Pakistan: Down with state repression! 
International solidarity with Kashmir!

International Secretariat, League for the Fifth International Wed, 13/01/2021 - 18:42
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As reports of the Pakistani state preparing a major police operation against Kashmiris pour in, the League for the Fifth International sends solidarity to the people of Kashmir who went on strike on the 13th of January. Kashmiris have been waging a heroic struggle against the rising prices of wheat since November. In the past two days, the situation has become all the more tense with a number of unarmed protesters fired upon by the police and a large number of protesting people arrested.

In the Poonch division, action committees have been springing up as fighting organs during the past year. In November last year, the government ended the subsidy on wheat and increased wheat flour prices in Pakistan-administered Kashmir by Rs500 per maund. Protests began in December.

The movement has been peaceful and reached a high point recently when it managed to secure a decrease of Rs200 per maund of wheat. A call had been given for strike action for the 13th of January in three districts of Poonch division and plans were made to seal off four entry points from Islamabad as well.

State forces did everything they could to prevent the popular movement from advancing further. The ruling PTI party is also apparently taking advantage of the situation as the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir belongs to the rival PML-N. Heavy contingents of law enforcement personnel were called from different parts of Kashmir and deployed in Poonch. A series of protests began from the 12th of January, when socialist activists of The Struggle, including Comrade Altamash Tasadduq, were arrested together with numerous organised activists of the action committees for simply announcing the protest. Members of the International Marxist Tendency have also been arrested.


Protesters in Azad Patan tried to proceed towards Islamabad to record their protest. Police unleashed brutal force on them, using baton charges and tear gas shelling. Three people were severely injured and taken to the Palandri hospital. Later, when some blocs arrived from Rawalakot, protesters set fire to a police checkpoint, forcing the law enforcers to retreat into Pakistani territory.

We categorically condemn the state violence that has erupted to contain the growing popular movement. We express full solidarity with the protest movement and fully endorse the indefinite general strike call of the Poonch action committee. We also appeal to left organisations, trade unions and students’ organisations to solidarise with the Kashmiri protesters, support the protest call and organise protests across the region against state violence in Azad Kashmir.
- Release all arrested protesters now!
- Reverse the increase in wheat prices now!
- All foreign forces out of Kashmir now!

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