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General Pervez Musharraf,  
President of Pakistan  
Pakistan Secretariat  
Islamabad  
Pakistan

Cc: Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations  
Cc: High Commissioner to South Africa  
Cc: United Nations Secretary General  
Cc: Commonwealth Secretary General  
Cc: United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Cc: SAARC Secretary General

8 November 2007

Dear President,

I write as the Secretary General of CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, an international organisation working to support and strengthen civil society around the world.<sup>1</sup> I write to express our deep dismay at the recent disintegration of governance in Pakistan and the escalating attacks on civil society and dissenting forces in the country. We call on you as President of Pakistan and Chief of the Army Staff, to take urgent actions to immediately halt such violations of human rights and restore democratic and constitutional order.

We take this opportunity to raise with you some particular areas of deep concern.

#### **Imposition of Emergency Rule**

The suspension of the Constitution of Pakistan 1973 and imposition of emergency rule is a tragedy for Pakistan. Such actions are ineffectual in responding to threats of terrorism and insurgency; and put the people of Pakistan at greater risk of violation of their human rights. Tragically, numerous grievous violations have been documented in this period.

CIVICUS calls for the immediate lifting of the state of emergency and restoration of the constitutional order and fulfilment of the promises of free and fair elections under a neutral and caretaker government according to the schedule announced.

#### **Attacks on civil society**

Civil society forms an essential wing of society, with independent but complementary roles to government and the private sector. Restoration of democracy and genuine development require the existence of civil society that is able to operate freely without fear, intimidation or attack. The current situation for civil society groups is dire and requires urgent attention. Reports we have received from our members and partners in Pakistan are deeply disturbing, with thousands of members of civil society reported detained without fair judicial trial, many in unknown locations.

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<sup>1</sup> CIVICUS is a membership organization headquartered in South Africa, with members and partners in over 100 countries. More information: [www.civicus.org](http://www.civicus.org)

That a United National Special Representative, Asma Jahangir, is one of those detained, reflects a disturbing lack of respect for the institution of the United Nations, as well as for her vital work. Likewise, attacks on the judiciary and legal fraternity are unconstitutional, short-sighted and violate the fundamental democratic principle of the independence of the judiciary.

CIVICUS calls for the release of all those detained without charge. In addition, we reiterate that, under international law, civil society in Pakistan must be allowed to operate freely without intimidation or attack and that all the fundamental rights according to the constitution of Pakistan and other international covenants that Pakistan is signatory of must be restored without further delay.


**Restrictions on freedom of expression**

We have noted your efforts in recent years to increase media freedom in Pakistan. It is therefore particularly disappointing to witness the reversal of this, evidenced by the blacking out of television networks, threats of detention of journalists, as well as arrests, raids on radio studios and printing presses, the prevention of publication, and new regulations for print and broadcast media. Such actions stifle free expression, violate human rights and destroy your recent record on media freedom.

CIVICUS calls for media freedom in Pakistan, including the repeal of new regulations, release of all media personnel detained, and that radio, print, television and electronic media be allowed to operate freely.

Actions have purported to prevent violent extremism, but in reality the targets have so far been the judiciary and legal community, civil society activists, the media and all voices of independent and democratic dissent. For the promotion of the well-being of all Pakistanis, these communities must be supported, not stifled. We appeal to you to immediately reverse recent actions that undermine democracy, freedom and fundamental rights; and instead act in the interest of all Pakistanis and support the vital work being conducted by civil society in your country.

Yours sincerely,



SECRETARY GENERAL

Kumi Naidoo  
Secretary General  
CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation