

International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations



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To: Mr. Pervez Musharraf, President of the Islamic
Republic of Pakistan

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Date: September 15, 2007
Ref: ro/pr/1212 - 2007

Concerns: arrests of trade unionists

Dear Mr. President,

The IUF is an international trade union federation representing over 11 million members 373 trade unions in 122 countries, including Pakistan. We wish to register our outrage at the arrest and detention of trade unionists following the imposition emergency rule, many of whom face sentencing by military tribunals for having expressed their commitment to democracy and the rule of law.

On 5th November, after speaking at the Karachi Press Club and calling for the return to democracy in Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Sahi, General Secretary of the Democratic Workers' Union of the State Bank of Pakistan was arrested along with other participants in the Press Club meeting. We have learned that he is now charged with the crime of "treason", an offense which carries the death penalty.

The IUF, the international labour movement and democratic public opinion around the world categorically reject the idea that citizens should be subject to arrest, detention and prosecution solely for calling for the return of parliamentary democracy.

We therefore call on your government to immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Ali Shah and all other trade union members and officers who have been arrested for their democratic engagement, as well as the many other defenders of human and democratic rights who have been charged with similar "crimes" following the declaration of emergency rule.

The IUF and the international labour movement as a whole are closely following developments in Pakistan, and we do expect a response to our demands in this regard, including a swift return to civilian rule and the protection of civil liberties guaranteed in international treaties to which your government is a signatory.

Yours sincerely

Ron Oswald
General Secretary