

Pakistan: Ship Breaking Worker Expire Due Injuries

Thursday 8 July 2010, by [MANSOOR Nasir](#), [NTUF](#) (Date first published: 8 July 2010).

We are reproducing below information on the Ship Breaking Yard Gadani workers' fight as the reach us.

See previously: [Call for solidarity with Gadani Ship Breaking Workers in Pakistan](#)

Ship Breaking Worker Expire Due Injuries

Ship breaking worker Bak Rawan is dead but no body no where is his dead body. It is routine matter for contractors to hid the news about these kind death at work place and shift the dead body immediately to ancestral village with the criminal collusion of local police officials.

Nasir Mansoor
NTUF

Another worker seriously injured at Ship Breaking Yard Gadani

“SOS”

Contractors are forcing the workers to break the strike and resume work. today at 7am one contractor forced the dozens of workers who reside in the boundary wall of yard to work or leave the residential hut.

Some workers succumbed to the pressure and started to work with out any safety equipment, one worker named “Bak Rawan” fell up side down from the height of 55 feet top of ship and critically injured at plot (yard) 113 owned by Babu Sadiq, there is wide spread rumors that he is dead. No FIR launched till this write up. Two days ago three workers at plot 68 severely burnt and no body know what is condition of these workers and in which hospital they are being treated.

Media is largely silent spectator, session court of Lasbella district restrained union leaders from all kind of trade union activities, private canteens (dhabas) and provisions/grocery shops stop to give food and other daily use and consume items on credit on the instruction of contractors, workers are warned to shun union activities otherwise they were ejected from residential quarter, police is with contractors and ship yard owners and government is no where to listen the grievances.

Workers are in high spirit and expecting strong supporting voices from individuals and organizations having serious concern on violation of fundamental rights of ship breaking workers.

Nasir Mansoor
National Trade Union Federation, Pakistan

Three ship breaking workers severely burn

Today is third day of strike. Yesterday owner and contractors try their hard to break the strike but failed however at two or three yards out of 60 yard only ten to fifteen workers forced to work.

Today union make extra measures to persuade the workers to observe the strike, now all yards are stand still except at yard no 68 called "Well Come plot" run by the most dreaded contractor Bakhti Rehman where 15 workers were force to work. Because of no safety measures and proper working chain three worker have been severely burned early morning and there is fire at the ship berth for scrapping. They are now lying at government hospital in Gadani with any treatment. No media is there to take up the issue.

Yesterday session court retrain president and general secretary of the ship breaking union. From taking part in any union activity at Gadani ship breaking site till 21 July. COURT FOR WORKERS?

Thousands of workers gathering at union office for the protest rally.
Please use you contacts in media to highlight on going struggle of one of the most deprived section of industries.

Nasir Mansoor
National Trade Union Federation, Pakistan

Video from Gadani Strike

July 5th, 2010 — Workers affiliated with the Gadani Ship-Breaking Democratic Workers' Union on the first day of their indefinite strike. Despite everyone's sympathies lying with the union, the police forced several workers out of their quarters into the shipyards in the early morning; they arrested two activists who were organizing workers to arrive at the office, and further tried to take two union leaders into custody once hundreds had gathered for a rally.

However, in a heartening display of strength and solidarity, workers reacted furiously to the second of the two attempted arrests at the union's office, and forced the police to back down. In short order, the day was won—the first union leader was promptly freed, and—by the end of the day—the two activists were, as well.

This video was taken at a march, several thousands strong, that set

out soon after these events."

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SULy2CRfmh0> (March)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALmE17PZZ28> (Interview)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQRzC-2Wzuk> (Interview 2)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tq--1YezPVI> (Interview 3)

10,000 Ship breaking workers come together at Gaddani!!

Press Release

5th July, 2010.

In a historic display of strength and unity, 10,000 ship breaking workers came together in Gadani today to protest deplorable working conditions and demand the fulfillment of repeatedly broken promises.

Even before the rally began, the massive congregation faced systematic harassment from the police and Anti Terrorism Task Force, who had arrived four hours in advance of the scheduled protest time of 10:30am. Not only did they attempt to physically force the protestors back to work, but led a baton charge on 150 workers, which resulted in several casualties. After wounding numerous protesters, security forces detained Edhi ambulances for a full 2 hours and prevented paramedics from tending to the injured.

Then in an attempt to intimidate the organizers and disperse the rally, the heavily armed police arrested, without just cause, the General Secretary of the Gadani Ship Breaking Democratic Workers Union (GDSBDWU), Mr. Tahir Yusufzai and threatened to arrest the Deputy General Secretary of the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF), Mr. Nasir Mansoor. However, the sheer presence of thousands of workers forced the SHO Mr. Amir Abdullah to back down from his confrontational stance and release Mr. Tahir Yusufzai.

A convention was held noting the long struggle of the workers. Mr. Nasir Manzoor from the NTUF, Mr. Tahir Yusufzai from GDSBDWU, Mr. Ghulam Mustafa from BNP all spoke at the convention.

The workers then commenced their 8km march along the Gadani shoreline at 10:45am and were joined by over 10,000 workers. Despite the squalid living conditions forced upon the workers for years past, they found joy in solidarity with their fellow workers and were in high spirits throughout the protest.

The ship breaking owners had previously agreed to meet the workers' demands by 30th June in return for them calling off the strike scheduled from 16th to 30th June. The owners' refusal to abide by the agreement and their underhand attempts to demoralize the union through physical threats and intimidation has only served to strengthen the resolve of the workers. Taking into account the owners' lack of good faith and their deceitful efforts to deny basic rights to the workers, it was unanimously decided by all present that an indefinite strike be called from the 5th of July till the following demands were met:

*100% increase in wages

*Registration with Social Security and Old age Benefits Institutes

*Medical Dispensary and Ambulance at each ship breaking yard

*Clean drinking water and canteen at each yard

*Appointment letter for every worker

* End of contract (JAMADARY) system

*Workers residential colony

*Recognition of representative character of GSBDW Union

*Occupational safety measures at work place

*End of police harassment against workers

For more information, please call Nasir Manzoor, Deputy General Secretary National Trade Union Federation at 0300-2449970



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Brief Gadani Report

We arrived at 730, just in time to see four police vehicles arrive. SHO Amir Abdullah was at their head, tailed by thuggish group of Anti Terrorist Task Force officers (assault rifles in hand), and roughly a dozen police (lathis and tear gas at the ready).

Immediately they attempted to disperse the hundreds of workers that had gathered (We learned later that they had been making rounds since the morning, forcing wrkrs to go to work. I myself talked to four or fiven on the phonen who weren't allowed out)

They arrested Tahir, president of the union. The SHO then moved to arrest Nasir, despite offering no justification. And they would have succeeded had the workers not intervened. The police backed off as soon as they found themselves surrounded on both sides. Soon after the police were forced to free Tahir, too.

From then on the day was ours. A rally of several hundreds was held, which soon turned into a march of several thousands along the road that runs along the shoreline. Perhaps as many as 7000 workers marched 9 km, and then held a massive rally in front of a different plot.

Along the way I passed workers' quarters-saw the hideous water they are forced to drink, the heinous conditions in which they're forced to live. Nevertheless, everyone was in tremendous spirits. The police were there-but shamed into silence. Three Edhi ambulances that they had tried to stop from entering had forced themselves through and were bearing witness.

The rally ended an hour ago, and we have convened back at the office. A meeting is being held to decide on a further course of action.

More details to follow.

Adaner

Gadani Ship breaking workers on move

Dear all,

The newly formed union of Gadani Ship Breaking industry have gone on strike today for wage increases and better conditions of workers.

This morning police tried to arrest the secretary of the union but workers resisted and got their leader released. Police also tried to arrest Nasir Mansoor labour secretary Labour Party Pakistan who led a delegation of 20 social and media activists from Karachi to Gadani to express solidarity with workers.

Here are some glimpse of this morning rally and public meeting, the first ever mass activity of the union in the area.

More updates later,

Farooq Tariq

Please SMS to SHO Gadani to stop terrorizing ship breaking

Gadani Police has been harassing the ship breaking workers since the announcement of indefinite strike. You all are requested to show you solidarity with 15000 workers and send sms or phone to Mr Amir Abdullah, SHO Gadani to stop terrorizing the workers and supporting the ship owners and

contractors. His cell number is +923442215612.

You may send this sms to the SHO

“Amir Abdullah sb., 15,000 workers from the Gadani shipyards have announced their intention to go on an indefinite strike, beginning 5th July. Their cause is just, and we support it. We expect the Police to stand aside as the workers exercise their constitutional rights. Any intervention in support of the ship owners and contractors will be strongly condemned. We will be watching closely.”

Nasir Mansoor
Deputy General Secretary
National Trade Union Federation, Pakistan

Ship Breaking Worker chalk out action plan in press conference on Thursday

Excerpts from the English-language press release:

"Despite working for twelve to fourteen hours a day, workers receive between 200 and 300 rupees, and remain unregistered in any government social security institution through which they could access medical facilities. Despite having worked for ten to fifteen years, they don't have formal confirmation of their employment status. Even though the conditions of work are arduous, there are next to no workplace safety guidelines—they are not provided safety shoes, gloves, goggles, helmets, belts, or other necessary safety items. As a result of this neglect, in the last year some 17 workers have died on the job. There is no clean water to drink, nor any reasonable food provided. Neither are workers given decent accommodation, nor is there any hospital nearby that could guarantee emergency treatment in the event of an accident.

...

On average, about 140 ships are kept at Gadani. Each of these weighs about 30,000 tonnes, and its dismantling requires about 200 to 250 workers working for three months. The scrap metal is sold for 45,000 rupees per ton, while each worker's daily pay is, at most, 300 rupees. Recently the navy ship Lady Diana was brought to Gadani in order to be broken down. It weighed some 38,000 tonnes, and had been bought for 480,000,000 rupees. It took four months to dismantle, and from the work the owner of the ship-breaking yard made off with 1,710,000,000 rupees. This, remember, was just one of the ships at Gadani—the fact that workers dismantle 140 ships every three months gives you some idea of the kind of profits that the owners make. In addition to the value of the scrap metal, of course, employers can sell other parts of the ship for profit—machinery, other forms of metal, and wood, for example. From each ship, also, the owners can extract large quantities of oil. All this while workers, collectively, make only 6,800,000

rupees per ship, and the contractor—who has no legal right to play the role he does—makes off with as much as 2,500,000 rupees. This gives you an idea of the level of exploitation in the industry.

...

If, as promised, these have not been accepted by the 30th of June, the workers will be fully justified in going to any lengths to force the issue—including an indefinite strike."

Gadani workers demonstration in Karachi, July 8, 2010



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P.S.

* Gaddani or Gadani is a small coastal city of Lasbela District located in the southern part of Balochistan along the Arabian Sea, Pakistan.