



COMMITTEE
FOR THE
WELFARE OF
PRISONERS



NEWSLETTER

Jan - March 2024
18th Edition

Legal Aid Updates



707

Vakalatnamas filed
in the courts



310

Bail applications
granted



526

Cases disposed off
through court orders



379

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

all made possible through the support of Government of Sindh

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Chairperson's Message on 20th Anniversary:

As we stand at the crossroads of time, marking the 20 years of the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners, I am honored to reflect on the remarkable journey that began in 2004 as a pilot project in the Women's Prison Karachi. Our vision was clear from the outset – to extend legal representation to first-time petty offenders who couldn't afford private legal representation.

Our journey, which commenced as a modest endeavor in the heart of Women's Prison Karachi, has gracefully evolved into a tapestry that now spans 22 prisons in Sindh. With a dedicated team of 31 lawyers, our mission transcends the mere provision of legal aid; we seek to redefine perceptions of prisoners – not as mere transgressors but as individuals yearning for a second chance at rehabilitation and a brighter tomorrow.

Our primary goal has been to alleviate the congestion in Sindh's prisons by providing free legal assistance to under-trial prisoners implicated in petty offenses. Over the course of our two decades of service, we've achieved significant milestones, including representing 29,175 under-trial prisoners in courts, disposing of 25,030 cases through court orders, obtaining bail for 10,743 individuals, and securing 11,038 acquittals.

In 2019, we bore witness to the winds of change as the province of Sindh led the charge in reforming colonial-era laws governing the prison system in Pakistan. It repealed the Prisons Act of 1984, replacing it with the progressive Sindh Prisons and Corrections Service Act and Rules 2019. This marked a paradigm shift towards corrections and rehabilitation within the prison system. Within this transformative landscape, the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners found its statutory footing under section 55 of the Sindh Prisons and Corrections Service Act and Rules 2019.

Our commitment to the cause extends beyond legal assistance; we have engaged in research-based policy advocacy and rehabilitation interventions for prisoners in Sindh. Reflecting on the past years, we express our heartfelt gratitude to the Home Department, Government of Sindh, and the Prison Department. Their unwavering commitment and collaboration have been the cornerstone of our success. To our dedicated team, partners, and supporters, I extend profound gratitude for your wholehearted contributions to the Committee's success.

As we commemorate two decades of devoted service, I urge everyone to contemplate the brevity of life. Each evening, before concluding your day, consider the positive impact you can make tomorrow; it's our duty as a nation. Let us reaffirm our commitment to persistently strive towards our vision of extending legal support to those in need, offering a renewed opportunity for individuals entangled in the criminal justice system to forge a path toward a better life.



JUSTICE NASIR ASLAM ZAHID
Chairperson

A New Chapter Begins: Committee's Re-notification

The Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners (CWP) operates under the administrative body of the Home Department, receiving government funding to fulfill its noble mission. This year, the Committee has been re-notified with a new composition, bringing in fresh perspectives and renewed vigor to its crucial work.

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Mr. Siddique Memon as the new Chairperson. Mr. Memon's dedication to social welfare makes him an ideal fit for this role, and we extend our heartfelt gratitude to him for accepting this responsibility.

In 2019, the Sindh government introduced progressive amendments to the prison laws through the Sindh Prisons & Corrections Service Act & Rules. Under this new legal framework, the Committee received formal recognition under Section 55. Our commitment to providing legal aid has never been stronger, and we remain actively engaged in advocating for and rehabilitating prisoners in Sindh.



The Committee is committed to improving the lives of prisoners by expediting legal proceedings and providing rehabilitation support. Our goal is to alleviate prison overcrowding and ensure prompt and fair justice. We offer legal assistance, educational programs, and support for successful reintegration into society after release.

With the re-notification of the Committee and the appointment of Mr. Siddique Memon, we are confident that our committee will continue to make significant progress in prisoner welfare. We have full confidence that he will lead our committee with integrity, vision, and dedication, carrying forward the legacy founded by Justice (R) Nasir Aslam Zahid. We express our sincere appreciation to all stakeholders and partners for their continued support and commitment to our cause. We are deeply grateful to the Sindh Government, the Home Department, our team, partners, and supporters for their continuous collaboration over the past two decades. We thank them for their unwavering support and commitment to our mission.

As we embark on this new chapter, we look forward to working together to create a more just and compassionate criminal justice system.

Sports of development: Provision of Football Kits to Participants of Training Camps in collaboration with Karachi United Football Club

While young offenders comprise only 1.3% of the Sindh prison population, their delinquency stems from diverse factors such as peer influence, illiteracy, and socio-economic pressures.

Despite their minority status, addressing youth delinquency remains a pressing concern, prompting our sustained efforts.

The Government of Sindh, recognizes the unique challenges and vulnerabilities of young offenders and is committed to special initiatives that support their reform and rehabilitation. It is through the commitment and support of the Government of Sindh, that the Committee has partnered with Karachi United football club since 2017 to provide football and life skills training and development to young offenders. Through weekly training camps at Youthful Offenders Industrial School (YOIS) Karachi, over 612 participants have received professional coaching and essential gear, promoting self-confidence and healthy recreational activities.

Since the re-commencement of our football camps on 1st February, 2024, we have successfully enrolled 31 young offenders. However, our goal is to extend this opportunity to at least 40 juveniles, ensuring that a maximum number of individuals benefit from this program. In a recent event, we had the privilege of distributing professional football kits provided by Karachi United Football Club among the participants of football training camps.



The provision of these kits not only enhances the quality of training but also serves as a symbol of hope and opportunity for the young participants. Through sports, we aim to instill valuable life skills such as teamwork, discipline, and perseverance, laying the foundation for a brighter future.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed guests, Mr. Hasan Sahito - Deputy Inspector General Prisons Karachi Region, Mr. Jalaluddin Meher - (Former) Special Secretary Prisons, Madam Sheeba Shah - DIG YOIS and Women's Prison and Ms. Humaira Qayoom - Superintendent YOIS Karachi whose presence added immense value to the event. Their unwavering support and commitment to the cause of rehabilitation and reintegration are truly commendable, and we are grateful for their presence and encouragement.

Kashmir Day Celebration with Students at Early Learning Center Karachi

Early Learning Center Karachi celebrated Kashmir Day to stand in solidarity with the people of Kashmir, fostering empathy, understanding, and a shared spirit of togetherness.

The event provided a platform for our students to express their solidarity and support for the people of Kashmir. From colorful posters adorned with messages of peace to heartfelt poems and drawings, our students showcased their compassion and empathy in tangible ways.

At the heart of this event was the belief that education is a powerful tool for fostering understanding and compassion. By providing our students with the opportunity to engage with complex global issues in a meaningful way, we hope to instill in them the values of empathy, tolerance, and social responsibility.



Empowering Women Prisoners Through Skill Development: two-day Traditional Kashikari Ceramic Painting Workshop in collaboration with NITA Crafts Development Cooperative Society Nasarpur at Women's Prison Hyderabad

The Committee is dedicated to exploring opportunities for skill development among inmates to reduce recidivism by empowering prisoners with valuable skills that enhance their employability and facilitate a smoother integration into society upon release.

Understanding the importance of skill development, we partnered with NITA Crafts Development Cooperative Society Nasarpur to organize a two-day workshop focused on the traditional Kashikari ceramic painting technique at the Central Prison Hyderabad on the 1st and 2nd of February 2024. The workshop focused on the traditional Kashikari ceramic painting technique, providing participants with invaluable skills and opportunities for personal growth.

Throughout the two-day workshop, inmates engaged in hands-on learning experiences, mastering the art of creating Traditional Ceramic Kashi Tiles and Mosaic paintings under expert guidance. The enthusiasm and dedication displayed by the participants were truly inspiring, reflecting their commitment to self-improvement and rehabilitation. We believe that providing inmates with marketable skills not only enhances their employability but also instills a sense of purpose and dignity.

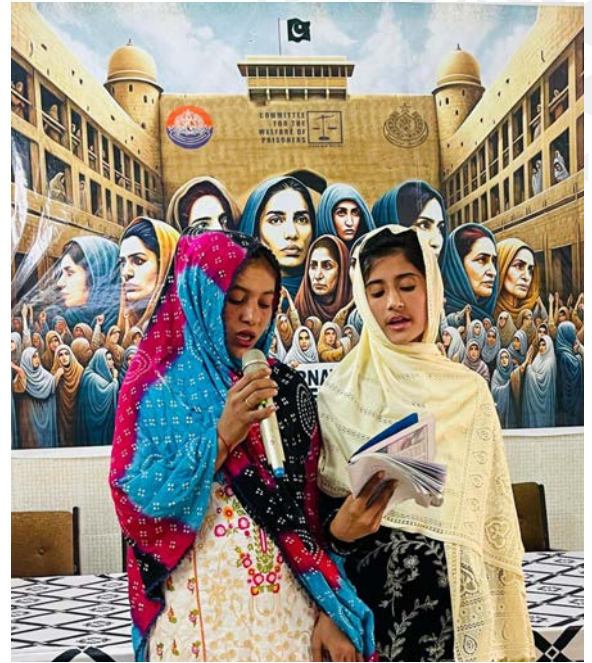
We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the NITA Crafts Development Cooperative Society Nasarpur for their invaluable partnership and support in making this workshop a resounding success.



International Women's Day Celebration at Women's Prison Hyderabad

In commemoration of International Women's Day, the Committee organized a special event at the Women's Prison Hyderabad. The event served as a platform to amplify global efforts for women's rights, equality, and justice while highlighting the unique challenges faced by incarcerated women. Incarcerated women make up for only 1.2% of the prison population in Sindh and therefore often find themselves marginalized and overlooked within the system.

During the event, female prisoners showcased a theatrical performance highlighting the empowerment they have experienced through obtaining access to legal knowledge and information on their rights and entitlements. This powerful demonstration underscored the transformative impact of legal empowerment on the lives of women.



The event was graced by the presence of esteemed guests, Mr Ayaz Hussain Tunio (President High Court Bar Association Hyderabad & Former Prosecutor General of Sindh) and Ms. Sadaf Keerio (Board Member SIDA). The Committee extends its heartfelt gratitude to all attendees for their support and dedication to advancing women's rights and empowerment.



Strengthening Partnerships: Strategic Meeting with Mr. Jalaluddin Mehar, (Former) Special Secretary Prisons

Ms. Sana Sharif, Program Manager, met with Mr. Jalaluddin Mehar, the esteemed (Former) Special Secretary Prisons, where he was briefed about the Committee's interventions and their impact.

A key focus of the discussion was on strengthening partnerships through shared synergies. Ms. Shariff and Mr. Mehar explored avenues for collaborative action, recognizing the importance of strategic alliances in driving positive change within the realm of prison reform. Through concerted efforts and collaborative endeavors, we are steadfastly committed to advancing our shared vision of a more equitable and just society.



Red Day at Early Learning Center Hyderabad

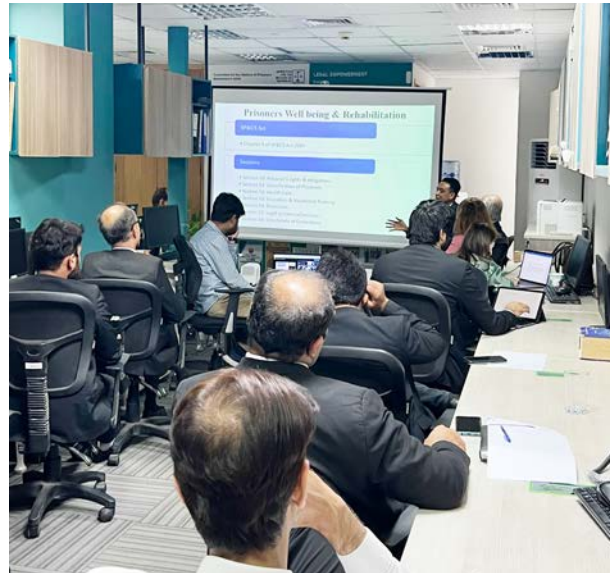
A day filled with laughter, creativity, and community spirit! Our Red Day celebration at ELC Hyderabad was a huge success, leaving smiles on every face.



Training Session with (Former) Inspector General Prisons Sindh, Syed Munawwar Ali Shah on Sindh Prisons and Corrections Service Act and Rules 2019

It was a pleasure to host (Former) Inspector General Prisons Sindh, Syed Munawwar Ali Shah, at our Karachi Head Office for a training session.

The session centered around the intricate nuances of the Sindh Prisons and Corrections Service Act and Rules 2019.



Justice SUCCESS STORIES

Rahim*

Rahim's life took an unexpected turn when he found himself trapped in the clutches of injustice. At 32 years old, Rahim was just trying to make ends meet as a laborer in Karachi, supporting his family of three dependents on a modest income of Rs. 20,000/= per month.

But his world turned upside down when he was falsely accused of possessing narcotics and thrown into the confines of Central Prison, Karachi.

Rahim found hope when his case was taken up by Committee's lawyer, **Mr. Aakif Shaikh**, with unwavering determination. Rahim's vakalatnama was filed on 26th September, 2023.

Despite the odds stacked against Rahim, Mr. Aakif Shaikh, meticulously unfolded the contradictions in the prosecution's case. The prosecution failed to produce a single credible witness to substantiate the allegations against Rahim. Rahim was declared innocent by the Court on 20th February 2024. Today, Muhammad Raheem walks free, his spirit unbroken, ready to embrace the endless possibilities that life has to offer.

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.



**Advocate
Mr. Aakif Shaikh**

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

Ali*

Ali, a 26-year-old from Sukkur, who faced a difficult situation. Ali with three siblings to support, worked hard as a laborer, earning just Rs. 10,000 a month to make ends meet in his underprivileged community. However, his life took a harsh turn when he was falsely accused of carrying drugs, landing him in Central Prison, Sukkur.

In his time of need, **Mr. Amjad Gabol**, a lawyer from the Committee stepped in to help. On 28th December, 2023, he filed for Ali's vakalatnama in Court, initiating the legal proceedings.

As the case progressed, Mr. Gabol meticulously uncovered numerous inconsistencies. Witness statements clashed, and the alleged time and location of the incident didn't add up. Despite being in a densely populated area, not a single private witness came forward to corroborate the prosecution's claims. On 13th February, 2024, after just one month and seventeen days, the Court declared Ali innocent and acquitted him of all charges.

For Ali, this verdict was a ray of hope in a dark time. It not only freed him from the false accusations but also gave him the chance to rebuild his life and continue supporting his family.



**Advocate
Mr. Amjad Gabol**

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

Hasan*

Hassan, a 14-year-old boy from Karachi, faced a daunting challenge. Despite his young age, he worked as a laborer, earning a meager monthly salary of Rs. 15,000 to support himself and his family in their underprivileged circumstances. However, his life took a sudden turn when he was falsely accused of carrying sachets of gutka and found himself behind bars at Youthful Offenders Industrial School, Karachi.

Thankfully, Hassan wasn't alone in his fight for justice. **Ms. Mehwish Naz**, a lawyer from the Committee, took up his case and filed his vakalatnama on 31st July 2023. Case proceedings began.

Early on, bail was granted, providing some relief. But the road to vindication was still long. Witnesses were examined, evidence was presented, and proceedings unfolded over the course of seven months and six days.

Ms. Naz meticulously scrutinized every detail of the case, pointing out contradictions and inconsistencies. Witness testimonies conflicted on crucial points, such as where the memo of arrest was prepared and the type of bag Hassan was allegedly carrying. Moreover, there was no prior criminal record against Hassan, further weakening the prosecution's case.

In the end, the Court declared Hassan innocent on March 5, 2024. With this verdict, he was finally freed from the false charges that had weighed him down for so long.



**Advocate
Ms. Mehwish Naz**

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

Kausar*

Kausar, a 40-year-old woman hailing from Thatta, who was a devoted mother of eight children, found herself entangled in a false murder case, leading to her imprisonment in the Women's Prison Karachi.

The ordeal began with a misunderstanding surrounding the disappearance of a relative. Despite her innocence, Kausar was implicated in the case. However, with the support of **Ms. Noor ul Saba**, a lawyer from the Committee, Kausar began her fight for justice.

Ms. Noor ul Saba diligently examined the case proceedings, uncovering numerous inconsistencies. The supposed eyewitness accounts and allegations against Kausar didn't add up. There was no evidence linking her to the alleged crime, and crucial details provided by the complainant were found to be unsubstantiated.



**Advocate
Ms. Noor ul Saba**

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

Despite facing a lengthy and arduous trial spanning over four years, Kausar persisted. She made the journey from Thatta to Karachi for every court hearing, bearing the additional financial burden that came with it.

Finally, on 26th February, 2024, after enduring years of hardship, Kausar's innocence was recognized, and she was acquitted of all charges. Kausar's story serves as a reminder of the resilience of the human spirit and the importance of standing up for what is right, even in the face of immense adversity.

Azaad*

Azaad, a 23-year-old resident of Sanghar, found himself facing imprisonment in District Prison, Sanghar. As the sole breadwinner for his family, earning just Rs. 16,000 a month as a laborer, his world turned upside down when he was falsely accused of carrying drugs by the police.

Committee's lawyer, **Mr. Hussain Bux** filed for Azaad's vakalatnama on 15th December, 2023.. The court meticulously examined the case records, uncovering numerous inconsistencies. Witness testimonies painted conflicting pictures of the events, with some discrepancies regarding Azaad's position at the time of arrest and the type of bag used to store the alleged drugs. Mr. Bux brought these discrepancies to light, casting doubt on the validity of the charges against Azaad.

After just two months of legal battles, on 15th February, 2024, the Court ruled in Azaad's favor, declaring him innocent and releasing him from the unjust burden of criminal charges. This victory was about restoring Azaad's dignity and giving him the opportunity to continue providing for his family without the shadow of false accusations looming over him.



**Advocate
Mr. Hussain Bux**

*Pseudonym used to protect privacy.

GET IN TOUCH!



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