EVEN the nuclear state of Pakistan has been experiencing a tidal wave of women’s rights activism, with young women marching in the streets of Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore to demand an end to gender violence and to call for justice. This has been the case particularly in the heavily-affected areas of the Punjab and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP).

In response to these women, an organisation of Pakistani women’s rights activists called the Women’s Initiative for Peace and Democracy (WIPD) has called for women to come together and form a “nationwide front” against gender violence and to demand an end to violence against women.

WIPD President Khadija Shahid said women have been at the forefront of Pakistan’s struggle for democracy and women’s rights. She said the government has failed to protect women’s rights and that women’s rights have been violated in the name of religion and tradition.

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