

**From the President**

The Rt Hon David Miliband MP  
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
Kings Charles Street  
London  
SW1A 2AH

8 November 2007



The Law Society

Dear Mr Miliband

I am writing as President of the Law Society of England and Wales to update you on action that the Law Society is taking in relation to the grave threat to the rule of law in Pakistan. In that regard I enclose a copy of letters sent on 6 November to President Pervez Musharraf and other members of the Pakistan Government.

On Wednesday I had the opportunity of meeting Hina Jilani, a Pakistan lawyer, who is the first holder of the position of Special Representative of the Secretary General to the United Nations on Human Rights Defenders, in accordance with the provisions of the Commission on Human Rights resolution 26 April 2000. She is a distinguished Pakistan human rights lawyer and also a member of the Pakistan Bar Association and the Vice Chair of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. At the time of the declaration of the suspension of the Pakistan Constitution she happened to be in London en route from the UN to Pakistan.

At the meeting Ms Jilani informed us that in her home city of Lahore 300 lawyers have been arrested and imprisoned after being charged with anti terrorism offences. She informed us that the President of the Supreme Bar Association of Pakistan and many of the office bearers of regional bar associations have been arrested and imprisoned. Ms Jilani has received reports out of Pakistan that three quarters of the Executive Committee of the Supreme Court Bar have been arrested. It also appears that at least one in four of all lawyers operating in Pakistan are now under arrest, including the Chief Justice. All members of the Pakistan judiciary have been asked to sign allegiance to the new Constitution and if they refuse they have been arrested. We understand that 80% of the judiciary have refused to sign.

The Law Society of England and Wales regards this as a very grave development. I am asking you to ensure that the British Government takes every possible step to ensure that this situation is resolved at the first possible opportunity by reinstating the Pakistan Constitution, restoring members of the judiciary to their rightful role and releasing all lawyers and judges improperly held in custody so they can exercise their freedom of expression and assembly and undertake their proper constitutional role.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Holroyd OBE  
President