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Pakistan

Solidarity with victimised telecom workers in Lahore

- News from around the world -

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On August 5, 400 workers turned up to show solidarity with the protesting Pakistan Telecommunication workers at GPO Chouck Lahore. among them were over 200 women workers. National Trade Union Federation had announced a Dharna today on Mall Road to demand the reinstatement of the PTCL terminated workers. The Etsalat company who had bought PTCL in 2005 had terminated the services of 83 trade union leaders who had organised a national protest in 2010 to demand a wage increase. Instead of listening to workers, Etsalat suspended 600 workers and eventually reinstated most of them apart from the 83 main leaders of the PTCL trade unions.

The PTCL workers had set up a protest camp at GPO Chouck since 1st August 2011 to demand their reinstatement. August 5 was a day for fellow trade unionists to show solidarity. National Trade Union Federation, progressive Youth Front, Labour Party Pakistan, Labour Education Foundation, Women Workers Help Line, Communist Mazdoor Kissan Party, Workers Party Pakistan, Pakistan Trade Union Federation and others participated in this Dharna for over two hours.

Speaking on the occasion, Farooq Tariq spokesperson Labour Party Pakistan announced full support to protesting workers. He said that today, we are sitting on road side and not disturbing the traffic but next week, we will picket the headquarters of Pakistan telecommunication office in Lahore., We will occupy the office to demand for workers reinstatement. He said that with the power of the working class,we will defeat the Dubai-based Etsalat who had taken over PTCL after privatization. Over 50,000 workers have lost jobs since Etsalat had taken over in 2005.

Yousaf Baluch, chairman National Trade Union Federation, Niaz Khan General Secretary NTUF, Azra Shad chairperson Women Workers Help Line, Irfan Choudry president National Student Federation, Sakhi Khan vice president Railway Workers Union CBA Workshops division, Hasan Rana general secretary United Workers Alliance PTCL, Rana Sarfraz, Hafiz Luttfullah of PTCL and others spoke on the occasion and expressed solidarity with the movement.

It was decided to continue the protest camp.