

FSP calls on U.S. Congress to cancel military aid to Pakistan

samedi 17 novembre 2007, par [FSP](#) (Date de rédaction antérieure : 10 novembre 2007).

The Freedom Socialist Party strongly condemns the suspension of democratic rights in Pakistan by General Musharraf, a longtime ally and beneficiary of billions of dollars in U.S. military assistance. We call on Congress to immediately cancel all present and future military aid to this dictatorial regime. General Musharraf has operated secret torture prisons on behalf of the Bush administration, aided and abetted the woman-hating Taliban, and regularly violated the labor and human rights of its citizens. Military assistance to a regime such as this is an affront to working people all over the world.

On November 3, Pakistan's president and army chief of staff General Musharraf suspended the bulk of the country's Constitution, including the right to free speech, freedom of association and freedom of assembly. He assumed the power 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. Musharraf also suspended the right to life, liberty and equal protection of the law, all of which are guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Thousands of people have been arrested or arbitrarily detained across Pakistan since the President suspended the constitution. They include unionists, lawyers, journalists, human rights defenders, and socialists.

Several Supreme Court Justices were sacked—including the Chief Justice—and placed under house arrest. Over 2500 lawyers in different parts of Pakistan, including the President of the Supreme Court Bar Association, have been detained. In addition, a large police contingent raided the Office of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and arrested around 70 people.

Under the Provisional Constitutional Order, TV and newspaper reporters who bring « ridicule or disrepute » to Musharraf could face three years in prison. In Karachi, trade unionists took the lead in organizing a protest of this attack on journalists.

On November 5, the All-Pakistan Trade Unions Federation and the Pakistan Trade Union Federation organized a demonstration at the Karachi Press Club. While journalists who took part in the protest were released later that day, trade union officers were not. In Punjab province, police arrested five leaders of the Pakistani Water and Development Authority Labor Union on November 5 and other unionists went into hiding. This union has been protesting the government's failure to deliver basic public services.

The Freedom Socialist Party stands in solidarity with these unionists and all the brave men and women fighting to reinstate democratic rights in Pakistan. We also denounce imperialist U.S. military and economic policies that produce and sustain dictators like Musharraf. And we pledge our assistance to all those struggling for self-determination, labor and women's rights, and socialism all over the world.

In solidarity

Alison Thorne

International Executive Committee Coordinator

FSP, International Executive Committee * Solidarity Salon : 580 Sydney Road Brunswick Vic 3055 AUSTRALIA

* Postal address : PO Box 266, West Brunswick Vic 3055 AUSTRALIA * Phone/fax : 61-3-9388-0062