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Pakistan

AWP Joint statement on military operation in Wazirestan

- News from around the world -

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The Awami Workers Party (AWP) has demanded public disclosure of all aspects of the ongoing military operation in North Waziristan and a time line for the return of displaced populations in all Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

The AWP has also asserted its long-held view that millenarian violence in Pakistan cannot be eliminated through military means only and therefore the parliament and elected government must outline concise and long-term initiatives so as to address to root out ideological and material causes of religious bigotry and violence.

AWP leaders have said that innumerable operations have taken place since the onset of the so-called 'war on terror' in 2001 and in all cases civilian populations have been badly affected while incidents of terrorism have continually increased. It is thus imperative that what is being called a decisive military operation in North Waziristan is clearly different from what has preceded it; neither is it tolerable that indiscriminate force be used which harms innocents nor is it acceptable that reporting on the operation be opaque and unaccountable as in the past.

The AWP leaders have also slammed the vacillation of the current government which only a few months ago launched so-called 'peace talks' and now has decided to undertake military operations. This confusion seeps into the larger society and makes it impossible to take on the ideology of extremism which breeds millenarian violence.

The AWP has demanded that the elected government adopt a holistic and coherent policy towards this issue and to disclose this policy to the parliament and to ordinary Pakistanis more generally.

The AWP leaders also reiterate their principled stand against the use of religion in politics, which has allowed various groups operating under the patronage of the establishment to wreak havoc in Pakistani society and also make enemies of our neighboring countries.

It is only by separating the affairs of state from religious faith that sectarian organizations can be brought to book, and the national security obsession of the Pakistani state be done away with. It is in this long-run transformation that the Pakistani state can become responsive to the welfare needs of its own people rather than be held hostage to the manipulations of the establishment and the religious right.

Lahore, 20 June 2014

[1] A first version of this statement, dated 17 June 2014, was initially posted online. After discussion among leadership of the Awami Workers Party (AWP), some changes were made in it. This is the amended statement.