

PRESS RELEASE

CPHD slams separate electoral rolls for Muslim and non-Muslim voters for upcoming Local Bodies elections

Commission for Peace and Human Development (CPHD) has criticized the government for holding the forthcoming LB elections with separate electoral rolls for Muslims and non-Muslims.

Expressing his disappointment on the decision of the Pakistan Election Commission to hold the forthcoming Local Bodies elections on joint electorate basis, but with separate electoral rolls, Waseem Anthony, the Executive Director of the Commission said that this double standard, in no way, will be effective to eliminate the relics of separate electorate system from the country.

Commenting on the election commission's statement, that the separate electoral rolls, which were used during the 2000-2001 local council elections, had been updated with an addition of 1.5 million new voters to be used for the upcoming local council elections, he said that there was enough time, while updating, to prepare these list on the joint basis but the decision shows the mindset of the government to keep some symbols of discrimination in all areas of life.

Pakistani society, already a victim of discrimination and religious intolerance, needs immediate positive measures to be taken to eliminate all form of discrimination on the basis of religion. He said that such symbols would hinder the efforts of changing Pakistan into a religiously tolerant and a pluralist society

"Keeping in view that curbing religious extremism and intolerance in the name of religion, still need more attention, we urge the government to take steps, regarding democratizing and liberalizing the society in the country. " He said.

He urged the government to hold the elections at every level with joint electoral rolls to leave out a symbol of prejudice and religious discrimination from the society. This positive step will pave the way to national integrity and religious harmony.

Waseem Anthony
Executive Director

July 6, 2005