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Call for enacting pro-women legislations



Campaigners yesterday started the drive of 16 days of activism calling on governments to enact all pending pro-women legislations to end violence against women.

The End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Alliance — an alliance of various nongovernmental organisations — censured the federal government for not passing bills such as the domestic violence bill, comprehensive acid violence bill, early and forced marriages bill, and honour killing bill pending for months. The drive of 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence runs from November 25 to December 10 to galvanise action to end violence against women and girls around the world.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday, the alliance members noted with concern that the existing gender disparities have worsened due to the current social, economic, political issues and lack of proactive will to deal with violence against women and girls issues. Rabeea Shah, Co-chair of EVAWG alliance Islamabad, said the interior ministry has been sitting on the domestic violence bill for more than eight months. Various organisations have written to the ministry to process the bill but there has been no response from it, she added.

"Though the domestic violence legislation has been passed by the provinces of Balochistan, Sindh and Punjab, yet the implementation mechanism still needs to be strengthened. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that always claims to be spearheading the change is also yet to enact the law," she said.

Likewise, the acid violence bill is pending with the ministry of law and justice, said Valerie Khan from the alliance. She urged the government to speed up the process of passing the legislations and called for strengthening accountability of law enforcing agencies on reported cases of violence against women and girls.

According to Aurat Foundation, gender-based violence kills seven women everyday in Pakistan, with five women either kidnapped or abducted daily, three raped or gang-raped and one woman faces domestic violence every day.