

Wednesday, January 16, 2013

HR body assails Qadri's sit-in

Myra Imran

ISLAMABAD: The Insani Huqooq Ittehad (IHI), a network of a large number of human rights activists and civil society organisations, on Tuesday condemned the exploitation and the use of women and children as human shields in what they called the expensive drama being staged by Dr Tahirul Qadri.

In a statement, the IHI urged the Supreme Court to take suo moto notice against Dr Qadri's "unconstitutional stand and actions".

"We demand that Dr Qadri come out of the closet and inform Pakistanis of his mentors, whether stationed in Ottawa, MI5/London, Langley/Virginia, or indeed not too far away in Rawalpindi, or closer still, in Aabpara/Islamabad. We warn him in the sternest language not to exploit the masses in the name of religion or poverty or basic needs," said the statement.

It said that Dr Qadri's unconstitutional move turned into farcical melodrama after the Supreme Court's order to arrest the prime minister and 16 others in the rental power case. The decision was announced in the middle of his speech being relayed live on Tuesday afternoon.

"The well-trained emissary lost not a moment in making the linkage between his unconstitutional demands, incitement to treason, challenging the writ of the state and emotional blackmail with the SC's order, terming it 50 percent success of his 'million man (sic) long march' within 12 hours of the Islamabad sit-in. We condemn this in the strongest terms," said the statement released after an IHI meeting.

It pointed out that it was the first time that a democratic dispensation was nearing its natural completion. "We, concerned citizens, human rights activists and civil society organisations in Islamabad and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are watching with the gravest concern the fast-unfolding events in Islamabad," it said.

The IHI requested the SC to take all possible measures not to derail democratic dispensation at this extremely critical juncture.

"We urgently demand that the federal government, all the provincial governments and all political parties immediately make a consensus statement regarding the election schedule, and their utmost resolve to uphold democracy and democratic norms," it said.

The IHI also warned the armed forces not to stage either a direct or indirect coup d'etat, by either marching boots down Constitution Avenue, or by installing their proxy, "whether in the form of Qadri or Khan or any retired general — or anymore".