

# *Tahir Dawar*

**Mohammad Tahir Khan Dawar** (Urdu: طاہر داوڑ; Pashto: طاہر داوړ) was a Pakistani police officer and Pashto poet who was abducted from Islamabad on October 26, 2018 and then tortured and killed. His body was found on November 13, 2018 by the locals in the Dur Baba District of Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan, close to the Torkham border crossing.<sup>[4]</sup> His postmortem report revealed he had no

marks of bullet injury but was rather killed by excessive torture during captivity. He was kept hungry and thirsty for several days, and his legs and arms were broken.<sup>[9]</sup> He had died a few days before his corpse was found.<sup>[3]</sup>

SP

## M. Tahir Khan Dawar

محمد طاہر خان داوڑ

**Born**

December 4, 1968

Khadi, Mir Ali, North

Waziristan, Pakistan<sup>[1]</sup>

**Disappeared**

October 26, 2018

Islamabad, Pakistan<sup>[2]</sup>

**Died**

"Few days" before

November 13, 2018

(aged 49)<sup>[3]</sup>

**Cause of death**


Excessive torture<sup>[3]</sup>

**Body discovered**

November 13, 2018

Dur Baba, Nangarhar,

Afghanistan<sup>[4]</sup>

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Burial place</b>     | <u>Hayatabad, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan</u> <sup>[5]</sup><br>Initially buried for a day in <u>Momand Dara, Nangarhar, Afghanistan</u> <sup>[6]</sup><br><u>33.9656°N 71.4306°E</u> |
| <b>Children</b>         | 7 <sup>[7]</sup>   |
| <b>Military career</b>  |  |
| <b>Allegiance</b>       |  <u>Pakistan</u>  |
| <b>Service</b>          | <u>Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police</u> and <u>Federal Investigation Agency</u> .   |
| <b>Years of service</b> | 1995–2018 <sup>[2]</sup>   |
| <b>Rank</b>             | <u>Superintendent of</u>   |

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
|                   | <u>Police</u>                                   |
| <b>Wars</b>       | <u>War in North-West Pakistan</u>               |
| <b>Awards</b>     | Quaid-i-Azam Police Medal (2011) <sup>[7]</sup> |
| <b>Other work</b> | <u>Pashto poetry</u> <sup>[8]</sup>             |
|                   |   |

Some Pakistani officials including the Pakistan Army spokesman Major General Asif Ghafoor expressed concerns for a possible involvement of foreign hands behind the murder.<sup>[6][10]</sup> A joint investigation team was formed by the government to probe the murder. However, Tahir's family, as well as the Pashtun

Tahafuz Movement, rejected that investigation team, and demanded that the murder should be rather investigated through an international commission, since the case involved two countries.<sup>[11][12]</sup> The family also accused the Pakistani government of making no serious efforts to recover Tahir while he was missing for more than two weeks.<sup>[13]</sup>

## Personal life

Tahir belonged to the Dawar tribe of the Pashtuns. He was born in 1968 in the Khadi village of Mir Ali Subdivision in North Waziristan, Pakistan. He got married in

1988 and had five daughters and two sons. Besides his own family, Tahir also helped in raising several other children at his village in North Waziristan and financially supported three widows.<sup>[14]</sup>

## Education and career

Tahir completed his secondary education in Eidak, a village west of Mir Ali on the periphery of Miramshah, the capital city of North Waziristan. He completed his bachelor's degree in 1989 in Miramshah and started his career in nursing and teaching in North Waziristan.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Police career in Bannu

...

In 1995, he joined the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police as assistant sub-inspector in Bannu. He continued his studies while working in the Police and completed his master's degree in Pashto in 1997.<sup>[1]</sup> He was appointed as station house officer at a police station in Bannu in 1998. He was promoted as sub-inspector in 2002 and as inspector in 2007. He was posted to Morocco and Sudan as part of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in 2003 and 2005, respectively. While posted in Bannu, he suffered gunshot wounds to his arm and leg during an encounter with militants



in 2005. He narrowly survived two suicide attacks by the Taliban in 2007 and 2009, in the latter of which he was wounded. He received the Quaid-i-Azam Police Medal, the highest award for a police officer in Pakistan, due to his dedication with his job. [Z][1]

## **Federal Investigation Agency** ...

In March 2009, Tahir was transferred to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), a border control and counterintelligence security agency in Pakistan. He worked at FIA as an Assistant Director in Peshawar. He was also sent to Australia and

Romania as part of his duty.<sup>[7]</sup> However, after his stint with FIA at Bacha Khan International Airport, Peshawar, he left it in July 2013.

## **Police career in Peshawar**

...

Tahir rejoined the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police in July 2013 and served as deputy superintendent of police (DSP) Crime Circle Peshawar, DSP Capital City Police Office, and DSP Faqeerabad Peshawar.<sup>[1]</sup> He was promoted as superintendent of police (SP) Rural Circle Peshawar in August 2018, just two months before his disappearance.<sup>[2]</sup>

## Political views

...

Tahir had sympathy for the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM).<sup>[15]</sup> When Mohsin Dawar, who is one of the leaders of PTM, won his seat in the 2018 general elections to represent North Waziristan in the National Assembly of Pakistan, Tahir said: “The people of Waziristan have hope that Mohsin Dawar will honor the right of representation and will take the voice of the oppressed to the assembly, whose fury the assembly’s mic will perhaps be unable to withstand.”<sup>[16]</sup>

In an old video which went viral on social media after his death, Tahir was seen addressing a group protesters, and arguing that India, the United States, and Afghanistan were behind many conspiracies against Pakistan in general and Peshawar in particular. He said that the Indian intelligence agency RAW, the US CIA, and Afghanistan posed threats to Pakistan, and the focus of their activities was to target the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor.<sup>[17][18][19]</sup>

## Abduction and murder

On October 26, 2018, Tahir was abducted from Islamabad, Pakistan, where he had arrived the same day from Peshawar to attend a meeting.<sup>[2]</sup> According to Tahir's brother Ahmaduddin: “At 6:30pm [October 26], Tahir talked to his wife in Peshawar and told her that he was in Islamabad and may return if the meeting is over soon, otherwise he would be coming back on Saturday [October 27]. However, at 7:15pm [October 27], his wife received a text message that Tahir was in Sarai Alamgir near Jhelum.”<sup>[2]</sup> On October 28, Tahir's brother Farhan Ahmed lodged an FIR on behalf of Tahir with the Ramna police station in Islamabad.<sup>[20]</sup> The police

officials investigating the kidnapping case informed that Tahir had dinner on October 26 at his residence in Islamabad, then he went out alone on foot at around 7pm, and his mobile phone was found to be switched off from around 8pm.<sup>[21][22]</sup> Geo-fencing of his mobile phone and number revealed that his last location before being kidnapped was at G-10/4 area of Islamabad.<sup>[20]</sup> On October 27, his mobile phone was switched on at a location in Sarai Alamgir, then switched off again, after which there was no trace of his mobile phone or SIM card.<sup>[20]</sup> The Pakistani Prime Minister's spokesman Iftikhar Durrani, in an interview with Voice

of America on October 28, laughed away Tahir's kidnapping report,<sup>[23]</sup> and stated that Tahir was not abducted but was safe in Peshawar; Iftikhar Durrani's statement later turned out to be wrong.<sup>[15]</sup> The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) protested against the abduction of Tahir during their public gathering on October 28 in Bannu.<sup>[24]</sup> On November 7, Tahir's family and elders of the Dawar tribe from Waziristan demanded that Tahir should be recovered immediately, threatening to organize protest sit-ins in Islamabad and Peshawar for his recovery.<sup>[4]</sup>

On November 13, i.e. 18 days after Tahir's disappearance, his tortured dead body was found about 100 meters away from the Durand Line,<sup>[25]</sup> in the Dur Baba District of the province of Nangarhar, Afghanistan. He was buried the same day at a cemetery in the Momand Dara area in Nangarhar,<sup>[6]</sup> after the washing and shrouding of his body and performing the Islamic funeral prayer for him.<sup>[26]</sup> On November 14, Tahir's body was exhumed from the cemetery in Momand Dara, and carried to Jalalabad to conduct a postmortem examination on it on the order of Hayatullah Hayat, Governor of Nangarhar.<sup>[6][20][26]</sup> The body would subsequently be carried from Jalalabad to



Peshawar, Pakistan. At first, a tribal jirga in Nangarhar refused to hand over Tahir's body to Pakistani authorities, but after some delay and negotiation, they agreed.<sup>[27]</sup> On November 15, the body was received at the Torkham border crossing between Nangarhar and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by a tribal jirga led by the Pakistani parliamentarian Mohsin Dawar.<sup>[28]</sup> Pakistan's State Minister of Interior Shehryar Afridi and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Information Minister Shaukat Yousafzai were also present at the jirga in Torkham.<sup>[29]</sup> The same day, separate Islamic funeral prayers were reperformed for Tahir at Police Lines

Peshawar and Hayatabad, Peshawar,<sup>[5]</sup>  
and then he was buried at a cemetery in  
Hayatabad.<sup>[3][22][27]</sup>

Shehryar Afridi, Pakistan's State Minister of Interior, stated during his speech at the Senate of Pakistan that Tahir was shifted from Islamabad to Nangarhar through northern Punjab, Mianwali, and Bannu. He said: "SP Tahir was transported from Islamabad to Punjab, where he was kept for a couple of days. Then he stayed in Mianwali for three to four days, and then he was taken to Bannu."<sup>[30]</sup> Shehryar Afridi also complained that at least 600 of the 1800 surveillance cameras installed under

the Safe City Project in Islamabad were not working and that not one camera could read a vehicle's number plate or a person's face.<sup>[30]</sup>

## Responsibility

...

The authorities in Islamabad initially said that the Pakistani Taliban abducted Tahir, but the Pakistani Taliban denied involvement.<sup>[31][8]</sup> In a Pashto note handwritten on a blank piece of paper, which was reportedly placed on the chest of the dead body of Tahir, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province (ISIL-KP) claimed responsibility

of the murder.<sup>[32]</sup> However, there was no official claim of responsibility from Amaq Agency, the news outlet linked to Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Some political analysts, journalists, and activists have questioned the authenticity of the handwritten note found besides the body, arguing that ISIL makes its official claims through Amaq Agency, not in this manner.<sup>[8][33]</sup> Mohsin Dawar, who represents North Waziristan in the National Assembly of Pakistan and is one of the leaders of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement, was also unconvinced.<sup>[33]</sup> Mohsin Dawar accused the Pakistani military of being an accomplice in the

murder, and said: "For more than 15 years, we have seen this deceptive drama that people are murdered and then their corpses are left with a note from militants. We will not be deceived. How was he taken from Islamabad?"<sup>[33]</sup> Calling for an international commission to investigate the murder case rather than investigating it internally, Mohsin Dawar said: "We reject an internal inquiry. We know that our investigation authorities can't question certain powers."<sup>[27]</sup>

On the other hand some other Pakistani officials, on condition of anonymity,

claimed that the Afghan intelligence agency carried out Tahir's murder.<sup>[34][35]</sup>

## Reactions

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### Pakistani government

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Imran Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, condemned the murder and called it a shocking tragedy. He ordered its immediate inquiry and tasked Pakistan's State Minister of Interior Shehryar Afridi to oversee it.<sup>[30]</sup> The Pakistan Army spokesman Major General Asif Ghafoor also condemned the murder. Hinting at a broader involvement of foreign powers

behind the case, Asif Ghafoor said:  
“[Tahir's] abduction, move to Afghanistan, murder and follow up behavior of Afghan authorities raises questions, which indicate involvement or resources more than a terrorist organization in Afghanistan.”<sup>[36]</sup><sup>[6]</sup>

## **Afghan government**

...

Omar Zakhilwal, Afghanistan's ambassador in Islamabad, expressed grief over the case and asked the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan to sit together and talk about who would have murdered Tahir.<sup>[37]</sup> He promised that the Afghan government would investigate the case.<sup>[38]</sup>

## Pashtun Tahafuz Movement

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Supporters of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) held protest rallies in several cities of Pakistan and demanded for an international commission to investigate the case.<sup>[8]</sup> They chanted slogans against Pakistan Army and Pakistani intelligence agencies, whom they accused to be involved in the abduction and murder.<sup>[32]</sup> Mohsin Dawar, who is one of the leaders of PTM and also represents North Waziristan in the National Assembly of Pakistan, expressed shock over Tahir's murder and said: "Explaining this in the same old 'good' and 'bad' Taliban drama



will not work anymore. The State of Pakistan is responsible for his martyrdom and we demand answers. His abductors have to be made answerable.”<sup>[39]</sup>

## **Opposition parties in Pakistan**

...

Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party's leader Mahmood Khan Achakzai equated the murder of Tahir with Jamal Khashoggi, saying "both incidents required international probe."<sup>[40]</sup> Awami National Party held protest rallies in several cities across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa<sup>[5]</sup> and backed the demand of PTM to call for an international inquiry.<sup>[41]</sup> Qaumi Watan Party

also protested against the murder and demanded for an early arrest of the killers.<sup>[42]</sup> Pakistan Muslim League (N) and Pakistan Peoples Party criticized the government of Pakistan for failing to provide security to Tahir in the capital Islamabad.<sup>[43][44][45]</sup>

## **Package for Tahir's family**

...

Imran Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, approved a package of Rs70 million for Tahir's family.<sup>[46]</sup>

## Tahir's poetry

Tahir wrote poetry in Pashto language.<sup>[8]</sup>

Some of his ghazals have been sung by local singers with music. The following Pashto poem is an example of his poetry, in which he lamented for his war-torn homeland, Waziristan:<sup>[47][48]</sup>

خان مې وړان، جهان مې وړان شو، لښکر  
وړان شو

*My life is ruined, my world is  
ruined, my army is ruined*

کور مې وړان شو، در مې وړان شو، گودر  
وړان شو

*My home is ruined, my door is  
ruined, my riverbank is ruined*

د سهار بلبل رنگینې نغمې پرېښوې

*The morning's nightingale*

*stopped chirping colorful songs*

مانښام وران شو، گلورین مازدیگر وران شو

*The evening is ruined, the*

*afternoon full of flowers is*

*ruined*

هرې خوا ته دي ویرونه ژړاگانې

*Everywhere people are*

*mourning and crying*

په خپپرو مې د پېغلو خيگر وران شو

*By slapping in grief, the bosom*

*of our damsels is ruined*

زه ظاهر داور گناه نه خبر نشوم

*Even though I, Tahir Dawar,  
have not known my sin,*

سر مې وران شو، سرد پاسه مې سر وران  
شو

*My head is ruined, the head  
atop of my head [the elders of  
my tribe] is ruined*

## See also

- [Killing of Nageebullah Mehsud](#)
- [Arman Loni](#)
- [List of kidnappings](#)
- [List of people who disappeared](#)

- [Mohsin Dawar](#)
- [Malik Saad](#)
- [Safwat Ghayur](#)
- [Waziristan](#)

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