

Senators question legal status of black list

ISLAMABAD: Senators on Monday raised questions over the legal status of the 'black list' used to bar individuals from travelling abroad.

During a meeting of the Senate's Standing Committee on Law and Justice, senators belonging to the opposition Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) asked under which law the names of people were placed on the black list.

Senators Raza Rabbani and Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar of the PPP and Musaddik Masood Malik and Ayesha Raza Farooq of the PML-N asked as to where the instructions for putting people's names on the black list came from and under which law the steps were taken.

Mr Khokhar said that during a meeting of the Senate's Standing Committee on Human Rights the interior ministry said there was no law except for the Exit Control Act under which an embargo on fundamental rights could be clamped.

The government is applying a new 30-day temporary travel restriction against those wanted by the state, to bypass the earlier long and tedious process of the Exit Control List.

The meeting was informed that the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) can now place a temporary ban on an individual for a month under a provisional nationality identification list that is prepared on the orders of courts.

Chairman of the committee Javed Abbasi decided to seek a detailed briefing on the issue from the relevant officials, including the interior secretary, the FIA director general and the director general immigration and passports, to know under which authority the ban has been placed, where the instructions for putting people's names on the black list came from and how many people have so far been blacklisted.

The meeting decided that the interior minister, human rights minister, human rights secretary and Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights would also attend the meeting.

The committee then discussed the proposed legislation for providing simple mechanism to address the miseries of citizens in obtaining succession certificates and other related matters, including the proposal to declare family registration certificate prepared by Nadra as succession certificate and subsequent filing of any objections with the courts of law.

Mr Abbasi later deferred the matter till the next meeting, saying that the procedures should be simplified and concerns of the members be addressed.

Iftikhar A. Khan