

Minutes of the WAF WC Meeting – March 10th 2021

Participants

1. Bunny
2. Erum
3. Maisoon
4. Maria
5. Meena
6. Mehreen
7. Naila
8. Naji
9. Neelam
10. Nida Usman
11. Rani
12. Rifat Maqsood
13. Ruby
14. Tauseef
15. Ume Laila

Agenda Item # 1-Aurat March - AM

Naila and Mehreen had joined the Aurat March. Bunny went also in her red shirt, but came away earlier. Just wanted to get the feel of the event.

Naji suggested that the photographs and video should become part of the WAF Archives. Bunny said we could ask for permission from AM to either upload or provide link on the WAF Website.

The AM was appreciated by everyone and Huma's performance was particularly liked.

Ruby was very concerned by the back lash on Tooba Syed and Aalia. AM organizers were thinking whether political parties should be involved, but the general opinion was that the political parties would not be interested in this issue.

Neelam suggested AM clarify the issue of underage marriage, which is a global phenomenon.

AM clarified that they were not carrying the French Flag but the WDF flag.

The extremists accusing AM of blasphemy (295-C) is very worrying.

Bunny suggested WAF write up its own statement. Neelam and Ruby to do this.

Ruby explained that AM, Islamabad had various stories written on a long banner, but the extremists only picked out the true story of the girl who was married at 9 years to a man of 50. Everyone agreed that the AM was very successful, Hyderabad was wonderful, and generally there was good energy and more acceptance of Aurat March objectives and slogans. Partly because the slogans had been unpacked for people and therefore, they now had a better understanding of the underlying issues.

Ume Laila, was concerned about the trolling and the scary language being used.

Agenda Item # 2: Procedures

Since the procedures were mostly for the younger members, it was agreed that they should be discussed at a GB Meeting.

Bunny said we should also try and activate the WC Members who are not joining the Meetings. There is a total of 33 WC Members.

The Mobilisation Committee, which now includes Bunny, will mobilize the WC and the GB and new members.

The document for Rules and Procedures which Rani, Neelam and Bunny have worked on, will be shared with the GB and the WC.

A decision was taken that persons interested in joining WAF could first become observers at WAF Meetings.

Agenda Item # 3: Update on Webinars

The Webinars scheduled are:

25th March: This is a Webinar on 1971, and it was on 25th March 1971 that the Army attacked East Pakistan which eventually led to the birth of Bangladesh,

Ruby will be the coordinator for this joint Pakistan – Bangladesh Webinar. The panelists will be:

From Bangladesh

Khushi Kabir

Ameena Mohsin

One younger person.

From Pakistan:

Rubina Saigol – Moderator

Panelists

Anum Zakaria

Nighat Said Khan

Saba Khattak

A meeting is scheduled on the 16th to finalize the format and the technicalities.

Bunny suggested that it be personal memories, a Feminist take on 1971.

Talking of personal memories, Neelam said that what was horrifying was the SILENCE in West Pakistan and the disinformation fed to the people in W. Pakistan.

A name has to be finalized for this Webinar.

Another Webinar is scheduled for May 1st.

Agenda Item # 4: The WAF Web-site

Bunny and Naila are working on the Web-site. Bunny explained that this was going to be different to other web-sites. Bunny, Naila and three non WAF men (who will be compensated for their time) are responsible for sorting, captioning, editing etc etc and uploading the archives. However, we need to write the introduction, activities etc. That is ALL writing will be done by WAF members, especially (but not only) those who have been with WAF from the beginning. Archives from 1981 were being selected for the Web-site, Captions were being finalized and apart from Lala's photographs the archives so far were all from the ASR Collection of material and videos which included newspaper clippings as well.

Articles on WAF would also be added to the Web-site, and references to books which are WAF related will be given as they could not be put on PDF because of copyrights.

They will of course keep adding videos and other material. Bunny said what they needed was narratives from older members. Plus help form people as to what should go public and what shouldn't.

Rani said she had a trunk full of notes and if she was given particular dates, she could pull out her diaries and see what she had written about the same event, so that a different perspective could be added. She had notes on some interesting debates held in the GB.

Everyone agreed that sharing notes a very good idea. The idea of a podcast was also discussed. Bunny said that we have to give the facts as well as the process and personal experiences, younger and newer members will also be asked to write up their experience of WAF and why they joined etc especially those who have been active in WAF for a couple of years.

Bunny hoping that the Web-site would be up and running by October.

Agenda Item # 5: SNC Update

Erum said she had talked to Baela and Zeba Hashmi about the SNC. Suggested a podcast for WAF, and Naila said she did not know the technicalities of this as they had not done it before. Erum asked Nida about the legal side of challenging the SNC.

Nida suggested that we could file a petition or write an Open Letter which would include Fundamental Rights, and the Media could then ask the Government the relevant questions raised in the Open Letter.

Rifat suggested that getting to the PM could be done through the PM Portal available to the public. Nida felt it would be more effective to build up public pressure. Other ideas were discussed, and Ruby suggested we take a position that this is unconstitutional and do a joint petition with Peter Jacob.

Naila suggestion Ayra be part of the SNC group as she was already involved.

WAF members not certain but some talk of the Madrassas getting themselves exempt from the SNC.

Erum said Sind was refusing to implement the SNC, and one of the reasons was that mostly the Punjabi culture was being projected.

Nida said the Open letter was nearly ready and she would circulate it by tomorrow. Erum said she would translate it into Urdu.

Erum commented that in 2019 WAF had been represented at the Aurat march but regrettably, this year there were very few WAF members there because of the Covid.

Rifat mentioned how many difficulties the smaller production houses were facing re printing of school books. Rani said the government was only interested in Big Business! Nida said she was very disappointed with the selfish attitude of parents. They were not interested in the larger issues but only in their own children.

Neelam would follow up with Peter Jacob re the petition.