

Mohammad Ishaq Dar – An apology

On 8 July 2019, New Vision television broadcast the Reporters programme in which it was asserted by Choudhury Ghulam Hussain and Sabir Shakir that Mr Ishaq Dar had stolen money from the Pakistani Government and was willing to pay it back if allowed to return to Pakistan. It was also asserted that Mr Ishaq Dar's bank accounts had been traced and that they contained large sums of stolen money in the region of one billion dollars. Further comments were made, asserting that Mr Ishaq Dar had caused someone to be subjected to death threats in order to encourage that person to leave Pakistan.

Mr Ishaq Dar has informed us, and we are prepared to accept, first, that he has not stolen any money from the Pakistani Government, secondly, that no bank account of Mr Ishaq Dar was traced, and consequently, the question of any stolen money does not arise, thirdly, that the claim that Mr Ishaq Dar was willing to pay any such money in order to return to Pakistan was also false and fabricated, and fourthly that Mr Ishaq Dar never made death threats to anyone.

On 8 August 2019, New Vision television broadcast the Powerplay programme. During the course of that programme, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Accountability and Interior Shahzad Akbar asserted that during the period Ishaq Dar was responsible for the Financial Monitoring Unit in Pakistan, he actively and improperly impeded its work, by preventing key institutions accessing systems that would assist it in its functions. It was further asserted that Mr Ishaq Dar had taken those actions to protect individuals who had been involved in the Choudhury Sugar Mills money laundering case.

Mr Ishaq Dar has informed us, and we are prepared to accept, that he never managed the Financial Monitoring Unit, since the Unit was established under the Anti-Money Laundering Act 2010 and operates directly under the State Bank of Pakistan; and therefore, Mr Ishaq Dar never impeded the work of Financial Monitoring Unit nor did he do anything to protect anybody in any case including the alleged Choudhury Sugar Mills money laundering case.

We unconditionally apologise to Mr Ishaq Dar for the significant distress, upset and embarrassment which these broadcasts have caused him.

We have agreed to pay Mr Ishaq Dar substantial damages for libel and to pay his legal costs.