



**Government of Pakistan**  
**National Commission on the Status of Women**

**NCSW Press Release**  
**Islamabad**

Date: - 21-04-2011

**Subject: -** *NCSW and members of IHI disappointed at the verdict of Supreme Court in Mukhtaran Mai case*

The National Commission on the Status of Women and members of Insani Huqooq Ittehad, including PODA, Mehergargh, Aurat Foundation, Rozan, Sungi, Bedari, Ethno Media, Pattan and SPO convened an emergency meeting to express deep shock and disappointment at the verdict given by the superior court in the Mukhtara Mai gang rape case today. Although the judgment did prove that Mukhtara was raped because one accused did get life imprisonment, while others were acquitted. We are surprised to see why only one accused was punished and others were acquitted on a charge of 'gang rape'.

The Commission and members of civil society felt that this was the reflection of a biased and inefficient criminal justice system. This case has been a classic example of how the facts were distorted and documentation of the evidence was tampered with at all levels.

The group expressed concern at the long delays to dispense justice. The victim was raped in 2002 on the instructions of the local Panchayat. In 2005 the chief justice of the superior court took suo moto notice of the case. Despite the intervention it took more than nine years to come up with this decision, which is a source of concern for the women of Pakistan. It is feared that this decision might further strengthen the anti women parallel legal and judicial systems and mechanisms in the country. We feel that the criminal justice system too is not pro women and is patriarchal in nature. Impunity is the order of the day.

In cases of complaints women victims are burdened to provide series of evidences which is not possible for them. It is the responsibility of the police to do the investigation and come up with the requisite evidence. Currently, methods of recording evidence by police are biased against women; and that is one reason that they do not get justice from the courts.

There is also a need to look at the women's representation in all those systems and mechanism dealing with matters of crimes and justice. Women's lack of proportionate representation in lower and upper judiciary is paving the way for verdicts against women victims. There is dire need to start a rational discourse on the lack of women's representation within the courts.

Today's judgment has shaken the confidence and sense of security of women of Pakistan to stand up for their rights. It reflects a faulty investigation of the police and the loop holes that are left intentionally to side with the power brokers. The outcome of Mukhtara case discourages survivors of rape and gang rape to report. However, we are proud of Mukhtara Mai, who stood bravely against all intimidation and harassment and has refused to buckle under life threats. She has given a message of courage and hope to all women victims of our country. We consider her a role model for women of Pakistan.

At the end we also condemn the insensitive and pathetic attitude of some sections of media, who were grinning at the verdict and clapped after they recorded the responses on the judgment. The owners and editors of these media houses are urged to inculcate responsible and sensitive attitude in the practices of such chauvinistic reporters.