



Pakistan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 26 July 2010

Treatment of PML-N

Reviewing events of 2009, a report published by *Freedom House* in April 2010 states:

“In early 2009, the government banned public demonstrations in the capital for two months in an attempt to prevent marches in favor of the ousted chief justice. On March 10, police in Punjab arrested more than 300 members of the PML-N and other opposition parties to prevent them from joining such a demonstration; however, the protest ban was lifted in late March when the judicial dispute was resolved” (Freedom House (April 2010) *Freedom in the World - Pakistan (2010)*).

The *United States Department of State* also commenting on events of 2009, note in a report released in March 2010 that:

“Between March 10 and 12, security forces arrested approximately 400 members of the PML-N to prevent protesters from participating in a march and sit-in in support of the restoration to office of Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, the Supreme Court chief justice, who was fired by then president and chief of army staff Musharraf in 2007. On the evening of March 14 and the morning of March 15, authorities restricted the movement of Nawaz Sharif, Aitzaz Ahsan, and several other political leaders, ostensibly for their own protection, but did not enforce the restrictions when the political leaders chose to ignore them on the afternoon of March 15. According to HRW, the Punjab and Sindh provincial governments imposed Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, banning gatherings of four or more persons. Human rights organizations, including HRW, strongly criticized the arrests and restrictions on gatherings. Authorities released the detained PML-N workers after the prime minister announced on the evening of March 15 an end to Section 144 throughout the country and the release of all political prisoners” (United States Department of State (11 March 2010) *2009 Human Rights Report: Pakistan*, Section 1d ‘Arbitrary Arrest or Detention’).

In March 2010 the *Human Rights Commission of Pakistan* published a report on events of the preceding year and commenting on the relationship between the PML-N and the PPP states:

“However relations between the two parties remained cold at best with the PML-N accusing the PPP of going back on its promise to repeal the Seventeenth amendment. Towards the end of the year the gulf between them further widened as a result of the Supreme Court's decision on the controversial amnesty law, the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO), which revived the corruption and criminal charges earlier dropped against several thousand people. The politicians that had benefited included many

PPP leaders, including President Asif Ali Zardari. The PPP dubbed the PML-N leaders' demand for resignation by its ministers as an attempt to destabilise the government. As the year ended, the two sides remained suspicious of each other's intentions. President Zardari publicly said that the PML-N's decision to leave the coalition government at the centre weakened the federal government and that some unseen forces were out to expel him from the Presidency" (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (22 March 2010) *State of Human Rights in 2009*, Political Participation, Failure of coalition politics).

References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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