

BASF Members,

Over the weekend Pakistan was wrenched into martial law – its constitution suspended, its courts closed, its judges forced to sign loyalty oaths, and the right of the Pakistani people to petition their government lost. In the midst of this turmoil, one group immediately took to the streets to protest these actions: Pakistan's lawyers. In newspaper after newspaper, we have seen these lawyers – wearing suit and tie – risking their lives in confrontations with military police to demand the return of the rule of law.

As the dust settles on this first round of protests, thousands of lawyers, including judges and leaders in local bar associations, have been rounded up and arrested. They are being held without bail, charged with “civil commotion” in violation of Pakistan's Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997, a statute unilaterally amended by General Pervez Musharraf in 2002 to punish not only terrorism, but also dissidence.

The dissidence now being suppressed is one which dares to say that Pakistan is entitled to a government of laws and not men. In Pakistan, as in the United States, an impartial Judiciary acts as a check on the power of the Executive over the individual. General Musharraf dissolved the Pakistan Supreme Court after it questioned his ability to impose martial law, and now he has imprisoned without bail those leaders in the legal community most intent on alerting the balance of the populace to the dangers of giving in to martial law.

As attorneys, and as officers of the courts, the members of The Bar Association of San Francisco stand in solidarity with the courageous attorneys risking life, limb and liberty to serve as their country's last bulwarks against tyranny. We are working with our elected representatives to push for General Musharraf to restore liberty to Pakistan and to the imprisoned attorneys, and we implore attorneys and other members of the public to do the same. We also pledge to hold ourselves to the high standard set by the Pakistani lawyers, and to defend our own judiciary against attacks on its impartiality.

Very truly yours,



Nanci Clarence
BASF President



THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF
SAN FRANCISCO

RALLY FOR LAWYERS IN PAKISTAN

We urge you to attend a demonstration of solidarity by Bay Area lawyers for the lawyers of Pakistan

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9
12:00 - 1:00 P.M.**

San Francisco Federal Building
Main Plaza
450 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco

We will gather - with members of the Criminal Trial Lawyers Association of Northern California, South Asian Bar Association, Bay Area Association of Muslim Lawyers and the SF Public Defender's Office - in front of the Federal Building to support our sister and brother lawyers in Pakistan.

They have been gassed, beaten and arrested as they courageously risk their lives and liberty to stand up to tyranny and to support judicial independence.

We gather in support for impartial courts and against torture, recognizing that the rule of law in our country, just as in Pakistan, is ours to protect.

BASF ANSWERS THE CALL

Many of you have contacted BASF to express your serious concerns with the situation in Pakistan. We share the deep concerns that many of you (and indeed, people around the globe) have expressed. On your behalf, BASF and its Impartial Courts Task Force have written letters to Senators Feinstein and Boxer, we have written op-ed pieces for the legal newspapers, and we are working with the ABA and other bar associations across the United States. We will continue to monitor the situation and will do what we can to obtain justice for the people of Pakistan.

To get involved with BASF's Impartial Courts Task Force, contact Jayne Salinger at jsalinger@sfbar.org.