



November 9, 2007

General Pervez Musharraf  
President, Islamic Republic of Pakistan  
c/o High Commission for Pakistan in Canada  
10 Range Road  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8J3  
Canada

**RE: Suspension of the Rule of Law**

Dear President Musharraf,

On behalf of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada, I write to express the alarm with which the governing bodies of Canada's 95,000 lawyers and 3,500 Quebec notaries have observed the suspension of the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the dismissal of numerous members of the judiciary, including the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, as well as the government's suppression of peaceful protest by and detention of hundreds of individuals including a large number of lawyers and human rights advocates.

Taken together, these actions constitute a disturbing assault on the rule of law, the cornerstone of any democratic society.

We are deeply concerned that the failure of your government to immediately restore Pakistan's normal constitutional order and with it, the rule of law, will do lasting and untold damage to the public's confidence that institutions such as an independent judiciary and an independent bar act as a bulwark against the exercise of arbitrary or excessive executive authority.

Although your government professes to justify its actions on the grounds that a state of emergency exists, it is in precisely such circumstances that the rule of law assumes its greatest significance. Not only do the actions of the government of Pakistan constitute a repudiation of the rule of law, they also stand in violation

of fundamental tenets of international human rights law and the numerous international law instruments to which Pakistan is required to adhere.

As regulators of lawyers in the public interest, we underscore the particular urgency of releasing detained lawyers so that they may fulfill their professional duties as advocates for the rule of law and the proper administration of justice.

The Federation of Law Societies of Canada adds its voice to those around the world who call upon the government of Pakistan to end emergency rule, restore the constitution of Pakistan, rescind the dismissals of members of the judiciary and release those who are unjustifiably detained.

Sincerely,



Michael W. Milani, Q.C.  
President

c.c. The Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada  
The Hon. Maxime Bernier, Minister of Foreign Affairs for Canada  
The Hon. Rob Nicholson, Minister of Justice and Attorney General for  
Canada