
Sindh Hari Committee struggles for land rights, 2009

- [\(mainly or initiated by\) people of color](#) [1]
- [an example of paradox of repression](#) [2]
- [local community or neighborhood-level campaign](#) [3]

Timing

March 22,
2009

to:

July 15,
2009

Location and Goals

Country:

Pakistan

Location City/State/Province:

Khaskheli, Sindh Province

Location Description:

Karachi Press Club

[View Location on Map](#)

Goals:

1. The removal of old, false First Investigation Reports (FIR) lodged by Faqir
2. The filing of an FIR in Wali Daad's case
3. Police protection in Sanghar
4. The regularization of village property
5. The end of Mr. Faqir's occupation of the Sindh Irrigation Dept. lands that surrounded the village.

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 016. Picketing
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 159. The fast (fast of moral pressure, hunger strike, satyagrahic fast)

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 016. Picketing
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 045. Demonstrative funerals
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 159. The fast (fast of moral pressure, hunger strike, satyagrahic fast)

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 016. Picketing
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 159. The fast (fast of moral pressure, hunger strike, satyagrahic fast)

Methods in 4th segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 016. Picketing
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 159. The fast (fast of moral pressure, hunger strike, satyagrahic fast)

Methods in 5th segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 016. Picketing
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 159. The fast (fast of moral pressure, hunger strike, satyagrahic fast)

Methods in 6th segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 016. Picketing
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 159. The fast (fast of moral pressure, hunger strike, satyagrahic fast)

Segment Length:

19 days

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Economic Justice

Human Rights

National/Ethnic Identity

Group characterization:

- Peasants from the Pakistani region of Khaskheli in Sindh Province

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Wali Daad of Khaskheli (AKA Walidad Khaskheli or Wali Daad Khan, name varies between sources); Sidh Hari Committee; Villagers of Mohammad Essa Khaskheli (AKA Essa Khaskheli Goth, name varies between sources); Joint Action Committee Karachi (JAC)

Partners:

Not Known

External allies:

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan; Pakistan Institute of Labor Education and Research; Actionaid; Labour Party; Shirkat Gah; Aurat Foundation; Takleeq Foundation.

Involvement of social elites:

Justice Rashid Rizvi (a prominent lawyer)

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

Groups in 2nd Segment:

- Joint Action Committee Karachi
- Pakistan Institute of Labor Education and Research
- Shirkat Gah

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

Additional notes on joining/exiting order:

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Aurat Foundation, Takleea Foundation

Segment Length:

19 days

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

Varyaam (Waryaam) Faqir, Noor Hassan, Dr Hashim, Manzoor Brohi, Noor Mohammed Abro and other landlords in the Sindh region.

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

Not Known

Campaigner violence:

Not Known

Repressive Violence:

Protesters were threatened at gunpoint outside the Karachi Press Club, leading to the heart attack and death of Wali Daad. Repeated threats of violence throughout the hunger strike led villagers to believe they would be massacred if they returned to their village.

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

6 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

2 points out of 3 points

Total points:

9 out of 10 points

Notes on outcomes:

Campaigners received the land rights to their land.

Growth occurred through the acquisition of solidarity groups, but not as rapidly as potential.

The villagers of Goth Muhammad Issa Khaskheli have lived on and farmed their village for the past fifty years, in Sanghar, Sindh, Pakistan. In 2003, a nearby feudal lord, Varyaam Faqir, began encroaching upon their land, despite the fact that they held documented ownership from the Pakistani government. Over a period of years, he began threatening the villagers and forcing them into working in his fields for free. As villagers resisted his demands, the threats became more severe and in 2007 approximately 200 men working for Faqir attacked the village, razing homes and injuring its members.

Unwilling to cede their land to Faqir, villagers held a series of undocumented demonstrations to raise attention for their issue, but the lack of media coverage in rural Pakistan meant that their protest went unnoticed.

In 2009, rumor of a second strike by Faqir's men spread, and the villagers moved to take action. The brother of the villager's founder, Wali Daad, began to organize a hunger strike, calling for governmental sanctions against Faqir, and land rights to be given, in writing, to the people of Khaskheli. On March 22, 2009, around 20 villagers assembled in front of the Karachi Press Club, the main media headquarters for much of Pakistan, and began their hunger strike. Fearing violence in their village, more and more members assembled in front of the Press Club, refusing to leave. During the day, they rallied and chanted, waving signs and banners detailing their plight.

During the initial period of hunger striking, the villagers received little to no support, or media attention. However, as they continued to occupy the front of the press club, in growing numbers, the mainstream Pakistani media began reporting on the story. Despite this very limited degree of success, Varyaam Faqir soon intimidated the media into ceasing their reporting.

On April 11, Faqir sent his employees to confront the villagers outside the Press Club, and inform them that if they continued their struggle, everyone in the village would be brutally murdered. Wali Daad, the leader of the

villagers, fainted during the confrontation, was taken to the hospital unconscious, had a heart attack, and was pronounced dead the next day.

The death of Wali Daad received a significant amount of media coverage both in Pakistan and around the world. The villagers of Khaskheli attempted to use the death to cast a shadow over Faqir, naming him responsible for the peasant's death from intimidation, and laying the shrouded body in front of the Press Club for funeral rites in plain view of the world and the international media.

After Wali Daad's death, Sindh province ministers Shazia Marri and Tauqeer Fatima visited the Khaskheli camp outside the Karachi Press Club, promising compensation of 100,000 Rupee (about \$1200), the arrest of the men who intimidated Wali Daad, and the leasing of the village to the villagers, within the week. The villagers returned to Goth Muhammad Issa Khaskheli. However, a week came and passed without any of the above occurring.

On April 20, seventy Khaskheli villagers returned to the Karachi Press Club to begin a second hunger strike for leasing rights to their village's land. As a result of media coverage and attention surrounding Wali Daad's death, the villagers had a significant amount of support from a wide variety of Pakistani nonprofit organizations and human and indigenous rights organizations, including the Pakistani Institute on Labor and Research, Shirkat Gah, and the Joint Action Committee Karachi. In addition, the prominent attorney and judge, Justice Rashid Rizvi, provided pro bono legal support.

On May 7, Varyaam Faqir and his associates, Noor Hassan, Dr. Hashim, Manzoor Brohi, Noor Mohammed Abro were detained on charges related to Wali Daad's death. A city judge ruled that they weren't eligible for bail. However, both Faqir and Dr Hashim were able to escape with the aid of their men. Police made little attempt to prevent their escape or pursue them after the fact. The villagers continued their hunger strike in the hot sun, waving flags and banners from their veritable encampment outside the Press Club.

On July 15, without warning, the Sindh province ministers announced that they would promptly sign land ownership over to the villagers themselves. This was the first time in Pakistani history that a feudal entity was forced to return land to its original owners. Although the struggle against feudalism and occupation continues in Pakistan, the first land return represented significant progress, and sets a precedent for other villages taking similar actions to reclaim their own properties.

Research Notes

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Additional Notes:

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