

# Pakistan Trade Union Solidarity

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## Prominent trade unionists abducted by the state Released after a successful international campaign

Six trade unionists and youth organisers were forcefully abducted from Karachi by Sindh Rangers on 22<sup>nd</sup> of April when they were participating in a peaceful demonstration in front of Karachi press club in solidarity with Pashtun's rights movement. Sindh Rangers is a paramilitary force notorious for extrajudicial abductions and murders. They have a history of harassment, brutalising, abduction and killings of workers in the

largest working-class dominated city of Karachi. The abducted workers have leading roles in the Progressive Youth Alliance (PYA) and the Red Workers Front (RWF). They were leading various campaigns for the rights of workers throughout Pakistan in different industrial sectors, and also campaigning for the restoration of student unions. The names of the arrested workers were Karim Parhar, leader of PTM and RWF

Quetta, Attaullah Afridi, Organizer of PYA Karachi, Aftab Ashraf, central organizer of RWF, Umer Riaz, Organizer of PYA Islamabad, Zain ul Abideen, Central Organizer of PYA, Gulbaz, Organizer of RWF Kashmir. Pakistan Trade Union Solidarity Campaign and other workers organisations initiated an international campaign immediately after their abductions. Protests were held by students,

Continued on Page 2



### Pepsi-Co Faisalabad: brutality against workers - 175 forced sacking

Pepsi-Co Company took a revenge against workers who campaigned for the reinstatement of their sacked fellow workers through holding a large demonstration on 29 January 2018 in Faisalabad. Pepsi-Co administration fired 175 workers forcefully without any prior notice or following legal steps. The sacked workers are now protesting against administration's brutality. The workers are saying that they are being victimised for the struggle they did for sacked workers earlier this year. PTUS is completely supporting the Pepsi-Co workers and demanding the company to reinstate the sacked workers immediately. Pepsi-Co Pakistan gives their workers neither permanent employment status, nor any kind of benefits. The daily wage of a precarious worker is 500 rupees (£3.20) and if he or she is lucky enough to get work every day, his or her total salary per month, including one day-off a week, is 13000 rupees

Continued on Page 2



### Anti-worker practices by Metro group of Germany in Pakistan

Metro Cash and Carry belonging to German retail conglomerate Metro AG, the owner of retail chains like Metro, Makro, Real, Media Markt and Saturn, have opened their stores and operations in Pakistan since 2006 and from 2011 have partnered with the notorious Habib group which is famous for its anti-workers and hostile management. The new partnership is named as Metro – Habib Pakistan. A few days before the general secretary of Metro-Habib workers union Farooq Hassan was arrested on the orders of Metro – Habib Pakistan. Pakistan Trade Union Solidarity approached Farooq Hassan and ask about the situation concerning his arrest. He told that Metro – Habib management has registered a secret workers union on papers without the knowledge of employees. The chairman of this secretive union is someone who is not even working in

Continued on Page 2

### **Prominent trade unionists abducted .... Continued**

youth, workers, trade unionists and political leaders in cities including London, New York, Paris, Amsterdam, Rome, Brussels, Vienna, Geneva, Stockholm, Toronto, Montréal, Edmonton, Napoli, Bologna, Prague, Alzey, Ghent, Pavia, Winterthur, Thurgau, Basel, Zurich, Bern, Parma, Liverpool, Wurzburg, Swansea, Gothenburg, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, Kathmandu and many other places. Several of these protests were organised by

### **Metro group .... Continued**

the company. This type of practice is common among companies in Pakistan representing foreign companies to show social compliance on papers. But in reality the story is totally different. When the workers of Metro – Habib company came to know about this pocket union, they registered form their own union and challenge the pocket union in National Industrial Relations Commission of Pakistan and through an election, won the Collective Bargaining Agent CBA rights securing majority of the votes. After this the management went hell bent on victimising and punishing the genuine workers union and CBA agent. They decided to dissolve the trade union without even following any legal steps. Alongside, they started a vicious campaign of victimising and brutalising workers representatives. Several reps were forcefully removed

### **Pepsi-Co .... Continued**

(£83.20). The situation for permanent workers is not much different: they are paid 620 rupees (£3.90) per day, and their monthly salary amounts to 18600 rupees (£119). It is important to note that the very basic living cost in Faisalabad is more than double the salary these workers are earning. However, the greed of the multinational companies knows no bounds. Each bottle of Pepsi-Cola manufactured in Faisalabad contains the blood and sweat of workers toiling in dismal conditions in this factory. The workers' so-called legal guardian (the labour department) is just a silent partner of the bosses, and makes a mockery of labour laws. Usually, workers are hired through middlemen or labour contractors of the factory administration and are offered daily, or monthly contracts: permanent workers

workers, trade unionists and students in front of Pakistani embassies in different countries. As a result of immense international solidarity campaign, Sindh Rangers were forced to release all the abducted people after keeping them for four days in unknown confinement. The abductees were brutally tortured during confinement. After their release, their families are being continuously threatened by police and secret service agencies to avoid taking legal actions. PTUS

from jobs, several were dismissed from their jobs, several were transferred and rest were pressurised to resign from work. Furthermore, these workers were deprived of their salaries which is an illegal in the court of law. They were even not allowed to enter premises and were confined to a certain area to isolate them from talking and contacting other workers. Alongside these repressive measures, numerous fake cases were registered against workers in courts. However due to lack of evidence the cases were rejected by the courts. On June 2018 general secretary of the dissolved workers union Farooq Hassan was invited to Karachi in Habib - Metro office and was arrested by private security guards. Later he was handed over to the police citing numerous fake cases against him. Management was using this tactic forcing him to retreat on un-

few. Unionising workers is a far-fetched dream under these circumstances. The EOBI (Government Pension Contribution System) and government social security system are also non-existent. Employees are forced to work more than 12 hours every day, and their hard-earned wages are subject to cuts and delays. Even the massive exploitation of Pepsi-Cola was not enough, and they started laying-off workers who demanded a pay rise. This created widespread anger amongst the workers, and on 29 January 2018 they shut down the whole factory and went on strike. The principal demand of striking workers was to reinstate their laid-off colleagues. Overnight, workers staged a sit-in strike outside the factory gates. The bosses used all tactics to disperse the workers including a threat to crush them

campaign volunteers and supporters were present in all demonstrations around the world. PTUS seeking affiliation from leading trade unions across the country and to show complete solidarity with the released workers and youth organisers from Pakistan. PTUS also appeal to international workers movements to condemn state abductions of workers. Please contact us to send letter of solidarity and affiliate to our campaign.

ion's allegations against the management. Management is fearful that a properly organised trade union the workplace will eventually fight against the exploitation going on in Metro – Habib group which includes low wages, extensive working hours often over time without overtime, non-existent health and safety measures resulting in injury and death of workers at workplaces and massive outsourcing of work to notorious contractors famous for super-exploiting workers. PTUS standing in support of Metro – Habib workers and is urging international working class movement and trade unions in the retail sector to support the workers struggle in Metro-Habib in Pakistan. We are confident that only through international working class solidarity, we can fight against injustices and enable workers to win their rights.

using factory cargo trucks, but not a single threat could budge the workers. The bosses also called a heavy contingent of the police to scare them (see below). Meanwhile, they tried to have a dialogue with the workers, in an attempt to force them to end the strike and withdraw their demands, but they failed. At last the administration announced to reinstate the laid-off workers but asked for a time extension until March 2018 to increase the workers' wages. After negotiation, the workers ended the strike with the partial fulfilment of their demands. However, no salary increase was provided in March and instead 175 workers were laid off. PTUS is standing side-by-side struggling workers of Pepsi-Co Faisalabad and demanding international workers and trade unions to show solidarity with Pepsi-Co workers.

## Continuation of demonstrations by professors and lecturers in Baluchistan

Baluchistan Professors and Lecturers Association (BPLA) are staging demonstration against the Baluchistan provincial government for their demands. The demand includes, approval of higher education allowances release of research funds and restoration of holiday pay. The leaders of the BPLA informed that the Chief Minister of the province has agreed to the allowances and all of their demands and furthermore, the department of Finance has also released the funds. However the corrupt bureaucrats are posing a hurdle in the imple-

mentation of the Chief Minister's decision. This protest is BPLA's first-ever protest in the last 40 years. They are demanding that the government and the bureaucracy should not only listen their demands but also to implement the decisions taken by the government to fulfil the demands.



## Privatised electric companies and heat wave - numerous people died in Karachi

The recent heat wave soared temperatures up to 50 degrees centigrade in Karachi and there are reports that at least 65 people died in the month of May 2018. However the death figures are way about the official quoted figures –reason being that the official report is based on data collected from only two only two regions by a private firm. If we count on the wrong methodology adopted in compiling the report, then it is safe to assume that hundreds of peo-

conditioned offices travelling on air-conditioned cars and living in air-conditioned houses. Heat related deaths are happening each year and the response of government is pathetic. There is no public infrastructure or any mechanism to deal with such deaths. Hospital have limited facilities to cater heat stroke patients. Workplace health and safety law dealing with extreme weathers are practically non-existent and its impact on workers' health is alarming.

appliances, like fan and electric coolers meant to reduce the impact of soaring temperatures cannot be used by poor people as they are left often without electricity. Furthermore, inability to operate electric water pump aggravate water crisis in hot weather. The situation of electricity supply is worsening every year particularly after privatisation of electrical companies across the country. To save money and increase profits, electrical companies are reduc-



ple are dying each day in extreme hot weather. Mostly people from poor working class areas are dying because of the heat wave. The rich are prone to heat because of their expensive and lavish lifestyles involving working in air-

There are no retirement places at workplaces to deal with the heat related tiredness, neither workers are allowed to have time off in case of extreme temperatures. Workers are forced to work in extreme heat resulting in strokes.

Workers in construction, textiles, foundries and boilers are at worst. Most of people die in houses particularly when there is no electricity due to the 'load management' of Karachi electrical supply company (K-Electric), whereby, they divert electricity to large businesses and posh localities rather than to working class communities. The home

ing the distribution load and supplying electricity to only those people that matters. Despite of extensive load management technique, basically cutting electricity supply, the energy bills received by the poor is soaring each year. Profits of electricity companies are increasing every year but the situation of electricity supply is worsening particularly for the working class. This is the fruit of privatisation in the electricity supply sector. PTUS strongly oppose privatisation and propose that the only way to fight against this menace is through an organised workers struggle. Only such struggle can guarantee uninterrupted electrical and water supply to all homes and proper implementation of health and safety measures at workplaces to deal with extreme weather events.





### Thal Engineering workers protest in Karachi against lay-offs.

Thal Engineering Company is tier 1 supplier to major automotive brands such as Jaguar Land Rover, Nissan, Honda, Toyota, Suzuki, Daihatsu and Dae-woo. In a continued wave of sackings, a further 21 workers were fired from their job by the management. Resultantly, workers of Thal Engineering staged a protest in front of Karachi press club. The protest was joined by workers of Sui Northern Gas Company (largest domestic and industrial gas supplier in Pakistan), Adamjee Engineering Company, General Tyres Limited, Pixar Industries along with many others. The workers of Thal engineering were in

fact protesting in January 2018 demanding their fair rights of pay and pensions. Workers and their leaders from different companies promise to stand shoulder to shoulder with the struggle of their fellow colleagues in Thal engineering. Workers are still protesting on a rolling basis alongside negotiating with the management to revert back the decision of sacking the workers. Pakistan Trade Union Solidarity campaign consider it important to highlight the struggle of engineering workers and appeal to international workers organisations and unions in engineering and manufacturing sectors to support the struggle of engi-

neering workers against illegal sackings and their genuine right of employment.



### Victory for workers struggle in Gulistan Textile Mills against non-payment of salaries



Gulistan group is the third largest textile group in Pakistan serving all major brands in Western countries as their Tier 2 and Tier 3 suppliers in the supply chain. Despite of the fact that business group is making enormous profits, they were not paying worker salaries. However, for a continued three years of struggle by the workers of Gulistan textile mills, finally, the management

decided to pay them their salaries. Workers faced numerous challenges in these three years. They faced intimidation, harassment, bullying, arrests, jail terms and above all faced extreme form of poverty for themselves and their families. However, these workers decided never to retreat from their struggle, and henceforth finally forced the management to listen to their demands and to pay them their salaries. This is a great victory for workers.

## Support Pakistan Trade Union Solidarity Campaign

Please provide your details and support.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Trade union / organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

### Suggested support contributions

National Trade Union:	UK £500	US \$1,000
Regional Bodies:	UK £250	US \$500
Branches:	UK £100	US \$200
Individual Waged:	UK £10	US \$20
Individual Unwaged:	UK £5	US \$10

### Campaign account

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