

Statement on Victory of Ms. Asma Jahangir as the President of the Supreme Court of Pakistan

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A Statement by the Asian Human Rights Commission

PAKISTAN: Statement on Victory of Ms. Asma Jahangir as the President of the Supreme Court of Pakistan

The Asian Human Rights Commission extends its congratulation to Ms. Asma Jahangir and her colleagues for their victory of different offices at the Supreme Court Bar Association elections. Her victory as the president of the highest bar association of Pakistan will strengthen the lawyer's movement for an independent bar, the supremacy of the judiciary and the rule of law. Her success is a victory for the democratic forces, lovers of freedom of expression and the independence of the media.

From 1998 to 2004, Ms. Jahangir served as the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions. From 2004 until July 2010, she was the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief. She resigned as chairperson of the human rights commission of Pakistan in July of this year in order to run for the SCBA presidency.

The AHRC sincerely hopes that she would continue to contribute to the improvement of the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary in Pakistan. Under her leadership the Bar can continue the work of her predecessors to ensure the independence of the Bar so that the interest of justice can be served.

We hope that Ms Jahangir will take decisive steps to create a legal aid system that will ensure access to justice for all, particularly the poor and the under privileged.

The survival of the rule of law and the independence of judiciary requires overcoming such problems as the undue delays in adjudication and the inefficiencies in the administration of justice inherited from the past. If this is to happen there needs to be the proper allocation of budget for the administration of justice by the government. When adequate funds are not available for the proper functioning of all sections of the justice mechanism people are deprived of justice. The defects of the justice mechanism gives rise to the many abuses which end in problems such as forced disappearances and other gross abuses of human rights.

Today leadership is required from the bar as well as from the judiciary to deal with these problems so as to ensure the benefits of a modernised system of justice for the people of Pakistan.

We trust that Ms. Jahangir will give expression to the aspirations and inspire the bar as well as the judiciary to pursue this objective.

P.S.

* About AHRC: The Asian Human Rights Commission is a regional non-governmental organisation monitoring and lobbying human rights issues in Asia. The Hong Kong-based group was founded in 1984.

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