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Pakistan

Supreme Court hears case of Mehar Abdul Sattar of Okara Military Farms

- News from around the world -

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Mehar Abdul Sattar is general secretary of Anjman Mozareen Punjab and also Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee, a peasant leader demanding land rights at Okara Military Farms. He has been in jail since April 2016, 36 false police cases have been registered against him. In March 2017, he was shifted to Sahiwal High Security prison to torture him as much as possible.

Against this Asma Jehanghir former president of Supreme Court Bar Association and the most vocal human right advocate in Pakistan went to Supreme Court after Lahore High Court rejected our plea to bring back to an ordinary jail from Sahiwal High Security prison.

The case was heard by Chief Justice Supreme Court of Pakistan justice Saqib Nisar and Umer Atta Bential, another senior SC judge.

Asma Jehanghir narrated the case history and said Mehar Abdul Sattar's only crime is demanding land rights at Okara Military Farms.

The high security jail is meant for convicted terrorists and religious terrorists. This was just to punish and victimise him. He is 24 hours in chains. Inhuman treatment of a peasant leader is totally unacceptable.

She said that without a judicial order, an under trial prisoner cannot be shifted to another jail. In this case, Home secretary ordered the move and later went to the court for permission. An administrative order is against the prison rules, she remarked.

The administration's advocates said that we had security issues to bring him from Okara to Sahiwal Court, on this Asma replied that he is not Osama Bin Laden but just a peasant leader.

The administration's advocates said that when Mehar Abdul Sattar appears in a court, hundreds of peasants come to see him, that creates more security issues. On hearing this, Asma Jehanghir replied that yes when rich leaders appear in court, no one objects how many followers come to the court but a leader of the poor is not treated the same.

Justice Umer Atta Bential remarked after looking at the list of the cases against him that he seems to be a socialist. On this Asma Jehanghir pointed towards me and said there are more socialists here.

Asma Jehanghir said that the court must order to produce him here and see for yourself how badly he was treated. He has lost almost half of his weight.

Chief Justice Saqib Nisar said that we want to look in detail on which rule and procedure an under trial prisoner is shifted to Sahiwal High Security Jail. While adjourning the case for a further hearing in September, he ordered that his chains are removed immediately and allowed Sattar's wife and sister to visit him every fifteen days. Also allowed Asma Jehanghir and Abid Saqi to meet Mehar Sattar in jail.

However they did not shift him to Central Jail Sahiwal immediately. The case will now be heard in Islamabad in September.

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