

# Political prisoners in Gilgit (Pakistan), My desperation: But not giving up

Friday 13 January 2012, by [BOYLE Peter](#), [SARWAR Beena](#), [TARIO Farooq](#) (Date first published: 2011).

Baba Jan and six other political activists, all members of Labour Party Gilgit Beltistan are in jail since August 2011. There were a total of over 30 arrested after people of Hunza protested against the killing of a father and son. Both were among the protesters who were demanding compensation for all the victims of Atta Abad Lake disaster. Only Labour Party Gilgit Beltistan are in jail now all other are released on medical grounds or on bail.

Baba Jan, a member of federal committee of LPP and organizer of Progressive Youth Front (PYF) and his comrades in jail has refused to budge and apologies. They are facing charges in 12 different cases registered against them including the anti terrorist charges.

The only crime they committed was to rise up against police brutality after the killing of two innocent citizens by police officers.

Baba Jan is well known political activist of the valley. He was the main leader of Peoples Youth Organisation, linked to PPP before he joined Labour Party Pakistan in 2005. He is a former elected member of the district assembly of Hunza.

Baba Jan was the first activist who raised the voice on Atta Abad lake water rise in January 2010; he organized demonstrations, rallies in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi to raise the issue. Because of his consistent voice on the issue, it became a national issue.

The PPP government announced after a lot of hue and cry a compensation of 500,000 Rupees for all victims of the lake. 25 victims were not paid. People of the valley protested on the arrival of chief minister of Gilgit Betistan, they were fired at, two died on the spot. The Hunza valley inhabitants rebelled against the killing. Baba Jan was among those who led the mass protest.

Police showed a fake FIR registered against the police officers involved to the masses to cool them down. Later they arrested several dozen. Baba Jan went in underground. We feared for his life and then he courted arrest to escape killing.

A judicial commission formed just after the incident gave a report to the government. The commission report blamed police and the government for the episode. The report was kept secret for three months, Now it is leaked to the press.

Baba Jan has been targeted by PPP government. They have offered him many concessions if he agrees to apologies or work with PPP. He has refused to do so.

He is in jail because he is member of Labour Party and is not compromising. Because he is from Labour Party and not Tehreek Insaaf, PPP, PMLN, ANP or MQM, he is ignored by the main stream commercial media.

Prime minister claims daily that there are no political prisoners in Pakistan; here I tell you that seven in Gilgit are political prisoners. Ask any one in Gilgit Betistan if Baba Jan has ever indulged in any

terrorist activity, or in violent activity? Yet, he is facing terrorist charges.

Why PPP ministers are offering him concessions to leave LPP. A dirty game is going on. PPP government is guilty. They are teaching political activists a lesson because he made up his mind to be with Labour Party Pakistan. Commercial Media is quit because we are no news. We are labour. The news is only for the rich and those who can give them advertisements. "We are not the equal citizens of Pakistan and hence should not be in the politics". That is what they want us to believe, however, we are equal citizens of Pakistan and will take part in politics come what may.

Baba Jan is firm. We are not giving up. We are launching a political campaign for Baba Jan release.

Please issue a press release for the release of Baba Jan.

Please join this facebook on Baba Jan

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/124069531026580/>

**Farooq Tariq**

spokesperson

Labour Party Pakistan

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## **Protest in Karachi demand release of Baba Jan**

Posted on 04 October 2011. Tags: baba jan shinaki, nasirabad

Source (Dardistantimes) Dozens of protesters from Gilgit-Baltistan gathered outside Karachi Press Club, demanding immediate release of Baba Jan and other local residents arrested by law-enforcement agencies in Hunza. The demonstrators held banners reading 'Release Baba Jan and stop harassment', 'Compensate Attabad Affectees' etc.

"People are paying the price for speaking up. The campaign to harass, arrest and detain political workers and normal people in Gilgit-Baltistan is in the milieu of the genuine demands for rehabilitation and compensation of the lake affected people." Speakers at the gathering maintained.

The speakers criticised the government for its slothful response to rehabilitate and compensate the people— while keeping a tight rein on the right to protest. The demonstrators demanded that the local authorities should stop engineering fake cases against peaceful protesters and release those in lock-ups.

The protest rally was organized jointly, by Labour Party Sindh, Progressive Youth Front (PYF), Balawaristan National Student Organization (BNSO), Karakoram Student Organization (KSO) and Gilgit-Baltistan Youth Adhoc Committee (GBYAC). Sajjad Zahir, Shabir Azad, Razaq Alvi, Rafique Chingari and Shabir Miyar of the organizing parties address the rally and demanded immediate release of more than 20 workers associated with labour Party, Progressive Youth Front and other political affiliates from Gilgit-Baltistan.

It is pertinent to remind that the youth agitation escalated in the region when local police opened fire on a protest demonstration in Alliabab, killing two innocent residents. The shooting incident followed by several arrests and night raids on the pretext that the demonstrators 'vandalized public property' in Hunza.

\* <http://www.mygilgit.com/blog/tag/nasirabad/>

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## **Letter to Pakistan High Commissioner for Baba Jan**

Dear Mr Abdul Malik Abdullah,

Source(socialist-alliance.org) We are writing to ask for your urgent intervention with the government of Pakistan to secure the release of Mr Baba Jan and five other political prisoners currently detained in the region of Gilgit-Baltistan. Mr Baba Jan is a leader of both the highly respected Labour Party Pakistan and the Progressive Youth Front in the region.

During a peaceful demonstration on August 11 by local residents of Gilgit-Baltistan demanding the payment of compensation allowances due to them following the devastating flood and landslide in the valley of Hunza on July 4, 2010, the police opened fired on the protesters, killing Afzal Baig (22 years old), then his father, Sher Ullah Baig (50 years old) who was trying to protect him. The following day, the population of Aliabad and other localities of Hunza rose up, clashing with the police. On August 19, in an attempt to silence the protesters and conceal these murders from public view, 36 people were picked up by police, then another 33 were picked up on September 16.

After initially avoiding arrest, Baba Jan gave himself up to authorities – not because he has committed any crime, but under threat of being “disappeared” if he was captured, a victim of an “extrajudicial execution”. The judge had sent Baba Jan to prison on judicial remand. However, he dragged from his by the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) and tortured for two days – suspended by ropes and severely beaten – in an attempt to extract false confessions from him.

We are aware that these events in Gilgit-Baltistan have featured on the front pages of Pakistan’s national press, as they should have: the inhumane treatment of Baba Jan and the other prisoners, whose only “crime” was to speak up for the basic human rights of fellow Pakistanis, has outraged all those who respect democracy and justice.

We in Australia have joined the international campaign to demand the immediate and unconditional release of Jan Baba and the other prisoners.

*(Video Source via Youtube) Baba Jan’s message to the people and government [Video recorded before his arrest]*

We also join with the Asian Human Rights Commission in calling for an end to the repression in Gilgit-Baltistan, and insist that the government of Pakistan prosecutes the police and intelligence officials responsible for these violations of human rights.

We ask you to insist to your government that the false charges against the demonstrators be dropped, and that full compensation be paid to all the people affected by the landslide of July 4, 2010.

*(Video Source via Youtube) Baba Jan’s message to the youth [Video recorded before his arrest]*

We look forward to your swift response on this issue, and to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Boyle  
National Convener  
Socialist Alliance

\* Posted in Hunza NagarComments (0)

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## **Activists protest detention of Baba Jan, fear torture | Gilgit-Baltistan**

Baba Jan speaking at a demonstration for the flood-affected earlier this year  
Farooq Tariq of the Labour Party Pakistan has sent an urgent email appeal to protest the detention of LPP federal committee member Baba Jan who had surrendered himself before an anti-terrorist court in Gilgit last week. He “has been taken out of jail in Gilgit and now the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) is torturing him on the name of investigation,” fears LPP. The judge had sent Baba Jan to prison on judicial remand instead of physical remand to the police. “He was dragged out of jail yesterday by the intelligence agencies,” alleges the alert.

Labour Party Pakistan demonstrated today at Islamabad National Press Club and has planned more demonstrations across Pakistan.

Baba Jan’s “crime” was that he had organised rallies and demonstrations against the police firing that killed two activists near Atta Abad Lake. They had been among the protesters demanding compensation for those affected by damage caused by the Atta Abad Lake floods last year.

Instead of arresting the police officers involved in the death of two activists, police registered 16 cases against Baba Jan and others. They arrested over 36 activists. The community protected Baba Jan but after a month underground, he surrendered himself at a court. Currently, six activists including Baba Jan are under arrest, facing charges many of which are believed to be fabricated.

Baba Jan joined Labour Party Pakistan in 2004 and was elected to the LPP federal committee at its congress in Faisalabad in 2010. Previously one of the main leaders of Peoples Youth, he had left the PPP youth wing to join LPP and organized Progressive Youth Front (PYF) across Gilgit Baltistan. He was among the first one to raise the issue of Atta Abad Lake and toured Pakistan in 2011 to organize rallies and demonstrations to highlight the plight of the villagers who lost their homes due to this newly formed lake caused by deforestation, soil erosion and climate change. He spoke to national media in press conferences held in Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad.

The corporate media finally took up the issue and some compensation was paid to the affectees. However, a new movement began to urge compensation for all the affected, as some had not been compensated. Police opened fire in July 2011 killing two activists; Baba Jan and his comrades took up the case.

Labour Party Pakistan appeals to all human rights organisations, political parties, trade unions, youth and peasant organisation to take up the case of Baba Jan to save his life.

For more information, please contact Ihsan Ali president Gilgit Baltistan High Court Bar Association and member of LPP Federal committee (03462524792) or Nisar Shah general secretary Labour Party Pakistan (0300 2147960)

Posted on September 15, 2011 by Beena Sarwar

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<http://beenasarwar.wordpress.com/2011/09/15/activists-protest-detention-of-gilgit-baltistan-activist-baba-jan-fear-torture/>

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