INTERNATIONAL THE NEWS

Ministry plans to present Anti-Torture Bill in next NA session

By Myra Imran | January 10, 2019

Islamabad : Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) plans to present Anti-Torture Bill in the next session of National Assembly.

The news was shared by the Federal Minister for Human Rights (MoHR) Shireen Mazari while speaking at a seminar on a seminar on “Police Reforms and Gender Based Violence (GBV)” organised by Rozan from the platform of the Pakistan Forum for Democratic Policing (PFDP), a nationwide civil network to promote the debate on citizen-centric, gender-sensitive, accountable and depoliticised policing in the country.

Dr. Shireen Mazari expressed the federal government’s commitment to make the police citizen-centric and gender sensitive by resolving legislative, infrastructural and attitudinal challenges of the police.

She also committed to depoliticize the police by introducing a merit-based system and a modern police law replacing 157 years old colonial law of 1861. The seminar was attended by around 100 participants from civil society organisations, bar, students,

religious minorities, media and academia.

Dr. Mazari endorsed that fact that the police are an under-resourced institution and they are needed to be equipped with all the required facilities and training to deal with victims or survivors of violence in an effective manner. She was of the view that the financial needs of police stations are required to be fulfilled in order to restore dignity of the police.

Highlighting the importance of Police Reforms, she vowed to introduce a new law in the Islamabad Capital Territory on the lines of KP Police Act 2017. She also talked about the importance for police to professionally deal with women, children, people living with disabilities and trans-genders. “Domestic violence is not a private rather a social issue that needs to be dealt with according to the laws and an FIR should be registered to for such cases,” she said.

DIGP Operations, ICTP, Faisal Ali Raja shared about capacity building initiatives that the police were taking to effectively deal with vulnerable groups especially

children. He informed about the appointing special Investigation Officer at each police station to deal children survivors of violence. He also shared that the institutional of police is committed to introduce reforms in the police and a meeting of Inspector Generals of Police (IGPs) serving across Pakistan is going to be held in a few weeks to discuss the agenda of police reforms to enhance the efficiency of policing.

Sayyed Safi Peerzada, Senior Manager of Rozan, presented civil society's Charter of Demand for police reforms and extended the support of civil society's support for the purpose. He presented challenges of policing and submitted recommendation to Dr. Shireen Mazari for police reforms based on the report the Federal and Provincial Ombudsman on "Good Administration Standards for Police Stations".

Talking at the seminar Barrister Benazir Jatoi stressed that the police should be capacitated on pro-women laws so that they could implement them properly. She shared that majority of police stations staff do not know about

the details of newly enacted women related laws and the amendments in CrPC and PPC. She suggested having a separate column in FIR form for transgenders. She highlighted the need for the police to inform survivors of violence about different referral services required by them including free legal and medical services.

Zulqarnain, Executive Director Potohar Mental Health Association talked on the needs of people living with physical, visual, hearing and intellectual impairments. He emphasized that infrastructure of police stations should be accessible for persons living with disabilities having clear signage available.

Managing Director of Rozan, Babar Bashir thanked all the speakers. He reiterated need of reforming the police with special focus on making it apolitical, operationally autonomous and capacitated for effectively dealing with of gender-based violence.

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