

## **Letter to the President, PM, CJ and Coas**

Dear Mr. President,

We the citizens of Pakistan are angry and dismayed at the abject capitulation of the state of Pakistan before the Taliban insurgents in Swat. With one stroke of the pen, you and the Parliament have signed away any real prospects of a stable, tolerant and progressive Pakistan as envisioned by its founder, Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

Leaving aside the merits or demerits of the so-called Nizam a Adal Regulation, we believe that any agreement signed at the point of a gun and under threats from violent extremists can never lead to a lasting and just peace. It has now become clear how naïve the government has been in thinking that the Taliban could be contained in Swat.

Since you signed the Regulation, the Taliban have stated that that they don't intend to lay down their arms, have called into question the legitimacy of the Parliament and Supreme Court, and declared the intent to impose their own brand of violent and brutal Sharia law not only in the rest of Pakistan but across the world! This is proof positive that the real aim of the Taliban is to seize power through brutal force and intimidation.

We reject the argument that the Pakistan army did not fight a counter insurgency because it did not want to kill its own people.

The army and security agencies of the country did not display any such qualms and reservations when they, under orders of the governments' of the day, shot and killed hundreds of Pakistani's –who were deemed a threat to the state - in east Pakistan during 1971, the MRD protestors in Sindh in 1984, and Baloch insurgents over the last 40 years. One is forced to ask the question, are the lives of some Pakistani's more precious than others in the eyes of the establishment of Pakistan?

We realise that the dark clouds of obscurantism hanging over our country are the direct result of a 'Jehadi' mindset within the civil and military establishment, which has for decades fostered and pandered to religious zealots and regressive forces in the country.

None of the above, however, absolves you and the government from mobilising the state machinery and the people of Pakistan against the existential threat facing us; the 'buck stops with you, Mr. President!'

It is incumbent upon you to compel the Pakistan Army to come to the aid of a constitutionally elected government and enforce the writ of the state in Swat and other troubled regions of Pakistan.

You must urge the Supreme Court of Pakistan to exercise the full extent of its authority to safeguard fundamental rights of all citizens including those of Swat.

The failure of the government to evolve a counter-narrative to the Taliban propaganda is dereliction of the highest order. The government must immediately

devise and implement a strategy for countering the insidious propaganda by and in support of the Taliban, which fills newspaper columns and airwaves.

Peace, Mr. President, cannot come by ceding territorial control to armed insurgents or by agreeing to their illegitimate demands, as has been done in Swat. Countries that have faced violent insurgencies in the past - Colombia, Egypt, Algeria - did not succeed in their wars by negotiating from a position of weakness, or by burying their heads in the sand. These countries employed all means, including the use of force, to fight those who sought to seize power and territory through violent means.

Mr. President, we too must fight the Taliban, who have chosen to fight against the state and who routinely terrorize and kill innocent Pakistanis. It is incumbent upon you to mobilize the nation against the scourge of the Taliban before it is too late.

History and the people of this country will never forgive you if you fail to show leadership now.

Signed,

Name:

Address:

City:

Country:

Cc: Prime Minister, Pakistan  
Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Pakistan  
Chief of Army Staff, Pakistan Army  
Chief Minister of Punjab, Shahbaz Sharif