

# KARACHI

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STOPPING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

## Pakistan joins global campaign

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One Billion Rising

# Pakistan joins global campaign to end women's plight

Aurat Foundation holds a seminar to encourage people in joining the movement

OUR CORRESPONDENT  
KARACHI

Activist Eve Ensler's global protest movement, One Billion Rising, to end violence against women reached Pakistan on Sunday with the launch of the campaign by NGO Aurat Foundation in Karachi at the Arts Council.

Apart from a seminar, a number of women and human rights organisations set up their stalls at the event to share information through their booklets and posters for promotion of justice and gender equality for women.

A performance by Suhae Abro on Faiz Ahmed Faiz's poem and a concert by musical band Sketches entertained the audience and participants of the seminar.

"Across the globe, countries have launched the campaign to mobilise men, women, intellectuals and politicians to raise their voices to end violence against women," said Aurat Foundation Resident



Aurat Foundation's Dr Masooma Hasan

Director Mahnaz Rahman. She told *The Express Tribune* that the main event will be held on the eve of Valentine's Day 2013 while the organization will get people involved in the time leading up to that. "People express their love on February 14. This year, we want men to show their love by raising their voice to end violence against women."

Referring to statistics from the United Nations, Rehman said that 1 out of every 3 women in the world will go through violence during their lifetime which comes up to one billion in total.

Speaker Farhat Parveen, who leads Now Communities, spoke on the

BILLION VICTIMS

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law and order situation of Karachi that affects women, mostly those who work in factories. "We can't go outside our homes as we are scared of getting caught in the violence that suddenly breaks out in the streets," she said. "But we don't feel safe at homes either because there are chances of a hand grenade being thrown at us - the city has become a battleground."

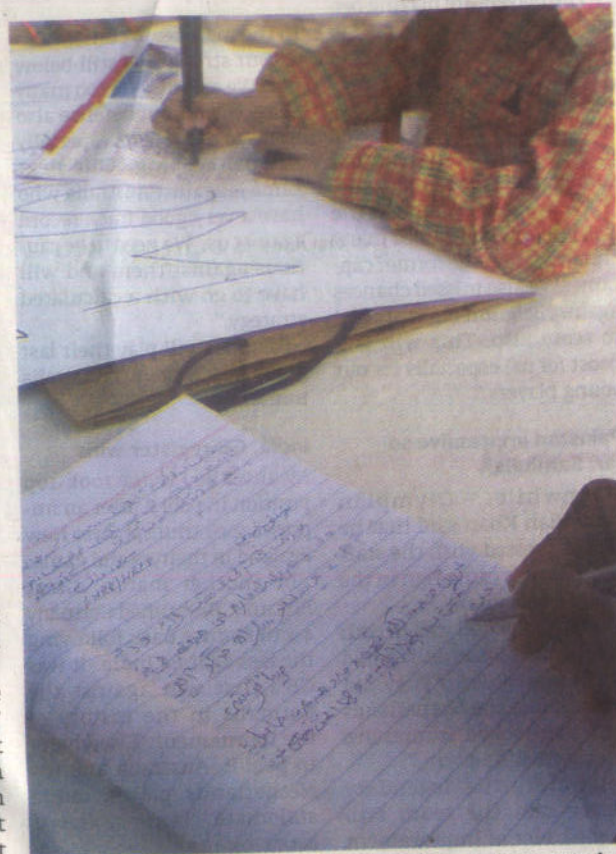
Sindh Assembly Deputy Speaker Syeda Shehla Raza shed light on the legislation on women issues in the assembly. Although the assembly has passed a number of small resolutions on women rights, she said they have



Sindh Assembly Deputy Speaker Syeda Shehla Raza

not yet come up with a detailed bill on women rights. "There are some certain problems which stop legislation on women rights but they need to be uncovered and removed," she said.

A poster reading 'No more violence against women!' was launched by Aurat Foundation's Dr Masooma Hasan. Speaking on 'Extremism and its Impact on Women', Journalist Babar Ayaz said that violence against women is imbedded in our culture and religion has given it a legal cover. "In rural and feudal societies, women are more subjugated because these societies have adopted values which are



**RAISING THEIR VOICE:** Participants at the seminar organised to launch the campaign, One Billion Rising, write notes to end violence against women (above). PHOTOS: ATHAR KHAN/EXPRESS

from the dark ages."

Nuzhat Kidwai of Women's Action Forum read out the draft of a resolution to end

violence against women which the participants of the seminar passed by raising their hands in favour.