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Gilgit-Baltistan (Pakistan): Religious institutions mobilised for a smear campaign against Baba Jan and his party

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Awami Workers Party GB leader and Federal Committee member Baba Jan, who is serving life term in jail with AWP Hunza District party leaders (L to R) Muhammad Ramazan, Engineer Amanullah, Ikram Jamal, and Akhon Bai after appearing in a lower court in Hunza on Wednesday (picture).

While this great son of the mountains is incarcerating in jail for raising voice for the rights of the people of GB and all working class people of Pakistan, the stooges of imperialist neo-colonial powers and some elements in the religious institutions and community organisations at the behest of the Establishment have once again launched a smear campaign against Baba Jan and his party.

Recently a retired army officer in his highly political speech at a community centre at Gulmit Gojal instead of giving security tips to the people made baseless allegations against Baba Jan and AWP of “getting funds from foreign countries to sabotage CPEC”. For the last couple of years religious institutions are being misused for political purposes especially against progressive radical politics.

Last year during by-election campaign, these religious institutions arranged a visit of Amin Hashwani, a business tycoon from Karachi to Hunza who at different community gatherings levelled the same allegations. When he was confronted by the youth of Hunza and faced strong resentment from the community and AWP activists he had to cut short his visit and left the valley.

The AWP is a progressive, secular democratic party struggling for the rights of the working class, peasants, teachers, doctors, youth, students, women and oppressed nationalities. After getting frustrated from its rising popularity and struggle the pawns of the international imperialist powers have launched smear campaign against the party and its leadership. We condemn this act and warn the establishment and the religious institutions to stop baseless and uncalled for campaign against the #AWP and #Baba Jan.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan in its report on #GB launched last weel criticised the government, law enforcement and intelligence agencies for “rampant misuse of the #Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) by state institutions in GB”. The report says that hundreds of individuals continue to languish in jails under #ATA and the law has been used extensively to suppress any voices raised for the rights of the people. The HRCP noted that the misuse of ATA has increased after the #National #Action #Plan (NAP) came onto effect. Youth, especially activists of AWP and other nationalist

organisations have borne the brunt of the misuse of ATA.

According to HRCP report one of AWP's prominent leaders in GB, Baba Jan is serving 40-year sentence along with 11 other activists for highlighting the plight of the people displaced by Attabad disaster.

The HRCP former Chairperson also criticised harassment of nationalist activists branding them as "enemies of the state and foreign agents" and putting their names in 4th Schedule.

She said that we support development but not at the cost of fundamental rights, civil liberties and environment. She advised the government to be realistic while praising and creating hype about CPEC. "Eulogise CPEC but do not make it a 'national anthem'", she remarked. People of GB have genuine concerns about the mega project and other issues. They have the very right to raise their voice but that doesn't mean that they are against the project or the country. "We don't need any kind of certificate of patriotism from the Establishment or any govt", she remarked.

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