

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights (PCHR) has expressed deep concern over the increasing ratio of violence Against women in Pakistan**

Islamabad: Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights (PCHR) has expressed deep concern over the increasing ratio of violence against women in Pakistan .PCHR's special meeting was held on March 08, 2007 in PCHR Secretariat Islamabad. Chairman Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights (PCHR) Riaz Fatyana MNA presided over the session. Executive Director, Ms. Kashmala Tariq (MNA) Mrs. Riffat Javaid Kahlon (MNA), Khawaja Saad Rafique (MNA), Dr. Farid Ahmed Paracha MNA, Mrs. Mehnaz Rafi (MNA), Ms. Fozia Wahab (MNA), Mrs Tehmina Dasti MNA, Mrs Gul-e- Farkhanda MNA and Chief Coordinator PCHR Mr. Shafique Chaudhry participated in the meeting.

PCHR members showed their concern over increasing ratio of violence against women and said that there is still need for more consolidated efforts to change mindset of society, particularly in the rural areas of the country.

Executive Director PCHR Ms Kashmala Tariq briefed the participants of the meeting about different legislative initiatives and policy suggestions to achieve gender balance and socio economic betterment of women in country. She demanded much stronger moral and political support from fellow parliamentarians for women issues in the parliament. She said that PCHR will establish a cross party caucus for women parliamentarians ,where women MP's of different political parties from both houses of parliament and provincial assemblies will be involved to formulate an integrated and consolidated strategy for addressing the problem of increasing gender violence in country. In this regard, PCHR decided to host a national conference of women legislators in near future.

Chairman PCHR Riaz Fatyana MNA appreciated Government's efforts regarding socio economic uplift and political empowerment of women in the country. He also appreciated the active role of women parliamentarians particularly Ms Kashmala Tariq and Mrs Mehnaz Rafi in highlighting the issues of Women. He said that women Protection Bill is land mark achievement of present regime. This bill is a timely initiative which would be helpful to stop different anti women rights practices and social evils i.e. badal-e-sulh, wanni or sawara in Pakistan.

Chairperson NA standing committee on women development, Mrs. Mehnaz Raffi, while appreciating governments achievements pointed towards different major issues which have been left un attended in recent women protection bills .She referred to the plight of home based working women who are involved in labor work at their homes or in agriculture sector i.e piece workers, banglke workers etc and constitute a significant portion of informal women labor force of the country She also pointed out towards the pathetic condition of victims of domestic violence and told the meeting that

At the moment there is no effective legal and administrative mechanism available for the victim of domestic violence .This rae needs urgent attention of government and legislators. She said that she has already prepared

draft legislation for addressing this issue which has been submitted in National assembly as a private member bill.

It was decided in the meeting that fresh moves will be initiated to push forward this bill .furthermore ,it will be also shared with the participants of proposed women legislators conference and their suggestions and recommendations will be incorporated in this bill.

Issues of minorities' women also came under discussion. PCHR members observed that

Women belongs to Minorities are subject to different kinds of abuses in the hand of Feudal lords and other influential groups of society. Women are generally considered as vulnerable but women belonging to minority communities are even more marginalized and prone to different forms of violations and abuses.

An important decision, taken up during meeting was setting up of special committee to analyze the condition of women belonging to minority community.

A special nationwide consultative process would be conducted to identify and highlight the causes of violation of fundamental rights of minority women. In the light of its recommendations, Appropriate policy recommendations would be forwarded to Government and Parliament for ensuring the protection of women rights of minorities.. And this issue demands urgent attention of government to address the women rights violations in Pakistan.