



EROME J. SHESTACK  
President

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

750 North Lake Shore Drive  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
(312) 988-5109  
FAX: (312) 988-5100  
Internet: abapresident@abanet.org

July 31, 1998

Minister of Justice  
c/o His Excellency Riaz Khokhar  
Ambassador  
Embassy of Pakistan  
2315 Massachusetts Ave.  
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Honorable Minister:

The American Bar Association, consisting of 390,000 members, has long been committed to the obligations of the legal profession to provide counsel to all persons who are charged with serious crime.

That obligation is reinforced by numerous instruments of international law and is so weighty as to have become a principle of international customary law.

We have received credible reports that Ayub Masih imprisoned in Sahiwal jail, convicted of "blasphemy," has encountered difficulty in obtaining lawyers to defend him and that lawyers engaged in such defense have met with threats of death and other dangers.

Similar situations have been encountered from time to time in other nations. In such cases, officials have often taken steps to provide defense lawyers and ensure their protection. Protection includes effectively dealing with those threatening their lives.

May I respectfully suggest that your office undertake to provide a group of defense lawyers among the senior members of the bar to represent defendants in such situations under the protection of your office.

Such a measure would reflect a courageous and sincere commitment to the rule of law and would certainly be applauded throughout the world as a demonstration of that commitment.

I look forward to your reply.

With expression of esteem.

Sincerely,

Jerome J. Shestack

cc: The Honorable Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State  
The Honorable John Shattuck, Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Department of State

**Pakistan cc List**

1. The Honorable Madeleine Albright, Secretary of Department of State
2. The Honorable John Shattuck, Assistant Secretary Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Department of State
3. The Honorable Minister of Justice, c/o His Excellency Riaz Khokhar, Ambassador, Embassy of Pakistan
4. Mr. Eric Schwartz, NSC Special Assistant to President & Senior Director, Democracy, Human Rights & Humanitarian Affairs
6. The Honorable Sam Brownback, Chairman, Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate
7. The Honorable Charles S. Robb, Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate
8. The Honorable Christopher H. Smith, Chairman, Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, Committee on International Relations, U.S. House
9. The Honorable Tom Lantos, Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, Committee on International Relations, U.S. House
10. T. Kumar, Amnesty International
11. Mehlika Hoodbhoy, Human Rights Watch
12. Patty Gossman, Lawyers Committee
13. Gary A. Hengstler, Editor of ABA Journal
14. Virginia Russell, Director of International Liaison Office
15. Fletcher Hall, International Law & Practice
16. Penny Wakefield, Director of Individual Rights & Responsibilities
17. Pat Hanrahan, Director of World Order Under Law
18. Holly McMahan, Law and National Security
19. Muriel Morisey, Chair of Individual Rights & Responsibilities Section
20. Jay M. Vogelsson, Chair of Standing Committee World Order Under Law
21. Tim Dickinson, Chair of International Law & Practice Section
22. Paul Schott Stevens, Chair of Law & National Security
23. Edward Fendley, Desk Officer of Pakistan, State Department
24. Rhonda McMillion, Information Services-Washington Letter
25. Maureen Collins, Assistant Director Media Relations
26. Gail Alexander, Director of Media Relations
27. Marina Jacks, Associate Executive Director, Policy Administration
28. Patsy Englehard, Director of the Office of the President