[**The world our men live in**](https://www.dawn.com/news/1738320/the-world-our-men-live-in)

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I HAVE gone running and walking in F-9 park in the winters, when I lived close to it. Being able to take any form of exercise in the open in Pakistan is a luxury for many of us. But even in bright daylight, with people around, rules have to be followed. Stick to the more open areas, always be aware of footsteps behind or people within eyesight.

Now that I am closer to the trails of Islamabad, the same rules apply. As they do even indoors, at gyms for example. They are slightly different than the ones followed when outside but they apply nonetheless and are based on the principle of always being aware of those around you.

Is there any place where one can be completely relaxed? For those of us who live alone, the answer is rarely ever ‘yes’.

Similar thoughts come to mind when the [F-9 rape came to light](https://www.dawn.com/news/1735458/islamabad-police-issue-sketch-of-f-9-park-rape-suspect). Shortly after the attack was reported, we were also told the assailants, after they had raped the survivor, told her that she should not have come to the park after dark.

More than déjà-vu, such statements reflect the Groundhog Day-world we are condemned to live in. By ‘we’, I mean the women, for men seem rather pleased with this world. Umer Sheikh, the former CCPO of Lahore lives in this very land, for he [too had a problem with the decision of the mother](https://www.dawn.com/news/1582117), who got raped on the Motorway, to drive home in the dark.

It is as if an attack is the price a woman pays for wanting to live a life outside the ‘home’.

Former prime minister Imran Khan, too, is an inhabitant of this same world, where he insists on questioning the clothes women wear or the public spots women journalists appear in to report a story.

It is a world he attempts to explain nearly every time he gives an interview, years after he first expressed these views. And then recently, the current human rights minister, Riaz Pirzada, has also provided us proof of his residency of this very world, when he explained better upbringing could help women avoid places where they can be raped.

It is as if an attack is the price a woman pays for wanting to live a life outside the ‘home’. Though I wonder what all these men would say to the women who get raped inside their homes.

But then, men in Pakistan tend to prefer not to admit to such events — in the world they inhabit, what happens in homes stays private.

However, I digress. For the issue here is the complete inability of those around to understand violence against women and how to address it. It was no different with the F-9 park case. Aside from schooling women, the next reaction of our government apparatus is to clamp down on any dialogue or debate. And it was no different this time around when Pemra, in its infinite wisdom, [decided to ban the coverage](https://www.dawn.com/news/1735897) and discussion of the case entirely.

The reason? Some channels had named the survivor. Of course, there is ample space here for a quick discussion on the mess which is our media industry, where from reporter to editor to producer to dozen others who are all involved in the process of deciding what goes on air and what doesn’t are incapable of understanding a rape survivor’s name cannot be made public.

And when it does, instead of those channels being blamed or shamed, the entire industry is penalised. And all discussion of the incident was banned. And why not? For we have only two answers to most societal problems — if the solution is being found at the level of the family, it is mostly marriage and at the state level, it is always a blanket ban. But there was worse to come.

Within days came the news of the suspects being identified, [caught and killed](https://www.dawn.com/news/1737527/two-killed-in-encounter-were-involved-in-f-9-park-rape-case-police). They were running away, we were told, and fired at the police manning a check-post, only to be killed. But before we could even digest the news, the survivor’s lawyers and rights activists told us the men had been caught and identified. They were seen behind bars, before they apparently appeared randomly at a check-post to fire at policemen.

What does one say? Worry about the survivor whose trauma cannot even be imagined? Of being attacked, of having her identity made public, having to identify first the attackers in custody and then later their dead bodies? Her lawyer, Imaan Mazari-Hazir, provided these details in a [press conference](https://www.dawn.com/news/1737649) she did after the news of the deaths in a shootout was released.

Or should we also be worried about our society where we first wonder why women step out in the wrong clothes or at the wrong time or in the wrong place? And where once an attack happens, we want quick and ready vengeance through speedy trials and public hangings? And because this cannot happen, we should settle for ‘encounters’?

At the press conference by Imaan Hazir and Farzana Bari, there were more than one question from the journalists about the slow and cumbersome judicial process, implying or even saying outright that extrajudicial killing is a quick solution.

It seems few of us want to understand where the ugliness in our culture, of any kind, comes from and how to address it. And for this reason, we don’t want justice either. Justice not just for those who have been wronged but also those accused of it.

We think death, hangings, painful endings straight from mediaeval times can resolve matters. Be it the rapist of Zainab, or the [Motorway case](https://www.dawn.com/news/1579054/lahore-motorway-gang-rape-causes-outrage), or the park incident, the least of our concerns is justice and a stronger system. Rough and ready death. That is all we want.

And worse still, this time around it happened in Islamabad, where the police are Twitter-happy, anxious to show us their people-friendly persona; and boast of women officers and their swanky offices where women complaints are entertained. But the veneer was surface thin, it seems. And perhaps it was equally thin in the case of the government also, which has maintained a worrying silence on the entire matter.

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