

OIC

OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER



April, 2024



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Top News

Mediator of Kingdom of Morocco H.E. Mohamed Benalilou elected as Vice President of IOI

Almas Ali Jovindah, Executive Secretary OIC Ombudsman Association offered his felicitations to its Board Member, H.E. Mohamed Benalilou, Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco, on being elected as the Vice President of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI).



OCIOA President Mr. Şeref Malkoç participated in international conference held in Qatar

Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye Mr. Şeref Malkoç and his accompanying delegation participated in the international conference on "Food Justice From a Human Rights Perspective: 'Challenges of Reality and Future Stakes'" organized in Qatar/Doha by the National Human Rights Committee of Qatar.



Govt agrees to set up 'more comprehensive' Ombudsman Malaysia

The government has agreed to establish a more comprehensive Ombudsman Malaysia. In a statement, the Legal Affairs Division of the PM's Department also said, the government has agreed to amend the Whistleblower Protection Act to strengthen the law.



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Editorial Team

Tauseef Ahmed Qureshi
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Ombuds Office participates in Bahrain human rights periodic report discussion

Hamad Salman Taqi, the Director of Monitoring Prisons and Detention Facilities represented the Gen. Sec. of the Ombudsman at the discussion of Bahrain's second periodic report on human rights.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Esteemed Members,

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OICOA) is delighted to announce its 11th Board of Directors Meeting, which will take place on June 25th and 26th, 2024, in the enchanting city of Marrakesh, Morocco.

As the Chief Ombudsman of the Republic of Türkiye and the President of the OICOA, I extend a warm welcome to all participants for the upcoming 11th Board of Directors Meeting.

These gatherings transcend mere meetings; they represent a confluence of shared visions dedicated to fostering the esteemed principles of Ombudsmanship on a global stage. Our collective ambition is to uphold justice, fairness, accountability, and the protection of human rights.

I eagerly anticipate the pivotal discussions on expanding OICOA's membership, echoing our joint commitment to enhancing its impact and reach. Additionally, these meetings will highlight the significant role that Islamic states play in strengthening the ethos of Ombudsmanship, sending a powerful message of unity, justice, and equity worldwide.



I look forward to the camaraderie, exchange of insightful ideas, and meaningful deliberations that will unfold during our meetings. Together, let's make these sessions a significant milestone for OICOA, paving the way for a global outreach resonating with the core principles of justice and equity.

Seref MALKOC
(Chief Ombudsman of
the Republic of Türkiye)
President OICOA

SECRETARY GENERAL'S MESSAGE

I am delighted to share the ' APRIL ISSUE ' of OICOA e-Newsletter, embodying the core principle of accountability rooted in the Islamic concept. Our commitment at OICOA extends to the fight against maladministration, protection of human rights and the promotion of good governance, believing that a peaceful society contributes to a peaceful world. Achieving the agenda of peaceful coexistence requires transparency, adherence to the rule of law, and a just system for addressing grievances – a responsibility we shoulder with unwavering commitment and resilience.

I expect enthusiastic participation by the board members in the 11th Board of Directors Meeting, which will take place on June 25th and 26th, 2024, in the enchanting city of Marrakesh, Morocco. We are privileged to be hosted by His Excellency Mohamed BENALILOU, Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco, and a valued member of the OICOA board.

As we share the “APRIL Newsletter” of OICOA, our hearts go out to our Palestinian brethren of Gaza. The brutal attacks and killings of the innocent Palestinian Muslims have not been stopped since 220 days. Horrendously, a total of 35,173 people have been killed and 79,061 injured in Israel's war on Gaza since October 7. OICOA calls upon the UNO and Human Rights Organisations to bring all perpetrators of this unfortunate act to justice.



Ceasefire should be immediately implemented as per Security Council resolution and all international NGOs, be allowed to work for the rescue, relief and rehabilitation of the affectees of War. With the support of member countries, we can build and fortify our association. May our actions be guided by the principles of justice, righteousness and peace.

Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah

(Hilal-i-Imtiaz) (Sitara-i-Imtiaz)

Federal Tax Ombudsman of Pakistan
Secretary General, OICOA

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

Dear Members of the OIC Ombudsman Association,

The April Edition of the OICOA Newsletter is continuation of our commitment to get all the members of OICOA engaged and well informed about the latest developments and events held at the member Ombudsman Institutes.

I am pleased to announce the upcoming Ombudsman Conference, to be held from 11-14 September 2014 in the historic city of Cassino, Monte Cassino, Italy. This momentous event is made possible through the gracious invitation of His Excellency Dott. Marino Fardelli, President of the National Coordinamento of Italy.

The primary objective of this newsletter is to enhance communication and collaboration among our esteemed members, providing the latest insights and advancements in the field of ombudsman services. We've established a dedicated website and social media accounts for OICOA.

I extend a cordial invitation for you to actively engage with this newsletter by sharing your feedback, suggestions, expertise, success stories, and research with fellow members. Let's harness the collective wisdom within our association, fostering a vibrant exchange of ideas and creating a sense of community.



We have developed a dedicated webpage, disseminating regular newsletter and gaining momentum of establishing a research centre as well.

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.

Almas Ali Jovindah
Executive Secretary , OICOA

ANNOUNCEMENT

11th Board Meeting of OIC Ombudsman Association to Convene in Marrakech, Morocco

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OICOA) is delighted to announce its 11th Board of Directors Meeting, which will take place on June 25th and 26th, 2024, in the enchanting city of Marrakesh, Morocco. We are privileged to be hosted by His Excellency Mohamed BENALILOU, Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco, and a valued member of the OICOA board.



This year's meeting is especially significant as it marks an opportunity to celebrate Mr. BENALILOU's recent appointment as the 1st Vice President of the International Ombudsman Institute. His election to this prestigious position is not only a personal achievement but also a considerable honor for OICOA, reflecting the high regard in which our organization and its members are held on the global stage. During the meeting, the OICOA board members will engage in comprehensive discussions to review the progress made on key decisions from the 10th Board Meeting held in Islamabad, Pakistan, earlier this year. Our primary focus will be on the pivotal decision to obtain affiliated institution status with the OIC for OICOA, a move that will significantly enhance our influence and capacity to advocate

a move that will significantly enhance our influence and capacity to advocate for the Muslim Ummah on an international platform. In addition, we will explore further avenues to amplify our efforts in raising awareness and support for critical issues affecting the Muslim community, with a particular emphasis on our Palestinian brethren. Deliberations will also be made with regards to OICOA Executive Body's future course of action for this year to further elevate and strengthen the footprint of OICOA. The Office of the Mediator of Kingdom of Morocco has planned cultural excursions for the delegates from Bahrain, Indonesia, Azerbaijan, Iran, and Turkiye who will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the rich cultural heritage and picturesque landscapes of Marrakesh. Once again, OICOA Board Members will be getting together for an opportunity to further strengthen our collegial bonds. This gathering is not merely about following up on the agenda items of the 11th OICOA Board Meeting; it is about coming together as a community of ombudsmen of OIC States to celebrate our collective achievements and enjoy the warm hospitality of our gracious host, His Excellency Mohamed BENALILOU.

Your dedication and support for OICOA's mission are deeply appreciated. We look forward to welcoming you in Marrakesh, where we will deliberate upon our forthcoming strategies for OICOA, work together towards our shared goals, and celebrate the outstanding accomplishments of our members.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Unity in Diversity: Strengthening Ombudsman Fraternity

OIC Ombudsmen to participate in Ombudsmen Conference in Monte Cassino, Italy

We are pleased to announce the upcoming Ombudsman Conference, to be held from 11-14 September 2014 in the historic city of Cassino, Monte Cassino, Italy. This momentous event is made possible through the gracious invitation of His Excellency Dott. Marino Fardelli, President of the National Coordinamento of Italy.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to His Excellency Dott. Marino Fardelli for extending an invitation to all IOCOA member countries to participate in this significant gathering of Ombudsman fraternity.

We are delighted to announce that students from OICOA member countries, including Pakistan and Uzbekistan are invited to be part of this prestigious event, providing a unique opportunity for knowledge sharing and networking.

This conference holds great significance for the Ombudsman community, and we will ensure its success extending our support to Mr. Marino. Executive Secretary OICOA, Almas Ali Jovindah, is coordinating with OIC members to make this event a worthwhile experience for our member institutes.



We have invited all the OICOA members to participate in this historic conference, where we will engage in fruitful discussions, share best practices, and strengthen our resolve to promote human rights and justice.

Let us come together in the spirit of unity and cooperation!



Mediator of Kingdom of Morocco H.E. Mohamed Benalilou elected as Vice President of IOI

Almas Ali Jovindah, Executive Secretary OIC Ombudsman Association offered his felicitations to its Board Member, H.E. Mohamed Benalilou, Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco, on being elected as the Vice President of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI). The election, which took place at the IOI headquarters in Vienna on the 29th of April 2024, witnessed H.E. Benalilou achieving a significant victory with 70 votes, while surpassing other candidates from the United States, South Africa, and New Zealand. "H.E. Benalilou's, who visited Pakistan this January, his election is a testament to his unwavering commitment and exceptional leadership within the field of ombudsmanship," remarked Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah, Executive Secretary General of OICOA.

This victory brings immense pride to OICOA and underscores the growing global recognition and respect for the vital work undertaken by the ombudsman institutions within our network."c Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah stated that the Executive Body of OICOA is particularly thankful to our member institutes from Pakistan for their unwavering support and votes that assured H.E. Benalilou's success in International Ombudsman Institute's election.



Jovindah further emphasized the significance of Mohamed Benalilou's victory for the OICOA. "This achievement underscores the increasing influence of our association in international governance, particularly in areas like promoting good governance practices and championing the advancement and protection of human rights through ombudsman institutions.

The Executive Secretary reaffirmed his commitment to supporting H.E. Benalilou in his capacity as the Vice President of IOI and look forward to fostering further collaborations between OICOA and IOI to enhance the impact and significance of both organizations.

OICOA MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

Türkiye

International activities and visits of Chief Ombudsman Türkiye and OCIOA President Mr. Şeref Malkoç

1. Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye Mr. Şeref Malkoç and his accompanying delegation participated in the international conference on "Food Justice From a Human Rights Perspective: "Challenges of Reality and Future Stakes" organized in Qatar/Doha by the National Human Rights Committee of Qatar in partner with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions "GANHRI", the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights "OHCHR" in Qatar and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States realized between 6-7 February 2024,. Mr. Malkoç gave a speech at the International Conference. During his visit to Doha, Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref Malkoç had bilateral meetings with the Chairman of Qatar Lawyers Association, Mr. Mubarak Al-Sulaiti; Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Lusail University and Member of the Shura Council Dr. Ali bin Fetais Al Marri.



2. Upon the invitation of the Authorized Person of The Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (Ombudsman) Ms. Feruza Eshmatova, Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref Malkoç and his accompanying delegation participated in the international conference on "Human Rights—an Important Factor of the Sustainable Development of States", organized in Uzbekistan/Tashkent between 23-24 February 2024 on the occasion of the 29th anniversary of the establishment of the Ombudsman Institution of Uzbekistan. During his visit to Tashkent, Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye Mr. Şeref Malkoç realized meetings with Ombudsman of Uzbekistan Ms.Feruza Eshmatova, the

Chairperson of the Senate of Uzbekistan Ms.Tanzila Narbaeva, the Chairperson of the Constitutional Court of Uzbekistan Mr. Mirza-Ulugbek Abdusalomov, the Speaker of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan Mr Nuriddin Ismailov, the Vice Rector of the University of World Economy and Diplomacy in Tashkent Prof. Yusupdjanov Odil Abdugafurovich, and the Rector of Tashkent State University of Law Prof. Dr. Islambek Rustambekov.



3. On 27 February 2024, upon the invitation of the Ombudsman of Ukraine, Mr. Dmytro Lubinets, Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye Mr. Şeref Malkoç participated the "International Platform for the Release of Civilians Arbitrarily Detained by the Russian Federation" via a video message. In his speech, Mr. Malkoç expressed his hope for the Russia-Ukraine war to end and wished for the genocide and brutality in Gaza to end as soon as possible.



4. On 25-28 March 2024, Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref Malkoç and Ombudsman Mr. Sadettin Kalkan paid a study visit to Ukraine upon the invitation of the Ombudsman of Ukraine, Mr. Dmytro Lubinets. The visit started from Odesa, the Transfiguration Cathedral. Following the on-site visit to Transfiguration Cathedral that was destroyed by the missile hitting the Cathedral; grain elevators that were also destroyed were visited. Mr. Şeref Malkoç, together with our Ambassador to Ukraine, Mr. M. Levent Bilgen and Ombudsman of Ukraine, Mr. Dmytro Lubinets attended the iftar dinner organized by the President of Ukraine, Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Mr. Malkoç had the opportunity to meet Mr. Zelenskyy.

5. Mr. Şeref Malkoç attended the meeting at the Ombudsman Institution of Ukraine in Kyiv. During the meeting, Ombudsman of Ukraine, Mr. Dmytro Lubinets gave information about the mandate and activities of his Institution. Mr. Malkoç also gave information about the activities of the Ombudsman Institution of Türkiye. Within the framework of his study visit to Ukraine, together with the participation of representatives of the ICRC Mission and the UN Monitoring Mission, Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref Malkoç met with the families of prisoners of war and listened to the requests of the families. Mr. Şeref Malkoç held a meeting in Kyiv with the Leader of the Crimean Tatar People Mr. Mustafa Dzhemilev, the Chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People Mr. Refat Chubarov, as well as members of the Mejlis. Mr. Malkoç attended the programme realized for internally displaced people in Ukraine. He also paid a visit to the Child Rights Protection Center and met with officials from the UNICEF Ukraine office. Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref Malkoç paid a visit to the facility where the Russian prisoners of war are held, in order to observe the conditions there. Mr. Malkoç met with Muslim prisoners of war and asked about their demands. He also congratulated their Eid al-Fitr. The delegation also visited the regional office of the Ombudsman of Ukraine in Lviv and received information about the activities of the office.



6. Following his visit to Ukraine, Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref Malkoç and Ombudsman Mr. Sadettin Kalkan went to Poland on the 29th of March and paid a visit to the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of Poland Mr. Marcin Wiącek and the Deputy Ombudsman Mr. Valeri Vachev. During the meeting institutional mandates, activities and cooperation issues have been discussed.



7. On 24-28 April 2024, Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref Malkoç and his accompanying delegation paid a study visit to the People's Republic of China upon the invitation of the Vice President of the National Commission for Supervision of China Mr. Fu Kui. Mr. Malkoç visited the Minister of Justice of China, Ms. He Rong. During the meeting, opinions were exchanged on justice and rule of law; also information about the Institution was provided. Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref Malkoç met with Vice-President of China's National Commission of Supervision, Mr. Fu Kui. During the

meeting, the works related to Asian Ombudsman Association were discussed. Moreover, Mr. Malkoç realized a meeting with the Chairman of the China Foundation for Human Rights Development, Mr. Xie Fuzhan. During the meeting, exchange of opinions were made and the activities of both Institutions were touched upon.

8. On 1-2 May 2024 Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref Malkoç and his accompanying delegation participated the 6th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue themed "Dialogue for Peace and Global Security: Cooperation and Interconnectivity" in Baku/Azerbaijan. The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. İlham Aliyev participated to the opening ceremony of the Forum. Mr. Malkoç gave a speech at the International Conference regarding "Enhancing available and flexible regular migration pathways to address irregular migration: creating the conditions for sustainable development". During his visit, Mr. Malkoç had also a meeting with the Ombudsman of Azerbaijan Ms. Sabina Aliyeva and came together with students from the faculty of law who were interns at the Ombudsman Institution of Azerbaijan.



Turkish delegation of Human Rights and Equality Organisation visited Azerbaijan

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey (TIHEK) and the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) institution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, activities are being continued in the direction of expanding mutual cooperation relations and effectively organising the exchange of experience in the field of protection of human rights and freedoms. According to Azernews, a delegation led by the chairman of TIHEK, Muharrem Kılıç, is on a visit to Azerbaijan at the invitation of Ombudsman Sabina Aliyeva in order to



exchange the experiences gained regarding the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) activity and further develop cooperation. During the visit, an inspection of the Umbak Penitentiary Service of the Ministry of Justice was organised with the members of the National Preventive Group (NPG) within the MPM activity of the Ombudsman of Azerbaijan. The TIHEK delegation inspected all the buildings of the newly opened facility, got acquainted with the general conditions created here and the state of protection of the rights of detained persons, including those sentenced to life imprisonment.

Within the framework of the visit, the delegation was also informed in detail about the activities of the Ombudsman of Azerbaijan as NPM, opinions and experiences were exchanged, and their questions were answered. It should be noted that in the near future, the delegation of the Human Rights and Equality Organisation of Turkey is scheduled to visit other institutions that people cannot leave on their own, together with NPG members, as well as meet with some officials.

Meanwhile, Azerbaijan's Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) Sabina Aliyeva has met with the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye (HREIT) delegation, led by the Chairperson, Muharrem Kılıç. During the meeting, Ombudsman Sabina Aliyeva pointed out that collaborative relations existing today between two brotherly countries in various areas of life, including in the field of protecting human rights and freedoms, continue to be developed. Stating also that the close relationship between the HREIT and the Ombudsman Office of Azerbaijan is satisfactory, Sabina Aliyeva said that measures undertaken bilaterally contributed to our cooperation in the relevant field.

The sides also outlined outcomes of the overall visit of the delegation members, underscoring the importance of such visits in terms of sharing experiences for effective upholding human rights and freedoms.

The Ombudsman, speaking about Armenia's policy of occupation against Azerbaijan, noted the high appreciation of the moral support provided by the brotherly country in conveying Azerbaijan voice to the world community. The HREIT Chairperson Muharrem Kılıç, expressed his gratitude for

the hospitality and highlighted the importance of strengthening and developing cooperation between institutions.



Bahrain

Ombuds Office participates in Bahrain human rights periodic report discussion

The Independent Ombudsman Office in Bahrain, participated within the delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain participating in the discussion of the second periodic report submitted to the Arab Charter Committee on Human Rights on April 2023 at the headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo.

The Ombudsman Office participation in discussing Bahrain's second international report submitted to the Charter Committee came within the framework of supporting and integrating national efforts in the field of human rights in cooperation with other relevant ministries and

bodies in the Kingdom, led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This participation also comes as a continuation of the effective contribution of the Ombudsman Office with regard to its Drafting of Bahrain's report before the Arab Committee. In which, it addresses its role in promoting respect for the principles of human rights and its tasks in receiving grievances and visiting correctional and rehabilitation centers, and detention centers. It is noteworthy that the Independent Ombudsman Office had previously received, last February, a delegation from the Arab Human Rights Committee, the Charter Committee of the League of Arab States, headed by His Excellency the Chairman of the Committee and a number of other members. During the meeting, the delegation was briefed on human rights achievements in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the role and tasks of the



Ombudsman Office and the Commission for the Rights of Prisoners and Detainees within the criminal justice system and independent national redress institutions.



Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan's PM meets with Chairman of Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ali Asadov, met with Muharrem Kılıç, Chairman of the Human Rights and Equality Organisation of Türkiye. Sabina Aliyeva, Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, also participated in the meeting. During the meeting, information was provided on continuous reforms aimed at the effective protection of human rights and freedoms in our country. Satisfaction was expressed with the ongoing development of cooperation between Azerbaijan and Türkiye in various directions, including the protection of human rights and freedoms. The importance of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the ombudsman institutions of the two countries was emphasised, and it was stated that the work done in this framework contributed to the development of cooperation in the relevant field. At the meeting, the development prospects of Azerbaijan-Türkiye mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields, including the protection of human rights and freedoms, were discussed. In another development, A meeting was held at the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan with the delegation headed by Muharrem Kilic, the

chairman of the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye (TIHEK), who is on a visit to Azerbaijan. It was noted at the meeting that the legal cooperation between the two countries had been successfully developed.

Chairman Farhad Abdullayev also informed the guest about the cooperation between the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan and

the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) institution in the field of ensuring human rights. Muharrem Kilic noted that the close cooperation between the two countries in all fields, including between the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye, is successfully developing on the basis of mutual support and understanding.



Malaysia

Govt agrees to set up 'more comprehensive' Ombudsman Malaysia

The government has agreed to establish a more comprehensive Ombudsman Malaysia. In a statement, the Legal Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Department also said the government, through the Law and Institutional Reforms Agenda Implementation Committee, has agreed to amend the Whistleblower Protection Act to strengthen the law.

The committee, which held its first meeting today, said it would engage stakeholders at the state and federal levels within the next three months over the two proposals. "The stakeholders include agencies, non-governmental organisations, civil society groups, Dewan Negara and Dewan Rakyat Parliamentary Select Committees

as well chairman of the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye (TIHEK), who is on a visit to Azerbaijan. It was noted at the meeting that the legal cooperation between the two countries had been successfully developed.

Chairman Farhad Abdullayev also informed the guest about the cooperation between the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan and as academicians," it said. The committee, through the engagement sessions, will seek to refine details about the scope, structure, and functions of Ombudsman Malaysia as well as a proposed centralised agency for

whistleblower protection. "The government intends for these two legal reforms to be tabled during the parliamentary session in October. "The establishment of this committee also reflects the unity government's commitment to ensuring institutional and legal reform efforts are implemented effectively." The meeting, which was chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, also involved Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform) Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said.



Iran

The swearing-in ceremony of newly arrived inspection trainees held

The Vice President of the General Inspection Organization: Improving affairs and preventing redundant processes will bring public satisfaction. According to the public relations report of the General Inspection Organization, the swearing-in ceremony of the new inspection trainees was held in the presence of Judge Rahmanian, the Vice President of GIO.

At the beginning of this ceremony Judge Rahmanian addressed the newly arrived trainees by honoring Labor Week and Teacher's Day: You are at the beginning of an important and sensitive path, and from now on, commit yourself to learning and gaining more knowledge.

He said: One of your most important approaches in this dangerous position is to see what the

people's problems are and how to solve the knot of the people's problems through supervisory action. This official stated that it is a red line to cause dissatisfaction and damage to public trust and clarified: In performing the duties and tasks



assigned, go for important and great works that attract the trust of the society and public satisfaction. Referring to the importance of the fight against corruption in gaining public trust, the Vice President of the GIO stated: Part of the people's complaints is about corruption. Of course, the meaning of corruption is not only economic corruption. Rather, any illegal act that harms people's trust is a type of corruption. This corruption can be administrative, political, cultural, social and economic and even a simple administrative corruption.

Referring to the importance of fighting corruption in realizing the slogan of the year, Rahmanian said: All managers and elements of the Islamic Republic of Iran are required to implement and realize the slogan of the year. In this regard, part of the task of our inspectors is to identify the sources of corruption, bottlenecks of corruption, enumerate the causes of weakness in productivity, non-compliance with laws and regulations related to production and employment, lack of work and laxity in some departments, etc. He pointed out: In order to realize the slogan of the year, it is necessary to have things such as comprehensive and complete and forward-looking

planning in economic and executive institutions, support for the private sector, full compliance with economic laws and regulations, avoiding marginalization, strengthening the spirit of work and production, avoiding Consumerism, preventing frequent changes in laws and guidelines and creating legal stability, mandatory pricing, etc. should be taken into consideration. The Vice President of GIO emphasized the comprehensive fight against corruption and said: Do not consider corruption limited to some issues such as economic, administrative corruption, etc. Appointing an incompetent manager in a managerial position and even hiring and recruiting an employee outside the rules and regulations can be a corruption and we must be the eyes of the Islamic system in these cases.

Stating that one of the people's complaints is the issue of long and sometimes pointless bureaucracies, this judicial official said: A person who refers to an organization should not be involved in administrative letters and complex administrative bureaucracy for weeks and months and inevitably be forced to pay bribes in order to achieve his request. Preventing these redundant processes and correcting matters can provide public satisfaction. Rahmanian continued with the description that there is no better reputation than the correct and complete implementation of the law, and there is no worse reputation than violating regulations: If we want to understand the commitment to the implementation of the law, we must pay attention to the manner and method of the Supreme Leader Even in the most difficult periods of the system, they have emphasized on the implementation of the law.

In his advices to new inspection trainees, he stated: If you want to be a good inspector, you must master the rules and regulations of the organization under inspection before any supervisory action. You must know the legal capacities of that institution well and be aware of the structure, function and output of that institution so that in the end you can comment that the laws have been implemented correctly or that there is a need to amend or introduce a new law and if it has not been implemented correctly, the reason for that. what has been This official continued: Be consultative, especially with colleagues and experts. He stated: One of the serious weaknesses of the administrative system and executive bodies is the lack of complete respect of the managers and employees to the laws and regulations and mandatory instructions and commitment to their implementation, so this issue has been taken into consideration in the judicial reform document and is part of one of them. It is one of the missions of the National Inspection Organization.

In another recommendation to the new trainees, Vice President of GIO said: seek to find the root and identify the causes of corruption and try to eliminate corruption from the roots. This view means identifying corruption bottlenecks, promoting transparency and monitoring the realization of e-government goals in a serious manner in the inspection organization, and you should put these issues at the top of your work priorities. In the final part of his speech, he ordered the trainees to strengthen their relationship with Allah and said: strengthen your relationship with the Creator as much as you can. Don't be arrogant in your work and know that the devil lurks in a proud and arrogant person. Put your trust in God in your work and consider sincerity in your work to bring Allah's pleasure. It should be mentioned that at the end of this meeting, the swearing-in ceremony of the new trainees was held in the presence of the Holy Quran.

OIC OMBUDSMAN FROM PAKISTAN

Pakistan's Federal Ombudsman

Federal Ombudsman of Pakistan disposes of 193,028 complaints in 2023

Federal Ombudsman (Wafaqi Mohtasib) of Pakistan has processed a record 194,099 complaints against the maladministration of government departments in 2023, which is 18% higher than the previous year. President Asif Ali Zardari has directed the federal ombudsman to take all necessary steps for expanding the scope and outreach so that the maximum number of people could benefit from its services. Federal Ombudsman (Wafaqi Mohtasib) of Pakistan has processed a record 194,099 complaints against the maladministration of government departments in 2023, which is 18% higher than the previous year. Out of these, 193,028 complaints were disposed of which is 22% higher than the year 2022. This was reported by Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi who called on President Asif Ali Zardari and presented the annual report of the Federal Ombudsman, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. The ombudsman briefed

the president about the performance and initiatives taken by the federal ombudsman. He said that the ombudsman was providing speedy and free-of-cost justice to the complainants against the maladministration of various government departments.



He informed that 49,190 complaints were received online in 2023, which was an increase of 47% from last year adding that 22,321 complaints were received through the mobile app, showing an increase of 21% as compared to the year 2022. He said the ombudsman was using the latest technology to help in the speedy redressal of cases and to enhance its outreach to the people in remote areas of the country.

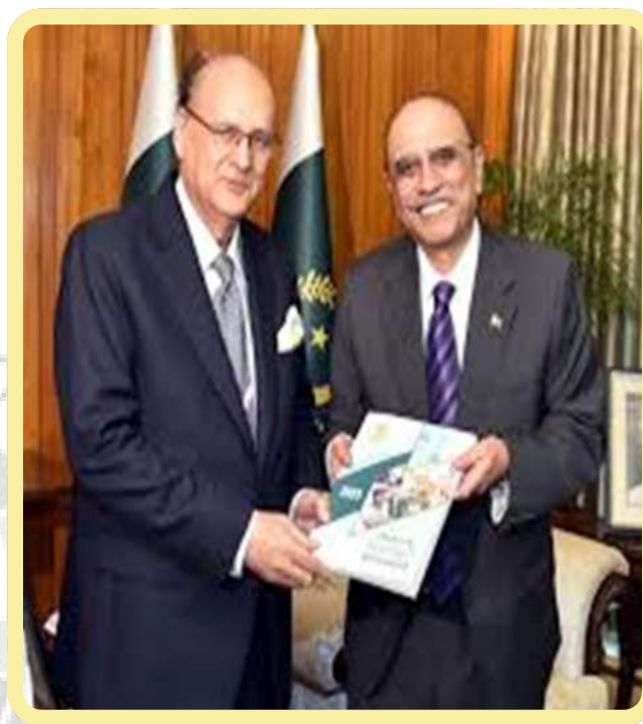
The Ombudsman highlighted that the opening of new regional offices, holding of Khuli Kutcheries, launching of the Informal Resolution of Disputes mechanism, and visits of Ombudsman's inspection teams had helped in addressing complaints, besides leading to an increase in the registration of complaints. He further said that the office of Overseas Pakistanis in the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat had processed a record 202,367 complaints received through Pakistan Missions abroad, and one window facilitation desks at all international airports of the country. The president appreciated the performance of the ombudsman and urged the need to take further steps to enhance its outreach so that the maximum number of people could benefit of its services.

Banking Ombudsman of Pakistan

The Institution of Banking Mohtasib Pakistan (BMP) provides relief amounting to Rs1.26 billion to the Banking Customers in year 2023

Addressing a press conference at the Institute of Bankers Pakistan, the Banking Mohtasib Pakistan, Sirajuddin Aziz on Monday said that overall, some 86 percent or 21,886 complaints, out of 36,437 complaints received during the year and those brought forward from the year 2022, were resolved amicably through reconciliation. Some 3 percent or 676 complaints were decided after formal hearings and 11 percent which the institution of Banking Mohtasib has been established.

While unveiling the Annual Report of BMP for the year 2023, Sirajuddin Aziz explained that there was an increase of 21 percent in public complaints lodged with BMP Office against commercial banks during 2023 as compared to 2022. However, there was a significant decrease in the complaints received on Prime Minister's Portal, which explains overall decrease of 5 percent in total number of complaints during 2023. He disclosed that relief of approximately Rs. 6.4 billion was provided to the Banking Customers by the institution of Banking Mohtasib since its inception in 2005. He said that the Annual Report 2023 of the Banking Mohtasib was presented to the President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari on April 19, 2024 at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.



On the occasion, the Hon'ble President appreciated the role of BMP in delivering free of cost service to the banking Customers and promoting good governance. He stressed the need to keep pace with technological advancements of banking industry to manage speedy disposal of public complaints. In addition, in compliance with the legal requirements, the Banking Mohtasib's Annual Report 2023 was presented to the Governor, State Bank of Pakistan, Jameel Ahmed on 28th March, 2024. Aziz emphasized upon all banks to collectively launch a massive public awareness campaign through electronic and print media to educate Banking Customers in order to protect them from frauds and forgeries. He also urged upon the commercial banks to take substantive, meaningful and effective steps for foolproof security of their customers' deposits. He further said that the Banking Mohtasib Office is also planning to run effective public awareness campaign through SMS in local languages to protect the Banking Customers from the nefarious designs of fraudsters.

Federal Tax Ombudsman of Pakistan

Honourable Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah Hosts Aftaar Dinner, Advocates for Justice and Peace in Gaza

The President of the Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman, Honourable Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah, hosted Aftaar dinner event on March 22 at Federal Tax Ombudsman Secretariat Islamabad. The event was graced by notable guests including representatives from the Federal Ombudsman, Banking and Insurance Ombudsmen, and the Ombudsman from Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Former Federal Tax Ombudsman Honourable Abdul Rauf Chaudhary also attended the event. Moreover, this prestigious event saw the participation of employees from the Federal Tax

Ombudsman Secretariat among other distinguished guests. Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah, the Executive Secretary of FPO and Advisor Federal Tax Ombudsman initiated the event informing about the aims and objectives of the FPO Forum. Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman is an association of 24 Ombudsman and Ombudspersons Institutions in Pakistan aiming to coordinate, collaborate and conduct meetings and training's to share experience with each other to share experiences with each other to deliver justice to the masses. In his welcoming address, Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah underscored the essence of Ramadan as a month of blessings, teaching patience, peace, and fostering brotherhood amongst all.



He highlighted the commendable performance of all Ombudsman Institutions in Pakistan, emphasizing their pivotal role in dispensing justice to the common citizens and significantly reducing their grievances.

Dr. Jah lauded the Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman Association for its crucial role in alleviating the grievances of the people. He called upon the gathering to hold the Muslim communities of Rohingya, Kashmir, and especially Gaza in their prayers, pointing out the dire situation in Gaza where, according to him, "Israel has crossed all limits of brutality." Dr. Jah maintained that each ombudsman Institution in Pakistan is trying its best to dispense justice to the public.



The spirit of philanthropy was vividly demonstrated by Mr. Faiz Ahmad Chadhar, Director General Customs, who generously donated 17 wells to the Customs Healthcare Society. This Society patronized by Honourable Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah, aims to aid the underprivileged in Pakistan's deprived areas, showcasing a significant commitment to humanitarian efforts. On the Occasion, former DG Health Dr Fayyaz Ahmed Ranjha conducted special prayer for the Gaza Muslims who are dying and facing tortures of Israeli juggernaut.



This aftaar dinner event not only served as a platform for dialogue and unity among the various ombudsman entities but also highlighted the collective efforts and dedication towards ensuring justice and support for the fortunate. Dr. Jah's call prayers for the oppressed Muslim

communities around the world resonated deeply with all attendees, reinforcing the message of peace and brotherhood.

FOSPAH

Officers of PAS briefed about working, performance of Ombudsperson secretariat

A delegation of 39 officers of the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS), visited on Tuesday the Federal Ombudsperson Secretariat for Protection against Harassment (FOSPAH) as part of their study tour of the 47th Specialized Training Programme (STP). The Officers were accompanied by Ms. Ammara Amir Khattak, Director (PAS); Mr. Qadir Nawaz, Additional Director Programme; and Mr. Muhammad Anees Chishti, Programme Officer.

The visit commenced with a presentation on the mandate and working of FOSPAH which was delivered by Ms. Meher Jamy, Law Officer. The delegation held a meeting with the Federal Ombudsperson against Harassment Ms. Fauzia Viqar along with the legal advisers. They were briefed about the powers of *suomotu* available to the Federal Ombudsperson in harassment matters; the range of penalties that can be imposed on guilty persons and the methods available for their implementation; the process adopted by FOSPAH to comply with standards of due process and natural justice; and the steps being taken by FOSPAH to reach out to the most marginalized sections of society.



The presentation was followed by court proceedings in harassment and property complaints, which the Officers observed giving them a practical demonstration of the procedure followed at FOSPAH.

Meanwhile, The Youth General Assembly (YGA) organised the National Law Moot on Workplace Harassment from 09.03.2024 to 11.03.2024 in collaboration with Lord's College international in Islamabad. The finale of the moot was held at the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection

against Harassment and was won by the team from Punjab University against Bahria University, both of whom reached the finale after two days of knock out rounds and semi finals which witnessed 36 teams from across Pakistan participating. The Moot was arranged by YGA and Lord's College to raise awareness regarding the legal framework governing harassment amongst the law students of Pakistan to facilitate the creation of a harassment and discrimination free work environment where all men, women and transgendered persons are able to exercise their fundamental right to work with dignity and respect. The event ended with a vote of thanks by the Federal Ombudsperson against Harassment who congratulated the team of YGA and Lord's College for their effort and encouraged the holding of similar events in the future.

Federal Tax Ombudsman of Pakistan

Federal Tax Ombudsman Drives Positive Change in Tax Administration: A Look at 2021–2023 Developments

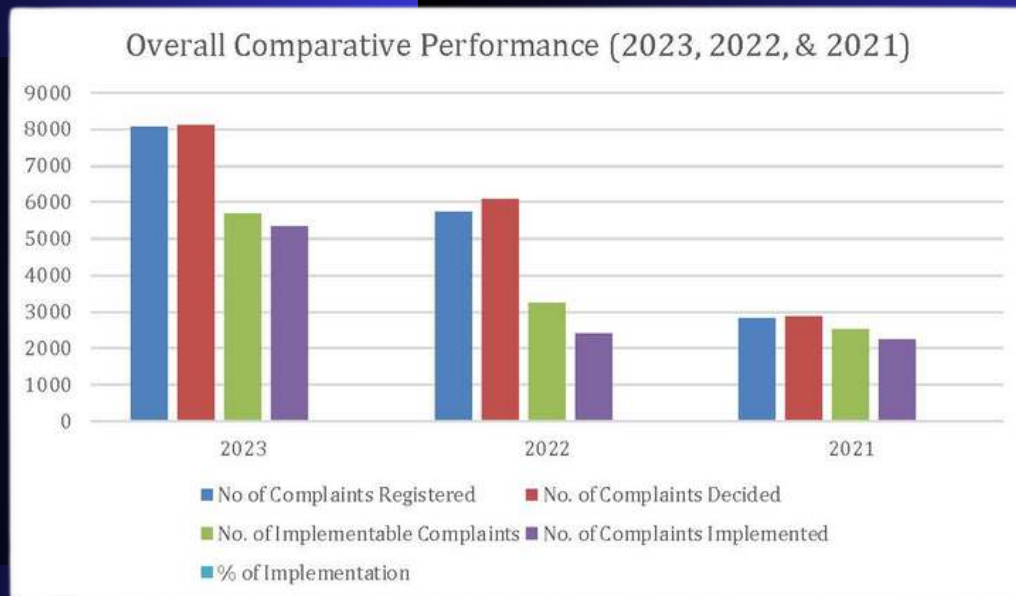
In the ever-evolving landscape of tax administration, the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) of Pakistan has been a beacon of change, tirelessly working to address grievances and ensure justice for taxpayers. Over the period from 2021 to 2023, significant developments have taken place under the purview of the FTO, marking a shift towards a more efficient and transparent tax system. In 2023, the FTO embarked on an aggressive Outreach Campaign aimed at fostering public awareness regarding its mandate of providing swift and cost-free justice to aggrieved taxpayers and the general public.

Notably, 115 seminars and sessions were conducted across small cities like Sukkur, Okara, Sahiwal, Dadu, and Larkana. This concerted effort facilitated the registration of complaints, with the adjudication time reduced to a commendable 37 days. Moreover, over 100 own motion investigations were initiated, benefiting millions of aggrieved individuals. The FTO's commitment to expeditiously resolving complaints was further underscored by the initiation of informal dispute resolution mechanisms under Section 33 of the FTPO Ordinance 2000. This approach ensured the rapid resolution of urgent cases, providing much-needed relief to complainants. Additionally, the establishment of an Overseas Pakistani cell exemplifies the FTO's dedication to addressing grievances across diverse demographics. The interns appointed in the FTO Secretariat also contributed significantly by liaising with the administration of Colleges and Universities located in Islamabad and Rawalpindi including NUST, NUML, International Islamic University and got arranged seminars in the campuses of these important educational institutions. The above initiatives led to a significant increase in number of complaints with following details:

Overall Comparative Performance (2023, 2022 & 2021)

Year	No. of Complaints Registered	No. of Complaints Decided	No. of Implementable Complaints	No. of Complaints Implemented	% of Implementation
2023	8076	8128*	5704	5366	94.07%
2022	5752	6106	3262	2391	73.29%
2021	2816	2867	2538	2238	88.15%

* Cases decided include 239 cases from previous year 2022



The collaborative efforts between the FTO and the Pakistan Telecom Authority (PTA) yielded substantial results, with awareness messages disseminated to approximately 117 million mobile phone users. This partnership not only enhanced public awareness but also facilitated an influx of inquiries regarding the functions and objectives of the FTO. Furthermore, strategic alliances with leading universities and organizations such as Bahria University, Comsats University, and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) underscored the FTO's commitment to capacity building and knowledge dissemination.

The positive reception of the FTO's decisions by the Honourable President of Pakistan, upholding 86.01% of representations filed against decisions made by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) or complainants, underscores the confidence instilled in the FTO and its adjudicatory process. Additionally, the establishment of a dedicated helpline and FTO TV channel further enhances accessibility and transparency, while fostering public trust in the institution.

The proactive response of the Revenue Division (FBR) to the recommendations of the FTO is indicative of a constructive partnership aimed at systemic improvement. Measures such as the issuance of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for various processes and the simplification of mechanisms for tax filing and payment reflect a commitment to enhancing efficiency and compliance within the tax system. In conclusion, the Federal Tax Ombudsman's performance in 2023 underscores its unwavering commitment to safeguarding the rights of taxpayers and the public at large. Through proactive outreach, expedited dispute resolution, and strategic collaborations, the FTO has emerged as a beacon of justice and accountability in the realm of tax administration. Moving forward, sustained efforts towards institutional strengthening and stakeholder engagement will be crucial in further enhancing the efficacy and impact of the FTO's interventions.

Punjab Ombudsman

State land worth Rs43m retrieved on directions of Punjab Ombudsman

On the orders of Punjab Ombudsman Major Azam Suleman Khan (R), a total of 43 kanals of government land worth more than Rs43 million was recovered.

Various complainants from across the province filed complaints in the office of Ombudsman Punjab regarding illegal farming on government land and encroachment on government land and requested that government land be handed over from these encroaching mafias. In this context, the Ombudsman Punjab Major Azam Suleman Khan (R) ordered various Assistant Commissioners, Chief Officer Municipal Committee of the province to recover the above-mentioned area according to the rules of the provincial govt. In this regard, a total of 43 kanals of government land was acquired, the market value of which is more than 43 Million on the orders of Punjab Ombudsman Major Azam Suleman Khan (R), a total of 43 kanals of government land worth more than Rs43 million was recovered.



Various complainants from across the province filed complaints in the office of Ombudsman Punjab regarding illegal farming on government land and encroachment on government land and requested that government land be handed over from these encroaching mafias. In this context, the Ombudsman Punjab Major Azam Suleman Khan (R) ordered various Assistant Commissioners, Chief Officer Municipal Committee of the province to recover the above-mentioned area according to the rules of the provincial govt. In this regard, a total of 43 kanals of government land was acquired, the market value of which is more than 43 Million. Provincial Ombudsman Major (Rtd) Azam Sulaiman Khan presented the annual report 2023 to IG Punjab Dr Usman Anwar.

Provincial Ombudsman Major (Rtd) Azam Sulaiman Khan said that he appreciates the Punjab Police for maintaining law and order in the province, eliminating crimes, provision of justice and welfare measures for the citizens. Major Rtd Azam Sulaiman Khan also presented an honorary shield to IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar. Secretary Ombudsman Punjab Syed Tahir Raza Hamdani, Advisor Headquarters Shafiq Hussain Bukhari and Dr. Masood Saleem Advisor implementation were also present on the occasion.

Punjab Ombudsperson

Punjab Ombudsperson signs MoU with Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Center

March was a landmark month for women's rights in Punjab. We witnessed a surge in the number of women securing their rightful property ownership through regional offices. This empowering development signifies progress towards a more just and equitable society. A beacon of hope for working women shone brightly with the signing of a crucial Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Punjab Ombudsperson for Protection of Women against Harassment at the Workplace and Shirkat



Gah-Women's Resource Centre. This three-year "Stand Together to End Sexual Harassment at the Workplace (SATH)" project, funded by What Works 2, promises a future where women feel empowered and safe in their professional spaces. The Ombudsperson's office, under the leadership of the dedicated Nabila Khan, has consistently championed the cause of women. Their commitment to creating a secure environment for working women and ensuring their property rights is commendable. The SATH project represents a significant step forward. It aims to empower women by equipping them with the knowledge and tools to navigate workplace harassment. Building a culture of respect within organizations is another crucial aspect of the project. This collaborative effort promises to transform workplaces across Punjab, creating a climate where women can thrive without fear of intimidation or discrimination.

March developments offer a glimpse into a brighter future for women in Punjab. By securing their property rights and fostering safe workspaces, we are paving the way for a more equitable and prosperous society. We must continue to support these initiatives and celebrate the tireless efforts of the Ombudsperson's office and organizations like Shirkat Gah in making Punjab a leader in women's empowerment.

Sindh Ombudsman

MR. MUHAMMAD SOHAIL RAJPUT TAKES OATH AS 7TH PROVINCIAL OMBUDSMAN SINDH

In a solemn ceremony held at Governor House in Karachi, Governor Sindh Mr. Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori administered the oath of Provincial Ombudsman Sindh by Mr. Muhammad Sohail Rajput. The event was attended



by provincial secretaries, senior government officials, and dignitaries from the city. He was congratulated by Governor Sindh on assuming the responsibilities of Ombudsman Sindh.

Mr. Rajput joined the Civil Service of Pakistan after qualifying Central Superior Service Examination (CSS) in the year 1991. During his lengthy career, he has served at various positions in the field at Sindh Secretariat and at Federal Secretariat; as Secretary of the Finance Department, Government of Sindh, Secretary of the Energy Department, Government of Sindh, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Sindh, Commissioner of Karachi Division, Additional Finance Secretary, Government of Pakistan, Special Secretary Ministry of Commerce, Government of Pakistan, Secretary of the Information Technology & Telecommunication Division, Government of Pakistan, Chief Secretary to Government of Sindh and Secretary, Board of Investment, Government of Pakistan.

Mr. Rajput's core areas of expertise include General Administration/Management, Public Finance Management and Project Development and Implementation. He has proven his ability to work in challenging situation with diversified stakeholders and against strict timelines. Mr. Rajput's key achievements include developing the Thar Coal Mining and Power project, improving fiscal health of Government of Sindh through effective financial management, enhancing IT exports of the country through effective policy interventions and shaping the response to super floods of 2022 in the Province of Sindh by providing timely relief services and designing projects for post flood rehabilitation.

Ombudsperson Office, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

KP OMBUDSPERSON HOLDS AWARENESS SESSIONS

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Ombudsperson for the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace, in partnership with the Legal Aid Society (LAS), held a series of awareness sessions from February 20 to 23, 2024, to inform communities about the Enforcement of Women Property Rights Act 2019 and the procedure for filing complaints under this law. This collaboration aims to enhance the implementation of laws protecting women's rights and properties and raise awareness about the rights of women to access justice, especially in matters concerning property ownership and possession. More than 116 participants, including representatives from the Police Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women (KPCSW),



National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), Federal Ombudsman, Provincial Ombudsman, Revenue staff of the Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, civil society members, disability rights activists, transgender activists, minority activists, lawyers, Social Welfare Department, Women Crises Center, and Medico-legal staff, actively participated in these sessions.

Act 2019” was held by the legal officer of the Ombudsperson in collaboration with UNWomen in Aka Khel Bara district, Khyber, on March 20, 2024, and subsequently in Lajar/Ambar district, Mohmand, on March 21, 2024. The Honourable Ombudsperson attended celebration of International Women Day event organized by various institutions such as BRT at TransPeshawar office, Benazir Women University Laram, Peshawar and DAI at Serena Hotel, Gandhara Hindku Board Peshawar on March 08, 2024. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ombudsperson conducted a quarterly meeting of the Provincial Harassment Watch Committee to review the progress of institutes functioning in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The main agenda of the review was to get updates

regarding the status of complaints lodged under the Harassment Law in the 1st Quarter of 2024, share the number and progress of awareness sessions, issues and problems faced by institutions and Standing Inquiry Committees, and provide feedback for improving the Performance of



Standing Inquiry Committees. All participants provided updated information on the number of harassment complaints filed in their respective institutes, the updated status of those complaints, and the status of the Standing Inquiry Committees.

The Minister Law and Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights Department visited Ombudsperson office. During the visit, the esteemed Ombudsperson provided a comprehensive briefing to the honorable minister regarding the office's progress and the challenges it faces. The minister took round of/ toured the Ombudsperson office and assures the Ombudsperson Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that issues related with her office will be resolved at priority basis in nearby future.

OICOA in Media



Morocco's Benalilou Elected First Vice-President of International Ombudsman Institute

Rabat - In a significant development for international governance, Mohamed Benalilou, the Ombudsman of the Kingdom of Morocco, has been elected as the first vice president of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI). The election took place on Sunday at the headquarters of the General Secretariat of the Institute in Vienna, with participation from ombudsman institutions worldwide.

Benalilou's victory was resounding, securing 70 votes, far surpassing competitors from the United States of America and South Africa, who garnered 44 votes each, and New Zealand with 40 votes. This historic achievement marks the first time a representative from Morocco assumes a leadership position within the IOI, highlighting the Kingdom's growing influence on the global stage. The Office of the Mediator of the Kingdom emphasized that Benalilou's election reaffirms Morocco's esteemed position in international forums under the enlightened guidance of His Majesty King Mohammed VI.

Following his election, Benalilou becomes a member of the Bureau of the Council of the International Ombudsman Institute, further cementing Morocco's role in shaping global governance policies. The inauguration of the new members will coincide with the 13th World Conference in The Hague, Netherlands, commencing on May 12, 2024. This gathering of ombudsman institutions from around the world will set the stage for collaborative efforts towards enhancing governance practices and capacity building.

Established in 1978, the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) serves as the primary platform for over 200 member ombudsman institutions across six regions: Africa, Asia, Australia and the Pacific, Europe, the Caribbean and Latin America, and North America. The IOI's mission focuses on promoting good governance through training, research, and regional grants to support impactful projects.



Govt agrees to set up 'more comprehensive' Ombudsman Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR: The government has agreed to establish a more comprehensive Ombudsman Malaysia. In a statement, the Legal Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Department also said the government, through the Law and Institutional Reforms Agenda Implementation Committee, has agreed to amend the Whistleblower Protection Act to strengthen the law. The committee, which held its first meeting today, said it would engage stakeholders at the state and federal levels within the next three months over the two proposals. "The stakeholders include agencies, non-governmental organisations, civil society groups, Dewan Negara and Dewan Rakyat Parliamentary Select Committees as well as academicians," it said.

The committee, through the engagement sessions, will seek to refine details about the scope, structure, and functions of Ombudsman Malaysia as well as a proposed centralised agency for whistleblower protection.



Gaza report dispatched worldwide by Türkiye's Ombudsman Institution

Aykut Yilmaz

As Israel's deadly offensive on the Gaza Strip enters its sixth month, an official report from Türkiye on the situation in the Palestinian enclave has been dispatched worldwide, aiming to serve as evidence in the prosecution of those responsible for "massacre, war crimes, and genocide," according to the country's chief ombudsman. The document, titled Gaza: A Special Report on the Catastrophe of Humanity, was prepared by Türkiye's Ombudsman Institution and introduced at Turkish parliament last week. It has now been sent to other legislatures, as well as international institutions and organizations including the UN Security Council, European Parliament, Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the International Criminal Court (ICC). Speaking to Anadolu, Chief Ombudsman Seref Malkoc underlined the importance of the report documenting the "genocide" that Israel has waged in Gaza since Oct. 7, adding that copies had been distributed to the representatives of nearly 200 countries at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF) on March 1-3. "I believe that this report will be used as evidence in courts where those responsible for the massacre, war crimes, and genocide in Gaza will be tried," Malkoc said.

'World's largest child cemetery'

Since the report was made public, ambassadors from many countries have asked for appointments to discuss its contents, Malkoc noted. "South Africa's ambassador said they would forward the report to their president to be sent to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). "In addition, a team headed by our ombudsman Fatma Benli Yalcin sent the report electronically to all human rights defenders, ombuds, human rights commissions in countries' parliaments, and judgment institutions worldwide. "Since Oct. 7, Gaza has turned into the world's largest children's cemetery," the official lamented. There is no other example in the world of the massacre unfolding in Gaza, he said, adding: "They dropped bombs on Gaza three times more powerful than the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki."

"Nearly 70,000 tons of bombs," he stressed.

Criticizing the US and many European nations for maintaining their support for Israel, Malkoc also pointed out that millions around the world "who have a conscience and value human dignity are taking to the streets" to protest Israel's onslaught. With the events in Gaza, the international system set up by Europe and the US after World War II has collapsed, along with all their theories and jurisprudence on human rights, he asserted. Arguing that the world needs a new breath of fresh air on human rights thinking, Malkoc said: "Our president's (Recep Tayyip Erdogan) statement that, 'the world is bigger than five,' and the fact that it is gaining attention all over the world is the most concrete indicator of this."

'Being a woman in Gaza'

Calling attention to the suffering of women and children in Gaza since Oct. 7, Ombudswoman Yalcin also underlined that Israel has been committing genocide in Gaza over the past five months. Speaking to Anadolu, she noted that according to the UN Population Fund, pregnant women face the risk of miscarriage at rates of up to 300% as they have no access to hospital care. Yalcin pointed out that the 50,000 women who were pregnant in Gaza on Oct. 7 could not "give birth in a healthy way" amid the lack of food and clean water, with many among the 2 million displaced since the offensive began.

The official further said: "That is why there are so many child deaths. There are even many reports of women going through c-sections without anesthesia," said the official. "Things are getting much worse for women in Gaza," she warned. "This March 8, we need to proclaim this to the whole world." Yalcin emphasized that the number of women killed in Gaza has exceeded 7,500 and urged women's organizations around the world to raise their voices on International Women's Day to say: "Stop the massacre of women and children in Gaza." "We have prepared a brochure on what being a woman is like in Gaza and we will present it at the Commission on the Status of Women to be held at the UN," she said, adding that the Turkish parliament's Committee on Equal Opportunity for Women and Men would also take part in this presentation.

Stating that women and children have been targeted and killed by Israeli snipers in Gaza, she said the Ombudsman Institution's report document this and other aspects of the situation in the besieged territory. Yalcin also underlined that what is happening in Gaza is the result of Israel's impunity. "If the world does not oppose this with a louder voice, if Palestine is not recognized as an independent state in the UN, if an immediate cease-fire is not achieved, all the rights violations taking place in the world will become crimes in which governments worldwide are complicit," she warned. She said only "existing cases" have been used in the report to document the genocide.

"On March 8, everyone who thinks about Gaza should ask themselves the question, 'What would I do if I were the mother of that child?' Israel has waged a deadly military offensive on the Gaza Strip since an Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas attack which Tel Aviv said killed nearly 1,200 people. More than 30,700 Palestinians have since been killed and over 72,000 others injured amid mass destruction and shortages of necessities. Israel has also imposed a crippling blockade on the Gaza Strip, leaving its population, particularly residents of northern Gaza, on the verge of starvation."



Qatar's National Human Rights Committee Chairperson expresses willingness to cooperate with Azerbaijan

During the meeting, Ombudsman Sabina Aliyeva provided an insight into her mandate, as well as the activities in the field of protecting and promoting human rights and freedoms.

Stressing the importance of international cooperation, the Azerbaijani Ombudsman highlighted close collaboration with international organizations, as well as foreign ombudspersons and NHRIs of other countries, and concluded memorandum of understanding, adding that such bilateral cooperation will be further strengthened.

Touching upon the amendments to the Constitutional Law on the Ombudsman, Sabina Aliyeva pointed out the expansion of the Ombudsman's mandate regarding the protection of PWDs and children's rights, ensuring equality and preventing discrimination, and protection of the right to information and other areas.

Providing information about the NPM activities, the Ombudsman also brought to the attention of the Chairperson the preventive monitoring visits conducted to places which persons cannot leave at their own will without prior notification in order to investigate detention conditions and treatment, and follow up on the implementation of the previously given recommendations.

The Ombudsman underlined that, up to date, there is no any information about the fate of about 4000 of our citizens reported missing during the First Karabakh War, while highlighting the occupation and terror policy of Armenia against Azerbaijan.

The discussions revolved around the landmines problem existing in the liberated territories, which had been planted by Armenia during the occupation, and which endangers the lives and health of the Azerbaijani citizens, hinders the safe return of the former IDPs to their ancestral lands, as well as the ongoing reconstruction process in the liberated territories.

Sabina Aliyeva shared her views about the prospects for cooperation within COP29, the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, which will be hosted by Azerbaijan this year.

Chairperson Maryam bint Abdullah Al-Attiyah provided information about her own mandate, the Committee's activity areas, expressing her interest in future collaboration.

During the meeting, they also discussed other issues of mutual interest and prospects for cooperation.



Azerbaijan, Türkiye discuss cooperation in protection of human rights

Baku, May 2, AZERTAC

Azerbaijan's Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) Sabina Aliyeva has met with the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye (HREIT) delegation, led by the Chairperson, Muharrem Kiliç. During the meeting, Ombudsman Sabina Aliyeva pointed out that collaborative relations existing today between two brotherly countries in various areas of life, including in the field of protecting human rights and freedoms, continue to be developed.

Stating also that the close relationship between the HREIT and the Ombudsman Office of Azerbaijan is satisfactory, Sabina Aliyeva said that measures undertaken bilaterally contributed to our cooperation in the relevant field.

The sides also outlined outcomes of the overall visit of the delegation members, underscoring the importance of such visits in terms of sharing experiences for effective upholding human rights and freedoms.

The Ombudsman, speaking about Armenia's policy of occupation against Azerbaijan, noted the high appreciation of the moral support provided by the brotherly country in conveying Azerbaijan's voice to the world community. The HREIT Chairperson Muharrem Kiliç, expressed his gratitude for the hospitality and highlighted the importance of strengthening and developing cooperation between institutions. The meeting saw discussions on the prospects for collaboration between the institutions. Sabina Aliyeva presented reports prepared by Azerbaijan's Ombudsman Institution to the guests. The HREIT delegation led by Muharrem Kiliç visited Azerbaijan at the invitation of Ombudsman Sabina Aliyeva. As part of the visit, the delegation jointly with members of the NPG, conducted monitoring visits to several institutions, which persons cannot leave at their own will, as well as meetings with some



OICOA at Glance



Azerbaijan, Turkiye discuss cooperation in human rights protection

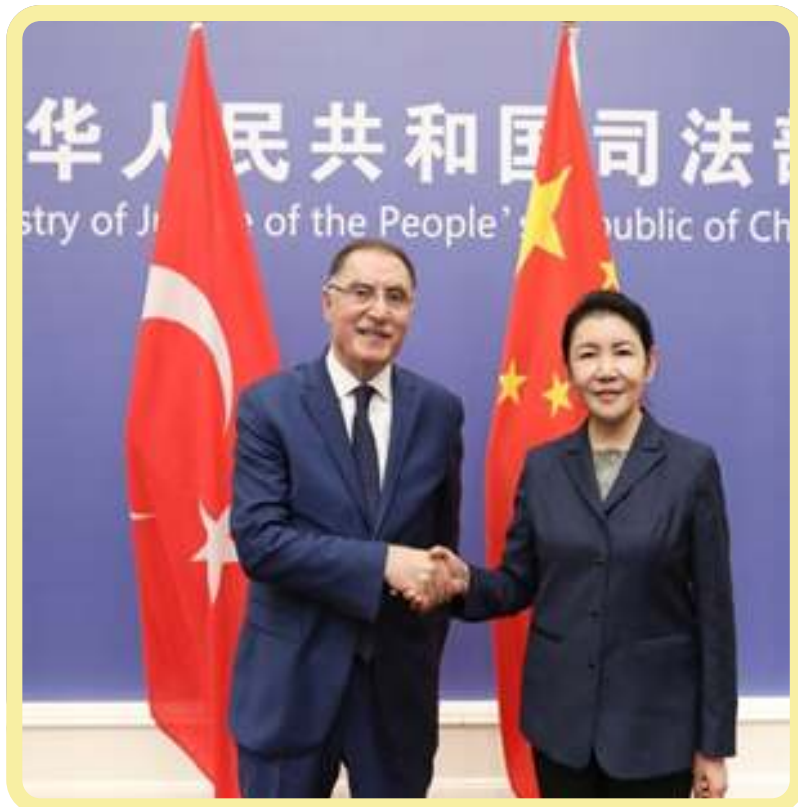


Turkey's chief ombudsman expressed his intention to visit Ukrainian prisoners of war in russia



**Azerbaijan's Human rights
Commissioner receives Azerbaijani
citizens**









Turkish delegation of Human Rights and Equality Organisation is on visit to Azerbaijan







