



PRESS RELEASE

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Pakistan: Laws against media freedom to be repealed

ARTICLE 19 welcomes Information Minister Sherry Rehman's pledge to repeal laws stifling media freedom in Pakistan created under the PEMRA Ordinance amendments in 2007.

"We are pleased to hear that the new Pakistan government understands the need for a free media and the contribution it makes to a successful and sustainable democracy." said Dr. Agnes Callamard.

Speaking at a media conference, Rehman announced that the new Pakistan government was taking unprecedented steps to involve journalists, human rights groups, and civil society activists in the process of changing laws to aid freedom of expression and restructuring the Ministry of Information.

Under the previous government led by President General Pervez Musharraf, journalists, such as Hayatullah Khan, Munir Sangi and Javed Khan, were often kidnapped and tortured by the authorities, particularly in the tribal belt.

The government's first test on toleration of free speech will begin on June 10 when Pakistani lawyers start further street protests for the reinstatement of sacked judges.

"We call on the new Pakistani government to continue to repeal regressive laws and enact legislation that will guarantee freedom of expression in Pakistan as guaranteed by international and human rights standards." added Dr. Agnes Callamard.

NOTES TO EDITORS

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- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees freedom of expression.