



LAWASIA

THE LAW ASSOCIATION FOR
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Founded in 1966

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March 16, 2007

His Excellency General Pervez Musharraf
President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
Aiwan-e-sadr
Islamabad
PAKISTAN

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Your Excellency

I write as president of LAWASIA, the Law Association for Asia and the Pacific.

We have learnt with considerable consternation of the sudden dismissal of the Pakistan Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhury.

On behalf of our member organisations, the peak legal bodies of 24 countries of Asia and the Pacific, including the Pakistan Bar Council, we express our concern about this development, in particular because the reasons for such a destabilising action have not been made clear and are left open to speculation that this is an unjustified interference with the independence of Pakistan's judiciary.

We note reports that the Chief Justice is now to face charges, as yet unspecified, in a closed session of the Supreme Court and we are extremely concerned at this apparent lack of transparency in a situation that is of grave concern to all who view independence of the judiciary as a cornerstone of the rule of law. We also note with significant concern reports that the Chief Justice has been denied access to telephone contact, newspapers and other media.

LAWASIA adds its voice to the many in the region in calling on your government to reinstate the Chief Justice forthwith and to ensure that, if there are charges for him to face, they are *bona fide* and dealt with by a proper and transparent process in the interests of justice.

We urge you to heed the strength of reaction of the legal community, both at home and abroad, to this development in Pakistan. As you would expect, there is strong sensitivity about any suggestion of any attack on the independence of the judiciary, the rule of law and the integrity of the justice system in Pakistan.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mah Weng Kwai', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Mah Weng Kwai
PRESIDENT