



DEFENSA DE NIÑAS Y NIÑOS INTERNACIONAL DNI
DEFENSE DES ENFANTS INTERNATIONALE DEI
DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL DCI

7th November 2007

DCI calls for the release of political prisoner, Ms Asma Jahangir, former member of DCI's International Executive Council

It is with deepest concern that Defence for Children International (DCI) has learned of the house arrest of Ms Asma Jahangir, human rights defender and former member of DCI's International Executive Council.

Reports indicate that Ms Asma Jahangir, has been put under house arrest for 90 days, as from the 3rd of November 2007. Like many other progressive lawyers and judges in Pakistan, Ms Jahangir has been issued with detention order *SO (IS-I)3 - 34 /2007*, on the grounds that "she will deliver inflammatory speeches"¹. According to the BBC (5th November 2007), sources from the police and interior ministry have said that some 1,500 people had been arrested in the past 48 hours, with many top judges being effectively detained.

Ms Jahangir is a leading human rights lawyer in Pakistan, and is recognised as such by many international actors and organisations. In 1998, the United Nations nominated her as Special Rapporteur on extra judicial executions and in 2004 as Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief. She is a Patron and Laureate of the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders. She won the Award in 1995, in recognition of her courageous and innovative human rights work and the international voice that she has given to Pakistan's human rights and pro-democracy movement.

Ms Jahangir was also an active and committed member of DCI's International Executive Council between 1992 and 1995, representing DCI's national section in Pakistan.

DCI would like to extend its thoughts and support to Ms Jahangir's family and friends, and strongly calls for the immediate lifting of her house arrest.

¹ MARTIN ENNALS AWARD FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS, PRESS RELEASE, GENEVA, 6 NOVEMBER 2007