

National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC)

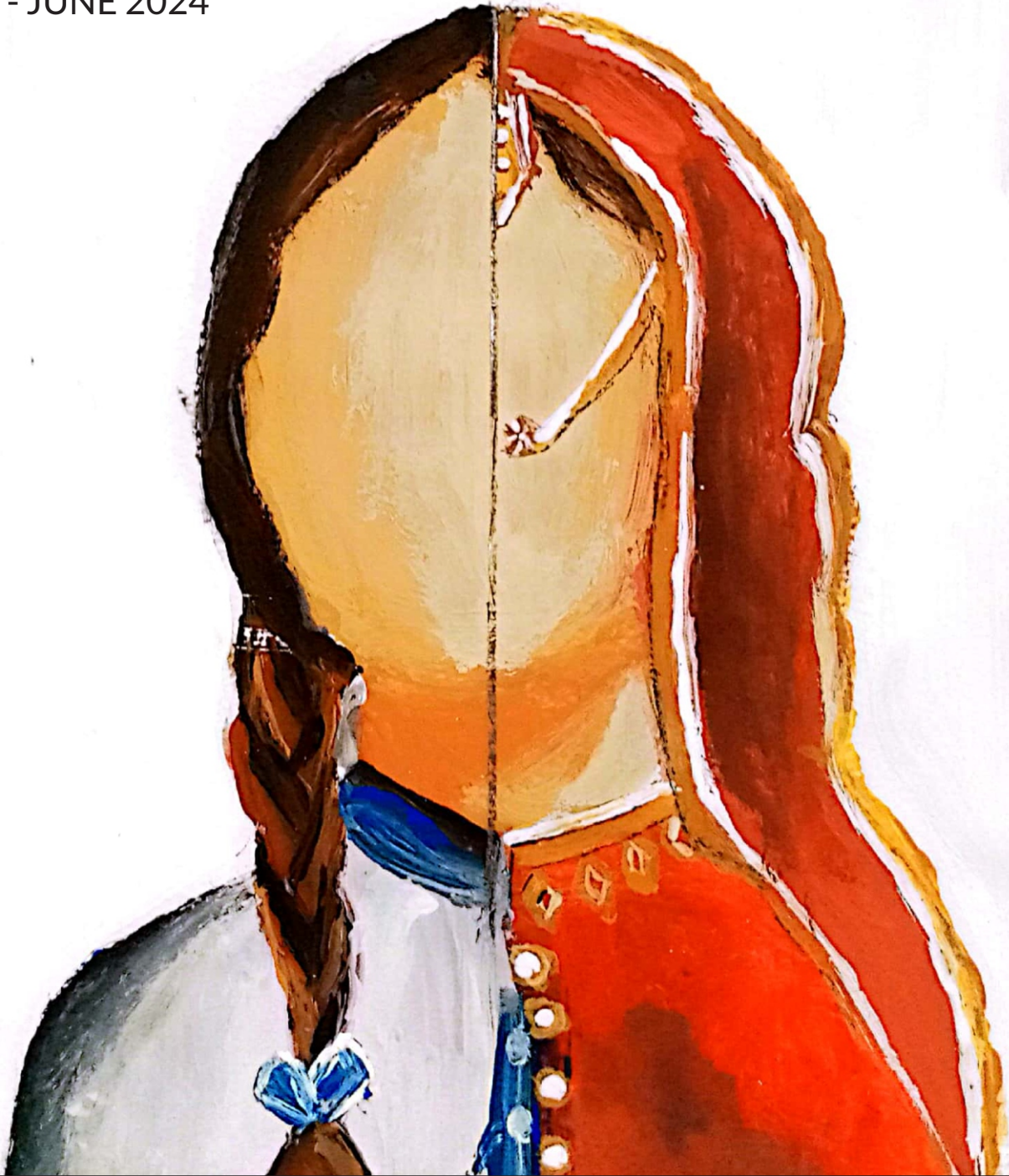


NATIONAL COMMISSION ON
THE RIGHTS OF CHILD

QUARTERLY

NEWSLETTER

APRIL - JUNE 2024





About The NCRC

The National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) is an independent statutory body established by the Government of Pakistan for the promotion, protection, and fulfilment of children's rights in Pakistan. The NCRC has the mandate to examine and review policies, laws, practices, and proposals, inquire into violations of child rights, conduct research, raise awareness, build capacities, provide technical support and advise the Government on legislative and policy matters by virtue of the National Commission on the Rights of Child Act of 2017.



Message from the Chairperson

As we reflect on this quarter, the NCRC has achieved significant progress in advancing and safeguarding children's rights across Pakistan.

This quarter, we made notable progress in legislative reforms, including our successful advocacy to raise the minimum marriageable age to 18 years. The approval of the Child Marriage Restraint Bill 2024 by the Balochistan Cabinet, along with similar legislative advancements in the National Assembly and Punjab Assembly, represents a pivotal step toward curbing child marriages and safeguarding the future of young girls.

In our ongoing battle against child domestic labour, we presented the draft Bill aimed at criminalizing child labour in domestic work at the 6th meeting of the National Task Force on Human Rights. This bill highlights the urgent need for legal measures to protect children from exploitation. Minister of Human Rights Azam Nazeer Tarar expressed support for the bill and has called for a Joint Special Committee to address and advance the necessary actions effectively.

Our efforts to enhance birth registration have yielded significant results. Through effective coordination with provincial governments, we established Steering Committees in Balochistan, Punjab, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to streamline birth registration processes and ensure that every child receives essential services and legal recognition from birth. Notably, the Government of Punjab has declared 2024 as the Birth Registration Year, offering free birth registration throughout the year. This initiative aims to address the existing backlog

and prioritize districts with lower registration rates, marking a major advancement in ensuring that every child is counted and has access to their fundamental rights.

In addressing the issue of out-of-school children, our consultations with key stakeholders have led to significant policy shifts, including the removal of the mandatory Form-B requirement for admissions into Federal Government schools. In Sindh and Balochistan, we are working closely with the education ministries to implement measures that will boost school enrollment and retention rates. A forthcoming policy brief will advocate for further reforms based on our findings.

On World Day Against Child Labour, we launched the State of Children in Pakistan portal and presented our annual report. The portal provides a comprehensive resource hub, including valuable data, research and legal frameworks, supporting policymakers, researchers and practitioners in making informed decisions to enhance child protection.

In collaboration with the French Embassy, we launched an impactful awareness campaign addressing child domestic labour, child sexual abuse and the need for increased school enrollment. Through culturally sensitive animations and robust advocacy, we aim to drive action and promote education as a crucial tool in breaking the cycle of poverty. Our campaign underscores the importance of legislative reforms and the protection of every child's right to education and safety.

In celebration of International Day to End Corporal Punishment, the NCRC in partnership

with Cities for Children (CfC), introduced "Mar Nahi, Pyaar!" program. Under the program, more than 150 teachers were trained on the prevention of corporal punishment. Moreover, a compelling poster, emphasizing positive discipline and effective classroom management was developed and disseminated through social media.

We extend gratitude to Chairman Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) for his commitment to advancing child rights by allocating free airtime for our awareness campaign. The 842 spots aired on national television have significantly broadened our reach, raising awareness about critical issues such as child domestic labour, out-of-school children and birth registration.

Our mission to protect children's rights and eradicate harmful practices continues. Through strategic advocacy, legislative reforms and collaborative efforts, we are making meaningful progress toward creating a safer and more inclusive environment for every child in Pakistan.

As we advance our efforts to promote and protect child rights, I want to express my sincere gratitude to our partners and stakeholders for their commitment to the cause of child rights which is instrumental in driving our mission forward and achieving meaningful progress.

With gratitude,



Ayesha Raza Farooq
Chairperson, NCRC



Members NCRC



Ayesha Raza Farooq
Chairperson



Khalid Latif
Secretary NCRC



Khalid Naem
Member ICT



Mehek Naeem
Member Punjab



Pirbhu Lal Satyani
Member Sindh/Minorities



Nadia Bibi
Member
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



Shania Khan
Member Balochistan



Muhammad Hassan
Male Child Member



Rabia Imran
Female Child Member

Key Functions of the Commission

Legal & Policy Reforms

The Commission reviews existing laws protecting children and proposes amendments if necessary.



Coordination

The Commission collaborates with other provincial commissions and organizations to ensure coordinated efforts towards protecting children's rights.



Inquiries Related to Child Rights Violations

The Commission investigates cases of child rights violations and recommends appropriate actions to relevant authorities.



Addressing Child Rights Issues

The Commission identifies obstacles preventing children from enjoying their rights, such as violence and exploitation, and suggests solutions.



Research and Database

It supports child-focused research and maintains a database of important information to inform decision-making.



Awareness Raising

The Commission raises awareness about children's rights in society and educates the public on methods of protection.



Reviewing International Commitments

It advises the government on international agreements related to child rights that should be adopted.



Other

The Commission may conduct any other task related to child rights that the State may be requesting from the Commission.



Key Achievements of the Quarter

Strategic Partnerships

During the quarter, the NCRC forged several strategic partnerships to further its mission of safeguarding the rights and well-being of children across Pakistan.

MoU with Cities for Children

In an effort to ensure a safe learning environment for every child, the NCRC collaborated with CfC to eliminate corporal punishment. This partnership includes advocacy and awareness campaigns aligned with the

International Day to End Corporal Punishment. It aims to build and enhance the capacity of teachers to prevent instances of corporal punishment in schools.



MoU with Chief Provincial Commissioner for Children Punjab

The NCRC and the Office of the Ombudsperson Punjab entered into collaboration to improve enforcement of child rights across Punjab. This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will focus on joint advocacy campaigns, raising awareness about child protection laws and capacity-building initiatives for stakeholders. The partnership also includes data sharing, support for legal assistance to children in need and rigorous monitoring of child rights policy implementation.



Meeting with UNWOMEN

Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson, NCRC, convened a meeting with Lansana Wonneh, Country Representative of UN Women Pakistan, to explore mutual areas of cooperation and discuss strategies for collaboration. The meeting emphasized on the importance of promoting gender equality, empowering girls,

combating gender-based violence and preventing child sexual abuse, with a specific focus on safeguarding the rights of girl children. Both organizations expressed their commitment to these shared goals and acknowledged the potential for significant impact through joint initiatives.



LEGAL & POLICY REFORMS

Child Marriage

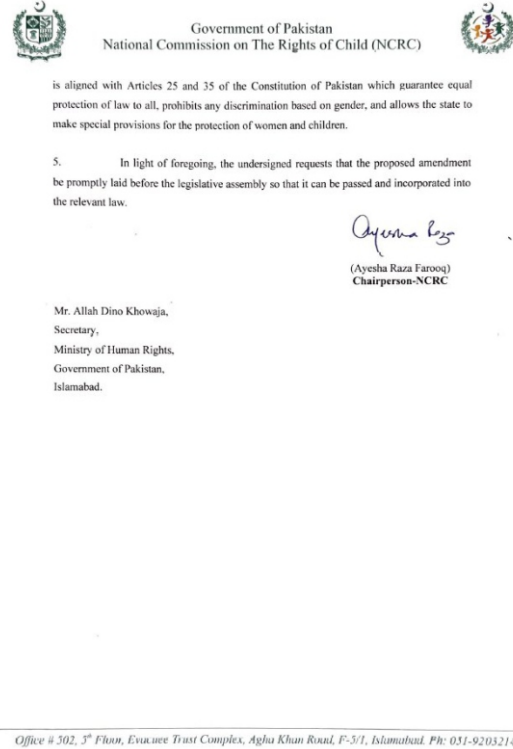
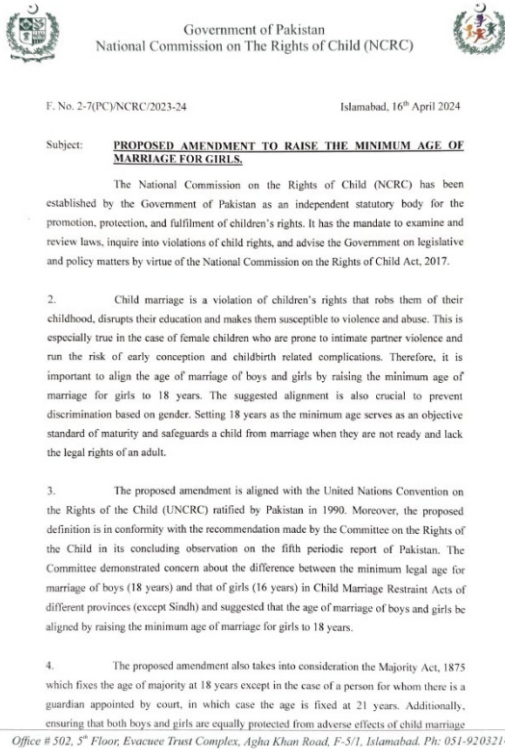
In our ongoing efforts to combat child marriage and safeguard the rights of children, the NCRC has made significant efforts towards legislative reform and policy advocacy. Recognizing child marriage as a grave violation of children's rights, the NCRC has spearheaded advocacy initiatives to raise the minimum marriageable age for girls

to 18 years across Pakistan, aligning it with international standards. This initiative aims to protect girls from the adverse effects of early marriage, ensuring they have the opportunity to pursue education, health and a fulfilling childhood.

Advocacy for Legislative Reforms

The NCRC geared its efforts to garner support for legislative reforms on child marriage at both provincial and federal levels. Engaging with provincial Human Rights and Law Departments in Punjab, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and ICT, the NCRC has urged to make

amendments to laws for raising the minimum marriageable age for girls to 18 years. Letters have been sent to all Chief Ministers to emphasize the urgency of this crucial legal reform, highlighting the need to prioritize child marriage in legislative agendas.



At the 6th meeting of the National Task Force on Human Rights which was attended by representatives of the Federal and Provincial Governments, the NCRC advocated for harmonizing age standards for marriage across provincial and national laws. Discussions focused on integrating National Identity Cards

(NICs) for age verification at the time of marriage, recognized as a critical step towards effectively preventing child marriages. A special meeting will be convened to further deliberate on strategies and implementation plans to curb child marriage nationwide.



The NCRC's advocacy efforts have yielded significant progress. The Child Marriage Restraint Bill 2024 has been approved by the Cabinet in Balochistan and is now set to be presented before the Provincial Assembly for enactment. Additionally, the Child Marriage Restraint Amendment has been introduced in

the National Assembly and referred to the Standing Committee on Law & Justice. In Punjab, the Child Marriage Restraint Bill 2024 has been introduced in the assembly and is currently under consideration by the Chief Minister and Cabinet.

In its continued efforts to support legislative reforms, the NCRC is identifying key parliamentarians to engage with, seeking their support for reforms on child marriage. The NCRC remains steadfast in its mission to protect children's rights and eliminate harmful practices

such as child marriage. Through strategic advocacy, legislative reform and collaboration with stakeholders, the NCRC continues to make significant strides towards ensuring every child in Pakistan enjoys a safe and nurturing environment to thrive.

Child Domestic Labour

During the 6th meeting of the National Task Force on Human Rights, in order to address the pressing issue of child domestic labour, Chairperson NCRC Ayesha Raza Farooq and Member Punjab Mehek Naeem presented the draft Bill aimed at criminalizing child labour in domestic work. The comprehensive presentation of the Bill highlighted the urgent need for legislative action to protect vulnerable children from exploitation and abuse.

Minister of Human Rights Azam Nazeer Tarar expressed his endorsement for taking the proposed Bill forward. He acknowledged the severity of child domestic labour and emphasized the need for immediate action. To ensure thorough deliberation and effective implementation, the Minister directed the convening of a Joint Special Committee meeting to address all necessary matters concerning child labour in domestic work.

Recognizing the importance of this initiative,



Furthermore, in another meeting, Chairperson NCRC Ayesha Raza Farooq and Federal Minister for Human Rights Azam Nazeer Tarrar discussed legislative reforms aimed at curbing child labour in domestic work and preventing child marriages from happening. The Chairperson raised her concerns regarding the enforcement of child rights laws and emphasized the necessity for robust mechanisms being in-place and enhancing capacity and coordination to ensure effective enforcement.



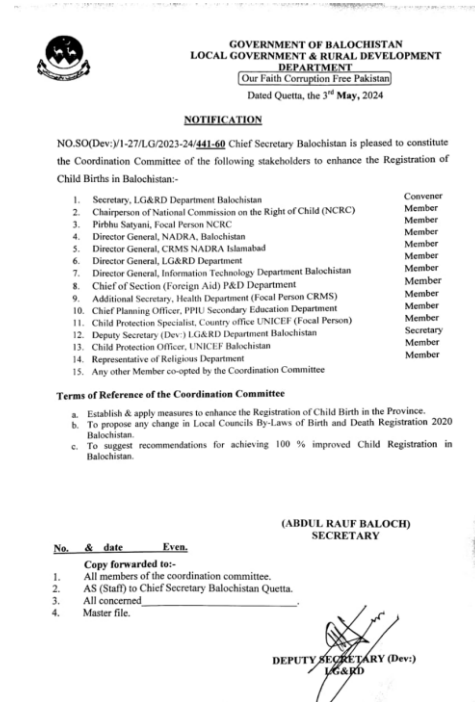
Birth Registration

BALUCHISTAN

Following a meeting between NCRC Chairperson Ayesha Raza Farooq and Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan in the previous quarter, a notification was issued to establish a Provincial Steering Committee on birth registration. This committee is tasked with implementing concrete measures to enhance birth registration, reviewing existing policies and providing recommendations to achieve 100% birth registration in the province. The Provincial Steering Committee will adopt a multi-faceted strategy to tackle birth registration challenges. The committee aims to overcome barriers to birth registration, ensuring that every child in Balochistan is counted and granted their fundamental rights.

Following the notification of the Steering Committee, Secretary Local Government Abdul Rauf Baloch organized a meeting where the NCRC team and other key stakeholders from various departments, including NADRA and UNICEF, convened to discuss the action plan for enhancing birth registration. The key points discussed are elaborated below:

- **Extending Registration Time:** It was recommended to extend the normal time for birth registration from 60 days to 1 year, providing ample time for parents to register their newborns. This step aims to reduce barriers and ensure no child is left unregistered.
- **Waiver of Registration Fee:** To further facilitate registration, it was proposed to completely waive the registration fee during



the normal time period. This initiative aims to make the process more accessible to all, regardless of socio-economic status.

- **Awareness Drives:** To spread awareness and encourage registration, it was proposed to conduct awareness campaigns on electronic media and deploy mobile registration units at schools. This approach ensures that every child is registered.
- **Birth Notification Tool:** NADRA and UNICEF will work in coordination with the Secretary of Local Government to deploy the Birth Notification Tool at hospitals. This tool aims to streamline processes and ensure interoperability between health and Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS), facilitating smoother registration procedures.

PUNJAB:

Acting on the request of the NCRC, a significant step has been taken in Punjab: establishment of the Provincial Steering Committee to enhance birth registration. Chief Secretary Punjab, Zahid Akhtar Zaman, has taken prompt action to form this committee, which is set to reform the birth registration process comprehensively.



As a result of the tireless efforts of the NCRC, during the second meeting of the steering committee, the Government of Punjab has declared 2024 as the Birth Registration Year. As part of this initiative, birth registration will be free throughout the year, aiming to clear the



During the inaugural meeting, the Provincial Steering Committee addressed several critical issues, including the digitalization of the CRVS system, simplification of the birth registration process and ensuring seamless interoperability with the health sector. These discussions are pivotal in creating an efficient and accessible birth registration system.



existing backlog and focus on districts with lower registration rates. This concerted effort ensures that every child is counted and has access to their fundamental rights, marking a significant stride towards comprehensive child welfare in the province.



SINDH:

The CRVS Working Group Meeting, chaired by Secretary Local Government Khalid Hyder Shah, focused on enhancing birth registration processes in Pakistan. The meeting brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including the NCRC delegation Chairperson Ayesha Raza Farooq, Member Sindh/Minorities Pirbhu Satyani, and Member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadia Khan, representatives from NADRA, Health, Education departments and UNICEF.

Key actions discussed during the meeting included:

- **Extension of Fee Waiver:** Advocating with the Sindh Cabinet to extend the birth

registration fee-waiver from 60 days to 1 year, ensuring a greater number of children are registered promptly.

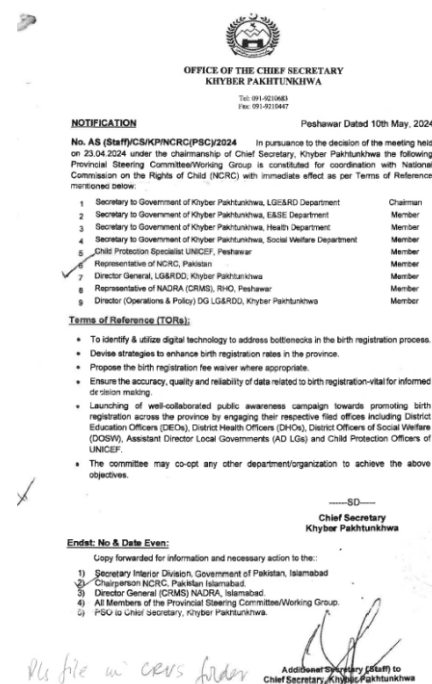
- **Integration with Social Safety Nets:** Exploring linkages with social safety nets and health programs to facilitate seamless integration of birth registration processes.
- **System Streamlining:** Streamlining CRVS systems and simplifying registration procedures to enhance accessibility and efficiency.

These initiatives aim to significantly improve the birth registration system in Sindh, ensuring that more children are registered and have access to their fundamental rights.



KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA:

In pursuance to the decision of the meeting held on 23 April 2024 presided by the Chief Secretary, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a steering committee was constituted for coordination with the NCRC. The committee will comprise of representatives from Local Government, Elections & Rural Development Department, Elementary & Secondary Education Department, Health, Social Welfare, UNICEF and NADRA. The committee will work on identifying and utilizing technology to address bottlenecks in the birth registration, devise strategy to enhance birth registration, propose fee waiver for birth registration and ensure the accuracy and reliability of data related to birth registration.



Out-Of-School Children

Consultation on Free & Compulsory Education at Federal Level:

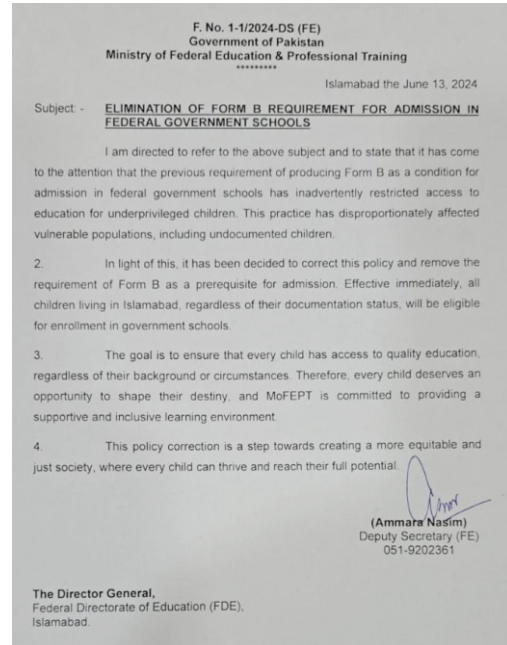
The NCRC organized a consultation on the 'Right to Free & Compulsory Education', bringing together key stakeholders including teachers, principals and representatives from Federal Directorate of Education, Special Education, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training and Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority (PEIRA). Insights were shared, key challenges were discussed and recommendations were made to enhance the quality, accessibility and inclusivity of education:

- Providing free transport to students for overcoming mobility issues and school dropouts.

- Conducting need-based assessment for human resource, infrastructure and transport requirements.
- Offering free meals to boost enrollment and retention.
- Upgrading schools to secondary level for reducing dropout rate.
- Integrating children with special needs in mainstream schools for inclusivity and right based education.
- Updating curricula for improved quality of education.



After extensive advocacy efforts by the NCRC, the Federal Government has removed the mandatory Form-B requirement for admissions into Federal Government schools. This policy shift aims to ensure equal access to education for every child, regardless of whether they possess Form-B. This development follows comprehensive consultations organized by the NCRC on Free and Compulsory Education. The FDE has now adopted these recommendations, thereby making education more accessible to underprivileged children and reinforcing the commitment to inclusive education.



Meeting with Minister Education Sindh:

In a meeting with Sindh Education Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah, the NCRC delegation led by Chairperson Ayesha Raza Farooq discussed the pressing issue of out-of-school children in Pakistan highlighting that 22.6 million children are out of school nationwide, requiring immediate, concrete actions. The meeting was also joined by the Chairman Sindh Textbook Board, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Reform Support Unit Sindh, Nadia Khan - Member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Pirbhu Satyani - Member Sindh NCRC. The Education Minister

emphasized the importance of accurate data in tackling this challenge. He highlighted that the Government of Sindh is already taking steps to support out-of-school children, with 4.1 million affected in the province alone and the approval of policies to upgrade primary schools demonstrates a commitment to providing quality and inclusive education for all. The NCRC delegation appreciated the steps taken by the Sindh Education Minister and shared the recommendations stemming from the provincial consultations spearheaded by the Commission.



Meeting with Minister Education Balochistan:

Chairperson NCRC Ayesha Raza Farooq called upon the Minister of Education, Balochistan, Rahila Hameed Durrani to discuss critical issues regarding the alarming number of out-of-school children in Balochistan, how to prevent growing number of child sexual abuse cases and addressing corporal punishment. The key recommendations discussed to improve these issues are discussed below:

- **Integration in Curriculum:** The meeting emphasized the importance of integrating informational and educational material on the prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as child rights, into the school curriculum. Educating children about their rights and safety is crucial in preventing abuse and exploitation.
- **Reforming Corporal Punishment Laws:** A pressing need to reform corporal punishment laws was highlighted during the discussion. Aligning these laws with national legislation is essential to create a safer and more supportive educational environment for children. The Chairperson and the Minister agreed on the urgency of this matter and pledged to work together to bring about necessary legal reforms.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** The meeting also focused on the importance of awareness campaigns to boost school enrollment and vocational training opportunities. Increasing enrollment rates and providing vocational training can significantly contribute to reducing the number of out-of-school children and equipping them with skills for a better future.



COORDINATION

Strengthening Coordination Mechanism for Addressing Child Rights Complaints

PUNJAB:

In a recent meeting between the NCRC delegation and the Punjab Police, discussions focused on enhancing coordination to address child rights complaints effectively. To bolster this coordination mechanism, Inspector General (IG) Punjab has designated a dedicated focal person and issued directives to all District Police Officers (DPOs) to prioritize child rights issues and support the NCRC's efforts in safeguarding children.

Chairperson Ayesha Raza Farooq also met with ASP Shehrbano Naqvi and toured several state-of-the-art facilitation and Khidmat centers, as well as a revamped Police Station in Gulberg, which is dedicated to timely complaint redressal and improved public service delivery. The Chairperson commended IG Punjab for his exceptional leadership and unwavering commitment to advancing and protecting children's rights.



The NCRC Member Punjab Mehek Naem and Member ICT Khalid Naem convened a meeting with Sarah Ahmad Chairperson Child Protection Welfare Bureau to assess the current status of

the child protection policy and to enhance coordination mechanisms for addressing children-related complaints promptly and effectively.



BALUCHISTAN:

The NCRC recently convened a meeting with all DPOs of Balochistan Police to enhance the referral mechanism for addressing child rights complaints. During the meeting, NCRC Chairperson outlined the Commission's mandate and functions, emphasizing its mission

to safeguard child rights. Under the directive and capable leadership of IG Balochistan, all DPOs are now fully committed to cooperating with the NCRC, ensuring the timely resolution of complaints and bolstering the protection of children's rights across the province.



In an effort to advance child protection initiatives in Balochistan, Mehek Naeem Member Punjab and Pirbhu Satyani Member Sindh/Minorities convened a meeting with Secretary Social Welfare Syed Sikandar Shah. Key discussion included:

- **Balochistan Child Protection Policy & Child Marriage Restraint Act:** Deliberations centered on fortifying these pivotal frameworks to uphold the rights and well-being of children across the region.

- **Child Domestic Labour:** The NCRC's efforts to combat child domestic labour were highlighted during the discussion, reflecting a commitment to creating a safe environment.
- **Enhanced Coordination:** Acknowledging the significance of collaboration, it was agreed to bolster coordination on child rights issues.
- **Enhanced Coordination:** Acknowledging the significance of collaboration, it was agreed to bolster coordination on child rights issues.



With the aim of strengthening complaint handling and coordination mechanisms, Mehek Naeem Member Punjab and Pirbhu Satyani Member Sindh/minorities visited the Woman and Juvenile Facilitation Center in Quetta. Their

discussion with Pari Gul, Focal Person from the IG Balochistan Office, delved into key child rights issues like child abuse and strategized to tackle these issues head-on.



SINDH:

To strengthen coordination mechanisms and discuss the Sindh Child Protection Policy, NCRC Member Sindh/Minorities Pirbhu Satyani held a meeting with Director General (DG) Sindh Child Protection Authority Moazzam Ali Marri and Director Operations Imdad Channa. During the meeting, the following key points were addressed:

- **MoU for Child Rights:** The participants explored the possibility of signing an MoU to enhance collaborative efforts in addressing

child rights issues across the province.

- **Recovery of Missing Girl:** The discussion included an update on the ongoing efforts to recover the missing girl, Priya Kumari, reflecting the commitment to addressing urgent child protection concerns.
- **Endorsement of Sindh Child Protection Policy:** The meeting also focused on the endorsement and implementation of the Sindh Child Protection Policy, aiming to bolster the framework for safeguarding children's rights in the region.



In an effort to address child abuse cases, Pirbhu Satyani, Member Sindh/Minorities and Mehek Naeem, Member Punjab, held a meeting with Shelha Qureshi, Focal Person for the IG office in Sindh. The meeting focused on the alarming issue of child abuse in the Thar region and the need for enhanced coordination between different agencies.

During the discussion, the NCRC delegation



emphasized the urgency of tackling child abuse cases in Thar, highlighting the importance of prompt action and effective collaboration between various stakeholders to protect vulnerable children. In response, the police department demonstrated commendable support by issuing a letter to all DPOs in Sindh, introducing them to the NCRC.



With an aim to improve child protection mechanisms, Member Sindh/Minorities Pirbhu Satyani and Member Punjab Mehek Naeem conducted a meeting with Anis Haroon, Member Sindh of the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR). The primary focus of the meeting was to enhance coordination and referral mechanisms for child protection cases, with a special emphasis on addressing child abuse in Tharparkar.

During the meeting, the critical need for a robust framework that ensures timely and effective intervention in child protection cases was stressed. Pirbhu Satyani and Mehek Naeem emphasized the unique challenges faced by children in Tharparkar, a region particularly vulnerable to various forms of abuse and exploitation. Anis Haroon acknowledged these concerns and expressed the NCHR's



commitment to working closely with the NCRC to address these issues comprehensively. By strengthening the collaboration between NCRC and NCHR, the aim is to ensure that cases are handled with the utmost urgency and that victims receive the support and protection they need.

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA:

To improve the coordination mechanism and ensure timely data sharing, Member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadia Khan and Member Sindh/Minorities Pirbhu Satyani convened a detailed meeting with Ijaz Khan, Chief of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Commission (KPCPWC). The meeting focused on enhancing collaborative efforts and

discussed the status of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Child Protection Policy. Potential areas for improvement were discussed and key actions needed to enhance the policy's effectiveness were also identified. The importance of aligning the policy with international standards and best practices were stressed to ensure comprehensive protection of all children from different age groups.



GILGIT BALTISTAN:

In a stakeholders' consultation held in Gilgit-Baltistan, the NCRC Chairperson Ayesha Raza Farooq and members of the Commission engaged with various stakeholders to address pressing child rights challenges in the region. The meeting included Karamat Raja, Vice Chairperson of the Child Protection Commission, along with representatives from local government, social welfare, special education and health departments.

by children in Gilgit-Baltistan. The NCRC delegation emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to protect and promote child rights in the region. During the meeting, participants proposed several key measures to enhance the existing framework for child protection. One of the primary proposals was to strengthen the coordination and complaint handling mechanism. This would involve establishing a more efficient system for resolving child rights complaints in a timely manner, ensuring that children receive the support and protection they need without delay.

The consultation provided a platform for an in-depth discussion on the unique challenges faced



NCRC Convenes Second Meeting of the Working Group of Religious Scholars

Creating momentum to fight child sexual abuse, the NCRC convened the second meeting of the working group of religious scholars. The meeting brought together religious scholars and experts who unanimously condemned the rise in abuse cases and underscored the urgency of collective action to address this grave issue.

During the meeting, participants shared their perspectives and proposed a series of concrete recommendations to counter child sexual abuse effectively. Key recommendations included:

Development of Educational Booklets: Creating comprehensive booklets on child protection and child rights tailored for children, teachers and religious leaders. These booklets will serve as vital educational resources to raise awareness and provide guidance on preventing and addressing child sexual abuse.

Dissemination of IEC Materials: Distributing Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials in schools and madrassahs. These materials will feature crucial information, including helplines for reporting child sexual abuse cases, to ensure that victims and witnesses know where to seek help.

Incorporation in Religious Sermons: Encouraging religious leaders to incorporate discussions on child sexual abuse in their sermons at mosques. The religious leaders can help to break the silence surrounding child sexual abuse and foster a culture of protection and support within their communities.

The meeting concluded with a strong commitment from all participants to take immediate and sustained action to protect children from sexual abuse.



NCRC Holds 3rd Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Child Rights

The NCRC convened the third meeting of the Advisory Committee on Child Rights (ACCR) in June 2024. The meeting was marked by impactful discussions and updates on the child rights landscape in Pakistan, underscoring NCRC's unwavering commitment to safeguarding children's rights.

The ACCR was briefed on the progress of NCRC's research initiatives, including "Children on the Move" and "Disrupting Harm." These

research initiatives are aligned with the mandate of the Commission and are pivotal in understanding and addressing the challenges faced by children in vulnerable situations, providing data-driven insights to inform policy and action. The meeting concluded with an open discussion where participants shared valuable insights and raised pertinent issues, ensuring a comprehensive dialogue on the current state of child rights.



Meeting with Donor Agencies, INGOs, Civil Society & Authorities

In the wake of rising child sexual abuse cases, the Chairperson NCRC Ayesha Raza Farooq had a meeting with SP Operations Punjab Police

Beenish Fatima to discuss and devise a strategy to counter this menace.



In line with NCRC's strategic plan to eradicate child trafficking, NCRC launched a Policy Brief on Child Trafficking. Subsequently, NCRC wrote letters to various stakeholders with concrete recommendations highlighted in the policy brief. We are grateful to Chairman NADRA for his prompt action to depute a team of experts to discuss combating child trafficking in ICT.



An insightful discussion on the vital role of empowering girls through play between Chairperson NCRC Ayesha Raza Farooq and Right to Play Pakistan team. The Chairperson applauded the Right to Play team's work for promoting girls' empowerment through play and

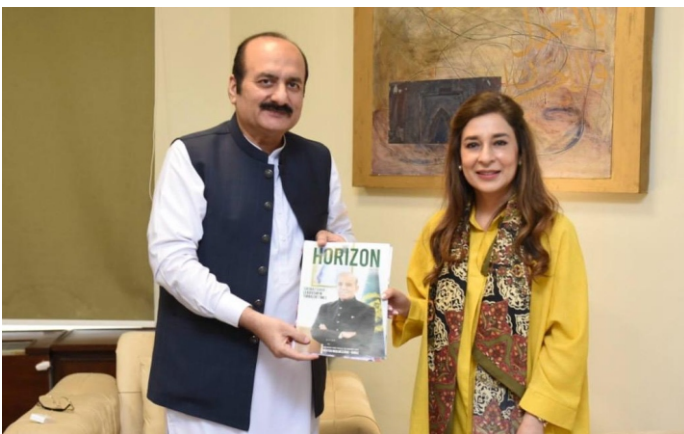
advocating for the inclusion of play as part of the curriculum. She further emphasized that every child deserves the fundamental right to play, as recognized by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).



With an aim to explore avenues of collaboration, NCRC Chairperson Ayesha Raza Farooq and Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood held a meeting. They discussed raising awareness about child rights and advocating for policies that support



the engagement of children and adolescents in sports and arts. The objective is to forge collaborative efforts that promote child-friendly environments and empower youth through active participation in creative and physical activities.



The NCRC team led by Chairperson Ayesha Raza Farooq conducted a productive meeting with the United Nations Development Programme Pakistan team represented by Malick Zulfiqar Ahmad, Senior Technical Advisor. During this



insightful discussion, several partnership avenues were explored and key areas for collaboration were identified to strengthen the protection and promotion of children's rights across Pakistan.

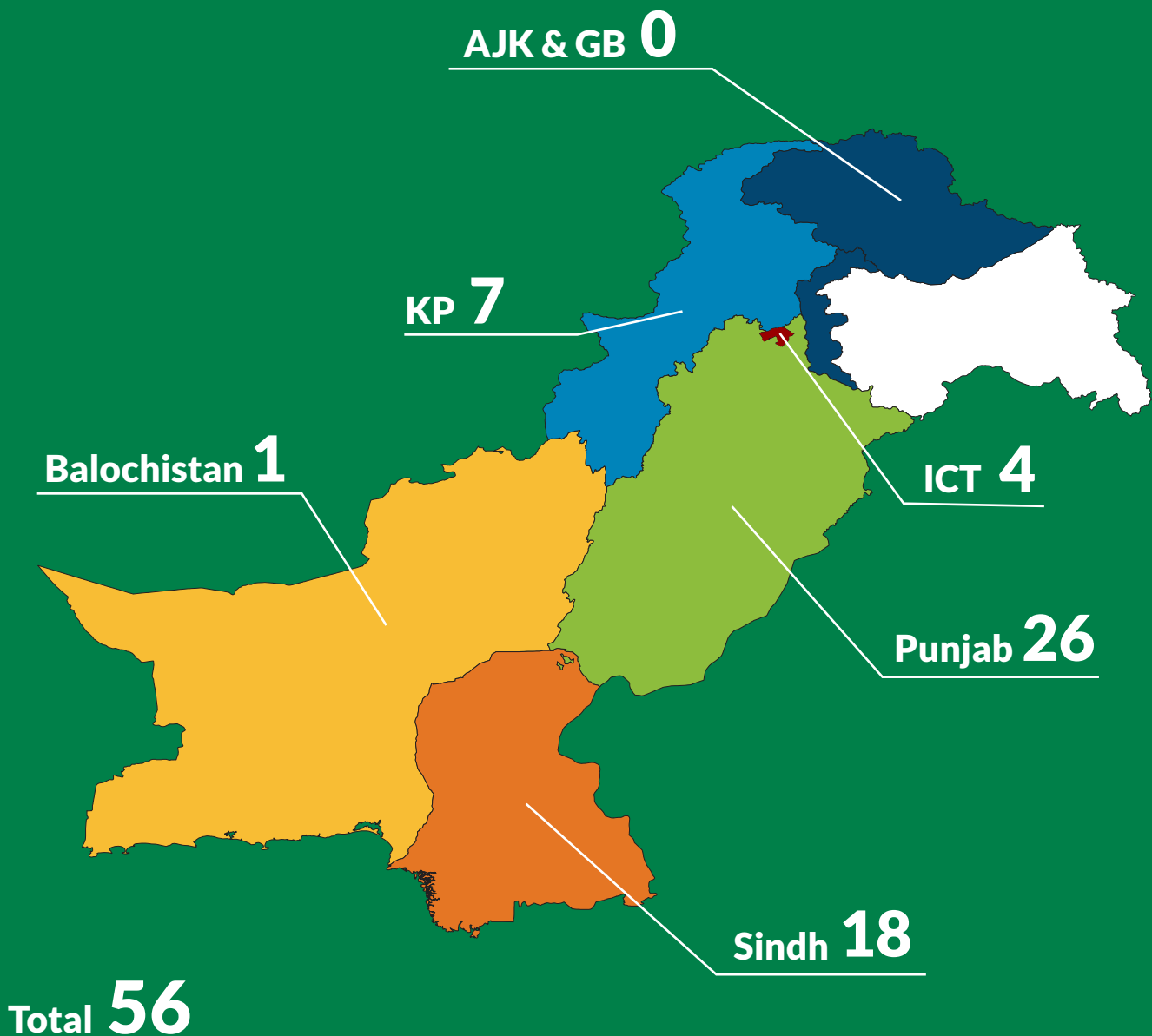


Inquiries Related to Child Rights Violations

Complaint Handling

In the second quarter of 2024, the Commission received 56 complaints related to children's rights, underscoring both the critical role of the

NCRC and the trust the public places in its work. The geo-graphical breakdown of the complaints received is as follows:



In addition to addressing new complaints, the NCRC also followed up on 27 previous complaints. A total of 46 complaints were resolved upon receipt of requisite actions taken

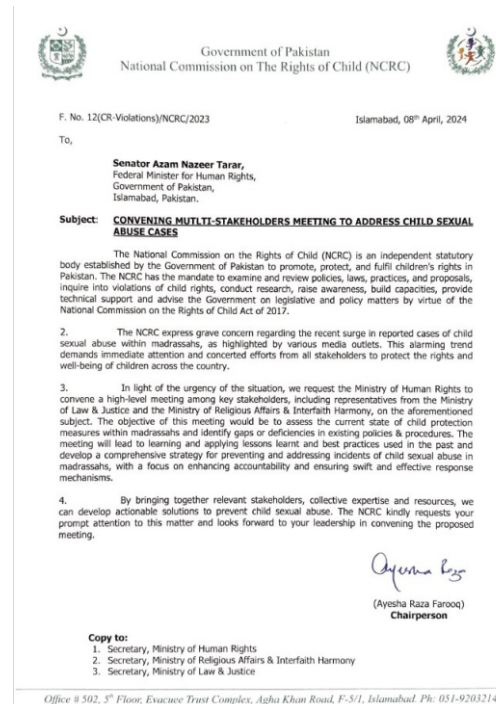
by the relevant agencies, bringing the total number of complaints dealt with in the second quarter to 129.

ADDRESSING CHILD RIGHTS ISSUES

NCRC Calls for High-Level Meeting to Address Child Sexual Abuse in Madrassahs

In response to the alarming increase in reported incidents of child sexual abuse in Madrassahs and religious seminaries, the NCRC has reached out to Federal Minister for Human Rights Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar. The NCRC has urged the Minister to lead a high-level meeting involving key stakeholders, including representatives from the Ministry of Law & Justice and the Ministry of Religious Affairs & Interfaith Harmony.

The primary objective of this crucial meeting is to formulate a comprehensive strategy aimed at preventing and addressing child sexual abuse in these institutions. The focus will be on enhancing accountability measures and establishing swift, effective response mechanisms to ensure the protection of children.



NCRC Highlights Urgent Child Healthcare Needs in Balochistan

In a recent visit to Balochistan, Mehek Naeem, Member Punjab and Pirbhu Satyani, Member Sindh/Minorities visited two children hospitals and engaged in discussions with Medical Superintendent Dr. Ameen Khan of Bolan Medical Complex Hospital and Dr. Ishiaque, Medical Superintendent of Sandeman Provincial Hospital. The discussions focused on the pressing issues affecting child healthcare in the region. The visit highlighted several critical challenges faced by healthcare providers and children in Balochistan:

- **Severe Malnutrition:** The prevalence of malnutrition among children, which

significantly impacts their health and development.

- **Maternal Anemia & Low Birth Weight:** High rates of maternal anemia contributing to low birth weight and subsequent health issues for newborns.
- **Low Routine Immunization:** Insufficient immunization rates leading to increased vulnerability to preventable diseases.

By bringing these challenges to light, the NCRC aims to advocate for enhanced resources and policies to better support children's health and well-being in the region.



RESEARCH

Following extensive consultations at both provincial and federal levels, the NCRC is in the process of developing a comprehensive policy brief on Free and Compulsory Education. This initiative stems from our commitment to ensuring that every child in Pakistan has access to quality education.

The consultations brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including government officials, education experts, civil society representatives, and community leaders. These discussions provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing free and compulsory education across the country. Key issues such as resource

allocation, infrastructure development, teacher training and community engagement were thoroughly examined.

The forthcoming policy brief will outline strategic recommendations and actionable steps to address these issues. It aims to provide a clear roadmap for policymakers to enhance educational access and quality, ensuring that no child is left behind. The NCRC is committed to advocating for policies that remove barriers to education, promote inclusive practices and ensure that all children, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to learn and thrive.

AWARENESS RAISING

NCRC Celebrates World Day Against Child Labour and Launches the State of Children in Pakistan Portal

The NCRC commemorated the World Day Against Child Labour by launching the State of Children in Pakistan portal and presenting its annual report for 2023-24. This event marked a significant step forward in the fight against child labour and the promotion of children's rights in Pakistan.

World Day Against Child Labour, observed annually on June 12th, serves as a powerful reminder of the urgent need to eradicate child labour in all its forms. It is a day dedicated to reflecting on the plight of millions of children worldwide who are deprived of their childhood, education and potential.

In Pakistan, child labour remains a critical challenge. According to estimates, 9.8% of children aged 10-14 are involved in child labour, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) reports that one in every fourth household engages a child in domestic work. These alarming statistics highlight the pressing need for concerted efforts to address this issue.

Recent cases, such as those of Rizwana and Fatimah Furrero, have underscored the exploitation and abuse faced by children in domestic work. In response, the NCRC initiated a national consultation process to draft the Prohibition of Child Labour in Domestic Work Bill 2024. This proposed legislation aims to make the offence non-compoundable and non-bailable so that no one can escape justice. Following the consultative process, the bill has been forwarded to the federal Ministry of Human Rights for submission to the Cabinet.

In her welcome remarks, Chairperson NCRC Ayesha Raza Farooq emphasized, "As we leave this room today, let us commit to becoming

advocates for change. Speak up against the silent exploitation happening in our midst. Let us not normalize young boys and girls working in our neighborhoods, sometimes in our own homes."

The chief guest, Minister of Human Rights Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, affirmed the government's commitment, stating, "The Ministry of Human Rights is fully committed to supporting the efforts of the NCRC in their mission to end child labour and bring about legislative reforms. I am pleased to announce that the comprehensive bill 'Prohibition of Child Labour in Domestic Work 2024' drafted by the NCRC is being considered at the highest forum of the National Task Force on Human Rights."

Geir Tonstol, Country Director ILO, highlighted the broader implications of addressing child labour, stating, "Achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8.7 is not just about eliminating child labour; it's about breaking the chains of poverty, providing education and opportunities and ensuring a brighter future for every child. We must commit to this goal with urgency and determination, knowing that each child's freedom from labour brings us one step closer to a just and equitable society."

Dr. Inoussa Kabore, Deputy Country Representative UNICEF, stressed the importance of collaboration, saying, "Stakeholder engagement serves as a powerful tool for bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives to address complex issues. It fosters dialogue, generates innovative solutions, and mobilizes support for our shared cause. In the context of Pakistan, where child labour persists across various sectors, stakeholder engagement

becomes crucial."

The event was participated by a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including international and national non-governmental organizations, embassies, high commissions, donor agencies, government representatives, civil society organizations and child rights experts. At the event's conclusion, dignitaries, including the chief guest and Commission Members, jointly launched the State of Children in Pakistan portal and the NCRC's annual report for April 2023 to March 2024. The report details the Commission's achievements, including the launch of a three-year strategic plan, partnerships with national and international

organizations, research publications, policy briefs and significant advocacy efforts.

The State of Children in Pakistan portal is a groundbreaking initiative that provides a comprehensive knowledge hub for all stakeholders involved in child rights. This platform serves as a repository of valuable resources, including data, reports, articles, research studies, and national and international legal and policy frameworks. It will empower policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to make evidence-based decisions and interventions that directly impact the lives of children in Pakistan.



NCRC and French Embassy Launch Campaign to Combat Child Labour, Abuse and Boost School Enrolment

The NCRC in collaboration with the Embassy of France, launched a comprehensive awareness campaign to address critical issues affecting children in Pakistan: child domestic labour, child sexual abuse and the enrollment of out-of-school children.

The campaign's primary goal is to raise awareness about the pervasive issue of child domestic labour, targeting the demand side while promoting education as a key factor in eliminating child labour. According to the ILO, one in four households in Pakistan employs a child for domestic work, often in hazardous conditions. The campaign aims to shed light on these practices, advocating for the protection and rights of these vulnerable children.

Ambassador of France to Pakistan, His Excellency Nicolas Galey, emphasized the importance of this initiative: "France is committed to promoting children's rights throughout the world, alongside all our partners. Our collaboration with the NCRC represents a significant step towards addressing the pressing challenges faced by children in Pakistan. Our shared vision is to safeguard the rights of children and ensure they grow up in environments free from exploitation and abuse".

Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson NCRC, said "With over 26.2 million out-of-school children, Pakistan confronts a severe challenge. Economic pressures and limited access to quality education, drives many children into the workforce, perpetuating a cycle of poverty. This campaign is a call to action for all of us to ensure that every child has access to their fundamental right to education".

The campaign also tackles the distressing rates of child sexual abuse in Pakistan. According to the "Cruel Numbers Report 2023" by SAHIL, 11

children are sexually abused every day in the country. The NCRC is committed to advocating for stronger legislation and societal awareness to combat this abhorrent crime.

In response to the increasing exploitation of children in domestic work, the NCRC has drafted the "Bill on the Prohibition of Child Labour in Domestic Work 2024". This proposed legislation seeks to explicitly ban the employment of children under 18 as live-in domestic workers and introduce stricter penalties for violators. The bill will soon be presented to the Cabinet for consideration and action.

Additionally, the NCRC has conducted extensive consultations across all provinces and at the federal level, focusing on the Education Sector Plans and the plight of out-of-school children. These dialogues have provided critical insights and recommendations, which will be compiled into a forthcoming policy brief aimed at driving educational reforms.

A key element of the campaign was the creation of culturally sensitive animations designed to raise awareness and inspire action among various audiences, particularly children and parents. Addressing issues such as child labour, child sexual abuse and the lack of school enrollment requires an approach that resonates deeply with the target audiences. The campaign ensures that the content is tailored to the local context, culturally sensitive and age-appropriate. The characters, settings, and scenarios depicted in each animation are familiar and relatable to the Pakistani community, enhancing the authenticity and impact of the message.

The NCRC urges all citizens to actively participate in this campaign. Sharing these animations on social media and within personal

networks can help disseminate the message and foster collective action against child labour and abuse while promoting education. If you witness

any instances or other forms of exploitation, please report them immediately by 1099 or 1121 as your prompt action can save a life.



NCRC & CfC Join Hands to Celebrate International Day to End Corporal Punishment

To commemorate International Day to End Corporal Punishment, NCRC and CfC organized a training of educators titled "Mar Nahi, Pyaar!" to take a stand against this harmful practice. Education is about nurturing minds, not instilling fear. Corporal punishment doesn't just hurt the body, it scars the psyche.

A visually compelling poster that outlines mechanisms for ensuring safe classrooms was also developed in consultation with legal experts and focusing on existing legislation on corporal punishment, will prominently feature information such as dedicated helplines for reporting abuse and corporal punishment.

Additionally, the campaign will reshare CfC's impactful "Maar Nahi, Pyaar" animation video, which highlights the detrimental effects of corporal punishment and promotes positive discipline and creative pedagogies as alternatives.

In tandem with the advocacy campaign, NCRC and CfC conducted training sessions across five public schools in ICT and trained more than 150 teachers. These sessions equipped educators with knowledge and strategies to combat corporal punishment. The training consisted of two sessions per school: the first focusing on raising awareness about relevant legislation and

positive classroom management strategies and the second on translating policy into actionable

steps, addressing abuse and establishing safeguarding policies and response committees.



PEMRA Allocating Free Airtime to Highlight Child Rights Issues

The NCRC extends gratitude to Chairman PEMRA for his remarkable commitment to promoting child rights and addressing critical issues. After follow-up by NCRC, PEMRA allocated free airtime to a joint awareness campaign, amplifying our message and fostering societal change.

A total of 842 spots were aired on national television, focusing on the prevention of child domestic labour, countering out-of-school children and increasing birth registration. This extensive airtime has allowed us to reach millions of households, raising awareness and

encouraging action on these pressing issues.

The campaign to prevent child domestic labour highlighted the harsh realities faced by children engaged in this work and underscored the importance of safeguarding their rights. Through compelling narratives, viewers were urged to take a stand against this form of exploitation. Similarly, our efforts to counter out-of-school children emphasized the importance of education and the collective responsibility to ensure every child has access to quality learning. Additionally, the birth registration campaign aimed to educate parents

and guardians on the process and benefits of registering their children's births, providing

them with legal recognition and access to essential services.



The Commission participated in various consultations and events to raise awareness of child rights

At the Interfaith Harmony Summit organized by Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) Pakistan, Chairperson NCRC Ayesha Raza Farooq spoke about how the Commission is leveraging the support of the minority working group to uphold the rights of children. She also highlighted that in the aftermath of the Jaranwala incident, the Commission visited the

affected minority community to extend support and address their concerns. She also pointed out that the need of the hour is to include interfaith harmony in the curriculum which includes discussions on tolerance, understanding, and respect which will lay the groundwork for a harmonious society.

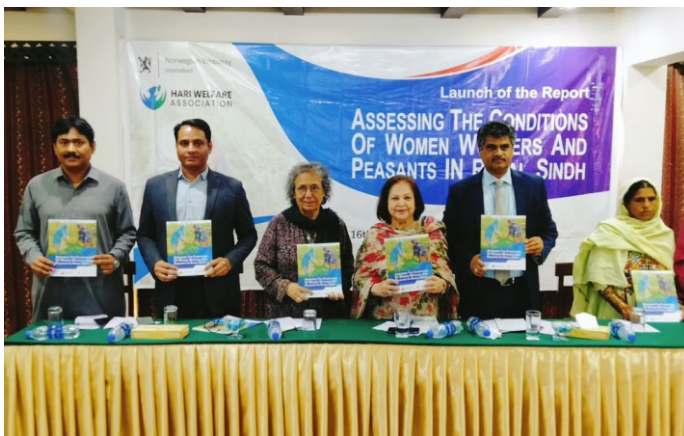


Khalid Naeem, Member ICT participated in a workshop titled "Making Disaster Risk Management Disability-Inclusive Tools with Specific Focus on Children", organized by UNESCAP, NDMA, and STEP. He introduced the Commission and its functions to the participants.



Member Sindh/Minorities Pirbhu Satyani spoke about the conditions of women workers and peasants in rural Sindh and how it is affecting girls at the Report Launch organized by Hari

Welfare Association. He also highlighted the challenges faced by girls in accessing education and NCRC's endeavors to mitigate the challenge.



The first-ever International Day of Play was observed on 11th June. This day underscores play as a fundamental right for every child, as recognized by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 31). The Chairperson NCRC Ayesha Raza Farooq participated in an event organised by Right to

Play Pakistan team along with Shehzad Roy and Bari Faisal. On this day, the Chairperson emphasized the critical role of play in a child's physical, emotional and cognitive development and raised awareness about the importance of play in children's lives.



Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO) and Street Children, two UK-based organizations, organized a three-day training course on "Child Protection and Safeguarding" where Member ICT NCRC Khalid Naeem was invited as chief



Member Punjab Mehek Naeem NCRC shared her insights and strategies at the Stakeholder's Consultation on the Punjab Child Labour Eradication Policy and Costed Action Plan. She



At the National Street Children Conference organized by Muslim Hands, Chairperson NCRC Ayesha Raza Farooq highlighted the initiatives led by the Commission to protect & promote child rights. She specifically highlighted the efforts of the Commission on curbing child domestic labour and addressing the increasing out-of-school children. She called upon the stakeholders to:

guest. He spoke about the mandate and functions of Commission, shedding light on the important role of Commission in safeguarding the rights of children across Pakistan.



highlighted the Commission's efforts to curb child domestic labour and appreciated evidence-based policy formulation.



- Invest in play-based interventions
- Forge partnerships
- Raise Awareness and mobilize support
- Invest in play-based interventions
- Forge partnerships
- Raise Awareness and mobilize support



“I encourage you to support one another, to celebrate your achievements, and to lift each other up in times of challenge. Your strength lies not only in your individual abilities but in your collective power to effect change and create a

more just and equitable world.” stated Chairperson NCRC Ayesha Raza Farooq as the chief guest at the 16th National Youth Forum organized by Pakistan Girls Guide Association.



Harnessing the Importance of International Days for Child Rights Advocacy via Social Media

In recognition of the pivotal role that international days play in raising awareness and driving advocacy efforts, the NCRC has been actively leveraging social media platforms to share impactful advocacy messages. Our recent social media campaigns have been strategically crafted to highlight key child rights issues and foster dialogue among stakeholders. Here's a glimpse of the themes we've covered:

Autism Awareness Day

Date: April 2

Theme: "Understanding and Acceptance"

World Art Day

Date: April 15

Theme: "Creativity and Expression"

Save the Earth

Date: April 22 (Earth Day)

Theme: "Protecting Our Planet for Future Generations"

World Immunization Week

Date: Last week of April

Theme: "Vaccines Bring Us Closer"

End Corporal Punishment Day

Date: April 30

Theme: "Promoting Positive Discipline"

Labour Day

Date: May 1

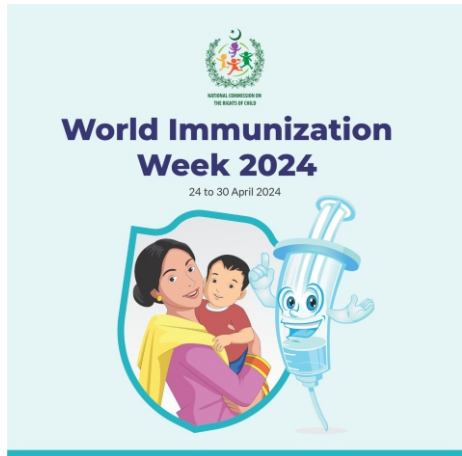
Theme: "Eradicating Child Labour"

International Day of Play

Date: May 28

Theme: "The Right to Play"

Through these campaigns, the NCRC fostered a deeper understanding of child rights issues and inspire action among our followers.



NCRC in the Media

Geo News: Speaking to Geo News, Chairperson NCRC Ayesha Raza Farooq stated that according to a report 11 children are abused every day. She further emphasized that the Commission takes cognizance of such cases immediately and follows up with the law enforcement to ensue that justice prevails and perpetrators are held accountable. She also called upon religious scholars to play a positive role and raise their voices against these culprits.

The Chairperson Ayesha Raza Farooq stressed the role of media in highlighting child sexual abuse cases and shared an update on the Faisalabad case where, the complainant was influenced to withdraw his complaint. She highlighted the importance of imposing strict punishments and the positive role of society in curbing this menace and how Anti Rape Act 2021 stands out as a special law prioritizing rights of victims and categorizing such crimes as a non-compoundable offense.



Voicepk.net: Chairperson NCRC Ayesha Raza Farooq stresses on spreading awareness, and appeals to the saner voices in society, be it clerics, teachers or politicians, to stand with victims of Child Sexual Assault.



Dawn News: Chairperson NCRC Ayesha Raza Farooq & Commission Members Nadia Khan Khalid Naeem Mehek Naeem Pirbhu Satyani in a talk show on Dawn News highlighted the alarming surge in abuse & violence against women and children. Focusing on the underlying causes, they talked about how economic disparities & patriarchal structures contribute to vulnerability. They informed on Government of Pakistan's enactment of special laws to protect women and children. From the implementation of the Anti-Rape Act 2021 to the establishment of Specialized Investigation Units and crisis cells, concrete steps are being taken to support victims and hold perpetrators accountable.



Awaz Tv: While participating in the morning show on Awaz TV, Pirbhu Satyani Member Sindh/Minorities NCRC highlighted the impactful work of the Commission on curbing child domestic labour, complaint mechanisms and handling child rights violations in a timely and effective manner.



Report Complaints



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