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Rise in Violence against Women

December 21, 2013

Violence against women has dramatically increased in the country triggering concerns among human rights and civil society organizations. Recently, there have been some awful incidents of violence against women in the country that further defame the tribal rules that have persisted in Afghanistan for centuries. Over the past few weeks certain heart-wrenching incidents of violence have occurred in Afghanistan. In all cases women have been the victims.

Here is account of these incidents: On November 27, dead bodies of two women were found hanging from a tree in Logar province. On December 12, a woman's ears, nose and lips were chopped off by her addicted husband in Herat. On 13th of the same month, a group of unidentified gunmen gang-raped a teenage girl after kidnapping her from home in Doshi district of the northern Baghlan province. On 15th of this month, another seventeen-year-old girl was gang-raped by a group of five people in northern province of Sar-i-Pul. And in the latest incident a man in Badghis province of Afghanistan killed his wife with an axe and then escaped.

These incidents have all happened under the very nose of the government and are those that have been reported. Yet there might be many such incidents that go unreported. All these incidents of violence have been inflicted over women in a period of just three weeks, not a month or a year.

During the first six of the current solar years, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) has registered 4,154 cases of violence against women and there must be thousands of other such cases that never get registered. The above-mentioned figure shows about a 25 percent increase in the number of cases of violence against women that were registered in different offices of the AIHRC during the first half of last year. Given the recklessness of government in regards to protecting Afghan women, any percentage of increase in violence against them should not be surprising.

The sufferings of women are not only confined to domestic violence but also the ongoing Taliban-led insurgency is causing more death of women and children than ever before. Killing of women and children is the most concerning point in the UN report on civilian casualties released in July. Conflict-related violence killed 106 women and injured another 241, an increase of 61 percent over 2012. Similarly, 231 children were killed and 529 injured -- a 30 percent increase from last year. This is at times when the religion of Islam emphasizes that women and children should not be harmed during wars and Taliban claims to be strict followers of Islam. While the government fails to punish those involved in treating women harshly or even in killing them, more women appear to be at risk. Afghan women continue to suffer as the efforts of the government in the last 12 years for protecting them have been more symbolic.