



The Law Society

President Pervez Musharraf
C/o Dr Maleeha Lodi
Pakistan High Commissioner
Pakistan High Commission
33 - 36 Lowndes Square
London SW1X 9JN

22 January 2008

Dear President Musharraf

I write further to my letter dated 6 November 2007, in which I expressed concern on behalf of the members of the Law Society of England and Wales about the proclamation of emergency and the mass arrest of lawyers and the judiciary in Pakistan.

As you will recall, the Law Society is the professional body representing more than 138,000 solicitors in England and Wales. It is concerned to see the independence of the legal profession, the rule of law and human rights upheld worldwide. Consistent international legal standards are especially important in our increasingly globalised world.

In my previous letter, I urged you to reinstate the constitution, lift all restrictions on the judiciary, release all lawyers and judges held in custody arbitrarily and allow lawyers to exercise their freedom of expression and assembly.

Despite the state of emergency having been lifted, the Law Society is still receiving reports that lawyers and members of the judiciary continue to be arbitrarily detained or are being subjected to harassment from the authorities or law enforcement bodies.

We are informed that at least three lawyers are current under house arrest. Their names are Aitzaz Ahsan (the President of the Supreme Court Bar) who is in Lahore, Tariq Mehmood who is in Islamabad and Ali Ahmad Kurd in Quetta. The former Chief Justice, Iftikhar Chaudhry is still under house arrest and former Justice (retired) Rana Bhagwandas was also put under house arrest earlier this month.

We have also had reports that one of our members, a solicitor qualified in England and Wales, experienced harassment from security personnel while visiting Pakistan in January 2008.

I understand that you are visiting the UK on 25 and 26 January 2008. I am writing to you now to respectfully request a meeting with you in order to discuss the above matters.

The nature of the judicial system is critical to the rule of law. Impartial judges, governed by clear legal rules, are essential if justice is to be safeguarded for all citizens. It is also important for creating the conditions necessary to encourage economic growth and foreign trade and investment. Similarly, an independent legal profession, able to regulate its own members, is necessary to maintain those very same conditions for peace and prosperity.

For these reasons, I am eager to have a meeting with you so that I may seek, in person, your assurance that the independence of the legal profession and the judiciary will be respected in Pakistan.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Holroyd OBE
President