



Down with rape and torture! International solidarity with climate activists in Karachi!

International Secretariat, League for the Fifth International Thu, 16/12/2021 - 12:57

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The League for the Fifth International is deeply concerned over reports of the rape and torture of a climate activist on the night before the December 12 Climate March in Karachi. We condemn this barbarism in the strongest terms and solidarise with the comrades who had worked day and night to make this march possible while focussing its demands on Karachi's working class population.

Our Pakistan section, the Revolutionary Socialist Movement, is also part of the broad coalition that organised the People's Climate March that gathered at Boat Basin and walked to Bilawal Chowrangi. The alliance unites housing rights, land rights, and climate change activists, including Karachi Bachao Tehreek ((Save Karachi Movement, a coalition of different left organisations focused on resistance against demolition of working class homes) , the Awami Workers' Party, Women's Democratic Front, Progressive Students' Federation Karachi, Pakistan Maholiati Tahaffuz Movement, Climate Action Pakistan and 28 other organisations, such as Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement, Jiye Sindh Students' Federation, Pakhtun Students' Federation, Sindh Sujaagi Forum, Baloch Yakjehti Committee, and the Karachi Union of Journalists.

Among all the different climate marches organised across the world, it is clear that the march in Karachi was organised by socialist forces who were not only critical of ecological devastation but were also willing to address the root cause of the climate crisis, which is capitalism. The main banners of the march displayed two main points: 'Socialism or Barbarism' and 'System Change Not Climate Change'.

Mobilisations for the march were focused on working class neighbourhoods and students and youth from socially oppressed strata. In view of all these factors, it is abundantly clear that the repression faced by the transgender woman climate activist was a tactic not only to use sexual violence against a member of one of the most vulnerable and oppressed gender minorities, but also to threaten the larger community of socialists engaged in struggles for climate justice. We pay tribute to the comrades for not bowing to this pressure or that of the cops on the day of the march.

According to the statement issued by the Karachi Bachao Tehreek, an organising committee meeting was held on December 11 to finalise the details of the march. "After the meeting, one of our organisers, a trans woman, was abducted on her way home. She was tortured and raped for information regarding the march's programme and its speeches", the statement says.

It adds: "On the day of the march, as protestors arrived at Boat Basin, they were met with heavy contingents of police, and the march was blockaded and surrounded on all sides by police vans. Protestors were only allowed to move forward inches at a time, with the explicit goal of not allowing the march to gather momentum and reach Bilawal House, the home of the chairman of the ruling party in Sindh, a party which ostensibly claims to stand for democracy, constitutional freedom, for human rights, and for environmental rights.

The blatant state repression against this climate march is part of a sustained campaign of criminalisation and police violence targeting economically and socially marginalised groups fighting against climate injustice. From Bahria Town to Gujjar and Orangi Nullah, organisers resisting forced displacements and climate injustice have been subjected to false terrorism charges, illegal detention, arrests, intimidation and abductions. All that because they demand the right to

a sustainable, equitable and just city. As climate activists, we are outraged about the infringement of our constitutional right to protest and freedom to assemble. We demand accountability from the Sindh Government and the Sindh Police on behalf of all participating organisations."

We stand in complete solidarity with the climate movement in Karachi.

- End violence against transwomen!
- Stop harassing political activists through torture and intimidation tactics!
- Stop forcible acquisition of working-class communities' lands in Malir and Gadap Town for building mega projects such as Bahria Town!
- Stop destroying the homes of working class people in Gujjar Nullah, Orangi Nullah and other such neighbourhoods for capitalist ventures!
- Working class control over development of the city!
- Climate activists around the world should express their solidarity with the comrades in Karachi and protest to the agencies of the Pakistan government against the brutality of the police.

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