

TAKE ACTION: Please cut and paste this letter onto your personal or Institutional letterhead protesting the charges brought against Honorary Member Taslima Nasrin

August 17 2007

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh
Prime Minister's Office
South Block, Raisina Hill
New Delhi 110 011, India
Tel.: 91 (11) 2301-2312
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Prime Minister,

The members of PEN Canada, the Canadian centre of the international writers' organization, International PEN, are writing to protest the charges filed against Honorary Member **Taslima Nasrin**.

On August 9 2007, Taslima Nasrin was attacked at a press conference releasing the Telugu translation of her Bengali novel *Shodh (Revenge)*. Led by three MLAs of the Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) political party, the protesters used bouquets, satchels and chairs to attach the writer and others sitting on the dais. Taslima Nasrin left with bruising, and Dr. N. Inniah and Nageswar Rao suffered injuries in an effort to protect her, along with two photographers and a reporter covering the event.

PEN Canada is encouraged by the arrests of three MLAs Mohammed Muqtada Khan, Mohammed Moazzam Khan and Syed Ahmed Pasha Quadri on charges of rioting, and by the case booked against Akbaruddin Owaisi on charges of intimidation after threatening the death of Taslima Nasrin should she return to Hyderabad.

However, PEN Canada is shocked by the case booked against Taslima Nasrin under section 153 (A) of the Indian Penal Code for "promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language etc. and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony." This charge is in direct violation of her right to freedom of expression, which is guaranteed under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

PEN Canada strongly protests the criminalization of free expression as evidenced by the charges brought against Honorary Member of PEN Canada, the writer Taslima Nasrin. PEN Canada believes that open debate must be protected in a democratic society, that the peaceful expression of opinions should not be met with criminal charges and that the charges against Taslima Nasrin should be dropped immediately.

Sincerely,

[Your name and address]

Appeals To:

Minister of Law & Justice Shri H.R. Bhardwaj
Ministry of Law & Justice
4th Floor, A-Wing, Shastri Bhavan
New Delhi 110 001, India

Tel.: 91 (11) 2338-7557 / 2338-4777 / 2338-4617
Fax: 91 (11) 2338-4241 / 2338-7259 / 2338-2733

Andhra Pradesh High Court
Near Government, City College
Madina, Charminar
Hyderabad 500 066, India
Email: aphc@ap.nic.in

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High Commission of India
10 Springfield Road
Ottawa, ON K1M 1C9
Tel.: (613) 744-2406
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Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations
235E 43rd Street
New York, NY 10017
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Please send copies of your appeal to the following Canadian authorities:

The Hon. Maxime Bernier
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Lester B. Pearson Building, Room A-10
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa ON K1A 0G2
Fax: (613) 996 3443
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Leonard Edwards
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Canadian High Commission
7/8 Shantipath, Chanakyapuri
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