



**COMMITTEE
FOR THE
WELFARE OF
PRISONERS**



LEGAL AID OFFICE

(Legal Aid Office project)



Supporting Sindh's Criminal Justice System through **Legal Aid, Legal Empowerment and Speedier Trials.**

NEWSLETTER

July - December 2021

9th edition



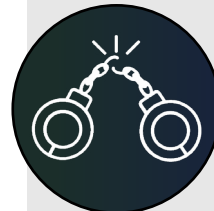
KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF SUCCESS

from this quarter



1679

Underprivileged prisoners legally represented



792

Under trial prisoners were released on bail



1319

Cases disposed / resolved through Judicial Orders



903

Under-privileged & innocent prisoners acquitted on merit

all made possible through the support of CWP-LAO



**Mr. Mohammad Hassan Sahito,
Superintendent Central Prison Karachi**

“Overcrowding in prisons is one of the key challenges prison management has faced over the decades. As of June 2021, a total of 4,513 cases from Central Prison Karachi have been successfully disposed of due to the efforts of CWP-LAO – it is a big achievement towards the goal to de-congest prisons”

MESSAGE FROM the Superintendent Central Prison Karachi

In my years of service, I have often seen prisoners in confinement simply due to a lack of legal understanding and insufficient financial resources to hire a private counsel for their case proceedings.

The work of Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid and the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoner guided by him has been a ray of hope. Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners is a unique public-private partnership with various on-ground interventions.

The fully functional prison paralegal service is a one-of-its-kind system that works to provide legal awareness and information to newly admitted prisoners through trained literate convicts.

The committee has an excellent team of experienced lawyers who work tirelessly to provide legal representation to inmates unable to afford private counsel. From providing legal awareness to rehabilitation drives, COVID-19 relief packages, antibodies testing, and zero-prevalence survey of prisoners in Central Prison Karachi – the committee has engaged in several on-ground activities. A key contribution has been the policy shifts at higher levels which have shown major improvements in the prison systems.

I am thankful to Mr. Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid for dedicating his life to ensuring that the marginalized and the vulnerable are represented and heard by the system.

FREE LEGAL ADVISORY CAMPS in 23 Prisons of Sindh

CWP-LAO organized 44 Free Legal Aid Camps from July to December 2021 on a large scale for un-sentenced prisoners. During this time 1088 un-sentenced prisoners from adult male prisons and 217 from women and 162 juvenile facilities attended the camps who were provided legal advice and guidance.



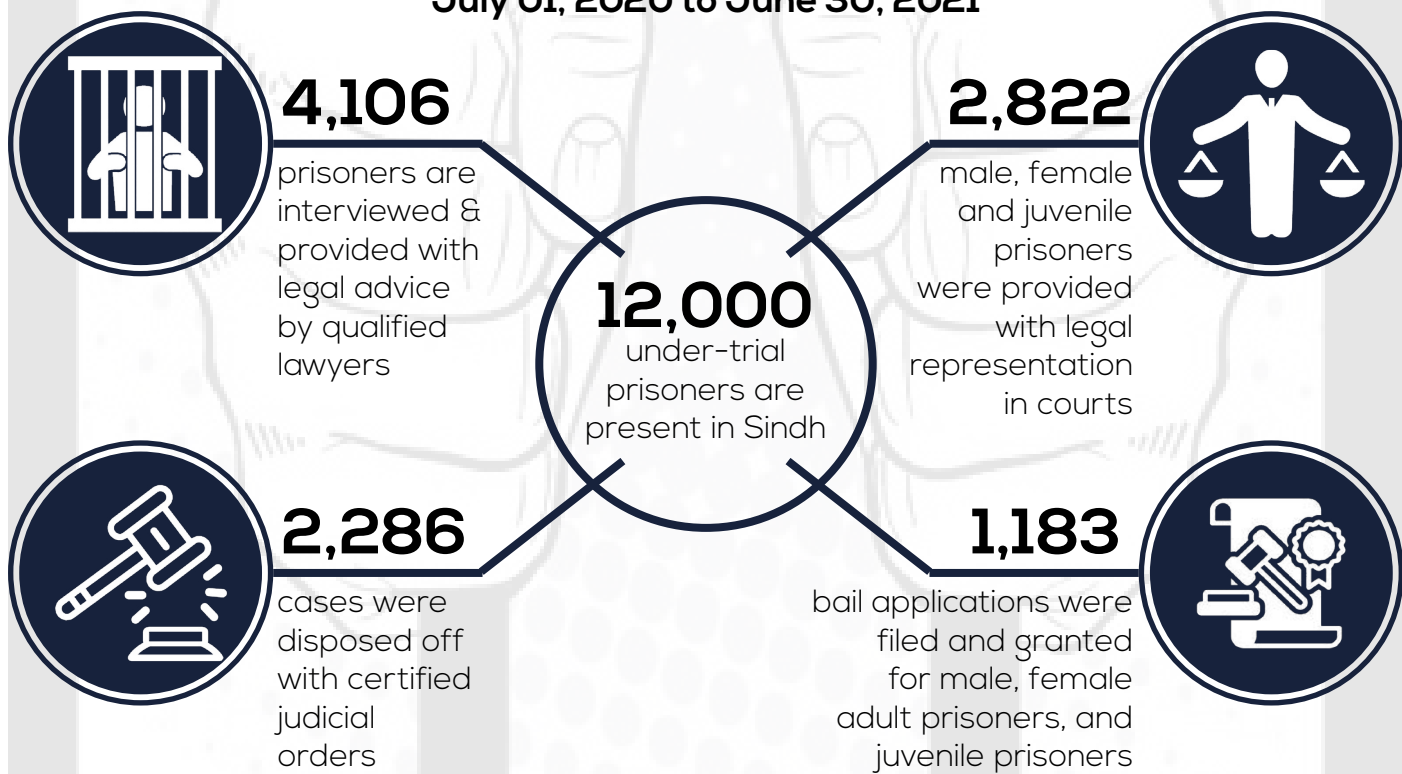
ANNUAL PROGRESS MEETING of CWP-LAO

The Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners presented its achievements to the Home Secretary, Government of Sindh on December 14, 2021. The meeting was attended by I.G Prisons, Sindh, DIG Prisons range of Karachi, Additional Secretary Sindh Prisons, Director of Women's Development Department, and Secretary CWP-LAO.



The Committee provides legal representation to first-time under-trial prisoners, marginalized, and those who are implicated in petty offenses. Some of the facts and figures are as follows:

Achievement from July 01, 2020 to June 30, 2021



During this time the Committee pursued its mandate with complete SoP(s) during the intensification of Covid-19 cases in the third and fourth waves.

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ACTIVITIES & HIGHLIGHTS

ART FROM BEHIND BARS: Unveiling the talent from Women Prison



Talent & art has no boundaries, nor limitations! This was demonstrated on November 25, 2021, when paintings made by women behind bars were displayed to

hundreds of visitors at the National Media Fellowship launch event held at Marriott Hotel Karachi, as organized by the National Commission on the Status of Women, Islamabad. On the same day,

the Sindh Commission on Status of Women organized **"Policy Dialogue on Inclusive Multisectoral Approaches to Gender-Based Violence"** at Avari Towers.



On these occasions, the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners – Legal Office (CWP-LAO) took the lead to arrange an art exhibition for the public to witness the hidden talent of the women incarcerated in the Women Prison, Karachi.

Visitors including **Mr. Imran Ismail** (Governor, Sindh), **Mr. Saeed Ghani** (Minister, Sindh Government), **Mr. Kazi Nazeer Ahmed** (Inspector General, Sindh Prisons), **Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar** (Chairperson; NCSW), **Mr. Arif Anwar Baloch** (Secretary, Sindh Government), **Ms. Sheema Kermani** (President; Tehreek-e-Niswan), **Dr. Habiba** (Board Member; LAS), and **Ms. Nuzhat Shirin** (Chairperson; SCSW) graced the occasion and appreciated the talent of these women.



Both exhibitions received an overwhelming response as most of the paintings were sold on the spot. The remuneration of each painting will be awarded to these brilliant artists who are currently spending their lives in prisons.

INAUGURATION OF THE SENSORY GARDEN at ELC Karachi

The Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners-Legal Aid Office (CWP-LAO) organized an inauguration ceremony for a one-of-its-kind Sensory Garden at the Early Learning Center (ELC) for children in Women Prison Karachi on November 11, 2021. The AMI School along with the support of several donors created this platform for children residing in prison, most of whom were born to women serving their sentences.

The sensory garden aims to give these children a sense of life outside the prison walls so they are exposed to different general ethics in a friendly environment. Individuals from various government departments as well as non-government organizations graced the event and recognized the collective efforts of CWP-LAO and AMI schools.

During this occasion, **Barrister Murtaza Wahab**



(Administrator, Karachi & Advisor to the CM Sindh on Law), **Mr. Kazi Nazeer Ahmed** (IG Prisons, Sindh), and **Ms. Sheeba Shah** (DIG Women Prisons and YOIS, Karachi) graced the event as our chief guests. We were also honored with the presence of valuable guests including **Ms. Nuzhat Shirin** (Chairperson, Sindh for Commission on Status of Women), **Dr. Habiba Hasan** (Member, Sindh National Commission on Status of Women), **Ms. Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy** (renown film director); along with Mr. **Mohammad Hasan Sahito** (Superintendent CP, Karachi).



CWP-LAO SEWING TEACHER GETS AWARDED from APWA

CWP-LAO team members have continued their momentum to produce moments of pride with their hard work.

Ms. Naseem, sewing teacher at the sewing center in Women Prison Karachi was presented with an award by the All Pakistan Women Association (APWA) on International Women's Day. The award recognized women for their outstanding achievements in multiple fields and whose efforts contributed positively to society at large.



MENSTRUAL HYGIENE SESSIONS and napkins distribution

Menstrual Hygiene is a fundamental need for women around the world. Unfortunately, attaining menstrual hygiene is still a challenge in underdeveloped countries specifically for women in prisons.

Rule No. 5 of UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders 2010 (commonly known as the 'Bangkok rules') requires authorities to ensure facilities and materials to meet gender-specific needs. CWP-LAO along with our partner Santex (Butterfly Pakistan)



organized interventions for menstrual hygiene in regional women prisons of Sindh on September 16 & 17, 2021. These sessions aimed to promote access to sanitary products, safe and hygienic spaces to use them along the rights to manage menstruation in a dignified manner.



INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION IN ELCS

The children from the Early Learning Centres (ELCs) of Karachi and Hyderabad celebrated the 74th Independence Day of Pakistan in true spirit towards our beloved land.

The activity served as a reminder of the sacrifices made by our ancestors to gain independence.



DONATION DRIVE

CWP-LAO has remained committed to its mission of providing support to vulnerable and deprived prisoners. In sweltering summers, ten ceiling fans were provided to the Ghotki prison administration on

September 13, 2021, to meet the acute shortage. On this Occasion, DP Ghotki's administration extended his gratitude towards CWP-LAO (especially to Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid) for its continued efforts.

JOINING HANDS with the local prison administration

It gives us immense pleasure to announce that CWP-LAO section heads were assigned different roles for Prison Oversight Committee established by the prisons department in various districts.

CWP-LAO congratulates all of the bright achievers for their new roles - leading to collaborating and constructive support for the committee members with regards to rehabilitation and improvement of the prisons.



Advocate Majid Ali
appointed as Convener of the
Committee for District Prison
Shaheed Benazirabad



Advocate Abdullah Soomro
nominated as a member for
Central Prison Hyderabad



Advocate Syed Ahmer Shah
nominated as a member for
Central Prison Sukkur

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INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS

International Children's Day is a commemorative date celebrated annually in honor of children. On this occasion, CWP-LAO organized celebrations in Karachi and Hyderabad Early Learning Centres on November 23, 2021.

To ensure that the children enjoyed the celebrations, Early Learning Centre was decorated with balloons and other elements. Little champs enjoyed the cake cutting ceremony and gifts with the chief guest, **Ms. Sheeba Shah** (DIG, Women Prisons, and YOIS Sindh).



CAPACITY BUILDING SESSIONS & TRAININGS

THREE DAYS TOT FOR PRISON PARALEGALS in Central Prison Karachi

In the light of the latest changes to law and regulations, the Paralegal manuals were revised accordingly. As a result, the paralegal staff was trained on revised topics which included Constitution, Basic Fundamental Rights, Stages of Criminal Trial, Probation & Parole, General Prison Rules, Women Inheritance Laws, and Gender Sensitization.

Keeping this in mind, CWP-LAO arranged a three-day Training of Trainers at the Central Prison, Karachi from July 29 to 31, 2021. Altogether seventeen new and old prison paralegals were trained on the above-mentioned topics by experienced consultant **Ms. Angbeen Mirza**. The training session used multiple methodologies such as lectures, group work, and role reversal to enhance participants' capacity. The training update prison paralegals on the latest development in law and regulation so they can continue to provide support to new inmates.



The prison paralegal program is one of the most successful programs launched by CWP-LAO which ensures legal awareness and legal empowerment of the prisoners. The training was concluded by Mr. Saeed Soomro (Deputy Superintendent; Central Prison and Correctional Facility, Karachi) who delivered a motivational speech to the participants and distributed certificates amongst them.



THREE DAYS TOT of CWP-LAO Lawyers

It was deemed necessary to get our lawyers familiar with newly enacted prison rules for them to deal with their cases in adherence to the latest developments in the law. For the same, a three-day training of trainers of the Prison Paralegal Program was arranged for CWP-LAO lawyers at Pakistan Society for Training & Development (PSTD) in Karachi from October 15 to 17, 2021.

The training aimed to enhance the capacity of CWP-LAO lawyers through updated training materials for prisoners engaged in the Prison Paralegal Program which is currently being implemented by the CWP-LAO in three prisons of Sindh.

CWP-LAO lawyers from all the regional offices



participated in this training, and learned different subjects such as the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Fundamental Rights of criminals, and Criminal Laws including Defences and Sentencing, Probation & Parole, along with Juvenile Justice, Prison Rules & Gender Sensitization through advanced learning techniques. The session concluded with a certificate distribution ceremony on the last day.



MONTHLY CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING SESSION for CWP-LAO Lawyers

A one-day Capacity Building training Session for the advocates of CWP-LAO was held at CWP-LAO head office on December 14, 2021. A batch of 40 lawyers from Karachi and district offices attended this training session.

Mr. **Mohd. Anwar Mahar** (District Public Prosecutor, Prosecutor General Office, Karachi) conducted a skill-based session on Cross-Examination. The expert distinguished between methods of preparing for cross-examination of the witness while being polite and courteous.



CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING on Cyber Security & Cyber Crimes Laws

In this era of information technology, online crimes have also increased. To counter this, the government of Pakistan introduced the **Pakistan Prevention of the Electronic Crimes Act** in 2016. This act provides a comprehensive legal framework that defines the various kinds of electronic crimes, mechanisms for investigation, prosecution, and adjudication concerning electronic crimes.

Since CWP-LAO has always aimed at building the capacity of stakeholders in the criminal justice system, CWP-LAO in collaboration with the Home Department-Government of Sindh organized a one-day training session on Cyber Crimes and Cyber Security Laws at PSTD, Karachi on October 30, 2021. Twelve officials from Sindh Prisons Department and sixteen CWP-LAO lawyers were trained during the session.

The training aimed to enhance the capacity of Prison Police



Officials and CWP-LAO lawyers by familiarizing them with recent developments in the laws and rules on cybercrimes & social media. Practical steps to cope with technology-related risks were also discussed in the session.

The event was honored with the presence of **Mr. Muhammad Nasir Khan** (DIG Prisons, Karachi) who distributed training completion certificates amongst participants and appreciated the efforts of CWP-LAO during his speech.



TOT PRISON PARALEGAL in Central Prison Hyderabad

The Prison Paralegal Program is one of our flagship components through which we aim to spread legal knowledge and awareness among prisoners, making them legally empowered.





CWP-LAO organized a Three-Days Training of Trainers at the Central Prison & Correctional Facility, Hyderabad from December 28 to 30, 2021, intending to create legal awareness amongst the new batch of convicted prisoners and to make them self-sufficient in holding regular Paralegal Classes for newly enrolled prisoners every week.

The training was facilitated by CWP-LAO's senior staff including **Ms. Sana Qureshi** (Program Manager), **Mr.**

Habib-ur-Rehman Jiskani (Manager Litigation and M&E), **Mr. Abdullah Soomro** (Section Head, Hyderabad), **Ms. Noreen Shaikh** (Litigation Advocate), and **Mr. Toseef Ahmed Chandio** (Litigation Advocate). The last day of the training was graced with the participation of **Mr. Abdul Kareem Abbasi** (Superintendent, Central Prison Hyderabad) who delivered a motivational speech and distributed certificates amongst the participants.

COMMUNITY PARALEGAL SESSION on Legal Property Rights of Women



CWP-LAO is successfully running a Prison Paralegal Program in three Prisons of Sindh. This program aims to empower the prisoners with sufficient knowledge about the constitution, fundamental rights, criminal law, criminal procedure, family law and inheritance, probation and parole, and other basic legal issues twice a week through Paralegal classes.



Recently, two of our Prison Paralegals, **Mr. Yawar Zaman** and **Mr. Aziz Ullah** who were acquitted from the Central Prison, Karachi who wished to serve the community with the legal knowledge that they had gained during their incarceration. CWP-LAO collaborated with its sister organization Legal Aid Society to arrange a Community Paralegal Session

on December 23, 2021, in Lyari Town, Karachi. Under the supervision of senior lawyers, these paralegals conducted Legal Awareness sessions on **Legal Property Rights of Women** which grabbed the attention of the community members, especially of female members who were excited to know their legal rights in inheritance and the legal procedures to claim it.

JUSTICE SUCCESS **STORIES**

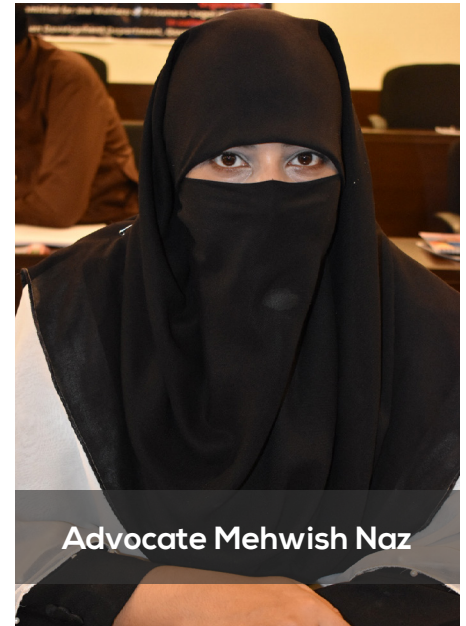
Uzair Ahmed gets acquitted from false kidnapping charges

Seventeen years old Uzair lives in Lasbela Karachi with his parents, two sisters, and one brother. He works as daily wage labor to help out in day-to-day household expenditure.

Uzair was arrested by Soldier Bazar Police under charges of theft. Due to his age, he was transferred to Youth Offenders Industrial School (YOIS) Karachi. Unfortunately, Uzair did not have contacts of his family members to reach out to them.

During a regular prison visit, CWP-LAO's team met Uzair. He briefed the team about his situation; his case was assigned to **Ms. Mehwish Naz** who filed for his Vakalatnama on June 15, 2021. During his initial time in prison, Uzair was convinced that the only option left for him was to plead guilty. He was guided by Ms. Mehwish to have faith and stand by his truth.

When the case proceedings began, Ms. Mehwish made continuous efforts for short hearing dates. During the



Advocate Mehwish Naz

proceedings, it was found that the witnesses had contradictory statements. Shortly after, Uzair was announced innocent by the court. Uzair was acquitted of the false charges against him on July 17, 2021.

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Deedar Janwari, gets timely help from CWP-LAO after being falsely accused with multiple charges

Deedar Janwari, 30 years old, was implicated in multiple offenses including an attempt to murder and illegal possession of weapons due to caste-based enmity with the other community in his village. Deedar has two daughters and two sons (all minors) who are dependent on his meager earnings as a driver in Sukkur

city. After being alleged he requested **Mr. Mohsin Shaikh** (Lawyer, CWP-LAO) for legal assistance, who proceeded with his case.

Two prosecution witnesses were examined, who failed to provide valid evidence to prove the case. Furthermore, no weapon had been recovered from Deedar's

possession. It was proved in court that the case against Deedar was falsely implicated due to community rivalry. The court announced Deedar's acquittal on September 6, 2021.

A bail application was also filed for another case against Deedar. The bail was granted for a certain amount of surety.

JUSTICE SUCCESS **STORIES**

Bilhuda gets justice after being implicated with false murder charges

Twenty-Five years old Bilhuda was married to Zubair in her teenage. She was living in Karachi with her husband and mother-in-law. Her husband ran a grocery shop which was the only source of income for the household.

Zubair was killed by two unidentified gunmen while he was at his grocery shop. Zubair's uncle registered an FIR against the two unidentified gunmen. The investigation formally began on May 16, 2017. In a strange turn of events, Bilhuda was arrested based on suspicion of her involvement in Zubair's murder. She was sent to Women Prison Karachi where

she spent more than three years in imprisonment.

Desperate to gain justice Bilhuda approached **Advocate Noor-ul-Saba Hussain** (Lawyer, CWP-LAO). She narrated her sufferings and requested legal help, following to which Ms. Noor-ul-Saba Hussain filed for her Vakalatnama on September 29, 2017.

The formal proceedings began and the case was shifted to the evidence stage where the court examined the witnesses and evidence. On July 25, 2021, Bilhuda's acquitting orders were passed by the Honorable Judge, and she finally got released from



Advocate Noor-ul-Saba Hussain

prison after spending more than three years without committing any crime.

Bilhuda was glad on the day of her release and paid special thanks to the CWP-LAO team along with Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid (Chairperson, CWP-LAO) for their generous & sincere support.

Since Deedar could not afford the amount, CWP-LAO provided financial assistance in this regard to ensure Deedar's timely release.

Deedar has now been reunited with his family and continues to attend hearings to vindicate his name.



Mohsin Shaikh

JUSTICE SUCCESS **STORIES**

A couple gets saved after being alleged with false kidnapping charges

Ruksana, a forty-eight-year-old housewife, lives with her husband and child in Chinasar Goth situated in Karachi East. Shahid Akram, Ruksana's husband, is a driver who earns just enough to manage their house rent and other necessary household expenditures.

On February 2, 2020, the family was enjoying an outing at a public park when they spotted a child crying alone. They approached the child, and since none of the guardians were around, Ruksana and her Shahid, decided to take the distressed child home.

The very next day, both, Ruksana and Shahid, went to the nearest police station to report about the child. An FIR had already been registered by the parents. Ruksana and Shahid her arrested based on the FIR; their alleged involvement in

the abduction was confirmed by the CCTV footage. The couple tried to explain their action and intention, but the police implicated them with the intent of kidnapping.

Not able to afford a private lawyer for their representation, the couple was frightened. Fortunately, Ruksana had got a chance to meet **Advocate Noor-ul-Saba**, from CWP-LAO at Women Prison Karachi where Ruksana narrated her story and requested legal representation. Advocate Noor-ul-Saba briefly interviewed Ruksana and filed a Vakalatnama for the couple in court on February 13, 2020, after which the proceedings started formally. During the proceedings, the CCTV footage was examined thoroughly which clearly indicated that they did not have any intention to abduct the child, instead, they were looking for his parents.



Advocate Noor-ul-Saba Hussain

The case witnesses to the case were also examined and the court finally declared the couple innocent and acquitted them on July 23, 2021. Keeping in view the seriousness of the case, it is obvious that if this case was not taken by CWP-LAO, the couple would have spent more time in incarceration. However, with the efforts of the CWP-LAO lawyers, especially of Advocate Noor-ul-Saba, the matter was resolved and the family was saved.



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JUSTICE SUCCESS **STORIES**

Zeeshan Maseeh gets reunited with his family after being falsely accused of stealing a gutter cover

Twenty-four-year-old Zeeshan Maseeh, resides in Shaheed Benazirabad with his family. He lives in a joint family setting with his wife, children, parents, and siblings. He is the sole breadwinner for the family of eleven.

Zeeshan was arrested for allegedly stealing a gutter cover. He was transferred to District Prison in Shaheed Benzairabad. Zeeshan and

his family had never been in such a situation; their financial situation did not allow them to hire a private counsel for the case proceedings.

The case came into the knowledge of CWP-LAO, following which **Advocate Noman Maqbool** filed Vakalatnama on behalf of Zeeshan on July 12, 2021.

The final hearing of the case was held on September



**Advocate Noman
Maqbool**

21, 2021, in which the court declared the evidence and witnesses presented against Zeeshan unsatisfactory, and he was declared innocent. Zeeshan's family is thankful to Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid and CWP-LAO for their humanitarian efforts.

Ayub Shaikh, receive timely assistance after being falsely accused of robbery

Ayub, aged twenty-three, spent about two months in Central Prison Sukkur under a false charge of robbery. Belonging to a financially deprived family, Ayub did not have the resources to hire a private advocate.

When the case came to the knowledge of CWP-LAO's team, **Advocate Samiullah Shaikh** immediately

proceeded with this case formally. The court later found the evidence and witnesses fabricated and therefore, the final decision of the honorable court went in favor of Ayub, and he was released from Prison.

During the entire process, the CWP-LAO continued to provide timely legal assistance and support to seek justice for Ayub.



**Advocate Samiullah
Shaikh**

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JUSTICE SUCCESS **STORIES**

Mother & Daughter get justice after being implicated with false murder charges

Humera and her mother, Allah Bachai, were implicated in the case of Humera's husband's murder. The FIR was registered by Humera's brother-in-law. Both, Humera and her mother were moved to Women Prison Hyderabad in June 2021.

During her incarceration, Humera had her nine-month-old baby with her. Due to insufficient funds, the mother-daughter could not

afford private counsel. They approached, **Advocate Toseef Ahmed Chandio**, who filed the Vakalatnama in court on their behalf on June 16, 2021.

During the case proceedings from June to December 2021, the court examined eight case witnesses and other relevant evidence. Keeping in view the case proceedings, the court ruled in favor of Humera and Allah Bachai

The first day of December 2021 brought good news for both, Humera and Allah Bachai, as both of them were released from prison and returned to their routine life. Through this channel, and by the Grace of the Almighty, CWP-LAO succeeded in playing its role for the welfare of the marginalized & vulnerable, and opening doors to justice.



Advocate Mohammad Toseef (left), Humera with her child (center) & mother Allah Bachai (right) after being cleared from charges

GET IN TOUCH!



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