

Hyderabad: Restoration of fishermen's rights urged

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Bureau Report

HYDERABAD, April 25: Leaders of public opinion have demanded of the new government to restore rights of fishermen.

Fishermen struggled for restoration of democracy, they said in a conference on "Rights of fishermen and role of democratic government" at the press club here on Thursday. The conference was organised by Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum.

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan Co-chairman Iqbal Hyder said the locals have first right to their resources according to internationally established principle, therefore fishermen should be given first right over oceans and all sweet water resources, Iqbal Hyder said.

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum Chairman Syed Mohammad Ali Shah said two million fishermen of Sindh had been deprived of their rights, adding no policy had been announced so far.

Due to non-release of water downstream Kotri, tens of thousands of people were living in abject poverty, he said and added majority of population living in coastal area had migrated to other places in search of livelihood.

He said the poisonous water of entire country including Karachi was being released in the ocean which had not only destroyed marine life but also the environment.

He said right from Kashmore to Karachi, two million fishermen living around fresh water resources and coastal belt had been deprived of basic facilities.

He called on the newly elected government to implement its manifesto and honour promises it made with fishermen.

PPP MPA Sikandar Shoro assured restoration of their rights and promised to raise the question on the floor of Sindh Assembly.

PILER director, Karamat Ali Khan, Vice Chairperson of the Forum, Tahira Ali, Ghulam Mustafa, Jami Chandio, Mr Wilson and others also spoke on the occasion.

The conference issued a declaration demanding fishermen's rights on ocean and river waters, formulation of fishing policy, abolishment of contract system, and issuance of licenses.

It demanded immediate halt to arrests and torture of fishermen by security forces for going beyond sea limits inadvertently, release of arrested fishermen and resolution of Sir Creek issue.

The declaration said 35 MAF water be released downstream Kotri Barrage to save Indus delta from destruction, proposals to construct dams on the River Indus be shelved forever and a committee be

appointed to probe into disastrous effects of LBOD and RBOD.

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* From Dawn: