

# Pakistan: A victory hard won

Monday 16 March 2009, by [TARIQ Farooq](#) (Date first published: 16 March 2009).

Finally, the chief justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Choudry and other top judges have been restored. Yousaf Raza Gilani, prime minister of Pakistan made the announcement on 16 March morning.

It is a victory hard won. At the time of writing this article, 23 activists of Labour Party Pakistan are among hundreds still in jails in different part of the country. The Prime minister has ordered the release of these political prisoners and lifting of section 144.

The government of Pakistan Peoples Party took this decision not calmly. It was in fact imposed on them by the masses of Pakistan. The decision came while thousands were on the way to Islamabad to start an indefinite sit in. This was despite all the state forces trying to stop it.

The Lahore rebellion on 15 March was the decisive blow to the Zardari government non fulfillment of the promises to restore the judges. Police has been trying for days to quell Lahore. They had done that to all other cities as well. The containers bringing goods from Karachi port to different parts of the country were used to block the roads. Section 144 was imposed in three provinces. Police has been busy in arresting the political activists and the lawyer's leaders. Over 2000 were arrested since 12 March, the day the long march started from Quetta and Karachi.

Police was able to curtail the size of the long march by arresting and blocking the roads all over the country until the day, Lahore has to join.

Police started arresting political activists and raiding the houses in a bid to do the same what had been done in such circumstances under General Musharaf. They brought their loyal police officers to key posts before crackdown. They were too busy in planning the arrest of the political opponents that the terrorists were able to attack on Sri Lanka cricket team on 2 March 2009 in a broad daylight at the most busiest area of Lahore with an ease.

The PPP government had a plan. They wanted to do two things in one go. Depose Punjab government and appoint new loyal PPP judges in High courts. The judges of Supreme Court who took oath under Provisional Constitutional Order under general Musharaf to validate the dictatorial measures came to help PPP government. The Sharif brothers of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz who were ruling Punjab were declared illegible by Supreme Court to contest election for the crimes they had not done. The Punjab government was dissolved and governor rule was imposed on 25 February 2009. It was PPP led coup in Punjab.

The lawyer's movement had already announced a sit in Islamabad for an indefinite period until the restoration of top judges. Punjab government of Sharif brothers was demanding the same. The strategy of PPP was to remove a government friendly to lawyer's movement. They wanted to do the dirty work of repression and suppression by dictatorial measure. To form a new government in Punjab, the PPP also wanted to have an alliance with a party that had been in power in Punjab under general Musharaf for five years.

Sharif brothers, once out of power, used the occasion very cleverly to fight for independence of the judiciary. The two brothers who had a majority vote in Punjab made very radical speeches all over Punjab in mass rallies in favor of the deposed judges. They recited Jalib and Faiz, the two most

popular left wing poets of Pakistan history.

All the Left parties including Labour Party Pakistan were already campaigning for the restoration since 9 March 2007, the day Chief Justice Iftikhar Choudry said his famous “no” to Musharaf insistence of resignation. They became part of All Parties Democratic Movement (APDM) a bourgeoisie alliance which boycotted the general election of February 2007 on the appeal of lawyer’s movement. The APDM included some the nationalist parties of Baluchistan and Sindh, Jamaat Islami, and Tehreek Insaf of Imran Khan, the former captain of Pakistan cricket team. Nawaz brothers were also part of ADM, but left it on 9 December 2007 to contest the general elections.

The PPP and Nawaz brothers contested the general elections with a promise to restore the top judges. This was not just the issue of some judges, but a question of independent judiciary. The PPP government in center refused to restore the judges even after several written agreements on the issue. They thought they can do what ever they like. For them, it is not important to act in accordance with promises. The PPP government became very unpopular because of the implementation of conditions imposed by IMF and World Bank. They went all the way with the neo liberal agenda. The international economic crisis, the collapse of industrial infrastructure and the price hike of unprecedented level brought PPP government to a point that many thought General Musharaf period was better.

Then, came a very popular conception of PPP government and particularly president Zardari, “they lie and deceive”.

The PPP government had no justification for not restoring the judges. They used all sort of weak arguments. Some of them said that these judges have also taken oath on PCO earlier and has worked with Musharaf. They forgot the time after when these judges refused to take oath under PCO to loose jobs. Then they said that the deposed judges have been politicized. They also came with this naked lie that they never promised to restore the judges. It was written agreements that were spread over the pages of newspaper to expose this lie.

When the announcement of the sit in for an indefinite period in Islamabad was made by the lawyers, the PPP government told the people that issue can never be resolved in the streets. This was a party which was the outcome of the streets in sixties. They asked the lawyers movement for negotiations. The lawyer’s movement told them pint blank, “there had been negotiation, it is time for implementation”. They always told the media that the Dharna in Islamabad will strengthen the undemocratic forces and there is a danger of a military coup. This was frightening the masses of the dark military period. Using this fear, the PPP government wanted to do all sort of undemocratic measure themselves.

Labour Party Pakistan argued very powerfully that the Islamabad sit in will weaken the undemocratic forces. There is no possibility of another military coup. The powerful layers movement is totally opposed to any military intervention. At present, there was no political party to welcome a military coup, unlike October 1999, when PPP and Jamaat Ismai welcome General Musharaf military coup.

PPP government also tried to give it a nationalist turn. “Zardari is from a smaller province so any movement against him is against the Sindh people” was a line toed by many so-called intellectuals who had all their hands full of privileges by corrupt PPP government. They forgot the fact that it was the nationalist parties that have supported the lawyer’s movement to an extent that they boycotted elections at a time when they could have won many seats of the parliament. It was a sacrifice of the progressive nationalist parties for the upholding of the flag for independent judiciary.

And Zardari is no nationalist leader fighting against the exploitation of Sindhi masses. He actually wanted to privatize the main source of income of Sindh, the gas reserves. He is a corrupt bourgeois accidental leader who became president of Pakistan because his wife Benazir Bhutto was killed and he inherited the leadership of PPP.

PPP government was fighting a losing battle with no arguable justification for not restoring the judges. Zardari became like Bush, A liar without any sophistication. He rapidly became very unpopular. With his cunning smile, he gave the impression that he is laughing at the masses.

Then came the call for sit in. All the planning of the PPP government to defuse the movement was devastated once the masses came in the streets. The PPP could not form a government in Punjab as the PMLQ refused to go along with them. The PMLQ members of Punjab assembly did not want to have an alliance with a very unpopular party.

The restoration of top judges is a victory with a bang. It has empowered the people like no other event has done in recent past. It is victory of people's power. It is victory of the masses in the streets. It is street victory over the so-called forum of bourgeois parliament. It is victory hard won by the people of Pakistan. It will end some of the remaining remnants of the militarization of society. It is defeat for dictatorial measures. It is beginning of the awakening of the judiciary. It is defeat of the elements always validating dictatorial measures.

March 16, 2009

---

## **The Lahore rebellion**

Dear all,

The fight is going on. Police is sometime retreating and coming back to use tear gas. The protesters are also determined to express their right to get together.

Police is firing directly at the demonstrators. One casualty the Shahid Siddique, the newly elected president of Lahore High Bar Association. Thousands of rounds of tear gas been fired at General Post Office Chouck. Many has injured. Asma Jehangir is also been effected badly.

The Labour Party Pakistan contingent arrive at GPO Chouck around one pm. They include several women. Maqsood Mujahid, member national executive committee LPP told me on phone that all of us have been effected but all of us are on high spirit.

When they left the LPP office to go to the main place of demonstration, it was clear to them that they are going to be arrested but they all wanted to do that.

Mian Nawaz Sharif is on the way to Lahore after breaking all police barriers, thousands are with him.

All the measures and strategies of police have been shattered by mass power. They could not repeat what they could do in Karachi, Hyderabad and Multan during the last three days.

It seems a total collapse of the state arrangements to stop the rally. The whole city is coming to the streets. The police brutalities of the last few days are coming to an end.

The PPP regime has no option but to accept the demands of restoration of judges.

March 15, 2009

---

Dear all.

20 comrades arrested this evening in Faisalabad. Police raided the office of Labour Qaumi Movement, a labour organisation of textile workers and arrested every one present including Rana Tahir, one main leader of LPP.

Labour Qaumi Movement main leadership and activists are members of labour Party Pakistan. They have led mass strikes in the city, the third largest city of Pakistan.

At this time, the leadership of LQM is meeting at a secret place to decide the future course of action. Labour Party Pakistan have suggested the LQM leadership to decide for an all out strike in the city against the arrest and on favour of lawyers movement.

In another development, police have raided offices of LPP in Toba Tek Singh, Qasur and Layya. However, the comrades escaped the arrests.

LPP Islamabad had a meeting at a secret place with Nisar Shah general secretary Labour Party Pakistan in chair to chart of the plan of LPP on 16 March, the day of the Dharna (sit in) in Islamabad. LPP activists from Sindh, PukhtoonKhawa and Punjab to take part in action despite all the police blockades.

Total numbers of LPP activists arrested today are 27. 24 are still behind bar, 3 were released earlier by police including Shakela, the women comrade arrested in Hyderabad. During the last three days, 33 comrades have been arrested.

LPP national executive committee has once again asked all party activists to be part of the long march.

Farooq Tariq

March 14, 2009

---

Dear all,

More activists of Labour Party Pakistan are arrested, this time in Hyderabad, second largest city of Sindh. They were arrested this afternoon on 14 March from a demonstration organised by LPP in front of Hyderabad Press Club.

They are Muhib Lighari, Faiz Kerio, Munwar Chandio, Sarfraz Kumber, Ghulam Qadir Mirani, Hasan Nasir and Shakela.

Ghulam Qadir Mirani, a member national committee LPP is senior leader of peasant movement of

Pakistan and a former president of Mir Pur Khas Bar Association. He recently was able to help in release of over 200 bonded haries (peasants) through a court case.

Despite the arrests, LPP will be continue to take part in Long March,

Farooq Tariq

March 14, 2009

---

## **LPP demonstration in Lahore and Karachi**

Labour Party Pakistan demonstrated today on Friday in Lahore and Karachi in front of press club buildings. The demonstration were held despite the serious threats of arrests.

In Karachi, LPP activists raised slogans against the brutal treatment of police against LPP activists Shakeel, Nasir Mansoor, shela Rizwan and others in Karachi yesterday.

Shakeel, a Progressive Youth Front leader and LPP activist and Nasir Mansoor Labour Secretary LPP were badly beaten up by police yesterday at Toll Plaza Karachi in a bid to stop the lawyers long march.

Shela Rizwan of LPP and Samina of Peoples Resistance were arrested while forcefully pushing them into police van. It made headline all over the world and became a reference in all the political discussions.

In Lahore, police threatened to arrest all the participants of todays demonstration against the arrests and tortures of LPP and other political activists. However, all 22 participant of this defiant demonstration were ready for any consequences. They made it clear that the demonstration will go ahead, come what may. The police retreated as most of the participant were women as a conscious strategy of LPP Lahore. The police had a very bad treatment by the media after yesterdays incident.

The LPP national executive committee has directed all the members of the party to take part in the long march and reach Islamabad. LPP is already distributing leaflets to appeal to the working class to join the long march. LPP will come out with the lawyers on 16 March in Islamabad despite all the hurdles.

Farooq Tariq

March 13, 209

---

Farooq Tariq

spokesperson

Labour Party Pakistan

40-Abbot Road Lahore, Pakistan

Tel: 92 42 6315162 Fax: 92 42 6271149 Mobile: 92 300 8411945

[labour\\_party@yahoo.com](mailto:labour_party@yahoo.com) [www.laborpakistan.org](http://www.laborpakistan.org) [www.jeddojuhd.com](http://www.jeddojuhd.com)