

WAF National Meeting

April 3rd 2024

Lahore Chapter Attendance

1. Bunny
2. Rani
3. Neelam
4. Tauseef

Total Number of Participants -22

Meeting was Hosted by Farieha – (Karachi WAF)

Subject : Independence of the Judiciary

Note: Farieha will also be sending her notes on the discussion today.

The meeting was a preliminary discussion on the position WAF is to take on the Independence of the Judiciary in light of the letter written by the 6 High Court Judges to the Supreme Court re the pressure on Judges.

- An independent group of lawyers, at the Supreme Court hearing today, said they would prefer the Supreme Court to take suo moto notice and not appoint an Executive Commission but a Judicial Commission.
- CJP talked about how to rectify interference in the future – a look forward approach, so that interference can be stopped. But still some confusion on how to proceed.
- Zainab reported that Justice Minallah said we cannot remain ostriches. Zainab pointed out that WAF has always taken a principled stand and stood up for Public Interest Litigation, stood against action against Justice Faez Isa, etc.

Hina Jilani spoke and said she had no objection to a Commission but it should not be a one person Commission, to have more credibility it should be more than one person. Plus the TOR's were important to see before deciding anything on the Commission. She said the Commission had full independent powers and was NOT under the Government. But felt it was eventually the Judges who have to decide what is best. Hina said we are not favouring any judges, nor are we against any judges, on principle we want the independence of the Judiciary. She also warned that any negative propaganda against the 6 H.C Judges should be ignored. Noted that it was also up to the Judges themselves not to succumb to pressure – the judiciary responsible for its own independence.

Nasreen Azhar said that to counter the PTI narrative, the WAF Statement must say that this sort of interference has been going on for a very long time, and is not PTI specific.

Rashida pointed out that the interference of the Establishment was not only in the Judiciary but across all Governance and NGO's as well.

Bunny said that WAF should write its own statement. She said that at the moment we are under Martial law via the Intel Agencies.

Kausar suggested that the Chapters start drafting a statement.

It was decided that WAF Chapters will go back to their working Committees and come up with an action plan. Meanwhile Chapters will keep in touch with each other as it is a happening situation. Next Supreme Court hearing is fixed for the 29th of April.

Next National Meeting scheduled after a week but will be confirmed.

Next Lahore WAF meeting ASAP.