

**Islamabad: TheNetwork for Consumer Protection registered a legal complaint against Phillip Morris International in Margalla Police Station on Friday at F-8, Islamabad. The complaint was filed with the SHO Margalla police station with evidence of tobacco advertisement by tobacco company. This is first legal step forward to activate the enforcement of tobacco control law which is in existence for past 9 years.**

Last week, direct marketing campaign by Phillip Morris International (PMI) Tobacco Company was launched. Section 7 of the "Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-smokers Health Ordinance 2002" restricts tobacco companies to advertise their products. But the law is toothless as it entails only Rs 5000 (US\$ 60) fine which is a peanut for tobacco company compared to millions of rupees being spent by PMI on recent promotional spree in Pakistan.

It is not the matter for TheNetwork to impose a petty fine on Tobacco Company who is violating and disregarding national law of Pakistan but we are more concerned that this blatant violation is undoing what little good was done for tobacco control in Pakistan, said Nadeem Iqbal Executive Coordinator of TheNetwork for Consumer Protection, an NGO which has been spearheading tobacco control campaign for around 15 years.

Pakistan assumes legal obligation to completely ban tobacco advertisement by endorsing FCTC, the Article 13 of FCTC obliges parties to recognize a comprehensive ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship to reduce the consumption of tobacco products.

Australia has passed the plain tobacco packaging bill, which is also an example for Pakistan to adopt, demands TheNetwork.

Although, Pakistan has taken initiative in introduction of tobacco control policies at national level prior to recognize Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) however, lack of political will to prioritize tobacco control and vigorous promotional campaigns by wily tobacco industry remain stumbling block in the way of effective implementation of tobacco control laws in Pakistan.