

PRESS STATEMENT



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Benazir Bhutto
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BHUTTO WARNS STATE OF EMERGENCY DANGEROUS STEP IN CREATING PAKISTANI DICTATORSHIP

*Leader of the Opposition Urges International Community to
Pressure Sharif Regime to Reinstall the Constitution and Independent Judiciary*

Karachi – The Leader of the Opposition and Chair of the Pakistan Peoples Party today issued a strong condemnation of the Sharif Regime’s imposition of a State of Emergency, stating “this is the next step in the Sharif Regime’s systematic dismantling of Pakistan’s fragile democracy. I am concerned that Sharif and his cronies will use the broad and sweeping powers of this draconian measure to undermine the institutions needed to check his power, and continue his attempts to remove any real political opposition from Pakistan. There is no cause for a State of Emergency at this time. Its purpose can only be political.”

According to press reports, the president declared the state of emergency under constitutional guidelines that call for a state of emergency to be declared when Pakistan's security falls under "threat of external aggression." The presidential decree however, further stated that “no citizen shall have the right to move any court for enforcement of any fundamental right during the period of the emergency.”

The state of emergency, under Article 232 of the constitution, suspends fundamental rights including security of person, safeguards against preventive detention and freedom of movement, of assembly and of association.

Leader of the Opposition Benazir Bhutto warned that “absent any direct territorial incursion by a foreign power, no government has the right to suspend the basic constitutional protections of our fundamental political and human rights, including the right to a free and fair judiciary, assembly, association and safeguards against unlawful detention. These are draconian measures by a regime that seems intent on removing all political opposition in this country. I warn the international community that this is yet another systematic act to create a dictatorship in Pakistan.”

Mohtarma Bhutto further called “upon the international community to bring to bear all due concern and pressure on the Sharif regime to respect the commitment of the Pakistani people to our constitution and our fledgling democratic institutions.”

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