

Support Pakistan democracy activists!

Wednesday 28 November 2007, by [McILROY Jim](#) (Date first published: 22 November 2007).

Brisbane,

Protesting journalists in Pakistan were beaten by police on November 21. I travelled to Pakistan earlier this year, and I wish to show my solidarity with the brave struggle for justice being waged against General Pervez Musharraf's dictatorship.

The responses to Musharraf's crackdown on dissent from (now former) PM John Howard and ALP leader Kevin Rudd have been ludicrous. Neither of them care one iota for the rights of the people of Pakistan. They call for a return to "stability" — but there has been no stability for the people of Pakistan who have opposed the Musharraf dictatorship since he took power in 1999.

The Australian government should demand the lifting of the state of emergency and the immediate release of all the judges, lawyers, trade unionists, human rights activists and civil society activists who have been arrested.

If Howard and (now-former) foreign minister Alexander Downer were seriously concerned about what is happening in Pakistan, they would be calling for the treason charges against trade union leader Liaquat Ali Shah and four others to be dropped. The treason charge carries a death penalty.

They would also be calling for the anti-terrorist charges against leaders of the Labour Party Pakistan to be dropped.

The Socialist Alliance, of which I am a member, stands strongly with the struggle against the Musharraf dictatorship. When I traveled through Pakistan earlier this year, I met with many brave activists who risk everything in their fight for justice. It is these people that we should be supporting - not a US-backed dictator.

The Howard government supported Musharraf's government since he carried out his military coup in 1999, while at the same time following in the steps of the US government in labelling Venezuela's popularly elected socialist President Hugo Chavez a "dictator". This shows the hypocrisy of Howard's supposed support for democracy.

The Chavez forces have faced 11 democratic elections since 1998, and in the presidential elections in December 2006, to which I was a witness, Chavez won the highest majority in Venezuelan history.

To donate funds to the brave activists in the Labour Party Pakistan via the Peoples Power Fighting Fund :

Commonwealth Bank. BSB: 062026. Account number: 1006 0743. To support any protests that are being organised in your city, phone Sue Bolton (Melbourne) 0413 377 978; Peter Boyle (Sydney) 0401 760 577; Paul Benedek (Brisbane) 0410 629 088.

When more practical, funds can also be donated through ESSF account in France :

Checks payable in France to ESSF :

ESSF

2 rue Richard-Lenoir, 93100 Montreuil, France.

Transfers

Bank name and address

Crédit lyonnais

Agence de la Croix-de-Chavaux (00525)

10 boulevard de Chanzy 93100 Montreuil France

International bank references :

IBAN : FR85 3000 2005 2500 0044 5757 C12

BIC / SWIFT : CRLYFRPP

National bank details (RIB) :

Bank : 30002

Sorting code 00525

Account number : 0000445757C

Key : 12

Account holder : ESSF

P.S.

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