

End all forms of gender-based violence

Lahore, 1 December 2018. As part of its campaign marking 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) organised a theatrical performance and dance recital to underscore the prevalence of violence against women and girls in Pakistan. Held at the Dorab Patel Auditorium in Lahore, the program comprised a play, 'Wajud-e-zan', performed by the Makhotay theatre group, and two dance recitals by Amna Mawaz, the first based on Kishwar Naheed's poem 'Hum gunahgaar auratein [We sinful women]' and the second in tribute to the late Fehmida Riaz. This was followed by an open forum to discuss patterns of gender-based violence (GBV) and the rising frequency of domestic violence and 'honour' crimes in the country.

In a statement issued today, HRCP has said that, 'Patriarchy and the practices it gives rise to, in terms of seeing women's bodies and minds as property or as easy targets of violence, exploitation and abuse, has no place in any society that wishes to call itself civilised. "Sixteen days" of activism against GBV should only serve to remind us that, for thousands of women and girls, GBV is an everyday phenomenon and that, as civil society, our silence is unacceptable complicity. For the alarming figures indicating the incidence of violence against women, there are also laws in place that protect women – laws that not enough women are aware they have the legal and constitutional right to access. HRCP urges the state to invest heavily in the infrastructure needed to give the most vulnerable and marginalised women access to these laws, and fulfil its obligations under all national and international human rights mechanisms that seek to eliminate GBV.'

Dr Mehdi Hasan

Chairperson