
US State Dept expresses concern over arrest of PTI leaders

Published on July 24, 2024

Document Date: Sat, Aug 16 2025 06:13:21 pm

Category: ,English,International -

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The United States has expressed concern regarding the recent arrest of opposition leaders in Pakistan, emphasising the need to uphold democratic principles and constitutional law. US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller addressed the issue during a press briefing on Tuesday, specifically referring to the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Raoof Hasan and the raid on the party's office. Hasan, who serves as a spokesperson for the PTI, was detained by Islamabad police on Monday. The arrest followed a raid conducted by the Islamabad police and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on the PTI's digital media wing. The interior ministry has accused the PTI of spreading "anti-state propaganda". In response to questions about the raid and the potential ban on the PTI, Miller acknowledged the reports of the arrests and stated that the US is "always concerned when we see arrests of opposition leaders". He added a personal touch by

expressing his own concern about the arrest of a fellow spokesperson, which elicited laughter from the attendees. Miller reiterated the State Department's stance on supporting constitutional and democratic principles, including the rule of law, equal justice, and human rights such as freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. He urged that these principles be respected according to Pakistan's constitution and laws. When asked about the state of democracy in Pakistan and Bangladesh, he emphasised the US commitment to democratic values worldwide. He stated that the US will continue to advocate for these values, recognising that sovereign nations make their own decisions. Miller stressed the importance of influencing countries to uphold fundamental freedoms and human rights. Regarding questions about the deportation of Afghan refugees and the Pakistan Army's stance on "digital terrorism," he reiterated the US support for media freedom in Pakistan and globally.