

## Pakistan: Clash between Musharraf and Bhutto a “farce”, says Bhutto niece

By [Marco Liconti](#)

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The clash between Pakistan’s President Gen. Pervez Musharraf and former prime minister Benazir Bhutto during the country’s current state of emergency is a “farce”, according to Bhutto’s niece, Fatima.

In an exclusive interview with Adnkronos International (AKI), Fatima Bhutto accused her aunt, who heads the largest opposition party, the Pakistan People’s Party, of “cynicism” and wanting “to sell out the country to the United States”.

Speaking by telephone from Karachi, the 25-year-old niece launched a scathing attack on the former leader and accused her of returning home to Pakistan “not to serve the interests of the people, but to chase power”.

“She has certainly not returned to Pakistan to spearhead political reform,” she said.

The young woman said the current crisis had degenerated into a war between two people, Musharraf and Benazir, who were losing sight of the real issues facing the country.

Bhutto said Benazir had come to an agreement with the president “because she wanted to please public opinion”.

But she claimed they would both find a way to “maintain the status quo” and “extend their own respective power”, excluding the only other leader with any clout, exiled former prime minister Nawaz Sharif.

As for Benazir’s house arrest, revoked on Thursday, the young Bhutto described it as a joke.

“Have you ever seen anyone placed under house arrest released continually for interviews and even receive an American consul?” she said.

The young Bhutto, a poet and writer, is actively involved in politics beside her stepmother Ghinwa Bhutto, plans to stand as a candidate for the breakaway Pakistan People’s Party Shaheed Bhutto (PPP-SB), which supports a return to Pakistan’s liberal Constitution of 1973.

Fatima Bhutto is the daughter of the late Murtaza Bhutto, who was killed by police in 1996 in Karachi during the premiership of his sister, Benazir Bhutto. She is grand-daughter of Pakistan’s former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

During her interview with Adnkronos International, Fatima blamed her aunt for the death of

her father.

“The second term of Benazir was characterised by several acts of state violence against opponents,” said Bhutto.

She accused Bhutto of “creating the conditions for the violence in which he (her father) was a victim” and of also being responsible for the cover up at the inquest.

Bhutto accused of Musharraf of failing to live up to his promises while her aunt had simply given “new strength to the fundamentalists” in Pakistan.

She also called for the US alliance to be renegotiated in a way that gave Pakistan greater parity.

Fatima’s mother, Ghinwa Bhutto, is the chairperson of the PPP-SB. The Lebanese widow of Murtaza Bhutto, she has staked claim to her share of the Bhutto political legacy.

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