



OICOA

OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION

NOV 2023, VOLUME-I, ISSUE-III

NEWSLETTER

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Editorial Team

Tauseef Ahmed Qureshi

Abdul Ghani

Fatima Akram

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Esteemed OICOA members

The 3rd General Assembly Meeting and the 9th Board of Directors Meeting held in Türkiye have been instrumental in shaping our shared path, working towards a stronger and more impactful "Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association-OICOA," which was founded in Pakistan-Islamabad in 2014. I congratulate elected board members and look forward to working with them more proactively for OICOA's progression and impact creating organisation at the global stage.

In our modern world, issues concerning the development and protection of human rights transcend borders, gaining an international and even universal dimension. Being together and organized is essential, but equally vital is the sharing of experiences in the field of human rights through increased activities, uniting us further. The key to our continuity lies in our joint efforts, such as regional workshops, conferences, and training programs, where we exchange knowledge and good practices. These initiatives not only elevate the standards of our institutions but also strengthen our capacities. It's a vital mission to be the voice for those facing discrimination based on language, race, ethnicity, and in actions against Islam and all other religions. In line with our mission, OICOA condemns tyrannical attack



on Palestinian Muslims and at this time of war, we stand with our Palestinian brothers and sisters. I anticipate that our upcoming monthly e-newsletter, planned as part of OICOA's initiatives, will be a valuable resource. Our top priorities include promoting and enhancing work related to knowledge, experience, and research, carefully considering your requests and suggestions, fostering the community through our meetings, and building relationships with member states and international institutions and organizations dedicated to human rights. I extend my best wishes for your success in your vital work, and I look forward to our continued collaboration.

Şeref MALKOÇ
Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye
President OICOA



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SECRETARY GENERAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

I take this opportunity to thank all worthy members of OICOA for showing their confidence in my re-election as General Secretary for the upcoming tenure during the 3rd General Assembly Meeting held in Türkiye. I am confident that with your kind support, the Association will progress and prosper more in the coming years. We can achieve remarkable progress by adhering to the principles of justice, equality and righteousness.

At OICOA, our slogan has always been "Let's grow together," and I firmly believe that cooperation and collective efforts are the keys to enhance our organization's potential. Knowledge is a powerful tool, and in Islam, the pursuit of knowledge is highly encouraged. The Holy Quran itself encourages mankind to think, reflect, and acquire knowledge, reinforcing the significance of collaboration in our journey ahead.

As OIC Ombudsman Organizations, we stand as advocates of justice, tolerance, the protection of human rights and equality. I would like to express my heartfelt condemnation of the brutal attacks on Palestine and the tragic loss of hundreds of lives during the recent conflict. OICOA stands in solidarity with Palestinian Muslims during these difficult and challenging times. The world community and OICOA should raise their voices to stop Isreal from the ethnic cleansing of the Muslims of Gaza.



I look forward to welcoming you on 10th Board of Directors Meeting to be held in Pakistan in the month of January 2024.

Thank you very much for your unwavering support and commitment to our cause. Let's continue to work together for a more just and peaceful world.

With gratitude and respects,

Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah
(Hilal-i-Imaz) (Sitara-i-Imaz)
Federal Tax Ombudsman of Pakistan
Secretary General, OICOA



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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

Dear Members of the OIC Ombudsman Association,

I have had privilege of convening the 9th Board of Directors meeting and third General Assembly meeting. During these gatherings, several critical decisions were made, one of which I would like to highlight – the initiation of the OICOA internship program. The first exchange program will take place between Pakistan and Morocco. This program signifies our commitment to nurturing talent within our association, and this newsletter will be a dedicated platform to keep you updated on its progress.

The primary objective of this newsletter is to enhance communication and collaboration among our esteemed members and to provide you with the latest insights and advancements in the field of ombudsman services. We aim to create a space where knowledge, experiences and best practices can be freely exchanged, thus fortifying the capabilities of each member institution. We have designed a dedicated website, and social media accounts of OICOA.

In this newsletter, we will ensure that you stay informed about the recent Board of Directors Meeting and General Assembly Meeting held in Türkiye on 5th and 6th October, 2023. This newsletter presents picture of upcoming events and conferences as well.



I cordially invite you to actively engage with this newsletter by sharing your feedback, suggestions, expertise, success stories, and research with your fellow members. Let's harness the collective wisdom within our association and create a vibrant exchange of ideas that fosters a sense of affinity and coherence among us.

Our association's strength lies in our collective dedication to upholding the principles of integrity, accountability and fairness. Together, we can build a valuable resource that mirrors the diversity and expertise within our association.

Sincerely,

Almas Ali Jovindah
Executive Secretary, OICOA



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THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION AND NINTH BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

The 9th meeting of the Board of Directors of the OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA) was successfully held on October 5, 2023, in Istanbul, Republic of Türkiye. The meeting, presided over by His Excellency Mr. Seref Malkoc, OICOA President (Chief Ombudsman of the Republic of Türkiye), and Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah, OICOA General Secretary (Federal Tax Ombudsman of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan), addressed a range of vital issues. The meeting began with President Malkoc's opening remarks, highlighting OICOA's commitment to promoting efficiency and cooperation among member nations to address human rights violations and Islamophobia. He commended the Secretariat's proactive approach and reviewed previous diplomatic engagements, including facilitating a meeting between the Ombudsman of Ukraine and Russia.

General Secretary Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah provided an overview of the OICOA Secretariat's current initiatives, emphasizing the launch of the OICOA website, social media channels, and e-newsletters, as well as the challenges posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Executive Secretary, Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah, echoed the commitment to OICOA's initiatives and highlighted the successful execution of these projects. The Board approved the agenda for the meeting and reviewed the previous Board of Directors meeting held in Baku, Azerbaijan. They discussed membership extension, proposed amendments to the statute, the annual fee, and budget allocation for the Secretariat. The establishment of a research and resource center was discussed, with contributions from Iran, Pakistan, and other member countries.





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The importance of enhancing digital communication tools such as e-newsletters and social media was emphasized, along with the commitment to multilingualism. The meeting addressed training and capacity-building workshops for member institutions, an internship program for youth, and OICOA representation at important forums, including the United Nations. Dates and venues for the 10th Board of Directors Meeting and the 4th General Assembly Meeting were decided, with Pakistan hosting the former in January 2024 and Iran the latter in 2025.

The Board of Directors also unanimously endorsed the Board elections for 2023, with candidates proposed for key positions, including President, Vice President, and General Secretary. The vote of thanks from President Malkoc concluded the meeting. OICOA is committed to promoting cooperation and advancing the objectives of Ombudsman institutions among member countries. The outcomes of the 9th Board of Directors Meeting reflect a shared vision for strengthening OICOA's role on the international stage and its dedication to enhancing human rights, ombudsmanship, and international cooperation.

Dr. Asif Jah got elected as Secretary General of OICOA in its 9th Board of Directors and 3rd General Assembly meeting recently held in Istanbul. The elected President, Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye, Mr. Seref Malkoc welcomed the Board of directors and members of General assembly and thanked them for their enthusiastic response and confidence to strengthen the network among Ombudsmen Association. He along with other Board members highly appreciated efforts of Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah (Tax Ombudsman) to bring the Association to Operational Stage.





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Pakistan took initiative of promoting institutions in Muslim world at the 39th session of the OICOA council Foreign Ministers in 2012 establishing networking of ombudsman institutions in the OIC member states. As a result, OIC Ombudsman Association was founded in Islamabad in 2014. The Federal Tax Ombudsman of Pakistan hosts OICOA Secretariat. For his vision and leadership to promote concepts of ombudsman ship, Dr. Jah got elected as “General Secretary” of OIC Ombudsman for a four year term in the meeting.

Secretary General OICOA thanked and paid his heartfelt regard to the colleagues who reposed trust upon the Board members in the past and he assured, that, “In future too, me and my colleagues would keep on serving this grand Association of Ombudsman brotherhood. Our main objective is to promote the concept of ombudsman ship at national and international level and also to exchange of information and experiences among the OIC states”. The elected President, Mr. Sered Malkoc also congratulated Dr. Jah and Secetariat in Islamabad for their commendable efforts. Dr. Jah highlighted that the institution of the Federal Tax Ombudsman Pakistan is pro-active organization with its doors open for aggrieved taxpayers.





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Executive Secretary General, Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah, convened BOD General Assembly meetings and thanked all the 33 participating countries for their cooperation. He also shared that Board has decided that OICOA secretariat will be providing internships/training programs and disseminate information and research data about the all the member institutions. Board of Director OICOA approved the proposal to host the next Board of members meeting in Pakistan on the Celebration of it's 10th Anniversary in the month of January 2024. All the members graciously accepted the offer. During the meeting, another important decision was taken that the training programs should be a permanent feature for the capacity building of OICOA Institution. Exchange internship program among member countries was decided to be launched by engaging young candidates with immediate effect in order to bring them to International level standards.

The President of the Association, Hon'ble Chief Ombudsman Turkey, congratulated the Members of the Board of directors OICOA. He thanked all the Members for electing Turkey as the President of the Association unanimously. He also congratulated Iran for being elected as Vice-President, Pakistan as Secretary General and other Board Members Azerbaijan, Morocco, Bahrain and Indonesia. He hoped to work together in harmony with more vigour for the promotion of this institution in the Islamic world. He wished for the success of the Members in performing important duties in their respective countries as well as for the Association.





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FELICITATIONS TO THE ELECTED BODY OF ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COUNTRIES OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION (OICOA)



Mr. Seref Malkoç
President OICOA
2023-2027



Dr. Zabihullah Khudaaen
Vice President OICOA
2023-2027



Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah
Secretary General OICOA
2023-2027



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Mr. Mohammad Benalilou
2023-2027



Mr. Muhammad Najih
2023-2027



Ms. Ghada Hameed Hassan
2023-2027



Ms. Sabina Aliyeva
2023-2027



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PRESIDENT OICOA'S STATEMENT OVER MAYHEM OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Regretfully, we are still witnessing migration, conflicts and wars in 2023. No war lasts forever and no war has a real winner. What is essential for humanity is tranquillity, prosperity and peace. Whatever the reason is, no group or people can be punished collectively. Even wars have morality and law. War crimes are regulated in international law for this purpose. In Gaza, in front of the whole world, international law is being violated, and events that proves the failure of human dignity and conscience are occurring. Bombing all residential areas without distinction of civilians and thus causing the death of civilians is a violation of international humanitarian law. In the 21st century, cutting off the electricity and preventing access to food, water and fuel for all civilians, including women, children, elderly and disabled people, is a crime against humanity.

It is unacceptable that the United States and the European Union support and almost encourage this crime, and it will undoubtedly go down in history as one of the greatest affronts to humanity. Years later when looking at history, human rights defenders will be called out for where they were at the time these crimes





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against humanity were committed. The bloodshed in the Middle East must be stopped as soon as possible before it spreads into more regions. And in order to ensure peace, Israel must comply with the United Nations Security Council's resolutions and withdraw from the lands it occupied unlawfully within the framework of international law. A two-state solution is the only solution for peace and an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds as its capital should be established in compliance with the 1967 borders. Al-Quds is a holy city for all divine religions. Therefore, all religions should show respect. Attacks on sacred values also violate international law. As the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association, we invite all human rights institutions/defenders to take action. It is essential to comply with international humanitarian law, prevent further civilian casualties, ensure people's access to their basic needs, ensure a peaceful environment as soon as possible, and deliver international humanitarian aid to the region in this process. There is no time to waste in these terms. As the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association;

- WE STRONGLY CONDEMN any attack on civilians' right to life and all kinds of unlawful and inhumane measures that deprive civilians of vital needs such as electricity, water, food, fuel and medical supplies,
- WE REQUEST the necessary support for Israel's withdrawal from the lands it unlawfully occupied, within the framework of international law and in line with the United Nations Security Council resolutions, and for the establishment of an independent State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders,
- WE DRAW ATTENTION TO the importance of humanitarian aid reaching the region until peace is achieved,
- WE INVITE all Human Rights Organizations and Ombudspersons from all around the world and the entire international community, especially the UN, International Organizations and the European Union,
- TO TAKE ACTION to calm the parties and ensure peace in the region as soon as possible, and NOT TO REMAIN SILENT in their own countries.

Şeref MALKOÇ
Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye
President OICOA



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FEDERAL TAX OMBUDSMAN OF PAKISTAN DR. ASIF MAHMOOD JAH CONDEMNS KILLING OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE



OIC Ombudsman Association

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Web: <http://www.oicoa.org/>, Email: secretary@oicoa.org
Phone: +92519222534

D.O.No.5 (1)/2000-A-II
Islamabad the dated: 16-10-2023

Subject:- CONDEMNATION OF ISRAELI BARBARIC ATTACKS BY OICOA

The Ombudsman Association of Islamic Countries (OICOA) abhors and strongly condemns the Israeli Barbaric attacks on the Muslims of Gaza, resulting into martyrdom of 3000 Palestinians including women and children and rendering a million of Palestinian Muslims shelter less.

2. Israel has openly started its evil design of ethnic cleansing of the inhabitants of Gaza. It has crossed all limits of human right violations. The daily bombing on the Gaza strip is resulting into killing of hundreds of Palestinians.

3. The board and all other Members of OICOA strongly condemn the Israeli barbaric attacks on the innocent people of Gaza. The UN should immediately come forward in order to stop the Israel from total elimination of Palestinians in Gaza. The members of OICOA and other Muslim countries are immediately required to help and support relief operations for the stranded Palestinians in coordination with TURK KIZLAI (Turkish Red Crescent) and other humanitarian organizations working in Gaza.

With profound Regards,

Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah
(Hilal-i-Imtiaz) (Sitara-i-Imtiaz)
Secretary General (OICOA)
Federal Tax Ombudsman



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INTERNATIONAL OFFICE OF THE GENERAL INSPECTION ORGANIZATION IRAN CONDEMNS MAYHEM OF PALESTINIAN MUSLIMS



indispensability
JUDICIARY BRANCH
GENERAL INSPECTION ORGANIZATION
OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Date: 18 OCT 2023
Ref: 273120
Att:

In the name of Allah, the most beneficent, the most merciful

Excellency;

Salam Alaykom

The General Inspection Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns the barbaric and anti-human rights behavior of the usurping and filthy Zionist regime in attacking the oppressed people of Palestine and the massacre of children, wounded and sick in the Gaza hospital.

I ask all the defenders of human rights and the ombudsmen of any religion of the countries of the world and the international ombudsman institutions to condemn the brutal and aggressive attacks of the Zionist usurper regime as soon as possible, in order to achieve the inalienable rights of the oppressed and suffering Palestinian nation, especially the defenseless women and children.

The crimes committed by the Zionists in Gaza, with the brutal bombing of Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital, and the bloodshed of the hospitalized wounded and the people who took refuge there, are definitely genocide and war crime, and the ugly face of this regime and its supporters will remain forever in the history of mankind. All the supporters of the crimes of this regime in the mass killing of the people of Gaza are considered partners and accomplices of the crimes committed by this regime and should be held accountable in front of competent courts as well as in front of human conscience and history.

Oppression and coercion will never last, and faith and will, relying on divine help, will eventually lead to victory. The General Inspection Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran requests the high level of that respectable institution to immediately condemn these crimes by issuing a statement and by any other means in order to confront the child-killing Zionist regime of Israel.

Justice Zabiollah Khodaeian
The President of the General Inspection Organization
The Islamic Republic of Iran

Add: Gharani Cross Road, Taleghani Ave, Tehran, Iran
Tel/Fax: 009821-88344383 | www.bazreslir | Email: international@136.ir



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BAHRAIN MARKS 10TH ANNIVERSARY

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BAHRAIN OMBUDSMAN OFFICE

The conference focused on the theme of the effectiveness of ombudsmen within institutional work and their role in promoting respect for human rights. It marked the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Bahrain Ombudsman Office has provided a dynamic platform for building international partnerships that drive efforts to uphold human rights through grievances, institutions, participants in the conference said. The conference, focusing on the theme of the effectiveness of ombudsmen within institutional work and their role in promoting respect for human rights, highlighted Bahrain's efforts in this area, as the first Ombudsman office of its kind in the region.

Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah, the Executive Secretary of the OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA), said that this event gives its participants the space to share their insights on human rights violations and how to set regulations to address them. Mr. Jovindah noted that this event represented an international collaboration which enhances capacity building, harmonising international laws, and learning from each other's experiences. "Today we can discuss how human rights are being violated, and what can we do together for prisoners, labourers and others. We can work together on a platform, in a cohesive way so we can raise that voice, we can strengthen the work of grievances institution anywhere locally," he said. adding that this was also a suitable platform to address challenges in the work of ombuds offices.





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Ana Dzhumalieva, Chairlady of the Commission for Protection Against Discrimination of the Republic of Bulgaria noted that this conference was a platform for those who are interested in human rights from around the world to come together and discuss and exchange ideas related to ombuds offices and their role in promoting human rights and accountability. "This conference will contribute significantly to the advancement of knowledge, research and practice in the field of ombudsman offices. It is also useful for getting to know each other about our activities and for the exchange of good practices," she added.

Dzhumalieva affirmed that such events help to develop cooperation between grievances institutions internationally, and especially between the Bulgarian Commission for Protection Against Discrimination and the Ombudsman Bahrain.

Seref Malkoç Turkish Chief Ombudsman noted the close relations between the Turkish and Bahraini ombudsman offices, highlighting the important role of Bahrain's Ombudswoman Ghada Habib in the field, which made her become a member of the Board of Trustees of the "Ombudsman Foundation" in the Islamic World. He considered the Ombudsman Bahrain conference an important event that gives a push forward to international relations of ombuds offices. "We thank everyone who contributed to organising such an important event to gather all those concerned with human rights work," he said.





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Gianina Irlando President of the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) in the US hailed Bahrain's efforts in protecting human rights through all its institutions. "From the reports I have read, they look like it's data based and very scientific which is something we all in oversight strive to get to, it's really hard to set standards in this field, and I think Bahrain is doing a great job," she said. The kingdom retained the "Tier 1" status for the sixth consecutive year in the United States Department of State's 2023, which reflects its commitment to upholding and protecting individual rights, through strengthening institutions and accountability.

Ghada Habib, Bahrain Ombudswoman noted that this is the first time Bahrain hosts a conference of this kind. This affirms Bahrain's long-standing approach to the protection and upholding of human rights, which has been based on the foundations and values of humanity and justice since ancient times, she said. "After 10 years of the establishment of the office, we have lots of success stories to tell and lots of achievements, and good statistics to show. Now, we have many indicators that show how people are confident in the role of ombudsman and its creditability, and how they are benefiting from the services it provides," she added.





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UPCOMING EVENTS

KINDDOM OF MOROCCO IN COLLABORATION WITH IOI TO CONDUCT INTERNATIONAL WEBINAR

The Institution of the Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco / International Ombudsman Institute IOI will conduct an International Webinar on "The Proposal power of the Mediators and Ombudsman: an important mechanism to support administrative and legal reform".



Save the date – November 15th, 2023

The Institution of the Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco / International Ombudsman Institute IOI

International Webinar on

« The Proposal power of the Mediators and Ombudsman: an important mechanism to support administrative and legal reform »

Date: November 15th, 2023

Time: 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM (Moroccan time) (UTC+1)

Opening session:

- Mr. Mohamed BENALILOU, Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco and AOMF Vice-President; (07min)
- Mr. Chris Field, President of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI). (07min)

Session 1:

- « The proposal power of the Mediators and Ombudsman: mechanism to support administrative and legal reform », Mr. Mohamed BENALILOU, Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco, (20 min).

Session 2:

Moderator: Mr. Mohamed BENALILOU, Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco.

« Good experiences and practices upon the path and results of the implementation of the proposal power ».

Speakers:

- Mr. Demba KANDJI, Mediator of Senegal (07 min);
- Mr. Pascal ESSOU, Mediator of Benin and AOMF treasury (07 min);
- Ms. Erinda BALLANCA, People's Advocate, Albania, (07 min)
- Mr. Marc BERTRAND, Mediator of Wallonia and the Federation Wallonia-Brussels and AOMF Vice-President, Belgium (07 min).
- Mrs. Claudia MONTI, Mediator of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg; (07min)
- Mr. Marc-André DOWD, Protector of the Citizen of Quebec and AOMF President, Canada (07 min);
- Mr. Mohamed LIDIDI, Secretary General, Institution of the Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco (07 min);

Conclusion: (10 min)



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OICOA MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

IOI PRESIDENT ADDRESSES INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE OCCASION OF THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OMBUDSMAN OF THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

IOI President Chris Field PSM was deeply honoured this week to provide an opening speech to an international conference on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Ombudsman of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Conference was attended by a number of Ambassadors, senior dignitaries from the Kingdom of Bahrain and Ombudsman and human rights commissioners.

Opening speeches were also provided by the Minister for Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments, His Excellency Mr. Nawaf Bin Mohammed Al Maawda (and inaugural Ombudsman), as well as Mr. Şeref Malkoç, Chief Ombudsman of Turkey and President of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association. "The Conference represented a fitting opportunity to pay tribute to the achievements of my colleague and friend, Ms. Ghada Hameed Habeeb, Ombudsman of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Ombudsman of the Kingdom of Bahrain was the first of its kind in the region and was part of a package of legislative, executive and administrative measures taken by the Kingdom within its democratic and developmental process, and human rights initiatives," said President Field.





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OMBUDSMAN DAY 2023

OMBUDSMAN DAY CELEBRATION AT PUNJAB OMBUDSMAN

MAJOR AZAM SULEMAN KHAN (RETD.), OMBUDSMAN PUNJAB SPEAKS ON THE OMBUDS DAY

Sixth Annual Ombud Day was celebrated recently all over the world, including Pakistan. A prestigious event was held at Lahore under the auspices of the Office of Ombudsman Punjab which was presided over by the Hon'ble Ombudsman Punjab Major Azam Suleman Khan (Retd) (Hilal-i-Imtiaz). The event was attended by the senior officers of Ombudsman Punjab and by the officers incharge of other Ombudsmen offices located at Lahore which include Dr. Arshad Mahmood (Member Incharge, Wafaqi Mohtasib Regional Office, Lahore), Mr. Abdul Basit Khan (Adviser Incharge, Regional Office Insurance Ombudsman), Syed Sibt-e-Hassan (Senior Consultant, Ombudsperson Punjab) and Ms. Adeela Rehman (Adviser Incharge, Regional Office Federal Tax Ombudsman).



institutions.



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While addressing the audience, Major Azam Suleman Khan (Retd) impressed upon the elimination of corrupt practices and mismanagement in the public service delivery mechanism. He also dilated upon the pivotal role of the ombudsman office in the establishment of good governance so that the government departments and officials believe that they are accountable to the people and that there must be no negligence in this regard. He emphasized that this is the only way to ensure the formation of a society based on justice, equality and transparency.

Hon'ble Ombudsman further added that this will strengthen people's trust in institutions. He also commended the efforts of all the ombudsmen institutions in resolving citizens' problems in an efficient manner. Stated that the Office of Ombudsman Punjab is playing an important role in protecting the rights of the people and providing them relief promptly and cost effectively.

Major Azam Suleman Khan (Retd) apprised the audience that in line with the provisions of the Punjab Office of the Ombudsman Act, 1997, a Research and Development Wing has recently been established in the Ombudsman Punjab office so as to carry out studies and research about the operational and systemic processes of the provincial government departments with a view to identifying problems and gaps in governance and to recommend implementable way forward to ensure good governance and efficiency in public service delivery.





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Further apprised that a robust media wing has also been functioning effectively to create awareness amongst the public about the institution. In order to ensure public accessibility to this Office, a 24/7 Helpline 1050 was also launched for registering complaints and seeking details about under process complaints. Also, mass awareness ensured through different social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. In his concluding remarks, the Hon'ble Ombudsman Punjab thanked the distinguished guests and appreciated the coordination among the Federal and Provincial Ombudsman institutions in connection with the resolution of public complaints in a more efficient manner. In the end, the Hon'ble Ombudsman Punjab presented mementoes to the senior officers of Ombudsman institutions.





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OICOA GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING OCTOBER 2023

HONORABLE FEDERAL OMBUDSPERSON AGAINST HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE MS. FAUZIA VIQAR ADDRESSES AT OICOA GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION

Ms. Fauzia Viqar, Federal Ombudsperson for Harassment attended the 3rd General Assembly Meeting of the OIC Ombudsman Association held in Istanbul, Turkey from 5th-6th October, 2023. In this regard, Hon'ble Ombudsperson explained the jurisdiction, functions and powers of FOSPAH in respect of cases pertaining to workplace harassment and women's property rights. She underscored the significance of a specialised body like FOSPAH for dealing with issues faced by women in a country like Pakistan where cultural norms, lack of awareness regarding workplace harassment and low asset ownership of females deprive women of their constitutional, legal and shari rights.



OICOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING: HON'BLE MR. KHAWAR JAMIL ADDRESSES DISTINGUISHED GATHERING

Federal Insurance Ombudsman of Pakistan Mr. Khawar Jamil shared his thoughts, expertise and experiences in the realm of insurance and ombudsman services. His participation added significant value to the discussions, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and knowledge exchange among member nations. The event was characterized by its productive discussions, decision-making and camaraderie among the participants. Notably, the presence of Honourable Mr. Khawar Jamil, the Federal Insurance Ombudsman of Pakistan, alongside other esteemed Ombudsmen from Pakistan, exemplified the nation's commitment to international cooperation and the promotion of ombudsman services.





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PROVINCIAL OMBUDSMAN PUNJAB MAJOR (R) AZAM SULEMAN KHAN LAUDS FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

While addressing the OICOA General Assembly, the Hon'ble Ombudsman Punjab said that Pakistan stands affirmed with the world ombudsmen institutions to safeguard human rights and providing justice to the aggrieved persons nearer to their doorsteps. He briefed the participants of the General Assembly about the performance of the Office of Ombudsman Punjab working in all the districts of the most densely populated province of Pakistan. He impressed upon the elimination of corrupt practices and mismanagement in the public service delivery mechanism.



OMBUDSMAN AZAD JAMMU AND KASHMIR PARTICIPATES IN THE 9TH BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND 3RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING ORGANIZED BY OICOA

Hon'ble Ombudsman Chaudhry Muhammad Naseem in his address to the assembly provided an enlightening overview of the history of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, shedding light on the unique characteristics and challenges faced by this region. He also elaborated on the exceptional performance of the Ombudsman Secretariat in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and its instrumental role in delivering justice to aggrieved individuals.



OMBUDSMAN BALUCHISTAN HONOURABLE NAZAR MUHAMMAD BALUCH PRESENT AT OICOA GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION

Ombudsman Baluchistan addressed General Assembly meeting in Turkiye. The event was attended by 21 Ombudspersons functioning in different OIC States who shared their specific mandates, successes and challenges with the audience. He emphasized the role of Ombudsman Institutions as these institutions play pivotal role in good governance. He said that Baluchistan Ombudsman Institution has been proactively playing significant role to be an impact creating organization.





OICOA IN MEDIA

BAHRAIN TRIBUNE

Ombudsman Office organises global forum on human rights

TDT | Manama

Ghada Hamid Habib, the Ombudswoman, has announced the Independent Ombudsman Office will organise an international conference on the occasion of the celebration of the tenth anniversary of its inauguration under the title "The Effectiveness of Ombudsmen in Institutional Work and their Role in Promoting Respect for Human Rights" from tomorrow until Thursday.

The Ombudswoman affirmed that this conference is a platform for those interested in the work of ombudsman offices from all over the world to come together to discuss and exchange ideas related to the work of their institutions, and their role in promoting human rights.

In addition, selected topics have been chosen through sev-



Ghada Hamid Habib

eral interactive sessions that engage in important issues in the field of ombudsman offices work with their historical and reference aspects, and the most important standards and practices that govern their mandate where experts specialized in this field will give speeches.

The conference also will provide an opportunity for communication and cooperation between many stakeholders, academics, and executive officials who will attend.



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tribune

Ombudsman Office hailed for promoting rights and justice

TBT | Manama:

Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments Minister Naseef bin Mohammed Al Mawardi praised the establishment of the Ombudsman Office as a significant step towards institutionalising work that ensures the respect of human rights and upholds justice and the rule of law.

Al Mawardi delivered a speech yesterday at the opening ceremony of the international conference organised by the Office of the Ombudsman, under the theme "the Effectiveness of Ombudsman within the Institutional Work and Their Role in Promoting Respect for Human Rights", marking its 10th anniversary.

He highlighted Bahrain's commit-

ment to human rights and its efforts to become a leader in respecting these values, both at the national and Arab levels. He emphasised that Bahrain's comprehensive development process, led by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and supported by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, guarantees full rights for citizens and residents.

The two-day conference was attended by ministers, heads of national government agencies, ombudsman offices, and representatives from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Arab countries.

Congratulations

Minister Al Mawardi commended Ombudsman Gha-



Mr. Al Mawardi and Ombudsman Ghada with key speakers at the event

da Hameed Habib as the first woman to hold such a position and congratulated all the direc-

tors and staff of Bahrain's Office of the Ombudsman on their achievements.

He emphasised the importance of the Ombudsman's role in responding to the challenges

faced by institutions in upholding justice and equity, which are vital for individuals and societies.

The conference aimed to provide a platform for ombudsman offices from around the world to discuss and exchange ideas on their work, covering historical aspects, standards, and practices that govern their mandates. It also facilitated communication and cooperation between stakeholders, academics, and officials.

Ombudsman Ghada said that the establishment of the Office of the Ombudsman in Bahrain was closely related to the king's deep-rooted civilised values, culminating in His Majesty's comprehensive development process, supported by HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

Kingdom's open prison and rehabilitation center a 'model' worth emulating

Arjan Tharaka

TBT | Manama:

The International Rehabilitation Institute (IRI) has given Bahrain's open prison and rehabilitation center in Riffa the title of a "model that can be used in other countries."

Dr. Mohamed Al-Bayan, director of the IRI, said: "This is an exceptional model in the world and I have been invited to see an open prison, an incredibly impressive one. You are creating an environment where people, the detainees, can work with and take those skills to employment and back into their culture and their families' environment."

He also made this statement while visiting the open prison and rehabilitation center in Bahrain with high-level representatives from Italy, Britain, Pakistan, and a few other countries as part of the General Secretary of Rehabilitation conference held in Sri Lanka.

During the visit, Captain Ayman Al-Saadi, Assistant Director of the Alternative Punishments Department, gave a briefing on the efforts of the General Administration for the Implementation of Alternative Sentences and Punishments in expanding the application of the New Code and Alternative Measures and implementing the Open Prison Program, in addition to reducing the rehabilitation and training programs provided to the刑犯s.

Chairing the visit of the Bahraini leadership and Ministers of Justice, Ombudsman



Captain Ayman Al-Saadi, right, Bahraini Minister of Justice and the IRI during the visit



Dr. Mohamed Al-Bayan

affirms that this initiative reflects Bahrain's commitment to human rights protection.

Dr. Asif Mohamed Ali, the Secretary General of the IRI, Ombudsman Association, also highlighted the role of the center in the rehabilitation of offenders, especially those who have committed minor offenses, which is to make them come back to society as positive human beings capable of living a full and dignified life, adding that they "have implemented a just sentence."

He told the Daily Tribune, "The government, after many years, has finally launched today and had implemented in the best way."



Dr. Asif Mohamed Ali

Dr. Asif Mohamed Ali, Secretary General of the IRI, Ombudsman Association, described the human rights protection, noting that they are in place, despite the fact that they have discarded the traditional correctional system, which is to make them come back to society as positive human beings capable of living a full and dignified life, adding that they "have implemented a just sentence."

Open prison and rehabilitation center

The center is designed to help offenders to transition back to society, before leaving the

center, offenders will be given the opportunity to judge their own behavior, discuss their mistakes, and receive a formal assessment. This assessment will include review of the offenders' case, health, education, work and social services, treatment of support, mental and psychological health, and substance abuse disorder.

The center's program consists of three stages: assessment, rehabilitation, and reintegration. In the assessment stage, offenders will be moved to a separate building in the three rehabilitation facility. The rehab facility will receive lectures and participate in activities to enhance their skills and knowledge.

In the rehabilitation stage, offenders will be provided with a daily program that includes a range of activities, including educational programs, vocational and health care, family and social relationship support, and religious education. In the reintegration stage, of



offenders will have more time to engage in their own activities. In supervision, as part of this initiative, ministers and heads of departments will continue to support them with their education, physical and rehabilitation for safety.

The open prison and rehabilitation center, which adds an additional 150 beds to the current system, provides offenders with the support they need to maintain functional society and become law breakers.



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Daily Times Saturday, October 28, 2023

A3

NATIONAL

dailytimes.com.pk

/DailyTimesPak

Lahore Edition

Dr Asif Jah re-elected secretary general of OIC Ombudsmen Association

The 9th meeting of the Board of Directors of the OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA) was successfully held on October 5, 2023, in Istanbul, Republic of Türkiye. The meeting, presided over by His Excellency Mr. Seref Malkoc, OICOA President (Chief Ombudsman of the Republic of Türkiye), and Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah, OICOA General Secretary (Federal Tax Ombudsman of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan), addressed a range of vital issues. The meeting began with President Malkoc's opening remarks, highlighting OICOA's commitment to promoting efficiency and cooperation among member nations to address human rights violations and Islamophobia. He commended the Secretariat's proactive approach and reviewed previous diplomatic engagements, including facilitating a meeting between the Ombudsman of Ukraine and Russia. General Secretary Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah provided an overview of the OICOA Secretariat's current initiatives, emphasizing the launch of the OICOA website, social media channels, and e-newsletters, as well as the challenges posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Executive Secretary, Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah, echoed the commitment to OICOA's initiatives and highlighted the successful execution of these projects. The Board approved the agenda for the meeting and reviewed the previous Board of Directors meeting held in Baku, Azerbaijan. The Board of Directors also unanimously endorsed the Board elections for 2023, with candidates proposed for key positions, including President, Vice President, and General Secretary. The vote of thanks from President Malkoc concluded the meeting. OICOA is committed to promoting cooperation and advancing the objectives of Ombudsman institutions among member countries. The outcomes of the 9th Board of Directors Meeting reflect a shared vision for strengthening OICOA's role on the international stage and its dedication to enhancing human rights, ombudsmanship, and international cooperation.

Dr. Asif Jah got elected as Secretary General of OICOA in its 9th Board of Directors and 3rd General Assembly meeting recently held in Istanbul.

The elected President, Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye, Mr. Seref Malkoc welcomed the Board of directors and members of General assembly & thanked them for their enthusiastic response and confidence to strengthen the network among Ombudsmen Association. He along with other Board members highly appreciated efforts of Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah (Tax Ombudsman) to bring the Association to Operational Stage.

For his vision and leadership to promote concepts of ombudsman ship, Dr. Jah got elected as "General Secretary" of OIC Ombudsman for a four year term in the meeting. Secretary General OICOA thanked and paid his heartfelt regard to the colleagues who reposed trust upon the Board members in the past and he assured, that, "In future too, me and my colleagues would keep on serving this grand Association of Ombudsman brotherhood. NEWS DESK



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OICOA AT GLANCE



OICOA President Seref Malkoc & Italian Ombudsman Marino Fardelli, Secretary General
Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah and Executive Secretary Almas Ali Jovindah



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Ms. Sabina Aliyeva, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Azerbaijan participates in OICOA General Assembly Session



Mr. Maqsoud Kruse, Chairman of the Human Rights Commission of UAE participates in OICOA General Assembly Session



Dr. Zabiullah Khouldun, President of the Ombudsman Institution of Iran
Speaks at OICOA'S General Assembly Session



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Mr. Abdullah Mohamed Qadirbou, Head of the Administrative Control Authority of Libya Speaks at OICOA's General Assembly Session





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Secretary General Asif Mahmood Jah with Ms. Ghada Hameed Habib
Ombudsperson of Kingdom of Bahrain



Mr. Muhammad Najih, Ombudsman of
Republic of Indonesia participates in
OICOA General Assembly Session



Ms. Fatma Benli Yalsin Ombudsman
of Türkiye speaks at OICOA's
General Assembly Session



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