



women's action forum

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PRESS RELEASE

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Women's Action Forum witnessed the strong arm of a police state this morning. WAF strongly condemns the brutal attack on the lawyers attempting to take out a peaceful rally to protest the government's attack on the highest level of the judiciary.

This rally was stopped by thousands of heavily armed police. The police chained the gates of the High Court, barricading the lawyers in the compound. Rows upon rows of barbed wire on the Mall and on all adjoining roads reminded one of a field of battle. Well armed and in large numbers, the police continuously lobbed tear gas into the premises of the High Court and ripping up the sidewalks, the police resorted to brick batting.

WAF believes that every citizen has a right to protest or otherwise make their positions known. The State has no right to strangle the voices of the people.

WAF demands that the government step down immediately and hand over to a civilian caretaker government for early elections. WAF also demands that an independent, transparent election commission conduct these polls. The army and the intelligence agencies must not be allowed to play a role in this process.

WAF calls upon all progressive forces to unite at this defining moment. Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif must return. Staying away at this point is a betrayal to those who support them. Staying away now is a betrayal of Pakistan.

WAF salutes the lawyers for taking a strong stand on judicial independence and for continuing their struggle. WAF is determined to be with them in this struggle.