

U.S. LAWYERS STRONGLY CONDEMN STATE OF EMERGENCY IN PAKISTAN

PORTLAND LAWYERS DEMONSTRATION CALLED FOR FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9TH AT 5:00 P.M. AT PIONEER COURTHOUSE SQUARE

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Lawyers' groups throughout the U.S. – including the National Lawyers Guild, the American Bar Association, and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers – have condemned the State of Emergency imposed on the people of Pakistan and the attacks on lawyers and the judiciary.

A demonstration has been called for Friday, November 9th at 5:00 p.m., at Portland Pioneer Courthouse Square (SW Broadway and Yamhill, southwest corner), to demand that President Musharraf immediately withdraw the emergency declaration of November 3, 2007 which suspends Pakistan's Constitution. Musharraf's 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.

Pakistani Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry is being held under house arrest, and over 2500 lawyers in different parts of Pakistan including the President of the Supreme Court Bar Association and other leaders of the Bar have been detained. Journalists said the government ordered that journalists who brought "ridicule or disrepute" to Musharraf could face three years in prison.

The real motivation for the emergency declaration "is not to defend the country against 'Islamic extremists' but to maintain Musharraf in power" says Steven Goldberg, a member of the National Lawyers Guild's International Committee. The State of Emergency was declared after the Supreme Court indicated it would overturn the results of the illegitimate election that preserved Musharraf's rule. Musharraf seeks to prevent public protests that lawyers and political parties have been organizing.

U.S. lawyers demand the immediate release of the lawyers and others in custody and/or house arrest and withdrawal of all other political restrictions. The National Lawyers Guild further urges President Bush and Congress to discontinue all aid to Pakistan until the state of emergency is lifted, the Constitution is no longer suspended, and Musharraf provides assurance that the January 2008 elections will proceed as planned.

PLANNED SPEAKERS:

Steven Goldberg

Portland attorney and former co-chair of the National Lawyers Guild's International Committee. Mr. Goldberg is one of the attorneys representing Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation in its challenge against the Bush administration's warrantless wiretap program.

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Saba Ahmed

Pakistani law student at Lewis & Clark Law School. Ms. Ahmed has a degree in Electrical Engineering and Physics from Portland State University, and is pursuing her law degree with a focus on international business law. After law school, she hopes to return to Asia and work in countries that have been devastated by armed conflict, focusing on providing education to women and children. Ms. Ahmed returns to Pakistan regularly.

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Speakers will be available for interviews.