

Remarks to International Women Human Rights Defenders Day Forum
of the Islamabad Capital Territory Police
Islamabad Capital Territory Police Lines
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As Prepared

AssalamuAlaikum.

Inspector General Bani Amin Khan, members of the Islamabad Capital Territory Police, I am pleased to be with you today as we recognize Women Human Rights Defenders Day.

The Islamabad Capital Territory Police is one of the premier law enforcement agencies in Pakistan. The police bear the responsibility to provide safety and security through fighting crime, maintenance of public order, and defense of human rights for all citizens. I commend you on your efforts to achieve these goals.

International Women Human Rights Defenders Day is part of a global campaign, The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. This 16 Days campaign began November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. It will conclude on December 10, which is International Human Rights Day. This campaign is designed to raise awareness about gender-based violence. My boss, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, has said, gender-based violence is a global pandemic that cuts across all borders and impacts all peoples and societies – regardless of ethnicity, race, socio-economic status, or religion. One in three women around the world will experience some form of gender-based violence in her lifetime.

Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread violations of human rights. It can include physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse, and it cuts across boundaries of age, race, culture, wealth, and geography. It takes place in the home, on the streets, and in schools; in the workplace, in farm fields, and in refugee camps; during conflicts, crises, and times of peace.

Violence against women and girls has far-reaching consequences, causing harm to families and communities. Gender-based violence not only violates human rights, but also hampers productivity, reduces human capital, and undermines economic growth. And as the Sura-e-Nisa of the Holy Quran makes clear, it is not condoned by Islam.

The work of the Islamabad Police to defend human rights, especially those of women, is a model for all of Pakistan. The establishment of a special unit to investigate crimes against women and children in 2010, the women's police station, the introduction of community policing techniques to help facilitate interaction between the police and all citizens - all of these efforts help protect women from violence.

We recognize the challenges that Pakistani police officers face every day. Your work requires dedication, courage, and sacrifice. We remember the 21 Islamabad Police officers who were killed in the line of duty, and the hundreds of others who suffered injuries. We salute your courage. Your defense of human rights and your dedication to your duty helps make Pakistan, and the world, a safer place.

Again, I am honored to be with you today and look forward to working in partnership with you to advance the human rights of all citizens.

Shukriya, and thank you.