

Minutes of WAF General Body Meeting

9th December 2014

Venue: ASR Library

Present: Tamkinat, Popti, Fareeha Zafar, Naila, Nighat, Ruby, Neelam

Agenda:

1. The Bajaur girls
2. WAF National Convention
1. Discussion on the Bajaur girls centred around the lack of information about them and the fact that news media had typically dropped the issue after the initial few days after the news hit the public. Presently there is no information (i) regarding the action taken by the government viz has an FIR been filed and action taken against the perpetrators and (ii) the status of the girls and how they came to be in Karachi etc.

It was felt that strategies other than press statements needed to be used for greater effectiveness, however, as any action without information was irrelevant, the decision was taken to get more information regarding the girls.

Anis Haroon contacted to get information on the issue and what action Karachi WAF had taken in this regard. We found that WAF Karachi had been unable to get specific information about the girls. Having only rumours to act on they had been unable to take any action.

The case of the Bajaur girls raised the following questions:

- i. Were they part of the wider trafficking network?
- ii. Is the trafficking mafia using madrassas as a mask for their activities?
- iii. Is trafficking now a madrassa activity etc

The decision was taken for the following WAF members to get necessary information for action:

Bunny: to contact Amar and Farzana Bari

Ruby: Bushra Gauhar

Neelam: Rakshanda Naz

Bunny reported back that neither Amar nor Farzana had any concrete information on the case.

Ruby has forwarded an article given to her by B.G. (See attachment)

Neelam has been unable to contact Rakshanda so far but will go on trying.

2. WAF's priorities: the question was asked, given the changing world, does WAF continue to prioritise women's issues or widen the ambit of its concerns? To some extent we already do that given that every issue is a woman's issue. But we need to be more specific. This matter too needs to be discussed before the Convention

3. The forthcoming WAF Convention, which is tentatively scheduled for February 2015 was discussed. WAF Hyderabad, which is the newest and highly active chapter has offered to host it.

As the last Convention was held 9 years ago in Lahore, this would be a fairly intensive event given that:

- i. The world has changed in 33 years since the first WAF Charter was drawn up, this meeting would entail a review of these years and including new issues/perspectives that have come up since then.
- ii. We would have to prioritize issues and our position regarding wider political issues including our own political positioning in this new context.

4. Pre-Convention process leading up to the revised Charter were discussed:
 - Each Chapter to draw up a position paper on new issues etc for the Nat Con.
 - Relevant sub committees would have to be formed to undertake this pretty intensive work. **Volunteers from the General Body needed for this.**
(Tauseef and Lala have already documented issues based on WAF statements etc for this purpose)
 - The sub committees would then present these papers to their GBs for amalgamation and finalisation.
 - The finalised position papers would be shared with other chapters for a more comprehensive position paper that would be presented and discussed at the Convention.
 - The positions taken at the Convention would then go back to the GBs of different chapters for endorsement.
 - Appointment of coordinators (there is another word we use but I can't think of it at the moment) to liaise between different chapters
 - The revised WAF Charter would then be written out.

This requires a fair degree of intensive work at each Chapter. The question to be asked is, can this work be completed in time for the Convention in Feb, or do we need to shift the dates?

It was also discussed that while Hyderabad is a new Chapter comprising younger women, which is active and has a wide outreach, the Convention would/should also be used to familiarise its members with WAF's history; its positions regarding funding and procedures etc.