



## National

### PMA sees hidden hand behind human organ trade

KARACHI (PPI) - Strongly criticising yet another deferral of the bill seeking ban on human organ trade, Pakistan Medical Association, Karachi chapter, Wednesday charged that some hidden hands in ruling quarters were providing shelter to lucrative but immoral business of organ trade in Pakistan.

Dr Qaiser Sajjad, PMA general secretary, talking to PPI said that the proposed Human Organs and Tissues Transplant Bill had been in limbo for 17 years and the federal cabinet had yet again deferred it. He said that it was intriguing that the government was not ready to put to an end to the immoral business of organ trade that was giving country a bad name in world comity.

He said that Pakistan was now being ridiculed as a 'kidney tourist destination' in whole world. He said that rich patients from the USA, UK, Australia, Middle East and even India were visiting Pakistan to purchase kidneys from the poor farmers. He said that some hospitals of Lahore and Rawalpindi were involved in this immoral trade and making a windfall. He said that rulers fully knew activities of these hospitals, but the vested interests in ruling quarters were providing shelter to this multi-million dollar business.

The PMA thinks that due to lack of seriousness this bill is turned into a joke, he said adding Pakistan is the lone Islamic country without any effective legislation against human organ trade.

He alleged that rulers did not want to pass this bill to save lucrative commissions and kickbacks of the vested interests. He said that the PMA had been striving to get passed this vital bill since years but in vain.

He said that mouthwatering profit margin was the reason of flourishing this trade. He said a recipient or buyer of a kidney has to pay from \$30,000 to \$40,000, but the poor seller or donor gets hardly \$1,000-2,000, while remaining amount goes into pockets of the mafia running the so-called kidney bazaars. He said that poor farmers, especially from Punjab villages were selling their kidneys for this meager amount. He said that rich buyers of kidneys enjoyed all post-operative care facilities, while poor sellers who were also living on one kidney got none.

He said that due to lack of post-operative care lives of thousands of poor people who had sold their organs were at dire risk. He said that crimes of forced kidney operations after kidnapping poor people were also being reported. In this regard he gave example of two real brothers of Hyderabad, Shahzad Odho and Mushtaque Odho, who were kidnapped and their kidneys forcibly operated.

He said that passing this law for present government was not a big issue, as in recent past it had got passed the women protection bill despite widespread opposition. He accused that rulers lacked political will to wipe out the immoral human organ trade from the country. He said the absence of this law is benefiting those involved running these kidney bazaars in Pakistan.

He referred to WHO Guiding Principles forbidding organ sales, which say, "The human body and its parts cannot be the subject of commercial transactions. Accordingly, giving or receiving payment (including any other compensation or reward) for organs should be prohibited."

He demanded of the government to take this issue seriously and display a strong political will to get passed this outstanding bill so that the immoral human organ trade could be ended from Pakistan for good, and lives of poor people, especially farmers, could be saved.

