

## **Pakistan: 10 'left-wing' parties join hands to cobble alliance**

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LAHORE: In their maiden meeting to form an 'alliance of the left,' the leadership of 10 progressive and left-wing parties on Friday agreed to work together in the future and formed an eight-member committee to find a way for the formation of an alliance.

In a communiqué that was issued to the media after the meeting, the leaders presented a list of demands. The demands included recovery of all the missing persons, following the due process if they had committed any crime; sending back immigrants to their countries since the mischievous elements took their cover; protection of minority girls from the hooligans who were using the name of religion; regulation of sugar mills mafia; restoration of tenancy rights to till the protected forest land in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; withdrawal of the unjust criminal cases against farmers of Hashtnagar and Okara Military Farms and their release and restoration of student unions.

The meeting rejected the election reforms bill passed by the parliament and demanded that the reforms might be reframed according to the petition filed by the Awami Workers Party (AWP) in the Supreme Court.

The meeting hosted by the AWP deliberated on the current economic and political situation and agreed that the mainstream political parties of the ruling class had miserably failed to present the solution to the growing economic and political crises in the country.

"In our view, corruption is an integral part of bourgeois system which needs to be replaced by an alternative system. And that alternative is socialism," said the communiqué.

The participants of the meeting said a vast majority of Pakistani population was still living under feudalism. The ruling classes were using religion to camouflage their exploitation and suppress the narrative of the social forces striving for a real socioeconomic change and this practice was exacerbating trends of fundamentalism, extremism and intolerance.

"Therefore, we resolve hereby to launch a concerted struggle against the flowing anti-people trends in the country," the parties announced. They made a pledge to launch a campaign against feudalism and fanaticism and support workers, farmers and tenants, work for supremacy of the parliament against the paradigm of a security state, establish Pakistan as a multicultural country so that every nationality might have full control over their resources, ensure gender equality with minorities, reconstitute a state on the principle of separation of state from religion, establish a socialist economy with no distinction of class in the education system founded on scientific lines, free and fair access of all the citizens with constitutional guarantee to shelter, employment, education and healthcare system, ensure a positive and non-aligned foreign policy, friendly economic and political relations with all neighbouring countries based on the principle of noninterference.

Some political observers, however, wondered about inclusion of some parties like Jeay Sindh Mahaz (a radical nationalist party), headed by Khaliq Junejo, in the leftist alliance. A similar point was raised to the Haye Baloch's Balochistan National Movement which did not attend the first meeting

but had been taken onboard for the alliance.

Defending the inclusion, Farooq Tariq of the AWP said the party had provincial alliances with both these parties and had decided to invite them. "They are still not part of the alliance and have their own reservations. It was only first meeting and many issues remain to be thrashed out," he added.

The parties that attended the meeting are: the AWP, Pakistan Mazdoor Kissan Party, Awami Jamhoori Party, Jeay Sindh Mahaz (Khaliq Junejo), JK Peoples National Party, Balochistan National Movement, Pakistan Trade Unions Defence Campaign, Pakistan Mazdoor Mahaz, JK Awami Workers Party, and Communist Party of Pakistan.

**The Newspaper's Staff Reporter**

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