

## **Für die sofortige Freilassung der vom Antiterrorismus-Gericht in Faisalabad verurteilten Gewerkschafter und die Organisationsfreiheit der Arbeitenden**

Wir protestieren gegen die Verurteilung von sechs führenden Gewerkschaftern zu insgesamt 490 Jahren Gefängnis durch ein Antiterrorismus-Gericht.

Dieses Urteil folgt auf einen bedeutenden sozialen Konflikt in Faisalabad, einem Industriezentrum in der pakistanischen Provinz Punjab. Unternehmer der Textilindustrie ließen Webereiarbeiter\_innen, die für ihre Löhne und ihr Recht auf soziale Sicherung kämpften, gewaltsam angreifen. Die Unternehmer schreckten nicht vor dem Einsatz von bewaffneten Leuten zurück. Zwei Gewerkschafter wurden getötet; eine Reihe von Arbeitern wurde heftig geschlagen.

Es ist nicht hinzunehmen, dass Aktivist\_innen und führende Köpfe der Arbeiterbewegung wegen Antiterrorismus-Gesetzen angeklagt werden, weil sie zur Verteidigung der grundlegenden Rechte von Lohnabhängigen aktiv geworden ist, und es ebenso wenig hinzunehmen, dass sie jetzt zu ganz besonders harten Strafen verurteilt worden sind. Gegen die Unternehmer, die bewaffnete Leute geschickt haben, ist keine Untersuchung eingeleitet worden.

Die Textilarbeiter\_innen in Faisalabad sind mit einer gewalttätigen Einschüchterungskampagne konfrontiert – einem Versuch, sie zum Schweigen zu bringen und ihnen leichter die grundlegenden Rechte auf tragbare Arbeitsbedingungen, anständige Löhne und soziale Sicherheit vorzuenthalten. Wir solidarisieren uns mit den Arbeitenden, die vor dieser Herausforderung stehen sowie mit den Organisationen, die von der Repression betroffen sind: dem Labour Qaumi Movement (LQM) in Faisalabad sowie anderen, die an diesem Kampf beteiligt sind, darunter die National Trade Union Federation (NTUF).

Am 15. November 2011 hat die International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF – Internationale Textil-, Bekleidungs- und Lederarbeiterföderation) gegen die Unterdrückung gegen die Arbeitenden in Faisalabad protestiert.

Wir fordern die sofortige Freilassung der gefangenen Aktivisten und führenden Gewerkschafter sowie die Einhaltung der Rechte der Arbeitenden auf Organisation und kollektive Vereinbarungen.

## **Pakistan: labour solidarity**

You will find attached:

A draft standard letter, to be adapted and approved...

Details of a labour union contact in Pakistan (NTUF)

The position statement of the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF)

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### **For the immediate liberation of trade union leaders convicted by the antiterrorist court in Faisalabad, and for the respect of workers' right to organise**

We protest against the condemnation of six trade union leaders to a total of 490 years imprisonment by an anti-terrorist court.

This conviction comes after a significant social conflict in Faisalabad, an industrial centre in Punjab, Pakistan. Textile sector employers violently attacked weaving workers in struggle for their salaries and their right to social security. The employers did not hesitate to use armed men. Two unionists were killed; a number of workers were seriously beaten.

It is unacceptable that labour activists and leaders are charged under anti-terrorist laws because they took action in defence of the basic rights of wage-earners, and equally unacceptable that they are now condemned to particularly heavy punishments. The employers who sent in armed men against the workers have not been investigated.

Textile workers in Faisalabad are facing a violent campaign of intimidation: an attempt to silence them, to make it easier to deny their fundamental rights to decent working conditions, a decent wage and social protection. We give solidarity to the workers facing this challenge, as well as the organisations suffering repression: the Labour Qaumi Movement (LQM) from Faisalabad – and others involved in this struggle, including the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF).

On 15 November 2011, the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF) protested against the repression of workers in Faisalabad in a press statement.

We demand the immediate liberation of the imprisoned activists and labour leaders, as well as the respect of workers' right to organise and their right to collective bargaining.

**Signature**

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**Reference:**

**ITGLWF Condemns Jailing of Pakistan Power Loom Union Leaders**

ITGLWF, PRIEGNITZ Klaus

15 November 2011

The International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation has strongly condemned the brutal campaign waged by employers on workers and unions in Faisalabad, Pakistan.

Speaking in Brussels the ITGLWF's General Secretary Klaus Priegnitz said "In July this year workers in Faisalabad were forced to go on strike to secure a 17% pay increase that was adopted by Government but which employers refused to pay. Over 100,000 workers went on strike in Faisalabad and the surrounding areas. The employers responded by launching a brutal campaign of violence and intimidation seeking to silence workers and deny them their fundamental rights. As part of this campaign workers have been attacked by armed men employed by factory owners, some have been shot while others have been badly beaten. "

The Labour Education Foundation Director Khalid Mahmood highlighted the severity of attacks on workers. "The owners and their henchmen resorted to violence by throwing stones and bricks on the peaceful march of workers from one side of the protest, while police used tear gas shells on the workers from the other end. 25 workers were injured including Mr. Tahir Rana, the president of LQM Faisalabad district, who was critically injured. Around 100 workers were also arrested."

Mr Priegnitz continued by stating: "This vicious campaign has now culminated in a decision by the Anti Terrorism Court to sentence 6 trade union leaders from the Labour Qaumi Movement (LQM) to a total of 490 years in jail on falsified charges. The involvement of the police and the judiciary in this process shows that Pakistan's state agencies are actively working with employers to assist in the repression of fundamental human rights."

Concluding Priegnitz called for "the immediate release of the union leaders and respect for the right of workers to organise and bargain collectively".

Date: 15 November 2011

<http://www.itglwf.org/lang/en/ITGLWFCondemnsJailingofPowerLoomUnionLeaders.html>