

HRCP, civil society condemn flogging of girl in Swat: Lahore rallies for peace today

Staff Report

LAHORE: The citizens of Lahore will hold a peace rally at the Lahore High Court (LHC) on Saturday (today) to condemn terrorism and urge the general population to show their support for peace.

In this connection, civil society and human rights activists held a press conference at the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) offices on Friday. The speakers condemned the lashing of a teenage girl in Swat by the Taliban. They also criticised the 'Peace Accord' made by the NWFP government with the Taliban in Malakand Division, saying there could not be separate laws for different parts of the country.

Addressing the press conference, HRCP Chairwoman Asma Jahangir said the attacks on the Sri Lankan Cricket Team and the Police Training School Manawan were highly condemnable. She said no human rights organisation could support drone strikes.

"But these drone attacks have nothing to do with the police. Why are the police being targeted then?" she asked. To a question, she said it was not appropriate for any political party to show its happiness by firing bullets. "We even saw Elite Police officials firing in the air when the operation was completed. This is not the job of a disciplinary force," she said. She said using weapons to display happiness should be eliminated from the Pakistani culture. "These remnants of the Zia regime should be abolished," she said.

HRCP Co-Chairman Iqbal Haider said the lashing of the girl in Swat was a month-old incident. He said a Taliban had sent a marriage proposal for the girl, which was rejected. He said the girl had then been accused of 'vulgarity' and an 'immoral character'. He said the Taliban had no authority to decide what was

immoral and what was not. He said the army and politicians had retreated in a way and surrendered before the Taliban by reaching a peace agreement with them. He said the terrorists had reached Punjab, Sindh, NWFP and Balochistan. He said the agreement with the Taliban was not an accord, but 'surrender'.

HRCP Balochistan chapter Vice-Chairwoman Surayia Ameeruddin, Labour Party General Secretary Farooq Tariq, The Friday Times publisher Jugnu Mohsin and others were also present on the occasion. They appealed to the people of Lahore to turn up in large numbers at the LHC.