

## Uptick in honour killings fails to move govt

ISLAMABAD: Even after more than 4,000 women have been murdered in the name of honour since 2008, the government continues to drag its feet on introducing law to effectively criminalise and stop this heinous crime.

In recent years, the clamour for introducing effective laws to discourage such killings has grown – both inside and outside parliament. Yet lawmakers have been slow to act on pending legislation, ignoring the high incidence of the crime.

### **Rampant killings**

Aurat Foundation, a nongovernmental organisation campaigning for women's rights, says some 4,317 women have been murdered in the name of honour between 2008 and 2015. A breakup of this data shows that 2014 was the bloodiest year when 713 women were killed.

### **Govt likely to present own bill on honour killing**

Data for 2015, when 344 women were killed, shows that Punjab reported the highest incidence of such killings with 170 reported cases. Faisalabad 24, Rahim Yar Khan 16 and Kasur 13 reported the most cases of honour killings in the province. The metropolitan city of Lahore reported 12 cases.

Sindh was a distant second where 116 cases of honour killings were reported in 2015. Jaccobabad reported the most number of cases of honour killings from any single district in the country with 30 cases. It was followed by Shikarpur with 21 cases and Kashmore with 10 cases. The metropolitan city of Karachi reported four cases.

Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa accounted for 30 cases of honour killing with Swat reporting six and four each from Peshawar, Mardan and Upper Dir.

Balochistan reported the fewest number of honour killing cases at 24. Most of the cases, nine to be precise, were reported from Jafarabad while Naseerabad reported eight cases. Jhal Magsi reported three cases. The capital, Islamabad, too, had its share of honour killings, with four cases reported during the year.

Mehnaz Rehman, resident director of Aurat Foundation, claimed that seven women are killed for honour or commit suicide every day in Sindh. At least five women are kidnapped or abducted per day, while three women are raped or gang raped daily.

She explained that honour killings are generally committed when a woman marries out of her free will, challenging the feudal mindset. She added that in such instances the man usually escapes any punishment and it is usually the woman who has to pay the ultimate penalty.

Moreover, she said the killers escape punishment by abusing the Qisas (retribution) and Diyat (blood money) laws.

### **Govt lethargy**

Despite widespread demand from the public, civil society and even some legislators, the government has dragged its feet on anti-honour killing legislation.

### **[Pregnant woman, husband killed for 'honour' in Faisalabad](#)**

Two laws proposed on anti-honour killings– Criminal Laws Amendment Bill, 2015, and the Anti-Rape Laws (Criminal Laws

Amendment) Bill, 2015 – had been passed by the Senate in January 2014 but could not be passed by the National Assembly within the stipulated time of 90 days.

Furthermore, opposition from religious parties including the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) meant that the bills could not be presented before the joint sitting of parliament in April earlier this year.

However, Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Law and Justice Zafrullah Khan argues that the government wants to build consensus of all stakeholders on the bills.

But after dragging it behind closed doors for months, the government seems to have woken up to the urgency of the bill after a string of high profile cases.

It has constituted a 10-member committee of the joint sittings, headed by Minister for Law and Justice Zahid Hamid, to expedite the bills.

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