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Pakistan

Updates on Baba Jan and Hunza 12

- News from around the world -

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All the 10 activists facing life sentence spent the Eid in Gilgit jail. They are in good spirit. Although twelve activists have been sentenced to life by Gilgit Anti terrorist court, two of them were declared absconder during the trail that lasted three years.

A large meeting of hundreds was held on Sunday 5th October at Ali Abad Raka Poshi Gardens in Hunza Valley to discuss the strategy of the release of Hunza 12. The meeting decided to establish a Hunza 12 solidarity committee to organize the release campaign. The committee comprising all political shades of the valley also included Ihsan Ali, advocate who have contested the case in the courts. The meeting was attended by all the political parties except the ruling party. The protest date is yet to be decided.

Ihsan Ali told me yesterday on 8th October that after he criticized the political decision of the anti terrorist court in public, I was served a contempt of court order by the same judge. Police went three times to my place. After lawyers made it clear that there will be a complete boycott of the courts if the contempt of court order is not withdrawn, the judge has to withdraw the orders.

Ihsan Ali also told that he has already submitted a bail application for all those imprisoned activists in the court and this week, the court will decide if this application is worth for hearing the case. Then later the actual process will start. It may take months before any decision is taken on bail application, he says.

In the mean time, the decision to award life sentence in this case to all 12 activists is been criticized heavily by the lawyers community and termed this as a murder of the justice and a very political decision. The police officers, who killed two demonstrated at the time in 2011 when they were refused the government grant for climate change effectees, were not even tried and those who protested against the killings are in jail for life.

Various political parties and Left groups in Pakistan and outside have protested against these sentences. Several demonstrations have taken place in Pakistan and Kashmir. More are planned for future. Local newspapers in Gilgit are printing this news as front page story.

Awami Workers Party chairman Fanoos Gujjar is planning to go to Gilgit this week along with some senior lawyers to discuss the whole strategy for the release of the comrades.

We would appeal all our comrades to raise the issue.