

Asian-American Network Against Abuse of Women (ANAA), Asia Society Texas,
George R. Brown Convention Center and Voices Breaking Boundaries

Present a symposium with

Mukhtaran Mai, Jirga Crime Survivor and Human Rights Activist

Salman Ahmed, Lead guitarist of internationally acclaimed band "Junoon" & Activist

Anis Haroon, Director Aurat Foundation – a Non Government Organization in Pakistan

Abid Hasan Manto, Progressive Politician and Scholar in Pakistan

To Be Announced, A member of religious political party in Pakistan

"Violence against women in south Asia: the reality on the ground in Pakistan".

Saturday, July 2, 2005 at 1:00 p.m.

George R. Brown Convention Center, Room 306 A-F

1001 Avenida de las Americas, Houston

Violence against women of Pakistan has been escalating in the past two decades; Honor killing, *Jirga* (tribal council) crimes, gang rapes, acid throwing etc are a few examples. Discriminatory laws combined with harmful customary laws and practices deny women their human rights in Pakistan. Discriminatory laws such as the Hudood ordinance, which does not make marital rape a crime and deters victims of sexual assault from seeking redress by exposing them to prosecution for adultery or fornication, and the Qisas (retribution) and Diyat (compensation) Ordinance, which make it possible for crimes of honor to be pardoned by relatives of the victim and assess monetary compensation for female victims at half the rate of male victims, are barriers to justice. Several Non-Government Organizations in Pakistan are fighting relentlessly for this cause. Expatriate Pakistanis in the USA need to get involved to raise awareness about the reality on the ground in Pakistan and, to exert pressure on the Pakistani government to repeal the discriminatory laws.

To raise awareness about these issues, ANAA is holding a symposium in Houston, Texas on July 2, 2005, where a coalition of civil society organizations will collaborate to start pushing forward the movement to advocate for women whose voices have been suppressed. **Mukhtaran Mai** will tell her story and panelists will present their points of view. We expect active and vibrant participation by local civil society organizations as well as members of the local community. This symposium and other such symposia will help build the coalition against violence against women, and perhaps ultimately lead to repealment of unjust laws in Pakistan.

ANAA is a network of men and women committed to defending the rights of women in Pakistan against social and cultural abuse.

The Asia Society is America's leading institution dedicated to fostering understanding of Asia and communication between Americans and the peoples of Asia and the Pacific.

Voices Breaking Boundaries is a multi-disciplinary arts organization with the mission to cross borders, sustain dialogue and incite change through living art.

There is no charge for this program and is open to the public. A very special thanks to our community partners that have endorsed this program: *Asians Against Domestic Abuse, Montgomery County Women's Shelter, United Nations Association – Houston Chapter.*

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