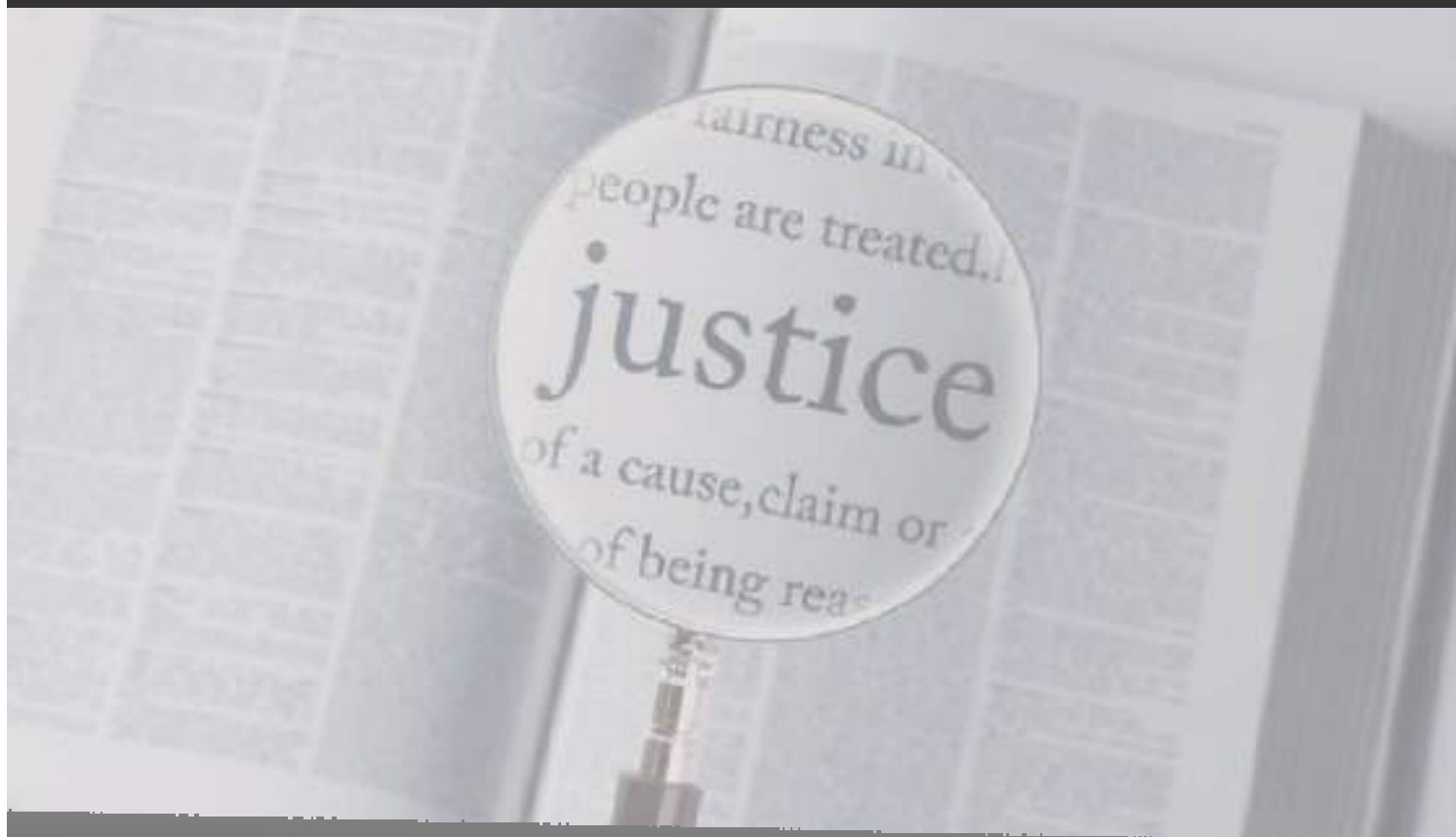




THE OMBUDSMAN OBSERVER

October 2025

An OIC Ombudsman Association Publication



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- Iran's General Inspection Organization Marks 44 Years Since Its Establishment
- H.E. Sabina Aliyeva Highlights the Accomplishments of Human Rights Ombudsman of Azerbaijan at an International Conference in Malta
- H.E. Ayesha Hamid Hosts the International Ombudsman Institute Conference & Asian Regional Meeting in Pakistan
- H.E. Fauzia Viqar Fines a Private Firm in Pakistan for Sacking a Female Employee During Maternity Leave

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The President's Message

Dear Esteemed OICOA Members and Colleagues,

As President of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OICOA), I am delighted to welcome you to the October edition of the OICOA Newsletter. It is an honor to extend my warmest greetings and heartfelt appreciation to each of you for your unwavering dedication to promoting the values of justice, fairness, and good administration across our member states.

Over the past month, as the Ombudsman Institution of Türkiye, we have remained actively engaged in various national and international activities that reflect our shared commitment to accountability and the protection of human rights.

Through constructive dialogue with public institutions, academia, and civil society, as well as through participation in global platforms, we have sought to contribute meaningfully to the promotion of human rights, good administration, and the rule of law. These efforts reaffirm our belief that cooperation and mutual learning are indispensable to ensuring effective, transparent, and people-centered administration. In this spirit, we remain devoted to working in solidarity with all OICOA members to uphold justice and strengthen the bridge of trust between citizens and the public administrations.

As the President of our distinguished Association, I am confident that, together, we will continue to act as a beacon of fairness, justice, and accountability. Our shared vision is to advance the culture of good administration and human dignity, not only within our national borders but also across the broader family of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

I wish you continued success in all your endeavors.

Warm regards,



H.E. Mehmet Akarca

PRESIDENT OIC OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION
CHIEF OMBUDSMAN OF TURKIYE



MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL



H.E. Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah
Federal Tax Ombudsman
of Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Dear OICOA Members,

The October 2025 issue of *The Ombudsman Observer* offers an opportunity to reflect on recent developments within our Association that speak to the continuing maturation of the ombudsman institution across the OIC community. Our work, rooted in administrative justice and the constitutional principles that underpin it, continues to advance through the engagement and initiative of our member institutions.

I wish to note, in particular, the successful organization of the IOI Asian Regional Conference in Lahore, led by H.E. Ayesha Hamid, Ombudsman Punjab. The conference was conducted with exemplary professionalism and provided a substantive platform for discussion on the strengthening of the rule of law. I also acknowledge the constructive participation of our members from Pakistan, Bahrain, Indonesia, and Azerbaijan, whose interventions and presence contributed meaningfully to the proceedings.

I further record our appreciation for the recent institutional engagements undertaken by H.E. Mehmet Akarca, President of OICOA, during his visit to Moscow. His meetings there represent a continuation of the serious, methodical efforts needed to deepen cooperation among oversight bodies. Similarly, I extend congratulations to H.E. Zabiullah Khodaeiyan on the 44th anniversary of the General Inspection Organization of Iran, an institution whose long operational history reflects a sustained national commitment to public accountability.

I would also like to highlight the work of the Mediator of Côte d'Ivoire, whose extensive nationwide awareness efforts ahead of the elections constitute a rare example of proactive ombudsman engagement in support of civic stability. The scale and intent of this campaign demonstrate the important role that mediation and oversight bodies can play in supporting democratic processes under conditions of potential strain.

As we move forward, I invite members to continue sharing developments from their jurisdictions, not only to document institutional progress but to contribute to the comparative understanding that strengthens our collective work.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Respected OICOA Members,

It is a pleasure to share with you the latest edition of the OICOA Newsletter. Each issue is a reminder of how active, diverse, and forward-looking our community has become, and this edition is no exception. In this edition, we are pleased to highlight the institutional history of the Ombudsman of Mozambique, a jurisdiction that continues to demonstrate how oversight bodies can evolve with purpose and clarity. We are also honoured to feature Hon. Beti Olive Kamya, the outgoing Inspector General of Government of Uganda, in our "Legendary Ombudsman" section in recognition of her impactful term and her longstanding engagement with the OICOA community.

I am equally delighted to feature H. E. Mohannad Hijazi, Chairman of Jordan's Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission, in our "Ombudsman in Focus" segment, where his institutional reforms for JIAAC offer valuable insight for the broader OICOA family. I also extend my appreciation to H. E. Sabina Aliyeva, Commissioner for Human Rights of Azerbaijan, for convening the first meeting of the Working Group on Mental Health and Human Rights. This initiative speaks to the expanding horizons of ombudsman work and the vital role institutions play in protecting vulnerable communities.

As always, I am reminded that OICOA's strength rests in its sense of community. While our institutions serve diverse nations, we remain united by a common commitment to fairness, integrity, and public dignity. I am grateful to share this month's achievements of our OICOA Members with you who embody these values in both spirit and practice.

Happy Reading.



Almas Ali Jovindah
Executive Secretary
OIC Ombudsman Association

THE LEGACY OF BETI KAMYA TURMOMWE

*The Woman Behind a Corruption Free Uganda
Based on Principles of Integrity and
Accountability*



Hon. Beti Kamya stands out as a stateswoman of uncommon resolve, whose leadership of Uganda's Inspectorate of Government brought renewed purpose, measurable results, and heightened regional cooperation across the OICOA network. A long-serving public administrator with a distinguished background in both the private sector and cabinet leadership, Hon. Kamya brought to the Inspectorate a rare combination of political acumen, institutional discipline, and unwavering moral conviction.

As an active OICOA Member, she ensured that the Inspectorate of Government (IGG) remained fully engaged in the Association's mandate—participating consistently in OICOA training programmes, technical exchanges, and General Assemblies.

Her tenure is widely remembered for breathing renewed energy into Uganda's anti-corruption framework. Early in office, Hon. Kamya declared that corruption was not an administrative irregularity but “a direct assault on the welfare of ordinary Ugandans,” noting that the country lost an estimated UGX 10 trillion annually—equivalent to nearly one-third of domestic revenue. This framing shaped her strategic direction: a forceful combination of enforcement, deterrence, and civic mobilisation. Under her leadership, the IGG concluded over 2,200 corruption investigations in 2024 alone, issued administrative sanctions to more than 1,200 public officers, and recommended recovery of nearly UGX 20 billion in illicit funds. The Inspectorate achieved a 94.7% conviction rate before the Anti-Corruption Court and intensified oversight of government expenditures, inspecting over 1,200 public projects and conducting dozens of targeted audits. These achievements reflected her belief that accountability must be measurable, visible, and people-centered.

Hon. Kamya's approach was equally defined by prevention and public education. She championed lifestyle audits, encouraged citizens to question unexplained wealth, and expanded integrity outreach in schools, universities, and local communities. She frequently reminded Ugandans that those “most affected by corruption are the least empowered,” urging citizens to reclaim the fight as a collective responsibility. Her advocacy helped shift societal attitudes, inspiring more citizens to report wrongdoing—an upward trend she publicly celebrated as a sign of a more engaged and vigilant society. In 2024 alone, the IGG handled 2,377 complaints and opened 852 formal investigations, demonstrating rising public trust in the institution.

Regionally, Hon. Kamya strengthened Uganda's leadership within the East African Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities (EAAACA), where Uganda served as Chair during her tenure. She used this platform to promote cross-border cooperation on asset recovery, whistleblower protections, and information-sharing—aligning Uganda's efforts with global standards and reinforcing the values championed by OICOA. Her office remained a consistent presence in international conferences and OICOA capacity-building initiatives, helping elevate Uganda's visibility in the global ombudsman community.

Despite acknowledging persistent challenges, particularly resource constraints, Ms. Kamya's four years at the helm of the IGG reshaped public expectations of accountability. Her insistence on transparency, ethical leadership, and citizen empowerment marked a shift toward a more inclusive integrity architecture. Upon completing her term, she reflected on the role as “very demanding but deeply meaningful,” while reaffirming her commitment to Uganda's governance reforms. Her subsequent appointment as Senior Presidential Advisor underscored the enduring value of her leadership.

Hon. Beti Kamya's legacy is one of courage, conviction, and institutional renewal. Her contributions to anti-corruption work and her steadfast commitment to public integrity have left a lasting imprint on Uganda and have earned her a distinguished place among OICOA's Legendary Ombudsmen.



H.E. MAJOR GENERAL DR. MUHANNAD HIJAZI

The Stalwart Steering Jordan's Anti-Corruption Agenda and Institutional Modernization

A distinguished OICOA Member, H.E. Dr. Muhannad Hijazi is a veteran Jordanian jurist and military justice official who has led the Jordanian Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission (JIACC) since March 2019. He holds a law degree from the University of Damascus (1981) and an MA in international legal studies from American University–Washington (1996). He later earned a PhD in international law (2013) and is a recognized expert in humanitarian law. Before joining JIACC, Dr. Hijazi served in senior military courts and prosecutor's offices, including as President of the Military Court and Military Appeals Court, and ultimately as Director of the Military Judiciary with the rank of Major General. His career established him as a leading legal authority on security and corruption-related crimes.

As JIACC Chairman, Dr. Hijazi has driven an institutional reform agenda focused on strengthening legal independence, harmonizing national legislation with international standards, and reshaping public-sector culture around integrity, transparency, and accountability.

Under his leadership, amendments to the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Law expanded JIACC's investigative mandate—enabling illicit-wealth tracking, asset recovery, whistleblower protection, and oversight of employees of international organizations operating in Jordan. He also launched the National Integrity Index, developed with Al-Hayat Center (RASED), to benchmark nearly 100 public institutions against OECD- and UN-aligned governance standards.

Dr. Hijazi's tenure has combined reform with active enforcement. Between 2019 and 2022, JIACC recovered roughly JD 517 million in illicit assets, with annual recoveries consistently exceeding JD 140 million. The Commission has referred between 170–200 high-level corruption files annually, with prosecutorial success rates of over 80%. These outcomes have drawn strong support from the Prime Minister, Senate leadership, and judicial authorities, reinforcing JIACC's role as a central guardian of public funds. To sustain institutional capacity, Dr. Hijazi has also expanded professional training, including new academic programs in governance and anti-corruption in partnership with the University of Jordan.

Throughout his tenure, Dr. Hijazi has consistently articulated a vision of a “fair environment free of corruption,” underpinned by the rule of law and robust public institutions. He often invokes His Majesty's directive for a more efficient, citizen-focused bureaucracy, telling officials that “an efficient public administration... can make decisions in a transparent manner” that promotes development and investment. He exhorts government employees to act without “hesitation” or “weak hands,” warning that indecision erodes public trust in state institutions. In official speeches he reiterates that combatting graft requires both punishment of wrongdoing and everyday ethical behavior – echoing Jordan's national Integrity Charter and international conventions. Complementing enforcement, Dr. Hijazi has prioritized prevention and public education through large-scale awareness programs across ministries, regulatory agencies, and security institutions. JIACC now conducts regular workshops on corruption risks, internal controls, and ethical administration, and has modernized its digital platforms to facilitate transparent public engagement. Dr. Muhannad Hijazi presents JIACC as a community partner rather than a distant prosecutor, emphasizing citizen participation in identifying risks and promoting a culture of integrity within public institutions.

Internationally, H.E. Dr. Muhannad Hijazi has positioned JIACC as an active regional and global actor. He has represented Jordan at UNCAC conferences, co-chaired emerging regional networks such as the MENA-ARIN asset-recovery initiative, and deepened cooperation with the EU, OECD, UNDP, AECID, and other partners working on governance reform and digitalization. He consistently situates JIACC's work within His Majesty King Abdullah II's broader modernization agenda, framing anti-corruption as essential to effective governance, investment, and public trust. JIACC has also been an active member of international ombudsmen network like OIC Ombudsman Association and International Ombudsman Institute along with other regional and international bodies. Dr. Hijazi's leadership reflects a dual commitment to legal rigor and societal reform, advancing Jordan's integrity system through institutional strengthening, proactive enforcement, and sustained international engagement. In essence, Dr. Hijazi's stewardship has recast functionality of JIACC in Jordan as a matter of national significance and a role model for international ombudsmen on how to shape an anti-corruption system that is stronger, more modern, and firmly oriented toward the public interest.



Provider of Justice (Ombudsman) of Mozambique



An Emerging Force for the Advancement & Protection of the Rights of the Citizens of Mozambique

Establishment and Mandate

The Office of the Provider of Justice (Ombudsman of Mozambique (Provedor de Justiça) is a relatively young institution in Mozambique's governance framework. It was first envisioned in the 2004 Constitution of Mozambique, which provided for an independent Ombudsman to oversee the public administration and safeguard citizens' rights. To operationalize this, Parliament passed a law in 2006 detailing the Ombudsman's office and powers. However, political deadlock delayed the appointment of any Ombudsman for several years – the law requires a two-thirds parliamentary majority to elect the Ombudsman, a threshold that was initially hard to meet. Opposition demands (such as creating multiple assistant ombudsmen representing different parties) were deemed unacceptable by the ruling party, and as a result, no Ombudsman could be agreed upon during the 2005–2009 Parliament.

This impasse was finally overcome after the 2009 elections, when the ruling FRELIMO party gained a large enough majority to push through a candidate. In May 2012, the Assembly of the Republic elected José Ibraimo Abudo as the country's first Ombudsman, marking the formal launch of the Ombudsman's Office in Mozambique. The Ombudsman is an independent, non-partisan office that does not take orders from any branch of government, answerable only to the Constitution and laws. The institution's mandate, as defined by law, is to receive and investigate complaints against public authorities and to recommend remedies for illegal or unjust acts by government agencies. In essence, in the words of incumbent Ombudsman of Mozambique H.E. Isaque Chande, the Provider of Justice of Mozambique acts as a guardian of citizens' rights – “the voice and guardian of the voiceless, the mediator between public powers and the citizens.”

INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

Hon'ble Dr. José Ibraimo Abudo (First Ombudsman of Mozambique)

Dr. José Ibraimo Abudo was elected as the first Ombudsman of Mozambique by Parliament in May 2012. Dr. Abudo is a jurist with a long career in the justice sector who previously served as a judge (including presiding judge of Sofala Provincial Court and a judge on the Administrative Tribunal) and was Minister of Justice from 1995 to 2004. As Ombudsman, he laid the groundwork for the new institution, handling citizen complaints and bringing attention to issues like prison conditions and bureaucratic inefficiencies. His term was for five years; it concluded in May 2017. Under Mr. Abudo's tenure, the Ombudsman of Mozambique was also admitted as a member of the OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA) in 2014 and African Ombudsman and Mediators Association (AOMA) in 2012, which integrated the office into regional and international ombudsman networks.



H.E. Isaque Chande (Incumbent Ombudsman of Mozambique)



The current Ombudsman, H.E. Isaque Chande, was elected by the Assembly of the Republic of Mozambique in May 2018 to succeed Mr. Abudo. Mr. Chande is a lawyer by profession, holding a law degree from Eduardo Mondlane University. Before becoming Ombudsman, he served as Mozambique's Minister of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs from 2016 until 2018. His background also includes academia and various public service roles (he holds a master's in corporate law and has taught at university level). As Ombudsman, Mr. Chande has continued to build the institution by expanding its outreach and pressing authorities to heed its recommendations. He was re-elected to a second term in December 2023, winning an Assembly vote for reconfirmation in the role (with 167 votes in favor). This continuity signals confidence in the Ombudsman's work and allows him to further entrench the office's influence.

Affiliation with International Ombudsman Networks

The Ombudsman of Mozambique has been an active part of OIC Ombudsman Association since becoming its Member Institution in 2014 and frequently engages in knowledge-sharing and capacity-building alongside counterparts from other OIC Member Institutions. The Ombudsman of Mozambique has also been actively participating in the OICOA Training Sessions and utilising these engagements to help their staff learn from the varied experiences of other OICOA Member Institutions and adopt best practices in handling complaints, mediating citizen-government disputes, and advocating for good governance. H.E. Isaque Chande recently attended the 4th OICOA General Assembly in Iran (May 2025) and delivered keynote address to highlight Mozambique's progress on transparency laws and the Ombudsman's role in upholding citizens' right to information.

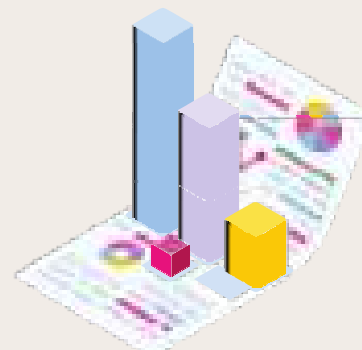


The Ombudsman of Mozambique is also a Voting Member of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) and African Ombudsman Association and actively participates in training and policy harmonization initiatives by such international and regional ombudsmen networks. The Ombudsman has also signed cooperation agreements with fellow lusophone institutions, including the Ombudsmen of Angola and Portugal, and engaged in joint activities with the South African Public Protector and the Dutch Embassy. These partnerships provide technical assistance, comparative insights and peer support that feed back into Mozambique's efforts to strengthen its own complaints-handling, reporting and outreach models.



Complaints, Case load, and Performance

Available data from recent years indicate a steadily growing demand for the Mozambique Ombudsman’s services. In a recent information note covering the period from April 2024 to March 2025, the Ombudsman reported receiving 457 complaints from citizens. Most related to delays and lack of response by administrative bodies, disputes over public employment and pensions, alleged abuses by local authorities and service-delivery agencies, and conflicts around land and housing – areas that reflect broader governance challenges in Mozambique.



The Ombudsman’s interventions also reverberate within the justice system. In its 2024 annual report, the Supreme Court noted that it had registered 83 complaints forwarded by the Ombudsman concerning excessive delays in judicial proceedings—a sign that the Ombudsman increasingly acts as a conduit for citizens’ frustrations with court backlogs and as a catalyst for institutional self-correction.

Beyond raw numbers, the Ombudsman’s performance is visible in specific thematic interventions. A notable example is Recommendation No. 003/GP/2019 on the voting rights of prisoners, which pressed state authorities to ensure that persons deprived of liberty could effectively exercise their constitutional right to vote. Recent reports from the justice sector confirm that a national strategy is being developed to implement this recommendation, illustrating how Ombudsman opinions can drive gradual policy change.

A second institutional milestone came with the adoption of *Law No. 10/2023*, which revised the statute, competences and operating procedures of the Ombudsman. The law enabled the creation of provincial delegations, introduced a Secretary-General, Provincial Delegates and National Directorates, and strengthened parliamentary follow-up mechanisms when public bodies fail to implement the Ombudsman’s recommendations. These reforms are gradually transforming the Ombudsman from a central-office body into a more territorially present, structurally robust institution.



The current Ombudsman, H.E. Isaque Chande, has also used public platforms to highlight structural problems such as corruption, poor ethical standards and gender-based violence. At the launch of the Office’s 2020–2024 Strategic Plan, he identified “zero tolerance for corruption” and the improvement of administrative responsiveness as central priorities, warning that persistent corruption and poor service delivery undermine citizens’ trust in the state. He has repeatedly stressed that the Ombudsman must be both a defender of individual complainants and a promoter of a broader culture of integrity in public life.



Over the ensuing decade, the Ombudsman’s office moved from a largely unknown organ to a visible actor in the national legal landscape. In 2022, the Presidency marked the tenth anniversary of the Ombudsman with a high-level ceremony in Maputo under the theme “Ombudsman: 10 years guaranteeing citizens’ rights, defending legality and justice,” explicitly recognizing the institution’s contribution to consolidating the rule of law.



Outreach, Vulnerable Groups and Territorial Presence

One of the institution's most visible recent achievements is its outreach to conflict-affected and vulnerable communities. In September 2025, the Ombudsman co-organized a large "Access to Justice and Human Rights Fair" in Metuge, a district of Cabo Delgado hosting one of the country's largest camps for people displaced by insurgent violence. The event brought together hundreds of internally displaced people—many of them women, girls and elderly persons—and multiple service providers offering legal assistance, civil registration, health services and documentation.

Linked to this initiative, in September 2025 the Ombudsman inaugurated the institution's first delegation in Cabo Delgado, a significant step toward decentralization after 13 years of institutional life. The delegation, opened in partnership with the National Human Rights Commission and a democracy-support organization under a Netherlands-funded "Promoting Access to Justice" programme, aims to bring complaint-handling and mediation closer to communities in a province deeply affected by terrorism.

The new delegation in Cabo Delgado is also linked to a child-protection agenda. A memorandum with the national child-helpline "*Linha Fala Criança (116)*" allows cases of abuse and violence reported by children and concerned adults to be channelled directly to the Ombudsman for follow-up, reinforcing the institution's capacity to respond to violations against minors. Through seminars and campaigns on gender-based violence, domestic violence and reproductive rights, often undertaken with UN agencies and civil-society partners, the Ombudsman has sought to position itself as a champion of women's and children's rights, linking day-to-day complaints to the broader human-rights commitments enshrined in the Constitution

A Young But Strategic Institution

In comparative terms, Mozambique's Ombudsman remains a young institution, still consolidating its authority amid resource constraints and complex governance challenges. Yet the trajectory of the past decade and a half shows a clear pattern of progress: from a mere constitutional idea to a fully functioning organ; from centralised office to network with provincial presence; from low visibility to a recognizable actor in both domestic and international arenas.

For the OIC Ombudsman Association community, the example of Provider of Justice (Ombudsman) of Mozambique illustrates how an Ombudsman can progressively translate constitutional principles into concrete protection for citizens, even in contexts marked by poverty, conflict and constrained state capacity. Through its growing caseload, thematic recommendations and outreach to vulnerable populations, the Office of the Ombudsman of Mozambique is slowly but steadily weaving itself into the country's fabric of accountability and rights-based governance.





OMBUDSMAN INSTITUTION OF TURKIYE

OICOA President Participates in Malta Conference Marking 30 Years of the Ombudsman Institution

President of OICOA and Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye, H.E. Mehmet Akarca, attended the International Ombudsman Conference in Malta on 16 October 2025, held under the theme “Upholding Good Governance in Challenging Times: The Role of the Ombudsman.” In his address, titled “Building People’s Trust – The Ombudsman as a Pillar of Democracy in Times of Change,” he highlighted the indispensable role Ombudsman institutions play in reinforcing public trust and serving as a stabilizing bridge between citizens and the state. The event, marking the 30th anniversary of the Maltese Ombudsman Office, concluded with the participation of Malta’s Prime Minister, H.E. Robert Abela.



Alongside the formal sessions, Mr. Akarca attended the General Assembly of the Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen (AOM) and engaged in a series of focused bilateral meetings with senior oversight officials from Malta, Ukraine, and Egypt. These conversations were not merely ceremonial exchanges but opportunities to assess how different jurisdictions are adapting their mandates and institutional capacities to contemporary governance pressures. The discussions highlighted overlapping concerns; from managing heavy caseloads to mediating complex administrative disputes, and reaffirmed the importance of maintaining channels of cooperation across the Mediterranean oversight community.



President of OICOA and Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye, H.E. Mehmet Akarca, Paid an Official Visit to Moscow - Russia

Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye and President OICOA, H.E. Mehmet Akarca, paid an official visit to Moscow upon the invitation of Ms. Tatiana Moskalkova, the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation, in order to participate in the 10th Meeting of the Eurasian Ombudsman Alliance as an observer, on the theme “Protection of the Rights of Residents of Hard-to-Reach, Remote, and Rural Areas”; as well as the 9th International Scientific and Practical Conference on “Protection of Human Rights in the Context of the Digitalization of Society.” Ombudsperson Ms. Fatma Benli Yalçın accompanied Mr. Akarca during the visit.



At the 10th Meeting of the Eurasian Ombudsman Alliance (EOA), Mr. Akarca stated that “Human rights and justice are for everyone. Just as we embrace the principle of equality in public services, we must aim to reach all citizens in the conduct of our activities.” He emphasized that the Ombudsman Institution of Türkiye frequently organizes regional meetings to reach citizens in different provinces across the country, which has a vast geography and population. He noted that the Institution prints informative brochures about its work and ensures they are distributed in different provinces and at various service points to raise public awareness. He added that the Ombudsman Institution frequently appears in visual and print media, provides information about its activities and shares important decisions that concern society at large.

During his speech at the 9th International Scientific and Practical Conference, Mr. Akarca highlighted that the concept of digital rights has emerged alongside digital transformation, accompanied by new international regulations. He noted that this process introduces new duties and responsibilities for Ombudspersons. Mr. Akarca further underlined the crucial role of Ombudspersons in ensuring a fair and secure digital environment—one in which human dignity, fundamental rights, and freedoms are effectively protected against the risks and challenges posed by digital transformation. At the Conference, Mr. Akarca also had the opportunity to meet with the Head of the Regional Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the Russian Federation, Ms. Rania Machlab.



Additionally, OICOA President H.E. Mehmet Akarca held a bilateral meeting with High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation, Ms. Tatiana Moskalkova within the framework of his work visit in Moscow. The meeting was also attended by the Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to the Russian Federation, Mr. Tanju Bilgiç, and Ombudsperson Ms. Fatma Benli Yalçın. During the meeting, the parties discussed issues related to cooperation on humanitarian matters.



H.E. Mehmet Akarca, also paid a visit to Mr. Igor Krasnov, Chairman of the Supreme Court in the Russian Federation, within the framework of his official program in Russia. During the meeting, Mr. Akarca extended his congratulations to Mr. Krasnov on his recent appointment. The parties exchanged views on enhancing bilateral cooperation between Türkiye and Russia, particularly in the fields of human rights and the rule of law, and expressed their mutual intent to further strengthen these ties. The meeting was also attended by the Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to the Russian Federation, Mr. Tanju Bilgiç.

Annual Reports of the Turkish Ombudsman Institution for 2023 and 2024 Discussed in the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye



During the Plenary Session of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (GNAT) on 2 October 2025, the Joint Committee—comprising members of the Petition Committee and the Human Rights Inquiry Committee—convened to review the 2023 and 2024 Annual Reports of the Ombudsman Institution. The session formed part of Parliament's ongoing oversight of national grievance-redress mechanisms and provided an opportunity to examine how institutional practices have adapted to evolving public expectations.



Chief Ombudsman Mr. Mehmet Akarca attended the meeting together with Ombudsmen Mr. Ertuğ Erkan Balta, Ms. Fatma Benli Yalçın, Mr. Abdullah Cengiz Makas, and Mr. Özcan Yıldız, as well as Secretary General Mr. Mehmet Doğan. Their participation ensured that Committee members could engage directly with the Institution's senior leadership on the findings, priorities, and administrative reforms reflected in the reports. The discussion underscored the parliamentary interest in strengthening the effectiveness, accessibility, and transparency of the Ombudsman Institution. By presenting two years of consolidated work, the session enabled legislators to assess broader trends in citizen appeals, administrative responses, and the Institution's efforts to promote a rights-based public service culture across Türkiye.

Chief Ombudsman H.E. Mehmet Akarca, accompanied by Ombudsmen Mr. Ertuğ Erkan Balta, Ms. Fatma Benli Yalçın, Mr. Abdullah Cengiz Makas, and Mr. Özcan Yıldız, held a series of courtesy visits with several Committee Chairs of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (GNAT). The delegation engaged with the Chairs of the Constitutional, Petition, Justice, and Human Rights Inquiry Committees, respectively. The meetings provided an opportunity to exchange views on parliamentary oversight, human rights priorities, and the Ombudsman Institution's recent work. During the visits, Chief Ombudsman Mr. Akarca also presented the Institution's booklet titled "Ethnic Cleansing in Gaza: Death, Destruction, Displacement," underscoring the Institution's broader engagement with humanitarian and rights-based concerns.



GENERAL INSPECTION ORGANIZATION OF IRAN



Iran's General Inspection Organization Marks 44 Years with Reform-Focused Oversight Vision

At the ceremony marking the 44th anniversary of the General Inspection Organization of Iran (GIO), President and OICOA Vice President H.E. Justice Khodaeiyan outlined an ambitious reform agenda that positions the institution at the center of Iran's evolving oversight landscape. Speaking in the presence of senior judiciary officials, he framed the anniversary as a moment for institutional self-assessment, noting that the GIO's constitutional mandate under Article 174 reflects the framers' intention to anchor administrative integrity and accountability within the state's legal architecture.

Justice Khodaeiyan underscored that the GIO's central duty—the consistent enforcement of law—is fundamental to realizing justice in both legal and social terms. He outlined the institution's ongoing shift toward technology-driven and knowledge-based oversight, citing smart supervisory systems, enhanced digital infrastructure, and expanded public-reporting channels, including a fully operational whistleblowing portal. Emphasizing public-centered accountability, he highlighted strengthened whistleblower protections and citizen-driven reporting, alongside expanded research and training capacities supported by partnerships with universities and scientific institutions. He also pointed to national initiatives on transparency, conflict-of-interest management, and preventive anti-corruption measures as core elements of the GIO's reform agenda, stressing that while lawful administrative activity faces no impediment, violations are addressed without exception and referred to judicial authorities in line with the Organization's constitutional mandate.

GIO and Allameh Tabataba'i University Sign Cooperation Memorandum to Advance Scientifically Based Oversight

The General Inspection Organization of Iran (GIO) and Allameh Tabataba'i University signed a cooperation memorandum to advance a science-centered approach in national oversight and anti-corruption efforts. GIO Vice President Dr. Ahmad Rahmani emphasized that effective supervision must rest on rigorous, research-driven methods, highlighting recent initiatives such as knowledge-based inspection programs, academic collaboration in identifying corruption vulnerabilities, and expanded use of digital tools to strengthen analytical capacity.



The agreement also supports joint research, training programs, and the development of academic initiatives related to administrative integrity, aligning with the GIO's broader focus on transparency and conflict-of-interest prevention. Both institutions underscored that the partnership is intended to translate university-based expertise into practical oversight tools, marking a step toward more methodical and evidence-informed governance.



Justice Zabiullah Khodaeiyan Honors *Khaleghi Pour* Martyrs on the 44th Anniversary of the GIO Iran

On the occasion of the 44th anniversary of the General Inspection Organization of Iran, Vice President OICOA H.E. Justice Khodaeiyan (President of GIO), visited the family of the Khaleghi Pour martyrs to honor their legacy. Conveying the greetings of the Head of the Judiciary, he expressed deep respect for Mrs. Forough Manahi, who lost three sons in defense of the Islamic Revolution, and emphasized that the country's security and stability are inseparable from the sacrifices of such families. His remarks echoed the consistent position of the Supreme Leader regarding the moral responsibility to recognize and support the families of martyrs.

During the visit, the life stories of Davoud, Rasoul, and Alireza Khaleghi Pour—martyred between 1983 and 1988 during key operations of the Sacred Defense—were remembered with reverence. Justice Khodaeiyan also paid tribute to their late father, Haj Mahmoud Khaleghi Pour, himself a veteran of the eight-year war, noting that the perseverance and faith of families like theirs form an enduring part of the nation's moral and historical foundation.

GIO President Visits Iranian Judiciary's Public Communications Center to Personally Address Citizens' Concerns

On the 44th anniversary of the establishment of the General Inspection Organization, Vice President OICOA H.E. Justice Zabiullah Khodaeiyan visited the Judiciary's Public Communications Center, addressed citizens' requests, and made phone calls to officials to follow up on their issues.

According to the public relations office of the General Inspectorate Organization, Justice Dr. Khodaeiyan, the President of GIO, in line with an order from the head of the Judiciary requiring judicial officials to appear at the Public Communications Center, this morning personally attended the center to review public requests.



During the meeting, he conversed face-to-face with visitors, heard their statements, and issued necessary directives to pursue and resolve the problems presented. In part of the session, he also attended to public requests and issues by telephone.



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER OF AZERBAIJAN



H.E. Sabina Aliyeva Highlights Ethical Governance at Malta International Conference

Azerbaijan's Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) and OICOA Board Member H.E. Sabina Aliyeva, participated in the International Ombudsman Conference in Malta on "*Upholding Good Governance in Challenging Times: The Role of the Ombudsman*," attended by Maltese state officials and representatives of foreign oversight institutions. In her address, she emphasized that strengthening ethical governance and good-administration principles is essential for maintaining public trust in modern state institutions. She underscored that the rule of law, transparency, and respect for human rights remain core pillars of Ombudsman institutions, and noted that Azerbaijan continues to advance these priorities through national programs and state action plans.

Ms. Aliyeva also stressed that globalization, technological change, and particularly the rise of artificial intelligence make the promotion of ethical governance even more pressing. She highlighted ongoing Azerbaijani initiatives that expand digital access for citizens, improve public awareness, and facilitate easier submission of complaints. During her visit, the Ombudsman was received by the President of Malta, H.E. Miriam Spiteri Debono, and held meetings with several officials participating in the conference.

Azerbaijan's Human Right's Commissioner Convenes First Meeting of the Mental Health and Human Rights Working Group

On October 10, ahead of World Mental Health Day, the Azerbaijan Ombudsman's Office held the first meeting of its new Working Group on Mental Health and Human Rights, chaired by Ombudsman Sabina Aliyeva. The session gathered leading medical experts, academics, members of parliament, WHO representatives, and civil society actors to discuss the legal, clinical, and social dimensions of mental-health rights. In her remarks, Aliyeva emphasized that the right to mental health includes access to care, protection from stigma and discrimination, and the creation of safe and inclusive environments. She highlighted the Ombudsman Institution's ongoing monitoring of psychiatric facilities and its recommendations to state bodies aimed at strengthening national mental-health protections in line with international standards.



Participants underscored the Working Group's role as a collaborative platform to identify challenges, shape expert-led proposals, and enhance coordination among relevant state and professional institutions. Discussions focused on reducing stigma, improving service accessibility, increasing public awareness, and addressing existing gaps in mental-health governance. The meeting concluded with agreement on initial follow-up steps to guide the Group's future work.



H.E. Sabina Aliyeva Holds a Meeting with the Newly Appointed Judge of the Constitutional Court of Hungary

Azerbaijan's Commissioner for Human Rights and OICOA Board Member H.E. Sabina Aliyeva, met with Justice Akos Kozma, recently elected Judge of the Constitutional Court of Hungary and former Ombudsman. She congratulated him on his new appointment and highlighted the longstanding friendship between the two countries. Ms. Aliyeva briefed Judge Kozma on her constitutional mandate, recent expansions of her authority, and the strong cooperation that exists between the Ombudsman Institution and Azerbaijan's Constitutional Court.

During the meeting, Ms. Aliyeva also informed her counterpart about pressing human-rights concerns stemming from Armenia's past actions, including the unresolved fate of nearly 4,000 Azerbaijanis missing since the First Karabakh War and the continued threat posed by landmines in liberated territories. She noted that mines impede safe living conditions, delay the return of displaced families, and obstruct reconstruction efforts. Judge Kozma expressed his gratitude for the warm reception and the comprehensive exchange.

Training on Legal and Social Aspects of Combating Drug Addiction Held in Ganja by Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of Azerbaijan

A training session titled "Legal and Social Aspects of the Fight Against Drug Addiction" was held at the Ganja Regional "ASAN Service" Center No. 2, jointly organized by the Western Regional Center and the Ombudsman Institution of Azerbaijan. The initiative was conducted on the direct instructions of the Commissioner for Human Rights, Sabina Aliyeva, as part of her broader focus on regional outreach and the protection of vulnerable groups. Participants—including legal experts, social workers, and community representatives—examined the complex interplay between public-health risks, social vulnerabilities, and the legal obligations of state institutions in addressing drug dependency.

Speakers emphasized the need for coordinated preventive measures, improved rehabilitation pathways, and stronger community-based awareness efforts. The session highlighted the Ombudsman Institution's ongoing work to promote rights-based approaches in combating addiction, ensuring that affected individuals receive protection, access to services, and reintegration support. The event reinforced the importance of inter-agency cooperation and underscored the role of regional centers in translating national human-rights priorities into practical, community-level action.





MEDIATOR OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO



Mediator of Morocco H.E. Hassan Tariq Receives the Delegation from Moroccan Elite Young Leaders Association

As part of the ongoing efforts to activate participatory governance and strengthen inclusive institutional dialogue, the Mediator of the Kingdom and OICOA Board Member H.E. Hassan Tariq, held an extensive listening session on October 31st with a delegation from the “Moroccan Elite Young Leaders Association”, led by its president, Amin Ben Omar. The meeting formed part of the newly launched “Elite Governance Forums” initiative, whose first edition is devoted to diagnosing structural challenges in the national health system and exploring proposals to restore public confidence in this essential sector. Mr. Tariq stressed the importance of the Mediator’s role in facilitating equitable resolutions to disputes and addressing administrative shortcomings through principles grounded in fairness, legality, and justice.

The session provided these young leaders—selected for their demonstrated commitment to public affairs and their analytical capacity, with a platform to engage directly with the Mediator on deficiencies affecting healthcare governance. Discussions focused particularly on the quality of health services, unequal access to care, and systemic obstacles that citizens encounter when navigating public health institutions. H.E. Hassan Tariq emphasized that engaging youth in such diagnostic exercises is crucial not only because of their ability to observe dysfunction with fresh eyes, but also because of their innovative thinking and their deep concern for the social issues that shape Morocco’s future. As the dialogue unfolded, the youth delegation demonstrated a strong sense of engagement, voicing concerns, sharing experiences, and proposing new approaches to overcoming the dysfunctions of the health facility.

Mediator of the Kingdom Meets Delegation from Burundi’s National Human Rights Commission

On October 13th the Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco and OICOA Board Member, H.E. Hassan Tariq, welcomed a high-level delegation from the Independent National Commission for Human Rights of the Republic of Burundi, led by its Vice-Chairman, Gérard Rugemintwaza. The meeting provided a structured platform for both sides to discuss avenues for deeper cooperation between Morocco’s mediation system and Burundi’s national human rights mechanisms. Discussions addressed the complementarity of mediation and human rights institutions, the importance of coordinated complaint-handling procedures, and the broader role of such bodies in strengthening trust, equity, and access to justice within public administration.



The delegation’s visit, held from October 8 to 14, 2025, at the invitation of the National Human Rights Council, aims to study Morocco’s evolving model in the protection and promotion of human rights. Their program includes thematic sessions, institutional exchanges, and field visits designed to present Morocco’s advanced experience in rights protection, administrative oversight, and mediation-driven dispute resolution. The meeting reaffirmed the commitment of both countries to enhancing institutional dialogue and building stronger, more effective national frameworks dedicated to safeguarding human dignity and citizens’ rights.

OMBUDSMAN OF THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

H.E. Ghada Hameed Visits Pakistan to Attend the Asian Regional Meeting of the International Institute of Ombudsmen

OICOA Board Member H.E. Ghada Hameed Habib (Secretary-General of the Ombudsman of Bahrain), took part in the Asian Regional Meeting and the 2025 International Conference of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) in Lahore, Pakistan, held under the theme “Promoting the Rule of Law through Ombudsman Institutions.” The forum underscored the central role of ombudsman bodies in safeguarding citizens’ rights, strengthening equity, and advancing the principles affirmed in the 2024 UN General Assembly Resolution on the role of Ombudsman and national mediators in protecting human rights.



The conference explored the Ombudsman’s role as a bridge between citizens and government, emphasizing how effective mediation strengthens public confidence and fosters adherence to the rule of law. Sessions also examined accountability and good governance in public administration, underscoring the importance of transparency and institutional responsibility for fair and efficient service delivery. Ms. Hameed praised the meaningful outcomes of the meeting. She highlighted that discussions on rule of law, accountability, and governance align closely with the mission of the Bahrain ombudsman. Participation in this international forum, she added, strengthens the Ombudsman’s global presence, facilitates access to comparative expertise in complaint handling and human-rights protection, and deepens partnerships with peer institutions, thereby enriching its operational approaches and service mechanisms.



Bahrain Ombudsman and PDRC Participate in National “Tree Week” to Support Carbon Neutrality Goals

As part of Bahrain’s nationwide efforts to promote environmental sustainability and advance the Kingdom’s commitment to carbon neutrality, the Ombudsman’s Office and the Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission (PDRC) took part in this year’s “Tree Week,” an annual initiative launched by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister. Their participation forms a meaningful contribution to the broader national strategy inspired by the directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, aimed at enhancing environmental balance and addressing the challenges posed by climate change within the framework of the National Action Plan for Carbon Neutrality.

On this occasion, OICOA Board Member H.E. Ghada Hameed Habib, Ombudsman of Bahrain and Head of the PDRC, reaffirmed the institutions’ commitment to supporting initiatives that protect the environment and expand green spaces across the Kingdom. She underscored that environmental stewardship is deeply intertwined with the principles of human rights and humanitarian responsibility that guide both the Ombudsman and the Commission.



OMBUDSMAN OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

Indonesian Ombudsman and Brawijaya University Renew Strategic Partnership to Strengthen Public Service Governance

The Indonesian Ombudsman and Brawijaya University (UB) signed a renewed memorandum of understanding on October 29, 2025, at UB's Rectorate in Malang, marking a significant step toward deeper collaboration in governance, public-service research, and institutional transparency. OICOA Board Member and Indonesian Ombudsman Chairman H.E. Mokhammad Najih emphasized that the partnership will support the Tridharma of higher education, particularly in strengthening research capacities.



Noting the Ombudsman's limited resources for academic studies, he highlighted UB's expertise as essential for sharpening public-service analysis and contributing expert support. The agreement also opens avenues for joint research, internships, public-report resolution initiatives, and the establishment of an "Ombudsman Corner" as a practical learning hub on campus.

UB Rector Prof. Widodo welcomed the partnership as a living collaboration that will generate valuable knowledge from the Ombudsman's extensive case data and public-service experience. He underscored the importance of translating collaborative outcomes into written works and academic publications to support broader scientific development. The renewed MoU—an update of a previous agreement that expired in February 2025—will be followed by detailed cooperation arrangements between the East Java Ombudsman Representative Office and UB's faculties. The signing ceremony was also attended by East Java Ombudsman Head Agus Muttaqin, Deputy Rector IV Prof. Andi Kurniawan, and Faculty of Social and Political Sciences Dean Ahmad Imron Rozuli.



Indonesian Ombudsman Monitors Academic Competency Test to Ensure Fair and Transparent Assessment

Indonesian Ombudsman member Indraza Marzuki Rais conducted an oversight visit to SMA Negeri 6 Jakarta on November 3, 2025, to monitor the implementation of the Academic Competency Test (TKA). The inspection focused on ensuring that the assessment was carried out transparently, in accordance with regulations, and free from maladministration that could disadvantage students. Indraza reviewed exam-room management, facility readiness, implementation procedures, and the availability of complaint mechanisms to guarantee equal access to educational services.

Highlighting the Ombudsman's mandate in safeguarding fairness and accountability in public services, Indraza emphasized that the quality of school-based evaluations plays a critical role in ensuring equitable access to quality education. The monitoring also gathered information on the administration of student assistance programs such as the Jakarta Smart Card (KJP) and the Smart Indonesia Program (PIP). The Ombudsman will continue similar monitoring efforts across educational institutions to uphold students' rights and strengthen governance within the education sector.



FEDERAL TAX OMBUDSMAN OF PAKISTAN

Bangladesh Ambassador Explores Enhanced Cooperation with the Federal Tax Ombudsman of Pakistan During His Official Visit

Ambassador of Bangladesh to Pakistan H.E. Iqbal Hussain called on the Secretary General OICOA and Federal Tax Ombudsman of Pakistan H.E. Dr Asif Mahmood Jah at the OICOA Secretariat. The official visit was made to the Secretariat to explore avenues for mutual cooperation, institutional learning, and the exchange of best practices in public grievance redressal and good governance. The Ambassador was received by senior officials of the Secretariat including Executive Secretary OICOA Almas Ali Jovindah, who briefed him on the mandate, functioning, and reform initiatives undertaken by the Federal Tax Ombudsman to strengthen administrative accountability and taxpayer facilitation in Pakistan.



The meeting underscored the mutual commitment of Pakistan and Bangladesh to advancing the role of ombudsman institutions as key guardians of transparency, fairness, and citizen empowerment. Both sides emphasised the importance of cross-country collaboration, especially in developing innovative redressal mechanisms, enhancing institutional capacity, and promoting people-centric service delivery. The visit concluded with an expression of willingness to continue dialogue and to explore structured cooperation that contributes to more efficient, responsive, and accountable public administration in both countries.



Bangladesh Finance Minister Studies Federal Tax Ombudsman Model to Develop Tax Ombudsman Institution in Dhaka

The State Minister for Finance (Special Assistant) of Bangladesh, Dr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury, along with Bangladesh's High Commissioner to Pakistan, H.E. Md. Iqbal Hussain Khan, visited the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Secretariat on October 28, 2025 to study Pakistan's ombudsman model and explore possibilities for establishing a similar institution in Bangladesh. The delegation was received by H.E. Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah (Federal Tax Ombudsman & Secretary General OICOA), and senior officials including Executive Secretary OICOA and Advisor (Legal) FTO, Almas Ali Jovindah.

During the meeting, Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah briefed the delegation on the FTO's performance, highlighting recoveries of more than PKR 23 billion, rapid complaint resolution averaging 34 days, and the institution's emphasis on transparency, accountability, and taxpayer facilitation. He also outlined the legal framework provided by the FTO Ordinance 2000 and the effectiveness of the Informal Dispute Resolution (IDR) mechanism.

Dr. Chowdhury praised the FTO as a strong model of integrity and citizen-centered governance and expressed interest in institutional collaboration to help Bangladesh establish its own tax ombudsman system. The visit concluded with an exchange of commemorative gifts and a symbolic tree-planting ceremony, to reflect friendship and growing cooperation between the two countries.

Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah Calls for Stronger Regional Ombudsman Cooperation at the IOI Asian Regional Meeting in Lahore

The IOI Asian Regional Meeting held in Lahore on 7 October brought together Ombudsmen and oversight leaders from across the region, hosted by the Provincial Ombudsman of Punjab, H.E. Ayesha Hamid. Federal Tax Ombudsman of Pakistan and Secretary General of the OIC Ombudsman Association, H.E. Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah, attended as Guest of Honour and Chair, praising H.E. Ayesha Hamid's hospitality and congratulating her on becoming the Second Vice President of the International Ombudsman Institute—a milestone he described as a proud moment for Pakistan and a significant step for women's leadership in global accountability institutions.



Chairing the proceedings, Dr. Jah highlighted Pakistan's central role in facilitating regional dialogue, noting that the Lahore meeting was accepted by the IOI Secretariat following a proposal submitted through the Punjab Ombudsman's Office. He emphasized that the strong participation from across Asia reflected a renewed commitment to cooperation, experience-sharing, and strengthening the collective capacity of Ombudsman institutions in public administration.

Addressing the forum's theme of good governance and accountability, Dr. Jah underscored that Ombudsmen are more than complaint handlers—they serve as impartial guardians of fairness, providing citizens, especially the vulnerable, with reliable access to administrative justice. He urged IOI members to deepen collaboration through joint capacity-building initiatives, secondments, and research exchanges, and pointed to a recent OICOA–Bahrain partnership as proof of how structured cooperation can elevate ombudsman performance across borders.

Dr. Jah also outlined the progress of the Federal Tax Ombudsman of Pakistan as an example of impactful ombudsmanship. He noted that the FTO has resolved over 57,000 complaints, including more than 30,000 in 2025 alone, backed by a 98 percent implementation rate and recoveries exceeding PKR 23 billion. These achievements, he said, demonstrate how a modern Ombudsman office can evolve into a strategic reform-oriented institution that improves service delivery and enhances trust in the tax system.



Concluding the session, Dr. Jah called on IOI Asian Region members to transform meetings like the one in Lahore into platforms for long-term partnerships and innovation. With continued collaboration through forums like International Ombudsman Institute, Forum of Pakistan Ombudsmen, and the OIC Ombudsman Association, he expressed confidence that Ombudsman institutions across Asia can strengthen their mandates, broaden their public reach, and become enduring pillars of democratic accountability.



INSPECTORATE GENERAL OF UGANDA



Uganda's IGG Secretary Rose N. Kafeero Calls on Eastern African Authorities to Strengthen E-Procurement and Close Vulnerabilities in Public Procurement Systems.

Mrs. Rose N. Kafeero, Secretary to the Inspectorate General of Uganda (an OICOA Member Institution), has called on members of the Eastern Africa Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities (EAAACA) to strengthen anti-corruption systems by eliminating opportunities for fraud in public procurement, including through the strategic use of technology.

Delivering a keynote address at a regional workshop in Kampala on fast-tracking the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), she emphasized that adopting and strengthening e-procurement tools is essential for promoting transparency and reducing vulnerabilities to bribery, kickbacks, and illicit financial flows. “By embracing and strengthening e-procurement systems, we can significantly reduce opportunities for fraud and build stronger anti-corruption systems,” Mrs. Kafeero said.

The workshop, organized by UNODC and held at Golf Course Hotel, brought together oversight bodies, law-enforcement agencies, and procurement authorities from across Eastern Africa. Mrs. Kafeero emphasized that strong integrity and procurement systems are essential for sustainable development and urged EAAACA members to integrate anti-corruption and anti-money laundering measures. The UNODC Regional Platform—covering ten Eastern African countries—aims to identify shared vulnerabilities and coordinate regional responses. Mr. Francesco Checchi noted that the workshop is expected to generate measurable results within 12–24 months, including new inter-agency cooperation mechanisms, amid growing concern over the USD 148 billion Africa loses annually to corruption and the significant procurement losses reported by the World Bank.



MEDIATOR OF TOGOLAISE



Togolaise Ombudsman Joins Global Dialogue on Military Mediation at the 17th ICOAF in Johannesburg

The Ombudsman of Togo, represented by Mr. Stan Akpelozim Lokoun, participated in the 17th International Conference of Ombudsmen for the Armed Forces (ICOAF), held from 7–9 October 2025 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The conference focused on strengthening awareness and communication around military mediation mechanisms.

Mr. Lokoun engaged in exchanges on improving access to complaint systems, enhancing trust and accountability, and adapting outreach to the needs of military personnel. The event provided a platform for sharing best practices on rights protection within the armed forces. Participants underscored the importance of international cooperation within ICOAF and the role of independent oversight bodies in safeguarding human rights. The conference concluded with the announcement that the 18th ICOAF will be held in Sydney, Australia, in October 2026.



ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL AUTHORITY OF LIBYA



Administrative Control Authority of Libya Participates in the Signing Ceremony of the UN Convention to Combat Cybercrime

Libya took part in the signing ceremony of the United Nations Convention to Combat Cybercrime held in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, on October 25–26, 2025. The Libyan delegation was led by Mr. Abdullah Qaderbough, Head of the Administrative Supervision Board, who was accompanied by senior officials and experts from the institution. The ceremony was attended by Mr. Võ Văn Thưởng, President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations; Dr. Ghada Waly, Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); and heads of national delegations and oversight bodies from across the world.

Experts from Libya's Administrative Supervision Board also participated as members of the Intergovernmental Expert Committee responsible for supporting the implementation of the Convention. This treaty represents the first comprehensive international legal framework dedicated to combating cybercrime globally. It was adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 24, 2024, through Resolution 79/243. To date, more than 60 countries have signed the agreement, which aims to enhance international efforts to prevent and counter cybercrime more effectively. Key pillars of the Convention include improving mechanisms for the exchange of electronic evidence, strengthening international cooperation, and expanding technical assistance and capacity-building—particularly for developing countries. The Convention will enter into force 90 days after 40 countries deposit their instruments of ratification or approval.

ACA Libya, UNODC and EU Mission Convene to Strengthen National Capacities Against Corruption and Money Laundering

The Administrative Control Authority of Libya convened its first coordination meeting in Tripoli on October 29 to discuss the implementation of the project “*Strengthening Libya's National Capacities to Prevent and Combat Corruption and Money Laundering*.” The meeting brought together ACA Chairman and OICOA Member H.E. Abdullah Qaderbough and representatives of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), alongwith the EU Mission in Libya.



Participants reviewed proposed activities for late 2025, including legal framework updates, capacity-building initiatives, anti-corruption workshops, and enhanced national and regional cooperation. The discussions emphasized the importance of unified institutional efforts to advance transparency, strengthen integrity, and support the National Strategy for Performance Monitoring and Combating Corruption (2025–2030). The meeting underscored the strategic partnership between Libya's Administrative Supervision Board, UNODC, and the EU Mission, reaffirming the shared goal of building effective governance systems capable of preventing corruption and money laundering. Participants agreed to prepare a detailed work program outlining key activities and expected outcomes, while emphasizing the role of collaboration between the High Committee and its subcommittees. The session concluded with a visit to the National Academy for Training and Development, where the delegation commended the Board's efforts to strengthen institutional skills and promote a professional, accountable public administration.



MEDIATOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF IVORY COAST

Korhogo Youth Dispute: Regional Office of Ivory Coast Mediator Brings Rival Leaders Together to Restore Stability

On 21 October 2025, the Regional Delegate Mediator for Poro in northern Ivory Coast, Mr. Seka Michel, convened a meeting with youth leaders in Korhogo to address ongoing tensions within the community of Waraniéné. The dispute, which began in August following a contested local youth leadership election, had led to divisions and unrest among young people in the area. To help restore calm, the Mediator brought together key actors: Mr. Coulibaly Lacina, President of the Korhogo Communal Youth; Mr. Konate Bafo, the elected President of the Waraniéné Youth; and his rival candidate, Mr. Coulibaly Alassane.



During the dialogue, the participants discussed the impact of the dispute on community cohesion and acknowledged the need for a peaceful and lasting resolution. All sides expressed a willingness to rebuild trust, restore unity, and prevent a recurrence of the disruptions experienced earlier in the year. The meeting resulted in two principal recommendations: the establishment of a reorganized youth leadership structure in Waraniéné to ensure inclusive representation, and a request for advocacy regarding the release of a detained student, Coulibaly Mamadou, who was arrested in connection with the August incidents. To ensure continuity, follow-up responsibility was assigned to Mr. Coulibaly Lacina, who will support the implementation of the agreed measures at the local level. The Regional Mediator reaffirmed his commitment to accompanying all efforts aimed at strengthening social cohesion, emphasizing that constructive dialogue and inclusive leadership are essential for stability and the well-being of young people in the Poro region.



Ivory Coast Mediator Brings Together Regional, Religious, and Community Leaders for Advanced Conflict-Prevention Training

A training workshop on conflict prevention and management was recently held by Mediator of Ivory Coast, bringing together regional delegations, religious leaders, and community representatives to strengthen local capacities in addressing community-level tensions. These tensions, often linked to land disputes, intercommunity misunderstandings, political competition, and social pressures during election periods, have periodically challenged stability in several regions. The workshop aimed to equip participants with practical tools to identify early warning signs and foster dialogue-based solutions.

Mr. Bakayoko Paul Emmanuel led a session on political tolerance, encouraging citizens to adopt responsible and peaceful attitudes, particularly during election periods. The workshop also featured an experience-sharing session on social cohesion, with contributions from delegates representing the Hambol, Kabadougou, and Folon regions. Their insights highlighted both successful practices and the challenges faced in maintaining harmony within communities.



OMBUDSMAN OF MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique's Ombudsman H.E. Isaque Chande Joins South Africa's Public Protector in Celebrating 30 Years of Constitutional Justice

The Provider of Justice (Ombudsman) of Mozambique and OICOA Member, H.E. Isaque Chande participated in the 30th anniversary celebrations of the Public Protector of South Africa, held from 13 to 16 October in Cape Town under the theme “*30 Years of Strengthening Constitutional Democracy – A Transformative Journey*.” The commemorative event gathered African ombudsman institutions, members of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI), government representatives, and international partners for a continent-wide reflection on the evolution of governance, accountability, and human rights protection in Africa.



Representing Mozambique Ombudsman, H.E. Isaque Chande attended the ceremony alongside Senior Advisors Almeida Ngovene and Laura Mutemba, and the Director of Studies, Planning, and Cooperation, Lalita Balate Guambe. On behalf of the institution, they conveyed congratulations to the Public Protector of South Africa H.E. Kholeka Gcaleka and her team for their exemplary work in promoting transparency, justice, and effective protection of citizens' rights and their active role in advancing interinstitutional cooperation among the Ombudsmen of African regions.



Ambassador of Netherlands Meets Mozambique's Ombudsman H.E. Isque Chande to Advance Partnership on Citizens Rights & Good Governance

The Ombudsman of Mozambique and OICOA Member, H.E. Isaque Chande, held a meeting on October 9 with the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, H.E. Elsbeth Akkerman, to deepen cooperation and exchange information on the mandate, functions, and institutional role of the Office of the Ombudsman. The discussion highlighted the Ombudsman's responsibilities in safeguarding citizens' rights, ensuring legality, and promoting justice in the actions of the Public Administration. The parties also reviewed the main categories of complaints received from the public and the mechanisms used to resolve them.

The Office of the Ombudsman and the Embassy maintain a longstanding partnership, exemplified by Dutch support for the establishment of the Ombudsman's Regional Office in Cabo Delgado under the Promoting Access to Justice Program, jointly implemented with the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) and the Institute for Multiparty Democracy (IMD). The Regional Office was inaugurated on September 11, in the presence of government authorities, diplomats, and development partners, who emphasized its importance in bringing justice services closer to the population, strengthening institutional responsiveness, and contributing to a more just, inclusive, and cohesive society.



JORDANIAN INTEGRITY & ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION

JIAAC Launches National “Digital Integrity” Campaign to Strengthen Cybersecurity and Public Trust

Jordan’s Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission (JIAAC), in partnership with the National Cyber Security Center, launched a new national campaign titled “*Digital Integrity: Sustainable and Effective Digital Transformation*” as part of Cyber Risks Awareness Month. The initiative builds on earlier campaigns to promote cybersecurity awareness, enhance transparency in digital services, and reinforce public trust in government systems.



JIAAC Chairman and OICOA Member H.E. Major General Dr. Mohannad Hijazi highlighted the link between digital integrity, reduced corruption risks, and improved service delivery, noting rising competition among ministries following the release of the National Integrity Index. Cybersecurity Center head Eng. Mohammed Al-Samadi emphasized that cybersecurity and integrity are inseparable pillars of good governance, praising the partnership as a model for national cooperation.

The event concluded with presentations highlighting recent advancements in Jordan’s digital-integrity initiatives, underscoring the increasing integration of cybersecurity principles into institutional practice. A detailed overview of the Cyber Aware government competition showcased the growing capacity of ministries to adopt secure digital behaviors, with representatives from 14 public institutions participating. Likewise, the Creative Designer competition demonstrated the role of innovative communication in strengthening public understanding of digital integrity, with submissions evaluated on conceptual clarity, creativity, and technical execution.



H.E. Dr. Muhannad Hijazi Engages Regional Partners at MENA Asset Recovery Network Meeting in Jeddah

Dr. Mohannad Hijazi, Chairman of Jordan’s Integrity and Anti-Corruption Authority and OICOA Member, participated in the inaugural annual meeting of the Middle East and North Africa Asset Recovery Network (Mena-ARIN) held in Jeddah. In his address, he emphasized Jordan’s strong commitment to fostering cooperation among Arab, regional, and international oversight bodies to better combat corruption and strengthen justice systems.

Dr. Hijazi highlighted the challenges facing asset recovery efforts—including complex legal procedures, evidentiary difficulties, and varying national frameworks—while underscoring the network’s value as a platform for information exchange, coordination, and improved recovery mechanisms.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Dr. Hijazi held bilateral discussions with senior officials from Australia, Morocco, Syria, and Azerbaijan to explore opportunities for deeper collaboration in areas such as financial investigations, money laundering, digital transformation, and cross-border asset tracing. He reaffirmed Jordan’s readiness to support partner institutions through experience-sharing and technical cooperation. The event concluded with the official launch of the Mena-ARIN Network, along with the adoption of its charter and declaration of shared intent which marked a significant step toward enhancing transparency, financial integrity, and coordinated anti-corruption action across the region.



OIC OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION SECRETARIAT



Diplomatic Missions Engage with Pakistan's Ombudsman System at Diplomatic Grievances Redressal Seminar Held at Presidential Secretariat in Collaboration with OICOA

The Presidential Secretariat, in association with the OICOA Secretariat, hosted the Diplomatic Grievances Redressal Seminar on 28 October, bringing together representatives from several foreign missions to discuss administrative challenges faced in Pakistan. The forum created a direct platform for embassies to engage with Pakistan's redressal architecture and explore more efficient pathways for resolving institutional bottlenecks.

Presiding over the session, Hon'ble Justice (R) Irfan Qadir, Chief Legal Consultant to the President of Pakistan, highlighted the constitutional role of the Presidency in overseeing the federal ombudsman system. He underscored the strength of Pakistan's network of 14 ombudsman offices—particularly the Federal Ombudsman of Pakistan, which adjudicates over 250,000 complaints annually with an implementation rate exceeding 80%. Justice Qadir reaffirmed the Presidency's commitment to ensuring that representations against ombudsman decisions are processed with clarity, fairness, and efficiency.

Ambassador (R) Dr. Aman Rashid, newly appointed head of the Diplomatic Grievances redressal Cell (DGRC) at the Federal Tax Ombudsman, briefed participants on the need for a coherent redressal mechanism tailored to the unique administrative context of diplomatic missions. He expressed readiness to act as a focal liaison and proposed replicating the DGRC model across all federal ombudsman offices. His proposal received support from Justice Qadir.

Representatives from the EU, Australia, Russia, Ireland, Iraq, Ethiopia, Nepal, and the Philippines, along with delegates from the OICOA and the Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman, shared feedback on tax refund procedures, interdepartmental coordination, and service responsiveness. Several envoys acknowledged the DGRC's contribution—particularly under former head of DGRC and incumbent Executive Secretary of OIC Ombudsman Association, Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah, in resolving longstanding issues. Justice (R) Irfan Qadir welcomed the interventions from participating missions, noting that candid, structured dialogue is indispensable for addressing administrative bottlenecks and enhancing the efficiency of state institutions. He reaffirmed that foreign missions may approach the Presidency or the relevant ombudsman forum directly, assuring them that their concerns will be examined with the seriousness and institutional rigor they merit. The seminar closed on a consensus that sustained engagement between diplomatic missions, the Presidency, and Pakistan's ombudsman institutions is essential for promoting transparency, improving service delivery, and strengthening the country's commitment to accountable and citizen-centred governance.





FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN OF PAKISTAN

Federal Ombudsman of Pakistan Takes Notice on Rising Population of Stray Dogs in Islamabad

Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has taken serious notice of the deteriorating stray dog situation in Islamabad, directing the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) to implement urgent remedial measures. The intervention comes amid rising reports of dog bite incidents and widespread public complaints, particularly from senior citizens, women, and children.

According to the Ombudsman's Office, the civic authorities have failed to operate the Stray Dogs Population Control Centre (SDPCC) in line with court directives and scientific standards. A study commissioned by the Federal Ombudsman earlier had already highlighted systematic lapses, noting that the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board's policy had not been implemented in letter and spirit.

The study reviewed international best practices, proposed actionable measures, and led to the establishment of the SDPCC under a high-level committee constituted by the Ombudsman. However, the Ombudsman's latest review found that the centre, intended to run on the Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate, and Release (TNVR) model, has largely ceased functioning as designed, resulting in a renewed surge in stray dog populations. With TNVR halted and proper care mechanisms absent, the facility has become ineffective, contributing directly to the growing public safety challenge. In his directive, the Federal Ombudsman expressed concern over the municipal authorities' negligence and reaffirmed that administrative inaction causing harm to citizens falls squarely within the jurisdiction of his office. He has ordered the CDA and MCI to immediately restore full TNVR operations, ensure humane management of dogs, and take coordinated steps to reduce the risks posed to the public. The Ombudsman emphasised that Islamabad must shift fully to humane, science-based population control methods in line with judicial directions, and that his office will continue to monitor compliance until substantial improvement is achieved.



Federal Ombudsman of Pakistan H.E. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi Participates in IOI Asian Regional Conference in Lahore

Federal Ombudsman of Pakistan and OICOA Member H.E. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi participated in the IOI Asian Regional Conference 2025 held in Lahore and hosted by Provincial Ombudsman of Punjab. In his remarks, Mr. Qureshi underscored the central role of ombudsman offices in reinforcing public trust and ensuring accountable governance. He noted that effective redress systems—rooted in independence, accessibility, and timely intervention—serve not only as corrective mechanisms but as essential components of constitutional democracy. Highlighting Pakistan's experience, he explained how the federal ombudsmen network has evolved into one of the country's most widely used channels for administrative justice.



Mr. Qureshi also commended the leadership of H.E. Ayesha Hamid, for successfully hosting the conference and providing a dynamic platform for regional cooperation. The Federal Ombudsman reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to advancing international collaboration within the IOI framework and emphasized that sustained dialogue among oversight bodies is vital for protecting citizens' rights and deepening the culture of rule-based governance.



PAKISTAN'S FEDERAL OMBUDSPERSON FOR PROTECTION AGAINST HARASSMENT

Federal Ombudsperson H.E. Fauzia Viqar Meets KPK Ombudsperson H.E. Rubab Mehdi to Strengthen Harassment Redressal System

Federal Ombudsperson and OICOA Member H.E. Fauzia Viqar met with Pakistan's Provincial Ombudsperson of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, H.E. Rubab Mehdi in Peshawar as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen Pakistan's institutional response to workplace harassment. The visit focused on improving coordination between federal and provincial mechanisms to ensure that women across the country, especially those in vulnerable or remote communities, can access timely and effective redress.



Both sides examined current procedures, shared operational experiences, and identified practical steps to streamline how cases are received, assessed, and followed up. They also discussed expanding outreach efforts to ensure that women—particularly those in remote parts of the province—are aware of available redress mechanisms. The meeting concluded with an agreement to continue technical cooperation aimed at building stronger, more accessible institutional support for complainants.



FOSPAH Fines a Private Pakistani Firm Rupees 1 Million for Sacking Female Employee During Maternity Leave

Pakistan's Federal Ombudsperson for Protection against Harassment (FOSPAH) and OICOA Member, H.E. Fauzia Viqar, has declared the dismissal of a female employee during her maternity leave as an act of gender discrimination and imposed a fine of Rs1 million on a private company. In her verdict on the woman's complaint, the Ombudsperson directed the company to pay Rs800,000 in compensation to the affected employee and deposit Rs200,000 into the national treasury. The office of the FOSPAH also nullified the woman's termination order and directed her reinstatement.

FOSPAH remarked that “motherhood should never become a barrier to a woman's career,” while emphasising that job security during maternity leave is a fundamental right and that every woman deserves a safe and protected maternity experience.

The case highlights growing enforcement of gender-discrimination protections in Pakistan and marks a significant step toward safeguarding women's labor rights in the public and private sectors. Employers are thus reminded that terminating a worker for maternity leave may constitute illegal discrimination—and that oversight institutions are increasingly empowered to impose reparations to deter such practices.

Federal Ombudsperson H.E. Fauzia Viqar Addresses the 18th Rural Women Leadership Training Conference Hosted by PODA

Honourable Federal Ombudsperson Fauzia Viqar addressed a panel at the 18th Annual Rural Women Leadership Training Conference organized by *PODA Pakistan—the Potohar Organization for Development Advocacy*, an NGO dedicated to advancing the rights, leadership, and socio-economic inclusion of rural women across the country. The conference serves as one of Pakistan’s longest-running platforms for rural women’s capacity building and policy engagement.



Speaking during a “Solution Strategies Development Session,” Ms. Viqar discussed the critical role of Pakistan’s law ministries and women’s departments in improving access to justice for women and girls, particularly in remote and underserved areas. She emphasized the need for coordinated institutional action to strengthen legal safeguards against harmful traditional practices, child marriages, and various forms of abuse that disproportionately affect rural communities.

Reaffirming the mandate of the Federal Ombudsperson’s office, Ms. Viqar underscored Pakistan’s commitment to building responsive, survivor-centered mechanisms that protect and empower women nationwide. She noted that sustained collaboration between government institutions, civil society, and local communities is essential to ensuring that every woman and girl in Pakistan can safely exercise her rights and seek justice.



Federal Ombudsperson H.E. Fauzia Viqar Addresses IOI Asian Regional Conference Hosted by Provincial Ombudsman of Punjab

Ensuring that state institutions remain accessible, responsive, and within reach of the people they serve is essential to strengthening the Rule of Law. This was the central message delivered by Federal Ombudsperson of Pakistan and OICOA Member, H.E. Fauzia Viqar at the IOI Asian Regional Conference 2025, hosted by the Ombudsman of Punjab under the theme “*Strengthening the Rule of Law Through Ombudsman Institutions.*”

Speaking to an audience of regional ombudsman leaders and governance specialists, Ms. Viqar emphasized that credible and effective oversight institutions must rest on a strong legal foundation, be adequately resourced for wide public outreach, and remain committed to awareness-raising, survivor-friendly service delivery, and policy reform. She reiterated that the Rule of Law cannot advance without ensuring that citizens—particularly marginalized groups—have meaningful access to independent accountability mechanisms that safeguard their rights.

Ms. Viqar also commended the leadership of H.E. Ayesha Hamid, Provincial Ombudsman of Punjab, for hosting the conference and setting a powerful example of women’s leadership in Pakistan’s governance landscape. She noted that the event itself reflected the values it sought to promote—professional excellence, institutional cooperation, and a commitment to public service led by strong and capable women at the forefront of reform.



FEDERAL BANKING OMBUDSMAN OF PAKISTAN

Pakistan's Federal Banking Ombudsman Provides Relief Worth 593.4 Million Rupees from 1st July - 31st October 2025

The Federal Banking Ombudsman of Pakistan has extended monetary relief totalling Rs. 593.4 million to banking customers by adjudicating 12,698 complaints against commercial banks during the four-month period from July to October 2025. During the same period, the Ombudsman's Secretariat received 13,132 new complaints, a reflection of both rising public reliance on the Ombudsman's redressal framework and the growing need for institutional vigilance amid an upsurge in banking-related fraud and deceptive financial practices.



Federal Banking Ombudsman and OICOA Member H.E. Sirajuddin Aziz, underscored the importance of customer awareness and responsible financial conduct. He advised banking clients to strictly avoid sharing personal or financial information with unknown callers and to treat unsolicited requests with caution. In cases of suspicious communication, he encouraged individuals to contact their bank's helpline or visit the nearest branch. His remarks underscored the central role of informed customers and responsive institutions in fostering a safer banking environment across Pakistan.



FEDERAL INSURANCE OMBUDSMAN OF PAKISTAN

H.E. Mumtaz Ali Shah Showcases Pakistan's Digital Governance Advances in Insurance Oversight at IOI Asian Regional Conference

At the IOI Asian Regional Meeting held in Lahore, Federal Insurance Ombudsman of Pakistan and OICOA Member, H.E. Mumtaz Ali Shah outlined recent reforms aimed at modernising grievance redressal in Pakistan's insurance sector. He highlighted the impact of the new digital complaint management system, which has accelerated case processing and expanded access, supported by nationwide awareness campaigns conducted with insurance regulators and industry partners.



H.E. Shah emphasised the growing role of digital governance in improving transparency and service delivery. By minimising face-to-face interactions and enabling remote submission of complaints, these tools are helping the Ombudsman reach underserved communities and streamline processes that once required extensive travel or paperwork.

He also pointed to the emerging use of artificial intelligence for data monitoring and trend analysis, noting its potential to strengthen oversight and identify systemic issues more quickly. The responsible adoption of such technologies, he said, will contribute to greater accountability and higher service standards for policyholders across Pakistan.



PROVINCIAL OMBUDSMAN OF SINDH

Pakistan's Provincial Ombudsman of Sindh Signs an MoU with Transparency International to Provide Speedy Justice to Public

Sindh Provincial Ombudsman and the Transparency International Pakistan have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to provide better, free and speedy justice to the public. The Provincial Ombudsman Sindh and OICOA Member H.E. Mohammad Sohail Rajput gave a detailed briefing to the Transparency International Pakistan delegation about the aims, objectives and working methods of the Provincial Ombudsman Sindh.

Mr. Rajput said that they were working on a modern complaint management system for public complaints related to government departments, after which the complainant will be able to directly monitor the process of his complaint, while the registered complaint will also be immediately transferred to the concerned officer for the next stage.

Transparency International Pakistan's Justice (r) Zia Pervaiz said that the Provincial Ombudsman Sindh was undoubtedly rendering excellent services for redressal of public complaints related to government departments of Sindh. He hoped the collaboration of the two institutions will increase the public's confidence in registering complaints for the provision of justice.



TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL - PAKISTAN



PROVINCIAL OMBUDSMAN OF SINDH FOR PROTECTION AGAINST HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE

Provincial Ombudsman Sindh (PHWWP) Drives Workplace Harassment Awareness at Sindh Mass Transit Authority

An awareness and training workshop on the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace (PHWWP) held on 29 October 2025 at the Sindh Mass Transit Authority, Government of Sindh, Karachi. The session was organised on the directives of the Provincial Ombudsman (PHWWP) Sindh, H.E. Justice (R) Shahnawaz Tariq, as part of the Ombudsman's ongoing efforts to strengthen institutional compliance with the anti-harassment law across public sector departments.

The workshop aimed to enhance understanding of the legal framework governing workplace harassment, clarify procedural safeguards for complainants and respondents, and guide institutions on developing fair, functional inquiry mechanisms. Participants were briefed on the mandatory responsibilities of employers under the 2010 Act, the importance of displaying the Code of Conduct, and the need for properly trained inquiry committees to ensure safe and respectful working environments. Officials of the Sindh Mass Transit Authority engaged actively in the discussions, acknowledging the importance of cultivating a workplace culture rooted in dignity, accountability, and zero tolerance for harassment.





PROVINCIAL OMBUDSMAN OF PUNJAB

H.E. Ayesha Hamid hosts the Asian Regional Meeting and International Conference of International Ombudsman Institute in Lahore, Pakistan



The International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) Asian Regional Meeting and International Conference 2025 were successfully convened in Lahore, marking a historic first for Pakistan as host of this prestigious global forum. Presided over by OICOA Member H.E. Ayesha Hamid (Provincial Ombudsman of Punjab and IOI Second Vice-President), the gathering brought together distinguished Ombudsmen and delegates from regions including Macao, Bahrain, Timor-Leste, Japan, Azerbaijan, South Africa, Austria, Gibraltar, Indonesia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Papua New Guinea, and the Philippines. Secretary General OICOA H.E. Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah also presided over the proceedings.

The three-day event served as a substantive platform for strengthening institutional cooperation and reaffirming the role of Ombudsman offices in protecting citizens' rights and advancing good governance. At the Opening Ceremony, H.E. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, Federal Ombudsman of Pakistan, highlighted the importance of transparency, citizen-centric service delivery, and sustained regional collaboration. H.E. Somsak Suwansujarit, IOI Asian Regional President and Chief Ombudsman of Thailand, briefed participants on outcomes of the IOI Board meeting in Rabat (May 2025) and the recent UN General Assembly resolution recognizing the global significance of Ombudsman and mediator institutions in safeguarding human rights and the rule of law.

The International Conference, held under the theme “*Strengthening the Rule of Law through Ombudsman Institutions*,” featured two thematic sessions. The first session, “*Making the Rule of Law Accessible: The Ombudsman as a Bridge between People and Government*,” included presentations by leaders from Azerbaijan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The second session, “*Ensuring Accountability and Good Governance in Public Administration*,” featured speakers from Macao, Pakistan, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, and others who shared comparative approaches to strengthening oversight and administrative justice.

The proceedings concluded with remarks by Mr. Bernhard Achitz, Member of the Austrian Ombudsman Board and Secretary General of the IOI, who praised Pakistan's exceptional hospitality and the exemplary organisation of the conference by the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab. He noted that the Lahore Conference had set a new benchmark for international cooperation, institutional capacity-building, and deepening the global Ombudsman mission of accountability, transparency, and service to citizens. Executive Secretary of OIC Ombudsman Association Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah was also in attendance.

Delegates were also introduced to Lahore's rich cultural legacy through visits to the Badshahi Mosque, Wazir Khan Mosque, Lahore Museum, Fakir Khana Museum, the Bamba Collection, Wagah Border, and the Shahi Hammam—experiences that fostered cross-cultural appreciation and strengthened bonds among participants.



Ombudsman Punjab Showcases *Helpline 1050* to International Delegates Following IOI Asian Conference

Following the successful IOI Asian Regional Meeting and International Conference 2025 in Lahore, the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab welcomed delegates from Azerbaijan, Timor-Leste, the Philippines, and Indonesia to its Head Office for a focused knowledge-sharing session. The visit underscored the commitment of Ombudsman institutions to deepen cooperation and strengthen service delivery through innovation and experience exchange.

Following the successful IOI Asian Regional Meeting and International Conference 2025 in Lahore, the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab welcomed delegates from Azerbaijan, Timor-Leste, the Philippines, and Indonesia to its Head Office for a focused knowledge-sharing session. The visit underscored the commitment of Ombudsman institutions to deepen cooperation and strengthen service delivery through innovation and experience exchange.

During the briefing, delegates were introduced to Helpline 1050, the Ombudsman Punjab's 24/7 PRI-linked call centre integrated with the Ombudsman Punjab Management Information System (OPMIS). This digital platform enables real-time complaint registration, monitoring, and follow-up. Mr. Sami Ullah, Advisor (F&P)/(ITID), explained how the system has become a vital link between citizens and public administration—logging more than 800 calls in September 2025 alone.

The visiting Ombudsmen expressed strong interest in adopting similar mechanisms within their own jurisdictions, noting the model's potential to improve accessibility and accountability. The session concluded with an interactive exchange on best practices and future collaboration within the IOI network, reflecting the Ombudsman Punjab's leadership in advancing citizen-centred governance and institutional innovation.



Punjab Ombudsman Launches Province-Wide Capacity Building on Anti-Harassment Framework

The Office of the Ombudsman Punjab, in collaboration with the Federal Ombudsperson Secretariat for Protection against Harassment (FOSPAH), launched a province-wide training initiative to strengthen awareness and implementation of the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010. The program began with a hybrid session at the Lahore Head Office on 5 September 2025, attended in person by Advisors and Wings' Incharges, while regional staff joined via Zoom. Following discussions with Ms. Lubna Ali, Regional Advisor FOSPAH, both institutions agreed to extend the training to regional offices across Punjab.

The first of these sessions was held at the Rawalpindi Regional Office on 10 September 2025, led by Mr. Waqar Malik, Assistant Registrar FOSPAH, and centred on the workplace Code of Conduct, professional ethics, and complaint-handling procedures. Building on the positive response from staff, the Ombudsman Punjab has asked FOSPAH to schedule the upcoming trainings in Multan and Faisalabad so that teams across the province receive the same guidance and clarity. The initiative is part of the Ombudsman's ongoing effort to ensure that offices at all levels are aligned with the law and have the practical tools needed to maintain a professional and respectful working environment.



PROVINCIAL OMBUDSMAN OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA



H.E. Muttahir Zeb Meets Delegation of National Reform Movement and Young Lawyers Council

Pakistan's Provincial Ombudsman of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and OICOA Member H.E. Muhtahir Zeb, held a meeting with members of the Supreme Council of the National Reform Movement and representatives of the Young Lawyers Council. During the meeting, the Provincial President, Mr. Sohrab Ali Khan, briefed the Ombudsman on the objectives of the Movement and presented a performance report outlining its recent activities.

The delegation included Advocate Ibrahim Khan, Advocate Javed Khan, Advocate Hamza Javed, Advocate Shah Fahad, Mr. Jan Afzal Khan, Mr. Ismatullah Khan Babakhel, Engineer Abdul Wali Khan, and other volunteer members who are actively working to resolve community disputes and transform conflicts into cooperation. The delegation raised concerns over growing public difficulties caused by the inactivity of certain government offices, noting that unresolved grievances have led to a rise in disputes across communities. They highlighted issues such as officials' reluctance to hear public complaints, the increasing fees for land transfers pushing citizens toward informal channels, and challenges related to illegal housing schemes on agricultural land, deteriorating drainage systems, encroachments, and deficiencies within the patwari system.

The Ombudsman attentively heard the delegation's concerns and informed them about the introduction of a modern online complaint portal, enabling citizens to directly lodge complaints and ensuring that negligent officials can be held accountable. He described the platform as an important step toward timely and accessible justice. H.E. Muhtahir Zeb commended the National Reform Movement's efforts, calling its mission a model for good governance. He also appreciated the volunteer lawyers providing free legal assistance to the public in matters of human rights. Both sides agreed to strengthen cooperation and continue working together for improved public service delivery and institutional accountability.



OICOA President and Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye H.E. Mehmet Akarca alongwith the Prime Minister of Malta H.E. Robert Abela at the International Conference on 'Upholding Good Governance in Challenging Times'



Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye H.E. Mehmet Akarca Attends the 10th Eurasian Ombudsman Alliance Meeting in Russia alongwith Ombudsman of Türkiye H.E. Fatma Benli Yalçın



OICOA President and Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye H.E. Mehmet Akarca and his delegation alongwith Russia's Prosecutor General Hon'ble Igor Krasnov



OICOA President H.E. Mehmet Akarca visited students at Ressam İbrahim Çallı Secondary School in Sincan, to promote Children's Rights Awareness



OICOA Board Member and Human Rights Commissioner of Azerbaijan H.E. Sabina Aliyeva addresses the First Meeting of the Working Group on 'Mental Health and Human Rights'



OICOA Board Member and Human Rights Commissioner of Azerbaijan H.E. Sabina Aliyeva along with the newly appointed Judge of the Constitutional Court of Hungary Justice Akos Kozma



H.E. Sabina Aliyeva addresses the Book Launch Ceremony of Professor Elchin Ahmadov's book "*Shusha - Historical & Cultural Heritage*" organized by the Turkish Culture and Heritage Foundation



OICOA Board Member and Human Rights Commissioner of Azerbaijan H.E. Sabina Aliyeva at the Baku International Book Fair



OICOA Board Member and Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco H.E. Hassan Tariq meets the delegation from Moroccan Elite Young Leaders Association



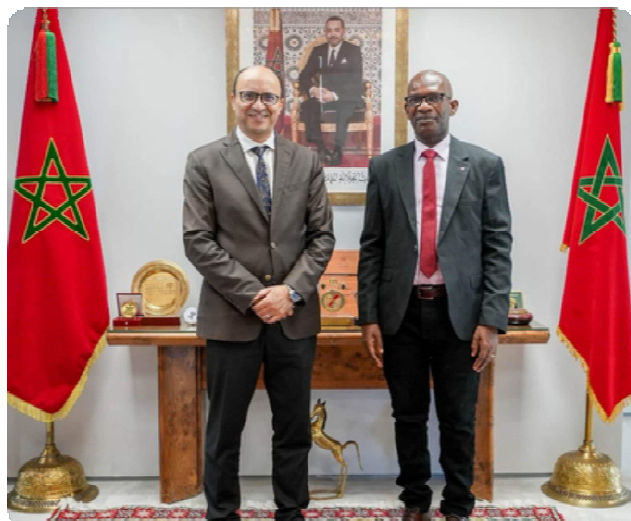
H.E. Hassan Tariq presents Completion Certificate to Ms. Ola Najab (Head of External Relations) on completing the International Formation Course on 'The Contribution of the Mediator in the Comprehensive Circular Review'



Mediator of Morocco's Delegation to Fas Meknes held a discussion on Promoting Gender Equality in Public Administration



H.E. Hassan Tariq presides the Institutional Forum on 'Towards the Management of Equality' under the slogan of 'Social-Based Public Policies'



H.E. Hassan Tariq alongwith the Chairman of Independent National Commission for Human Rights of the Republic of Brundi Hon'ble Mr. Gerard Rugemintwaza



OICOA Vice President and President of General Inspection Organization of Iran (GIO), H.E. Justice Dr. Zabiullah Khodaeiyan addresses the ceremony of 44th Anniversary of GIO



H.E. Justice Zabiullah Khodaeiyan visits the family of Khalegi Pour Martyr to offer his condolences



OICOA Board Member and Ombudsman of Bahrain H.E. Ghada Hameed plants a sapling on the occasion of 'Tree Week' in Manama



OICOA Member and Ombudsman of Mozambique H.E. Isaque Chande at the 10th Anniversary of the Implementation of the Right to Information Act in Maputo - Mozambique



H.E. Isaque Chande alongwith his delegation at the 30th Anniversary of the Public Protector of South Africa



H.E. Isaque Chande alongwith Ambassador of Portugal to Mozambique H.E. Jorge Monteiro at the Headquarters of Ombudsman of Mozambique



Chairman of Administrative Control Authority of Libya and OICOA Member H.E. Abdulla Qaderboh chairs the Meeting of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the EU Mission in Libya



H.E. Abdulla Qaderboh arrives at the International Attorney General Book Fair in Tripoli Libya



Chairman of ACA Libya and Chairman of Jordanian Integrity and Anticorruption Commission H.E. Muhannad Hijazi during the first 'Mena Arin' Meeting in Jeddah in support of International Cooperation in Asset Recovery and Fighting Corruption



OICOA Member and Pakistan's Federal Ombudsperson for Protection Against Harassment H.E. Fauzia Viqar attends the Seminar for International Day of Rural Women organized by Potohar Organization for Development Advocacy



H.E. Fauzia Viqar addresses the participants of International Ombudsman Institute Asian Regional Conference in Lahore - Pakistan



Secretary General OICOA H.E. Dr. Asif Jah with OICOA Board Member and Ombudsman of Bahrain H.E. Ghada Hameed Habib at the IOI Asian Regional Conference



Federal Ombudsman of Pakistan and OICOA Member H.E. Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi addresses the IOI Asian Regional Conference in Lahore



Secretary General OICOA and Executive Secretary OICOA along with OICOA Member and Federal Insurance Ombudsman of Pakistan H.E. Mumtaz Ali Shah during the IOI Conference



Group Photo of the Participants of the IOI Asian Regional Conference hosted by Provincial Ombudsman of Punjab and OICOA Member H.E. Ayesha Hamid



The delegation from Mediator of Ivory Coast holds a Conflict Resolution Session for the Chieftancy Conflict in Atteinkaha Region



Mediator of Ivory Coast holds an awareness session in Loh-Djiboua and Gôh Regions for peaceful Presidential Elections



Mediator of Ivory Coast Officers visit the Dimbokro Pastors Association for delivering message of peace and food donations



An In-House Training Session conducted by National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh in Association with Bengal's Ministry of Law & Justice on the topic of 'Basic Techniques of Legislative Drafting'

Press Coverage highlighting the decision and recommendation issued by the Ombudsman of Türkiye directing the Sosyal Güvenlik Kurumu (SGK) to cover the mandatory training costs of private security personnel working under its authority.



KDK'dan SGK'ya tavsiye kararı

Kamu Denetçiliği Kurumu (KDK), Sosyal Güvenlik Kurumu'nun (SGK) kararına göre, SGK'nın bir il müdürlüğünde kadrolu statüde görev yapan bir özel güvenlik görevlisi, 5 yılda bir tekrarlanması zorunlu olan ve yaklaşık 15 bin liralık yenileme eğitimi bedelinin kurum tarafından karşılanması yönünde talepte bulundu. Muadil kamu kurumlarında söz konusu giderlerin idareler tarafından ödendiğini belirten kişi, çalıştığı kurum tarafından talebinin reddedilmesi üzerine KDK'ya başvurdu. Başvuruyu inceleyen KDK, başvurucuyu haklı buldu ve yenileme eğitimi giderinin kurum tarafından karşılanması adına SGK'ye tavsiye kararı verdi. **AA**

'Güvenliklerin eğitim ücretleri kurum tarafından karşılanmalı'

Kamu Denetçiliği Kurumu (KDK), Sosyal Güvenlik Kurumu (SGK) bünyesinde istihdam edilen özel güvenlik görevlilerinin, zorunlu mesleki yenileme eğitimi giderlerinin, görev yaptıkları idare tarafından karşılanması için tavsiye kararı verdi. Kurumun kararına göre, SGK'nın bir il müdürlüğünde kadrolu statüde görev yapan bir özel güvenlik görevlisi, 5 yılda bir tekrarlanması zorunlu olan ve yaklaşık 15 bin liralık yenile-

me eğitimi bedelinin kurum tarafından karşılanmasına yönelik talepte bulundu. Muadil kamu kurumlarında söz konusu giderlerin idareler tarafından ödendiğini belirten kişi, çalıştığı kurum tarafından talebinin reddedilmesi üzerine KDK'ya başvurdu. Başvuruyu inceleyen KDK, başvurucuyu haklı buldu ve yenileme eğitimi giderinin kurum tarafından karşılanması adına SGK'ye tavsiye kararı verdi. **(AA)**

KDK'den SGK özel güvenlik görevlilerine eğitim gideri kararı

Kamu Denetçiliği Kurumu (KDK), SGK bünyesinde çalışan özel güvenlik görevlilerinin zorunlu mesleki yenileme eğitimi giderlerinin kurum tarafından karşılanması için tavsiye kararı verdi.

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MUADİL KURUMLARDA GİDERLER ÖDENİYOR

Muadil kamu kurumlarında söz konusu giderlerin idareler tarafından ödendiğini belirten kişi, çalıştığı ku-



rum tarafından talebinin reddedilmesi üzerine KDK'ya başvurdu.

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KDK'nın kararında, söz konusu eğitimin, personelin bizzat terfihine bağlı kişisel gelişim faaliyetleri olmadığı,

görevin ilave için kanuni bir zorunluluk teşkil ettiği, kamusal güvenlik hizmetinin devamlılığıyla da doğrudan ilişkili bulunduğu belirtildi.

Kararda, idarenin takdir yetkisini kullanırken, hizmetin gereklilikleri, idarenin bütçesiyi ve eşitlik ilkesi çerçevesinde hareket etmesinin de sonucu olduğu vurgulandı.

Kurum mevzuatında, eğitime giderleri için kurum bütçesinden karşılana bilmesi engelleyen bir düzenlemenin yer almadığına işaret edilen kararda, "İdareden beklenen, iş hacminde yer alan eğitime ve asymetlik yarışına uygun bir şekilde, kişi lehine yorum ilkesini esas alarak, ilgili ödemenin yapılması yönünde işleri tesis etmesidir" çağrısı edilmesine yer verildi.

Güvenlik görevlilerine eğitim ücreti kararı

Kamu Denetçiliği Kurumu (KDK), Sosyal Güvenlik Kurumu (SGK) bünyesinde görev yapan özel güvenlik görevlilerinin, zorunlu mesleki yenileme eğitimi giderlerinin kurum tarafından karşılanması için tavsiye kararı verdi. SGK'nın bir il müdürlüğünde kadrolu statüde görev yapan bir özel güvenlik görevlisi, 5 yılda bir tekrarlanması zorunlu olan ve yaklaşık 15 bin TL'lik yenileme eğitimi bedelinin kurum tarafından karşılanması için talepte bulunmuş, başvurusu reddedilmişti. KDK, başvuruyu inceleyerek görevlinin haklı olduğunu belirledi ve SGK'ye eğitim giderinin ödenmesi yönünde tavsiye bulundu. KDK kararında, eğitimin kişisel tercih değil, görev için kanuni bir zorunluluk olduğu ve kamusal güvenlik hizmetinin devamlılığıyla doğrudan ilişkili bulunduğu vurgulandı. Ayrıca, idarenin eşitlik ve işçi lehine yorum ilkesi çerçevesinde hareket etmesi gerektiği ifade edildi. **>>HABER MERKEZİ**



Press Coverage highlighting the decision and recommendation issued by the Ombudsman of Türkiye regarding illegal piers and structures in İzmir's Seferihisar district.



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THE OMBUDSMAN OBSERVER

Official announcement on Maroc.ma Portal regarding Mediator of Morocco joining the MARFIP platform, enabling young citizens to access Ombudsman services through the “Jawaz Al-Shababi” app.





By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Ombudsman for Protection Against Harassment (FOSPAAH) has declared the vice chancellor of Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (FUUAST) Dr. Zabea Khan Shiwari guilty of workplace harassment for repeatedly making gender-stereotypical and demeaning remarks about women faculty members.

A penalty of censure has been imposed on the VC under Section 4(4)(b) of the Act with directions to the university syndicate to monitor his conduct and ensure that "such incidents are not repeated in future."

Ombudsperson Fauzia Viqar took serious notice of Mr. Shiwari's remarks about women and said such statements are "inherently sexist, derogatory, and demeaning, amounting to gender stereotyping and constituting

behavior that can create a hostile work environment."

Mr. Shiwari had said, "When females reach the age of around 35 or above, they experience hormonal issues, and their mental condition becomes unstable, causing them to create problems for others."

The order underscored the urgent need for mind-set change within Pakistan's institutions. Sexist and demeaning remarks by those in authority constitute workplace harassment under Pakistani law, the ombudsperson observed.

"University heads bear an institutional duty to demonstrate exemplary gender sensitivity, as their words and actions shape the culture of the academic community," she said.

FOSPAAH's decision goes beyond the individual case to address the wider culture of bias that often hides behind ignorance or misplaced insouciance. The order added that "ignorance of

gender stereotypes cannot absolve duty-bearers of responsibility," making it clear that unconscious bias is not an excuse for perpetuating it.

The ombudsperson said: "The conduct of the Vice Chancellor, consisting of repeated remarks linking women's professional performance to hormonal changes, underscores gender-based stereotyping and reflects sexually demeaning behavior within the meaning of Section 2(1)(i), and also amounts to gender discrimination as defined under Section 2(3)(a) of the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010."

It also ordered the university to take concrete steps toward changing institutional culture, including the formation of a standing inquiry committee, display of the statutory code of conduct across campuses, and regular awareness and sensitization workshops for staff and students.

voicepk

Fired for taking maternity leave? FOSPAAH declares action as "gender discrimination"

In her detailed order, Fauzia Viqar, the Ombudsperson underscored that maternity protections are "non-negotiable and inviolable rights," reaffirming Pakistan's obligations under international treaties such as CEDAW, ICESCR, and ILO conventions. "Safe motherhood is not a favour — it is a fundamental right," the order read. "No woman should be forced to choose between her career and motherhood."

But this may be a rare case as women usually do not report such cases especially in court.

Nida Aly, Executive Director of the Asma Jahangir Legal Aid Cell (AGHS), a women-led organization providing free legal aid to women and children, said that while AGHS receives numerous cases of sexual harassment on a regular basis, it has rarely encountered cases related to maternity leave.

According to her, this is largely due to the fear and insecurity women face in the workplace.

"Many women don't report such violations because they fear losing their jobs or facing retaliatory actions from employers," she said. "There are also many societal barriers women face especially in the cases of sexual harassment as they hesitate to report sexual harassment because if they speak out, families often restrict them from working or studying further. As a result, many women silently endure abuse out of fear of losing their independence."

Speaking to Voicepk, Fauzia Viqar, said that the Constitution of Pakistan guarantees women's right to equality, dignity, and fair participation in all spheres of life.

"Article 37 places a clear duty on the State to provide humane and just conditions of work," she said. "FOSPAAH serves as an extension of this duty, ensuring that women can work with security, respect, and without fear of discrimination. Denying maternity protection or terminating a woman during maternity leave not only violates these constitutional principles but also undermines the very foundation of workplace justice."

"FOSPAAH remains fully committed to upholding women's rights in line with the Constitution and the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010. Our mission is to ensure that every woman in the workplace is treated with fairness, dignity, and equality," she added.

THE TRIBUNE

FOSPAAH to lead international committee on women's rights

Committee receives immediate backing from OICOA President H.E. Mr. Mehmet Akarca, Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye

The OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA) has established a new Sub-Committee on Women's Rights on October 23, appointing Pakistan's Federal Ombudsperson for Protection Against Harassment (FOSPAAH), H.E. Ms. Fauzia Viqar, as its Inaugural Chair.

With global gender equality still projected to be a staggering 135 years from reality, Pakistan has been tapped to lead a new international charge to shatter that timeline.

The new committee was born from an urgent call to action by Ms. Viqar herself. Recognizing the alarming global statistics, she proposed the formation of the dedicated body during her speech at the 4th OICOA General Assembly in Iran.

This appointment leverages the specific and powerful expertise of FOSPAAH. FOSPAAH is unique, standing as the only ombudsman institute of its kind that specifically tackles the critical and intertwined issues of women's property rights and workplace harassment.

The idea received immediate and powerful backing from OICOA President H.E. Mr. Mehmet Akarca, Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye. Mr. Akarca strongly endorsed the proposal in his concluding remarks and directed the OICOA Secretariat to "immediately begin work on its formation."



Ombudsman's international conference held in city

LAHORE: The regional meeting and international conference 2025 of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) was held here on Friday in collaboration with the Punjab ombudsman.

The meeting and conference brought together delegates from Macao, Bahrain, Timor-Leste, Japan, Azerbaijan, South Africa, Austria, Gibraltar, Indonesia, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Papua New Guinea.

The participants engaged in discussions on promoting good-governance, enhancing transparency, ensuring adherence to the rule of law, protecting rights of the people and rectifying injustices done to a person through the effective role of the ombudsman offices.

It was the first-ever such conference held in Pakistan, and during the meeting, issues directly affecting the people at gross-root levels were discussed at length. The delegates exchanged their experiences, through formal and informal interactions, towards making ombudsman offices more effective.

The conference opened with the theme "Strengthening the Rule of Law through Ombudsman Institutions."

Various sessions were held including "Making the Rule of Law Accessible: The Ombudsman as a Bridge between People and Government" and "Ensuring Accountability and Good Governance in Public Administration".

The delegates visited historical places like the Lahore Fort, Badshahi Mosque, Wazir Khan Mosque, Shahi Hamam and Faqir Khana Museum and witnessed the flag-lowering ceremony at the Wagah Border.

The delegates expressed deep appreciation for bringing together people of diverse cultures and backgrounds, contributing to a meaningful change in the lives of many.

Published in Dawn, October 11th, 2025

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FTO Orders Probe into FBR Over Failure Grant Tax Return Filing Extensions

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) has ordered an inquiry into the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for allegedly failing to act on taxpayers' requests for extensions in filing income tax returns for Tax Year 2025.

The directive follows a public interest complaint lodged by tax lawyer Waheed Shafiq Butt, who highlighted that numerous taxpayers submitted online extension applications through FBR's IRS portal but received no response, creating widespread uncertainty as the filing deadline neared.

The FTO has summoned key officials — including the FBR Member Operations, Member IR-Policy, and the Director General (Information Technology) — to appear on November 18, 2025, and explain the apparent inaction.

Waheed Butt voiced strong concern, noting that many extension applications remain stuck in the IRS system's queue, calling the lack of action a violation of taxpayer rights and a clear case of maladministration.

The FTO's move brings renewed focus to persistent gaps in tax administration, particularly the delays and technical inefficiencies that continue to hinder taxpayer compliance.

BUSINESS RECORDER

Specialist M.A. Faisal

10th October 2025 10:30 AM

FBR yet to notify manual/paper income tax return for TY25

Recorder Report | Published October 26, 2025

ISLAMABAD: Despite clear instructions of the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO), the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) is reluctant to notify the manual /paper income tax return for the Tax Year 2025.

Details of the issue revealed the Inland Revenue (Operations) Wing FBR has failed to implement key recommendations of Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) to upload and notify the manual/ paper income tax return for the Tax Year 2025, an omission that the FTO has held to constitute negligence and inefficiency in the discharge of official duties of the FBR.

According to sources, the FTO ruled that such conduct amounts to maladministration within the meaning of Section 3 (2) (a) of the FTO Ordinance, 2000, as it reflects clear neglect and inattention to statutory obligations by the Member Operations IR.

The complain before the FTO, Waheed Shafiq Butt stated that failure to make available the manual or paper return forms, as required under the Income Tax Rules, 2002 has caused unnecessary hardship to taxpayers and practitioners who rely on the manual system for filing their annual returns.

FTO has ordered Member to immediately ensure the upload the manual/ paper tax return for Tax Year 2025, emphasizing that adherence to prescribed rules.

The FTO order stated: "The complainant stated that as per rule 73(2DD) of Income Tax Rules 2002, it is mandatory to e-file the Income Tax Return if an individual taxpayer has taxable income one million rupees or more. Accordingly, other taxpayers having less income than Rs 1,000,000/- are required to file manual income tax returns.

However, the FBR did not issue the manual return form for tax year 2025 for the eligible taxpayers. The latest screen shot of the income tax returns up to 2024 has been placed.

Despite clear legal mandate and previous practice, the FBR has failed this time to upload or notify the manual/ paper return for the tax year 2025. This negligence and inefficiency in the discharges of duties constitutes maladministration.

The FBR should immediately ensure upload of the manual/ paper tax return for tax year 2025, the FTO order added.



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