

Pakistan: Police attacked village in revolt near Lahore, one killed, dozens injured, police register murder case against peasants leaders

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On 17th May at 5pm, over 50 police men along with District Police Officer Sheikhupura attacked a small village called Dehra Sehgal near Lahore. They started beating the women and children without any warning or reason. During their over an hour stay in this small village, they arrested five peasants and 24 peasants were injured including 16 women.

After the incident, the peasants brought the injured women on the main GT Road and blocked the road in protest. One of the main leaders of Workers Party Ghulam Dasghir Mehboob also arrived at the blockade. He was a trade union leader of the area and has led struggle against privatization along with us for long time.

Police attacked again to disperse the crowd injuring more women and youth. Police started using tear gas and aerial firing. This resulted the death of a passer by Arif belonging to Kotli Kamboh Gojranwala. Arif father of six was returning to Gojranwala after buying some buffalos and stopped at Manu abad because of traffic jam. He went to see what happened when police grabbed him. He told the police that he is not one of the protesters. Despite that he was severally beaten up and was later hit by a bullet, he die on the way to hospital. His family has refused to sign a paper stating that he was killed by the protesters. The family is terrified.

The police have registered a murder case including anti terrorist charges against 132 persons belonging to this village including Ghulam Dastghir Mehboob, Khalil, Sadique, Nazir and Mohammed Tariq Jawad. They are all political activists and has taken part in several peasant movements.

Dehra Sehgal has been centre of a peasant revolt in the seventies. When Bhutto announced land reforms, the tenants of this area got hold of the land they were cultivating. They possessed this land till now totaling 125 acre of agriculture land. Sehgal family owned it. In 2011, after Asif Sehgl failed to get possession of this land, he hired some local gangsters including Shafee Mehr. They were promised that of they take possession of this land, half of the land will be given to them free of cost.

It was Shafee Mehr who had organized the police to attack the village.

Those who are in police custody include Asif, Bashir, Ashraf, Akram and Shujat. They are falsely charged of decoitry stating that they have snatched a motor cycle and 32000 Rupees near Dehra Sehgal.

I have been several times to Dehra Sehgal to speak in study circle, public meetings. I went last year to attend the funeral of Mohammed Asghar, the main leader of this peasant movement. Their

organization called Gharib Itihad Anjamn Shamsia is part of Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee has been very active. Last year, Abid Hasan Minto president Workers Party spoke a large rally in this village when most of the leaders of this movement joined Workers Party.

The incident shows the growing violence against the peasants cultivating land in suburbs of the large cities. The land has become expensive and any land in dispute is being aggressively perused by the feudal lords with help of local police and gangsters.

The incident shows how police can register fake cases against those struggling for their rights. Once again a fake murder charge and anti terrorist laws are used against the protesters. The use of anti terrorist laws against the trade unions, peasant leaders and protesting masses under PPP government is on the increase.

Labour Party Pakistan has condemned the incident and demanded an immediate withdrawal of the fake cases and releases all the detainees.

I will address a press conference tomorrow to highlight the whole issue along side with the community and leaders of Workers Party, details will be given later after finalization.

Farooq Tariq
