

PRESS STATEMENT

## **Pakistan and the Supreme Court verdict on Panama-Leaks: For continuity of democratic process, across-the-board accountability & abolition of article 62, 63**

Saturday 29 July 2017, by [AWP](#) (Date first published: 27 July 2017).

Islamabad, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2017: The Supreme Court verdict on Panama-Leaks will deepen the political crisis rather than stemming the menace of corruption. The Awami Workers Party (AWP) expresses concern at the disqualification of an elected prime minister by invoking the controversial articles 62 and 63 inserted in the constitution during a military dictator as it will open a Pandora's box. It is, in fact, the conflict between the establishment and a section of the ruling class on control over resources and power. Corruption was just a ploy.

The decision has set a new precedence that henceforth all political controversies, economic and governance issues will be settled through courts and not through Parliament. It will thus have serious consequences for democracy and the country.

In a joint statement issued here on Friday, AWP president Fanoos Gujjar, general secretary Akhtar Hussain, Yousaf Masti Khan, senior vice president and spokesperson Farooq Tariq criticised those who are jubilant on the verdict.

"One should neither be jubilant nor doom and gloom on the decision," the AWP leaders said.

This will not change the essence of an anti-people political and economic system which is beset by innumerable internal contradictions.

The Supreme Court's unanimous verdict will neither stem the fast creeping menace of corruption nor provide any relief to the common man," AWP leaders said.

The party demands across-the-board accountability of all in-service and retired judges, military officers, civil bureaucracy, religious leaders and politicians. It will be meaningless if an individual or a family is made target in the name of accountability.

The AWP has been demanding the abolition of the draconian laws, controversial articles like 62 and 63 and ultra-constitutional bodies like Shariat Court and Islamic Ideology Council which are being used against politicians, democratic dispensations and minorities. It is the Federal Shariat Court which had declared land reforms un-Islamic to protect the feudal class and tribal chiefs' interests.

They reminded the people of the same trials and propaganda unleashed against political leadership and removed them and even eliminated some of them on the pretext of either corruption or national security.

They questioned the political acumen of those populist political parties and elements who are making the people believe that if they were given a chance they will stem corruption and everything will be alright.

It serves only to confirm that all mainstream parties are concerned only with the acquisition of power and that none of them has the ability to oversee a transformative shift in the system of governance.

“Neither the ruling party nor the opposition parties are sincere in weeding out corruption and money laundering. They just want their turns to grab the power and continue the loot and plunder of the national exchequer and maintain the status quo”, the AWP leaders said.

The AWP believes that the so-called crisis of corruption is not attributable to one party, family or person. Panama-leaks confirmed that most of the global elite is implicated in the acquisition of wealth through illicit means and ‘corruption’ cannot be done away with by simply replacing one party of the elite with another. ‘Corruption’ is, in fact, a pillar of the bureaucratic capitalist system which prevails in Pakistan and around the world.

The AWP has consistently maintained that the real issues of working people in Pakistan relate to joblessness, rising inflation, poverty, religious extremism, the manipulations of the establishment and environmental degradation.

Meanwhile, global imperialist powers continue to shamelessly exploit the resources of the country. All of these genuine issues are absent from the agenda of all mainstream parties, they said.

The AWP demands a broadening of the investigation of money laundering and the inclusion of all those industrialists, in-service and retired judges, generals and bureaucrats who have been accumulating power and resources systematically for decades.

They warned that any move to derail the democratic process through extra-constitutional means will be resisted tooth and nail.

They urged all progressive, socialist and secular democratic forces to join hands and fight against feudalism, capitalism, religious extremism, the political opportunists, the establishment’s pawns, the imperialist stooges, neo-liberal economic agenda that thrives on corruption, kickbacks and commissions.

**AWP**

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