

URGENT ACTION

PEACEFUL PASHTUN ACTIVISTS FACE CRIMINAL CASES

Criminal cases have been filed against Manzoor Pashteen and other leaders of the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (Movement for the Protection of Pashtuns), for peacefully calling for equality and justice for human rights violations against the Pashtun community.

A “first information report”, effectively a criminal complaint, was filed by the police against **Manzoor Pashteen, Haji Hidayatullah, Ali Wazir, Khan Zaman Kakar and Nawab Ayaz Khan Jogezei** at Qilla Saifullah station in the south-western Pakistan province of Balochistan, on 13 March 2018. Under draconian sections of the Pakistan Criminal Code Criminal, the men are accused of “provoking with intent to cause riot” and “promoting enmity between different groups” (under section 153 and 153a respectively).

The trumped-up cases appear to be an attempt to smear the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) and punish its leaders for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. The PTM has up to now been a peaceful, grassroots movement demanding equality for Pakistan’s Pashtun community, which has suffered systemic discrimination and human rights violations.

Coming to prominence after a thousand-strong sit-in protest in Islamabad in February 2018, the PTM have continued to peacefully demand equality and justice for human rights violations across the country following a lack of progress by the civilian government to uphold their commitments. The latest rally, of what has become known as the “Pashtun Long March”, took place in Zhob, Balochistan days before the criminal cases were filed.

1) TAKE ACTION

Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:

- Immediately drop criminal cases against Manzoor Pashteen and other leaders of the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement;
- Respect and protect the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement’s rights to freedom of expression and freedom peaceful assembly;
- Adopt and implement legislation which recognizes and protects human rights defenders; and repeal or amend legislation that violates the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association or place obstacles in the way of legitimate activities to promote and defend human rights.

Contact these two officials by 30 April, 2018:

Inspector General of Police, Balochistan

Mr. Moazzam Jah Ansari

Central Police Office

Quetta, Balochistan

Pakistan

Fax: +92 81 920 1267

Email: blncpo@yahoo.com

Salutation: Dear Inspector General

H.E. Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Embassy of

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan

3517 International Ct NW, Washington DC 20008

Phone: 1 202 243 6500 | Fax: 1 202 686 1534

Email: info@embassyofpakistanusa.org

Salutation: Dear Ambassador

2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 61.18*

Here’s why it is so important to report your actions: we record the actions taken on each case—letters, emails, calls and tweets—and use that information in our advocacy.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

PEACEFUL PASHTUN ACTIVISTS FACE CRIMINAL CHARGES

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) came to prominence after the extrajudicial execution of Nageebullah Mehsud in Karachi, the capital of the Pakistani province of Sindh, in January. Mehsud, who owned a clothing store and established a social media presence as a model, was the victim of an extrajudicial execution by the Karachi police after they alleged that he was a fighter with the Pakistani Taliban. A three-member inquiry, headed by Additional Inspector General of the Counter-Terrorism Department Dr Sanaullah Abbasi, established that Mehsud had no links with the armed group. Rao Anwar, a senior Karachi police officer, was found to be responsible for Mehsud's killing and consequently has fled into hiding.

Nageebullah Mehsud's killing sparked large protests, led by Manzoor Pashteen, the 26-year-old leader of the PTM, demanding Rao Anwar be held accountable; an end to extrajudicial executions; the clearing of landmines in the South Waziristan tribal area, where the Mehsud tribe is from; and for all victims of enforced disappearances to be produced in court.

The PTM's peaceful protests attracted large numbers of Pashtuns aggrieved by the systemic discrimination they have faced over the past two decades as the Pakistani security forces waged military operations against the Pakistani Taliban based in the tribal areas. The operations involved large scale displacements, harassment and surveillance, arbitrary detentions, extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances.

In February 2018, the PTM held a thousand-strong rally in Islamabad to reiterate its demands for equality and justice for human rights violations. Protestors came in large numbers from different parts of the country – Karachi, the Swat Valley, and the tribal areas. The protests were shunned by the mainstream media, suspected to be a result of pressure from the authorities to limit any publicity of the events. Nevertheless, the civilian government did meet with the protest's leaders and signed an agreement assuring them that their concerns would be heard. With that assurance, the protestors dispersed.

Since then, there has been no progress on the commitments made by the civilian government. Meanwhile, the PTM's "Pashtun Long March", as the protests are popularly known, has taken its demands to other parts of the country. The latest rally took place in Zhob in Balochistan. The criminal cases against Manzoor Pashteen and other leaders of the PTM were filed just days later.

The criminal cases also came as Pakistan's Universal Periodic Review was coming to an end at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, where Pakistan accepted recommendations from several states to protect freedom of expression and human rights defenders – commitments that are being called into question in light of the cases against the PTM. Pakistan was elected to the UN Human Rights Council in October 2017 and started its term in January 2018. As a member of the Council, it is expected to "uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights".

Name: Manzoor Pashteen, Haji Hidayatullah, Ali Wazir, Khan Zaman Kakar and Nawab Ayaz Khan Jogezeai,
Gender m/f: male

UA: 61/18 Index: ASA 33/8079/2018 Issue Date: 19 March 2018