

Wednesday, January 16, 2013

On the contrary  
**Civil society expresses concern over sit-in**

**Term MQI demands as an incitement to treason**

**OUR CORRESPONDENT**  
 ISLAMABAD

Human rights activists and civil society organisations in Islamabad and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa have expressed their concern over Tahirul Qadri's sit-in protest in the federal capital.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, the Insani Huqooq Ittehad (IHI) condemned what it termed as an "expensive drama" staged by Qadri and requested the Supreme Court to intervene.

"We...request the honourable Supreme Court with the utmost respect, to take all possible measures not to derail the democratic dispensation at this extremely critical juncture," the statement read.

The IHI is an alliance of nongovernmental organisations working for women and human rights.

The IHI said it was equally opposed to the "flawed, corrupt and nonperforming" government but suggested the democratically elected set up should be allowed to complete its term.

The civil society organisations also expressed their disappointment over the timing of the Supreme Court's order to arrest Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf in the rental power plants case.

The case has been ongoing for months and, in the IHI statement, the organisations condemned the way Tahirul Qadri linked the decision with his "unconstitutional demands" during his public address on Tuesday.

The organisations called for politicians to unite for democracy and democratic norms to counter Qadri's call for dissolution of constituent assemblies.

"We urgently demand that the federal government, all

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the provincial governments and all political parties immediately make a consensus statement regarding the election schedule," the IHI stated.

The IHI termed Qadri's demands as an incitement to treason and a challenge to the writ of the Pakistani state.

The organisations further said they were "closely monitoring the unfolding situation" and "will not allow Jinnah's Pakistan to be hijacked or derailed". They also warned the Armed Forces not to stage either a direct or indirect coup, according to the statement.