

Union molested at Pakistan International Airlines

Sunday 17 October 2010, by [TARIQ Farooq](#) (Date first published: 14 October 2010).

Today, on 14th October, I was at a press conference in Lahore along with most of the trade union leaders of Pakistan. They were here to express their solidarity with Peoples Unity of PIA Employees (Collective Bargaining Agent, CBA). A senator of Pakistan People's Party and a close friend of president Zardari Senator Faisal Reza Abidi has taken over the trade union offices at Karachi and Lahore forcefully from the Unity leaders. They have brought gunmen to do the job.

The trade union leaders today expressing solidarity included Khursheed Ahmad general secretary Pakistan Workers Confederation, Mohammed Yousaf Baluch, chairman National Trade Union Federation, Choudry Gulzar Ahmad general secretary All Pakistan Trade Union Federation, Mohammed Yaqoob chairman Motihida Trade Unions federation, Taj Haider president Pakistan Teachers Union along with Kamran Choudry, general secretary PIA Unity.

The trade union leaders told the press at Lahore Press Club that Senator Faisal Reza Abidi has been making illegal interventions in the affair of the union in order to replace the democratically elected office bearer of the union instead of respecting the Fundamental Rights of Freedom of Association of the Workers enshrined under article 17 of Pakistan constitution. Despite a clear order by Lahore High Court directing the Senator not to interfere in any way in the affairs of the union, Faisal Reza Abidi has forcefully captured the union offices and record at Karachi and has been threatening the lawful office bearers of the union. The PIA Unity has been compelled to move contempt proceeding against the Senator to the court.

The trade union leaders expressed full solidarity with the unions and demanded Prime minister of Pakistan to take an immediate action against the said senator who claims that PPP has designated him to coordinate the work of union at PIA. They said that the working class of Pakistan fully support the just struggle of the Peoples Unity of PIA Employees to get respected the fundamental rights of freedom of association.

Replying to a question, Kamran Choudry general secretary PIA Unity said that PIA has suffered a huge loss after Captain Ejaz Haroon took over as managing director of PIAC in 2008 after PPP took over power. The only qualification of Ihaz Haroon is that he is personal friend of President Zardari. The annual loss of PIA was at 32 Billion Rupees in 2008 and it has now reached to staggering 72 Billion Rupees a year. He said that there are 23 captains of PIA doing the management duties in PIAC under this MD, and they fly only two hours in a month to claim 106 hours of flying apart from the normal wages. A normal captain in PIA can claim only 70 hours at the most despite flying a full month apart from the wages. Most of the friends of Captain Ejaz Haroon in PIA are doing the administrative duties at the top of the management to earn a massive amount.

Kamran Choudry earlier told me that their only fault was they sided with the movement of the PIA pilots association. They were asked not to support the PIA pilots but we refused and this led a situation where there is an all out effort to kick us out of the PIA. He told me that PIA pilots are working very hard and we must show our workers solidarity with them while they are in struggle for better conditions.

It is ironic that PIA Unity is formally associated with PPP for long time. Kamran CHoudry and his union always supported PPP politics outside the PIA. However, the present PPP leadership is in no mood to tolerate any little opposition within the party affiliate unions and are trying to control all dissensions.

I personally have worked along Kamran Choudry and other trade union leaders of PIA in the early nineties under the name of Pakistan Trade Unions Action Committee, an alliance of most of the trade unions in Pakistan that led to the formation of Pakistan Workers Confederation. He is one of the most respected trade union leader of Pakistan despite his affiliations with PPP. I hope that the struggle of Pakistani trade unions against the ouster of Kamran Choudry and his associates from PIA union offices would be successful. We will do our best to raise the issue on all political and trade unions plate forms.

If you want more information, please contact to Nazar Bhatti a union leader at PIA. His email is nazarbhatti7 yahoo.com

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