



Deputy Secretary

Islamabad, the, 22nd November, 2024

Press Release

"Chief Justice of Pakistan extends the National Jail Reforms Initiative to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province"

Peshawar, November 22, 2024 – A consultative meeting was convened today at Peshawar chaired by the Honorable Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi. The other participants included Honorable Mr. Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim, Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court, Mr. Justice Ijaz Anwar Khan, Administrative/Monitoring Judge for Prisons - Peshawar High Court, Mr. Justice Qalandar Ali Khan, Former Judge, Peshawar High Court, Mr. Shah Faisal Utmankehel, Advocate General of KP, Mr. Muhammad Abid Majeed, Additional Chief Secretary of the Home and Tribal Affairs Department, KP, Mr. Akhtar Hayat Khan, Inspector General of KP Police, Mr. Muhammad Usman, Inspector General KP Prisons, Mr. Muhammad Salim Khan, Registrar of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Mr. Iftikhar Khan, Registrar, Peshawar High Court, and the Ms. Riffat Inam Butt, Secretary Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP). The session also participated by Ms. Ayesha Bano, Social worker and activist, as well as members of the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Mr. Amjad Ali, Provincial Minister for Housing, Mr. Fazal Shakoor Khan (MPA) and Mr. Ahmad Karim Kundi (MPA).

This meeting was in continuation to the series of nationwide discussions initiated earlier this month by the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan in Lahore and Islamabad, aimed at formulating a comprehensive National Jail Reform Policy. The agenda focused on prison reforms and inmate welfare as key components of a broader strategy to modernize Pakistan's criminal justice system.

Hon'ble Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi underscored the need for a just and equitable criminal justice framework, emphasizing that a humane and efficient prison system forms its backbone. He appreciated the prison management in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, noting that 1,289 prisoners charged with minor offenses had been released through camp courts conducted by judicial officers over the past three months and urged other provinces to replicate these efforts to alleviate overcrowding.

Hon'ble Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim of the Peshawar High Court highlighted the lack of rehabilitation facilities for the convicts in the province, stressing the need to develop a strong rehabilitation system for absorption of the convicts in the society. He proposed sentence remissions to inmates who achieve educational excellence during their confinement, aligning with broader rehabilitation goals.

The meeting also focused on the LJCP's proposed National Jail Reform Policy, which aligns with international standards, including the Nelson Mandela Rules, Bangkok Rules, and Beijing Rules. This policy aims to ensure the humane and rehabilitative management of correctional facilities across Pakistan. Participants expressed strong support for the proposal, emphasizing the importance of alternative sentencing options and rehabilitation programs for under-trial prisoners.

A significant outcome of the meeting was the recommendation to establish a Jail Reforms Committee to address pressing issues such as overcrowding, inmate welfare, and case processing delays. The proposed Terms of Reference (ToRs) for a National Committee were also discussed, focusing on reducing under-trial detention, improving case management, and implementing comprehensive rehabilitation initiatives.

To accelerate these efforts, the Hon'ble Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi announced the formation of a sub-committee for KP province, comprising Ms. Ayesha Bano (also to act as the coordinator), Mr. Fazal Shakoor Khan, Mr. Ahmad Karim Kundi, Mr. Amjad Ali, and a representative of the Inspector General of Prisons. This sub-committee shall compile a report on the situation prevailing in the jails of the province with respect to various categories of the inmates confined in the prisons of the province. The report prepared by this sub-committee shall be submitted to the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Qalandar Ali Khan (Retd.) for oversight and guidance. The findings of this report shall contribute in formulating a national prison reforms policy, which shall be based on the feedback received from all the provinces.

The sub-committee's priorities will include making recommendations for reducing the number of under-trial prisoners and promoting alternative sentencing options such as community service and probation. In the meeting, the participants also stressed the importance of expanding prison-based rehabilitative programs, including vocational training, mental health support, and educational initiatives, to facilitate inmates' reintegration into society upon release. Moreover, it was also urged that the forensic science facilities in the province may be upgraded.

Under the leadership of the Hon'ble Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi and with analytical support from the LJCP, these initiatives aim to prioritize humane treatment, rehabilitation of the inmates, and their efficient case management.

For further information, this press release can be downloaded from the LJCP website.

Muhammad Tanveer
Deputy Secretary-Admin