

Friday, December 31, 2010

Protest demonstration in front of Parliament House

Eliminate FSC, repeal discriminatory laws, demands IHI

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: The people of federal capital got together in front of the Parliament House on Thursday to stage a protest demonstration against discriminatory blasphemy laws, parallel judicial structures, especially the Federal Shariat Court (FSC) and its recent judgment against the Women's Protection Act (WPA) that brought little relief to women being booked under notorious Hudood Laws.

Representatives of civil society, minorities and residents of Islamabad gathered under the auspices of the Insani Haqooq Ittehaad (IHI), a human rights alliance, to denounce FSC's decision on WPA. They demanded abolishing of FSC and parallel judicial systems i.e. Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), FSC, jir-



gas, panchayets and repeal of all laws that are discriminatory to women and minorities, especially blasphemy and Hudood laws. They also called for immediate dismissal of Maulana Shirani as the CII chairman.

The participants of the rally were a diverse mix of civil society organisations, women's rights groups, human rights activists, political workers, students' organisations and minority communities from Islamabad. They raised slogans for a secular and demo-

cratic Pakistan. Human rights activists Tahira Abdullah, Farzana Bari, Naeem Mirza and Marvi Sarmad addressed the participants of the rally. They urged the government to work towards the realisation of the democratic, secular and peaceful vision of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's Pakistan, a vision he clearly articulated in his speech on August 11, 1947 when he stated that religion would have no role to play in the business of the state.

The protesters demanded

repeal of Hudood, Qisas and Diyat laws. They reminded the government that the state had a duty to ensure protection to women, minorities and other vulnerable sections of the society and it should not bow down to political pressures and blackmailing by religious parties.

The protesters also demanded that the government stand up to the retrogressive religious forces in the country and not capitulate to their blackmailing. They called upon the government to ensure the rights of religious minorities by immediately releasing Aasiya Bibi and repealing the blasphemy laws.

The demonstration was part of countrywide campaign of the human rights organisations against the FSC's decision, to demand FSC abolishing and repeal of blasphemy laws.