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End to violence against women

# Govt, opposition defeat each other's resolutions

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As the world marked International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women on Wednesday, the treasury and the opposition in the National Assembly shot down each other's resolutions calling for an end to all forms of torture against women in the country.

Opposition lawmakers staged a walkout from the house after Federal Minister for SAFRON Lt Gen (ret'd) Abdul Qadir Baloch refused to read out a resolution moved

by the opposition. The resolution exhorted the government to take 'concrete action' and put an end to torture against women.

The opposition lawmakers claimed that they had incorporated input from a cabinet member, Saira Afzal Tarar, in the draft resolution but her cabinet colleagues objected to its wording. Deputy Speaker Javed Murtaza Abbasi, who was officiating the session, reprimanded the opposition and forced them to vet the draft.

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## Violence against women: January–June 2015

<b>Kidnapping</b>	<b>1,020</b>	<b>Domestic violence</b>	<b>256</b>
<b>Murder</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>Sexual assault</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Rape   Gang rape</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>Acid attack</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Suicide</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>Burning</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Honour killing</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>1,053</b>

SOURCE: AURAT FOUNDATION

## Govt, opposition defeat each other

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He also circumvented the house rules and allowed a ruling party MP from Sindh to speak on a point of order for unlimited time. The lawmaker complained about the conduct of the Sindh government during the second phase of the local government elections in the province. Interestingly, a day earlier PPP Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto Zardari accused the PML-N of changing results of the two phases of the LG polls in Punjab on the pretext of recounting.

Zahid Hamid, who has recently been inducted in the federal cabinet, complained that the opposition had not shared the draft of the resolution with the treasury benches. PPP lawmaker Shazia Marri was quick to refute the claim. Hamid remained adamant, however.

The government, then, came up with its own resolution which was shot down by PTI's Dr Arif Alvi. He said the resolution did not say much about the situation of women in Pakistan. "We are marking Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women to identify shortcomings and address them," he added. Lawmakers from other opposition parties endorsed Dr Alvi, though the chair did not allow them to speak on the matter.

Violence against women is still rampant in Pakistan. According to Rabeea Hadi, Director Advocacy at Aurat Foundation, seven women are either murdered, killed in the name of honour or commit suicide every day in Pakistan.

### Violence perpetrated against women in Pakistan every day

**Killed/Suicide**



**Kidnapped**



**Raped/gang raped**



**Domestic violence**



SOURCE: AURAT FOUNDATION

"Similarly, five women are kidnapped or abducted, three are raped or gang-raped, and one woman faces domestic violence every day," she told *The Express Tribune*. More than 4,000 cases of violence against women have been reported so far this year in Pakistan.

Quoting from a World Health Organisation report, Hadi said physical and sexual violence against women affects more than one-third of women globally. "The fact that Pakistan has been ranked 144th on the Gender Gap Index unveiled on 19th of this month reminds us that we are still far behind our target of empowering women and giving them equal rights in all fields of life," Hadi said.

She noted with satisfaction that Pakistan's parliament has 21% representation and many more are joining local govern-

ments. "Ironically however, only 4.8% women have government sector jobs in the country. This is the lowest in South Asia," she added.

Parliament and provincial legislatures have introduced a number of laws over the past few years to protect women's rights, she said. "The Sindh and Balochistan assemblies have passed domestic violence bills but other provinces and the federal legislature have yet to follow suit."

Saima Javed, representative of the Quetta chapter of Aurat Foundation, said 66 cases of violence against women had been reported in the last six months in Balochistan.

"Of these, 24 cases were of honour killings, one each of suicide and kidnapping, and 11 cases of domestic violence," she added.