

<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article6132>



Pakistan

The situation in Waziristan – Release Ali Wazeer, Mohsin Dawar and PTM activists!

- IV Online magazine - 2019 - IV533 - June 2019 -

Publication date: Wednesday 26 June 2019

Copyright © International Viewpoint - online socialist magazine - All rights reserved

On May 26, the army fired on a non-violent protest of the Pashtun Defence Movement (PTM), killing at least 13 people and injuring dozens. The two Members of the National Assembly of the PTM were arrested, Ali Wazeer first, Mohsin Dawar later. Curfew was imposed on Waziristan.

An International Solidarity Campaign has been launched. See on [ESSF International Call – Pakistan: Release Ali Wazeer and Mohsin Dawar, withdraw false police cases](#)

Please support it!

The following article presents an update.

After massive protests across Waziristan and on social media, the 11-day-long curfew was lifted on June 17, 2019.

The curfew, imposed on June 6, created an humanitarian crisis. Since media are not allowed to cover this region hence definite information are hard to get. However, social media outlets have reported three deaths caused by starvation and lack of medicine.

Earlier, the district administration had imposed section 144 of the Code of the Criminal Procedure. This is a colonial-era law regulating the maintenance of public order.

Under the Section 144, more than five persons can not gather at any public place. Consequently, public protests, sit-ins, or rallies become illegal.

Post-9/11, Waziristan has been in global headlines as a base-camp for the Taliban and al-Qaida. However, last year a mass social movement: Pashtun Defence Movement (PTM) emerged and transformed the socio-political landscape of the region. The PTM is a non-violent movement that, on the one hand, is anti-Taliban, on the other, challenges the military establishment.

The PTM's main demand is rehabilitation of Waziristan residents uprooted in the wake of anti-Taliban operations launched by the Pakistani state besides an inquiry into extra-judicial killings. Overnight, the PTM became a platform for the people of Waziristan sandwiched between the Pakistan military and the Taliban.

Two PTM leaders Ali Wazeer and Mohsin Dawar, thanks to PTM popularity, were elected to the National Assembly in last year's general elections.

On May 25, the security forces opened fire on a peaceful protest in a Waziristan village, led by Ali Wazir and Mohsin Dawar. The firing left at least 13 dead while scores were injured.

Ali Wazeer, also on the central committee of The Struggle (a group associated with Fourth International in Pakistan), was arrested on the spot while he was rescuing an injured comrade. He luckily survived the direct fire on him. He has been imprisoned ever since on terrorism charges. There are reports that Ali Wazeer was physically tortured by the

The situation in Waziristan – Release Ali Wazeer, Mohsin Dawar and PTM activists!

security forces.

According to official procedures, when a member of National Assembly is arrested, the speaker of the Assembly issues a production order and the arrested member attends the Assembly session to explain his/her side of the story.

In the case of Ali Wazeer and Mohsin Dawar, despite a demand by the Opposition members, the speaker has refused to issue the production orders of the two.

Ahead of Ali Wazir's arrest on May 25 (Mohsin Dawar courted arrest a week after Ali Wazir's arrest), military establishment publicly warned the PTM leadership of dire consequences. A high-level military spokesperson, while addressing a press conference, portrayed the PTM leadership as a fifth column. He advised the media not to cover the PTM viewpoint.

Such has been the level of media manipulation that the May 25 tragedy was not reported as a case of military firing on the protestors. On the contrary, mainstream media presented the military firing as a case of self-defence following a violent attack on the military check-post. However, a number of video clips have emerged since which prove that Ali Wazir and his comrades were unarmed and non-violent. However, a scary vilification campaign to malign the PTM leadership, particularly Ali Wazir and Mohsin Dawar, is going on in the mainstream media as well as social media.

It is hard to say if Ali Wazir and Mohsin Dawar will be out soon or not. However, on the one hand, their popularity has sky-rocketed in Pushtoon areas, on the other hand, their arrest under terrorism charges is indeed sinister.

Even if they are released in near future under public pressure, their lives remain threatened. In future, there may also be attempts to revoke their parliamentary mandate through some dirty tricks. It is therefore an urgent matter that an international solidarity campaign is built not merely for their immediate release but also for their secure future.

17 June 2019

PS:

If you like this article or have found it useful, please consider donating towards the work of International Viewpoint. Simply follow this link: [Donate](#) then enter an amount of your choice. One-off donations are very welcome. But regular donations by standing order are also vital to our continuing functioning. See the last paragraph of [this article](#) for our bank account details and take out a standing order. Thanks.