

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 7, 2019**

**DIGITAL RIGHTS FOUNDATION LAUNCHED LEGAL PORTAL “AB AUR NAHIN”**

Digital Rights Foundation (DRF) has launched a pro bono online portal for women seeking legal representation and psychological counselling in cases of harassment and gender-based violence. The website works by linking victims/survivors to helpful resources and connecting them with qualified and experienced pro bono lawyers so they receive all the help they need to combat the cycle of violence and abuse.

In light of the #MeToo movement worldwide and the national conversation around harassment, an unprecedented number of women have been coming forward to share their experiences of gender-based violence and abuse.

*“The #MeToo movement has opened the floodgates for women’s testimonies and stories; it has also shown us the true scale of the problem as it stands in Pakistan as well as around the world. Institutional support and resources are needed to provide both legal and mental health support to survivors of harassment.” - **Nighat Dad, Executive Director, Digital Rights Foundation***

The aim of this portal, “*Ab Aur Nahin*”, is to help women who want to take legal action against their harassers but are discouraged to do so due to inaccessibility of resources. The portal (<https://abaurnahin.pk/>) currently has over 42 lawyers from across Pakistan out of which 26 are women lawyers and the portal hopes to expand its database to include more professionals with the passage of time. We realise that support for survivors of harassment and gender-based violence should be holistic, which is why we also provide resources for mental health counselling on the portal.

Our network of lawyers is built across Pakistan to ensure that women from different geographical destinations can approach them without any hassle. The Cyber Harassment Helpline established by DRF in 2016 has received 2302 calls over a period of two years regarding incidents of gender based violence and harassment. We saw that a large number of women wanted to proceed against the harassers legally but were either financially restrained or did not have access to a lawyer. Keeping in mind these profound reservations of women, this portal is an attempt to cater to their needs so as to serve as a helping hand to these incredibly strong women who did not only vocalize their stories but wish to pursue their cases legally.

Digital Rights Foundation is a registered research-based advocacy non-governmental organization in Pakistan. Founded by Nighat Dad in 2012, DRF focuses on ICTs to support human rights, inclusiveness, democratic processes, and digital governance. DRF works on issues of online free speech, privacy, data protection and online violence against women.

Contact person:

Nighat Dad  
Executive Director, Digital Rights Foundation  
Nighat@Digitalrightsfoundation.pk