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Press release

Pakistan: “ Free Vaccine for All” campaign launched in an on line public rally

Saturday 27 March 2021, by [People’s Movement for Free Corona Vaccine \(Pakistan\)](#) (Date first published: 27 March 2021).

- **People’s Movement for Free Corona vaccine would be organised all over Pakistan,**
- **Cancel permission to private companies for injecting Corona vaccine**
- **State must order 200 million doses of the vaccine immediately**
- **“ Free Vaccine for All” campaign launched in an on line public rally**

Activists from different walks of life agreed to launch a federal campaign “Free Vaccine For All” in an on line public rally. The rally was addressed by Baba Jan, Hamid Mir, Karamat Ali, Dr Ashraf Nizami, Dr Ammar Ali Jan, Mohammed Tehseen and several more.

Addressing the rally Prof Zaighum Abbas from Asian People’s Movement on Debt and Development said that Pakistan is the only country around the world to allow the private companies to procure vaccines. He added that this is criminal and inhumane during a global pandemic, when state should have taken more primary responsibility of health it is benefitting private mafias by allowing them to make profits. He added a people’s led movement by forming alliance with all other movements is the need of the hour.

Haqooq Khalq Movement activist Dr Alia Haider said that health budget should be increased by curtailing defence budget. Developmental budget should also be diverted towards vaccination drive. All state institutions including judiciary and military should come forward to do the vaccination drive.

Renowned political leader of Gilgit Beltistan, Baba Jan said that we need to start a comprehensive people’s led movement for free provision of campaign, he added that people will always welcome such a demand and they will be able to take the government accountable.

Prof Dr Ashraf Nizami president Pakistan Medical Association Lahore said that vaccination is primarily the responsibility of the State. He added that PMA stands in full solidarity with the demand of public to provide covid vaccine.

Mushtaq Lashari of Third World Solidarity said that already 50 percent of population has been vaccinated in most south Asian countries, so Pakistan needs to fix this lag with other countries in the region. He added that billions were spent on the meaningless parades but it is said that there is no money to spent on vaccination drive which is unfortunate. It is a right campaign at right time.

Renowned Professor Dr Masood Khan from London told the rally that Pakistan is the biggest importer of arms in the first 10 countries, the question is where does all this money comes from? And we are being told that there is no money to buy the vaccine. We buy missiles and arms but the gov is not willing to buy vaccine from its population, what are we gonna do with the weapons when we don't have the population to fight. We need to educate the young people about these contradictions in our priorities.

Karamat Ali executive director of Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research said that our health sector has become incapable of catering to the needs of our health needs. Our social security sector is non-existent. Working class has been the biggest hit of covid where they have not be prioritized by the govt. I endorse that vaccine should be provided freely and by the state and our govt needs to prioritize that.

Renowned journalist Hamid Mir said that all around the world the policy is to provide free vaccine, even transparency international has said that Pakistani govt is pursuing a wrong path by selling the vaccine. He added that PTI gov and Sindh gov has the same policy of selling the vaccine expensively to its population. I endorse the demand that vaccine should be provided free to the people.

Mohammed Tehseen of South Asia Partnership said that the government is not interested in providing free vaccination to the people. We have become a bigger state that doesn't prioritize health. In every disaster only the poor becomes the primary affectees. There is no science in it, we know that this government is the government of the mafia. It should be the one point agenda of people's led movement.

Nisar Shah advocate said that In capitalism disasters are actually beneficial for the states. We see that a government official said that people who don't want to queue, they can go and buy vaccines. I think this situation is pathetic. The alternate to this disastrous situation is like what we did after earthquake in 2005, we need to initiate a movement like that around that demand.

Anees Haroon from Women Action Forum Karachi said that this is very timely to have a debate on this issue. The government is prioritizing its own mafias so as to benefit them by allowing them to import the vaccine. She added that women's representation in such a movement is crucial and they need to be included and given lead role.

Khalid Mehmood from Labour Education Foundation Said that historically we have seen that health sector in this country has always been run on donations be that polio or AIDS or any other pandemic. Therefore we need to added this demand into the public discourse that vaccine may be provided free to everyone.

Dr Ammar Ali Jan from Haqooq Khalq Movement said that this is the crisis of the whole system. HKM is doing a health and safety campaign in Lahore working class areas and we came to know that every working class household is suffering either from hepatitis or covid or any other pandemic. We see that every other sector is right now protesting. But we are obsessed with war toys and parades. We need to bridge this gap between state and people and the only way to do it is to get a new social contract. How can this state call anyone ghaddar when it is clearly benefitting private mafias. They have sold our education system, our health system and every other profession. This system is unsustainable. We need to form a campaign against this criminal negligence and we need to link all these pains of every sector by providing a new socialist alternative.

Jalvat Ali from Labour Education Foundation Added that this is a very timely initiative and I am continuously engaged with grass-roots worker and I can say with authenticity that working class is suffering more, because first they have been fired enmasse and then they are being denied the

vaccine. Working class cant even afford normal tablets, how will it buy this expensive vaccine.

Akash Ashfaq from Toba Tek Singh said that as much as we need to talk about free vaccines, we also need to talk about the patients of covid which are being robbed financially even by public hospitals, the injections used in the treatment of covid pandemic, must be free.

Saima Zia of Crofter Foundation said that all of the people here are one way or the other associated with grass-roots movements and we need to sensitize government towards this important issue. This needs to be a people's led movement and must be led by people.

Farooq Tariq general secretary Paksitan Kissan Rabita Committer said we demand Free vaccine for all citizens of Pakistan. We demand that permission to private companies to do Cronin vaccine be cancelled and state should immediately order at least 200 million doses of Corona Vaccine. Pakistan should start producing the vaccine itself as well. This public rally is first step of the Free Vaccine campaign, we will organise it on federal level and more actions would be taken in future to force the government to change its present policies regarding the vaccine. We demand free universal health for all.

Report by Farooq Tariq

General Secretary Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee
