



Pakistan: Solidarity with the Baloch Students' Organisation!

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Free Jiand Baloch, Zareef Rind, Changaiz Baloch and Aurangzaib Baloch!

On the afternoon of 5th December, three student activists; Zareef Rind, Changaiz Baloch and Aurangzaib Baloch went missing. They were last seen at a protest for the release of Jiand Baloch, the Joint Secretary of the Baloch Students' Organisations, his father, Abdul Qayyum Baloch, and his ten year old brother, Hasnain Baloch, on the same day in Quetta, Balochistan's capital. This criminal abduction of the whole remaining leadership of the Baloch Students' Organisation clearly bears the all the hallmarks of the secret service.

Zareef, Chaingaz, Aurangzaib, Jiand, Abdul and Hasnain, these names are ingrained in our consciousness. Their names stand for the courageous women, men and children who have stood up against injustice in the past, an injustice that has cost the lives of some 20,000 Baloch people.

The practice of disappearances in Pakistan is not just designed to intimidate and frighten individuals. It is an attempt to suffocate the sparks of resistance to an unjust system in which the youth, women, workers, peasants and oppressed have nothing to lose, but everything to win. The practice of disappearances is designed not just to rob our movements of our bravest leaders. The Pakistani state and ruling classes know full well that they cannot allow even unfair, but public, trials to those struggling for justice. Every such trial, whatever the sentence by the court, would bear the potential of putting the elites in the dock. The oppression, exploitation and injustice is so stark, that the state simply cannot take the risk of public trials or executions against those who speak out against it. It needs to make them 'disappear' in the hope that their struggle, the world they represent, will vanish, will be forgotten.

Make no mistake. These atrocities certainly hit the Baloch people especially hard but such crimes are inflicted upon the great mass of the people of Pakistan. The arrogance, disdain and hidden fear that Pakistan's upper classes feel towards students like Jiand Baloch from Balochistan, are what they also feel towards a poor factory worker from the Punjab. Everyone who looks at Pakistani society objectively, and not through the distorting lens of ideological prejudice, knows that this is true.

What the Pakistani state, what the military and the rich fear more than a revolt in Balochistan, a movement for justice in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a peasant struggle in Sindh, a strike movement in Faisalabad or a women's protest in Lahore, is the perspective that such clear sightedness offers. They fear that it leads to a deeper understanding and consciousness of mutual solidarity that tears down the walls of chauvinism and the religious, nationalist and patriarchal prejudices that the Pakistani elites have carefully erected over the past 70 years.

The past week saw a spike of solidarity within Pakistan, demanding the release of Jiand Baloch. A fraternisation that went beyond the limitations of ethnicity. It may well have been exactly this that frightened the Inter Service Intelligence, and led it to snatch Zareef, Chaingaz, Aurangzaib. We do not know.

What we do know is that this call for solidarity is already echoing internationally, workers' organisations have started to answer it. Most prominently by socialist and Member of the German Parliament, Ulla Jelpke, on the 5th of December. And we pledge to extend this solidarity and to deepen it internationally.

The Pakistani state is mistaken if it thinks that its 'disappearances' can stop us. Nothing and no-one can stop true and honest international working class solidarity. Today, we are all named Zareef, Chaingaz, Aurangzaib, Jiand, Abdul and Hasnain. Their names are ingrained in our consciousness, and their struggle for a better world pulses through our veins, too.

Zareef, Chaingaz, Aurangzaib, Jiand, Abdul and Hasnain need to be recovered immediately. And so do all the other missing persons. We call for public investigations into those who have carried out the criminal offense of extrajudicial abduction, and who have carried out killings in silence in the past. All such practices need to be stopped immediately and prohibited under the most severe punishment in the future.

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