

To the President, Prime Minister and the Members of the Senate and Parliament of Pakistan:

An Appeal

The South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy (SANSAD) is an organization of the South Asian Diaspora in the Vancouver region of British Columbia, Canada. We are dedicated to the cause of promoting peace, social justice, human rights, democracy, and secular values in South Asia.

While grieving the enormous tragedy that has befallen Pakistan as a result of the recent earthquake, we have become aware of the additional misfortune that some unscrupulous people are preying on the thousands of children orphaned by the earthquake. We understand that the Government of Pakistan has taken the preventative step of banning all adoptions since that was a means being utilized to exploit these children. But we also understand from the appeal made by the eminent Iqbal family and the support their appeal has received, that this ban has had the unfortunate effect of excluding the highly reputable organization for the care of orphans, SOS Villages, from taking charge of the orphans. It makes sense to us that a government bureaucracy, especially at a time of extraordinary national stress, is not the best instrument for the care of traumatized orphans, and that where a well-established organization dedicated to such care exists, that organization should be given the responsibility of looking after these unfortunate children. All sources of our information have convinced us that SOS is an organization with a proven record of caring for orphans. We urge you to let this organization take charge of the orphans of the earthquake under the supervision of the Ministry of Women's Development. This will relieve pressure on the overtaxed government, while putting the care of the children in the hands of those who have experience and expertise in the area.

Living far away from South Asia, where we had our origin, we share your grief in this tragic time and appeal to you out of our concern for the most vulnerable survivors of the earthquake.

The Board of Directors of South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy

Signed: Chinmoy Banerjee, Secretary