



Solidarity appeal for Pakistani Telecom workers fighting privatisation Trade Union Rights Campaign – Pakistan

Trade Union Rights Campaign – Pakistan
turcpakistan@yahoo.com
26 May 2005

To: All MP's, Councillors, trade unionists, trade union branches and community groups

61 000 Pakistani Telecom workers start all-out strike against privatisation

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Musharraf government has begun an ambitious \$1.7 billion privatisation programme to sell off what remains of state owned industry. The jewel in the crown for local and international big business is the Pakistani Telecommunications Ltd (PTCL) which makes £323 million in profit every year. If privatisation goes ahead 50% of the workforce could be sacked. Workers who keep their jobs will lose the health and education benefits they receive for themselves and their families. The phone system in the rural areas, where the majority of the population lives in Pakistan, will be decimated by new private owners because this section of the industry is not profitable.

As a result, two weeks ago 61 000 telecommunication workers started a programme of meetings of the workforce mobilising opposition to privatisation and in support of increased pay and conditions. They also went out on strike for two hours every day. This action was coordinated by a nine-union strong coordinating committee, the Trade Union Action Committee, which brings together all unions in PTCL.

The Trade Union Rights Campaign – Pakistan was set up to fight privatisation, downsizing, and the policies of the World Bank and IMF. The TURCP also campaigns for the rights of trade unions to organise in the workplace and against all the anti-trade union legislation implemented by the Musharraf regime.

Management has called negotiations on two separate occasions but made no concessions. Telecommunication workers see this struggle as vitally important to save their jobs and conditions but also other sections of the public sector. After the failure of the last round of negotiations, telecommunication workers have started an all-out strike to halt the privatisation plans of the government. Four thousand workers have occupied the headquarters of PTCL in Islamabad and have said they will not leave until the government withdraws its privatisation plans.

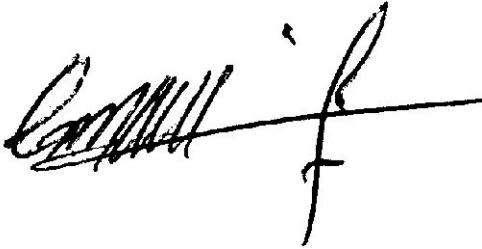
Already union activists have come under pressure from the police and army to end the action. It is possible that the government and management will attempt to crush the strike in the next few days. So we are appealing for solidarity letters of support from all Members of Parliament, councillors, trade unionists and their branches to be sent as quickly as possible to the following email address: turcpakistan@yahoo.com

- Stop the privatization, downsizing and retrenchment.
- Stop the massacre of 30 000 jobs.
- No to imperialist globalisation, IMF, World Bank, and WTO.
- Abolish IRO 2002, Labour policy 2002, Removal from service ordinance 2000-1, and all other anti-union laws.

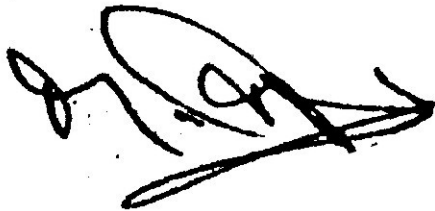
Yours in struggle,



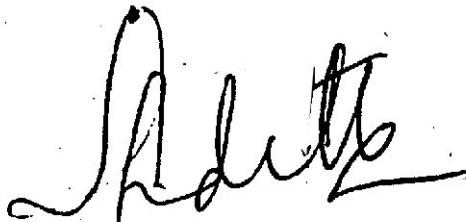
Azad Qadri,
Organising Secretary, Trade Union Rights Campaign – Pakistan
National Deputy Secretary General Lions Unity Union



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