

Trade Unionist Immediate Victim of Pakistan Crackdown

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The International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine General Workers Unions (ICEM) deplores the arrest, two days after the emergency decree in Pakistan, of Deputy General Secretary Rana Ayub Aki Khan, leader of ICE affiliated WAPDA Labor Union (PWLU).

“We demand his immediate release, and the release of the others.” said ICEM General Secretary Manfred Warda. “It should not be surprising that a leader of a trade union – and one that has been outspoken in the way Pakistan has operated its public utilities – is one of the first ones rounded up and arrested.”

PWLU is a strong trade union voice inside the 130,000-worker Pakistani Water and Development Authority (WAPDA). ICEM has learned that Rana Ayub Aki Khan, along with 4 colleagues, were arrested on Monday, November 5, and are in a police jail in Gujranwala, Punjab Province. The ICEM also received notice that other leaders of WAPDA have now gone into hiding.

The union has protested against government mismanagement and inefficiency at the public utility. It has also blamed a political patronage system with failure to deliver basic services, such as education and health.

On October 29, nearly 1,000 WAPDA workers marched in Peshawar in protest of authorities ignoring the kidnapping of a co-worker at a WAPDA subsidiary, Peshawar Electricity Supply Co. Mukhtiar Khan is a driver for the utility. [Click here](#) for more on that.

The ICEM is a Brussels-based 20-million-member Global Union Federation representing oil, gas, power, mine, chemicals, and other manufacturing workers. It has 384 affiliated trade unions in 118 countries.

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