

Media Update

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PRESS RELEASE

High-level Pakistan Prosecution Forum convened in Lahore

Lahore, May 2, 2024: The Punjab Public Prosecution Department convened the 17th meeting of the Pakistan Prosecution Forum (PPF) from 2 - 3 May, 2024, in Lahore. This high-level meeting, funded by the U.S. Embassy's Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) and facilitated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), is a crucial step toward promoting legislative and policy reforms in Pakistan's criminal justice system. Senior officials from prosecution and criminal justice stakeholders from Punjab and other provinces across Pakistan deliberated to advance critical rule of law reforms by sharing of experiences and discussing solutions for the common challenges they face.

The forum was graced by the Honorable Justice (R) Khalil Ur Rehman Ramday, as the Chief Guest, who in her inaugural speech applauded this established platform, stating, *"I am honored to preside over the Pakistan Prosecution Forum, which plays a crucial role in shaping our nation's legal landscape. Together, we will continue our journey towards a fairer and more equitable justice system inclusive of the gender specific needs of our communities."* Honorable Justice further apprised that Government of Punjab is committed to reform the current Criminal Justice System for our posterity while ensuring "Rule of Law" in the Province.

The PPF is a prominent national forum consisting of each provincial prosecution department's leadership. It has representation from all provinces and the federal law department, who come together to advocate for essential prosecution reforms to improve criminal justice service delivery to the public.

The UNODC helps the forum improve and strengthen its strategic role. The provincial PPF chapters rotate, with each province hosting quarterly meetings.

The Secretary of Prosecution, Usman Anwar, highlighted, *“The Pakistan Prosecution Forum is a valuable opportunity for us to learn from each other and to share best practices. I am confident that this forum will help us improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the prosecution system.”*

The 17th meeting of the forum also highlighted the Punjab Public Prosecution Department's flagship interventions, including the Punjab prosecution capacity building project, police training modernization, and integration of the case flow management system and prison management information system. These projects are graciously funded by the US Embassy's Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) and are being implemented by the UNODC Country Office in close coordination with Punjab stakeholders. UNODC Advisor for Criminal Justice System and Legal Reforms Arsalan Malik stated, *“UNODC is proud to support the Pakistan Prosecution Forum. We are committed to working with the Government of Pakistan to strengthen the overall prosecution system.”*

The PPF's achievements include an agreement on CrPC revisions, a Code of Conduct for Balochistan prosecutors, and a review and suggestions for amendments to the Balochistan Prosecution Service Act. These efforts have greatly reduced under-trial detainees by promoting fair investigations and trials.

The Forum held discussions on gender sensitivity, job descriptions for prosecutors, performance indicators, the recruitment syllabus, skill set enhancement, and training needs assessment.

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