

Guns and Aerial Firing

"Papa, mujhe goli lag gai [Papa, I have been shot]," were the last words of the 15 year old Syed Hussain Raza Zaidi, as an unthinking nation resorted to aerial firing with the fall of the last Indian wicket. Raza fought for his life, just as his team fought for the Champion's trophy. The team succeeded at Oval, while Raza lost his struggle for life at the Jinnah Post Graduate Medical Centre. Raza's parents would never want a team to win again so that no parents ever lose their child to the madness of a violent society.

Pakistan is home to some 20 million largely illegal guns possessed in most cases by militant individuals and mafias. The ordinary peace-loving Pakistanis have become hostage to the violent compulsions of the rich, powerful and medieval gun owners. They can indulge in firing indiscriminately, uncontrollably and mindlessly, at the least provocation, dispute, despair or delight. Must we, with each new year, birthday, marriage, cricket match or a new moon, sacrifice scores of our children so that our ruling elite can enjoy a few moments of madness.

It is never the children of Ministers, Secretaries or Parliamentarians who die in this insane exhibition of delight. The government remains completely callous and disinterested in controlling the proliferation of guns or stopping the barbaric practice of 'killing for joy'.

We as members of 'Citizens Against Weapons' protest against the government for taking no measures to control guns or prevent aerial firing. The Sindh government ought to be held accountable for the tragic and unwarranted death of Syed Raza Zaidi. We demand that action be taken against the officials of the Home Department and the Police for failing to eliminate guns and to implement a permanent ban on aerial firing.

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