

PRESS FOR PEACE
Giving Voice to the Voiceless



Ref: PFPUK/89-09

Date: 09 October 2009

TO:

The Secretary of State for International Development

**Department For International Development (DFID)
1 Palace Street, London SW1E 5HE
United Kingdom**

**Subject: DFID Aid for Earthquake Victims, State of Azad Jammu and
Kashmir (Pakistan)**

Dear Mr Douglas Alexander MP,

Hope this letter finds you in good health and spirit. We would like to appreciate the services of DFID being delivered for supporting relief and rescue operations in a wake of devastating earthquake in Pakistan, and also we appreciate the support of your prestigious organisation for backing the civil society organisations in promoting and protection of human rights.

Press for Peace (PFP), a voluntary, non-political and non governmental organisation working to promote peace and sustainable development in South Asia, expresses its gratitude to the government of United Kingdom for giving an extra £35 million to help people continue to rebuild their lives after the devastating earthquake on October 8, 2005. The decision of the UK government that this assistance will be channelled through the government's Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) and other frontline agencies comes with some reservations. PFP opines that the proposed donated money is likely to be squandered when pass through government controlled bodies as has happened previously.

Jammu and Kashmir

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A report “ Fighting Bribery in Public Procurement in Asia and the Pacific”, compiled by ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific , could be referred here to point out some of the weaknesses being inherently faced by the public sector funds -using-bodies in Asia. The same report underlines importance of a third party validation of the public procurement institutions. Regarding accountability and transparency policy of the ERRA the report says: “The ERRA ordinance provides for a three-tier exclusive system of audit-internal audit, annual audit by the Auditor General of Pakistan and third party validation. Internal audit is an ongoing exercise within the ERRA to ensure that financial procedures are followed and procurement guidelines are observed. For third -party validation the UK department for International Development (DFID) has been requested to hire the services of a firm through international competitive bidding, to ensure thorough scrutiny by a fairly independent source.”

As regards the publicly available resources or important documentation of accountability process in the ERRA (particularly about the DFID -sponsored aid) , no such information is available to the general public considered to be an important stake-holder in the process.

Further reference is made to another assessment “Evaluation Independence at DFID” prepared for Independent Advisory Committee for Development Impact (IADCI) , which says: “There should be a clear cut DFID policy statement on the full disclosure of evaluation documents.”

Press for Peace would like to know the progress made by the DFID in this direction.

Kind Regards,

Ejaz Ur-Rehman

Director

Press For Peace(PFP) UK

CC:

1. British High Commission
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2. Executive Director
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