

Demo held against deferral of Domestic Violence Bill

OUR STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD - Insani Haqooq Itihad (IHD), a network of civil society organisations and human rights activists, along with Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW), organised a peaceful demonstration on Friday against the deferral of the long-pending Domestic Violence Bill in front of Parliament House.

The participants raised slogans, "Violence against women unacceptable", "Pass the Domestic Violence Bill", and "We demand justice". The members of civil society and human rights activists strongly condemn the deferral of the long-pending and most urgently needed Bill on Domestic Violence due to patriarchal, anti-women mindset of some of our male parliamentarians.

The Bill was unanimously passed by the National Assembly in 2009 and was referred to a mediation committee by the Senate. After the 18th Amendment, Senator Nilofar Bakhtiar moved the same bill in the Senate and it was passed unanimously. It is shocking that JUI-F, PML-N and PPP expressed their reservations and asked for more time to review the contents of the bill, the representa-

tives said.

"It is highly condemnable that despite rampant incidents of domestic violence in the country, our Parliament is still reluctant to provide legal protection to women against family violence. We demand immediate passage of the bill on domestic violence at a joint sitting of the Parliament," they added.

The demonstrators were intercepted by the police on all routes to be kept away from demonstrating. Police stopped Aurat Foundation staff at security picket near Secretariat and also threatened them of dire consequences if they didn't obey the police.

Though some of the Aurat Foundation women staff succeeded in reaching the demonstration, most of them were stopped at various check points. Another women rights activist Aqsa Khan was detained by police at a security picket near Radio Pakistan, however she was later released.

Later in the day, Wasim Wagma, Advocacy Specialist Aurat Foundation, while talking to journalists said that civil society is organising a bigger rally in support of the bill on Monday when it will be presented in the Parliament again.