

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 364/93 (ASA 13/14/93, 11 October 1993) - and follow-up (ASA 13/15/93, 19 October 1993) - Death threats

BANGLADESH Taslima Nasrin (female), novelist, aged 31

Two armed police guards continue to maintain a round-the-clock vigil outside the home of Taslima Nasrin. Amnesty International appealed to the authorities to take steps to protect the writer after an Islamist group, the Council of Soldiers of Islam, was reported to have called for her death for blasphemy in her novel, *Lajja* (Shame). The latter is about a Hindu family in Bangladesh attacked by Muslims after the destruction of the Babri mosque in Ayodha, India.

While Amnesty International welcomes the fact that the Bangladeshi authorities continue to offer police protection for Taslima Nasrin, the organization is concerned that no action has been taken to bring to justice those who issued the death threat against her.

Since the Urgent Action Network took action on her case, Taslima Nasrin has written to Amnesty International, saying: "*Amnesty International is a very reputed organization, highly placed in the mind of our people in the region. When such an organization comes forward to stand by a very new writer of the third world like me, I feel really proud and strong. One of your statements has already appeared in our press, which helped to create strong public opinion in my favour. Your concern has also been able to create good amount of pressure on the government of our country. Two police guards have been posted in front of my apartment for my protection since Amnesty International's statement appeared in the local papers. Before that, though the honourable Chief Metropolitan Magistrate ordered the government to give necessary protection for me, it was not carried out. So I think your concern for me has worked well in ensuring my safety.*"

Amnesty International is continuing to closely monitor Taslima Nasrin's situation, but for the time being no further action is required by the Urgent Action Network. Thank you to all who sent appeals on behalf of Taslima Nasrin.