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**For Immediate Release**

**July 8, 2013**

**Public Statement**

**The Law Society of Upper Canada expresses concerns about the killing of  
Pakistani prosecutor Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali**

**Toronto** – The Law Society of Upper Canada\* condemns the killing of Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali, chief prosecutor of the Federal Investigation Agency in Pakistan.

Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali was gunned down by unidentified assailants on May 3, 2013, near his home in Islamabad. Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali had a reputation for determinedly pursuing cases against suspects with powerful and sometimes militant connections, despite receiving repeated death threats for his involvement in this work.

Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali was heavily involved with several high profile and dangerous prosecutions. He acted as the government's lead prosecutor in the 2008 terrorist attack in Mumbai, India, which killed 166 people. The investigation into this case involved a probe into several members of the Lashkar-e-Taiba militant group, which was ongoing at the time of his murder. Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali was also leading the prosecution against suspects in the 2007 assassination of former Pakistani Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto. In connection with this case, the prosecutor was pursuing charges against several suspected Taliban militants, and had also recently ordered the arrest of former military ruler Pervez Musharraf. It is speculated in various news outlets that Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali's killing may be connected to his involvement in these two particularly high profile cases.

In the ongoing war between Pakistan and internal militants, lawyers have been particularly targeted and vulnerable. The killing of Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali is part of a similar pattern across the country where judges and lawyers have been attacked in the course of the legitimate exercise of their duties. It is often difficult to find the culprits of these killings, unless they identify themselves and claim responsibility for the attacks.

The Law Society is deeply concerned about situations where lawyers who work for the protection and respect of human rights are themselves targeted for exercising their freedoms and rights under international law. Article 16 of the *United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers* states that 'governments shall ensure that lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely; and shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.' Article 18 states that 'lawyers shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions'.

The Law Society urges the government of Pakistan to:

- a. ensure that the ongoing state investigation into the killing of Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali is thorough and transparent;
- b. take steps to ensure that lawyers and judges who are engaged in politically high profile cases are provided with added security unless expressly declined by the individual;
- c. publicly recognize the importance, legitimacy and independence of the work of lawyers and judges;
- d. ensure that all lawyers and judges can carry out their legitimate duties and activities in peace and security; and
- e. ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with human rights standards.

*\*The Law Society of Upper Canada is the governing body for some 44,400 lawyers and 5,100 paralegals in the Province of Ontario, Canada, and the Treasurer is the head of the Law Society. The mandate of the Law Society is to govern the legal profession in the public interest by upholding the independence, integrity and honour of the legal profession for the purpose of advancing the cause of justice and the rule of law.*

*The Law Society urges the legal community to intervene in support of members of the legal profession in Pakistan in their effort to advance the respect of human rights and to promote the rule of law.*

- 30 -

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