on 2 December, Zaiba Malik and Bruno Sorrentino were allowed to meet with their lawyers and consular officials. Lawyers acting for Pricila Raj have reportedly still not been allowed to meet with her.

The two European journalists and their translator, Pricila Raj, were transferred to Dhaka Central Jail on 2 December after they appeared before a magistrate's court in Dhaka.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Saleem Samad who was arrested on 29 November;
- urging the authorities to ensure that Saleem Samad is not subjected to torture or ill-treatment while he is in detention;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that Saleem Samad and the four other detainees have full and unrestricted access to a lawyer, family visits and medical attention;
- urging that lawyers representing Pricila Raj are given immediate and unrestricted access to her;
- expressing concern that Zaiba Malik and Bruno Sorrentino were not given access to their lawyers or consular officials until eight days after their arrest;

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia
Office of the Prime Minister

Gona Bhaban
Sher-e Bangla Nagar
Dhaka
Bangladesh

Telegrams: Prime Minister Zia, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Fax: + 880 2 811 3243
Email: pm@pmobd.org or psecretary@pmobd.org
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Mr Altaf Hossain Chowdhury
Minister of Home Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
Bangladesh Secretariat
Building 4
Dhaka
Bangladesh

Telegrams: Minister of Home Affairs Chowdhury, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Fax: + 880 2 861 9667
Salutation: Dear Home Minister

Mr Muddabir Hossain Chowdhury
Inspector General of Police
Police Headquarters
Fulbaria
Dhaka
Bangladesh

Telegrams: Inspector General Chowdhury, 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 15 January 2003.