



Asian-American Network
Against Abuse of Women

On Saturday September 17th, 2005, from noon to 3p.m., the Asian American Network Against Abuse of Women (ANAA) held a demonstration outside the Roosevelt Hotel, Madison and East 45th Street, New York City, where Pakistan's President General Pervez Musharraf was staying during the UN World Summit. The event was co-sponsored by Amnesty International's New York City Women's Action Team.

Attended by 300 individuals, the demonstration was led by a broad coalition of women's groups and human rights activists and was in direct response to the Pakistani Government's failure to protect women from rape, murder, and other human rights violations. In Pakistan, rape, karo kari and honor killings are committed with impunity. Religious-based laws such as the Zina and Hudood Ordinance not only limit women's freedoms and access to justice, but treat victims of rape as criminals and allow rapists to walk free.

Speakers at the rally highlighted two recent cases that have received a great deal of international publicity. Dr. Shazia Khalid was raped by an army officer who was never prosecuted, and she was forced to seek asylum in the United Kingdom. A tribal court sentenced Mukhtar Mai (also known as Mukhtaran Bibi) to gang rape as punishment for an offense allegedly committed by her brother. In both cases, the perpetrators of these heinous crimes were never brought to justice.

In this unprecedented protest, human rights activists from the United States and abroad gathered outside President Musharraf's hotel to demand that he repeal draconian and unjust laws and defend the human rights of women against the rise of Islamic religious extremism.

Speakers and demonstrators also vehemently condemned General Musharraf's comments in a Washington Post interview which quoted him as saying that women in Pakistan were exploiting rape in order to obtain visas to go abroad and become rich. His callous and offensive statement has since drawn outcry from countless international human rights groups and from world leaders alike.

The following individuals and organizations spoke and were represented, respectively, at the ANAA Rally on September 17th, 2005 in New York City:

Leena Khan: Reading of Mukhtar Mai's Statement
Somi Ali: Reading of Dr. Shazia Khalid's Statement
Dr. Amna Buttar: President of ANAA
Taina Bien-Aime: Equality Now
Purvi Shah: Executive Director of Sakhi
Ghazala Afzal: Volunteer and Member of Sakhi
Sunita Mehta: Founder of Women for Afghan Women
Humaira Rahman: Director of the World Sindhi Institute, Canada
Nisha Varia: Human Rights Watch
Professor Raza Ali Mir: INSAF - International South Asian Forum
and FOIL - Forum of Indian Leftists
Mehar Hussain Shah: Sindhi Association of North America
Professor Saadia Toor: PAGE - Pakistani Activists for Gender
Equality
Joseph Francis: CLAS - The Center for Legal Aid and Shelter
Razia Meer: Manavi
Afrasiab Khatak: Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
Sabira Qureshi: Closing and Action Steps