



Australian Bar Association

The Australian Bar calls for the return of the rule of law in Pakistan

3 December, 2007

The Australian Bar Association yesterday joined with the leaders of the Bars of England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland in calling for the return of the Rule of Law in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

The President-Elect of the Australian Bar Association, Mr Tom Bathurst QC said "The suspension of the Constitution, the interference with the independence of the judiciary and the legal profession and the denial of fundamental rights strike at the very heart of a fair and just society."

"The dismissal and detention of Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry is of particular concern to the Australian Bar" he said. It is understood that 60% of Pakistan's appellate court is currently under house arrest and thousands of lawyers have been imprisoned, some in solitary confinement. "It is a deplorable situation that cannot be allowed to continue" Mr Bathurst said. He noted that "People are being imprisoned, denied their fundamental rights for doing no more than during their duty to the Constitution, ensuring the maintenance of the rule of law and the securing an independent voice for the people of Pakistan".

The Australian Bar Association called on the Commonwealth Government to use its best endeavours to ensure that diplomatic pressure was maintained on the military regime to respect the rule of law and to honour the promise of an overdue return to democratic rule in Pakistan.

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