

KARACHI: The peace rally organized by the Sindh Government in Karachi on Saturday came to an end while violence continued in the city as 13 more were killed, local T.V's reported.

Members of the Pakistan People's Party, Muttahida Qaumi Movement, Awami National Party, Jamaat-e-Islami

and other parties took part in the peace rally.

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani appreciated the participation of all political parties in the peace rally and said that stability in Karachi is important for the country. "It is in the best interest of the country that peace and stability is maintained in Karachi," said Gilani.

Gilani said he had a detailed discussion with MQM chief Altaf Hussain. "I appreciate Altaf Hussain's support for PPP's initiative of peace rally, and for asking his party members to support it," he further added.

Rally participants including provincial ministers marched from Clifton Helipad to Three-Sword monument. Political workers waving party flags raised slogans against targeted killing in Karachi and demanded initiatives for peace.

Sindh Minister for Information Sharjeel Inam Memon said the rally was the first step towards peace and unity. He said this journey to peace would continue till making Karachi a peaceful city.

Separately, two people were injured in a firing incident in Sherpao Colony of Landhi. The injured were immediately shifted to a hospital where they succumbed to their injuries.

### **Ferocity:**

Amid shooting incidents in Karachi that left at least 13 people dead on Saturday and 92 in the last nine days, the main political stakeholders differ on the means and methods of curbing violence.

According to officials, more than 240 people have been killed this month in Karachi while 92 people lost their lives since July 22. Eleven people, including two lawyers, were killed on Friday.

Officials and observers have said that violence in Karachi has been fuelled largely by hostility between the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), Awami National Party (ANP), Sunni Tehrik and Mohajir Qaumi Movement-Haqiqi (MQM-H), a splinter

group of MQM.

Recently armed men of MQM-H carrying party flags entered into the houses of rival MQM workers in Malir area and killed several of them at point blank range. "A new front has suddenly been opened in Karachi. The MQM-Haqiqi appeared out of nowhere," an investigative officer in Karachi told media.

Return of normalcy to the port city which generates 70% of the country's annual tax revenue is not slightly in the limelight as all main parties representing different ethnicities share conflicting views on the current spate of violence and its solutions.

ANP's Sindh chief Shahi Sayed called for a full-fledged military operation. "We are asking for an operation in Karachi not to target the MQM but the criminals in all the parties, including ANP, PPP and Sunni Tehrik," he said. But Sindh chief minister Qaim Ali Shah disagreed. "We need administrative and political action to ensure peace in the city. There will be no operation in Karachi," he said.

Home minister Rehman Malik claims that external factors are involved in Karachi's violence. "Israeli ammunition was used by criminals in several incidents," Malik claimed. But Sindh's new interior minister Manzoor Wasan rejected Malik's claims and said: "This is Karachi's problem and will be resolved through negotiations, better policing and by establishing the writ of the state."

Sarwat Ejaz Qadri, a leader of Sunni Tehrik blamed banned Sipah-e-Sahaba, a militant outfit for killing its workers. "Our workers have continuously been targeted in a campaign by imported version of Islam," he said.

Altaf Hussain, the self-exiled chief of MQM, has appealed to rival political parties to work in collaboration for ending violence in Karachi.

Credits: Local Correspondents and News agencies