

HRCP decries Safdar's speech

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LAHORE: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) on Thursday criticised the speech of [retired] Capt Safdar, a ruling party member of the National Assembly, and termed it discriminatory against a religious minority group.

The HRCP issued a statement condemning “the targeting of any Pakistani religious minority group and any call for discriminatory behaviour against any such group at a public forum... the use of the National Assembly floor to advocate discrimination, hatred and exclusion for citizens in this manner is deplorable.”

Capt Safdar made demands, among others, that there should be a prohibition on the recruitment of Ahmadis into the armed forces and national institutions such as the Atomic Energy Commission of Pakistan. He also spoke against the naming of the Physics department at the Quaid-i-Azam University after Nobel Laureate Dr Abdus Salam, because he was an Ahmadi.

It is a bad omen for Pakistan's beleaguered democracy if members of political parties are able to express such intolerant and politically incorrect views at a public forum with such impunity, the statement said. “It is regrettable that no political party or attending parliamentarian condemned this parliamentarian as he made his speech.”

“Pakistan's national and international human rights obligations do not support such vehement and uncalled for disregard of the human rights of any of its citizens, irrespective of their religion, caste or creed. The government must ensure that such hate speech does not go uninvestigated and uncondemned at the highest level.”

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