

Press release

# **CADTM condemns the state of emergency declared by Pervez Musharraf, for too long supported by the major powers and the World Bank**

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On Saturday 3 November 2007, Pakistan's president Pervez Musharraf declared a state of emergency and ordered widespread repressive measures against the numerous opponents of his regime. Several activists for democracy in CADTM's Pakistan branch were taken into custody in Lahore the same day. These decisions follow a highly contested presidential election (by indirect suffrage) won by Musharraf in totally anti-democratic circumstances. In CADTM's view, Musharraf intends to use force to hold on to the power seized at gunpoint during the military coup d'état of October 1999.

It should be remembered that General Musharraf is a strategic US ally in the region, particularly since the attacks of 11 September 2001. The principal creditors have never hesitated to lend the Pakistani dictatorship the funds it needs to pursue this alliance.

In the autumn of 2001, the United States asked Pakistan for assistance in waging the war in Afghanistan. Musharraf agreed to let the US use his country as a rearguard base for US armed forces and those of its allies, but in exchange, he negotiated a substantial reduction of Pakistan's debt. In December 2001, the rich countries meeting at the Paris Club were quick to agree to this reduction.

Since then, Musharraf's regime continues to drag the country into debt with the active support of the World Bank and the major powers. The loans granted have no legitimacy; they serve to reinforce Musharraf's tyranny and in no way improve the living conditions of Pakistan's citizens. The debt contracted by this despotic regime can therefore be classified as odious.

CADTM declares that the creditors who made loans to Musharraf did so in full knowledge of the facts, and that this being so, it is inadmissible that Pakistan's people should in the future be forced to repay the odious debt contracted by Musharraf.

CADTM calls for an immediate halt to any form of support for the Musharraf regime, the release of political prisoners, the speedy organisation of fair elections, total cancellation of Pakistan's external public debt and an end to the structural adjustment policies that are seriously affecting the

living conditions of local communities.

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