

The Emergency Times



LUMS enters 4th day of Protest

LUMS saw its fourth consecutive day of protest against the Martial Law on November 8th, 2007. Despite the avalanche of overdue assignments and impending examinations, approximately 150 students showed up, along with several members of the faculty at the Sports Complex to show their continuing dissent against the martial law, the blatant abuse of human rights and the tyrannical suppression of our judiciary and media.

Other than the students who came up to speak in front of a peacefully assembled crowd we had speeches by Aasim Sajjad, faculty member of the Social Sciences department, an Alumnus lawyer, and our Vice Chancellor.

Defying the poor acoustics of the hall, Aasim Sajjad's voice rang out clear, congratulating the students for fulfilling their duty to their conscience and their country and for successfully making their voices heard all over the world. He related the incidents that transpired during the peaceful protest held in Islamabad, of which he and his wife were both a part; the group of 20-30 civilians were surrounded by a police force ten times their number and brutally manhandled. He clarified that this is not just a political war but a moral one which must be fought by all people at all fronts. Nothing, he said, can justify the heinous manner in which innocent people are being beaten, tear-gassed, tortured and arrested without regard to their gender, age or any other factor that characterizes a human being. It is not only our right to raise our voices against the State which has sanctioned such barbarism but our duty to do so. He urged the students to be organized and safe, and to make this movement strong by striking a balance between caution and courage; his final words expressed his firm belief in the success of this struggle.

A member of the LUMS alumni, who is at present one of the defiant lawyers upholding the struggle on the judicial front, came up to express his happiness over the students' support. Being a former LUMS student he was especially proud that the faculty and students of his university were among the first to raise their voice against the tyranny of the government. He emphasized the need to ensure our own safety first, to exercise caution and to avoid getting arrested, which, he maintained, should be left to the lawyers. He urged the students to continue the struggle and not to stop till our goals are achieved.

Our Vice Chancellor also expressed the administration's support regarding freedom of expression; he reminded us to fulfill our academic responsibilities, to speak our minds clearly and loudly but at the same time tolerate others' opinions. He said the students' right to speak their hearts and their minds would be protected by him and the administration however he also asserted the need to keep our protest within the normal parameters of university rules. The day we cannot express our opinions and our views freely, he said, LUMS will stop being the academic institution it prides itself to be.

Aasim Sajjad also sang a revolutionary song to the beat of the students' rhythmic clapping, while the Students Action Committee showed two presentations covering the massive protest held in LUMS on 7th November, 2007, further raising the spirits of those present.

Among the things discussed and ideas passed around two of the most important suggestions were: to write letters of support and comfort to the lawyers who are under house arrest and are completely deprived of any outside information, and to flood the CNN ireports (www.cnn.com) with messages expressing our dissent against the martial law and human rights' abuse in the country.

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In the meantime, Police remained stationed outside LUMS the entire day, monitoring students moving in and out. Reports abound of phone lines being tapped and emails being monitored. Attempts to intimidate and silence us continue.

But is essential that the fervor remain, that we persevere in whatever manner possible, against the injustice, against the oppression, until we bring them to their knees.

In Complete Unity.

Asma Jehangir calls for solidarity with the Lawyers

Appeal for support to lawyers and judges in Pakistan.

I am fortunate to be under house arrest while my colleagues are suffering. The Musharraf government has declared martial law to settle scores with lawyers and judges. While the terrorists remain on the loose and continue to occupy more space in Pakistan, senior lawyers are being tortured.

The civil society of Pakistan urges bar associations all over the world to mobilize public opinion in favor of the judges and lawyers in Pakistan. A large number of judges of superior courts are under arrest. Thousands of lawyers are imprisoned, beaten and tortured.

In particular the cases of Muneer A Malik, Aitzaz Ahsan, Tariq Mahmood and Ali Ahmed Kurd are serious. Muneer A Malik, the former President of the Supreme Court Bar Association and leader of the lawyers' movement has been shifted to the notorious Attack Fort. He is being tortured and is under the custody of the military intelligence. Tariq Mahmood, former President of the Supreme Court Bar Association, was imprisoned in Adiala jail. No one was allowed to see him and it is reported that he has been shifted to an unknown place. Mr. Ali Ahmed Kurd, former Vice Chair of the Pakistan Bar Council is in the custody of military intelligence and being kept at an undisclosed place. Mr. Aitzaz Ahsan, President of the Supreme Court Bar is being kept in Adiyala jail in solitary confinement.

Representatives of bar associations should approach their governments to pressure the government of Pakistan to release all lawyers and judges and immediately provide access to Muneer A Malik, Tariq Mahmood, Ali Ahmed Kurd and Aitzaz Ahsan. The bars are also urged to hold press conferences in their country and express their solidarity with the lawyers of Pakistan who are struggling to establish the rule of law.

Asma Jahangir

Advocate, Supreme Court of Pakistan

Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan

A Solemn Pledge of Solidarity

(The Emergency Times Eds)

We thoroughly condemn the government's atrocious behaviour, especially after learning the dark details of the imprisonment of Aitzaz Ahsan, Muneer A Malik, Tariq Mahmood and Ali Ahmed Kurd, lawyers who have become the icons of our struggle for justice. We take this opportunity to express solidarity with them all, including Asma Jehangir and her colleagues from the HRCP protest. We also thoroughly sympathize with the families of all the lawyers and activists who are bearing the brunt of the government's criminal high handedness. We express our support and unity with their pain and their cause and urge them that they are not alone. Inshallah, we will be trying our level best towards contacting them all soon and let it be known that we rally behind their cause with every ounce of our beings. Let us also not forget the valiant defiance of those judges who have refused to take oath under the insulting and shameful PCO. We would like to take this opportunity to urge all readers to reflect on the level of commitment and bravery shown by these inspiring individuals and to take something of their tireless commitment back with us. You urge us on. You keep the hope in us alive. You keep our spirits soaring and our hearts strong. God bless you. We are all with you. In complete Unity.

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A Lament to Iqbal

Kehtey hain:

"Khamosh raho tu sukhi raho ge
Ghar mein raho tu sukhi raho ge
Kitabon mein jo tum ne seekha hai
Bhool jao tu sukhi raho ge
Sola crore jo bhooke mar rahe hain
Marney do, tu sukhi raho ge"

Insaaf per nafiz nazar-bandi hai
DiloN ke milne pe pabandi hai
ZubanoN pe taale laga rahe hain
Niyyat in hukamranoN ki gandi hai

kia yeh aik mushkil faisla hai?
kia ab bhi intizaar ki gunjaish hai?

Nahi chahiey mujhe yeh
Sisk'ti hoi lachaar zindagi
Dari hoi, murda, bekaar zindagi

Bohat kos chuke tareekh ko
Bohat pooj chuke iblees ko
Haq ki roshnai jab ragoN mein ho
Farz hai badlna taqdeer ko

Jeena hai tu dil se jeo
Dil ki baat her bol ke jeo
Jin haathoN mein bandoqeiN hain
Mal-e-haraam ki sandooqeiN hain
Un zalim hathoN ku tor ke jeo
Dil ki baat her bol ke jeo

Lahore School of Economics Passes Resolution

The student union at the London School of Economics today passed a resolution condemning the imposition of emergency rule in Pakistan and expressing solidarity with the movement against martial law. The Union also mandated the General Secretary of the Students Council to write a letter to the Pakistani High Commissioner for the UK condemning the Pakistani government's actions, and to also write letters to the students of LUMS and FAST expressing solidarity.

Three Pakistani politicians charged with treason

Pakistan on Thursday charged three politicians and a trade union leader with treason for making speeches against President General Pervez Musharraf's imposition of emergency rule, court officials said.

The four were remanded in custody for two weeks by a court in Karachi, two days after they were arrested for criticising Gen Musharraf in addresses at the city's press club, they said.

Treason -- or sedition, as the activists have been formally charged with, carries a maximum sentence of death.

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The arrested men are Baloch nationalist leader Hasil Bizenjo, his party's provincial chief Ayub Qureshi, the vice-president of the National Workers Party, Yusuf Mustikhan, and trade union leader Liaquat Sahi.

Flash Protests in Karachi

People, especially students and university alumni, are devising ever more innovative ways to express dissent in these testing circumstances. People communicating through e-mail lists, facebook and other networks are holding 'flash protests' to help create the atmosphere of resistance. The idea is to assemble at public places, brandish their placards, shout slogans, distribute pamphlets and scatter before the police arrive. Such events have taken place around Clifton and Defence, with the public's response reportedly overwhelmingly supportive of the protestors. A number of LUMS alumni have been a part of such protests.

From the Eds

We encourage all artistic expression of our revolutionary and unyielding thoughts and feelings. We have a rich tradition of poetry, literature, theatre and music and want to see more of the same. Let us also revisit the works of our historic greats such as Iqbal, Habib Jalib, Faiz and Manto. It is time we found inspiration within ourselves and within our history, and devised novel ways of raising our voices into a war cry to battle all forms of oppression. Any such purposeful work, be it in the form of theatre, music, poetry or art is more than welcome. Contribute pictures videos, audio files and other web links. The artist. The intellectual. The revolutionary. In perfect harmony. This is how our movement must crystallize.

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