



# Annual Report 2019-20



NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE RIGHTS OF CHILD  
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

Published with the support of



## **Annual Report 2019-20**

28 February 2020- 30 June 2020

This report covers the Commission's progress during the first four months of FY 2019-20 since the Commission was notified by the federal government on February 28, 2020.



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## **Acronyms**

FY Financial Year

ICT Islamabad Capital Territory

MoHR Ministry of Human Rights

NCCWD National Commission on Child Welfare Development

NCHR National Commission for Human Rights

NCRC National Commission on the Rights of Child

NCSW National Commission on the Status of Women

ToR Terms of Reference

UNCRC United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child

ZARRA Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Act

# Message from the Chairperson

The National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) was established by an Act of Parliament, the National Commission on the Rights of Child Act, 2017. The Commission is mandated by the NCRC Act, 2017 to ensure that all laws, policies, programmes and administrative mechanisms are consistent with child rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) UN.



The Commission was established to make recommendations for effective implementation of policies and laws related to children. The Commission plays an important role in promoting and protecting children's rights in Pakistan. An empowered NCRC, which can only be achieved by working with civil society and the media, can help the government protect the rights of Pakistan's children.

It is my honour and privilege to be the first Chairperson of this newly established Commission, and I would like to thank the Federal Government of Pakistan for appointing me to this very important position.

Since this is a newly established institution, our main focus in the first four months was to make the Commission functional. In those months, despite a lack of financial, administrative, and staff support, and despite overcoming and dealing with the realities of Covid19, we have made reasonable progress in getting the Commission up and running. We are determined and will make a bona fide effort to institutionalise the NCRC in the coming months. In this regard, we also hope for the support of the Ministry of Human Rights of the Government of Pakistan.

This is the **first Annual report** published by the Commission, as required by law. The report serves as a tool of institutional accountability while raising public awareness of the Commission's work.

## **Afshan Tehseen**

Chairperson

National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC)

# Introduction to the National Commission on the Rights of Child



The Federal Government has constituted the National Commission on the Rights of Child in exercise of the powers conferred on it by Section 3(1) of the National Commission on the Rights of Child Act, 2017 (XXXII of 2017) by a notification dated February 28, 2020.

The Commission consists of a Chairperson, Members from each of 4 provinces and ICT, and two child members. In addition, the Commission includes ex-officio members/officials at grade 20 and above from the Ministries of Human Rights, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, Chairs of Provincial Children's Commissions, and Chairs of the National Commission for Human Rights and National Commission on the Status of Women.

**The Commission has an overarching mandate in accordance with international obligations and for matters relating to the promotion, protection and realisation of the rights of the child, as enshrined in the NCRC Act 2017.**



## Functions of the Commission

The Commission's main tasks include:

- Review existing or proposed legislation and administrative instruments and proposals related to the rights of the child and make recommendations as appropriate.
- Build liaison with federal and provincial commissions established under provincial laws, as well as with other concerned organisations in the provinces.
- Contribute to raising awareness and promote dialogue on children's rights in different sectors of society.
- Carry out research and advise on policy issues affecting the situation of children's rights in Pakistan.
- Propose measures to follow up the implementation of the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.
- Advise the Federal Government on signing, ratifying or acceding to proposed international treaties.



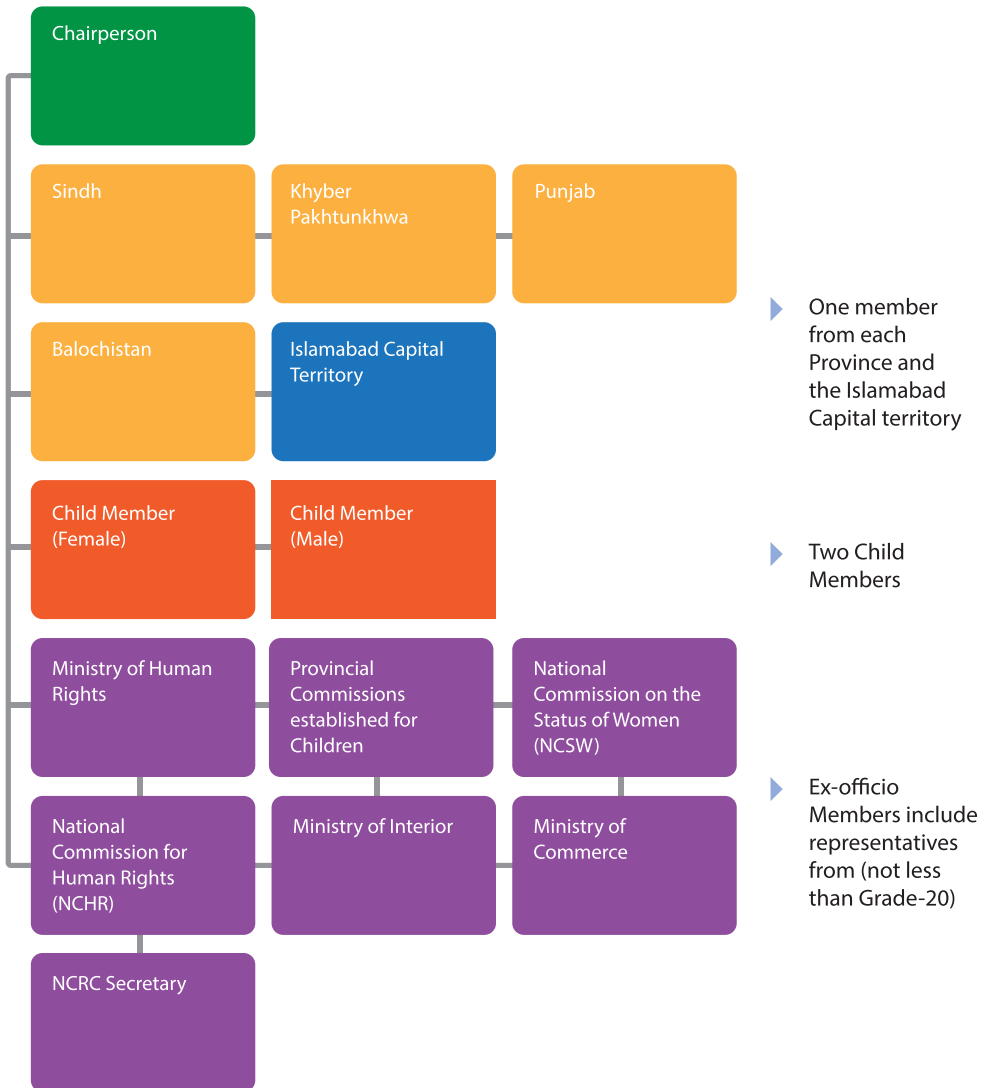
## Powers of the Commission

- Inquire violations of children's rights and recommend that the appropriate agency or department initiate proceedings in such cases.
- Exercise the powers vested on a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure of 1908 (Act V of 1908) for enforcing the attendance of any person and compel the production of documents during the investigation of complaints of violations of the rights of the child



# Composition of the Commission

The Commission consist of:



**NCRC** Core Team

The core team is chaired by the Chairperson, one commissioner from each province, and two child members.

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**Ms. Afshan Tehseen** – Chairperson

Ms. Afshan Tehseen has been working for the protection and promotion of human rights for over 25 years. She has held key positions at various national and international organisations, including the United Nations (UN). Her work has focused primarily on children’s rights and protection, mentoring youth, women’s empowerment, and advocating for legal and policy reform. Ms. Tehseen has been an active member of key networks and forums at the national and international levels, as well as a “Master Trainer,” “Goodwill Ambassador,” and “Regional Gender Champion.”



**Mr. Iqbal Detho** – Member Sindh

Iqbal Detho received a Master of Science in Human Rights from the London School of Economics as a Chevening Scholar, United Kingdom. He was also a Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow (Law and Human Rights) at the University of Minnesota, United States. Mr. Detho has been a trainer and educator on human and children’s rights for over 15 years. He is also a member of the Provincial Monitoring Committee on Prevention of Child Marriages, Women Development Department, Government of Sindh and a member of the Curriculum Development Programme, Sindh.



**M. Hashim Kakar** – Member Balochistan

Muhammad Hashim Kakar has served as the Director General (B-20) of Social Welfare and Special Education, Government of Balochistan. Mr. Kakar was also Deputy Director of Provincial Commission for Child Welfare and Development Balochistan, Quetta. His areas of expertise include public administration, child protection and children with special needs. During his career, he contributed significantly to the abolition of child labour.



**Dr. Rubina Feroze Bhatti** – Member Punjab

Dr. Rubina Feroze Bhatti holds a doctorate in Leadership Studies from the University of San Diego, California. She has decades of experience in the field of human rights and has served in various leadership positions,

including as a member of the Advisory Council for Minorities Affairs, Punjab. She has been nominated for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize, the 2011 Woman of Courage Award, and the 2015 UNDP N-Peace Award, among others. She has been awarded the 'Human Rights Award' by the Ministry of Human Rights and Minority Affairs, Punjab for four consecutive years (2016-19).



**Dr. Rubina Farid** – Member ICT

Dr. Rubina Farid has been a practicing obstetrician gynaecologist and nutritionist for the past 30 years. She is a well-known advocate for the rights of women and children and is committed to making Pakistan a safer place for them. Her work for human rights over the years has been recognised with the Fatima Jinnah Gold Medal in 2006, the National Human Rights Award in 2016, and the Human Rights Achievement Award in 2018. She is also the Chairperson of the Shelter Home Care Committee and the National Cell for the Protection of Children.



**Dr. Jahanzeb Khan** – Member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Dr. Jahanzeb Khan is a native of Swabi district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Dr. Khan holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of Peshawar. Dr. Khan has authored and published more than 10 research papers on child protection issues in Pakistan. He has been working in the field of child protection for 20 years. He has served as the Regional Head of SPARC and consultant to Oxford Policy Management on 'Child Protection Case Management and Referral Mechanism' in KP.



**Ms. Faryal Javed** – Child Member

Faryal Javed is a pre-medical student at Islamabad Model Girls College, working to integrate children's rights into the socio-economic paradigm of social institutions. She is inspired by her mother, who holds a master's degree in gender studies from the College of Punjab, and her father, who teaches political science at Islamia Degree College.



**Mr. Tajdar Hashmi** – Child Member

Tajdar Ali Hashmi is a promising student who joined Jamia Lateefiya Nazeeriya for Hifz-e-Quran after completing his primary education on scholarship from Islamabad Model School for Boys AaraKirpa. Tajdar continues to study on scholarships and recently completed his Matriculation from Islamabad Model College for Boys Hummak.



# Progress

February 28, 2020 - June 30, 2020

The institutional set-up and operationalisation of the Commission began with the appointment of the Chairperson and Members on February 28, 2020. The NCRC began its work through the Chairperson and appointed members, but had no office or staff and faced financial and infrastructural obstacles to carry out its work smoothly.

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**GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN  
MINISTRY OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

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Islamabad, the 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2020

**NOTIFICATION**

S.R.O (1)/2020:- In exercise of powers conferred by Section 3(1) of the National Commission on the Rights of Child Act, 2017 (XXXII of 2017), the Federal Government is pleased to constitute the National Commission on the Rights of Child consisting of the following members, namely:-

- |                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| a) Ms. Afshan Tehseen        | Chairperson               |
| b) Dr. Rubina Fareed         | Member-ICT                |
| c) Mr. Muhammad Hashim Kakar | Member-Balochistan        |
| d) Mr. Jahanzeb Khan         | Member-Khyber Pakhtunkhwa |
| e) Ms. Rubina Feroz Bhatti   | Member-Punjab/Minority    |
| f) Mr. Iqbal Ahmed Detho     | Member-Sindh              |
| g) Mr. Tajdar Qureshi Hashmi | Child Member              |
| h) Ms. Faryal Javed          | Child Member              |

[No.1-1/2013-NCCWD]

✓  
The Manager,  
Printing Corporation of Pakistan Press,  
**Karachi.**

*Muhammad Khalil Awan*  
(Muhammad Khalil Awan)  
Deputy Secretary (Admin)

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Some of the major work undertaken by the NCRC in the first four months was:

## **Governance Structure of the NCRC**

The NCRC governance structure was discussed and finalized on April 2, 2020 in consultation with the Joint Secretary (Admin) of the Ministry of Human Rights and forwarded to the National Commission for Child Welfare and Development (NCCWD) for further processing. The proposed governance structure reflects three wings of the Commission;

- i. Legal, Research, Awareness & Inquiry Wing;
- ii. Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation Wing; and
- iii. Administrative Wing

The governance structure ensures coherent functions of each official within each wing and in relation to the other wings. This synchronization of functions promotes harmonization and teamwork and supports the achievement of desired organizational goals.

## **Meetings of the NCRC Chairperson and Members**

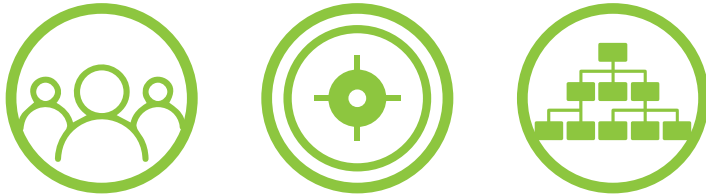
The first meeting of the Chairperson and Members of the NCRC was convened on April 7, 2020. During the meeting, the Chair informed the participants about the pace of work for the operationalisation of the NCRC and answered questions from the members.

A second meeting with all Members was held on April 21, 2020, chaired by the Chairperson of the NCRC, in the Committee Room of the Ministry of Human Rights in Islamabad to review the pace of the Commission's work and to assign specific tasks to Members.

A third meeting of the NCRC Members was held on May 5, 2020 to deliberate on the programme components, i.e., the proposed strategy template, complaint handling mechanism, Covid-19, etc.

## Defined role of an NCRC core team

The core team met regularly on a weekly basis to review the day-to-day operations of the Commission in terms of operationalisation and programme development.



Task descriptions and work plans for each core team member were developed, finalized, and approved by the NCRC Chairperson. The Core Team coordinated with existing commissions to learn about their operations and to understand and implement best practices.

The Core Team, under the leadership of the Chairperson, drafted the Commission's vision, mission, and core values and presented them to the membership for comment.

The Core Team has begun conceptual work and initial programming on awareness raising and public dialogue on children's rights in accordance with the Commission's mandate.

## Vision

An enabling, responsive, and protective society for children to enjoy their rights with dignity.



## Mission

A viable, effective, and resourceful institution to enforce its mandate for comprehensive legislative, institutional and social reforms on child rights.



## Core Values of the NCRC

- Integrity and Ethics
- Dignity and Respect
- Accountability & Transparency
- Child Centred
- Diversity and inclusion
- Transformation and Innovation



### The Logo of NCRC

The development process to design NCRC's logo has begun. To that end, a vendor has been hired and has submitted an initial design.



## First Commission Meeting



The first commission meeting of the NCRC was held in Islamabad on June 24, 2020 to brief the commission members on the mandate of the NCRC, progress in establishing the secretariat, allocation of funds, and creation of posts. The establishment of a Child Rights Fund and approval of the opening of an assignment account for the use of budgetary funds allocated by the government were also discussed during the Commission meeting. The Commission expressed its gratitude to the Ministry of Human Rights and especially to Honourable Minister Shireen Mazari and her team for establishing the Commission for the benefit of children in Pakistan.

## NCRC Strategic Framework and Mapping of Institutions and Services

Under the supervision of the Chairperson, a draft of the NCRC Strategic Framework was prepared. This framework elaborated the vision, mission, strategic priorities, and interventions of the Commission. The first draft was shared with

members for written comment and will be discussed further in upcoming meetings for finalisation, adoption, and implementation. The identified priority areas for FY 2019-20 were:

- Child Protection and COVID-19;
- Child Labour/ Domestic Child Labour;
- Complaint Mechanism and Referral Systems; and
- Visibility of the Commission

Members were also given the task of mapping the existing institutions, mechanisms and services for children in their respective provinces.

## **Mechanism for Complaints Handling**

The Commission has the exclusive mandate to monitor and remedy violations of the rights of the child. Given this core mandate, a well-coordinated and effective complaint handling mechanism needs to be put in place. In this regard, NCRC has started monitoring child rights violations without any human and financial resources. There is a need for an adequate complaint handling system and human resources.

## **Meeting with Ministry of Human Rights Joint Secretary**

The Chairperson and Members held a meeting with the Joint Secretary MoHR, Malik Kamran Azam Khan, after the end of the COVID-19 lockdown to discuss the Commission's mandate, activities and challenges.



## Meeting with the President of the Islamabad Stock Exchange (ISE)

The Chairperson of the NCRC was invited by the President of Islamabad Stock Exchange to discuss possible areas of cooperation for the cause of children's right in Pakistan. The Chairman of NCRC briefed the Honourable President of Islamabad Stock Exchange about the mandate and function of NCRC. The meeting ended with the wish to continue the cooperation for the rights of children.

## Meeting with Director Programmes, National Commission on the Status of Women

NCRC Chairperson met with Mr. Suleman Shah, Director of Programmes, on April 23, 2020 to learn about the functioning of NCSW. Mr. Suleman briefed about the official functioning and initiatives of the Commission and assured to support and advise NCRC in its work.

## Appearing on TV Channels to Raise Awareness for Children

The Chairperson of NCRC was invited by Roze TV on April 24, 2020 to talk about social distancing in the prevailing situation of Covid-19. The Chairperson emphasised the need for society to adopt a "new normal"; the concept that describes the resilience of society and the adoption of measures during and after the Covid19 scenario.

Similarly, the Chairperson and members appeared on various TV channels and spoke about various issues affecting children in Pakistan.





## Legal analysis of the ZARRA Act, 2019 and the NCRC Act, 2017

The Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Act, 2019 is a law that defines the system of one window operations for public notification and recovery of abducted children in Pakistan. As an internal work, a comparative analysis of the NCRC Act, 2017 and ZARRA, 2019 was initiated by NCRC member Sindh. The goal was to anticipate how the two laws complement each other and develop a path for future coordination with the Authority.

## Special Lecture at National Institute of Management (NIMS)

The Chairperson NCRC conducted a two-hour session on the “Issues of Children” for the Senior Management Mandatory Course for all CSS Officers being promoted from Grade 19 to 20.

BRIEF ON

## National Commission on the Rights of Child

The Federal Government has constituted the National Commission on the Rights of Child in exercise of powers conferred by Section 307 of the National Commission on the Rights of Child Act, 2017 (20000 of 2017). The Commission has been notified.

### Issues and Welfare of Children

Afshan Tehseen Bajwa  
Chairperson

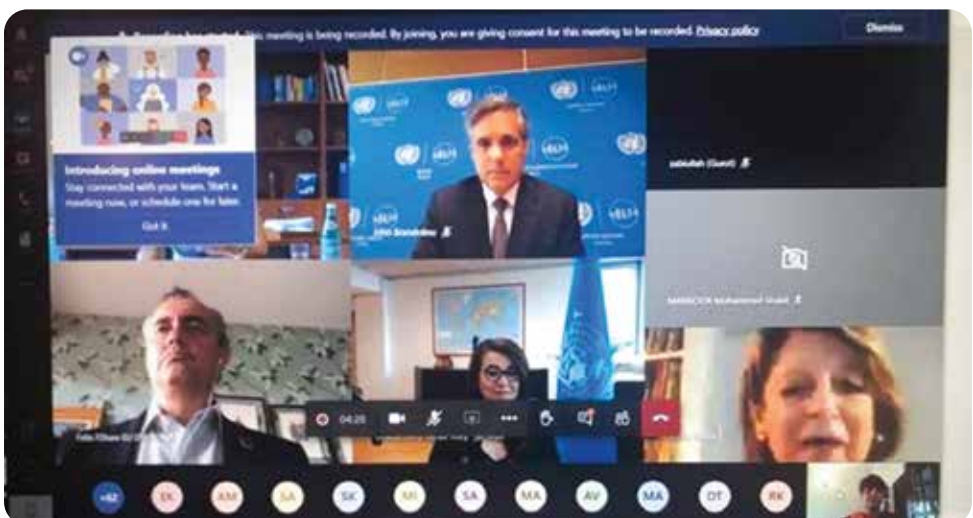
NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE RIGHTS OF CHILD

“NCRC Envisions an enabling, responsive and protective society for children to enjoy their rights with dignity”



## Participated as Keynote Speaker at “Global Seminar on Trafficking in Women and Migrant Smuggling”

The Chairperson of NCRC was invited by UNODC as a keynote speaker to speak on trafficking in women and migrant smuggling. The event was attended by the ambassadors of various countries, parliamentarians and high-ranking government officials from law enforcement agencies.





## Webinar on the role of Women/ Girls in Managing Stress and Countering Violence

NCRC Chairperson was invited by the Center of Pakistan and International Relations to speak on May 15, 2020 on stress management and how women and girls can counter violence. She emphasized the need to equip women and girls with legal tools and techniques that will protect them from becoming victims of violence and make them agents of change and role models for other women and girls in Pakistan.



## Appearance on various TV Channels on International Women’s Day

The Chairperson of NCRC was invited by Roze TV, PTV World on March 8, 2020 – International Women’s Day – to talk about gender equality, the interlocked nature of child rights with women’s rights and the importance of safeguarding human rights for the most marginalized groups.



## World Day Against Child Labour

NCRC commemorated the World Day Against Child Labour on 12th June 2020. The Commission issued a press release and the Chairperson NCRC also made an appearance on various television channels to discuss the persistent issue of child labour in Pakistan.



### OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSON



On this World Day against Child Labor, the Chairperson of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC) reiterates her determination to resolve matters concerning the plight of child domestic labor. As per the international treaties ratified by the Government of Pakistan, it is important to designate strict compliance, whereby the practice of child labor is eliminated.

It must also be noted that the loopholes within the legislative system, wherein there is a lack of coherence in provincial and federal laws, creates a space for exploitation that needs to be brought into careful consideration. Most concerning in this regard is the issue of varying age legally cited. The Chairperson believes in a unified mechanism to deal with such issues, and reinforces her commitment to abolishment of this practice, and not its regulation.

Data and census based on child labor indicators was last published in 1996, which has since become obsolete, requiring updating. A comprehensive policy is only possible if followed up by authentic evidential data for which the Government of Pakistan must intervene.

Furthermore, the procedural lapses that deter the implementation of these laws must be carefully monitored to ensure that the child's welfare and protection is secured. In light of COVID'19, it is extremely crucial to integrate a communal approach by rejecting the practice of child labor and admonishing those who continue to engage in it. There is only one way to fight this menace and that is to collectively take up arms against it.

If we are to proceed towards a country where each child is legally, emotionally, and physically protected, we all must stand together and join hands in ensuring that these young individuals do not meet the fate of many victimized before them. As Chairperson, the quest to a safe and secure Pakistan for our children continues.

## Participation in TV shows highlighting the International Day on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

The Chairperson NCRC participated as a guest on the PTV show for International Day on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on 26th June 2020. The Chairperson shed light on the rising caseload of drug abuse among the children and youth – especially street children, urban schools, and children in child labour.



## Networking and Orientation Meetings with Stakeholders

Networking and orientation meetings were held in May and June 2020 with parliamentarians, representatives of the media, academia, NGOs, UNICEF, UNDP, and other civil society stakeholders. These meetings discussed the role of the Commission and ways to work with stakeholders to strengthen child protection systems in Pakistan.



## Case Study

### ZAHRA SHAH

The case of a female child, Zohra Shah, was brought to the attention of the Commission in July 2020 by the Ministry of Human Rights. Zohra Shah had been murdered by her employers. NCRC sought a report from the local police in Rawalpindi district and was later informed of the status of the investigation by SSP. The police lodged an First Information Report (FIR) under 302/376/34 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) at Rawat Police Station in Rawalpindi District on June 1, 2020. According to the Investigating Officer, the employer, Hassan Siddique, accompanied an injured minor girl to the hospital, stating his relationship as the employer. It turned out that the employer had severely beaten her for freeing caged parrots. The girl eventually succumbed to her injuries and died in the hospital. Both employers (husband and wife) were subsequently arrested; their DNA and polygraph tests were conducted. The case is currently before the relevant court. NCRC continues to follow the case and receive updates from the police to ensure that the case is concluded in a fair and impartial manner.

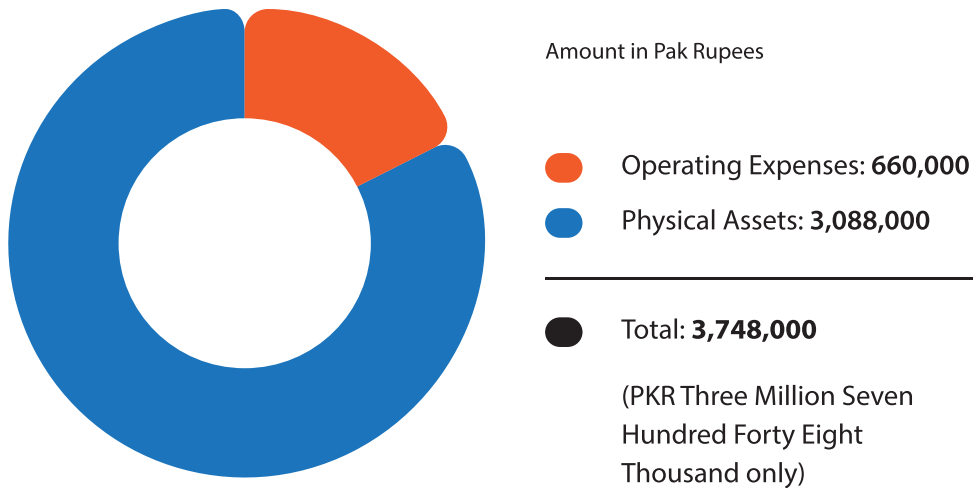


#### OFFICIAL STATEMENT

The Chairperson for the National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC) condemns the brutal murder of Zohra Shah, an 8 year old beaten to death in Bahria Town, Rawalpindi. She has expressed her deep concern regarding this matter and has personally taken it up for resolution, vowing to ensure that the perpetrators be met with the appropriate legal consequences. It is heart wrenching to witness these incidents in such frequency and we feel, it is our collective responsibility as a society to ensure that Zohra Shah's family be provided the justice that they deserve.

## Budget 2019-20

In the absence of office and staff resources, MoHR supported the NCRC and the following expenditures were incurred in fiscal year (FY) 2019-20.



The budget for fiscal year (FY) 2019-20 was evaluated and re-appropriated according to the immediate needs of the Commission. Discussions were held with MoHR to process and further submit the budget for FY 2020-21 to the federal government.

# Way Forward



The Commission is a key player in fulfilling international commitments made under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other treaties. Despite all the technical, financial and operational constraints, the Chairperson and members of the NCRC have shown commitment and dedication in the first four months to bring the institution into operational mode.

Sincere support from the Ministry of Human Rights, line ministries, and other stakeholders is needed to strengthen the NCRC and help the country strengthen its child rights efforts. A more empowered commission is important not only to help the government uphold children's rights, but also to improve the country's image. The allocation of financial resources is critical to sustaining the NCRC and meeting the institution's necessary staffing, administrative, and financial needs.

NCRC remains committed to fulfilling its mandate and will continue to protect and promote children's rights in accordance with its mandate under the NCRC Act, 2017.



The Commission envisions an enabling,  
responsive and productive society for children to  
enjoy their rights with dignity.

**NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE RIGHTS OF CHILD (NCRC)**

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