

# **Baldia Factory Fire Affectees (Pakistan): German brand KIK asked to pay compensation as per ILO standards**

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## **Press Release**

German brand KIK asked to pay compensation as per ILO standards

National Trade Union Federation, Baldia Factory Fire Affectees Association hold protest rally

Karachi, December 14: The heirs of the victims of Baldia factory fire have demanded of the federal and provincial governments and international brands to fulfill their promises and ensure payment of the promised compensation to them.

As per details, National Trade Union Federation, Baldia Factory Fire Affectees Association held a big protest rally here Sunday that marched from the Regal Chowk to Karachi Press Club (KPC). It was attended by a large number of the heirs of Shaheed workers, including women and children.

Addressing the rally, the speakers said the German brand KIK is still reluctant to pay the heirs of factory fire victims compensation as per ILO standards. They said that the compensation as promised by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Bahria Foundation leader Malik Riaz were still to be fully paid.

Addressing the rally, NTUF deputy general secretary Nasir Mansoor said that the safety situation in our factories despite the tragedy of Baldia factory fire has not improved. Our factories and industries are still sweatshops and torture places for workers, and resultantly industrial mishaps are happening continuously. Due to non-functional labor inspection the occupational health and safety arrangements in factories are almost non-existent. Local industrialists and their international buyer companies feel it their right to violate local and international labor laws and standards. They suppress the right of labors to form their unions and earn huge profit by making quality products through cheap labor and selling them in American and European markets on huge profit margin.

He said the German brand KIK that is responsible for Baldia factory fire has been delaying the talks for last two years under various pretexts. Due to this, the heirs of five victims in the first phase have sent them legal notice through a German lawyer. After serving of this notice the KIK is ready for talks but they are ready to pay the compensation as per the demand of the heirs. Similarly, five heirs are preparing to file a case in Italy against the Italian social audit company RINA that had issued the social audit certificate to Ali Enterprises. In this regard, a delegation of international lawyers would soon visit Pakistan to discuss the legal issues with the heirs soon. Moreover, a delegation of German lawyers and representatives of international labor organizations would visit Pakistan in February regarding filing a suit against KIK.

PAKISTAN Workers Confederation (PWC) Vice President Rafiq Baloch said they have been raising voice against the violation of labors' rights. He said the representatives of the European Union in

Pakistan are being informed about the violation of labor rights as per the GSP+ status given to Pakistan.

Baldia Factory Fire Affectees Association representative Muhammad Jabbir said the Sindh chief minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah had promised to give government jobs to the heirs of the martyred workers. He said that Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif when he was the leader of opposition had promised of a compensation of Rs0.3million per family from the government of Punjab. Similarly, Malik Riaz of Bahria Town had also promised of a compensation of Rs0.2million per family but these promises are yet to be fulfilled completely. He said the heirs of the victims have been braving mental stress and agony due to this situation. Every industrial incident only increases their sufferings and they feel that the sitting rulers, labor-related organizations and the international buyers of the Pakistani products have become insensitive to their plights. This situation will result into a movement for a change. He thanked the international organizations, legal experts, labor organizations and the chief justice of Sindh High Court for their positive role in doling out justice to the heirs.

Workers Rights Movement leader Gul Rehman assured full support to the heirs of the martyred till their genuine demands are met. He said they would not allow turning factories and workplaces into “Ali Enterprises”.

The rally participants through resolutions demanded that the German company KIK should pay Rs0.5mn per family as interim relief and pay the final compensation as per the standards of ILO without further delay. RINA is equally responsible for this tragedy and it should also announce payment of compensation to the heirs.

The compensation of Rs0.3mn per family as announced by Nawaz Sharif as opposition leader should be paid immediately; otherwise, a hunger strike protest camp would be established in January.

The compensation of Rs0.2million per family as announced by Malik Riaz is not paid to 92 heirs, which should be urgently paid.

Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah should implement his announcement of giving jobs to the heirs.

A monument should be erected in the factory in the remembrance of the martyred workers.

The government should ensure implementation of the accepted laws and standards as per the GSP+.

The government should recognize the ILO convention 155 for occupational health and safety working environment and convention for occupational health service and make bound the provincial governments to make effective laws in this regard.

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