

Pakistan: Shrinking Freedom of Expression

Wednesday 6 June 2007, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 5 June 2007).

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Statement of Support for Dr Ayesha

Dear media colleagues and friends

Academics and other professionals in the US, UK, Holland, France, Canada, Pakistan and India, including well known professors Howard Zinn, Ayesha Jalal, Shahla Haeri, Shahnaz Rouse and Phillip Oldenburg, have expressed grave concern about the interference of Dr Ayesha Siddiqa's recently published 'Military Inc.: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy' in Pakistan, and the threats and intimidation she faces.

Please publish, broadcast, disseminate, as you see fit (text & endorsements below).

thank you

beena sarwar

Cambridge, MA

June 3, 2007

Interference with the book launch in Islamabad on Friday of the distinguished Pakistani scholar Dr Ayesha Siddiqa's 'Military Inc.: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy' gives us grave concern.

Although Dr Siddiqa was able to use the office of a non-government organization after hotels refused to provide a venue, her phone service has subsequently been repeatedly disrupted as she gave interviews and she has told the Committee to Protect Journalists and others that she feels

increasingly isolated and physically threatened.
On Saturday, plainclothes "Special Branch" agents visited her home town Khanqah Sharif near Bahawalpur and questioned her employees about Dr. Siddiq, her husband and property.

We urge the Pakistan government not to curb academic freedom. At a time when Pakistan faces an internal political crisis and a dangerous regional security situation the need for information and free expression of ideas only increases. Dr. Siddiq has produced thorough research on important topics that can inform open debate by all Pakistanis, and indeed others around the world. She and her work should be defended, not threatened or suppressed. The following academics and professionals around the world endorse this statement:

1. Hassan Abbas, Research Fellow, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, U.S.A.
2. Tahira Abdullah, researcher, development worker Islamabad, Pakistan
3. Syed Adeeb, journalist & President of the Human Rights Foundation (HRF), U.S.A.
4. Nasir Ahmad MD., FRCS.,FACs, Chief of Otolaryngology /Head & Neck Surgery, Hurley Medical Center, Flint, Michigan, U.S.A.
5. Salman Ahmad, UN Special Representative, New York, U.S.A.
6. Ishtiaq Ahmed, Professor, Department of Political Science, Stockholm University, Sweden
7. Imtiaz Ali, International Knight Fellow, Stanford University, U.S.A.
8. Kamran Asdar Ali, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Middle East Studies and Asian Studies. University of Texas, Austin
9. Omar Ali MD, Assistant Professor of Pediatric Endocrinology, Medical College of Wisconsin, U.S.A.
10. Dr Arif Alvi, Central Vice President, Tehreek-e-Insaf, Pakistan
11. Amin Ansari, CEO IT company, Lahore, Pakistan
12. Shaheryar Azhar, moderator, The Forum, 1175 New York, U.S.A.
13. Cassandra Balchin, Director, L.A.W.S. (Legal Awareness, Women & Society), U.K.
14. Akshay Bakaya, Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Paris, France
15. Julia Bard, writer and editor, Member of the National Union of Journalists London, U.K.
16. Amna Buttar, MD, President, Asian American Network Against Abuse of Human Rights, Middleton, WI, U.S.A.
17. Walter Crump, Commonwealth School, Boston, MA, U.S.A.
18. S.M.A. Ehtisham MD, Bath NY, U.S.A.
19. Drs Khalid Hameed Farooqi, journalist and researcher, Holland
20. Asim Ghani, journalist, Karachi, Pakistan

21. Frederic Grare, Visiting Scholar, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, U.S.A.
22. Shahla Haeri, Director, Women's Studies Program & Associate Professor of Anthropology, Boston University, MA, U.S.A.
23. Zahra Shahid Hussain, educationist, political analyst, Karachi, U.S.A.
24. Zaffar Iqbal, MD & ANAA Board Member, Kingman AZ, U.S.A.
25. Ayesha Jalal, Professor of History, Tufts University, MA, U.S.A.
26. Ruchir Joshi, film maker and writer, New Delhi, India
27. Kalim Irfani, M.D., Pediatrics, Scarsdale, NY, U.S.A.
28. Dr Mahjabeen Islam, Medical Director, Comprehensive Addiction Services & Odyssey Hospice, Toledo, Ohio, U.S.A.
29. Harsh Kapoor, coordinator, South Asia Citizens Web & 'India Pakistan Arms race and Militarisation Watch', France
30. Mohammad Arshad Khan, Society for Social Justice and Development Pakistan, Sialkot
31. Waqas Khwaja, Associate Professor and Chair, English Department Agnes Scott College, Decatur, GA, U.S.A.
32. Zaheer A. Kidvai, Education Technology Consultant, Karachi, Pakistan
33. Syeda Masood, Kennedy School of Government 08, Harvard University, U.S.A.
34. Andy McCord, freelance writer, past fellow of the Fulbright program in Pakistan and India, & of the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities, New York, U.S.A.
35. Anita Mehta, Fellow, The Radcliffe Institute of Advanced Study, Harvard University, U.S.A.
36. Zubeida Mustafa, journalist, Karachi, Pakistan
37. Maniza Naqvi, author/development specialist, Washington DC, U.S.A.
38. Akbar Noman, Senior Fellow, Initiative for Policy Dialogue, Columbia University New York, NY, U.S.A.
39. Philip Oldenburg, Independent Scholar, New York, U.S.A.
40. Emran Qureshi, Wertheim Fellow, Labor & Worklife Program at Harvard Law School, U.S.A.
41. Omar Qureshi, History Department, The Brearley School, New York, U.S.A.
42. Jamil Rashid, Professor: Social Sciences, Kingston, Ontario, Canada
43. Jeff Redding, Oscar M. Ruebhausen Fellow in Law, Yale Law School, New Haven, U.S.A.
44. David Rosenberg, teacher and writer, Member of the National Union of teachers London, U.K.
45. Shahnaz Rouse, Professor of Sociology, Sarah Lawrence College, New York
46. Gita Sahgal, film maker and writer, U.K.
47. Beena Sarwar, journalist & Fellow, Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Harvard University, U.S.A.
48. Malik Sarwar, Senior Vice President, Permal Group, NY, U.S.A.
49. Najmi Sarwar, Vice President Citibank, Executive Director Developments In Literacy, New York, U.S.A.
50. Sehba Sarwar, Founding Director, Voices Breaking Boundaries, Houston, U.S.A.

51. Mohsin Sayeed, journalist, Karachi, Pakistan
 52. Shaheen Sehbai, media professional, Washington, DC, U.S.A.
 53. Dr. Subir Sinha, Department of Development Studies, SOAS, London, U.K.
 54. Nandini Sundar, Professor, Department of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics
University of Delhi, India
 55. Mohammad Taqi ,MD, Asst. Prof. of Medicine, University of Florida, Gainesville, & President, American Pakistani Physicians for Justice and Democracy (APPJD), U.S.A.
 56. John Trumbour, Research Director, Labor & Worklife Program, Harvard Law School, U.S.A.
 57. Dr. Rashmi Varma, Department of English, University of Warwick, Coventry, U.K.
 58. Rafia Zakaria J.D, Indiana University, Department of Political Science, U.S.A.
 59. Howard Zinn, Professor Emeritus, Boston University, U.S.A.
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Electronic media muffled in Pakistan

The government empowered the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority on 4th of June 2007 to take stern punitive actions against any broadcast media for violation of its rules.

President Gen Pervez Musharraf has promulgated the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority Amendment Ordinance 2007, which will come into effect immediately. According to details issued by Law and Justice Secretary Mansoor Ahmed, the ordinance would be called the PEMRA (Amendment) Ordinance 2007.

The president has tightened the regulation of the media under the ordinance. He has made a raft of amendments to the regulations governing the electronic media, including private television channels that the general has accused of anti-government bias. The ordinance says authorities can seal the premises of broadcasters or suspend distributors breaking the law, and raises possible fines for violations from 1 million rupees (\$16,665) to 10 million rupees (\$166,650).

The text of the PEMRA (Amendment) Ordinance 2007

Ordinance No. XXVI of 2007. An ordinance to further amend the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority Ordinance, 2002.

WHEREAS it is expedient to further to amend the Pakistan Media Regulatory Authority Ordinance, 2002 (XIII of 2002), for the purposes hereinafter appearing;

AND WHEREAS the National Assembly is not in session and circumstances exist which render it necessary to take immediate action; NOW, THEREFORE, in the exercise of the powers conferred by clause (1) of Article 89 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the President is pleased to make and promulgate the following Ordinance:-

1. Short title, extent and commencement.- (1) This Ordinance may be called the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Ordinance, 2007. (2) It shall come into force at once.

2. Amendment of section 2, Ordinance XIII of 2002:- In the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority Ordinance, 2002 (XIII of 2002), Hereunder referred to as the said Ordinance, in section 2,-

(a) in clause (ha) for the letters "DTH" the letters and commas "DTH, IPTV, Mobile TV" shall be substituted; and

(b) for clause (j) the following shall be substituted, namely:-

(j)- "Frequency" means the frequency of the electromagnetic waves measured in Hertz and used for transmission;"

3. Amendment of section 4, Ordinance XIII of 2002.- In the said Ordinance, in section 4, sub-section (3) shall be omitted.

4. Amendment of section 20, Ordinance XIII of

2002.- In the said Ordinance, in section 20, in clause (d), after the word "rules" the words "and regulations" shall be inserted.

5. Amendment of section 23, Ordinance XIII of 2002. In the said Ordinance, in section 23, in sub-section (2) in the proviso, for the word "fare" the word "Fair" shall be substituted.

6. Amendment of Section 25, Ordinance XIII of 2002.- In the said Ordinance, in section 25, in clause e(d), after the word "organization" the words "including any foreign non-governmental organization" shall be added.

7. Amendment of section 27, Ordinance XIII of 2002.- In the said Ordinance, in section 27,-

(a) for the word "therefore," the word "therefor" shall be substituted; and

(b) after the word "operator" the words "or owner" shall be inserted.

8. Amendment of section 28, Ordinance XIII of 2002.- In the said Ordinance, in section 28, in the marginal note, of the section for the word "of" the word "by" shall be substituted.

9. Amendment of section 29, Ordinance XIII of 2002,- In the said Ordinance, in section 29,-

(a) in sub-section (5), the proviso, for the full stop, at the end, a colon shall be substituted and thereafter the following further proviso shall be added, namely:-

"Provided further that the Authority or the Chairman may seize a broadcast or distribution service equipment or seal the premises, which is operating illegally or in contravention of orders passed under section 30."; and

(b) in sub-section (6), for the word "one" a word "ten" shall be substituted.

10. Amendment of section 30, Ordinance XIII of 2002.- In the said Ordinance, in section 30,-

(a) in sub section (1),-

(i) in clause (b), for the colon, at the end, a full stop shall be substituted; and (ii) the proviso shall be omitted.

(b) in sub-section (3) the comma and word ", suspended" shall be omitted; and

(c) after sub-section (3) following new sub-section shall be added, namely:-

"(4) License of a broadcast media may be suspended on any of the grounds specified in sub-section (1), by a duly constituted committee comprising members of the Authority."

11. Insertion of section 39A, Ordinance XIII of 2002.- In the said Ordinance, after section 39, the following new section shall be inserted, namely:-

"39A. Power of the Authority to make regulations.

The Authority may by notification in the official Gazette, make regulations, not inconsistent with this Ordinance and the rules made thereunder, to provide for all matters for which provisions is necessary or expedient for carrying out the purpose of this Ordinance."

P.S.

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