

Pakistani parliament member and Pashtun leader Ali Wazir gets bail but to remain behind bars

Tuesday 7 December 2021, by [Peoples Dispatch](#), [SINGH Shriya](#) (Date first published: 3 December 2021).

On November 30, Ali Wazir was granted bail by the Supreme Court but remains in jail as a case is pending against him. He was accused of insulting a state institution in a speech in December 2020 and has been incarcerated for close to a year



Ali Wazir

On Tuesday November 30, the Supreme Court of Pakistan granted bail to the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement leader Ali Wazir, who has been in jail for close to a year. Wazir faces charges of insulting a state institution. However, he remains in jail as another case is pending against him.

A three-member bench of the Supreme Court led by Justice Sardar Tariq Masood accepted Wazir's appeal against the dismissal of his bail application by the Sindh High Court on June 1. The bench set the bail amount at PKR 400,000.

Wazir, a member of Pakistan's National Assembly, was arrested on December 16, 2020 on charges including criminal conspiracy and making derogatory remarks against various state institutions. This followed a speech he delivered at a public meeting on December 6 that year.

The Supreme Court pointed out that Wazir could not be kept in jail if the co-accused have been granted bail. One of the judges asked why the issues raised by Wazir should not have been discussed in parliament. Another judge asked why he was being charged under an anti-terror law.

Wazir's appeal also pointed out that he was being persecuted for political differences with the party in power.

Wazir was elected to the National Assembly in 2018. He is one of the prominent leaders of the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (Pashtun Protection Movement) which has raised issues facing the community such as extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. He has often been targeted by the Taliban and other militant groups. At least 13 of his relatives have been reportedly killed by militants.

PTM leader Manzoor Pashteen tweeted thanking all those who raised their voice in support of Wazir.

Tweet

Manzoor Pashteen

@ManzoorPashteen

Finally, Ali Wazir granted bail by the SC. He remained incarcerated for more than a year on politically motivated charges in Karachi prison. Hope that Hanif & Owaisi will also be released soon. Thanks to all pol.parties, Lawyers,journalists &everyone who raised voice for Ali.

8:42 AM · Nov 30, 2021

Last month, Wazir and other PTM leaders and members were indicted in a sedition case for the same comments from December 2020

Peoples Dispatch

• Peoples Dispatch, December 03, 2021:

<https://peoplesdispatch.org/2021/12/03/pakistani-parliament-member-and-pashtun-leader-ali-wazir-gets-bail-but-to-remain-behind-bars/>

Pashtun movement leaders in Pakistan indicted in dubious sedition case as struggle awaits

An Anti-Terrorism Court in Karachi has indicted National Assembly member Ali Wazir and Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement chief Manzoor Pashteen as offenders in a sedition case



PTM leaders indicted Pakistan - PTM leaders (L to R) - Mohsin Dawar, Manzoor Pashteen and Ali Wazir at PTM's Karachi rally Dec 6, 2020.

On November 3, an Anti-Terrorism Court in Karachi indicted Ali Wazir, member of Pakistan's National Assembly and a prominent leader of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), in a sedition case that has seen the legislator in judicial custody over fabricated charges for a year now.

Along with Wazir, his comrade Manzoor Pashteen, who has become the face of the Pashtun struggle in Waziristan region, has been accused under the Pakistani Penal Code and the Anti-Terrorism Act of

sedition, instigating hate, and for making derogatory remarks against the Pakistani army during the movement's December 6, 2020 Karachi rally.

The Pashtun Tahafuz (Protection) Movement grew out of a series of protests in the North Waziristan and South Waziristan districts of the erstwhile FATA region, which are now a part of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Pashteen has led the protests which were triggered by the fake encounter of a young Pashtun mill worker, Nageebullah Mehsud, in Karachi by a senior police superintendent on January 13, 2018.

The Mehsud tribe of Pakistan from the regions bordering Afghanistan has been consistently targeted by the Pakistani state's anti-terrorism offensive since 2007 when Baitullah Mehsud founded the banned militant group Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which has been associated with terrorist activities within the country.

At the end of the War on Terror, many illegally armed militant groups crossed the Afghanistan border for refuge in Pakistan's border provinces like Waziristan, from where they continue to operate. Neither the US nor Pakistan has acknowledged their role with regard to these groups and the alleged human rights abuses that have resulted from their presence in the region.

The Pashtun struggle has been rooted in the travesty of being caught in between the army and the Taliban in Pakistan. More than a decade of discrimination has quickly grown into a mass movement since 2018 demanding an end to the war crimes, extrajudicial killings and torture faced by innocent civilian Pashtuns, who have been regularly suspected and arrested under a draconian colonial-era law called the Frontier Crimes Regulation that has governed this tribal belt since the 19th century.

Despite a complete media blackout and zero coverage of their movement in Pakistan, PTM's stride into a peaceful human rights movement has drawn considerable global attention through their social media outreach and its success can be credited to its leaders.

A veterinary student in his late-20s and a Mehsud himself, Pashteen has been central to voicing the movement's demands for fair treatment and acknowledgment of the abuse faced by people in the tribal areas by the state-military nexus, which he says has been using the Pashtun tribes in the FATA region as its 'agents' according to its convenience.

Ali Wazir, who was arrested after the military opened fire resulting in the death of over a dozen PTM activists at Kharqamar, has lost 18 members of his family to Taliban assassinations in the South Waziristan district over the years. In December 2020, his first cousin and member of the National Assembly, Arif Wazir, was shot dead by 'unidentified assailants' outside his house. The government and the army chose to remain tight-lipped about the murder of a legislator.

Despite its initial reluctance to acknowledge and later immense effort to invisibilize the Pashtun movement in the public conscience, the Pakistan military is left with nothing but formula tactics to continue suppressing a non-violent movement through fabricated charges of hate speech and instigating war and ethnic divide in Pakistan.

The indictment of PTM activists in the hate speech case and the simultaneous engagement of the PTI government with far-right hardliner groups like Tehreek-e-Labaik (TLP), whose recent protests have seen widespread street violence and public vandalism in Punjab and Sindh provinces, are a signal to what many are calling a double-dealing revealing a weak government with weaker governance policies.

Mohsin Dawar, PTM leader and member of the National Assembly, grew up in the FATA region

witnessing the atrocities of the Taliban. He was elected to the National assembly along with Wazir in 2018. On Wazir's indictment, Dawar said [1], "By doing deals with TTP & TLP, the State has set a precedence that terrorism, murder, violence will go unpunished & the perpetrators garlanded."

Shriya Singh

- Peoples Dispatch, November 19, 2021:

<https://peoplesdispatch.org/2021/11/19/pashtun-movement-leaders-in-pakistan-indicted-in-dubious-sedition-case-as-struggle-awaits/>

Footnotes

[1] <https://twitter.com/mjdawar/status/1455174974399000581>