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Pakistan

# Islamabad Rally: Hundreds demand release of Baba Jan and his friends from Gilgit Jail

- News from around the world -

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**Hundreds joined today at a rally in Islamabad to protest against the continues detentions and registration of new cases against Labour Party Pakistan leader Baba Jan. The rally started from Aab Para Chouck and went to National Press Club Islamabad was organized by Labour Party Pakistan and was attended by activists from different political parties, groups and trade unions.**

They were holding placards demanding the release of Baba Jan and his friends imprisoned in Gilgit jail. "Free Baba Jan, Iftikhar Hussain and others, No to anti terrorist laws against political activists, pay compensation to all Attabad Lake victims, arrest the two police officers responsible for the murder of two in Hunza, We will win" were some of the slogans raised at the rally. There were significant numbers of women activists who participated in the rally.

The rally was led by Nisar Shah, spokesperson of the Labour Party Pakistan, Asim Sajad Akhtar, leader of the Workers' Party Pakistan, Yousaf Baluch, chairman of the National Trade Union Federation, Aman Kariapper of the Free Baba Jan Campaign, Dr. Farzana Bari of Qaid Azam University Islamabad, Alia Amir Ali general secretary National Students Federation as well as Qalandar Memon and Nazli Javed of Labour Party Pakistan.

Addressing the rally, Nisar Shah said that registration of another case under anti terrorist laws against Baba Jan while he is in jail for the last nine months shows the nervousness of the Gilgit government. Baba Jan was granted bail by the chief court of Gilgit and was about to be released when the government registered another case against him.

Labour Party Pakistan have launched a national and international campaign for the release of Baba Jan and his friends and dozens of rallies and demonstrations have taken place inside Pakistan and also outside Pakistan embassies abroad. Nisar Shah said that gross human rights violations in Gilgit Beltistan are taking place. Baba Jan and his four friends have been imprisoned in various jails in Gilgit since September 2011. They have been charged under the anti-terrorism act. However, they have not committed any crime but are being victimized for their support of the Attabad Lake victims.

Aman Kariapper said that Baba Jan, Iftikhar Hussain, Amir Ali, Ameer Khan and Rashid Minhas are all human rights defenders and have all been illegally detained for over 9 months in total violation of their fundamental rights. We demand the immediate cessation of the misuse of the anti-terrorist act and the release of Baba Jan. Various human rights organizations have demanded the release of all the political prisoners from Gilgit jail. He said that Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Asian Human Rights Commission, Parliamentary Committee For Human Rights Pakistan, Human Rights Ministry of Pakistan, dozens of international political parties and trade unions have demanded the release of Bab Jan and his friends. Despite that, there is no positive response by the government. Aman Kariapper said that Prime Minister of Pakistan should take an immediate notice of the gross violation of human rights and imprisonment of political activists in Gilgit jail.

The participants of the rally dispersed peacefully after marching for over two hours in Islamabad.

*Jth of Jukly 2012*