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About PATTAN-Coalition38

PATTAN is one of the leading civil society organisations of Pakistan and has been working to empower marginalised classes to make state and govt bodies accountable for improving governance of elections, disasters and rights. Currently, PATTAN is the secretariat of Coalition38 - a largest network of CSOs, labour unions, CBOs, and intellectuals.

Coalition38 aims to influence the state institutions for the implementation of Articles 3; 29; 37, and 38 of Pakistan's Constitution in letter and spirit through research, awareness raising, social mobilization, networking of civil society including marginalised people and women.

PRESS RELEASE

Civil society strongly condemns the killing of peaceful protesters and demands an impartial and transparent investigation of lethal crackdowns on journalists and political workers.

Islamabad 30 November 2024: PATTAN – Coalition 38 strongly demands an independent, impartial and transparent investigation into the killing of dozens of peaceful political workers by the law enforcing agencies and making them accountable under a neutral government as the ruling authorities and its security agencies have become acutely partisan. We demand the incumbent government's resignation and the sacking of those responsible in the security agencies for taking such extreme actions.

We fully support the demand of human rights bodies of the United Nations and the international community for independent and transparent investigations and accountability for the lethal crackdown on peaceful political rallies.

In our considered opinion this escalating political instability and emerging anarchy in Pakistan is a result of massive rigging that was engineered by the non-political establishment and the incumbent government as well as the Election Commission. We believe that fresh general elections must be held under a neutral and independent election commission as this is the only way forward to bring about political normalcy in the country. We also demand that the current Election Commission should be removed and tried for rigging the 8th February General Elections.

Pattan Coalition-38 expresses its deep concerns and condemns the use of violent and even lethal force by the state authorities to suppress and disperse the political rally in Islamabad which reportedly killed and injured a significant number of peaceful demonstrators. It is unacceptable that even a single protestor loses its life in a peaceful demonstration, which is a fundamental citizen right.

Independent media reporters and eyewitness accounts vouched that the protestors were peacefully demanding the release of their detained party leaders and workers, denouncing recent constitutional amendments and rectifying electoral irregularities. The use of brutal force – including lethal force – by the authorities severely breached the right to life and freedom of peaceful assembly and was thus unlawful and unjustified. In addition, the authorities curbed freedom of press and free-speech with increased restrictions on broadcasting, print, social media, internet and communication channels including illegal arrests and abduction of journalists to control the free flow of news and information to the public.

This ruling authority's unending campaign to crush peaceful protests has further shrink space for democratic dissent that only signifies growing fascism in the country which has been condemned by international rights bodies as well as civil society in the country. The authorities have failed to learn the lesson that people's fundamental rights to peaceful assembly as well as to associate and participate in political parties, trade unions and civil society are indispensable to build and strengthen the democratic foundation of the state. Uprooting parties, systematically crushing political opponents and suffocating freedom of assembly and expression will eventually obscure progress and lead the state and society into the abyss.

PATTAN Coalition-38, a network of more than 250 associations, CBOs, labour unions and human rights activists, reminds the authorities that it has completely failed in its constitutional obligations to eliminate all forms of exploitation including political repressions. The right to assemble and engage in peaceful protest is a fundamental human right integral to any democracy. The state has also given such commitments to the international communities which have been increasingly criticising the ruling authorities for sabotaging and derailing the democratic process in the country. Pattan Coalition-38 strongly supports the demand of the international observers for a prompt, thorough, impartial, effective and transparent investigation into the deaths and injuries of protesters as well as the unlawful use of by security personnel and hold the evaders of justice culpable. We urge provincial and national governments to immediately release political detainees and ameliorate the victims and their families' suffering. We believe political instability cannot be prevented from further deterioration without returning brazenly stolen people's electoral mandate to its rightful representatives through new elections.