

Karachi: Military rulers slammed over Kohlu tragedy

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KARACHI, Aug 28: The Labour Party of Pakistan on Monday staged a rally to condemn Saturday's Kohlu incident where security forces killed Jamhoori Watan Party leader Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti along with a large number of his companions in, what has been described as a fierce battle.

Participants of the rally were carrying banners and placards inscribed with slogans against the military operation in Balochistan.

Expressing solidarity with Baloch people, they condemned the government for having resorted to an 18-month long undeclared military operation that had left a large number of military and civilian people dead and injured, besides causing considerable destruction.

Addressing the protesters, LPP leaders strongly criticized use of helicopter-gunships and other sophisticated weapons against the civilian population of that province which resulted in heavy casualties, including those of innocent women and children. They noted that scores of Baloch youths had disappeared in mysterious circumstances since the operation was launched.

Shehla Rizwan, Abdul Salam, Nasir Mansoor, Shakil Malik, Sherbaz Khan, Ghani Zaman, Azra Perveen, Raheel Iqbal, Osman Baloch and Maulana Abdul Aziz Bohyo were among those who spoke at the rally.

They appealed to all people, particularly workers, to observe the countrywide strike on Friday to express solidarity with the oppressed Baloch people.

They expressed the view that peace could not be established in the country unless the sense of deprivation prevailing among all the oppressed nationalities in the country was removed and constitutional rights of all local nationalist entities were restored.

Condemning the rulers for their indifferent attitude towards the constitutional rights, they claimed that the policies of military rulers had brought the country to a situation that finally led to its dismemberment in 1970.

They warned them against creating the same situation by resorting to using force against civilians and continuing the military operations elsewhere in the country.

The LPP leaders observed that the repeated military interventions had caused great damage to democratic institutions of the country as every military ruler had usurped rights of people and used different methods to undo the democratic dispensation, hence promoting dictatorship.

Referring to the recent statement of Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao confirming arrest of 4,000 people in connection with the Balochistan unrest, they expressed surprise that none of these detainees had so far been formally charged or produced before a court. In many cases, they noted, families of the arrested people had not been informed of the charges, nor were they told about the whereabouts of the detainees.

Terming the killings in Kohlu operation 'extrajudicial', they apprehended that this would further aggravate the already volatile situation in Balochistan.

They stressed on finding a political solution to the Balochistan issue through peaceful means, and asked the rulers to recognise the right of the people of a province on all its resources.

They also called for an immediate halt to military operations within the country and withdrawal of troops from the areas where such operations were being conducted.

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