



NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD

Massachusetts Chapter, Inc.

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November 13, 2007

Ambassador Mahmud Ali Durrani

Embassy of Pakistan

3517 International Court, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Ambassador Durrani:

The Massachusetts Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild strongly condemns the State of Emergency imposed on the people of Pakistan and the attacks on lawyers and the judiciary. We demand that President Musharraf immediately withdraw the emergency declaration of November 3, Provisional Constitutional Order No. 1 of 2007 (PCO), which suspends Pakistan's Constitution. This declaration includes suspension of the right to life and liberty, freedom of speech, assembly and association, and equal protection of the law, all of which are guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

It is our understanding that Pakistani Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry has been taken in custody from Islamabad to an unknown location in Baluchistan. Other judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts who have not taken oath under the PCO are being held under house arrest. In addition, over 2500 lawyers in different parts of Pakistan, including the President of the Supreme Court Bar Association and officials of the Democratic Lawyers Association of Pakistan, have been detained. Journalists state that they have been threatened with prison sentences if by reporting the truth, they bring "ridicule or disrepute" to President Musharraf.

We believe that the real motivation for the PCO is not to defend the country against "Islamic extremists" but to maintain President Musharraf in power. The State of Emergency was declared after the Supreme Court indicated it would overturn the results of the illegitimate election that preserved the President's rule. President Musharraf seeks to prevent public protests that lawyers and political parties were organizing.

The lawyers and the judiciary are resisting efforts by President Musharraf to violate Pakistan's Constitution and to interfere with the judiciary. The Massachusetts Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild salutes the lawyers of Pakistan for their principled stand in upholding the Constitution, independence of the judiciary, and the rule of law. We support the call by the lawyers of Pakistan to refuse to practice before judges who have agreed to take oath under the PCO. The PCO has been held to be unconstitutional and illegal by a seven-judge bench of the

"... to the ends that human rights shall be regarded as more sacred than property interests."

Preamble to the Constitution of the National Lawyers Guild. 1937.

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Pakistan Supreme Court. Chief Justice Chaudhry and other judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Courts who have refused to take oath under the illegal PCO continue to hold office and cannot be removed.

Joining National Lawyers Guild members nationwide, we demand the immediate release of the lawyers and others from custody and/or house arrest and withdrawal of all restrictions illegally imposed. We further urge President Bush to discontinue all aid to Pakistan until the state of emergency is lifted, the Constitution is no longer suspended, and President Musharraf provides assurance that the January 2008 elections will proceed as planned.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Eleanor J. Newhoff, Esq.
Co-Chair, Massachusetts Chapter

David L. Kelston, Esq.
Co-Chair, Massachusetts Chapter

Cc: Barry D. Hoffman, S.Q.A.
Honorary Consul General of Pakistan, Boston