

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 273/05 (ASA 29/007/2005, 19 October 2005) and follow-up (ASA 29/008/2005, 31 October 2005) Medical concern/ legal concern/ prisoner of conscience

MALDIVES

Jennifer Latheef (f), aged 33

Opposition political activist and prisoner of conscience Jennifer Latheef was released on 16 August 2006.

She had served 10 months of a 10-year prison sentence handed down on 18 October 2005. She was found guilty of "terrorism" after protesting against deaths in prison and political repression in the Maldives. Amnesty International believes that she was jailed solely for exercising her right to peaceful protest.

Jennifer Latheef was informed of her release from house arrest through a presidential pardon. Initially, she refused to accept the government offer of release on two grounds: firstly, that her release should have been unconditional and not through a pardon, since this would imply that she had committed a recognizably criminal offence – which she had not; and secondly, she insisted that the other four political prisoners convicted at the same trial should also be released. After consulting with friends and other human rights defenders, Jennifer Latheef agreed to accept the offer of release from house arrest. She has since **said** that she will continue to campaign for the release of other political prisoners, and for the conviction imposed on her by the court to be quashed.

In a message send to Amnesty International, Jennifer Latheef says:

“I believe that Amnesty and friends from Maldives and all over the world have put tremendous effort into securing my freedom. I would like to thank each and every person who has believed in my innocence and given their emotions, time and energy to not just my cause, but the cause of each and every Maldivian. It is my fervent wish that the international community will continue to bear witness to the human rights violations and the miscarriages of justice that are orchestrated on a daily basis in Maldives. It is also my belief that the sweeping reforms that I would like to see in my country can only come about if there is strong international pressure for reform.”

Since her release, Jennifer Latheef has travelled to Europe and has met with many people interested in the Maldives' human rights situation. She visited Amnesty International's International Secretariat in London in late September 2006.

Many thanks to all who sent appeals on behalf of Jennifer Latheef. No further action is needed.