



International Network for Economic, Social & Cultural Rights
Red Internacional para los Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales
Réseau international pour les droits économiques, sociaux et culturels
الشبكة العالمية للحقوق الاقتصادية والاجتماعية و الثقافية

1 June, 2011

TO:

**Mr. Asif Ali Zardari
President of Pakistan**

CC:

**Mr. Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, Prime Minister of Pakistan
Mr. Syed Qaim Ali Shah, Chief Minister: Karachi, Sindh Province
Mr. Syed Mumtaz Alam Gillani, Federal Minister for Human Rights
Mr. Muhammad Ayaz Soomro, Minister for Law, Parliamentary Affairs & Criminal
Prosecution Service
Chief Justice of Sindh High Court**

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**RE: Requesting action against the murder of two fisherfolk activists and the threats
and acts of violence directed against human rights defenders**

ESCR-Net is the largest global network of organizations and activists devoted to achieving economic, social and environmental justice through human rights, consisting of 217 organizations and individuals from 66 countries. We write to express our serious concern regarding the acts of violence and continued threats against leaders of ESCR-Net member Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) who have been legitimately exercising their right to expression and dissent. It is our understanding that requests for protection have been largely ignored or in certain instances actively repressed. We strongly condemn the attacks and ongoing harassment against the fisherfolk leaders, including the murder of two PFF leaders on May 5, as well as the obstruction of their access to justice in past months. We urge the Pakistani authorities to take all necessary measures to refrain from all acts of aggression against human rights defenders, immediately provide the protection required and to prosecute those guilty of the recent attacks.

According to our sources, members of the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum that have mobilized to resist the clearing of mangroves along the coastal towns in the administrative limits of Keamari and Bin Qasim are facing ongoing threats and acts of violence in response to their defense of the human rights of affected villagers. Nearby communities have reportedly experienced increased food insecurity resulting from the loss of some 500,000 hectares of mangrove forests (from both natural and man-made causes) that serve as breeding grounds for fish, mating grounds for migratory birds and safeguards against damages from the tides. The environmental effects of the loss of mangroves have according to reports resulted in increased hardship in these fisherfolk villages. The acquisition of lands by private interests that stand to benefit from the clearing of the

mangroves for commercial development purposes has further aggravated this dire situation. In response, PFF has engaged in writing letters to concerned authorities, coordinating with the Asian Human Rights Commission and petitioning the Supreme Court of Pakistan, as well as convening a number of demonstrations, marches and hunger strikes.

Allegedly in response to actions taken to protect the mangroves, a group of about forty people attacked the fishing village of Kaka Pir, in Maripur, Kemari town, Karachi on the evening of January 16, 2011. The attackers reportedly fired automatic weapons at the homes of residents, resulting in multiple injuries. Several of the villagers were able to identify the perpetrators and attempted to file a report with the police. It was reported that the Station House Officer refused to register the report, insulted PFF leaders and ordered them to be thrown out of the station. A number of allegedly false criminal charges have also since been filed against fisherfolk leaders.

Less than a month later, on February 8, several members of the Sindh Assembly reportedly expressed assurances that 1) the above-mentioned Station House Officer would be promptly suspended, 2) action would be taken against the main instigators of the land grabbing and those who filed false charges against PFF leaders, and 3) further attempts at land grabbing would be swiftly addressed. A committee to investigate and report on the situation was also apparently formed. Yet, since that time, continued threats and harassment against PFF members has prompted the organization to write to the authorities and remind them of their promises and to seek protection for the villagers of Kaka Pir. Fisherfolk activists also filed charges against several government officials, police officers. Following this, on April 2011 the High Court of Karachi issued a stay on the cutting of mangroves. Notwithstanding, land grabbing and threats and attacks against fisherfolk leaders have reportedly continued.

Reportedly, the PFF office in Kaka Pir village was attacked on May 5 by armed persons, resulting in the murder of two PFF leaders: Mr. Haji Abu Bakar, President of Pakistan Fisher Folk Forum Kaka Pir village unit and Mr. Abdul Ganai Mirbahar, General Secretary of Pakistan Fisher Folk Forum Karachi Division. It is alleged that the Pakistani authorities have failed to launch a proper investigation or bring charges against the perpetrators. This has led to a sit-in held on May 19 by some five thousand people in Karachi to demand the arrest of the murderers. It is reported that several thousand fisherfolk were reportedly blocked at several points of entry into the city by the police, who allegedly fired on protesters at the ICI Bridge in Karachi, resulting in the injury of six fishermen and four women.

We strongly condemn the threats and attacks against these human rights defenders and urge all competent federal, state and municipal authorities in Pakistan to:

- Refrain from all future violent actions committed against fisherfolk, and bring all government officials to account for any involvement in such violence;
- Provide protection for fisherfolk being threatened and investigate the crimes committed, particularly the murders of May 5, in order to identify those responsible within the context of an independent and impartial criminal trial;
- Undertake all necessary measures to ensure fisherfolk's human rights to food, water and a healthy environment are protected from abuses by third-parties and take effective steps to prevent future threats and violence against the legitimate activities of human rights defenders;
- Apply the articles set out in the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 9th, 1998, especially in relation to the obligation of the state to guarantee *“the protection...of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure*

or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration” (Art. 12.2);

- Guarantee the respect for human rights and fundamental liberties throughout the country, in accordance with the international human rights norms signed and ratified by Pakistan.

We urge the authorities to take all necessary measures to fulfill the Pakistani government’s fundamental obligation to protect citizens against such egregious human rights abuses. Finally, we ask to be kept us informed about any measures taken.

Sincerely,



Julieta Rossi

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Members: International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights *(Updated May, 2011)*

Organization	Acronym	Country
Action Contre Impunitie Pour Les Droits Humains	ACIDH	DR of Congo
Action for Social Rights - formerly Youth Movement for Peace and People's Rights	AfSoR	Sierra Leone
Actionaid International		South Africa
African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies	ACDHRS	The Gambia
Afro-Colombian National Movement CIMARRON	CIMARRON	Colombia
Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights		Palestine
Aliança para Promoção do Desenvilmento da Comunidade de Hoji Ya Henda	APDCH	Angola
Alliance for Holistic and Sustainable Development of Communities	AHSDC	India
Amnesty International	AI	United Kingdom
Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development	APWLD	Thailand
Asian Foundation for Human Rights and Development	FORUM-ASIA	Thailand
Asian Human Rights Commission	AHRC	China
Asian Institute for Human Rights	AIHR	Thailand
Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia	ACIJ	Argentina
Asociación Comité de Familiares de Víctimas de Violaciones a los Derechos Humanos “Marianella Garcia Villas”	CODEFAM	El Salvador
Asociación Q’ukumatz		Guatemala
Association Africaine de Défense des Droits de l’Homme, représentation du Katanga	ASADHO/Katanga	Democratic Republic Congo
Association for Women's Rights in Development	AWID	Canada
Association Nigerienne de Défense des Droits de l’Homme	ANDDH	Niger
Association of Environmental Lawyers of Liberia	Green Advocates	Liberia
BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights	BAOBAB	Nigeria

Bretton Woods Project	BWP	United Kingdom
Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation	BGRF	Bulgaria
Bulgarian Helsinki Committee	BHC	Bulgaria
Butere Focused Women in Development	BUFOWODE	Kenya
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network		Canada
Center for Constitutional Rights	CCR	United States of America
Center for Economic and Social Rights		Spain
Center for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Promotion	ESCR-PRO	Thailand
Center for Human Rights and Environment	CEDHA	Argentina
Center for Reproductive Rights	CRR	United States
Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)	CWGL	United States
Center of Concern	COC	United States
Center on Housing Rights and Evictions	COHRE	Switzerland
Centre d'Information Juridique/Femme Justice Aide	CIJG/FJA	R of Guinee
Centre for Applied Legal Studies	CALS	South Africa
Centre for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Hakijamii)	Hakijamii	Kenya
Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation	CERA	Canada
Centre for Minority Rights Development	CEMIRIDE	Kenya
Centro de Apoyo Comunitario Trabajando Unidos	CACTUS	Mexico
Centro de Asesoría Laboral del Perú	CEDAL	Peru
Centro de Derechos Económicos y Sociales	CDES	Ecuador
Centro de Estudios de Derecho, Justicia y Sociedad (Dejusticia)	Dejusticia	Colombia
Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales	CELS	Argentina
Charter Committee on Poverty Issues	CCPI	Canada
Child Rights Information network	CRIN	United Kingdom
Collectif des Femmes du Mali	Le COFEM	Mali
Colombian Commission of Jurists	CCJ	Colombia
Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos, A.C.	CMDPDH	Mexico
Comité de Emergencia de Garífuna de Honduras		Honduras
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative Organization	CHRI	India
Community Law Centre (University of the Western Cape, South Africa)		South Africa
Conectas Direitos Humanos		Brazil
Confederación Campesina Del Peru	CCP	Peru
Corporate Accountability International		United States
Desarrollo, Educación Y Cultura Autogestionarios Equipo Pueblo A.C.	DECA Equipo Pueb A.C.	Mexico
Dignity International		France
EarthRights International	ERI	United States
Eastern Africa Coalition for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	EACOR	Kenya
Education and Research Association for Consumers Malaysia	ERA Consumers	Malaysia
Egyptian Center for Housing Rights	ECHR	Egypt
Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)	EIPR	Egypt
El Proyecto de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales	ProDESC	México
EnGendeRights		Philippines
Equalinrights		Netherlands

ESCR-Asia		Philippines
Estudio Para La Defensa De Los Derechos De La Mujer	DEMUS	Peru
European Anti Poverty Network	EAPN	Belgium
European Roma Rights Centre	ERRC	Hungary
FEDERAÇÃO DOS ORGÃOS DE ASSISTENCIA SOCIAL E EDUCACIONAL	FASE	Brazil
Fédération internationale des droits de l'Homme	FIDH	France
Federation of Women Lawyers	FIDA-Kenya	Kenya
Femmes Cote d'Ivoire Experience	FCIEX	Cote d'Ivoire
Food First Information and Action Network Organization	FIAN	Germany
Foro Ciudadano de Participación por la Justicia y los Derechos Humanos (FOCO)	FOCO	Argentina
Foundation For Human Rights And Democracy	FOHRD	Liberia
Frente Autentico del Trabajo	FAT	Mexico
Front Line - The International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders		Ireland
Fundación Emmanuel Internacional	FEI	Dominican Republic
Global Action on Aging		United States
Global Basic Income Foundation	GBI	Netherlands
Habi Center for Environmental Rights		Egypt
Habitat Int. Coalition-Housing & Land Rts. Network	HIC-HLRN	Egypt
Harvard Project on Disability	HPOD	United States
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights		United States
Human and Environmental Development Agenda	HEDA	Nigeria
Human Rights Centre at the School of Law, Queens University Belfast		United Kingdom
Human Rights Law Resource Centre	HRLRC	Australia
Human Rights Tech		United States
Indonesian Legal Aid Society Association	Perkumpulan MBH	Indonesia
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)	IATP	Switzerland
Institute for Democracy in South Africa	IDASA	South Africa
Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti	IJDH	United States
Instituto de Estudios Legales y Sociales del Uruguay	IELSUR	Uruguay
INSTITUTO DE ESTUDOS, FORMAÇÃO E ASSESSORIA EM POLÍTICAS SOCIAIS	PÓLIS	Brazil
Instituto de Formacion Feminina Integral	IFFI	Bolivia
Instituto Latinoamericano De Servicio Legales Alternativos	ILSA	Colombia
Interchurch Organisation for Development	ICCO	Netherlands
International Centre for Reproductive Health and Sexual Rights	INCRESE	Nigeria
International Centre for the Legal Protection of Human Rights	INTERIGHTS	United Kingdom
International Commission of Jurists	ICJ	Switzerland
International Human Rights Internship Program		United States
International Women and Mining Network	RIMM	India
International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific	IWRAW Asia Pacific	Malaysia
Justiça Global	JG	Brazil
Justice, Development & Peace/ Caritas Commission		Nigeria
Karimojong Community Child Welfare Initiatives	KACOCI	Uganda
KEBETKACHE WOMEN DEVELOPMENT & RESOURCE CENTRE		Nigeria
Kensington Welfare Rights Union	KWRU	United States
Kenya Land Alliance	KLA	Kenya

Kituo Cha Sheria (Center for Legal Empowerment)		Kenya
Labour, Health and Human Rights Development Center	LHAHRDEV	Nigeria
Land Center for Human Rights	LCHR	Egypt
Lawyers for a Democratic Society	MINBYUN	Republic of Korea
Legal Resources Centre	LRC	South Africa
Legal Resources Centre Organization	LRC	Ghana
Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal	MASUM	India
Maison des Droits de l'Homme du Cameroun	MDHC	Cameroon
Masimanyane Women's Support Center		South Africa
Mazingira Institute		Kenya
Media Mobilizing Project	MMP	United States
mines,minerals & PEOPLE	mm&P	India
Minority Rights Group International	MRGI	Uganda
Mouvement pour le Progres de Roche Bois	MPRB	Mauritius
Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People	MOSOP	Nigeria
Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens	MAB	Brazil
Multi-Initiative on Rights: Search, Assist, Defend	MIRSAD	Lebanon
Nairobi Peoples Settlements Network	NPSN	Kenya
National Economic and Social Rights Initiative	NESRI	United States
National Union of Domestic Employees	NUDE	Trinidad and Tobago
Network Movement for Justice and Development	NMJD	Sierra Leone
Observatoire Congolais des Droits de l'Homme (OCDH),		Congo-Brazzaville
Observatorio de Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas	OBDPI	Chile
Observatorio de Política Social y Derechos Humanos de INCIDE Social, A.C		Mex
Office of Human Rights Studies, Mahidol University	OHRSD	Thailand
Ogiek Peoples Development Program	OPDP	Kenya
Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum	PPF	Pakistan
People Against Injustice	PAIN	The Gambia
People's Health Movement	PHM	Egypt
People's Movement for Human Rights Learning	PDHRE	United States
Poverty Initiative		United States
The Program on Human Rights and the Global Economy	PHRGE	United States
Programa de Justicia Global y Derechos Humanos		Colombia
Programa DESC, Universidad Diego Portales		Chile
Programa Venezolano de Educacion Accion en Derechos Humanos	PROVEA	Venezuela
Programme on Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	PWESCR	India
The Project on Organizing, Development, Education and Research	PODER	Mexico
Rencontre Pour LA Paix Et Les Droits De L'Homme	RPDH	Congo-Brazzaville
Rights and Accountability in Development	RAID	United Kingdom
Samata		India
Shelter Forum	SF	Kenya
Social and Economic Rights Action Center	SERAC	Nigeria
Social and Economic Rights Action Center - Indonesia	SiDAN	Indonesia
Social Rights Advocacy Centre	SRAC	Canada
Socio Economic Rights Initiative (formerly Shelter Rights Initiative)	SERI	Nigeria

Socio Legal Information Centre	HRLN	India
Socio-Economic Rights Foundation	SRF	Kenya
Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa	SERI	South Africa
Sœurs Unies à l'œuvre	SUO	Benin
South Africa Human Rights Non-Governmental Organization Network, Tanzania Chapter	SAHRINGON-TZ	Tanzania
Southeast Asian Council for Food Security and Fair Trade	SEACON	Malaysia
Stakeholder Democracy Network	SDN	Nigeria
Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF)	SDF	Thailand
Tebtebba Foundation (Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education)	TEBTEBBA	Philippines
TERRA DE DIREITOS		Brazil
Thailand Burma Border Consortium	TBBC	Thailand
The Democracy and Workers' Rights Center in Palestine	DWRC	Palestine
The Democracy Center		Bolivia
The Jus Semper Global Alliance	TJSGA	United States
The Kenya Human Rights Commission	KHRC	Kenya
Tierraviva a los Pueblos Indígenas del Chaco		Paraguay
Tribunal de Mujeres y Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales		Colombia
Uganda Environmental Education Foundation	UEEF	Uganda
Waso Trustland Project, Kenya		Kenya
Western Shoshone Defense Project	WSDP	United States
WITNESS		United States
Women in Law and Development in Africa	WiLDAF	Ghana
Women's Economic Agenda Project	WEAP	United States
World Organization Against Torture	OMCT	Switzerland
Yiaku Peoples Association		Kenya
Zi Teng		Hong Kong
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