

# **Pakistan: the government withdraws the murder charges against the owners of Karachi Baldia textile factory - where over 289 workers died in an industrial fire**

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## **Withdrawal of murder charges against Baldia factory owner: an ignominy act by PPP government**

Pakistan People's Party government has ordered to withdraw the murder charges against the owners of Karachi Baldia textile factory. Over 289 workers were killed in the factory fire in September 2012, the worst industrial accident in human history.

According to GEO, private television channel, 'the Minister of State for Finance, Salim Mandviwala disclosed that the case registered against the owners of Baldia Town factory has been withdrawn. Talking to media men in Karachi, the State Minister said that the above case was withdrawn on the orders of Prime Minister. He said Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf had promised the office bearers of Karachi Chamber of Commerce (KCCI) to have the case withdrawn during his visit to the chamber.

This is an ignominy act by PPP government. It shows a complete lack of respect for the working class by a party who calls its self "Peoples" Party. The workers lost their lives because of complete lack of health and safety measures at this factory. The decision by PPP government is another attempt to please the capitalist class at the expense of working class.

Awami Workers Party will take up this matter at all level and launch a protest campaign on this issue.

Nasir Mansoor, deputy general secretary National Trade Union Federation and also labour secretary of AWP told GEO tonight that the identity of over 30 workers bodies are still not been clear and DNA test results are still awaited of these bodies.

Responding to the dire need of some solid measures and a comprehensive movement to avert such horrible incidents, labourers organisations had joined hands and formed a consortium entitled 'Workers Rights Movement' in December 2012, so as to put a pressure on all stakeholders for some concrete steps, instead of lip services.

Later, A German discount clothing retailer KIK agreed to pay more than \$1.2 million compensation for victims of factory fire, The blaze in September at the Ali Enterprises factory in Baldia Town, Karachi, which made ready-to-wear garments for Western stores, killed 289 workers and injured 110 more. Sindh High Court has been approached by WRM to form a commission to distribute this amount among the workers.

Earlier this month, famous Pakistani singer Jawad Ahmed launched his latest song "Mazdoor" near

the burnt factory in the presence of hundreds of workers affected by this fire.

While all the efforts were going on to honor the workers who lost their lives in this unprecedented incident, this latest attack by the bosses with the help of PPP government must not go unnoticed by trade unions, social movements and working class as whole.

**Farooq Tariq**

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