**Resisting tyranny**

**It was a one-man crusade for freedom, democracy, and rule of law.**

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On October 27, 1958, when Ayub Khan, the first Desi Si­pah-e-Salar took control of the country, I was barely over five years old but the memory of those dark days is etched in my mind. My late fa­ther Nazir Ahmed Malik and uncle Dr Salim Wa­hid Salim, both work­ers of the freedom move­ment were taken aback. While my old man contin­ued to struggle with his business, Dr Salim, the progressive writer and poet, decided on direct inter­vention. The situation was tense, very few dared to stand up. While there were heated discussions in Tea Shops (Pak Tea House, Cof­fee House, Cheney’s Lunch Home, Nagina Bakery, Lords, Shezan, etc) street protests were limited. With excessive use of coercive state ap­paratus, it was clear that resis­tance carried serious consequenc­es. Hamid Nizami was bold with his Nawaiwaqt newspaper, and Habib Jalib was also defiant, but Dr Salim decided on direct action. He decid­ed to go on a hunger strike. It was a one-man crusade for freedom, de­mocracy, and rule of law.

[PM to chair federal cabinet meeting](https://www.nation.com.pk/22-Feb-2023/pm-to-chair-federal-cabinet-meeting)

In the year 1959, Dr Salim organ­ised a hunger strike camp oppo­site the main gate of the Civil Sec­retariat. He had three demands: return of the army to the barracks, investigation into the murder of the Prime Minister (PM), and with­drawal of intelligence monitoring of activists. The strike continued for twelve days—no one seemed interested to negotiate with him. His vital signs started to slowly di­minish. The family was seriously concerned. Every day we walked to the camp to spend time with him. There was no electronic media, only the newspapers covered the event. My mother wanted to save his life at all costs, she kept pres­suring my father to intervene. Be­ing a man of action, my old man or­ganised fake negotiations with the striker who was close to death. A retired bureaucrat was requested to negotiate on behalf of the gov­ernment. Under the watchful eyes of the press, Dr Salim was assured sympathetic consideration of his demands. The strike ended, and a life was saved but Pakistan lost track, tyranny survived and has continued since then. Today the na­tion has the same demands.

[Mainly dry weather expected in most parts of country](https://www.nation.com.pk/22-Feb-2023/mainly-dry-weather-expected-in-most-parts-of-country)

For his defiance, Dr Salim had to pay a heavy price. His movements were closely monitored by the agencies. The entire family fell on hard times, his wife with his two sons migrated back to Aligarh to stay with her parents. With his fail­ing medical practice, Dr Sahib de­cided to try his luck in London. He landed a job with BBC Urdu ser­vice. Only after a few months on the assignment, he was let go. Cor­nered with no source of income, he approached the Pakistan High Commission where he was told that he was under surveillance with no chance of settling down. Finally, he was deported back to his motherland. Dejected and bruised he had to put his life back togeth­er. He kept his intellectual crusade but was financially hurt. Finally, my mother had to organise a family fund to keep him going. Most of his work was published after his death including the poetic translation of the epic Omer Khayyam from Per­sian to Urdu. His two sons (Khalid Salim, and Muslim Salim) grew up in Bhopal. Muslim emerged as a re­nowned poet whose writings have been included in the standard text of the Urdu language both in Paki­stan and India.

[In year of war, US gives Ukraine $30B worth of weapons](https://www.nation.com.pk/22-Feb-2023/in-year-of-war-us-gives-ukraine-dollar-30b-worth-of-weapons)

Those who resisted the stampede were made to suffer, Dr Salim was not alone in this crusade for de­mocracy and rule of law. The dun­geons of the Lahore Fort were ac­tivated to torture those who dared to defy the tyranny. Hassan Nisar, a Marxist activist was tortured to death. When his mother came to retrieve his dead body, it was badly mutilated and beyond recognition. Khan Qayyum Khan, the leading Muslim League leader of his time was also captured and kept in the fort for a week. He decided to seek a truce with the dictator and went home. Ayub Khan’s EBDO (Elected Bodies Disqualification Ordinance) knocked out the entire political leadership of the country. Hussain Shaheed Suharwardy challenged his disqualification in the martial law tribunal and was exonerated by his strong defence but had to leave the country for his safety. A few years later, he was found dead in a Beirut Hotel. With the prevail­ing political vacuum, the Mother of the Nation, Mohtarma Fatima Jin­nah decided to challenge the dic­tator in the Presidential Elections in 1965. She was declared a traitor and had to face vicious character assassination.

[Russia suspends its participation in New START nuclear arms treaty](https://www.nation.com.pk/22-Feb-2023/russia-suspends-its-participation-in-new-start-nuclear-arms-treaty)

The tyrannical state created by repeated martial law regimes con­tinues to derail our freedom strug­gle. Those who defy tyranny are made to suffer. On August 14, 2023, the constitution of the Islamic Re­public of Pakistan will be fifty years old but there is not much to cele­brate. The document has been mu­tilated several times and remains unimplemented. There are around twenty clauses ensuring human rights but not one of them has been discussed, debated, or implement­ed. The Victorian acts prevail after over 75 years of so-called freedom. Preventive detention is the order of the day. Even popular leaders like Imran Khan are not safe. The will of the people has to prevail through free and fair elections which has been denied by those who belong to the barracks. The tyrannical state apparatus needs a major overhaul for nation-building to start.

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