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AFP

## Musharraf 'murdered my mother,' says Bhutto son

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The son of slain Pakistan leader Benazir Bhutto said Thursday that ex-military ruler Pervez Musharraf "murdered my mother," as he vowed to play a bigger political role in his homeland "in any way I can."

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, son of current President Asif Ali Zardari, said Musharaff sabotaged his mother's security when she returned to her homeland in 2007, and said he is confident of his own security in Pakistan.

"I'm confident that the Pakistani government will provide me with the adequate security, unlike the government at the time that sabotaged my mother's security in Pakistan," he told CNN in an interview.

The 23-year-old, who returned to Pakistan last year after studying at Oxford, said her assassination was due to a combination of Islamic extremists, and Musharraf's regime.

"Al-Qaeda issued the instructions to do it, the Taliban... carried out the actual attack, while Pervez Musharraf purposely sabotaged my mother's security when he knew there was going to be attacks, so she would be eliminated.

"He murdered my mother. I hold him responsible for the murder of my mother," he added. "He'd threatened her himself in the past. He said: 'Your security is directly linked to our relationship and our cooperation.'

"When he imposed emergency, and it was clear that he was pulling the wool over our eyes. He was not interested in returning democracy to Pakistan. And my mother started to speak out more against him, the security decreased."

Bhutto was assassinated on December 27, 2007, while leaving an election rally in Rawalpindi, the headquarters of Pakistan's army, shortly after her return to the country.

Musharraf, who has lived in self-imposed exile in London and Dubai since August 2008, has indefinitely delayed plans to return home to contest elections after the government warned he would be arrested upon arrival.

Bhutto's son, who is head of the Pakistan's People's Party, said he hopes to take a greater role in Pakistan's political life.

"I did not campaign in the last election, I went to university. I don't feel like at the moment I have the mandate to take a particularly active role," he said.

"I look forward to campaigning in the next election and playing a larger role then," he said. Asked if he hoped to be Pakistan's leader one day, he said: "I'd like to help my people in any way I can.

"It's difficult times in Pakistan and we all have to help."