

# **NTUF/LEF/LPP: Appeal to support families of Comrades died in accident**

Friday 25 December 2009, by [TARIQ Farooq](#) (Date first published: 23 December 2009).

Dear friends and comrades,

We have lost our four most brilliant comrades Abdul Salam, Najma Khanum, Rehana Kausar and Wahid Baloch in a road accident on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2009 near Ormara, Baloachistan. They were in the coastal region, one of the most deprived areas of the country, to organize the home based women workers (HBWW) on one plate form. They held two focus group meetings and a wider consultation on 11-12 and 13 December in port cities of Pasni and Gawadar. They also formed core groups and clusters of local HBWW and planned to organize more meeting in the region in month of January next year.

Comrades Abdul Salam, Najma Khanum, Rehana Kausar and Wahid Baloch were dedicated members of the team who lost their lives for the cause of downtrodden masses and were on mission till their last breath. Another member of team, Mohammed Rafiq Baloch, central president National Trade Union Federation, Pakistan (NTUF) survived but severely injured in that fatal accident.

Comrade Abdul Salam, Najma Khanum and Rehana Kausar were the staff members of Labour Education Foundation (LEF). While Wahid Baloch was trade union activist in industrial city of Hub and by profession he was a driver.

**Abdul Salam**, 29 was working as coordinator on peace, democracy and trade union issues. He was also elected central Finance Secretary of National Trade Union Federation, Pakistan (NTUF) in 2007. He was the Secretary of Labour Party Pakistan, Karachi chapter for 2007-2009. Comrade Abdul Salam had initiated number of awareness activities for the trade union members, young students and political activists. He conducted 6 regular monthly study circles on social, economic and political issues in different localities of working class. He was the guiding force behind his last initiative of six-month training course on labour laws for new and young trade union activists in a view to build a team of committed workers who represent workers in labour courts.

He was on the of editorial board of weekly Mazdoor Jeddojehad for two years. He was also a regular contributor in respect of articles to Mazdoor Jeddojehad in Urdu and Pashto and was the main source for the LEF's monthly "Newsletter". He had translated a Pashto novel of Noor Mohammed Tarakai in to Urdu. He was Pashto poet of good repute and organizer of the "Jurs", a progressive Pashto literary forum in Karachi. He belonged to working class family and started his career as textile worker in Al Karam Textile Mill, where he was expelled from job nine year ago because of trade union activities. He contested the management in court and won the case in October 2009.

**Najma Khanum**, 38 was social activist and was the former local body's councilor of the area, mainly comprising of working class. She had been staff member of LEF since 2003. She was the social Mobilizers to organize home based women workers. She was the leader of her community and always at the forefront of all political, trade union and woman rights related rallies and demonstrations. She formed a women theatre group of young girls with the title of "Apna Theatre", means "Our Theatre". Their performances on May Day, Women day and on other important events

were always important portion of the programs. She was also a former member of Pakistan National Squad of women field hockey. She served LPP as women secretary of Karachi chapter for two years from 2007 to 2009. She had been running the home based women workers cooperative in Yousuf Goth for four years.

**Rehana Kausar**, 26 was one of the youngest staff member of LEF. She started to work as part time teacher at adult literacy center in Gadap town and become social mobilizer in 2006. She was very energetic and committed with the cause and a great fighter. She was also active member of LPP.

**Wahid Baloch**, 40 was basically trade union activist and was sacked from job by the Bawani Air Products manufacturing company three years ago where he worked as a driver. His only crime was that he was trying to form union in the factory. No factory was inclined to give him job in Hub city industrial area due to his union related activities. He was involved in all activities of National Trade Union Federation and partly worked as driver with NTUF. All the comrades were from very poor and working class families. Three were working with full time for LEF and fourth one, the driver was an unemployed trade unionist.

Comrade Abdul Salam leaves behind two little kids, two and four year old and a young widow. Salam was the only one working. Najma leaves behind three children but to some extent grown up, from 13 to 20, all are studying. Her husband has job of contractual nature with very little earnings, living in rented house. Driver Wahid Baloch leaves behind 6 young kids, the eldest is only 14. Wahid was only the source to run the home. His old father and mother also live with his family in rented house. While, Rehana was not yet married, but one of the nine sisters and brothers and one of the two bread winners among them. She was also only hope for her old aged bedridden mother and father.

We as representatives of LEF, NTUF and LPP jointly pledge to do our best to cater the needs of their families and to work hard for the accomplishment of the cause for which they scarified their lives. In this respect we need your help. We appeal to entire circle of our friend, comrades and well wishers to come forward to show their solidarity with families of our shining comrades. We are launching this appeal to all of you to support us for raising 3,000,000 Pak Rupees (35,300 US\$) for the permanent well being of the four families. Our plan is to deposit fixed amounts in saving accounts bank in the name of their immediate family members so that they get a regular monthly income and an increased amount after a certain period of time.

In joint meeting of LLP, NTUF and LEF comrades on 19 December in Karachi they have promise to contribute PRs 605,000 (7,120 US\$) in response to this appeal.

Your contribution will accommodate financial needs of families of our departed comrades, strengthen the confidence in movement and further the cause working people of Pakistan.

Labour Education Foundation ([www.lef.org.pk](http://www.lef.org.pk)) is a social organization set up in 1993; its main work is to strengthen trade unions in Pakistan. It has done great work to unionize many unorganized workers and strengthening trade unions especially National Trade Union Federation, Pakistan (NTUF) in Pakistan.

*You can send your contributions to the bank account of LEF as per following details.*

A/C Title: Labour Education Foundation

A/C Number: 01801876

Swift: ALFHPKKALDA

Bank: BANK ALFALAH LTD., LDA PLAZA Branch, KASHMIR ROAD, LAHORE, PAKISTAN

Looking forward for your encouraging responses.

Farooq Tariq (Spokesperson Labour Party Pakistan)

Nasir Mansoor (Deputy General Secretary NTUF)

Khalid Mahmood (Director LEF)

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## **A brief tribute : organizing home based women workers till last**

### **Four LEF leaders died in road accident**

Najma Khanum, Rehana Kausar and Abdul Salam Salam along with their driver Wahid Baluch lost their lives in a tragic traffic incident at Omara in Baluchistan on 13 December evening. Their car trying to save a donkey turned upside down that came suddenly on the main road. Comrade Abdul Salam was seriously injured, while going to hospital, the ambulance got stuck at a place where there was a overflow of water in a stream that has blocked the road. He spent whole night at the place as there was no way out; he died in the morning at a hospital on 14 December. While, Mohammed Rafiq Baluch president National Trade Union Federation, received minor injuries during the accident is out of danger. The driver Mohammed Wahid Baluch was younger brother of Mohammed Rafiq Baluch.

All five were returning from a consultation meeting at Gwadar on the issue of organizing home based women workers. The meeting was organized by Labour Education Foundation and 31 trade unions, social activists and government labour official participated in the day long consultation on government home based workers national policy document. Earlier, the five attend two other meetings of home based workers in Pasni and Gawadar to discuss the expansion of Home Based Women Workers Association, an organization that was set up few months back in Pakistan.

**Najma Khanum** joined Labour Education Foundation in 2003 and was one of the senior staff members at Karachi LEF office. She was elected counselor from Gadap Town Karachi and a known social activist. She had participated actively in lawyer's movement and was part of the rally on 12 May 2007 that came under fire from MQM goons. She narrowly escaped at the time. Najma Khanum joined Labour Party Pakistan in 2007 and took part actively in all the demonstrations and rallies of LPP in Karachi. She travelled extensively in Sind to organize the work of LEF and also the political work of LPP. Najma Khanum was part of the delegation from Pakistan which attended the People SAARC Sri Lanka in 2008.

**Rehana Kausar** (26), a young women activist joined LEF in 2007 and later became member of LPP as well. A fine orator, she was very active in the formation of home based women workers in the province.

Comrade **Abdul Salam Salam** was former secretary of Labor Party Pakistan Karachi chapter. He recently voluntarily paved the way for a younger comrade Mukhtiar Raho to be elected as secretary LPP in Karachi. Comrade Salam was member of editorial board of Weekly Mazdoor Jeddouhd and was a leading trade unionist at a textile factory. He recently won his reinstatement at the factory by an order of a labour court after few years of fighting for his reinstatement. He joined LEF as a union organizer and was instrumental in helping many trade unions in training and registrations. He was running a literary website in Pashto language.

Comrade **Wahid Baluch** was younger brother of Rafique Baluch, the main leader of one of the radical trade union federation of Pakistan, the National Trade Union Federation. He was always there to help his elder brother by driving him around the province.

All the four dead had a dream of building a strong union for the home based women workers. They had already held a very successful convention with over 500 women at Hyderabad to start the Home Based Women Workers Association last month. They were travelling in several cities and towns to organize this most unorganized sector.

LEF and LPP lost their four of their best comrades in Sindh. The three had made LEF and LPP work in Karachi and Sindh as a main priority of their lives. The working class in Pakistan is poorer now without these four untiring crusaders of their class. They all believed in a Socialist society free of exploitation and for free education and health facilities.

They all lost their lives to save the life of one animal, a donkey. The very poor infrastructure of the roads in Baluchistan means accidents like this very often. Comrade Salam lost his lives waiting on the road side for the whole night where his ambulance was stuck because of over flow of a stream. He was also a victim of very poor infrastructure.

I have met all of them many times. Comrade Salam was the intellectual backbone of LPP and LEF in Sindh, while Najma Khanum and Rehana Kausar were tireless activists for women and workers rights. Najma Khanum was particularly known in her community for social work and political education. She was always ready to talk politics and activities to promote politics and workers rights.

Red salute to comrades who are no more with us now.

By: Farooq Tariq

Fraternally,

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## **TO SEND DONATIONS THROUGH ESSF EUROPEAN ACCOUNT IF MORE CONVIENT**

**Via ESSF:** You can contribute to this effort by sending your donations to the ESSF (please mention « Pakistan ») - if simpler :

### **Checks in euros payable to ESSF :**

ESSF, 2 rue Richard-Lenoir, 93100 Montreuil, France.

### **Transfers**

***Bank name and address***

Crédit lyonnais

Agence de la Croix-de-Chavaux (00525)

10 boulevard de Chanzy

93100 Montreuil

France

***International bank references :***

IBAN : FR85 3000 2005 2500 0044 5757 C12

BIC / SWIFT : CRLYFRPP

***National bank details (RIB) :***

Bank : 30002, Sorting code 00525

Account number : 0000445757C, Key : 12

Account holder : ESSF

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