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Cases of violence against women down by 7pc

■ ALMAS HAIDER NAQVI

ISLAMABAD — Although the overall law and order situation in the country was deteriorating, fewer incidents of violence against women were reported in 2010, compared to a year earlier.

A total of 8,000 cases of violence against women were recorded in 2010, all over the country, compared to 8,548 incidents being reported in the 2009, according to a report titled 'Violence against women in Pakistan: A qualitative review of statistics for 2010.'

The statistics showed that a large number of the total cases reported were from the Punjab (5,492), followed by Sindh (1,652), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (650), the Islamabad Capital Territory (127) and Balochistan (79).

The figures for Islamabad were alarming, given the small population and the high security measures in place in the capital, the report said.

Abduction cases topped the list with 2,236 cases. Murder of women was the next biggest crime, with a total of 1,436 cases, while 928 cases of rape and gang rape had been reported in the 2010.

The report had been prepared by

the Dr Rakhshanda Perveen, under the 'Policy Data Monitoring Programme-Violence Against Women (PDM-VAW),' of the Aurat (Woman) Foundation.

Anis Haroon, Chairperson National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), said other forms of violence dominating the country, such as terrorism, had overshadowed the issue of violence against women. Although the number of reported cases of violence against women had gone down in 2010 but that did not indicate that the society was becoming more tolerant.

She said without reforming the system of policing and ending political influence on them, and reviewing the subordinate judicial system, reducing violence in the society was not possible. "The government should penalise and criminalise the parallel judicial systems, like *Jirgas* and *Punchayats*," she stressed.

Naeem Mirza, Chief Operating Officer Aurat Foundation, sharing major features of the report, said the 50 districts of Pakistan that were on top of the list were at the same position since 2008. He said there was less vio-



MAKING A POINT: Anis Haroon, Chairperson, National Commission on the Status of Women speaking at a seminar on women violence Tuesday. — Dateline photo by Sohail Shahzad

lence in Karachi, a highly populated city, compared to other mega cities of the country. He however did not agree that it made Karachi a more woman-friendly city. He said perhaps due to other forms of violence dominating the city, violence against women in Karachi had been overshadowed.

Ehsan Sadiq, Assistant Inspector General, Islamabad Police said for sustainable change in the police department, it was necessary to introduce drastic reforms in the department.

"This is a fact that most of the cases of violence against women are now getting registered, which would surely

bring sustainable positive change, by eliminating violence against women," he said. He suggested in order to change the image of the police department and make it more sensitive towards women, the government should increase the number of women in the police department.