



EHD NEWS AGENCY

## Top news

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The 4th General Assembly Meeting of the OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA) was successfully held in Tehran, Iran, bringing together senior officials, ombudsmen, and dignitaries from across the Islamic world.



### Historic Milestone Achieved: OICOA Gets Affiliation with Organisation of Islamic Cooperation



The OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA) has officially been granted Affiliated Institution status by the Organisation of Islamic

Cooperation (OIC) during the 51st Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) held in TURKIYE on June 21-22, 2025. This milestone was formally adopted through Resolution No. 7/51-LO, marking a historic institutional achievement for OICOA and its member states.

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The Republic of Azerbaijan successfully hosted the International Symposium of Ombudsmen under the theme "Strengthening the Rule of Law: Role of Ombudsmen and National Human Rights Institutions", coinciding with the country's "Year of Constitution and Sovereignty" and its observance of Human Rights Day on June 18.

### Morocco Hosts Board of Directors Meeting of the International Ombudsman Institute



The Kingdom of Morocco proudly hosted the Board of Directors meeting of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) in its capital city, Rabat.

## چهارمین مجمع آمبودمان‌های کشورهای عضو سازمان همکاری اسلامی

آبودسمان: پاسخگویی فراگیر، حکمرانی عادلانه، همگرایی امت اسلامی

۱۴۰۴، ۱۳ و ۱۴ اردیبهشت



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### Chief Ombudsman Turkiye and President OICOA Mr. Mehmet Akarca Highlights Need for Balance Between AI Advancements and Human Rights at International Conference in Qatar



The Public Auditor General of the Republic of Turkiye, Mr. Mehmet Akarca, took part in a high-level session titled "Human

Rights and Artificial Intelligence: An Approach from the Perspective of National Human Rights Organizations", during an esteemed international conference held in Doha, Qatar.

### North Sumatra Ombudsman Launches "Ombudsman On The Spot" Service at H. Bakhtiar Djafar Hospital



The Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia, Representative of the Province of North Sumatra, has initiated a proactive public outreach initiative titled "Ombudsman On The Spot" at Hospital H. Bakhtiar Djafar.

## Message From President

Dear Esteemed Members and Colleagues,

Welcome to the May edition of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OICOA) newsletter. As a member and the President of OICOA, it is my privilege to connect with you and express our heartfelt gratitude for the unwavering dedication and invaluable contributions of our members. Your tireless efforts continue to strengthen our collective mission to promote justice, protect human rights, and foster good governance across our member states.

This month was particularly special, as it brought us together in Iran for the 4th General Assembly Meeting and the 12th Board of Directors Meeting of the OICOA. On this occasion, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my esteemed colleague, Dr. Zabihullah Khodaeian, President of the General Inspection Organization of Iran and Vice President of the OICOA, as well as to his colleagues, for their outstanding hospitality. I firmly believe that these meetings were both successful and meaningful, offering us a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences. The decisions taken—on strengthening the OICOA, contributing to the protection of human rights in Islamic countries, and enhancing the capacities of the Association's member institutions—marked important steps forward. In this context, I would like to once again express my sincere appreciation to all those who contributed,



whether in person or virtually, during the meetings in Iran. It is indeed a great honor and privilege for me to work alongside such esteemed colleagues as yourselves. Thank you once again for your enduring support and engagement. We look forward to continuing this journey together and sharing more updates in next newsletters.

Warm regards,  
**Mehmet Akarca**  
Chief Ombudsman of Republic of Türkiye  
President, OICOA

## Message From Secretary General

Dear Esteemed Members

It gives me immense pleasure to reach out to you through this month's newsletter as we reflect on the accomplishments of member institutes.

On behalf of the OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA), I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all member organisations and observers who actively participated in the 12th BOD and 4th General Assembly Meeting, graciously hosted by the Islamic Republic of Iran in the historic city of Tehran.

We are especially grateful to the General Inspection Organization of Iran for their warm hospitality and outstanding arrangements that ensured the success of this significant gathering. I would like to personally thank Justic Khodaeian President, for his leadership and wonderful generosity towards us. His powerful opening address set the tone for a collaborative and purposeful meeting.

I also commend Mr. Mehmet Akarca, Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye and President of OICOA, for his strong leadership and tireless commitment towards OICOA.

Furthermore, OICOA continues to stand united against Islamophobia and all forms of injustice. During the Assembly, we reiterated our



solidarity with the people of Palestine and reaffirmed our commitment to defending the rights of Muslim communities around the world facing oppression and discrimination.

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

## Message From Executive Secretary

Dear Members and Colleagues,

We extend our deepest gratitude to all our esteemed members and observers who participated in the 4th General Assembly Meeting of the OIC Ombudsman Association, held in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran. We all enjoyed an unparalleled hospitality of GIO of Iran under the leadership of Justice Khodaeian. Active presence, thoughtful engagement, and collaborative spirit were instrumental in the event's resounding success.

This historic gathering not only strengthened our shared commitment to justice, transparency, and administrative accountability but also affirmed the strength of unity among OIC member states. The adoption of key declarations and the productive exchange of ideas have laid a strong foundation for future collaborative action to enhance ombudsman institutions across the Islamic world.

A delegation led by Mr. Akarca visited the Iranian General Inspection Organization to explore cutting-edge approaches to public oversight particularly the integration of artificial intelligence in complaint-handling mechanisms. Several member countries have expanded the reach of Ombudsman Clubs in universities, encouraging civic awareness and participation among young people.



These efforts are vital to cultivating a future generation committed to transparency, justice, and citizen empowerment.

We will soon announce our new initiatives, including sub committee formation on protection of Women Rights, capacity-building workshops, training opportunities, and dialogue forums designed to strengthen institutional collaboration and shared learning. OICOA remains steadfast in its pursuit of good governance, strengthened ombudsman institutions, and the protection of citizens' rights across the OIC region.

**Almas Ali Jovindah**  
Executive Secretary, OICOA

## OICOA Events

### The 4<sup>th</sup> General Assembly and 12<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting of the OIC Ombudsman Association Successfully held in Tehran, Iran



The 12th Board Meeting of the OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA) was held in Tehran on 13th May, hosted by Mr. Zabiullah Khodaeian, Head of the General Inspection Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Vice President of OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA). The meeting was held to review the Biannual progress of OICOA's current initiatives and upcoming projects.



The meeting was presided over by H.E. Mehmet Akarca, Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye and President of OICOA. Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah, Federal Tax Ombudsman of Pakistan, participated in his capacity as Secretary General of OICOA. The proceedings were moderated by Almas Ali Jovindah, Executive Secretary of the OIC Ombudsman Association.

Board Members in attendance included H.E. Sabina Aliyeva, Human Rights Commissioner of Azerbaijan, and H.E. Mokhammad Najih, Chief Ombudsman of Indonesia, both of whom contributed actively to the discussions. The Board reviewed the Association's biannual progress, with members commending the Secretariat for its ongoing efforts to enhance regional collaboration and institutional development.



A special note of appreciation was extended to Secretary General Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah and Executive Secretary Almas Ali Jovindah for their instrumental role in securing the successful consideration and approval of OICOA's status as an OIC-affiliated institution. This milestone was achieved at the recent Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation held in Jeddah. The session concluded with an exchange of souvenirs among Board Members, which symbolized goodwill, partnership, and continued commitment to strengthening ombudsman institutions across the OIC region.



## Historic Milestone Achieved: OICOA Gets Affiliation with Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

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With this recognition, OICOA becomes an integral part of the OIC's institutional ecosystem and has gained formal standing to contribute to OIC's collective efforts in promoting justice, good governance, and public accountability across the Muslim world. The resolution, passed with broad support, signals the growing importance of independent oversight institutions within the framework of multilateral cooperation in Islamic world.



Amb. (R) Abdul Moiz Bokhari honored in recognition of his support in securing OICOA's affiliation with Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

Adopted alongside a range of strategic decisions focused on unity, development, and diplomacy in the Islamic world, the OICOA resolution reflects a consensus among member states on the need for strengthened accountability mechanisms. It grants OICOA greater access to OIC platforms, deeper policy engagement, and the ability to influence human rights and governance discourse at the international level.

## Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of Azerbaijan holds an International Symposium in Baku on 'Strengthening the Rule of Law: Role of Ombudsmen and NHRIs'

The Republic of Azerbaijan successfully hosted the International Symposium of Ombudsmen under the theme "Strengthening the Rule of Law: Role of Ombudsmen and National Human Rights Institutions", coinciding with the country's "Year of Constitution and Sovereignty" and its observance of Human Rights Day on June 18.



The high-level event, organized on the initiative of Azerbaijan's Human Rights Commissioner and OICOA Board Member, H.E. Sabina Aliyeva, brought together ombudspersons, human rights officials, and legal experts from various countries. The symposium served as a platform to deepen inter-institutional cooperation in advancing rule of law and protecting fundamental freedoms globally.



Speaking at the forum, Sabina Aliyeva emphasized the ongoing humanitarian challenges faced by Azerbaijan due to decades of occupation and ethnic cleansing. She highlighted the landmine threat in liberated territories as a critical barrier to safe resettlement, reconstruction, and ecological balance.



First Deputy Speaker Ali Ahmadov highlighted the 1995 Constitution as the foundation of Azerbaijan's

human rights framework, while Constitutional Court Chairman Farhad Abdullayev emphasized inter-institutional cooperation in safeguarding fundamental freedoms. The Symposium comprised of three panel discussions on the topics of Protection of Constitutional Rights and the Role of Ombudsmen and NHRIS, Good Practices and Challenges in Ensuring Equal Rights for Everyone, and Strengthening International Cooperation and Best Practices for Protection of Refugee Rights. The first panel session was moderated by Executive Secretary OICOA, Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah. The symposium concluded with a unified call for strengthening international cooperation among ombuds institutions to address emerging global challenges to human rights and the rule of law. Participants reaffirmed their shared commitment to transparency, accountability, and the protection of fundamental freedoms.



## ACTIVITIES OF OICOA MEMBERS

### Türkiye

#### **Chief Ombudsman Turkiye and President OICOA Mr. Mehmet Akarca Highlights Need for Balance Between AI Advancements and Human Rights at International Conference in Qatar**

The Public Auditor General of the Republic of Türkiye, Mr. Mehmet Akarca, took part in a high-level session titled "Human Rights and Artificial Intelligence: An Approach from the Perspective of National Human Rights Organizations", during an esteemed international conference held in Doha, Qatar. This session brought together leading figures from national human rights institutions, global policy experts, and AI ethics specialists to discuss the complex interplay between emerging technologies and the protection of fundamental human rights. Representing Türkiye's commitment to both innovation and democratic values, Mr. Akarca contributed a deeply reflective and forward-thinking perspective on the ethical implications of artificial intelligence.



In his keynote speech, Mr. Akarca emphasized the dual nature of artificial intelligence: "Artificial intelligence provides many benefits to human life," he stated, "but it also carries some vital risks, especially in terms of security, democracy, and human dignity."

Highlighting both the opportunities and the perils of rapid technological progress, Mr. Akarca urged governments and human rights institutions to act proactively. He stressed the importance of building frameworks that allow societies to reap the benefits of AI while safeguarding the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals.

## Azerbaijan

### Ombudsperson Azerbaijan Sabina Aliyeva Participates in "Voices Condemned to Silence" Event Honoring Literary Icon Huseyn Javid

As part of the "Human Rights Month" commemorations, Sabina Aliyeva, the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Azerbaijan, participated in the cultural and human rights event titled "Voices Condemned to Silence", held at the Huseyn Javid House Museum.

The event brought together scholars, human rights advocates, cultural figures, and members of the public to honor the enduring legacy of Huseyn Javid—one of Azerbaijan's most brilliant literary minds—whose voice and ideas were silenced during a repressive era.

Delivering the opening remarks, Ombudsman Sabina Aliyeva emphasized the importance of remembering the voices that were suppressed throughout history and reaffirming society's commitment to justice, freedom of expression, and human dignity.



In her speech, Ms. Aliyeva highlighted the literary and philosophical contributions of Huseyn Javid, stating: > "Muvakkil genius writer and playwright Huseyn Javid is one of our most prominent figures in Azerbaijani literature. His work not only enriched our national heritage but also symbolized the courage to speak truth in the face of injustice." She stressed that commemorative events like "Voices Condemned to Silence" serve not only as cultural retrospectives but also as powerful reminders of the value of free expression and the ongoing struggle to protect it.

The event featured readings from Javid's works, panel discussions on censorship and freedom, and reflections on the historical repression of intellectual voices. It served as a tribute to those who, like Javid, used their pen as a tool for justice and were punished for doing so.

Ms. Aliyeva reiterated the Ombudsman Office's dedication to promoting and protecting human rights in all spheres of Azerbaijani society, including the cultural and intellectual domains.

## Bahrain

### Bahrain Ombudsman Hon'ble Ghada Hamid Habib Meets Ambassador of Bangladesh

Bahrain Ombudsman Hon'ble Ghada Hamid Habib Meets Ambassador of Bangladesh welcomed H.E. Mr. Muhammad Rees Hassan Sarwer, the newly appointed Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the Kingdom of Bahrain, during his inaugural visit to the General Secretariat of Bahrain Ombudsman.

The courtesy visit marked the beginning of enhanced bilateral engagement between the Secretariat and the Embassy of Bangladesh. The meeting served as an opportunity to exchange views on mutual cooperation in areas of shared interest,

particularly concerning community welfare, legal rights, and human dignity. Secretary-General Habib extended her warm congratulations to Ambassador Sarwer on his recent appointment and conveyed her best wishes for his diplomatic mission, expressing hope for strengthened ties between the friendly nations.

"We welcome Ambassador Sarwer and wish him success in fulfilling his diplomatic duties in the spirit of cooperation between our peoples," said H.E. Mrs. Ghada Hamid Habib. During the meeting, the Secretary-General offered an overview of the mandate, legal responsibilities, and ongoing initiatives of Bahrain Ombudsman. She highlighted its vital role in supporting public interests, with particular attention to incoming communities residing in Bahrain. Mrs. Habib also presented key statistics from recent Secretariat reports, along with visual documentation of its contributions to promoting human rights in law enforcement. She emphasized the Secretariat's commitment to fostering international partnerships, exchanging best practices, and engaging in regional and global dialogue with institutions sharing similar mandates. Also present at the meeting was Sheikh Mohammed bin Ali Al Khalifa, Director of the International Cooperation and Development Department, who underscored the Secretariat's dedication to expanding cross-border cooperation and institutional capacity-building. The visit concluded on a positive note, with both sides expressing mutual interest in continued collaboration on humanitarian, legal, and social development efforts.



## Morocco

### Morocco Hosts Board of Directors Meeting of the International Ombudsman Institute

The Kingdom of Morocco proudly hosted the Board of Directors meeting of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) in its capital city, Rabat. This marked the first time Morocco has served as the host nation for the prestigious gathering of international ombudsman leaders, reinforcing its growing influence in the global human rights and governance landscape. The event, organized in close coordination with the IOI Secretariat and Morocco's Ombudsman Institution, convened high-ranking delegates and IOI Board Members representing regional ombudsman bodies and national human rights institutions from across the world.



In his opening remarks, Mr. Hassan Tariq, the newly appointed Mediator of the Kingdom, welcomed the international guests and underlined Morocco's enduring commitment to promoting participatory citizenship, institutional mediation, and administrative justice. He emphasized that hosting the IOI Board reflects the country's desire to build bridges of cooperation and share its experiences in good governance and accountability. "The Ombudsman Institution is not only a mechanism of complaint handling; it is a cornerstone of democratic transparency. Morocco seeks to reinforce this role, both domestically and in the broader international context," stated Mr. Tariq.

## Indonesia:

### North Sumatra Ombudsman Launches "Ombudsman On The Spot" Service at H. Bakhtiar Djafar Hospital

The Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia, Representative of the Province of North Sumatra, has initiated a proactive public outreach initiative titled "Ombudsman On The Spot" at Hospital H. Bakhtiar Djafar.

The program will be conducted over three days: Thursday, May 22, Friday, May 23, and Tuesday, May 27, 2025, providing direct access for the public to lodge complaints, seek guidance, and report suspected cases of maladministration.

This on-site service reflects the Ombudsman's commitment to bringing accountability mechanisms closer to citizens, particularly in vital public service sectors such as healthcare.



"Yuk, Sahabat Ombudsman! For those who wish to report or share allegations of maladministration, please visit our service booth at the hospital," invited the North Sumatra Ombudsman team.

The mobile booth will offer walk-in consultation and assistance to patients, families, hospital staff, and the wider public. Trained officers from the Ombudsman's office will be available throughout the event to receive reports, answer queries, and provide education on the public's rights in accessing fair and transparent services.

"Ombudsman On The Spot" is part of a nationwide initiative to ensure government services remain accountable and responsive to the needs of the people. The North Sumatra Representative continues to expand its reach through grassroots engagement, emphasizing the importance of citizen participation in oversight processes.

## Uzbekistan

### Uzbekistan's Ombudsman Participates in International Symposium on Strengthening the Rule of Law

Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Ms. Feruza Eshmatova, took part in an international symposium titled “Strengthening the Rule of Law: The Role of Ombudspersons and National Human Rights Institutions”, held in Baku. The event was organized by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Azerbaijan in collaboration with various international organizations.



The symposium convened over 20 national human rights institutions and ombudsman offices from countries including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Egypt, Turkey, Serbia, Oman, Montenegro, and Slovakia. Representatives from global networks such as the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNRI), and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OICCOA) also participated. In her address, Ms. Eshmatova highlighted Uzbekistan's recent constitutional reforms, emphasizing the enhanced legal foundations for safeguarding human dignity, rights, and freedoms. She noted that the 2024 adoption of the Law “On the Commissioner of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (Ombudsman)” aligns with the updated constitutional norms, thereby expanding the Ombudsman's powers and reinforcing its role as a national human rights body.

Ms. Eshmatova also presented several initiatives aimed at increasing legal awareness and accessibility, such as the “Ombudsman School” and “Ombudsman Hours,” which provide legal assistance and engage with the public across various regions. She highlighted the “Huquq Bilimdoni” (Legal Knowledge) quiz, designed to educate children with disabilities and those living in orphanages about their rights. The symposium served as a platform for sharing national experiences and discussing modern mechanisms for ensuring human rights protection, particularly in the context of digitalization and artificial intelligence. Special attention was given to providing legal assistance to populations affected by conflict. During the event, Ms. Eshmatova held bilateral meetings with her counterparts from various countries to discuss mutual cooperation and the further development of partnerships in the field of human rights.

## Federal Ombudsman of Pakistan

# Wafaqi Mohtasib to Inaugurate New Buildings in Multan & Bahawlpur

The Wafaqi Mohtasib, Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, will inaugurate the new office building of the Wafaqi Mohtasib Regional Office, Multan, on Thursday, 26 MAY-JUNE 2025.

He will hold a meeting with the officers of the Wafaqi Mohtasib, Multan, Bahawalpur, and DG Khan Regional Offices, besides conferring with the representatives of the Federal agencies there.

These meetings will be held to streamline professional matters, particularly those aimed at providing prompt relief to the public by redressing maladministration in the public sector organizations.

He would urge them to redouble their efforts in this regard. He highlighted that new offices

have been or are being established in regions such as Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Kashmir, Mirpur Khas, and Dera Ghazi Khan to bring services closer to the people. "The primary objective is to make our services more accessible and to prioritize the resolution of complaints from ordinary citizens, especially in less developed areas," he said.

Referring to the agency's performance, the Ombudsman noted that last year, decisions were made on 93% of the complaints received, which he described as a testament to the organization's commitment to public service. He also pointed out that offices have been digitized in line with modern standards to ensure that critical cases receive timely attention.

In response to a question, Qureshi expressed satisfaction with the institution's performance despite challenges like work overload and limited resources. He mentioned that public outreach initiatives, such as open court sessions and an online complaint registration system, have made it easier for citizens to seek help.

He added that most of the grievances pertain to federal departments and are resolved promptly on merit. He also acknowledged the media's constructive role in raising awareness about the institution's work.

Earlier in the day, the Federal Ombudsman chaired a meeting to assess the performance of regional heads and reviewed the case progress. He issued important directives during the session and also held discussions with heads of federal institutions regarding the resolution of public issues.



## Federal Tax Ombudsman

### **Secretary General of OIC Ombudsman Association H.E. Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah, Paid a Courtesy Visit to Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan, H.E. Raza Amiri-Moghaddam**

In a cordial meeting held at the Iranian Embassy, Dr. Jah expressed deep concern over the continuing aggression in the region and extended heartfelt sympathies on behalf of the Pakistani people. He emphasized the importance of unity among Muslim nations in confronting shared challenges and resisting acts of oppression. "At a time when the region is facing grave provocations, it is essential for Muslim countries to stand together in defense of peace, dignity, and justice," Dr. Jah stated during the discussion.

The two sides exchanged views on regional developments and



underscored the need for stronger cooperation between Pakistan and Iran, not only in diplomatic spheres but also in matters related to humanitarian relief and cultural exchange.

Marking the occasion, Dr. Jah presented his book, "Journey Towards Allah", to the Iranian Ambassador. The book, a personal reflection on faith, service, and spiritual growth, was offered as a gesture of goodwill and cultural affinity. Ambassador Amiri-Moghaddam thanked Dr. Jah for his visit and welcomed the expression of solidarity, stating that such gestures of support are deeply valued during critical times. Senior Advisor to the FTO Secretariat, Mr. Nazim Saleem, also accompanied Dr. Jah during the visit.

## FOSPAH

# FOSPAH Conducts Dialogue to Strengthen Enforcement of Workplace Harassment Law at Workplaces

In a powerful show of solidarity and commitment to gender justice, a dialogue on the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 was held in collaboration with the National Women Journalists Forum (NWJF) and Women in Struggle for Empowerment (WISE). The event convened journalists, media professionals, legal experts, and activists to address persistent challenges and advocate for harassment-free work environments across all sectors. Federal Ombudsperson Ms. Fauzia Viqar emphasized the robustness of the 2010 law, stating that "harassment-free workplaces are not just a legal requirement—they are a necessity for increasing women's participation in Pakistan's labour force." She reaffirmed her office's commitment to ensuring access to justice for victims and strengthening institutional accountability.



Provincial Ombudsperson Ms. Nabila Hakim stressed the urgency of institutional compliance, reminding organizations that enforcement of the law is mandatory, not optional. "We need stronger monitoring and reporting mechanisms to ensure no woman is left unprotected," she said.

Ms. Bushra Khaliq, Executive Director of WISE, brought attention to the need for grassroots-level awareness. "Every worker—whether in the formal sector or the informal economy—must know her rights and be empowered to speak up," she asserted.

Ms. Farzana Chaudhry, President of the National Women's Journalism Forum, highlighted the unique risks women in media face due to the public nature of their work. "Newsrooms must adopt proactive policies and internal accountability systems to protect their women staff," she urged.

The dialogue served as a strategic step toward building a culture of safety, respect, and zero tolerance for harassment in workplaces nationwide. With unified voices from the state, civil society, and media, the call for action is loud and clear: every woman deserves a workplace free from fear and discrimination.

## Federal Insurance Ombudsman

### Federal Insurance Ombudsman Launches Awareness Drive to Empower Consumers

In a powerful initiative to reinforce consumer rights, the Federal Insurance Ombudsman (FIO) Honourable Mumtaz Ali Shah has unveiled a comprehensive public awareness campaign, urging policyholders—and non-policyholders—to utilize its free, lawyer-free complaint resolution services. This message underscores FIO's commitment to accessibility, transparency, and justice for all. The campaign, disseminated across major platforms including the Official Partner Forum's website, explicitly highlights three key assurances: no legal fees, no requirement for legal representation, and swift, hassle-free resolution. Accompanying the messaging, FIO shared an illustrative video titled "Bridging the Gap – From Complaints to Resolutions" on social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram. The video clearly communicates that every complaint is treated with urgency and empathy, reinforcing FIO's mission to rebuild trust in insurance dispute processes.



The video initiative is designed with clarity in mind—integrating graphics, compelling narratives, and actionable guidance to help consumers understand how their grievances are addressed. By showcasing actual complaint pathways, the FIO affirms that consumers have a fair, effective, and accessible avenue to resolve their insurance-related concerns without financial or legal burdens. Honourable Insurance Ombudsman said, "We strive to serve as the bridge between policyholders and insurance providers. Through this ongoing awareness drive, we want to make it clear that our services are fully free of charge and easily accessible—no lawyers, no court visits, just fair resolutions," affirmed an FIO spokesperson into the video campaign.

This significant outreach represents the FIO's effort to demystify the complaint process and encourage more consumers to come forward. It builds on a successful national conference held in May, where FIO officials discussed increasing institutional reach and addressing rising complaint volumes.

## Banking Ombudsman

### Banking Mohtasib Pakistan Reports Substantial Progress in Complaint Resolution

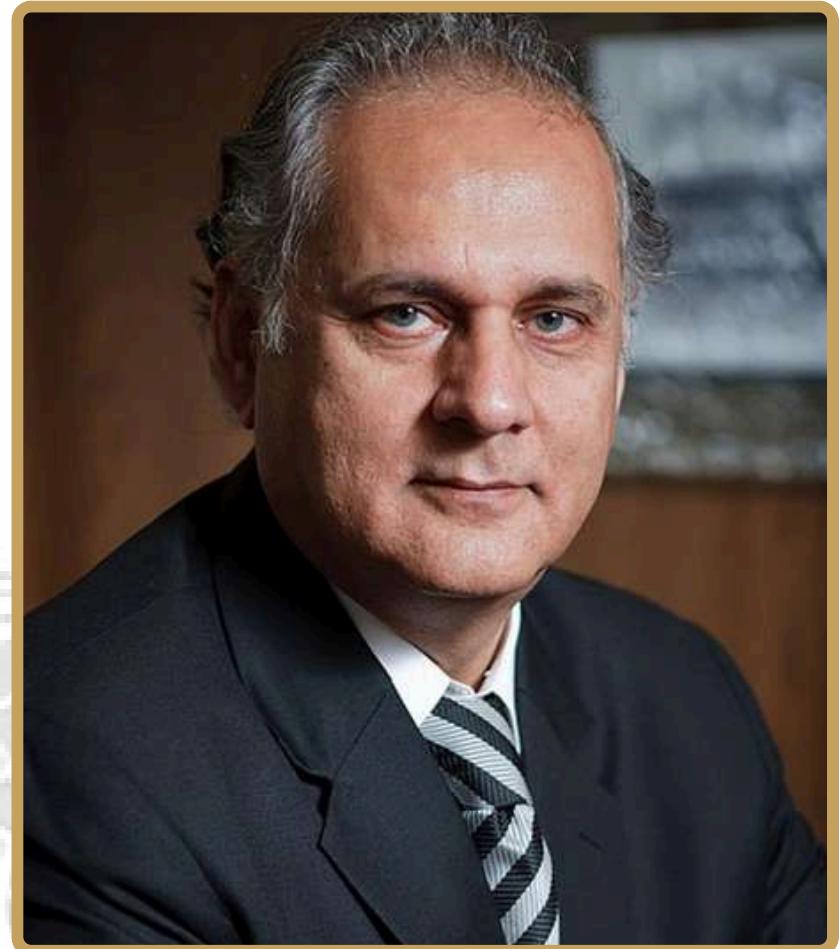
The Office of the Banking Mohtasib Pakistan (BMP) has released its latest performance update, revealing a significant volume of customer complaints handled in the first five months of 2025. As of May 16, 2025, the BMP has received 27,909 complaints from banking consumers across the country. Out of these, 11,596 complaints have been successfully resolved, while 16,313 cases remain under active investigation.

This data reflects both the growing public awareness of the Ombudsman's services and the increasing demand for accountability in Pakistan's banking sector. The Banking Mohtasib, Mr. Sirajuddin Aziz, emphasized the institution's commitment to protecting consumer rights, especially amid a surge in digital and mobile banking fraud. He noted that while digital banking has expanded access to financial services, it has also introduced new risks that require urgent institutional and technological responses.

In response to the rising number of complaints, BMP has enhanced its public outreach efforts, especially targeting rural communities where financial literacy remains low. The Mohtasib's office is collaborating with commercial banks to improve complaint resolution mechanisms and to deliver multilingual awareness campaigns. Additionally, BMP is advocating for improved fintech training among bank staff to strengthen the sector's capacity to deal with sophisticated forms of fraud.

The BMP also reaffirmed its intention to continue working closely with the State Bank of Pakistan and other regulatory bodies to ensure fair, timely, and efficient redressal of grievances. A quarterly review meeting is scheduled for early July 2025 to assess mid-year progress and align strategies with national financial inclusion goals.

Established under the Banking Companies Ordinance of 1962, the Banking Mohtasib Pakistan operates as an independent body that provides free-of-cost services to resolve consumer complaints without resorting to the courts. With continued focus on transparency, institutional accountability, and citizen empowerment, the BMP remains a cornerstone of public trust in Pakistan's financial system.



## Punjab Ombudsman

### Punjab Ombudsman Intervenes to Secure Widow's Long-Delayed Benefits

After the sudden passing of her husband—a devoted public servant—Maria Gill was left not only to bear the weight of grief but also to navigate a system that had seemingly forgotten her. Despite her late husband's dedicated years of service, the benefits legally owed to his family never arrived, lost in a web of red tape and administrative delays.

Maria knocked on doors, wrote letters, and made repeated visits to government offices. Her pleas, however, remained unanswered—drowned in a system that often overlooks the most vulnerable. But Maria did not give up.

Her struggle reached a turning point when she approached the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab. Upon taking notice, the Ombudsman initiated action against the maladministration. As a result of this intervention, Maria has now received Rs. 132,000, with the remaining payments actively under

process. The concerned department has assured that regular follow-ups are being conducted under the supervision of the Ombudsman's Office to ensure she receives the full amount without further delay.

This is more than just a financial settlement—it is a story of resilience, justice, and the impact of speaking up. Maria's journey stands as a powerful reminder that no voice is too small to be heard, and that justice begins the moment someone listens



## Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ombudsman

### Ombudsman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Holds Awareness Session at District Tor Ghar

The Office of the Provincial Ombudsman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa organized an important awareness session at the Headquarters of the Judicial Police (Judpa), District Tor Ghar, aimed at educating the public about citizens' rights and the role of the Ombudsman in addressing administrative injustices.



The session was chaired by the Honourable Provincial Ombudsman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, who was warmly received by local officials, community leaders, and members of civil society. In her address, the Worthy Ombudsman emphasized the importance of public awareness regarding the complaint resolution mechanisms available under the Provincial Ombudsman Act. She highlighted the institution's commitment to ensuring transparent, impartial, and accessible redressal of grievances, particularly in underserved and remote regions like Tor Ghar.

The Ombudsman also noted that citizens can lodge complaints without any legal assistance, and that all services provided by the Ombudsman's office are free of cost. "Good governance begins with listening to the people. Our goal is to ensure that every citizen, regardless of location, has access to justice and administrative accountability," said the Honourable Ombudsman. Participants were briefed on the process of submitting complaints, the rights of complainants, and the timeline for grievance redressal. Special emphasis was placed on women's rights, transparency in government departments, and addressing misuse of power at the grassroots level. The session concluded with a Q&A segment, where attendees expressed appreciation for the proactive outreach of the Ombudsman's office and shared localized concerns for future action.

## Sindh Ombudsman

### Sindh Ombudsman Launches Climate and Disaster Justice Unit for Swift Grievance Redressal

The Provincial Ombudsman of Sindh, Muhammad Sohail Rajput, has announced the establishment of the Climate and Disaster Justice Unit (CDJU) at the Ombudsman's Secretariat to strengthen justice, accountability, and inclusive service delivery in disaster-affected regions of the province.

The newly formed unit is designed to serve as a fast-track mechanism for addressing complaints related to inefficiencies, delays, mismanagement, or corruption in disaster preparedness, emergency response, and recovery efforts. It aims to ensure that individuals and communities impacted by both natural and human-induced disasters receive fair compensation, access to essential services, and protection of their fundamental rights.

Imdad Hussain Siddiqui, Director Coordination, has been appointed as the head of the CDJU, owing to his extensive background in coordination, public service delivery, and disaster risk governance.

In addition to handling public grievances, the unit will collaborate with United Nations agencies, civil society



organizations, community-based groups, and humanitarian actors to enhance public engagement, increase transparency, and improve response mechanisms. It will also partner with relevant government departments to monitor compliance with Sindh's climate and disaster management policies.

By promoting research, advocacy, policy oversight, and institutional capacity building, the CDJU aims to bolster disaster governance while reinforcing the Ombudsman's role as an impartial and accessible institution for delivering climate and disaster justice.

This initiative underscores the Sindh Ombudsman's broader commitment to administrative reform, human dignity, and ensuring free and timely justice for the most vulnerable segments of society.

## Balochistan Ombudsman

### Honorary Consul General of Iran Visits Provincial Ombudsman Secretariat in Quetta

His Excellency AliReza Rajaee, the Honorary Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran for Balochistan, along with delegation, paid a cordial visit to the Provincial Ombudsman Secretariat in Quetta. The distinguished guests were warmly received by the Honorable Ombudsman Balochistan, Mr. Nazar, accompanied by Mr. Saeed Ahmed Shahwani, Senior Director, and Mr. Ghulam Saewar Broahi, Senior Director of the Federal Ombudsman Quetta Region. The meeting was marked by an atmosphere of mutual respect and a shared vision for regional cooperation. Discussions centered on enhancing administrative and institutional collaboration between the two neighboring countries, with a strong emphasis on the importance of fostering trade and economic ties.



"The need for strong trade ties between the two countries is the need of the hour," stated the Honorable Ombudsman Balochistan, underscoring the potential benefits of bilateral economic collaboration. His Excellency AliReza Rajaee was also briefed on the operational framework, responsibilities, and outreach mechanisms of the Ombudsman Secretariat Balochistan, reflecting the institution's commitment to good governance, transparency, and citizen-centric service. The visit served as a constructive step towards building mutual understanding and exploring opportunities for future cooperation across administrative and economic spheres.

## Punjab Ombudsperson

### Ombudsperson Punjab Honours Team and Partners at Appreciation and Acknowledgement Ceremony

The Office of the Ombudsperson Punjab hosted a heartfelt Appreciation and Acknowledgement Ceremony in Lahore to celebrate the efforts of its team and collaborative partners working toward women's empowerment and good governance. The event highlighted the institution's ongoing commitment to fostering safe, inclusive, and harassment-free workplaces across Punjab.



Held at the Grand Pearl Hotel, the ceremony brought together distinguished guests from various public and private sector organizations. The Ombudsperson Punjab recognized and appreciated key contributors by presenting shields and certificates as tokens of gratitude and acknowledgment for their continued support and dedication.

Speaking on the occasion, the Ombudsperson reiterated the significance of strong partnerships in furthering the mission of the office under the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010. The event served as a platform to reflect on progress made and to strengthen collaborative resolve for the journey ahead.

This recognition ceremony is part of a broader institutional effort to highlight the importance of teamwork, field outreach, and stakeholder engagement in promoting gender equality and responsive governance throughout Punjab.

## OICOA in Media



### **Appeal of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding the "Human Rights Month"**

The protection and promotion of human rights and freedoms are one of the priority directions of the state policy in Azerbaijan. Following the restoration of a state independence, consistent and complex reforms have been carried out in the building of a legal state in our country, and fundamental legal bases were formed in this direction. "The State Program on the Protection of Human Rights," which was approved at the initiative of the National Leader, Heydar Aliyev, on 18 June, 1998, laid down the strategic activity. Subject to this important document, 18 June, was officially established as a national Human Rights Day by the Order of 2007 issued by the country's President, Ilham Aliyev and since then, this date has been marked every year.

On the eve of this significant day, the period of 18 May-18 June, was traditionally declared by the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan as "Human Rights Month." The month-long campaign aims to promote rights and freedoms, increase public legal awareness, discuss the existing challenges in the field of human rights, and publicize the broadcasting of the activities held at the national level. It must be noted specifically that advocating the rule of law, legal culture, legal accountability, and social inclusion principles should be the key subjects of discussions.

From this perspective, state institutions, municipalities, education and cultural facilities, health and social service institutions, penitentiary institutions, non-governmental organizations, media outlets, and other corresponding institutions are encouraged to participate actively in the events to be held during the "Human Rights Month," and to organize various educational events, discussions, trainings, and awareness campaigns. Given that, particularly, 2025 was declared in our country as the "Year of the Constitution and Sovereignty," it is recommended to pay special attention to promoting national constitutional values and the rule of law in these events.

In the course of the month-long campaign, it is kindly asked to share the information about the activities carried out and the educational events organized on social media platforms using the #HumanRightsMonth hashtag.

In addition, I believe and express my gratitude in advance for demonstrating special sensitivity to ensuring the rights of all groups of the population, especially socially vulnerable groups, including families of martyrs, war veterans, persons with disabilities, children, the elderly, refugees, former internally displaced persons, and migrants; preparing legal educational materials; publication and distribution among the population; and covering events and social videos through audiovisual, print, and online media, as well as TV and radio channels and social media accounts.



### **Ombudsman urges creation of National Palm Oil Agency**

Jakarta (ANTARA) - The Ombudsman of Indonesia emphasized the importance of the government establishing a National Palm Oil Agency to improve governance of the palm oil industry and address related issues in a comprehensive and effective manner. "There is one solution to improve governance: setting up a National Palm Oil Agency tasked with offering one-stop services to handle palm oil-related matters from the upstream to downstream sectors," Ombudsman member Yeka Hendra Fatika noted in a statement cited here on Monday. Fatika made this proposal in a discussion in Jakarta on Wednesday (May 7), during which he offered the government several viable measures to overhaul palm oil governance in the country. In addition to proposing the agency's formation, Fatika suggested that the government intensify efforts to address issues stemming from the overlapping of palm oil plantations and forest areas, improve the permit issuance system, update data on planters, and strengthen regulations governing palm oil factories. Furthermore, he highlighted the importance of ensuring favorable prices for fresh palm fruit bunches for farmers. Fatika explained that these suggestions stemmed from a six-month study conducted by the Ombudsman last year, which involved 52 institutions across Indonesia. The official also highlighted that last month, his team sent an official letter to President Prabowo Subianto, briefing him on pressing matters related to Indonesia's palm oil industry. He noted that although the country has proven its strength in downstreaming palm oil, the industry's upstream sector still requires significant improvements. On the same occasion, National Development Planning Minister Rachmat Pambudy affirmed that palm oil plays a crucial, far-reaching role in life on Earth. "Beyond its importance for our farmers, business actors, and the state, palm oil has become a global commodity, to which foods around the world are tied," he remarked. Meanwhile, former agriculture minister Bungaran Saragih highlighted that palm oil had emerged as the most prominent industry in Indonesia's agricultural sector. "Palm oil stands out among other commodities in our agricultural sector," he remarked.



## IOI Meetings, Recognition of Morocco's Political & Institutional Leadership -Kingdom's Ombudsman

The holding of the decision-making meetings of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) in Rabat is a recognition of Morocco's political, institutional, and administrative leadership under the enlightened guidance of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, said the Kingdom's Ombudsman, Hassan Tariq, on Tuesday in Rabat.

Speaking at the opening session of the IOI's Board of Directors meeting—held as part of the Institute's decision-making sessions taking place in Rabat from May 12 to 14—Tariq emphasized that the Moroccan model promotes participatory citizenship through the strengthening of administrative justice, the independence of national institutions, and the constitutionalization of institutional mediation.

The Institution of the Kingdom's Ombudsman occupies a significant place within the IOI, having built strong relationships with its international counterparts and participated in numerous activities, which has enabled it to take on an active role within the organization's governing bodies, he stated.

Tariq also stressed that these gatherings offer a valuable opportunity to strengthen cooperation among Ombudsman institutions internationally, providing a privileged space for sharing visions, ideas, and experiences among members.

For her part, IOI President Nashieli Ramirez Hernandez stated that the meeting reflects the commitment of Morocco's Ombudsman Institution to the promotion and protection of human rights.

She noted that this annual meeting is a major event for the Institute, offering a valuable occasion to engage with all participants on issues of global significance, while highlighting that the IOI represents a diverse network—composed of national and local institutions tirelessly working in their respective domains—united by a common objective: the defense of human rights and the promotion of good governance.

Meanwhile, IOI Secretary General Bernhard Achitz noted that the meeting brings together mediation institutions from across the globe, who share their experiences and discuss best practice models with the aim of enhancing the Institute's effectiveness.

He added that the discussions will also focus on human rights and their protection, affirming that mediation institutions play a crucial role in many countries as defenders of fundamental rights.



## Uganda Moves to Establish Tax Ombudsman Office

Kampala — The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development has officially begun stakeholder consultations for the creation of Uganda's first-ever Tax Ombudsman office, a major step aimed at improving fairness, accountability, and service delivery within the country's tax administration.

In a letter dated May 21, 2025, addressed to various stakeholders, Patrick Ocaalap, who signed on behalf of the Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury, disclosed that the Domestic Revenue Mobilisation Strategy (DRMS) recommends the establishment of the Tax Ombudsman as "a key initiative to address service-related challenges in tax administration."

The Ministry has already developed a concept note outlining the mandate and operations of the proposed office. A half-day stakeholder engagement was held on June 4, 2025, at the Ministry's headquarters to gather input from key players in the private sector, civil society, and government. "Your insights and contributions will be invaluable in shaping this important initiative," Ocaalap wrote.

### Global Best Practices

The establishment of a Tax Ombudsman aligns Uganda with global practices already adopted in many jurisdictions to enhance tax compliance and protect taxpayer rights. In South Africa, for example, the Office of the Tax Ombud (OTO) was established in 2013 and operates independently from the South African Revenue Service (SARS).

Its core mandate includes resolving taxpayer complaints, ensuring fair treatment, and addressing administrative failures by the revenue authority. Similarly, Canada operates the Office of the Taxpayers' Ombudsman, created in 2007, which investigates service-related complaints against the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). Several countries, including the United Kingdom, India, and Australia, have integrated tax ombudsman structures into their broader taxpayer advocacy frameworks, contributing to greater trust in tax authorities and improved voluntary compliance.

Experts say Uganda's move signals a maturing of its revenue administration system.

"When taxpayers know that there's an independent body to address grievances, confidence in the system grows, leading to better compliance and higher revenues," says Sam Asinguza, a Ugandan economist and public finance analyst.

### Uganda Revenue Authority's Performance

The Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), which would be one of the key institutions overseen by the Tax Ombudsman, has consistently improved its revenue collection performance. In the financial year 2023/2024, URA collected UGX 25.2 trillion, achieving 99.3% of its annual target, according to official data. This represented a 16% growth compared to the previous financial year.

The revenue agency has credited its performance to a combination of improved digital tax systems, aggressive taxpayer education, and stricter enforcement of compliance measures. However, concerns have periodically emerged regarding delays in tax refunds, perceived high-handedness by some officers, and complex compliance procedures — gaps the Tax Ombudsman is expected to help address.

## Ombudsman Office's role highlighted



Ombudswoman Ghada Habeeb received Serbia's Ambassador Tatjana Garcevic. The meeting provided an overview of the office's mandate, its specialised role in serving the public and its contribution to promoting respect for human rights within the criminal justice system .



## Wafaqi Mohtasib to inaugurate new buildings in Multan & Bahawlpur



ISLAMABAD, Jun 24 (APP):The Wafaqi Mohtasib, Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, will inaugurate the new office building of the Wafaqi Mohtasib Regional Office, Multan, on Thursday, 26 June 2025. He will hold a meeting with the officers of the Wafaqi Mohtasib, Multan, Bahawalpur, and DG Khan Regional Offices, besides conferring with the representatives of the Federal agencies there. These meetings will be held to streamline professional matters, particularly those aimed at providing prompt relief to the public by redressing maladministration in the public sector organizations. He would urge them to redouble their efforts in this regard.

## OICOA at Glance

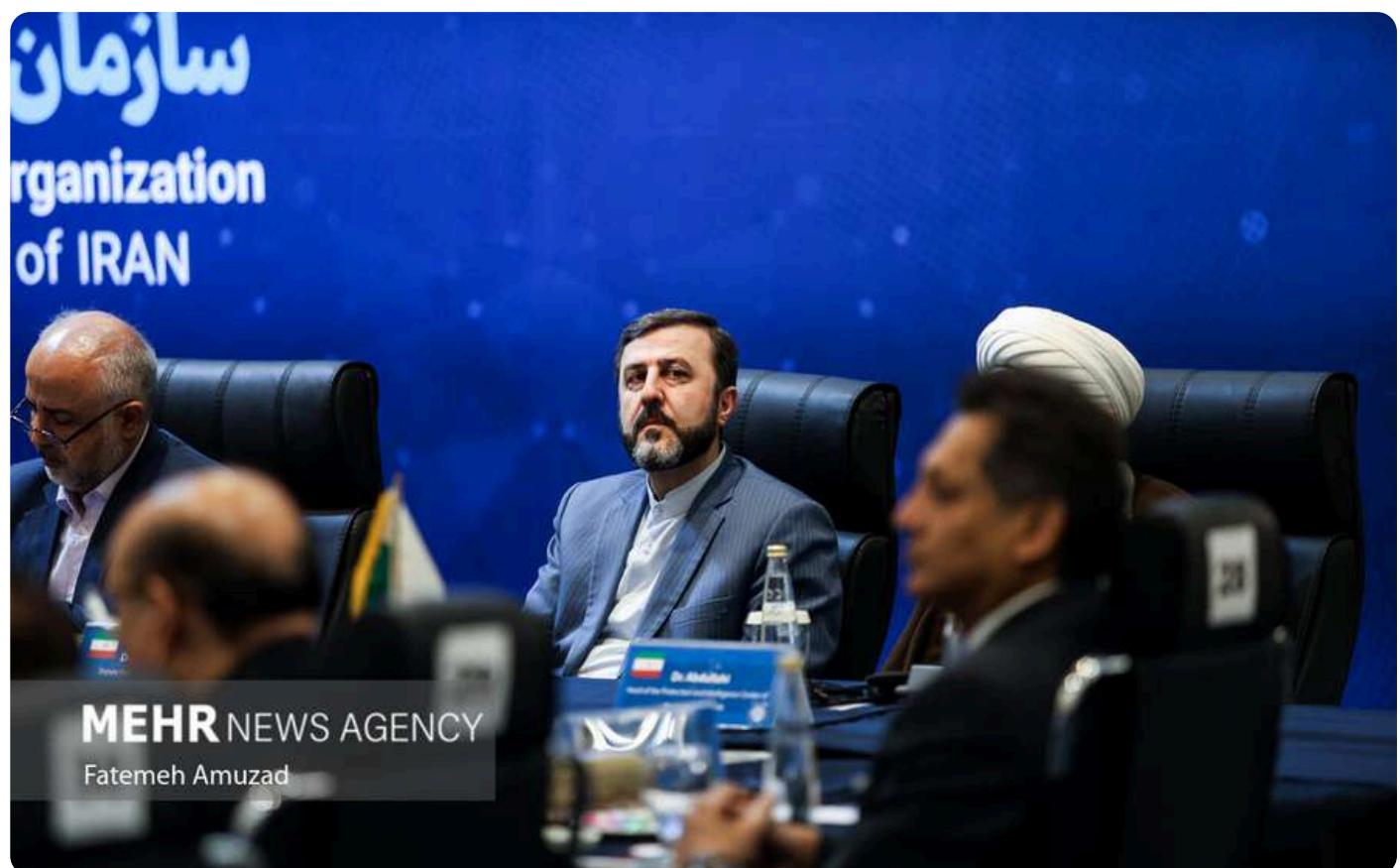
Precious moments with distinguished leaders from OIC countries, including Ombudsmen and Human Rights Commissioners, in the historical city of Tehran, where we held our 12th BOD and 4th General Assembly meetings



## Meeting of the Board of Directors

13 May 2024 | Neuilly-le-Chateau Hall - Paris



































Chief Ombudsman of the Republic of Türkiye and President of the OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA), Mr. Mehmet Akarca, participated in Panel Discussion titled "Access to Human Rights from National and International Perspective" held in Izmir



The Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and OIC Ombudsman Association Board Member, H.E. Sabina Aliyeva, held a bilateral meeting with H.E. Dr. Lars Castellucci, the Federal Commissioner of Human Rights Policy of the Republic of Germany



Azerbaijani Ombudsman Sabina Aliyeva Participates in “Voices Condemned to Silence” Event  
Honoring Literary Icon Huseyn Javid



Human Rights Commissioner Republic of Azerbaijan (Ombudsman) honourable Sabina Alieyeva Addressed Seminar on "Year of Constitution and Sovereignty with Youth"





An event on the theme "Natural resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan serve to the welfare of the people and the prosperity of the country" was held within the framework of the "Human Rights Month" announced by Sabina Aliyeva, Ombudsman for Human Rights of Azerbaijan



**Honourable Ghada Hamid Habib, Boards Member of OICOA and Ombudsperson of Bahrain met with Mr. Muhammad Ali Qaida**



**OIC Ombudsman Association Board Member, H.E. Ms. Ghada Hameed Habib, (Secretary General of the Ombudsman Office of the Kingdom of Bahrain), welcomed H.E. Mr. Mohammed Rees Hassan Sarwar, Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to Bahrain**



**Ombudsman of Indonesia and Mayor of Pasuruan City Government sign an Agreement to strengthen oversight of public services**



**The Federal Ombudsperson, Ms. Fauzia Viqar, had a productive meeting with the Balochistan Ombudsperson, Mr. Nazar Muhammad Baloch, focusing on cross-departmental collaboration to enhance efficiency, strengthen complaint redressal mechanisms, and ensure consistent protection of citizens' rights nationwide**



Ms. Nabila Hakim Ali Khan, Ombudsperson Punjab, participates in a dialogue on the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010, organized by Women in Struggle for Empowerment (WISE) in collaboration with the National Women Journalists Forum



Hon'ble Ombudsman Justice (R) Shahnawaz Tariq addressing the participants . The Office of the Provincial Ombudsman (PHWP) successfully conducted awareness & training workshop for Algi Pakistan, Quality Care Management Services & individuals from various departments and sectors, Karachi", at the camp office of Provincial Ombudsman (PHWP).



**Federal Tax Ombudsman of Pakistan Hon'ble Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah Meets with  
Representatives of Karachi Tax Bar Association**



**Onsite and Remote Interns, Along with Campus Ambassadors From Across Pakistan, Participated in a Highly Interactive Joint Session Held at the Federal Tax Ombudsman Secretariat Featuring Senior Advisor (Customs), Dr. Arslan Subuctageen**

