

Legislation urged to stop violence against women

By Our Correspondent

LAHORE

SPEAKERS at a press conference have stressed the government to take immediate steps to stop domestic violence against women through legislation and declare it as a heinous crime.

The press conference was organised by an NGO in connection with the International Women's Day under the Legislative Watch Programme for Women Empowerment at the Lahore Press Club on Wednesday.

The speakers urged the government to move a draft bill named as Punjab Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill 2012 in its current session of the Punjab Assembly in order to provide support and protection to victims.

EX-MNA Mehnaz Rafi, Salman Abid from SPO, Akbar Dogar, Secretary High Court

Bar Association, Hina Hafeez Ullah Ishaq, advocate Lahore High Court, Bushra Khaliq from the Wise, Ambreen from the Action Aid, Resident Director of the said NGO Nasreen Zehra, Senior Programme Officer Mumtaz Mughal and Programme Officer Shamaila Tanvir were present at the press conference.

The speakers said the proposed bill should be moved in the current session of the Punjab Assembly and ensure its early passage and effective implementation as a law. They said that this domestic violence bill should be incorporated in the 'Empower Women Package' which was going to be announced by Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif on the eve of International Women's Day. With the passage of the said bill, victims will be properly protected and will be provided relief. They said that the domestic violence which included

physical, sexual, mental, psychological and economic abuse was a slap on the face of the civilised society.

They said the women were not the only victims of domestic violence but children and other vulnerable persons were also facing the same type of violence. They said the rapid increase in such incidences was deplorable, and it was the obligation and prime duty of the provincial government to take robust measures. Expressing their concerns over the increase of domestic violence issue, they stressed the government to move the draft bill in the house and complete all formalities including drafting necessary rules for the early passage of the bill.

They said the government should also provide helpline facility in the province, so victims should contact the law enforcing agencies for their protection and remedial relief.