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# Civil society seeks justice for Fakhra

By A Reporter



A civil society activist holds a candle and placard during a vigil in memory of Fakhra Younas on Friday. — Online

ISLAMABAD, March 30: Civil society and human rights activists here on Friday held a demonstration seeking justice for acid attack victim Fakhra Younas who committed suicide after failing to get her rights as a citizen of Pakistan.

The participants also organised a candlelight vigil to pay tribute to the woman at F-6 Markaz.

Representatives of civil society networks, including Insani Haqooq Itihad, End Violence against Women, and Women Action Forum, said they were outraged at the failure of the state and the system to protect the acid burn victim or provide her justice, making a travesty of her fundamental constitutional rights.

In view of her reported dying declaration, which constitutes new evidence, they demanded that the Fakhra-Bilal Khar acid-crime court case be reopened irrespective of the time limitation.

"The recent legislation on acid crimes cannot be ef-

fectively implemented unless parliament enacts the follow-up Acid and Burn Crime Bill 2012. We demand that the government table and pilot it speedily as a Treasury bill thereby demonstrating ownership," civil society activist Tahira Abdullah said.

"While we appreciate MNA Kashmala Tariq's tabling of a resolution on the subject in the National Assembly, we are outraged by the news that her draft document was changed to remove Bilal Khar's name on the demand of at least four MNAs: PPP's Nafisa Shah and PML-N's Anusha Rahman; Ayaz Amir and Zahid Hamid," Ms Abdullah said.

She said National Assembly Speaker Fehmida Mirza agreed to this questionable demand, demonstrating yet again that feudal will collude to stick together irrespective of gender, party ideologies and manifestos.

"We feel that Kashmala Tariq should have disassociated herself from the revised draft resolution," she

added.

The speakers appreciated the role of the print and electronic media in reporting crimes of violence against women, especially in the remote rural areas. However, they also called upon certain sections of the private electronic media to act in a responsible, ethical manner as per their own agreed code of conduct.

"They need to desist from sensationalising cases, resulting in intrusion into and invasion of privacy, denigration and humiliation, amounting to insult and defamation."

Human rights activist Samar Minallah while talking to *Dawn* said parliament should take responsibility to ensure implementation of the law. The judiciary is overburdened with human rights cases, thus we demand that the police and other law enforcement agencies be made responsible and accountable for prevention, effective investigation and prosecution of crimes against women.