

Solidarity needed: Workers jailed for protesting illegal mass terminations at Philip Morris, Mardan (Pakistan)

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Workers jailed for protesting illegal mass terminations at Philip Morris Pakistan

Thirty-five workers were arrested in the city of Mardan on January 6 for peacefully protesting the brutal instant termination of 141 employees at the Pakistan subsidiary of tobacco giant Philip Morris International. Workers were informed of the mass terminations on November 21 when they arrived to work only to learn that dismissal letters would be sent to them by post.

With the support of the local union, whose President Abrar Ullah was among the arrested, workers launched a continuous round of protests at the factory gate after management refused to discuss the terminations and began pressuring workers to accept the illegal dismissals. To add to the pressure, police were called to the factory gate when the protest began.

On January 6, workers gathered with their union officers to present a Charter of Demands to management when police arrested 35 protestors under the Maintenance of Public Order law, which allows for up to 90 days detention without charges. The arrested workers were then shifted to Bannu Jail, some 250 kilometers from Mardan and notorious as a prison for incarcerating Taliban activists. A solidarity delegation from the IUF-affiliated Pakistan Food Workers Federation (PFWF), which had hoped to meet with the workers, demonstrated outside the police station following the mass arrests.

The PFWF and the IUF will continue to support and assist the workers, who have vowed to continue the fight. USE THE FORM BELOW TO SEND A MESSAGE TO THE GOVERNMENT authorities calling for the immediate release of the workers and their union President.

Your name: [required]

Your email: [required]

Your union/organization:

Country:

Here is the message you are sending:

To the Chief Minister and Chief Secretary,
Khyber Pakhtoon Khwa Province

Dear sirs

I am deeply disturbed to learn that police arrested on January 6 thirty-five workers, among them their union secretary Abrar Ullah, for peacefully protesting the illegal terminations of 141 workers at the Philip Morris International factory in Mardan, and that the 35 are now being held in Bannu Jail. I therefore call for their immediate release. Rather than arresting workers, your government should be demanding the company reinstate the illegally dismissed employees and facilitating good faith negotiations with the union.

Yours sincerely

To sign, go to:

http://www.iuf.org/cgi-bin/campaigns/show_campaign.cgi?c=972

View online : [To sign the petition:](#)