

## Press Release

Dated 24/11/2020

"Bonded laborers of human trafficking freed today"

"33 laborers sold and held hostage"

"Minority communities are targets"



National Campaign Committee for Eradication of Bonded Labour Uttar Pradesh informed Bandhua Mukti Morcha Delhi on 13/11/2020 that 33 laborers belonging to minority community to be freed from bondage running in S+ H kiln in Machhari village of District Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh.

Immediately Nirmal Gorana, General Secretary of Bonded Mukti Morcha sent a complaint to the District Magistrate and ADM of Sambhal district, demanding the liberation and freedom from bondage for 33 bonded labourers suffering from human trafficking.

On 23/11/2020, a team of representatives of Bandhua Mukti Morcha, Human Rights Law Network and National Campaign Committee for Eradication of Bonded Labor namely 1. Osbert Khaling, Advocate, 2. Kawal Preet Kaur, Advocate and 3. Sonu Tomar, Social Activist, reached Sambhal district and approached ADM Sambhal. Thereon ADM Sambhal ordered SDM Sambhal to immediately free the bonded laborers.

Under the direction of Sub- Divisional, Naib Tehsildar Mr. Bharat Pratap Singh, Mr. Vinod Kumar Sharma, Labor Inspector, Hardwari Lal Gautam Vigilance team members and a team of Asmoli police station also constituted administration rescue team. When the team reached the spot it was seen that there was no proper brick kiln and these labourer were kept inside jungle where they were found to be making brick from mud.

After listening to the narration of the labourers, 16 bonded laborers were freed along with their respective family in which five men, four women and seven children were found working in a bondage condition in which two women were pregnant. They were trafficked by a thekedar named Riyaj on the pretext of providing them with good wages. They were promised Rs. 550 for 1000 bricks but when they reached the present brick kiln they were told that they would be paid Rs. 450 per 100 bricks. After working for one month still these labourers were not paid anything. These bonded labourers are native of District Baghpat, Shamli and Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh.

The conditions of the freed bonded labourers were very delicate and painful. They did not have any food items for their sustenance. They were made to live in a chappar made of tin and cloth. The workers were victims of human trafficking and bonded labourers. The trapped labourers, including the family, fell victim to the bosses and contractors who would harass them day and night. The workers neither received work money nor respect but yet were made to work for more than 13 hours per day. Then when the labourers were brought from Kashmir to Sambhal district, Uttar Pradesh the exploitation skyrocketed and wreaked havoc. Whenever the workers talked to the principle employer about wages they were threaten and beaten mercilessly. The thekedar was also abusive with women labourers. In the name of food, each family was given 5 kg of rice and 5 kg of flour and 1 kg of pulses a month ago, then nothing. The labourers used to fill their stomachs with demands and demands.

The condition of the labourers was seen to describe the atrocities that occurred with them. The administration team recorded the statements, then SDM Sambhal ordered immediate action against the kiln owner and traffickers. The SDM Sambhal immediately issued Release certificates to the rescued bonded labourers. All the labourers were not paid any wages and were sent to their village.

Bandhua Mukti Morcha General Secretary Nirmal Agni said that the workers of Uttar Pradesh were taken out of the shackles of human trafficking and bonded labour, but at present they have no means to live life. Under the rehabilitation scheme of bonded laborers, the immediate assistance amount should be given to each freed bonded laborer at the rate of Rs. 20,000. Also, survey of bonded labourers should be done with immediate effect in Sambhal district, otherwise this cycle of slavery will continue. The cases of human trafficking and bonded labour are increasing due to the lockdown. In Corona, everyone is selling labourers in a luring manner, so the government should take strong measures against human trafficking and bonded labour.

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