

Chungi residents demand closure of life-threatening drain

Wednesday 21 April 2021, by [JALIL Xari](#) (Date first published: 29 March 2021).

LAHORE: A protest was held on Sunday at the Chungi Amar Sidhu stop against poor cleanliness in the entire locality. The protest was organised by the Huqooq-i-Khalq Movement (HKM).

Residents gathered at the stop and protested the extremely poor situation of the Chandrai Road drain. They complained that after the Buzdar government took charge, the environmental situation of the locality, including solid waste management, was worsening by the day, and that the municipal committees were not functioning properly or efficiently.

The protesters said they had submitted several complaints but none of them were addressed, while the officials representing the area are also silent over the situation.

A couple of days ago, a body found in the drain sent shockwaves across the entire area. The locals called out the Lahore Development Authority, Water and Sanitation Agency and Lahore Waste Management Company and demanded cleaning of the drain and its subsequent closure.

“Sometimes children are falling into the drain and sometimes there are bodies floating in it,” said a woman. “When will this drain be blocked? Who was this man whose body was found inside?”

She said if this body was of someone important, it would have been immediately investigated, but added that it had been floating in the drain for two weeks. She demanded closure of the drain at once.

“This gutter has caused panic amongst the residents. Every other day, some car, motorcycle or rickshaw falls into it, and it is equally dangerous for children,” said another resident. “In the rainy season, the whole area is flooded with sewage and waste material. It has taken the lives of many people.”

The residents said the choked drain was adversely affecting the health of those living nearby, with various diseases spreading in the area. People and children with low immunity are being affected the most with conditions such as sore throats, flu and allergies. The count of dengue and malaria cases is also rising, they complained.

The non-governmental organisation HKM has initiated a health and cleanliness project in which its representatives are going door to door, prompting people to sign a petition to have the drain closed and fix the water and sanitation pipelines as soon as possible. They demanded prompt action and implementation of an everyday cleaning process of solid waste in the area. A proper plan of action should be adopted for the waste and water cleaning and cleanliness reforms.

Azra Parveen shared the problems of the area, saying that every 10 days someone slipped into the drain or fell victim to health issues because of it. “It has become a killer,” she said.

The protesters walked from their neighbourhood to the main Ferozpur Road and partially blocked it while chanting slogans.

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