



**COMMITTEE  
FOR THE  
WELFARE OF  
PRISONERS**



**LEGAL AID OFFICE**



# NEWSLETTER

Supporting Sindh's Criminal Justice System through

**Legal Aid, Legal Empowerment and Swift Trials.**

16<sup>th</sup> Edition | July - September 2023



**630**

Vakalatnamas filed in the courts



**290**

Bail applications granted



**488**

Cases disposed off through court orders



**321**

Acquittals (On merit & 265-K & 249-A CrPC)

## Celebrating excellence in justice : performance of our lawyers

Join us in celebrating the unwavering dedication of our lawyers in ensuring access to justice and upholding the right to a fair trial for all during 2022 - 2023. Each case they handle marks a significant stride towards a more equitable legal system.



### Toseef Chandio

In 2022-2023, Toseef filed an impressive 162 vakalatnamas, secured 104 acquittals on merit, and granted bail in 31 crucial cases.



### Noman Maqbool

In the year 2022-2023, Noman filed an impressive 141 vakalatnamas, championed 77 acquittals on merit, and secured bail in a remarkable 108 cases.



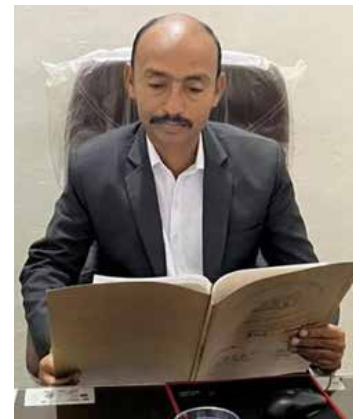
### Noreen Shaikh

In the year 2022-2023, Noreen filed an impressive 120 vakalatnamas, secured a remarkable 89 acquittals on merit, and skillfully obtained bail in 73 significant cases.



### Hussain Bux

In the year 2022-2023, Hussain filed an impressive 106 vakalatnamas, secured a remarkable 72 acquittals on merit, and adeptly obtained bail in 73 significant cases.



### Majid Ali

In the year 2022-2023, Majid filed an impressive 93 vakalatnamas, achieved a commendable 67 acquittals on merit, and skillfully secured bail in 83 pivotal cases.



## Collaborations with Sindh Human Rights Commission:

The Committee continues to collaborate with the Sindh Human Rights Commission to enhance access to justice and ensure that legal aid reaches those who need it most.

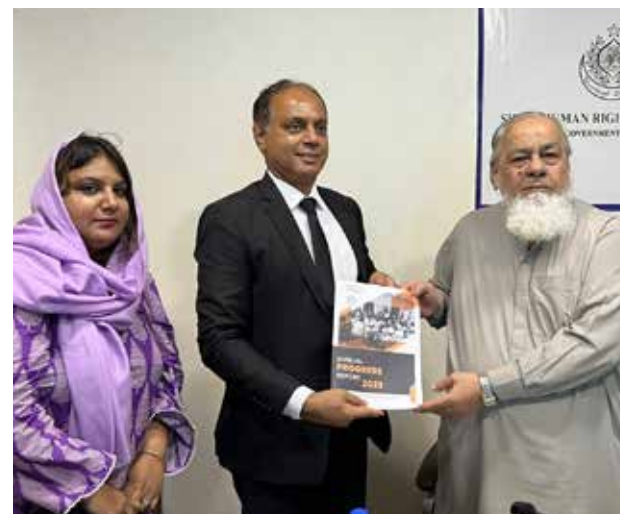
In our collaborative visit to Women's Prison, Youthful Offenders Industrial School, Central Prison Hyderabad, and Special Prison Nara, our dedicated team offered on-the-spot legal guidance to 16 inmates, ensuring access to justice behind bars.

The Committee has also facilitated visits to Central Prisons Sukkur, Khairpur, Mirpurkhas, Karachi, and District Prison Malir. A total of 45 vakalatnamas have been filed as a result of these visits.



## Coordination meeting with Sindh Human Rights Commission on case referrals:

Mr. Habib Jiskani, Litigation Manager, and Ms. Sana Sharif, Program Manager, met with the Honorable Justice (R) Arshad Noor Khan, Member Judicial I, Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC). The agenda was to deliberate on the progress of cases referred to the Committee by SHRC. These coordination meetings are not only instrumental in fostering a stronger collaboration between the legal and human rights sectors but also play a significant role in ensuring efficiency, transparency, and accountability within the system.



## Free Legal Advisory Camps

The Committee prioritizes the provision of legal aid across prisons in Sindh, including efforts towards increasing prisoners' awareness regarding the right to legal aid and ways to seek legal aid services.



**Between July and September 2023, we successfully organized 21 free legal advisory camps for prisoners. The camps witnessed the active participation of 630 under-trial prisoners, including adult men, women and juvenile prisoners who benefited from free legal advice.**

## Presenting 19 years of progress to the Honorable Minister Home and Prison, Government of Sindh, Brigadier (R) Haris Nawaz

We had the privilege of presenting our journey to the Honorable Minister Home and Prison, Government of Sindh, Brigadier (R) Haris Nawaz alongside the esteemed Home Secretary, Mr. Aijaz Ali Shah.

We discussed the challenges we've overcome and the path ahead, all aimed at creating positive change. The unwavering support of the Home Department, Government of Sindh, has been our driving force over the years, propelling us towards our goal of ensuring the right to fair trial and access to justice for all under-trial prisoners. With the assurance of support from the Honorable Minister Home and Prison Sindh, we're more determined than ever to make a lasting impact.



## Training of Trainers on Prison Paralegal Program for the Committee's Lawyers

In 2017, the Committee piloted a Prison Paralegal Program in Women's and Central Prison Karachi to promote legal literacy among under trial prisoners. The program was later scaled to the Central Prisons in Hyderabad and Sukkur.

This is a unique, one-of-its-kind convict led program with the objective to create a sustainable mechanism for all new inmates in prisons to be informed on rules, laws and norms. Its sustainability is ensured through training convicts as paralegals who then transfer knowledge to other prisoners. **Since 2017, 251 inmates have been trained as paralegals who have provided awareness to over 6500 prisoners.**



The Committee organized a three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) on the Prison Paralegal Program in July 2023 led by Angbeen Atif Mirza, Assistant Professor at the Shaikh Ahmad Hassan School of Law, LUMS. The training took place at the Pakistan Society for Training and Development (PSTD) in Karachi and was specifically designed for the lawyers engaged in the program.

The main objective of this training was twofold. Firstly, it aimed to serve as a refresher on effective adult teaching techniques, ensuring that the lawyers are equipped with the most up-to-date and impactful methods of imparting knowledge to the prisoners. Secondly, the training provided a comprehensive revision of the topics included in the Prison Paralegal Program, ensuring that the lawyers have a thorough understanding of the material and can effectively convey it to the inmates.

By investing in the continuous professional development of our lawyers, the Committee strives to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the Prison Paralegal Program. This, in turn, enables us to make a meaningful difference in the lives of underprivileged prisoners, empowering them with legal knowledge and promoting access to justice within the prison system.

As the training concluded, Mr. Habib Jiskani, Litigation Manager, underscored the significance of the Prison Paralegal Program and the crucial role that lawyers play in ensuring its effective service delivery. He highlighted the importance of providing legal aid and representation to underprivileged prisoners, emphasizing the positive impact it can have on their lives.

In recognition of the dedication and commitment shown by the participating lawyers, Mr. Habib Jiskani distributed certificates to acknowledge their successful completion of the training. These certificates served as a testament to their acquired knowledge and skills, reaffirming their role as valuable contributors to the prison paralegal program.

A total of 22 lawyers were a part of this training.



## Training of Trainers for new paralegals in Central Prison Karachi

The Committee hosted a two-day Training of Trainers (ToT) centered around the Prison Paralegal Program at Central Prison Karachi in July 2023. This initiative was specifically tailored to equip new inmates with paralegal skills.

The primary objective of this training was twofold. Firstly, it aimed to familiarize participants with effective adult teaching methods, ensuring that paralegals possessed the most current and impactful techniques for imparting knowledge to fellow inmates attending paralegal sessions at Central Prison Karachi. Secondly, the training aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topics covered in the Prison Paralegal Manual, ensuring that paralegals had a thorough grasp of the material and could effectively communicate it to inmates.



Through this ongoing investment in paralegal training, the Committee strives to enhance the quality and efficacy of the Prison Paralegal Program. This, in turn, allows us to make a meaningful impact on the lives of underprivileged prisoners by empowering them with legal knowledge and facilitating access to justice within the prison system.

The closing ceremony was graced by the presence of Mr. Hassan Sahito, Superintendent Central Prison Karachi. In his address, he praised the Committee's relentless dedication to providing legal assistance and representation to underprivileged prisoners, emphasizing the positive influence it has on their lives. Mr. Sahito acknowledged the significant progress made by the Prison Paralegal Program in raising legal awareness among prisoners.

As a token of appreciation for the participants' dedication and commitment, Mr. Hassan Sahito awarded certificates to acknowledge their successful completion of the training. Mr. Hassan Sahito's presence and words of encouragement further motivated the participants to persist in their efforts to promote legal empowerment and access to justice within the prison system. The certificate distribution not only celebrated their achievements but also underscored the significance of their role in advocating for the rights and well-being of underprivileged prisoners.

**As a result of this training, 15 new prison paralegals have been trained at Central Prison Karachi.**

## Breaking Taboos and Promoting Menstrual Hygiene in collaboration with Santex Pakistan

**M**enstruation, a natural and recurring aspect of a woman's life, is often surrounded by stigma and taboo, making it a challenging subject to discuss openly. This hesitation to address menstrual hygiene is even more pronounced in vulnerable communities, including incarcerated women in prisons



Of the 23,551 prisoners in prisons across Sindh; women account for only 1.2%. In the context of women prisoners, menstrual hygiene becomes an issue of utmost importance, yet frequently overlooked. The challenges these women face are unique, as they not only contend with the emotional and physical strain of imprisonment but also grapple with managing their menstrual cycles in restrictive environments.



One of the primary challenges is the lack of proper knowledge and education about menstrual hygiene. Many incarcerated women come from disadvantaged backgrounds, where access to information about menstrual health is either limited or non-existent. This lack of awareness can lead to misconceptions, fear, and embarrassment around menstruation, further isolating these women and impacting their overall well-being.

Moreover, the availability of menstrual products in prisons is often inadequate. Many incarcerated women struggle to access essential resources such as sanitary pads or tampons, leading them to resort to makeshift and unhygienic solutions, like using torn clothing or even toilet paper. The consequences of such practices can be detrimental to their physical health, increasing the risk of infections and other menstrual-related complications.

In recent years, a positive change has been underway; The Committee's collaboration with Santex Pakistan, aims to provide adequate resources and knowledge for incarcerated women to manage their periods in a dignified and healthy manner.

The collaboration between The Committee and Santex Pakistan has been a transformative step towards breaking barriers. Through this partnership, feminine hygiene products are being provided to women prisoners in three Women's Prisons across Sindh. Beyond providing physical resources, the collaboration also includes menstrual hygiene awareness sessions. **A menstrual hygiene awareness session was organized at Women's Prison Hyderabad in July 2023, where 46 incredible women participated.**

This session not only equipped incarcerated women with knowledge on managing their periods but also empowered them to disseminate this crucial information to others in their lives, amplifying the impact of this initiative. Santex Pakistan generously distributed feminine hygiene kits to each participant, ensuring they have the necessary resources.

The impact of this collaboration goes beyond the prison walls. By empowering incarcerated women with essential resources and knowledge, The Committee and Santex Pakistan are fostering a sense of dignity and self-worth. Proper menstrual hygiene is a fundamental human right, and no woman, regardless of her circumstances, should be denied access to these basic necessities.

Menstrual hygiene in prisons remains an urgent concern that requires collective efforts from organizations like Santex Pakistan, as well as from policymakers and society as a whole. By acknowledging and addressing the challenges incarcerated women face and providing adequate resources and education, we can ensure they manage their periods with dignity and safeguard their health. Ultimately, empowering women with proper menstrual hygiene is not just an act of kindness, but it is an investment in a healthier, more equitable future for all.

## Independence Day Celebration at the Early Learning Centers (ELCs) Karachi and Hyderabad

**W**e are delighted to share the heartwarming celebration of Pakistan's 76th Independence Day with the students of the Early Learning Centres (ELCs) in the Women's Prison Karachi and Hyderabad. It was a day filled with joy and smiles as the young ones enjoyed the spirit of independence and patriotism. The Early Learning Centres were adorned with colorful balloons and other festive decorations to ensure that the children had a memorable and enjoyable experience during the celebrations.

The highlight of the day included a delightful cake-cutting ceremony, enthusiastic flag-waving, and the heartwarming gesture of sharing gifts with the Prison officials. This event not only celebrated our national independence but also fostered a sense of unity and camaraderie among the little champs, creating lasting memories of a day filled with joy and shared moments.





# Justice SUCCESS **STORIES**

## Ahmed\*

**A**hmed, a humble laborer in Shaheed Benazirabad, toiled tirelessly to provide for his family. At 35 years old, he was not just the breadwinner; he was the pillar of strength for his loved ones. His monthly earnings of Rs. 10,000 barely sustained them, but it was an honest living. Little did he know that his life was about to take a daunting and unjust turn.

Ahmed found himself ensnared in a nightmarish ordeal, accused of carrying contraband wine in a gallon. It was a baseless accusation that threatened to shatter his world. Born into a backdrop of poverty and hardship, Ahmed's financial situation left him unable to secure the services of a private attorney.



**Advocate  
Mr. Noman Maqbool**

*\*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.*

Amidst the bleakness of imprisonment in the District Prison Shaheed Benazirabad, a glimmer of hope emerged. During a visit by the Committee's advocates, Ahmed mustered the courage to seek legal assistance. His plea was met with swift action as his vakalatnama was filed by Mr. Noman Maqbool.

On April 29, 2023, Ahmed's vakalatnama was filed, marking the beginning of a relentless pursuit of justice. With unwavering determination, Mr. Maqbool delved into the case proceedings, meticulously examining every detail. As the case proceedings unfolded, the contradictions within the prosecution's case began to surface.

Witness statements crumbled under scrutiny, unable to prove the quantity of the alleged recovered wine. Doubt loomed over the entry into the malkhana, casting shadows of suspicion over the prosecution's claims. In the face of these inconsistencies, the prosecution faltered and failed to substantiate their allegations against Ahmed.

In a momentous verdict, the court absolved Ahmed of the criminal charges that had unfairly burdened him. On August 2, 2023, he emerged from the shadows of injustice, a symbol of resilience and triumph.

In a remarkably short span of 3 months and 5 days, Ahmed's life underwent a profound transformation. His story serves as a stark reminder that justice, when pursued diligently, can prevail, and even the most vulnerable among us can break free from the chains of wrongful accusation.

# Justice SUCCESS **STORIES**

## Raheel\*

In the quiet town of Dadu, Raheel, a 32-year-old family man, found himself in the darkest circumstances. With a wife and six children depending on him, the weight of their well-being rested squarely on his shoulders. As a laborer, his monthly earnings of Rs. 10,000 were barely enough to make ends meet. In a world already fraught with hardship, Raheel's life took a harrowing turn when he got caught in a web of false accusations.

The charge of dacoity hung over Raheel like a looming storm cloud. His crime? Refusing to pay a bribe to a police party that had stopped him and demanded illicit gratification. From his perspective, this case was born out of corruption, a desperate attempt to silence a man who dared to stand up to injustice. Yet, his humble background left him ill-equipped to navigate the legal labyrinth that lay ahead.

It was during a visit to the District Prison in Naushahroferoz that Raheel's plea for help reached the ears of the Committee's advocate. He had not been able to secure legal representation due to his dire financial situation. His vakalatnama was swiftly taken up by Mr. Naveed Khan Ujjan.

On August 16th, 2023, Mr. Ujjan filed Raheel's vakalatnama, marking the beginning of a relentless pursuit of truth and justice. The court proceedings that followed were a beacon of hope for Raheel. The court meticulously examined all the pertinent case documents, and as the layers of the case were peeled back, inconsistencies began to emerge. Witness statements failed to align with the facts presented in the First Information Report (FIR), revealing the frailty of the prosecution's case.

In a moment of vindication, the Court declared Raheel innocent, lifting the heavy burden of criminal charges that had threatened to shatter his life. On August 30th, 2023, Raheel walked out of the shadows of injustice and into the embrace of freedom.

In a mere 15 days, the course of Raheel's life had been irrevocably altered. His story serves as a powerful reminder that even in the face of overwhelming odds, the pursuit of truth and justice can prevail, and the human spirit can overcome the darkest of challenges.



**Advocate  
Mr. Naveed Khan Ujjan**

\*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

# Justice SUCCESS **STORIES**

## Naila\*

**N**aila, a 26-year-old woman hailing from Gujranwala, was embroiled in a heart-wrenching battle for her freedom. Married to Zahid, she had left her hometown behind to build a life together in Hyderabad. Little did she know that this journey would lead her down a path of profound adversity.

The prosecution's story painted a disturbing picture: a call to a police officer from his sister-in-law, claiming that a lady had brazenly entered her home with the nefarious intent to steal. According to her account, she had apprehended Naila and recovered Rs. 5000, which she believed had been stolen. She reached out to the officer, triggering a sequence of events that would forever alter Naila's life.

In a harrowing twist, Naila countered this narrative with a stark reality. She vehemently denied any attempt at theft and claimed that the police had arrested her from a location unrelated to any alleged burglary. It was under these unjust circumstances that an FIR was registered against her, tainting her with false charges of theft. Born into a world of poverty and hardship, Naila and her family were ill-equipped to secure legal representation.

Naila found a glimmer of hope in the Women's Prison Hyderabad when she heard about the Committee's free legal aid services from other under-trial prisoners. She requested legal assistance, a lifeline she desperately needed. Her vakalatnama was promptly taken up by Mr. Abdullah Soomro, a dedicated advocate from the Committee.

On May 6th, 2023, Naila's vakalatnama was filed, marking the beginning of her arduous journey to justice. As the case proceedings unfolded, Mr. Soomro meticulously scrutinized the details, shedding light on the contradictions within the prosecution's narrative. A critical point of contention lay in the absence of a single eyewitness to corroborate the police officer's account.

In a momentous verdict, the Court absolved Naila of the false and fabricated charges that had threatened to imprison her spirit. On August 30th, 2023, she emerged from the shadows of injustice, a symbol of resilience and triumph.

In just 3 months and 25 days, Naila's life had undergone a profound transformation. Her story serves as a testament to the enduring power of truth and the unwavering commitment of those who champion justice for the voiceless.



**Advocate  
Mr. Abdullah Soomro**

\*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

# Justice SUCCESS **STORIES**

## Mohammad Zahir\*

In the heart of Sanghar, a resilient 15-year-old named Mohammad Zahir faced a life filled with unimaginable challenges. Orphaned by his father's passing and left alone by his mother's second marriage, he found himself in the care of his 65-year-old grandmother. With unwavering determination, he became her sole caretaker, a young boy bearing the weight of a world well beyond his years.

One fateful day, while standing alongside a friend, Zahir's life took a dark twist. Accusations of drug use cast a long shadow, leading to his arrest. In a cruel twist of fate, he was falsely implicated in a drug-related case and sent to the Youthful Offender Industrial School in Hyderabad. Zahir hailed from a background steeped in poverty, and his future looked bleak.



\*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

But in the midst of despair, a glimmer of hope emerged. The District and Sessions Judge of Sanghar, moved by Zahir's plight, swiftly intervened. Zahir's plea found its way to the Committee on June 21, 2023, where the committee filed Zahir's vakalatnama.

As the legal proceedings unfolded, the Court meticulously scrutinized every aspect of the case. They pored over the First Information Report (FIR), the prosecution's evidence, and the accused's statements. In the heat of the Courtroom, contradictions within the prosecution's witness statements began to surface. Questions about Zahir's whereabouts when the eyewitness statement was prepared, and the absence of private witnesses during his arrest left the prosecution grasping for answers.

In a stunning turn of events, the prosecution's case crumbled under the weight of its own inconsistencies. Zahir's innocence was laid bare for all to see, and on August 23, 2023, he emerged from the shadows of false accusations, a free man.

It was a whirlwind journey, spanning just two months and three days, but in that short time, Mohammad Zahir's life was forever transformed. From the depths of despair to the euphoria of freedom, his story is a testament to the enduring power of hope and the unwavering commitment of those who fight for justice.

## GET IN TOUCH!

