

## President Musharraf's address to nation

"My dear Pakistani brothers and sisters,

Today I am addressing you at a time when Pakistan is facing an important situation. The Jamia Hafsa operation came to its end. The Lal Mosque, Jamia Hafsa and the forced occupation of Children Library has been freed from the control of terrorists.

I appreciated all law enforcement agencies including police, Rangers and armed forces for proving their professional excellence during operation, and pay tribute in particular to Special Services Group (SSG) and Anti-Terrorists Force.

The nation and I feel proud of them who sacrificed their lives for the country, and [of them] 10 were martyred while 33 others injured.

I pray Allah Almighty for bestowing all Shaheeds a place in Jannat and also pray for the soon recovery of injured people. The tragic incident also claimed the lives of some innocent citizens. I also pray for their families to bear this loss with equanimity.

I am greatly thankful to Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain particularly and the ministers for interior, information and broadcasting, religious affairs and women development, Maulana Abdus Sattar Edhi and his wife Bilquis Edhi, all religious scholars and Wafaqul Madaris who tried their level best to convince terrorists for laying down weapons so as to resolve the matter peacefully.

I am also thankful to the residents of Sector G-6 who suffered hardships due to curfew. I realize the trouble they faced and apologize for this. But I must say that the step was inevitable due to security reasons.

My brothers and sisters,

Today, despite the success, it is not the moment to celebrate. This is a day to mourn and to ponder over the situation and re-evaluate the deeds which led to such circumstances.

The grief is because we did not conquer against any enemy; rather it was an action against our own people who had strayed from the righteous path and followed terrorism and extremism.

It is the time to think what we, as Pakistanis, want to do with ourselves, with our country and the religion.

Islamic beliefs and values preach to honour humanity. Life is a precious gift of Allah, and He is the only one who bestows and takes back life.

In Islam, the killing of one human being is equivalent to the massacre of entire humanity. So what kind of Islam the Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa were propagating?

The Lal Masjid administration was using minor children as shield and was deceiving them in the garb of teaching Islamic education.

The administration transformed Madressah into a warfare fortress and also provided shelter to terrorists. There used to be present more than five thousand men and women at a time.

They had formed Lal Masjid's baton-wielding women brigade. The men were armed with weapons. They forcefully occupied Children Library, and destroyed the nearby shops, held policemen hostage and snatched their weapons. They damaged official buildings, set them on

fire, and even kept on looking the national flag burning at the buildings. They did not let fire brigade perform its duties and killed a soldier of Rangers.

The worst example is that seven nationals of our friendly country China were abducted. This shameful incident happened to the people who belonged to our best friend, who always supported us, stood by us in troubled times and also helped us in economic, trades and defence fields. To hold hostage Chinese nationals was very shameful act. The Chinese President called me on telephone and asked to ensure security of its citizens. So, in my mind this is extremely shameful for our country and citizens. They have security all over the world and if their citizens are not secure in a country, for which they did a lot and still doing, is so regrettable for us. Overall, the terrorists challenged the government's writ as a whole.

My dear brothers and sisters,

Due to these incidents, the government and I came under-pressure from all Pakistanis to take action. Even we were being alleged that the government was involved with the extremists and is deceiving the world, country and the people, and playing tricks and political games with them.

The reality is that if we were to kill them, we would have on the first day and the government is strong by the grace of Allah to take action the first day. But this could have led to a loss of hundreds and thousands lives, so we did not want to do this.

The wisdom was not to use force. The question was not of killing the people but to save them, especially the women and children. So the government's policy despite allegations and pressure based on resolving the issue through negotiations and release women and children.

The policy proved beneficial which we followed for last six months. I feel proud to say that 2000 persons including men, women and children could come out (of Madressah) and after July 3, 1300 children were freed.

This was a success due to our policy, and 3300 persons were freed due to our patience and tolerance.

Till the last day and last minute, we continued efforts to lay down weapons. Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, Maulana Abdul Sattar Edhi, all ministers and religious scholars made efforts for about ten hours and late night so that these extremists follow wisdom and lay down weapons so that they do not suffer loss.

My brothers and sisters,

I want to tell you that why we started the operation belatedly. Operation should have been started after midnight, but we continued to delay it, gave chances to resolve the issue through dialogue. When the operation commenced at 3.45 in the morning, the security forces took risk because they required darkness of night so as to avoid the loss of lives. Despite this, the security forces took risk and the operation started in day light, which caused loss of lives. After the operation started, it was carried out in a way that the action should not be done in an aggressive manner and the forces had been told to make full efforts to save the lives of maximum number of women and children.

My brothers and sisters,

Now you have the results of the operation before you. Ten army men were martyred, while 33 were injured and almost all of them are commandos of Anti-Terrorist Force. That is why I salute them and alongwith them some 75 extremists were killed. I am sad on this because no one feels happy over the death or killing of a human being. And nor do I feel happy on this. But I and the government of Pakistan tried best and made every effort to find a solution to this tragedy. We arranged their contact and parleys with Council of Islamic Ideology and

Wafaqul Madaris, even invited Imam-e-Kaaba, so that he could convince them, but in vain. Therefore I feel very sad for the loss of human lives, but it had become inevitable for Pakistan.

Why this process of talks failed? A lot is being said on this; all types of televised discussions are also going on air. I do not want to go into detail. But I want to tell that this process failed because the first demand of Rasheed Ghazi was to provide him a safe passage, which meant that there should be no trial of him, and the second was that he and his companions get general amnesty.

And (they demanded) this general amnesty should be from the time when the Children's Library was occupied six months ago and whatever happened afterwards - our people were killed and martyred. First a soldier from Rangers was martyred, then Col. Haroon was martyred, government buildings were set on fire, people were kidnapped, police personnel were made hostages, weapons were snatched - (The demanded ) all this should be pardoned. And later they demanded that safe passage should also be given to the foreigners. How could the government accede to all these demands. How could the government take this dictation. Therefore the negotiations failed and the operation started.

My brothers and sisters,

Now the question is what has to be done in future. By this action I want to tell clearly that extremism and terrorism have not been eliminated from Pakistan. But this should be clear that we are firmly committed to eradicate terrorism and extremism from the country. We have to eradicate terrorism and extremism from every province and from every nook and corner. And I have firm belief that through our resolve, we will wipe out terrorism and extremism from every part of Pakistan. We also know that the extremists who were in Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa had contacts with people in some areas of NWFP and FATA. Therefore the federal government will fully support, help and coordinate with the provincial government to tackle this. And to provide this help, new recruitment will be made in all law enforcing agencies, NWFP police, Khasadars, Levies, Frontier Corps and Frontier Constabulary. Their numbers will be increased and they will be provided with best weapons after their reorganization and better training. They will also be provided tanks and guns, which the army has already provided them.

The army will assist the training and re-structuring of these organizations in six months and wherever they would require help in other fields, the army will fully provide assistance to them.

My brothers and sisters,

We have the determination that we will not allow in future any other mosque or Madressah to be used illegally as Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa. I know that large majority of Pakistani population is moderate and now they are perturbed. They are concerned about what is happening to them and Pakistan as well. I appeal to all moderate people to come forward and join hands with the government in changing the mindsets of these misguided people.

I am addressing all the madaris and Wafaqul Madaris and want to tell them that as far as the madaris are concerned, I think no other person in the past argued so well in their favour in the world, in the United Nations and in the West. I told them that madaris are best non-governmental organizations. I removed misperceptions about the madaris and changed their mindsets about them. I changed their mind to the extent that they wanted to provide resources to improve the standard of the madaris. We had formulated a Madressah Strategy in coordination with the Wafaqul Madaris to bring poor children of madaris into the mainstream enabling them not only to play their role in the society but also contribute in the development of Pakistan.

I had such plan about the madaris and I will have. But, unfortunately, what was happening in the Jamia Hafsa, I have watched on television. There was a battle there and the weapons used

there dashed my intentions to the ground. We will continue to put in our efforts but there was a huge loss.

I appeal to all those who are operating madaris especially Ulema of Wafaqul Madaris to teach true Islamic values to their students, purge of violence and hate of their minds and also teach them worldly knowledge.

In my view Wafaqul Madaris will have to play a pro-active role in coordination with the government and their role will be to identify those madaris where extremism and militancy is being taught. I will appeal to you to prevent such practices and it was your suggestion and you should coordinate with the government in this respect.

This is all I had to share with you. I pray that may Almighty Allah protect all Pakistanis and Pakistan from terrorists and extremists.

In the end, I pray that may Allah Almighty always protect our country, guide us and enable us to stand fast in every difficult time and there is always progress and prosperity in the country.

May Allah embark us on the path of moderation and protect us from hardships (Ameen). May Allah save us and Pakistan from all difficulties.

Long Live Pakistan."