

# Media Update

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## IOM

PRESS RELEASE

### IOM and SSDO host a Provincial Dialogue in Lahore on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants

**Law enforcement officials discuss the challenges they encounter in combating trafficking and smuggling in Pakistan during the provincial dialogue [SSDO 2024].**

Lahore, 1 May — The International Organization for Migration (IOM), in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and the Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO), convened a Provincial Dialogue in Lahore, Punjab, on April 18, 2024, to discuss and address issues of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and Smuggling of Migrants (SOM) in Pakistan.

The dialogue brought together nearly 90 participants, including government officials, community representatives, academics, religious leaders, and law enforcement agencies, to collectively strategize and devise solutions to combat these pressing challenges.

Syed Kausar Abbas, Executive Director of SSDO, delivered the opening remarks, underscoring the critical importance of collaborative efforts in combating trafficking and smuggling. He emphasized the necessity of a multi-sectoral approach to addressing the underlying causes of trafficking, thereby safeguarding the rights of vulnerable communities. Addressing the joint campaign by IOM, SSDO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, he called for the active participation of all stakeholders, including local communities, to effectively combat trafficking and smuggling in Pakistan.

The one-day dialogue brought together multiple government stakeholders, providing a platform to facilitate exchange on ongoing initiatives and challenges, resulting in improved knowledge sharing.

Uzma Kardar, Member of the Parliamentary Assembly (MPA) Punjab, reflected on Pakistan's progress in addressing trafficking and smuggling issues, advocating for comprehensive capacity building and awareness campaigns targeting stakeholders. She particularly emphasized the need for the development of provincial-level rules to facilitate the smooth implementation of trafficking laws.

Also present at the event, MPA Punjab and Opposition Leader, Ahmed Khan Bachar, underscored the importance of strengthening law enforcement and surveillance mechanisms to monitor trafficking activities at the grassroots level in Pakistan.

Reflecting on awareness-raising and community engagement sessions conducted by IOM and SSDO in Sialkot and Quetta over the past two months, Nimra Nazir, Programme Assistant at IOM, highlighted the critical need for victim support services, heightened community awareness, and sustained, ongoing collaborative efforts to implement anti-trafficking laws effectively.

The dialogue also featured diverse perspectives, particularly from travel agents, who shared insights about the challenges they encountered and advocated for stricter regulations.

The discussion concluded with all stakeholders reaffirming their commitment to the critical need for collaboration, awareness, and the effective implementation of laws to combat trafficking and smuggling in Pakistan.

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