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December 18, 2020

High Commissioner Raza Bashir Tarar
High Commission for Pakistan, Ottawa
10 Range Rd, Ottawa, ON K1N 8J3
Canada

RE: Immediate release of Amar Fayaz

Dear Mr. Tarar:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the 90,000 working Albertans who form Western Canada's largest labour union. The Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) is a family of strong, compassionate, and mobilized public-sector employees who leave no worker behind. We stand in solidarity with the International Marxist Tendency (IMT) and join in their call for the immediate release of Amar Fayaz, an outspoken workers' rights advocate and activist for post-secondary students, who was abducted by Pakistani police and security officials on November 8.

Clearly, the government of Pakistan so fears the justice, equality, and popular strength that unions embody that it's willing to torture, jail, and intimidate anyone who has a voice and uses it to stand up for basic human rights. We refuse to let a tyrannical regime smother more voices.

The stories we're hearing from everyday Pakistanis are horrifying, and we commit to amplifying their voices. From firsthand accounts of police hauling journalists into stations with hoods over their heads simply because they used Twitter to challenge the military state, to doctors arrested *en masse* for demanding adequate personal protective equipment for healthcare workers on the frontlines of the worsening pandemic – state violence is spreading. Meanwhile, corporate thugs are murdering trade union activists.

The International Trade Union Confederation reported on one disturbing killing in their 2019 *ITUC Global Rights Index*: In 2018, a factory owner and his accomplices murdered Abdul Khaliq Sher, a prominent labour activist, when Sher came to talk with them. While investigations into the case remain open, in many cases of union rights' violations, the Pakistani police collaborate with bosses by violently smashing strikes and protests. Hardworking people are just trying to meet their basic needs and feed their families, and the government of Pakistan is making them pay with their lives.

In a disturbing display of authoritarian power, the state is also making an example of individuals. Amar Fayaz is their most recent target. No one, not even his wife and

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daughters, knows where he is and what condition he's in. This sadistic, state-sanctioned disappearance is as much of an injustice to them as it is to him. His blood-family is scared and traumatized. His second family – his union family – is mobilized and angry. Extrajudicial sentences and punishments are a violation of the basic human right to a fair trial, and we demand that your government releases Fayaz and hear his case in court if you have any charges against him.

We're not going to stay silent like the Pakistani government wants or stand back while a whole nation of people is pushed to the edge, wondering, "Am I next?" We have our eyes on Pakistan, and we're not the only ones. [Amnesty International](#) has condemned the country for "fail[ing] to uphold its commitments to legislate against torture and enforced disappearances."

Last week, on Human Rights Day, AUPE spread Amar's story, calling on all working Albertans to sign the online petition for his immediate release. Yesterday, on Dec. 17, working people in major cities across the country organized a day of solidarity actions, calling for Amar's immediate release. AUPE stands in solidarity with the protesters' demands. Pakistan's government may have abandoned its own people, but the international labour movement leaves no one behind, because an injury to one is an injury to all.

Sincerely,



Bobby-Joe Borodey
Vice-President and Chair of the Human Rights Committee
Alberta Union of Provincial Employees