



# Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

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## Advisory Commission Members

29 March 2007

Sam Okudzeto  
*Ghana (Chair)*

## THE COMMONWEALTH HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE – STATEMENT OF CONCERN OVER JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE IN PAKISTAN

Eunice Brookman-  
Amissah  
*Kenya*

The suspension of the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Iftikhar Chaudhry, by the executive and his subsequent treatment are to be deeply regretted. CHRI considers this to be an unacceptable breach of judicial independence. Justice Chaudhry is well known for his strong stance on human rights and for delivering a number of decisions that have been in conflict with government interests. Lawyers throughout the country have boycotted the courts in response to the suspension.

Murray Burt  
*Canada*

Jean Corston  
*UK*

The suspension order is contrary to the Commonwealth's Lattimer House Principles of separation of powers and represents an attack on the independence of the judiciary. As a member of the Commonwealth, Pakistan has committed itself to these principles. The order violates Pakistan's own Constitution, laws and procedures. It demonstrates disrespect for the judiciary and is contrary to the expectations of the people of Pakistan who have a right to expect that due process will be followed by all.

Maja Daruwala  
*India*

Alison Duxbury  
*Australia*

Nihal Jayawickrama  
*Sri Lanka*

CHRI urges the Government of Pakistan to withdraw all actions taken in contravention of the Constitution, law and procedural mandates of the country and ensure that all actions are transparent and in strict accordance with the law.

B. G Verghese  
*India*

Zohra Yusuf  
*Pakistan*

To remove any doubt about the legality and fairness of the procedure created by its actions, it is urged that the Supreme Judicial Council hold all proceedings in an open court and not in camera. The Government of Pakistan must ensure that the Chief Justice is provided with all facilities and freedoms and afforded every respect due to the high constitutional office he represents. CHRI deplores the disproportionate use of force against the peaceful protest of lawyers and the violence meted out to the media. It urges the Pakistan Government to be tolerant of dissenting voices, such as those of lawyers and the media. CHRI hopes that the current judicial crisis in Pakistan will be resolved in accordance with the international principles of independence of the judiciary and Pakistan's own Constitution.

Sam Okudzeto  
Chair Advisory Committee  
On behalf of Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

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