



**COMMITTEE  
FOR THE  
WELFARE OF  
PRISONERS**



# ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

2025

This report is published by the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners in partnership with Home Department, Government of Sindh







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# About Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners

## **Vision, Mission, & Values**

The Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners is a government funded not for profit Committee established in 2004 founded by Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid. In March 2024, the Committee was reconstituted with new Chairperson and members; the committee chair position is currently vacant. The Committee has been highlighting the plight of vulnerable prisoners and is bridging the accessibility gaps in the conventional justice system by providing free legal assistance and representation for first time petty offenders across Sindh since its inception. Its key areas of work are: Litigation, Legal Empowerment, Welfare and Research and Policy Advocacy.

With the continuous support from the Home Department Sindh, the Committee expanded its presence to cover 21 prisons, facilitating the release of numerous innocent prisoners. Presently, the Committee has a team of 29 dedicated lawyers who visit Central and District Prisons across Sindh multiple times a week to assess the legal requirements of new inmates. In 2019, the Sindh Government introduced updated legislation known as the Sindh Prisons and Corrections Services Act and Rules 2019. This legislation provides a modern and progressive framework for prisoner admission, classification, rehabilitation initiatives, and other entitlements. It serves as the foundation for effective and compassionate prison governance and administration.

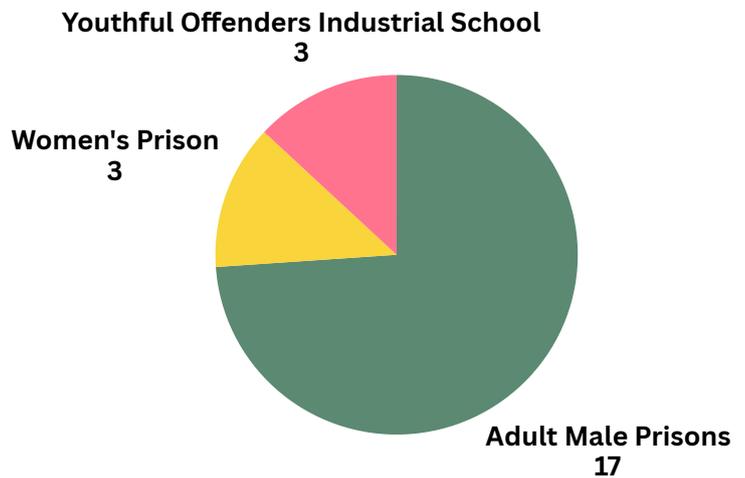
The Committee actively advocates for speedy trials and case resolutions on behalf of under-trial prisoners, aligning with the Government's priority areas outlined in the Rule of Law Roadmap. This approach helps alleviate the burden on prisons, reduces overcrowding, and addresses the challenges faced by the under-resourced prison system. It remains functional through a notification of the Home Department and has been provided statutory footing under Section 55 of Sindh Prisons and Corrections Services Act 2019.

# Overview of Prison Facilities in Sindh

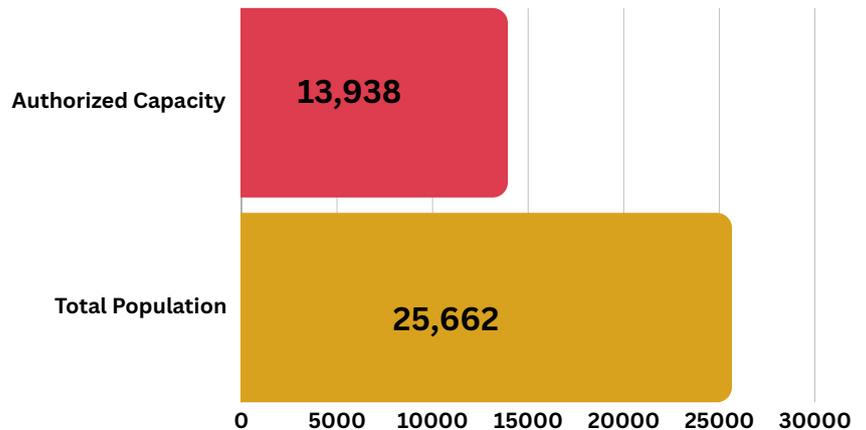
There are a total of



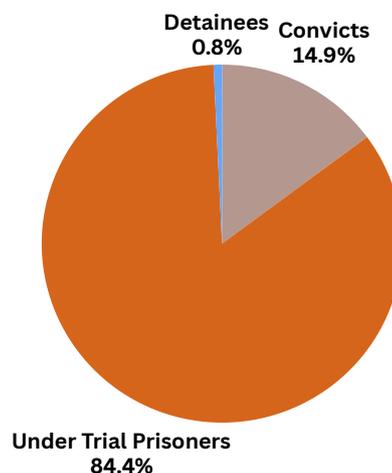
of which



The total **authorized capacity** for all 23 prison facilities is **13,938**. The **prison population** as of 30th June 2025, is **25,662**. Prison facilities currently operate at **60% over capacity**.



Of the 25,662-prison population, 3,722 are convicts, 190 detainees and 21,140 under-trial prisoners (UTPs). Under trial prisoners make up for **78%** of the prison population.



## Detailed Breakdown of Prison Facilities

Prison	Authorized Capacity	Current Population	Difference	Overcrowding (Percentage)
Central Prison Karachi	2400	7,810	5,419	226%
District Prison Malir Karachi	1800	6,034	3,834	174%
Youthful Offenders Industrial School Karachi	350	197	-153	-44%
Women's Prison Karachi	250	237	-13	-5%
Central Prison Hyderabad	1527	2,520	993	65%
District Prison Shikarpur	250	400	150	60%

# Detailed Breakdown of Prison Facilities

Prison	Authorized Capacity	Current Population	Difference	Overcrowding (Percentage)
Special Prison Nara Hyderabad	300	481	181	60%
Youthful Offenders Industrial School Hyderabad	150	48	-102	-68%
Women's Prison Hyderabad	150	80	-70	-47%
Central Prison Mirpurkhas	1000	776	-224	-22%
Central Prison Sukkur	1666	1,670	-4	0%
Youthful Offenders Industrial School Sukkur	100	28	-72	-72%
Women's Prison Sukkur	20	76	56	280%
District Prison Ghotki	250	278	28	11%
Central Prison Khairpur	1175	1,109	-66	-6%

## Detailed Breakdown of Prison Facilities

Prison	Authorized Capacity	Current Population	Difference	Overcrowding (Percentage)
Central Prison Larkana	650	877	237	36%
District Prison Larkana	150	313	163	109%
District Prison Shaheed Benazirabad	100	344	244	244%
District Prison Sanghar	250	335	85	34%
District Prison Dadu	250	369	119	48%
District Prison Naushero Feroz	250	419	169	68%
District Prison Jacobabad	250	372	122	48%
District Prison Badin	250	8,790	620	248%

\*Based on Prison Population Statement as of 30th June 2025.

# Geographic Footprint



# Executive Summary

During the project cycle from 1st July 2024– 30th June 2025, the Committee has had the following successes:

## Legal Aid , Advice and Assistance achievements as per the Prison Rule (R 865 (a), (b), (c)) are as follows:

- **789** legal aid clinics were conducted (**698** in adult male & Juvenile prisons, **91** in women prisons) (**38%** of the projected annual target achieved);
- **2,064** interviews conducted with inmates, (**1,887** adult male prisoners, **51** women prisoners) including the provision of on the spot legal advice to **1,923** prisoners (**1,632** adult male prisoners, **164** women prisoners); (**52%** of the projected annual target achieved);
- **1,850** vakalatnamas signed and filed in courts (**1,705** adult male prisoners, **38** women & **107** Juvenile prisoners) (**59%** of the projected annual target achieved);
- **1,024** applications for bail granted (**1,011** adult male & juvenile prisoners, **13** women prisoners) (**82%** exceeds projected annual target by );
- **1,747** cases disposed off (**1,725** adult male & Juvenile prisoners, **22** women prisoners) (**68%** of the projected annual target achieved);
- **4** prisoners (**2** adult male prisoners, **2** women prisoners) were provided with fine and surety amounts.

## Legal Awareness and Empowerment achievements as per the Prison Rule (R.865 (d), (h)) are as follows:

- **39** free legal aid & advisory camps in 21 prisons across Sindh organized by the Committee's advocates to provide topic specific free legal advice to **1,035** under-trial prisoners (UTPs) and convicts.
- **57** paralegal sessions with convicts in Central Prison Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur conducted. A total of **761** new inmates provided crucial legal awareness through the Prison Paralegal Program.
- Two dedicated prison paralegals have received remission of **320** and **522** days for their exceptional contributions to our prison paralegal program, which empowers inmates with legal knowledge.
- **Osama Malik**, Director of Legal Education at the Pakistan Bar Council, visited the Paralegal Class at Central Prison Karachi and praised its success in enhancing legal literacy for UTPs.
- **Iqbal Ahmed Detho**, Chairperson of the Sindh Human Rights Commission, visited the Women's Prison and YOIS in Hyderabad, facilitated by the CWP, to hear inmates' concerns, provide immediate legal assistance, and address challenges, highlighting the importance of bridging support gaps for marginalized individuals.
- Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners (CWP) meeting, chaired by **Mr. Ghanwar Ali Leghari** (CWP Chairperson) and co-chaired by the Inspector General of Prisons, was convened on February 3 to advance strategies for improving reintegration mechanisms for inmates.

## **Welfare and Rehabilitation achievements as per the Prison Rule (R 865 (g)) are as follows:**

- **Mr. Shakir Nawaz Shar** (General Secretary, District Bar Association Hyderabad) and Ms. Maria Sario (Incharge, Human Rights Cell, SSP Office Hyderabad) visited the Women's Prison Hyderabad to distribute warm shawls to inmates, children, and staff, offering vital comfort during the winter season.
- Sindh Assembly Member **Ms. Saima Agha** graced the Independence Day event at Women's Prison Hyderabad, engaging with rehabilitation initiatives such as the Early Learning Center, Sewing Centre, and Sensory Garden.
- **Mr. Ziauddin Shaikh** (President, District Bar Association Hyderabad) and colleagues visited Women's Prison Hyderabad, commended CWP's efforts, and donated an 80-litre electric water cooler to enhance living conditions.
- **Eid Milad-un-Nabi** was observed with recitations, naats, and food distribution at Women's Prison Hyderabad.
- A **Holi** celebration brought color, dignity, and joy to incarcerated women.
- **Ramazan** was marked by iftar and dinner events, as well as the distribution of gift packs including dates, sharbat, hygiene kits, and snacks.
- **Eid gifts** including clothes, mehndi, and snacks were distributed to women and children at Women's Prison Hyderabad.
- Tailored suits and **festive gifts** were shared with juvenile inmates at YOIS Hyderabad.
- Pro bono partner **Mr. Hasan Mandiwala** celebrated Eid with children at the Early Learning Center in Women's Prison Karachi.
- **Iftar, dinner**, and cash gifts were also arranged for juveniles at YOIS Hyderabad.
- **Creative & Mental Well-being** Initiatives: On July 25, 2024, 20 group art therapy sessions concluded at Women's Prison Karachi, providing emotional relief and creative expression. Participants reported significant improvement in mental well-being.
- CWP Hyderabad distributed **warm clothing** to juvenile inmates at YOIS Hyderabad to address seasonal needs.
- **Sewing classes** continue weekly in the Women's Prisons in Karachi and Hyderabad, serving both recreational and income-generation purposes for women inmates.
- **33** children living with their mothers received **pre-primary education** at Early Learning Centers (ELCs) established by the Committee in Women's Prisons in Karachi and Hyderabad.
- A **Ramzan-themed** activity was also held for these children at the ELC in Women's Prison Karachi.

## **Policy and Research achievements as per the Prison Rule 865 (e), (f) are as follows**

- Develop a **policy paper** reporting quarter, based on the **IRD Pakistan**-funded project, evaluating the effectiveness of group **art therapy** in addressing mental health issues, reducing depressive symptoms, and improving the well-being of **female inmates** in Sindh.

# Annual Snapshot

The Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners is a government funded not for profit Committee that operates under the Chairpersonship of Muhammad Siddique Memon. The Committee seeks to support Sindh's criminal justice system by advocating for speedy trials and case resolutions on behalf of undertrial prisoners. This, in turn, reduces the burden on prisons and de-congests the overcrowded and under-resourced prison system, which aligns with the Government's priority areas under the Rule of Law Roadmap. The Committee, with the support of the Home Department, Government of Sindh, provides its services to prisoners in **14** adult male prisons, **3** youthful offenders industrial schools, **3** women's prison facilities and **1** remand home facility in Sindh.

## How many prisoners did we represent?



1,850

Cases represented in Courts



3%

women



97%

men  
(adult male & young offenders)



38 women

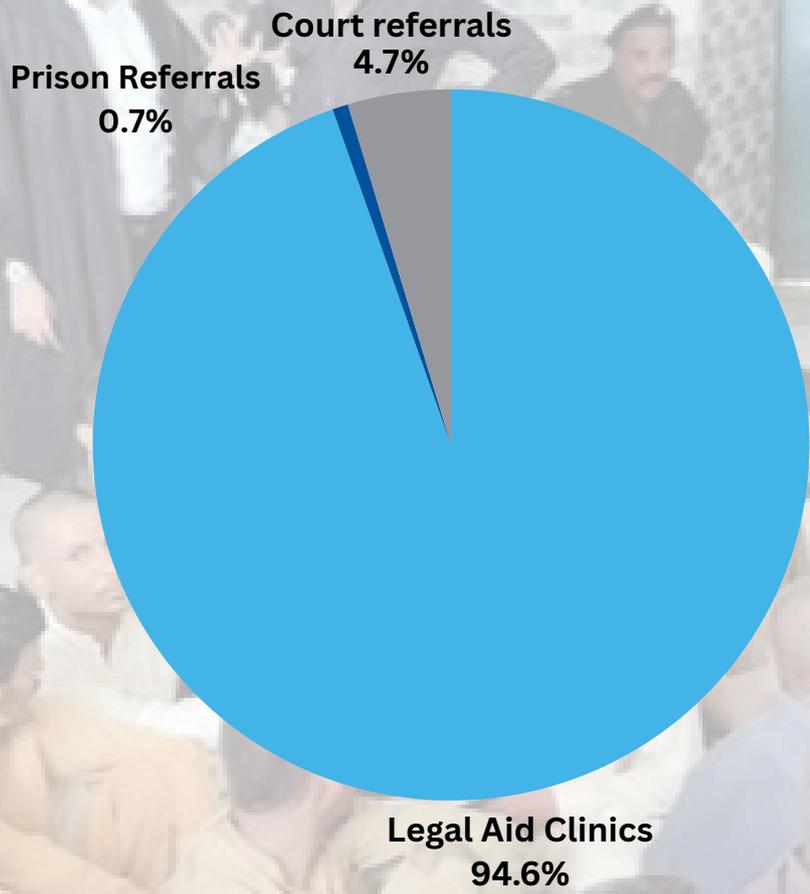


1,705 adult male



107 young offenders

### How do our clients get in touch with a lawyer from the Committee?



**1,747**  
cases disposed of

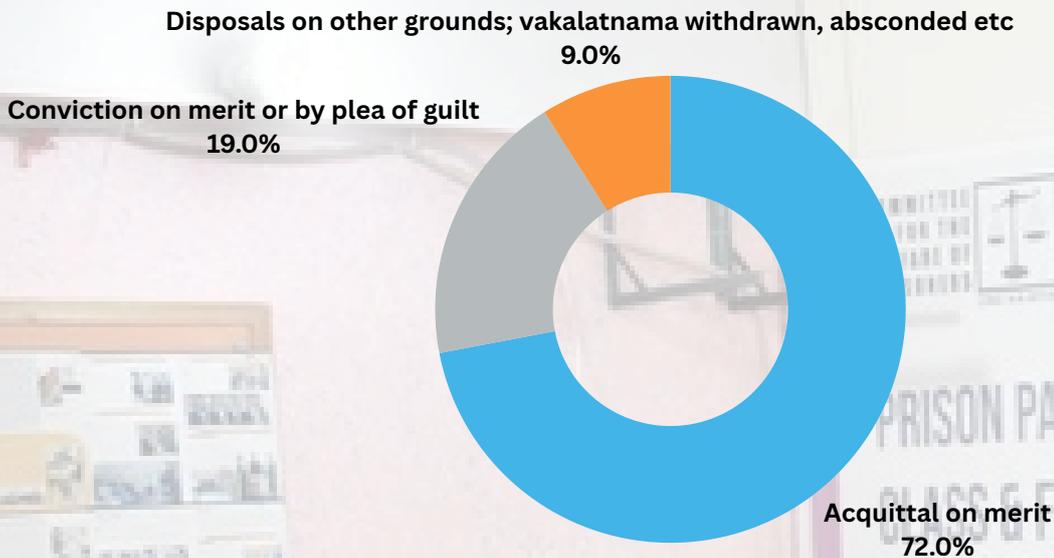


Adult Male  
**1,725**



Female  
**22**

### Resolution of cases



In 2024-2025 the Committee conducted **1,997** interviews with inmates (**1,916** adult male prisoners, **81** women prisoners) including the provision of legal advice to **1,889** prisoners and filed **1,850** cases which required legal assistance and representation.

#### Number of bail applications granted



**13 women**



**960 adult men**



**51 young offenders**

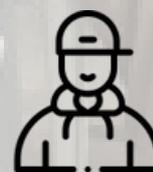
#### Financial Assistance for bail/surety amount provided by the Committee



**2 women**

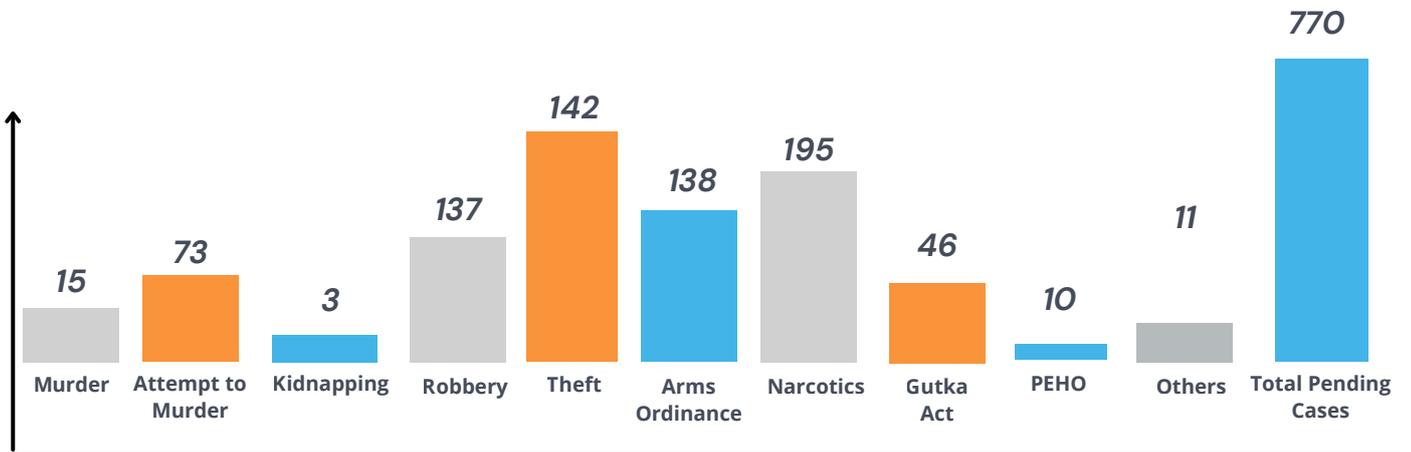


**2 adult men**



**0 young offenders**

### Offence categories for filed and non filed cases in courts until June 2023:



# Activities in 2024-2025

## Strategic Meetings with Stake Holders

### Committee's Annual Progress Meeting: Review and Future Planning

On August 21, 2024, the Committee convened its Annual Progress Meeting at the Home Department, chaired by Mr. Muhammad Siddique Memon. The meeting focused on reviewing progress made against the 2023-2024 Terms of Reference (TORs) and outlining strategic plans for the upcoming year. Committee members actively engaged in discussions, sharing insights on accomplishments, challenges, and key objectives for the future.



### Strategic Meeting with Inspector General Prisons Sindh, Kazi Nazeer Ahmed: Advancing Prison Rehabilitation

The Committee's Chairperson, Mr. Muhammad Siddique Memon, held an introductory meeting with Inspector General Prisons Sindh, Kazi Nazeer Ahmed, to discuss innovative strategies for addressing prison overcrowding and enhancing rehabilitation efforts. The meeting explored new approaches aimed at creating a more effective and humane prison system, benefiting both inmates and the broader community.



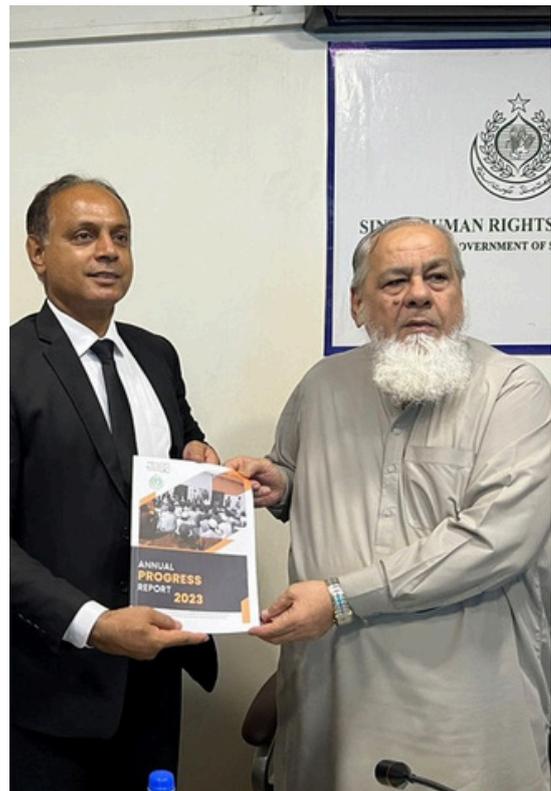
## Strengthening Partnerships for Human Rights: A Visit from Ms. Tahseen Fatima

We were privileged to host Ms. Tahseen Fatima, Secretary of the Human Rights Department for the Government of Sindh, at our Head Office for an insightful meeting. During her visit, we discussed potential collaborative efforts between the Human Rights Department and the Committee, aiming to expand legal aid services and enhance human rights within the prison system to ensure comprehensive support and protection for inmates.



## Strengthening Reintegration Mechanisms for Women and Young Offenders: Committee Convenes Strategic Coordination Meeting

During the reporting quarter, the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners held a strategic coordination meeting on February 3, 2025, chaired by Mr. Gahanwar Ali Leghari (Chairperson) and co-chaired by IG Prisons Mr. Kazi Nazeer Ahmed. The meeting focused on establishing an effective referral mechanism to support the reintegration of young offenders and incarcerated women. Key stakeholders in attendance included Mr. Riaz Ahmed Jalbani (Additional Secretary, Law Department), Mr. Parvez Qureshi (Committee Member), Mr. Zahid Ahmed (Deputy Secretary, Women Development Department), and Mr. Bilal Farooqi (Section Officer, Social Protection), among others. The session aimed to foster interdepartmental collaboration and align institutional efforts toward sustainable rehabilitation and post-release support.



## Legal Empowerment Approaches

### Prison Paralegal Program

CWP is committed to enhancing prisoners' legal knowledge and well-being as part of their rehabilitation journey. To achieve this, we implemented the Prison Paralegal Program, which trains incarcerated individuals to serve as paralegals who conduct

informative sessions within prisons. This initiative creates a sustainable legal awareness system, with comprehensive training and resources provided to the paralegals. In recognition of their contributions, participants receive remissions and a sense of purpose, ensuring that incoming prisoners gain immediate access to crucial legal information.

## Paralegals Awarded Remission for Outstanding Contributions

We are proud to announce that two of our dedicated prison paralegals have been granted remission of 320 and 522 days, respectively, for their exceptional contributions to the prison paralegal program. This program, established by the Committee, trains convicts to serve as paralegals, providing vital legal literacy to new under-trial prisoners.



The paralegal program follows a three-fold approach: know the law, use the law, shape the law. It empowers prisoners by equipping them with knowledge of their legal rights, prison regulations, and judicial processes, helping them navigate the legal system more effectively. These two paralegals, through tireless work, have provided invaluable support to their peers, significantly enhancing access to justice within the prison system.

Their hard work and dedication have not only transformed the lives of many inmates but also opened doors for a brighter future through this remarkable achievement.

To date, CWP has conducted 19 Prison Paralegal sessions with new inmates in Women's and Central Prisons in Karachi, Hyderabad, and Sukkur, significantly improving legal literacy for 265 newly admitted Under Trial Prisoners (UTPs), helping them navigate their legal situations more effectively.

## Mr. Osama Malik, Director Legal Education at the Pakistan Bar Council, visit paralegal class in Central Prison Karachi

In the latest quarterly report, Mr. Osama Malik, Director of Legal Education at the Pakistan Bar Council, visited the Paralegal Class at Central Prison Karachi, established by the Committee in 2017. This program follows a three-fold approach: know the law, use the law, shape the law, with the aim of creating a sustainable system where trained convicts serve as paralegals to assist new under-trial prisoners (UTPs). By providing crucial information about legal rights, prison rules, and procedures, these paralegals are filling a critical gap in access to justice. Notably, 15% of UTPs who attended the sessions showed increased knowledge of the laws and norms governing their rights and obligations.

During his visit, Mr. Malik engaged with the paralegals and expressed strong interest in expanding this impactful model to other prisons, acknowledging its potential to significantly improve legal literacy and support for inmates nationwide.

### **Free Legal Advisory Camps in Sindh Prison**

The Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners (CWP) is dedicated to promoting legal empowerment among inmates by organizing free legal aid and advisory camps. These camps, led by experienced CWP lawyers, provide vital information on legal rights, prison regulations, and the criminal justice system. So far, 534 under-trial prisoners have actively participated in these sessions, gaining valuable legal guidance and improving their legal awareness.

### **Collaborative Visit to Women's Prison and Youthful Offenders Industrial School, Hyderabad with the Sindh Human Rights Commission**

Iqbal Ahmed Detho, Chairperson of the Sindh Human Rights Commission, and his team visited the Women's Prison and Youthful Offenders Industrial School (YOIS) in Hyderabad, with the visit organized by the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners. This visit provided a valuable opportunity to engage with inmates directly, listen to their concerns, and address their needs.

During the visit, the Committee provided immediate legal assistance to prisoners requiring urgent support. Discussions with inmates revealed ongoing challenges, and efforts were made to resolve some of them on-site.

Such visits play a crucial role in bridging the gap between prisoners and the assistance they require, underscoring how small, direct actions can significantly impact the lives of those often overlooked.

## Welfare and Rehabilitation initiatives

### Celebrating Independence Day with Ms. Saima Agha at Women Prison Hyderabad

We were privileged to have Ms. Saima Agha, Member of the Sindh Assembly and Parliamentary Secretary for Sports & Youth Affairs, as the Chief Guest at our Independence Day celebration at Women Prison Hyderabad. Ms. Agha actively participated in the program and visited several key initiatives, including the Early Learning Center, Sewing Centre, and Sensory Garden. Her engagement and presence made the event truly memorable for everyone involved.

### Generous Donation from the District Bar Association, Hyderabad

Mr. Ziauddin Shaikh, President of the District Bar Association Hyderabad, along with Mr. Wazeer Hussain Chandio, Library Secretary of the District Bar, and Mr. Zain ul Aabdeen Sahito, BVC Trainer of the Sindh Judicial Academy, visited our Early Learning Center and Sewing Centre at Women's Prison Hyderabad. They expressed their appreciation for the Committee's work and generously donated an 80-litre electric water cooler to support the inmates.

The inmates are grateful for this much-needed support. Ms. Abida Sami, Superintendent of the Prison, conveyed her heartfelt gratitude to the Chairperson of the Committee and the donors for their generous contribution, which has significantly improved the daily lives of the inmates.

### Football Camps at Youthful Offender Industrial School

The Committee, in collaboration with Karachi United Football Club, successfully concluded its football training camps at the Youthful Offender Industrial School (YOIS) Karachi. These camps aimed to promote both mental and physical fitness among young offenders. Understanding the importance of mental well-being, the sessions also incorporated mindfulness exercises and motivational talks to help build confidence and self-belief.

Each session was filled with energy and excitement, beginning with light drills and culminating in thrilling matches that fostered teamwork and camaraderie. It was heartening to see the young offenders not only enjoying the sessions but also demonstrating remarkable improvement in their skills and cooperation. The positive impact of these camps will continue to resonate as we strive to encourage meaningful change through sports. Through this camp a 35 young offenders has been trained.



## Dr. Mehmood Mustafa's Visit to the Early Learning Center

Dr. Mehmood Mustafa, representing the Education Support Initiative (ESI), visited our Early Learning Center (ELC) at Women's Prison Karachi. ESI has been a key donor for several years, playing a crucial role in supporting our educational programs for inmates.

The purpose of this visit was to assess ongoing activities and explore opportunities for extending collaboration to further enhance the educational support and resources available to the inmates. We look forward to continuing our partnership with ESI to create a positive and lasting impact on the lives of those in our care.

## Eid Milad-un-Nabi Celebrations at Women's Prison and YOIS Hyderabad

In observance of Eid Milad-un-Nabi, the Committee organized a heartfelt event at Women's Prison Hyderabad, featuring moving recitations and naats. Prisoners, staff, and our dedicated female lawyers actively participated in the celebration. The event concluded with the distribution of food boxes to all inmates and staff, bringing comfort and joy to the prison community.

Our support also extended to the Youthful Offender Industrial School (YOIS) Hyderabad, where food boxes were provided to both inmates and staff. A total of 250 lunch boxes were distributed across both facilities, made possible through the generosity of private donors.



## Little Hands, Big Creativity: Beading Fun at ELC Hyderabad

The Early Learning Center (ELC) in Hyderabad recently buzzed with excitement as little hands got busy with a delightful beading activity. This hands-on experience wasn't just about creating colorful designs—it was about nurturing creativity and building essential skills.

Beaded activities are wonderful for developing fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and patience in young children. As the little ones carefully strung beads to craft their masterpieces, their focus and determination were truly inspiring. Activities like these play a crucial role in fostering self-expression and confidence, especially for children living in challenging environments.

We couldn't be prouder of these budding artists and their creations! The Early Learning Centers are designed to provide a safe and stimulating space for children incarcerated with their mothers.

## **Seasonal Cheer: Winter Celebration at the Early Learning Center, Karachi**

The Early Learning Center (ELC) in Karachi came alive with joy and laughter during its Winter Celebration! The fun-filled event featured exciting activities and games that kept the children engaged and entertained throughout the day. From creative crafts to energetic play, every moment was filled with the warmth and magic of the season. The celebration was a reminder of how small, meaningful events can bring light into the lives of children, even in challenging circumstances. The smiles on their faces and their enthusiastic participation truly captured the spirit of the season—creativity, togetherness, and hope.

## **Community Support in Action: Distributing Warmth and Encouragement**

In a gesture of compassion and solidarity, Mr. Shakir Nawaz Shar, General Secretary of the District Bar Association Hyderabad, and Ms. Maria Sario, Incharge of the Human Rights Cell at the SSP Office Hyderabad, visited the Women's Prison Hyderabad. Their visit brought both warmth and encouragement—distributing shawls to inmates, children, and staff, offering much-needed comfort during the winter months.

As part of their visit, they also toured key rehabilitation and welfare spaces within the prison, including the Sewing Centre, Early Learning Centre, and Sensory Garden. These interactions provided an opportunity to showcase the Committee's holistic approach to prison reform, where legal aid is complemented by emotional support, education, and livelihood opportunities.

Their appreciation for the Committee's work in advancing legal and social welfare for incarcerated women and their children was deeply affirming. We extend our sincere thanks to Mr. Shakir Nawaz Shar and Ms. Maria Sario for their generosity and support.

As we continue our mission, we welcome partnerships, donations, and community engagement to sustain and expand our impact. Whether through volunteering, resource sharing, or advocacy, every contribution strengthens our shared vision of dignity and justice behind bars.

## **Provision of Winter Relief Items to Juvenile Inmates at YOIS Hyderabad**

In response to a request from the Superintendent of the Youthful Offenders Industrial School (YOIS) Hyderabad, the CWP Hyderabad team distributed warm clothing, including hoodies, to juvenile inmates during the reporting quarter. The distribution took place in the presence of the Superintendent and was made possible through the generous support of a kind donor. This initiative aimed to address the seasonal needs of the inmates and ensure their well-being during the winter months.

## **Ramazan Gift Pack Distribution at Women's Prison Hyderabad with Support from District Bar Association**

During the holy month of Ramazan, CWP continued its tradition of compassion and support by distributing Ramazan Gift Packs—comprising dates (khajoor), sharbat, hygiene kits, and snacks—to all inmates and staff at the Women's Prison Hyderabad. This initiative was made possible through the generous contribution of Mr. Masood Rasool Babar Memon, the newly elected General Secretary of the District Bar Association Hyderabad. During his first visit, Mr. Memon toured the Early Learning Centre, Sewing Class, and Sensory Garden, where he observed the tangible impact of CWP's rehabilitation and welfare programs. The visit underscored the value of collaborative efforts in uplifting incarcerated communities during the holy month.

## **Celebrating Holi: Spreading Joy and Dignity Among Women Prisoners in Hyderabad**

As part of its ongoing efforts to promote emotional well-being and dignity among incarcerated women, CWP organized a Holi celebration at the Women's Prison in Hyderabad during the reporting quarter. The event brought color, music, and shared laughter into a space often marked by isolation, offering a moment of joy and connection to the women. This initiative underscored the belief that every individual—regardless of their circumstances—deserves compassion, dignity, and the opportunity to celebrate life. Through such events, CWP aims to humanize prison spaces and support the emotional rehabilitation of women in custody.

## Iftar and Dinner Organized at Women's Prison Hyderabad

During the holy month of Ramazan, the Committee organized an iftar and dinner for the inmates and staff at the Women's Prison Hyderabad. Made possible through the generous support of local philanthropists and humanitarians, the event brought moments of hope and compassion to those often overlooked, reinforcing CWP's commitment to humane and inclusive prison environments.



## Ramzan Mubarak Activity at the Early Learning Center – Women's Prison Karachi

To mark the holy month of Ramzan, a special activity was organized at the Early Learning Center in Women's Prison Karachi. The initiative aimed to engage children residing with their incarcerated mothers in festive, age-appropriate celebrations that promote joy, learning, and emotional well-being. Through storytelling, interactive games, and small giveaways, the event created a nurturing environment during this spiritually significant time, reflecting CWP's commitment to holistic support for children living in prisons.

## Eid Gift Distribution at Women’s Prison Hyderabad

In celebration of Eid, the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners facilitated the distribution of Eid gifts—including clothing and mehndi—to the inmates and staff at the Women’s Prison in Hyderabad. The event was graced by Mr. Asher Majeed Khokhar (President, District Bar Association, Hyderabad), Mr. Tanveer Junejo (Joint Secretary), and Advocate Vikram Kumar. The distribution took place under the supervision of Ms. Abida Sami Abbasi, Superintendent of the Women’s Prison. This initiative aimed to bring festive cheer and a sense of dignity to incarcerated women and staff during the Eid festivities.



## Eid Gift Distribution for Juvenile Inmates at YOIS Hyderabad

As part of its Eid celebrations, the Committee distributed Eid gifts to juvenile inmates at the Youthful Offenders Industrial School (YOIS) in Hyderabad. The distribution took place in the presence of Mr. Muhammad Ayoob (Library Secretary, District Bar Association, Hyderabad) and Advocate Atif Khuwaja.



## Pro Bono Partner’s Eid Visit to Early Learning Center – Women’s Prison Karachi

We are deeply grateful to our pro bono partner, Mr. Hasan Mandiwala, for his unwavering commitment to justice. During the reporting period, Mr. Mandiwala met with clients whose appeals he is representing in the Supreme Court. In addition to his professional duties, he took time to share the joy of Eid with the children at the Early Learning Center in Women’s Prison Karachi. His meaningful contributions extend beyond the courtroom, positively impacting lives and fostering hope for those in need.

## Iftar and Dinner for Juvenile Inmates at YOIS Hyderabad

The Committee organized a heartfelt iftar and dinner for the juvenile inmates and staff at the Youthful Offenders Industrial School (YOIS) in Hyderabad. During the event, the children were also given cash gifts as part of the Eid celebrations.

This compassionate initiative was made possible through the generous support of local philanthropists and kind-hearted individuals, underscoring the importance of community involvement in uplifting those in need.



## Research and Policy

### Research and Policy Advocacy

The impact of imprisonment on mental health is particularly profound for women inmates in Pakistan. Despite constituting only 1.5% of the prison population in Sindh, women prisoners face a disproportionate burden of mental health challenges, compounded by inadequate healthcare and the absence of structured psychological support within the prison system. To address this gap, the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners, with funding from Interactive Research and Development (IRD) Pakistan, initiated an innovative mental health intervention—group art therapy. This initiative aimed to provide incarcerated women with a therapeutic outlet to express and manage complex emotions such as anger, anxiety, and depression. The project began with a comprehensive mental health screening of all 153 women inmates at the Women's Prison Karachi. Of the 113 women who voluntarily participated, 83 exhibited symptoms of depression, and 13 consented to participate in structured weekly group art therapy sessions facilitated by a psychologist. Launched on December 11, 2023, the sessions explored a variety of therapeutic themes, including expressing happiness through art, emotional awareness, gratitude exercises, painting, and mindfulness practices like mandala art and breathing techniques. Over a span of 20 sessions, the participants reported significant improvements in mood, emotional well-being, and interpersonal relationships. The positive feedback confirmed the potential of creative therapeutic interventions in fostering psychological resilience within correctional settings. Based on these findings, the Committee has developed a policy paper that evaluates the effectiveness of group art therapy and offers strategic recommendations for its integration into the prison system. The paper advocates for expanded mental health services for female prisoners, institutional support for therapeutic programming, and capacity-building for sustainability. This initiative reflects the Committee's commitment to rights-based, humane prison reform and marks a significant step toward enhancing mental well-being and dignity for incarcerated women.

# Success Stories

## Shahzad\*

23-year-old man from Hyderabad, Shahzad Shafi, was acquitted of drug charges after spending over five months behind bars. Shahzad, who comes from an underprivileged community, was arrested and accused of carrying drugs, a crime he consistently denied committing. His arrest and subsequent incarceration in Central Prison Hyderabad devastated his family, as they were unable to afford a private lawyer to defend him against the serious allegations.

However, Shahzad's fate took a turn when a team of advocates from the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners (CWP) visited the prison. During the visit, Shahzad shared his plight with the legal team, who, impressed by his courage and determination, decided to represent him. On March 30, 2024, CWP formally took up his case and initiated legal proceedings on his behalf.

As the case progressed, the court uncovered numerous inconsistencies in the prosecution's evidence. Key among these was the failure to establish the recovery of the alleged drugs. This critical gap in the prosecution's case cast serious doubt on the charges levelled against Shahzad.

After a protracted legal battle lasting five months and ten days, the court finally ruled in Shahzad's favor. On September 11, 2024, he was acquitted of all charges, marking the end of a painful time for him and his family. Shahzad's release not only signifies the triumph of justice but also restores hope for others unjustly imprisoned.

## Maryam\*

CWP took on the case of 22-year-old Maryam, a housemaid from Karachi, who was wrongfully accused of drug trafficking. Facing already challenging economic circumstances, Maryam's life was upended by these unfounded allegations, leading to her detention in Karachi Women's Prison.

On February 28, 2024, CWP filed a vakalatnama on Maryam's behalf, providing her with the critical legal representation needed to challenge the accusations. As her case progressed, significant flaws were revealed in the prosecution's narrative—no concrete evidence, no eyewitnesses, and no recovered substances, indicating a lack of substantial proof linking her to the alleged crime.

After a prolonged seven-month trial, Maryam was finally acquitted on September 26, 2024, as the court declared her innocent. Her release highlights both the power of determined legal advocacy and the role of CWP in supporting the wrongfully accused. Maryam's case stands as a reminder of the importance of accessible legal support in restoring justice and dignity to those unjustly imprisoned, offering a message of hope for others in similar circumstances. Top of Form.

## Hayat\*

Muhammad Hayat Tarar, a 34-year-old labourer from Naushahroferoz, who had been wrongfully Prison for alleged possession and sale of intoxicants. As the only income-earner for his family, Muhammad's imprisonment put his family in a difficult situation, especially his two young daughters.

Without resources to hire a private lawyer, Muhammad reached out to CWP for help. On July 22, 2024, CWP filed his vakalatnama and began reviewing the case. During the proceedings, CWP's team uncovered key issues in the prosecution's claims: a four-day delay in testing the alleged substance, missing records from the investigation officer, no reliable witnesses, and contradictions in the police reports.

After just 26 days of dedicated legal support, on August 16, 2024, the court declared Muhammad innocent. His release emphasized CWP's role in helping those unfairly accused, showing how essential legal support can quickly restore freedom and peace for individuals in need.

## Sabra\*

Sabra, a 35-year-old housewife from Swat, had always led a modest life, working tirelessly to support her family amidst difficult circumstances. But her world was turned upside down when she was falsely accused of blasphemy—a grave charge that threatened her future and cast a dark shadow over her family. With no option but to endure the unforgiving walls of Women's Prison Karachi, Sabra's life seemed lost, clouded by fear and uncertainty.

Just when it seemed like all hope was gone, the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners (CWP) extended a lifeline. On November 8, 2023, advocate from CWP took on Sabra's case, determined to uncover the truth and clear her name. As the case unfolded, it became clear that the accusations against Sabra were completely unfounded. There were no eyewitnesses, no solid evidence, and no proper investigation to back the claims. The investigating officer even admitted he had never visited the site of the alleged incident—a clear indication that the prosecution had no real case.

After 13 long months and 12 days of relentless legal battle, Sabra was finally declared innocent on December 19, 2024. For Sabra, her release from prison marked more than just the end of a legal struggle—it was the restoration of her dignity, her freedom, and the chance to rebuild her life. Sabra's story serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of justice and the tireless work of those committed to uncovering the truth.

## **Awais\***

Awais Rajput, a 30-year-old rickshaw driver from Dadu, lived a modest life, earning just Rs. 10,000 a month to support his wife and nine dependents. Despite the struggles, Awais worked tirelessly to provide for his family. However, his world was upended when he was falsely accused of attempted murder after refusing to pay a bribe to a group of police officers. With no financial means to hire a lawyer, Awais faced the grim prospect of being imprisoned in District Prison Naushahroferoz.

During a routine prison visit, a team of lawyers from the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners (CWP) heard Awais's story and took up Awais's case and filed vakalatnama on his behalf on October 5, 2024. As the legal process unfolded, the truth began to surface. Investigations revealed significant flaws in the prosecution's case—the crime scene had never been properly investigated, no weapon had been presented, and crucial evidence like police logs, CCTV footage, and medical reports were either missing or tampered with. Even the medical report lacked proper signatures and key details, making it clear that Awais had been wrongfully accused.

After just two months of intense legal efforts, the court declared Awais innocent on December 6, 2024, clearing him of all charges. His victory marked the power of persistence, the dedication of his legal team, and the triumph of justice, proving that the truth will always find its way to the surface.

## **Abdullah\***

Abdullah Sattar, a 32-year-old daily wage labour earning Rs. 25,000 per month, was the sole breadwinner for his two siblings. Life was already difficult for Abdullah, who came from a disadvantaged background, but his quiet strength and determination helped him persevere—until he was falsely accused of possessing an unlicensed weapon and incarcerated at District Prison Malir, Karachi.

In March 2024, a turning point arrived when his case was taken up Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners. CWP filed Abdullah's vakalatnama on March 25, 2024, and began contesting the prosecution's claims.

Upon review, it became evident that the case lacked merit. The prosecution had presented only a single witness whose testimony was unsupported by any concrete evidence. Despite over a year having passed, no further witnesses or material had been produced, casting serious doubt on the case's credibility.

After 9 months and 16 days of incarceration, the court concluded that the prosecution had failed to establish the charges beyond a reasonable doubt. On January 9, 2025, Abdullah was acquitted and released.

His case stands as a powerful example of how timely legal aid and persistent advocacy can restore justice. Abdullah's story reflects the broader mission of CWP—to ensure that vulnerable individuals are not left voiceless in the face of injustice.

## Zahid\*

Zahid Hussain, a 27-year-old from Khairpur, had always lived a life marked by quiet resilience and struggle. Coming from an underprivileged background, he had little to rely on but hope. That hope was nearly crushed when he was falsely accused of attempted murder and imprisoned in Central Prison, Khairpur. With no financial resources to secure private legal representation, Zahid found himself alone, innocent yet voiceless behind bars. His family, burdened by poverty, could do little to help, and the justice system seemed stacked against him.

That changed on February 19, 2024, when the Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners (CWP) stepped in. And filed a vakalatnama on Zahid’s behalf, offering him a fighting chance at justice.

As the trial proceeded, Mr. Raza thoroughly examined the FIR, challan, and witness statements, uncovering a web of contradictions and inconsistencies. The location and timeline of the alleged crime did not align with police accounts. The distance between the arrest site and the police station was disputed. Most notably, no medical report or recovered weapon—supposedly central to the charge—was ever presented in court. The prosecution’s case collapsed under scrutiny, and the court found the allegations unsubstantiated. On March 4, 2025, Zahid Hussain was acquitted and released, walking out of prison after over a year of wrongful imprisonment.

His story stands as a testament to CWP’s role in defending the innocent and ensuring that justice reaches even the most marginalized.



# Risks and Challenges

## Risks

Bar Councils and members of Bar Associations have expressed concerns regarding the Committee's legal services within prisons. They perceive these services as potentially challenging the traditional role of legal professionals and view CWP's work as a possible threat to their established practices.

CWP is responsible for the data and identity protection of prisoners.

The Committee faces a risk that, based on referrals from prison authorities or courts, it may handle cases involving death sentences. Such cases could potentially conflict with the state's stance on capital punishment.

While the CWP has been able to sustain its operations over the past five years due to consistent funding from the Home Department, Government of Sindh, it is now facing significant challenges. The ongoing inflation and escalating fuel prices are straining the Committee's ability to manage operational costs effectively, which has led to reduced visibility within the prisons. This situation represents a key risk that could impact the Committee's overall effectiveness and reach.

## Mitigation

The Committee proactively engages with the legal fraternity by holding strategic meetings with bar associations to cultivate a stronger and more sustainable working relationship. Additionally, we have organized events inviting senior members of Bar Councils and Bar Associations to further demonstrate our commitment to fostering a productive partnership.

The CWP is responsible for safeguarding data confidentiality, protecting prisoners' information from unintentional, unlawful, or unauthorized access and disclosure. Research findings will only be disclosed with the explicit consent of Committee members.

To address this matter, CWP-LAO has established specific criteria and policy guidelines for handling minor offenses. Legal assistance and representation are provided in accordance with these criteria, with ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance and effectiveness.

In response to these challenges, the Committee has implemented austerity measures by reducing prison and out-of-district court visits. Consequently, the reduction in prison visits necessitates a corresponding adjustment in overall targets.

# Risks and Challenges

## Risks

Prison security is another critical factor that could affect service delivery. For instance, in the event of a prisoner escape, increased security measures might necessitate the suspension of regular prison visits.

The Committee for the Welfare of Prisoners (CWP) is currently facing serious structural challenges, as two newly appointed Chairpersons have resigned consecutively, resulting in operational disruptions and halted service delivery. Furthermore, the contracts of the existing team are set to expire on June 30, 2025, heightening the risk of institutional discontinuity.

Since February, 2025, a change in institutional hierarchy has led to a restrictive shift in the Committee's Terms of Reference. Lawyers have been instructed to address only the backlog of existing cases, with an explicit prohibition on initiating new legal representation for undertrial prisoners. This abrupt policy change has severely disrupted the Committee's core legal aid operations, effectively freezing access to justice for newly detained individuals, including indigent women, juveniles, and first-time offenders. The sustained suspension of these services poses a serious risk to the Committee's visibility, credibility, and long-standing reputation as a frontline provider of legal assistance for the most vulnerable populations.

## Mitigation

CWP upholds a strong and credible relationship with the Sindh Prison Department, established based on the structure outlined in the committee's Terms of Reference (TORS). The CWP- team is provided with clear instructions to ensure adherence to the rules and policies during prison visits.

Despite operational constraints, CWP lawyers have continued to voluntarily pursue and represent their assigned pending cases, demonstrating their commitment to ensuring continuity of legal aid for undertrial prisoners.

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