

PUBLIC

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06 November 2007

Further Information on UA 292/07 (ASA 33/027/2007, 05 November 2007) Illegal detention/prisoner of conscience

PAKISTAN Asma Jahangir (f)

Released: Hina Jillani (f)
Iqbal Haider (m)
I. A. Rehman (m)
Brigadier (rtd) Rao Abid Hameed (m)
Shahtaj Qizilbash (f)
Imran Qureshi (m)
At least 48 other human rights defenders detained in the state of emergency

At least 53 human rights defenders and civil society activists, including a number of staff and council members of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), were released on bail on 6 November. They are facing charges under The Maintenance of Public Order law and under an unlawful assembly provision of the Penal Code.

However, Asma Jahangir, Chairperson of the HRCP, is still under house arrest. She was ordered to be detained for 90 days by the Home Department of the Government of Punjab on 3 November. Asma Jahangir is a leading human rights activist and lawyer in Pakistan and the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief.

A 90-day detention order also remains in place against Hina Jillani, UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on human rights defenders, who is currently visiting London. There is grave concern that she will be detained on her planned return to Pakistan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Acting in his capacity as army chief of staff, General Musharraf suspended the bulk of the Constitution, including the rights not be arbitrarily deprived of life and to be guaranteed a fair trial. He assumed powers to amend the Constitution without any parliamentary procedure and proclaimed a Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO). This order prohibits any court issuing an order against the President, Prime Minister or any person exercising powers under their authority.

Hundreds of lawyers, human rights activists and political workers are still under arrest.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Asma Jahangir, Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan;
- urging the authorities to cancel the order of detention against Hina Jilani immediately;
- appealing for charges against at least 53 human rights defenders released on bail on 6 November to be dropped immediately;
- urging the authorities to cease arbitrary arrests and detentions under the state of emergency;
- calling on the authorities to protect and uphold the constitutional human rights guarantees, including safeguards on life and liberty.

APPEALS TO:

President Pervez Musharaff
Pakistan Secretariat, Islamabad, Pakistan
Fax: +92 51 9221422
E-mail: via website: <http://www.presidentofpakistan.gov.pk/WTPresidentMessage.aspx>
Salutation: Dear President Musharaff

Mr Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao
Minister for the Interior
Ministry for the Interior
Room 404, 4th Floor, Block R, Federal Secretariat
Islamabad, Pakistan
Fax: +92 51 9202624
E-mail: minister@interior.gov.pk
secretary@interior.gov

Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Zahid Hamid
Minister of Law, Justice and Human Rights
Room 305, S-Block, Pakistan Secretariat
Islamabad, Pakistan
Fax: +92 51 9202628
+92 51 9201631
E-Mail: minister@molaw.gov.pk
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Pakistan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 18 December 2007.*****