

PRESS RELEASE

State's human rights institutions are strengthened

KARACHI, Dec 31:

Speakers at a Webinar on Friday underlined the need for providing autonomy and more financial and administrative powers to the state's human rights bodies under the Paris Principles.

Member of National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) Ms. Anis Haroon, Chairman of Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC) Justice (Retd.) Majida Razvi and a research Abdullah Khoso were speaking at a Webinar "The Paris Principles and Human Rights Institutions in Sindh" organized by The Knowledge Forum.

Ms. Anis Haroon pointed out that the NCHR remained inactive for two years and now its members and new chairperson have been nominated. According to her, all issues that come under the purview of human rights are raised by the Commission. In the past, the NCHR had raised the issue of enforced disappearance through the Interior ministry.

"We have received replies from the Interior Ministry," she said adding that the state institutions have never been under government control. State institutions are seeking recommendations from non-government organizations. It can take suo moto action and submit reports independently.

There is no competition anywhere and we have to protect the rights of the people. She pointed out that the appointment of members of the state commission should be through parliament.

Civil society and human rights activists should be taken as members of the Commissions, but the government's retired officers are made members of the Commissions.

She said the government is enjoying benefits under the Paris Principles so it should be made laws required under the international obligations.

Justice (Retd.) Majida Razvi said the provincial commission on Human rights has raised many violations of human rights.

The author of a paper on The Paris Principles and Human Rights Institutions in Sindh said that although the Pakistan government and provincial governments have established human rights, women rights and child rights commissions.

He said the process of establishing NHRI should be transparent, inclusive, and consultative. This is not the case with Sindh's Human Rights Institutions. The appointment of the Chairperson and members in the Sindh Child Protection Authority (SCPA) and the SHRC is done through the non-parliamentary procedure. Civil servants (bureaucrats) possess a mandate to appoint them, which influences the neutrality and independence of these institutions, he added.

A human rights activist Pribhul Lal Satiyani conducted the Webinar and Ms Zeenia Shaukat, Director of TKF welcome the speakers.

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