

Pakistan: political parties urged to shun opportunism

Tuesday 11 December 2007, by [Correspondent\(s\)](#) (Date first published: 9 December 2007).

LAHORE, Dec 9: Speakers at a seminar here on Sunday called upon political parties to shun opportunism and support the struggle for the independence of the judiciary and rule of law by boycotting the elections being held for legitimising the continuation of the unconstitutional rule of Pervez Musharraf.

The seminar titled 'Democratic struggle against opportunism', organised by the Awami Jamhoori Tehreek was held at the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

Sarfraz Cheema, Lahore High Court Bar Association secretary general, said that bar, students and civil society were struggling for the independence of judiciary because rule of law and protection of fundamental rights were not possible without it. Justice could not be expected from the judges under the oath of the Provisional Constitution Order (PCO) who had ruled the court did not have powers to hear any petition challenging curbs on the media.

He said political parties had been opposing the law of necessity since long but were reluctant to support the struggle for the independence of judiciary. He said police had entered the Lahore High Court for the first time in its history and subjected the lawyers to worst kind of torture in the tenure of PCO judges. He said the bar would march to Islamabad for the release of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry if he was not released after the lifting of emergency.

Lahore Bar Association President Syed Muhammad Shah said the political parties participating in the elections would betray the struggle of the bar and civil society. He dubbed the elections a drama being staged only for thrusting the cronies already selected by the government. This selection process could not have been staged in the presence of an independent judiciary, he said.

Labour Party Chairman Nisar Shah said the struggle of lawyers and civil society had given a hope to the people at a time the political parties had disappointed them by agreeing to participate in the elections.

Labour Party Secretary General Farooq Tariq said the bar and civil society were engaged in a historical struggle for restoration of rule of law but the political parties were reluctant to boycott the sham elections being held by the unconstitutional regime. He said the Awami Jamhoori Tehreek would not only boycott the election but also stage demonstrations outside polling stations on the day of elections.

Pakistan Trade Union Federation Secretary General Afzal Sandhu said the rulers had turned the country into a jail by depriving the people of their fundamental rights and right to seek justice by appointing judges who had sworn the oath of allegiance to President Pervez Musharraf.

Manaka Organisation President Amjad Rabbani said President Musharraf had given up military uniform but had not changed his dictatorial thinking. —Reporter

P.S.

* From Daily Dawn.