

## APPENDIX 6

Sardar Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari  
President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan  
President's Secretariat, Islamabad.

Subject: Restoration of Pension - General Officers

Sir,

1. I have been encouraged to submit this petition after reading your recent statement in the newspapers that your decisions are taken in keeping with the tenets of Islam. I have lifted the pen because I address the President of Pakistan, for whom all are equal and whose prime focus is to uphold and administer justice. I have also taken this liberty since Islam values the undoing of injustice as and when it comes to light. I have also been encouraged by the fact that the 'Débâcle in East Pakistan' is close to a quarter of a century behind us and many important facets have come to the fore.
2. As a sequel to the 1971 national tragedy and the loss of East Pakistan I was removed from service on 05 May 1975 and my hard-earned pension was denied to me. This denial resulted in suffering not only for me but for my entire family and other relations who were dependent on my financial help. The process of law was cut short by an 'Administrative Action' without assigning any cause for my removal. I had even opted for a trial by Court Martial, which was not granted because a lot of unpleasant, unpalatable facts would have emerged cutting into the failings and the overall conduct of war by the High Command. It was to be my destiny to pay for the collective blunders of the High Command and many others who fortunately by and large lived happily ever after. I was given an *ex gratia* pension which is meagre and in no way substitutes for my hard-

earned pension and reputation and does not restore the rights and privileges of a retired General.

3. My President, like so many unfortunate innocent people I had been condemned to cover so many masked faces, but time and again the innocent have been rehabilitated during their lifetime. That is the core matter for the justice I am seeking at your hands, because I have been punished for reasons untold, unheard, and untried.

4. Listed below are events (I will try to reveal as few faces as I can since events are more important than individuals) that will stand in the witness box before the prosecutors in the presence of the President of Pakistan:-

- a. I volunteered for Court Martial because the truth would have come out and the real culprits exposed, but I was denied this basic right because they could not frame any charges against me and at the same time it would have raised eyebrows as to why operations in West Pakistan failed at the launching pad while Eastern Command had been fighting a protracted battle most successfully for almost a year against 10:1 superiority of the Indian Army. (West Pakistan ratio was 1:1).
- b. This was the first time in Islamic history that we had parity of forces and resources with our enemies. The circumstances were also more conducive for us in the West. The troops were in their battle positions according to our over-all plan 'Battle of East will be fought in the West', which meant that the Eastern Garrison with limited resources of men and material would have a holding role while the main and decisive battle would be fought and won in the West where the bulk of the forces and resources quite adequate for the job supported by a loyal and motivated population, secure rear and flanks, with the entire Navy and PAF were deployed.
- c. We struck the enemy in West Pakistan at the place and time of our own choosing but instead of capturing territory we lost 5500 square miles of our sacred soil in about 10 days time, a set-back militarily unbelievable, unacceptable and unforgivable.
- d. On the contrary East Pakistan undertook the mission

successfully with limited resources under the worst circumstances but our High Command faltered under most favourable circumstances and doomed Pakistan and East Pakistan Garrison who were fighting gallantly. To save West Pakistan from further disintegration we had to abandon East Pakistan and face the humiliation of laying down our arms. All those who erred and failed in West Pakistan got away unscathed. Many were retained in service and promoted, while others were given lucrative jobs. No questions asked, no queries made, but General Niazi, who completed all his given tasks most successfully, was penalized for the sins of others.

- e. General Tikka Khan ex COAS had given a statement that General Niazi could not be court-martialled because no substantive material against him was forthcoming.
- f. The Hamoodur Rehman Report is a Top Secret document but portions of the report have been divulged through newspapers by politicians. Salient features of the Report are:-
  - (1) Disciplinary action was recommended against many who were responsible for the débâcle of 1971 but I was made the solitary example, the scapegoat nay the sacrificial lamb'.
  - (2) The surrender was executed on the order of the President of Pakistan for fear of a humiliating defeat in the West.
  - (3) The report was shelved as biased on the advice of the 'PPP Committee of Seven.'
  - (4) The report had no legal anchorage and was not endorsed by an executive order for implementation.
  - (5) The Terms of Reference of the Hamoodur Rehman Commission were inadequate (not covering all aspects of the disaster).
  - (6) General Yahya Khan was dubbed 'the Usurper' who was the chief architect of the crisis, ordering the crack-down instead of handing over power to the elected representatives of the people.
- g. Although Gen. Yahya was blamed for the vivisection of Pakistan he lived to enjoy two pensions (President and C-in-C.) and was sent abroad for treatment at Govt.

expense and finally given a military burial. On the contrary, I was denied my pension because in a matter of two months, I had:

- (1) Restored the writ of the Govt. in East Pakistan, when no one was a volunteer to take command of the Eastern Wing and where two senior generals had already failed.
- (2) Normalized living conditions.
- (3) Evicted the guerrillas and Indian agents who were then in high spirits and held the initiative. I am the general whose troops defeated the guerrillas in a lightning campaign lasting less than two months.
- (4) Gen. Fazle Muqueem rated our achievements in his book as 'a miracle'.
- (5) The enemy was contained and later evicted during insurgency by a handful of 45000 troops consisting of 34000 regular and 11000 Civil Armed Forces personnel. Whereas in terms of simple military planning by experts we needed 300000 troops fully trained in counter insurgency role with full support of the local population.

- h. Conditions both political and military were normalized by the end of May 1971 and gave an ideal time and opportunity for a political settlement. This opportunity was missed on purpose to ultimately shed East Pakistan and sacrifice 45000 troops from West Pakistan at the altar of the political power game. The plan hatched for the attainment of this unholy aim was to leave East Pakistan without a successor government.

This could only be done if the Indians won and Niazi lost the war. But when the junta saw that I could not be defeated on the battlefield, I was told to surrender, and when I hesitated the bait given was that West Pakistan was in danger. Also defeat would absolve them from the distribution of the assets, armament, and stores. They had decided to leave poor East Pakistan and rule rich West Pakistan.

- j. General Hamid Khan, C-in-C., in May 1971 had viewed my plans for carrying the war into India as sound and workable but they were shelved since the national aim of the Government then was:

- (1) No open war conflict with India. Hence our troops are not to trespass into Indian territory nor fire into it.
  - (2) Evict by force of arms any intrusion by India in East Pakistan.
- k. On 13 December 1971 I gave the final orders of 'Last man-last round' which was virtually an order to die. No officer or man hesitated and the response was in the affirmative. These orders had to be changed to 'Surrender' on the orders of the President of Pakistan advised by General Hameed and persuaded by Dr Malik, the Governor who told me that delay in surrender would cause difficulties in holding operations in West Pakistan. They wanted to cease hostilities in West Pakistan at all cost. The panic and stress was so great that the Govt. was hysterical to shed East Pakistan and save West Pakistan. So to save West Pakistan, our base, from disintegration and Western Garrison from further repulses I staked my reputation, my brilliant career, and the high traditions of Pakistan Army and agreed with a heavy heart to lay down arms when we were nowhere near defeat and tactically better placed than Indians at that particular time. More or less the same thing happened with the Japanese Forces deployed in the Pacific in World War II, who had about fifty-eight Army Divisions with sufficient aerial and naval support and tactically and strategically were in a better position than the Allies. The use of atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki forced the Japanese Pacific Forces to surrender unconditionally in order to save their motherland from further destruction.
  5. My President, in the capacity of most senior military officer my conduct of operations was governed by two important undisputable constraints, firstly, the National Aim spelt out by the government for the defence of East Pakistan, secondly, the military resources that were given to me which encompassed all the three services. The simple comparison given below would suffice to prove that the achievements of Eastern Garrison were gratifying by all standards with meagre resources and the worst possible prevailing conditions.

	Pakistan	India
a. Infantry Divisions	3 (two divs without heavy weapons)	12 (full combat divisions)
b. Armour Regts	1 Regt comprising three squadrons (with light old-vintage M-24 Tks having 75 mm guns)	All told 18 Squadrons with latest 105 mm guns and night vision fighting devices.
c. Air Force	One squadron (out of date F-86)	14 (FGA) squadrons
d. Airfield	One	3 plus aircraft carrier <i>Vikrant</i>
e. Navy	4 Gun boats	Bulk of Indian Navy including aircraft carrier <i>Vikrant</i> which could also act as an air base.

**Note:** The above does not include Indian troops engaged in subversive activity, supporting the rebels in the garb of Mukti Bahini since March 1971—some 4 lacs (360,000 Bengalis and 50,000 Indians). The local population was not only hostile towards us but was also fighting against us.

6. Tributes to the East Pakistan Garrison and their Commanding General are no better projected than by the enemy Commanders, foreign Press and our own High Command. Some of these were:-

- 'A veteran of World War II, tall, well-built and full of confidence, he had the reputation of being a "soldier's General". Flamboyant.' (*Indian Army after Independence*, p. 438).
- 'The beaming Niazi was depicted as a Soldier's General' (*The Liberation of Bangladesh*, Major-General Sukhwant Singh).

- 'Admiral Mountbatten complimented the Major on the smart turn out of his men and inquired into his distinguished war record. In 1943 he was "Mentioned in Despatches" and in the jungles of Kohima he was awarded Military Cross for outstanding bravery and leadership.' (*Fauji Akhbar*, 25 May 1946)
  - 'I am most impressed by the wonderful job done by you and all ranks under your command in meeting the latest challenge posed by the enemy in East Pakistan.' (From C-in-C. Yahya, 29 November 1971)
  - 'The heroic fight put up by our armed forces in East Pakistan against overwhelming odds will go down in history as an epic of indomitable courage, reminiscent of the highest traditions of soldiers of Islam.' (Gen. Yahya, speech on 16 December 1971)
  - 'THE LIKE OF HIM ARE FEW IN THE WORLD. Reports quoting US intelligence sources say that resistance put up by General Niazi and his troops is unprecedented in the history of war. No army, denied of supplies completely, has ever fought so long with such undaunted courage.' (*Star Special*, Washington, December 1971)
7. My promotions from Major onwards were all accelerated and I was invariably selected for special tasks and missions both before and after partition and in return praised and decorated. I am the highest decorated officer of the Army and compare favourably with any officer of my age and service group in the armies of the world as recorded below:-
- World War II
    - MC (Military Cross). Mentioned in Despatches, and Commendation Card were awarded for conspicuous courage, efficiency, endurance, and dedication beyond the call of duty. (An Indian to get anything from the British had to be really outstanding, nothing less).
    - In physical combat killed a Japanese Major in hand to hand combat in a duel in Assam during World War II. Nicknamed 'Tiger' Niazi. Was promoted Major from Lieutenant. (In Pakistan I was nicknamed 'Tariq-bin-Ziyad' for operations conducted).

- (3) During World War II my regiment being Rajputs had nicknamed me 'Amar Singh Rathore'.
- b. Pakistan Operations.
- (1) Locust Operations: *Sitara-e-Khidmat*.
- (2) 1965 War: *Hilal-e-Jurat*.
- (3) 1971 War: *Hilal-e-Jurat* and *Sitara-e-Pakistan*.  
(I have the honour of being awarded *Hilal-e-Jurat* twice)
- c. Medals. A total of twenty-four medals have adorned my chest. (More than anyone else in the army).
8. My failing, I would say, was in not being part of any gang of fortune seekers, sycophants, self seekers, social climbers, or conspirators. I always called a spade and never minced my words. I abhorred power politics and held accumulation of wealth in contempt. I was loyal to my superiors and juniors both. I can say without hesitation that I did more for the good of the country and its armed forces than anyone else.
9. I held authority to grant commissions to both officers and JCOs, which was not even enjoyed by the C-in-C. Pakistan Army. I could award battlefield gallantry awards up to *Sitara-e-Jurat*. This delegation of powers which was the prerogative of the Head of the Govt showed their confidence in my being fair in my dealings with all and that my judgement was beyond any suspicion. I don't think there will be any other such example of a Commanding General being given such sweeping powers.
10. Sir, when I got the orders for surrender (I got orders on 13 December 1971 but signed the surrender document on 16 December 1971) as a precautionary measure I had moved all cash (including foreign exchange) and gold in banks to Dhaka in order to protect my country's financial wealth. Who was there to stop me from grabbing a large chunk of cash and gold and fleeing to a neutral country? Asylum is not uncommon in modern society, and could have been arranged. I may not then have lived in abject poverty as compared to the living standards of our top brass today. I would have also escaped the humiliation of signing the surrender document and living in India as a POW. I arranged the burning of all currency under the supervision of Colonel Muhammad Khan.
11. But thievery and deserting troops and people during crises was not Niazi's cup of tea. I decided to surrender with my troops

instead of fleeing from Dhaka in the helicopters in which I sent the women and children. I used all my resources for the protection of the lives of West Pakistanis and Biharis, otherwise they would have been put to death by the thousands, our daughters and sisters would have been raped and sent to brothels in Calcutta as was done by the rebels/Indians in February 1971, and finally the fighting troops would have been placed at the mercy of the Mukti Bahini. At one stage General Manekshaw did send a message (because I was hesitating to surrender) that if the surrender document was not finalized and signed he would let loose the Mukti Bahini. This bluff I called, and finally all actions were taken in consultation with me and in accordance with the Geneva Convention. I stayed with my troops, whereas some very famous generals left their troops when the Goddess of War and fortune deserted them. Hannibal left his troops when defeated at Zama. Napoleon left his troops twice, once in Egypt and once in Russia. Lt-Gen. Yaqub Khan resigned and left his troops in East Pakistan in March 1971.

12. Mr President, I see no cogent reasons for denying me and my family the pension that I earned over a period of four decades, especially when all others who were responsible for the military and political débâcle in East and West Pakistan went unscathed. This was not the end—they were given lucrative jobs after retirement. To single me out was to nail a scapegoat for East Pakistan and to hide and protect the real culprits. I list below some of the important actors in the great tragedy till the curtain fell:

- General Yahya Khan. Two pensions and treatment abroad at Govt. expense. The kingmaker, conspirator, and defaulter was given the honour and privilege of a hero.
- Gen. Abdul Hamid. Right-hand man of Gen. Yahya and virtually the C-in-C. Granted pension and sent abroad for treatment at Govt. expense.
- Lt-Gen. Peerzada. Principal Staff Officer to the President, who never heard a shot fired in anger, betrayed Gen. Yahya, and joined hands with those who opposed him. Granted full pension.
- Lt-Gen. Gul Hassan. Who never heard a bullet fired in anger in Pakistan and yet rose to dizzy heights. Showed reluctance when asked to take over command of East

Pakistan Garrison. All generals evaded posting to East Pakistan; finally I, being twelfth on the seniority list, was selected to command East Pakistan Garrison, because the President, gauging the attitude and performance of generals senior to me, decided to go for efficiency and suitability instead of seniority and formality. As CGS, Gen. Gul Hassan's handling of Divisions and Corps was so disastrous that the war in West Pakistan was lost in spite of the fact we had everything in our favour. He deliberately made false promises to me regarding despatch of reinforcements and equipment for East Pakistan, because professionally he wanted to run me down, and was an active member of the junta which had decided to get me defeated and so lose East Pakistan. He was promoted as COAS in his present rank but was removed by Mr Bhutto. He got his full pension and an ambassadorial job.

e. Air Chief Marshal Rahim. Disgraceful conduct during the 1971 War. He hid himself and his Air Force while the Indian Air Force had more or less free run all over West Pakistan. He was not only retired from his post but made an ambassador and given full pension.

f. Lt.-Gen. Jahanzeb Arbab. He was removed from command of his brigade in East Pakistan by his GOC and sent back from East Pakistan for trial for corruption and looting cash. He was found guilty by an enquiry but was promoted from a Brigadier to the rank of Lt.-Gen. and later retired with full pension.

g. Maj.-Gen. Rao Farman Ali.

(1) The crack-down in March 1971 was presided over by Gen. Farman Ali. The action was so severe and harsh that it resulted in closure of all avenues of compromise with the Awami League. He contacted the UN representative in Dhaka in December 1971 and divulged the contents of a Top Secret document to him without the approval and knowledge of the Governor or myself or the President. He was in close touch with the Indian C-in-C. and the Russians without our knowledge.

(2) He sent Rs 80,000 (a lot of money in 1971) to his

wife through his nephew, a helicopter pilot. The matter was reported but no action taken. He was made Chairman of Fauji Foundation and later a Minister. He is now rolling in money, which raises eyebrows.

h. Major-General Tajamal Hussain. Was court-martialled and punished but his pension was restored after his release on advice of Gen. Aslam Beg, ex COAS.

j. There were two other cases of officers whose pensions were restored. These were:

(1) Colonel Khanzada. Joined INA (Indian National Army) during World War II and was punished but was granted pension by Field Marshal Ayub Khan.

(2) Maj.-Gen. Akbar Khan. Convicted in Rawalpindi Conspiracy case in 1951 but granted pension and made a Minister by Mr Bhutto in 1972.

13. From the above it will be seen that officers convicted of an offence were given pension, but in my case no conviction yet pension withheld.

14. Mr President, I have laid before you in brief all the pain and agony that have come the way of me and my children for reasons best known to those who were responsible for it. Your position as Supreme Commander is unassailable in terms of undoing any injustice. The basic pillar of justice is 'You give concession to one, you have to give it to all.' This is the Law of Equity and no exceptions can be made. There should be the same yardstick for everyone. If the matter were referred to the Ministry of Law or the Chief Justice of Pakistan, they would not deny the Law of Equity which treats all at par in a given situation. Islam spread in the world because it gave justice and fair play top priority and became the saviour of suffering mankind.

15. Must I, therefore, continue to suffer for the reason that I commanded a theatre of war cut off from the centre by a thousand miles, where political expedients dominated the military options? When the shedding of East Pakistan was decided well before the anticipated war? When everyone else directly or indirectly involved with East Pakistan was either fully rehabilitated or granted full pension or given important assignments?

16. Mr President, must the last commander of East Pakistan live his remaining life in misery and his children be made to suffer

and live under a shelter in gross disrepair and without private transport? Must the general and his family be punished and condemned collectively for:

- a. Accepting the command of East Pakistan when the shining stars of the army would not touch it with a bargepole and where two generals had already failed.
  - b. Keeping the Pakistan flag flying for eleven months in East Pakistan against all odds while those responsible for the crackdown and bunglings were conveniently shifted to West Pakistan.
  - c. Not abandoning the command after surrender in order to provide leadership to the troops and thousands of West Pakistanis and millions of Biharis who would have been murdered in cold blood and lakhs of women raped and sold to brothels.
  - d. Suffering the humiliation of signing the surrender documents and remaining in POW camp when I could have escaped without any difficulty.
  - e. Being the highest decorated officer.
  - f. Being denied the Law of Equity which forms an important pillar of justice and Islam.
  - g. A political disaster which emerged after years of fermentation and ultimately exploded in a military debacle. (Niazi a coward and scapegoat).
17. What could be a better projection of a soldier than the battle-field performance report in the form of Annual Manuscript Report by his C-in-C. under whom he fought a war. [See, Appendix 2.]
18. Mr President, my petition is not nourished with malice towards anyone. Names came up only in order to highlight the injustice done to me. I seek justice at the hands of the elected President of the Democratic Islamic Republic of Pakistan, justice denied to me for over two decades, which is the restoration of my pension as Lt-Gen. with retrospect. By retiring me as a Lt-Gen. (the rank which I held for four years) and giving me pension with retrospect, the era of victimization will finally come to a close, and justice will eclipse the period of deprivation, for which I would be very grateful.
19. What better support can be given to me when the troops under my command fought valiantly against heavy odds. It was only possible by excellent leadership provided by the command at all levels. Some examples:

- a. A company comprising 75 men—30 regular troops and 45 Mujahids under a young Captain—at Kamalpur Post held one Indian brigade (3000 men), supported by 18 field guns and 18 mortars, for 21 days. The position was strafed, rocketed and napalmed by enemy aircraft twice daily but the Pakistani troops held their ground.
  - b. One Pak battalion (900 men) at Hilli held one Indian infantry division consisting of 5 infantry brigades (15 battalions) and one tank brigade (3 tank regiments) for 20 days. When the battalion was ordered to fall back to their main position, they did so in perfect order on Bogra, 40 miles behind. This position too was attacked by enemy aircraft twice daily.
  - c. Dafadar Sarwar of a tank regiment at Bogra refused to surrender and went into the Indian positions blazing the guns of his solitary tank. When the tank was destroyed he came out and charged with his personal weapon till he was cut to pieces. The Indian troops reversed slopes and gave him an honourable burial.
  - d. A military burial is given by the enemy to a soldier by whose courage even the enemy is impressed. In World War II millions of soldiers fought for years but there is mention of only one military burial, given by the Germans to a British sergeant. He had accompanied the Commandos who went to kill Rommel in the Western Desert. I had only 45,000 men from West Pakistan and open war lasted for 26 days, during which four of my heroes were given military burial by the Indians (this noble gesture proves that the days of chivalry are not yet over).
20. There may not be any other such examples of courage, efficiency, devotion to duty, and acting on the proverb 'with the board or on the board' in the history of warfare. Had the commander of these troops made no contribution in building their fighting spirit and acts of valour?

21. To reinstate the honour of the commander of East Pakistan would end the last injustice done. He should not suffer as the scapegoat for the sins and omissions of others.

I beg to remain,  
Sir,

Yours Obediently,

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Dated: 23 April 1995

To the above letter, the President of Pakistan chose not to reply.