



women's action forum **مخواتين محاذ عمل**

WAF Statement condemning continuous vicious attacks against Women Journalists

In its meeting on 25 August 2020, WAF issued a statement expressing solidarity with women journalists and commentators who bravely broke the silence on the relentless and vicious attacks that they are being subjected to in the social media. At the same time WAF strongly condemned those who continue to hound women in the media.

WAF lauds the National Assembly Standing Committee on Human Rights, chaired by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, to give women journalists the opportunity to present details of these personalized attacks and false allegations that have been unleashed to intimidate them. That the journalists have shared these gender-based threats and abusive slurs with legislators reflects their courage and professional commitment.

WAF reiterates in the strongest words, its belief in the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of expression and the right to hold contrary opinions. At the same time WAF upholds the position that counter arguments should be based on facts and not on slander and abusive language. WAF strongly believes that the space for debate and discussion is the hallmark of democracy. It must be safeguarded, not undermined and restricted through defamation and intimidation.

WAF condemns these vicious attacks and urges the government to immediately take steps to restrain those targeting media women and hold perpetrators accountable especially those allegedly from the ruling party made after the media women's submissions to the Human Rights Standing Committee. The Minister of Human Rights, Dr. Shireen Mazari has admitted to the presence of social media harassment and promised to take action. WAF calls upon the Minister to make good her promise without delay.

WAF reassures women in the media that it stands with them in the face of this onslaught.

WAF Working Committee
Lahore Chapter
25 August 2020