

Minutes of WAF Working Committee Meeting

16th December 2020

Attended by:

Neelam Hussein

Khawar Mumtaz

Nighat Khan (Bunny)

Nighat Dad

Farida Shaheed

Ume Laila

Rubina Saigol

Tauseef Hyat

Agenda Item No. 1: Rape Ordinance

Nighat Dad explained that the Legal Committee had read the unofficial version and written their comments. She had received the official version just now and in the light of this version they will need to change some of their comments, and then circulate it to the WC and WAF could then decide how to take it forward.

Khawar appearing on Arifa Noor's Programme on the Rape Ordinance on the DAWN Channel, and Farida will suggest Nighat Dad's name also.

Bunny said we should start lobbying on this issue as soon as possible and statement committee should start writing up a statement.

Nighat Dad will give us the legal committee's comments in writing later but some of the issues that they want to comment on are:

Transgenders

Definition of 'Rape'.

Definition of 'Rapist'

Rape of boys

Special Courts –

On PECA Nighat Dad explained that the Government was trying to block illegal and unlawful content from social media Platforms, and this included on-line content related to army and Islam.

For this they want to use FIA and PTA.

The Government is also asking International Organizations, such as Facebook, twitter, YouTube, etc to open their offices in Pakistan and allow them decrypted access to all data that the Govt or Intel Agencies ask for.

They also want the local Internet Service providers to provide data and intercept conversations.

Nighat Dad said she had not attended some of the Meetings called by PTA/IT Ministry, as they later give a statement saying they have consulted civil society and there is a consensus.

WAF has already given a statement on this.

Agenda Item No. 2: Update on RTI

Bunny gave an update. There has been no reply from the Lahore HC or the Supreme Court. The Information Commission was told that the army information could not be given for security reasons. If WAF receives no response they can complain. Bunny and Ume Laila to pursue further.

Agenda Item No. 3: Statements and Committees

Neelam suggested we have procedures in writing so we have a clear document to help not only present members but especially younger members joining WAF. Neelam has already written some points, which have been forwarded already, and has asked others to add to it. They are attached to this email as well.

Important thing is that there is no ownership of any statement and anyone can add/modify.

The Committee has autonomy but may contact other members if it wishes.

Neelam was disappointed at the comments to their Rapid-Fire video. She was hoping for more questions, rather than just 'how cute' comments. It was suggested that WAF organize interactive sessions for new members.

Rani said that members should not use accusatory tones and there should be no personalization. There should be more understanding among members, old and new.

Ume Laila said that discussions should be opened up there is a need to look at the situation in totality, and this should be a continuous process.

Bunny added that the Statement committee does not share with the WC as it has a mandate. WC should be consulted only if statement is outside the WAF stated position.

She also said we need to get back to members who have stepped back.

Bunny listed all the WAF Committees. Hopefully these will be added to the document on Procedures.

Agenda Item 4: Charter of Democracy (COD)

Bunny suggested that the COD should have a preamble and then also include what WAF has been doing in the last 5 years.

The consensus was that we continue with the document already in progress, which has input from the chapters and then tackle the more detailed COD at a later stage as that would take some time. Ruby said it should cover Fundamental Principles, not activities. Agreement on that.

Ruby suggested we hold discussions with younger members on 1971, giving its background and correcting the history taught in our educational institutions. This subject has become even more relevant considering the present situation in Baluchistan and Sindh. This could be a Webinar. Final date to be decided.

The general consensus at the meeting was that more 'education' is needed, as the younger generation are not reading enough, and so their understanding of history/politics is superficial.

Study Circles, Political School Talks, encouraging critical questioning were some of the ideas suggested.

Rubina suggested a Webinar on PECA saying it had very dangerous implications. Speakers could be Nighat Dad and Farieha. Bunny suggested it come after Neelam's Webinar, perhaps in January, before the one on 1971.