

Land is their life; name land to tenants

Okara Military Farms (Pakistan): Supreme Court orders release of tenant leader framed in false robbery case

Thursday 6 December 2018, by [TARIO Farooq](#) (Date first published: 6 December 2018).

Today Supreme Court Lahore registry ordered to release Malik Salim Jhakar, a tenant leader of Anjman Mozareen Punjab, on bail. He was falsely inducted in a robbery case last year in November. For three days, the case was argued at the Supreme Court by our advocate Azam Nazir Tarrer on the grounds that this is a false case and the only “crime” of Malik Salim Jhakar is that he is demanding land rights at Okara Kulyana Military Estate.

Today, the judges of the highest court, asked the lawyers of the state that how come that Salim was carrying the identity card of the person who claimed that he was victim of the robbery even after few days of robbery. They asked the question how could a villager who accepted in the court that he knew Malik Salim because he lives next to the village of Malik Salim (accused) told the police in the first report (FIR) that he is robbed by an unknown person and later recognize him. That how could police claim that the 25,000 Rupees recovered from Malik Salim were the same that he has looted?

The Supreme Court two judges, Mr. Justice Manzoor Malik and Mr. Justice Mansoor Ali Shah both questions the truthfulness of the case again and again. The State lawyers had no answer to the questions posed by the judges.

Our advocate Azam Nazir Tarrer told the court that Malik Salim was inducted in over 80 false cases by the local administration since the last five years. He is one of the main leader of Anjman Mozareen Punjab who are demanding land rights at Okara Military Farms. He was either acquitted or released on bail in all the other cases apart from one where he was sentenced to three years and appeal against that case is still pending.

After an hour of arguments, Malik Salim bail application for the immediate release was accepted. The elderly father of the Malik Salim who was in the court alongside with me was bloody happy.

The fact of the case is that Malik Salim came to visit me in Lahore late last year after he was released in all false cases spending two years in jail. The Okara administration came to know that he was in Lahore to meet Farooq Tariq. Very next day, he was arrested and within days of his abduction he was framed in a robbery case.

While Malik Salim was in jail during 2016, six persons were brought by police at Malik Salim village and were killed and later it was announced that religious terrorists were taking refuge at Malik Salim home. And Police killed then in an encounter when they went to arrest them. This was typical story of police after such “police encounters”.

I went to the press same day and contradicted police story and said that Anjman Mozareen Punjab is

totally oppose to religious fundamentalism and also religious terrorism. This is a story by police to register more cases against Malik Salim family.

The case was registered against Malik Salim's younger brother and he went in underground and escaped the arrest.

Malik Salim came to me in Lahore in November 2017 after his release. He requested me that I should speak to late Asma Jehanghir to take up the case of his younger brother who is in underground for fear of arrest in this false murder case of six persons. Very next day, he was abducted and later this false case of robbery was registered against him.

A week before her death, Asma Jehanghir met Shamshad Ali at her office in Lahore, a local advocate from Okara along with me and promised that she will take up this case and also of Malik Salim arrest.

After Asma Jehanghir's death, I requested Azam Nazir Tarrer, a close associate of Asma Jehnghir and member Pakistan Bar Council to take up this and Noor Nabi case. He accepted our request. This was done on volunteer basis. We cannot afford the fees of the lawyers like Azam Nazir Tarrer. He is at present lawyer of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz and has taken up the cases of former prime minister and chief minister Mian Nawaz Sharif and Mian Shahbaz Sharif.

Today, Azam Nazir Terror was called again and again by Mian Shahbaz Sharif's friends because he has to appear in another court on his behalf. However, he prioritize to appear on our behalf at Supreme Court and got our tenant leader bail approved.

Last week, Azam Nazir Tarrer appeared on behalf of Noor Nabi advocate who is elected chairman of his union council at Okara Military Farms. Noor Nabi was also arrested on a similar false robbery case. There is in line with a pattern by police in Okara that whenever a tenant is released on bail, he should be arrested again on a false case. Noor Nabi bail application was also accepted last week..

At present Mehar Abdul Sattar, Younis Iqbal, Noor Nabi, Malik Salim Jhakar are in jail for demanding land rights at Okara Military Farms. Two would be released if they are not framed again in any other false case. Mehar Sattar is sentenced to 10 years by an anti-terrorist court earlier this year. His appeal against the sentence is fixed on 9th January 2019 at Lahore High Court.

We have not seen any other part in Punjab apart from Okara where dozens of false police cases have been registered against the leaders of a mass movement of peasants. There was a reign of terror at Okara for the tenants. That is still going on. Tenants are refusing to pay what they have paid for over 100 years as part of crop sharing. They are demanding to fulfill the demands of land rights on over 13000 acre of fertile land at Okara. Fifth generation of tenants are working on these lands. Almost all governments including the present Tehreek Insaaf has promised land rights to tenants. Without exception, no one has fulfilled the promise,

Today is a small victory of a movement that is going on since 2001. We say that military should hand over these agriculture land to the tenants living in 19 villages of the district. The land should not be cultivated by military institution. It should come out of a business that is not related to them.

This dispute at Okara is going on for over 17 years now. I appeal to Prime Minister Imran Khan to fulfill his promise made at a public meeting in Okara in 2013 that this land would be given to Okara tenants. This is a high time to fulfill the promise.

I also appeal to the chief of the army staff to take an interest in this ongoing conflict with the most down trodden section of the society, the tenants. They cannot go anywhere else. Land is their life

and that is what they can do. Please grant them land rights and the honor and prestige of military would be at a better stage after this decision.

Farooq Tariq

General Secretary
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