

National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC)



BI-QUARTERLY

NEWSLETTER

JULY - DECEMBER 2024

HAPPY
new year
2025

As we welcome the new year, let us reaffirm our commitment to creating a brighter, safer, and more inclusive world for every child.





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, 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 Chairperson of the NCRC, it is my privilege to share some of our key milestones from the past two quarters. These achievements reflect our commitment to advancing child rights through advocacy, policy reform, and strategic partnerships.

A pivotal moment for the NCRC was that for the first time since the establishment of the Commission in 2020, a comprehensive report on child rights was laid before both the Senate and National Assembly by the Federal Minister of Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar.

We were honoured to appoint Ms. Sarwat Gilani, an acclaimed actress, social activist, and dedicated mother, as NCRC's Brand Ambassador. Her influence will help amplify children's voices and raise awareness about critical issues affecting their well-being.

One of our most notable advocacy achievements was the introduction of the Child Marriage Restraint Amendment Bill 2024 in the National Assembly. The NCRC is actively pushing to raise the minimum marriageable age to 18 years for both boys and girls, reaffirming our commitment to protecting children from early and forced marriages.

Our advocacy with the provincial governments led to the formation of steering committees in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan with representation from key stakeholders and departments to oversee the birth registration efforts, increasing the registration period for free birth registration, interoperability with the health sector and ease of business processes. In parallel, our

engagement with the Sindh Government led to a landmark policy decision to waive birth registration fees for the first 90 days. This step ensures that thousands of children receive essential legal documentation, enabling them to access vital services and legal protections.

Our commitment to justice was further demonstrated when the Sindh Government, following persistent advocacy by the NCRC, agreed to become a party in the high-profile Fatima Phuriro case after the complainants withdrew the case and sought an out of court settlement. This milestone reflects our continued efforts to ensure justice for child victims and hold perpetrators accountable. The government becoming part of cases will help **prevent out-of-court settlements**, reinforcing a transparent legal process and setting a strong precedent for protecting vulnerable children.

Representing Pakistan at the first-ever Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children (VAC) in Colombia was a defining moment for the NCRC. On behalf of the Government of Pakistan, I pledged to strengthen integrated child protection services and promote positive parenting and non-violent discipline through policy and practice.

We also established the Child Advisory Panel (CAP), an inclusive forum of 22-30 children from diverse regions of Pakistan, ensuring meaningful child participation in shaping policies that impact their well-being.

Recognizing the urgent need for online safety, we collaborated with the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR), META, and the National Center

for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) to launch the “Take It Down” portal. This platform empowers children by enabling the removal of non-consensual online content, reflecting our proactive approach to digital protection.

We celebrated World Children's Day (WCD) 2024 in collaboration with the MoHR, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and key stakeholders at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), Islamabad. This year's theme, “Listen to the Future,” emphasized amplifying children's voices and promoting their active participation in decision-making processes.

The Commission forged partnerships with the European Union (EU) Delegation, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Alhamra Arts Council, Roshni Helpline, and the Sindh Child Protection Authority (SCPA) which strengthened our capacity to protect children and enhance public outreach through arts-based learning and creative advocacy initiatives.

These milestones were made possible through the relentless dedication of our team, the trust of our partners, and the support of all stakeholders committed to child welfare. To everyone who has contributed to our shared mission, I extend my deepest gratitude.

As we move forward, I invite every citizen to join us in creating a society where every child in Pakistan grows up in a safe, nurturing, and equitable environment where their rights are respected, protected, and celebrated.

With gratitude,



Ayesha Raza Farooq
Chairperson, NCRC



Members NCRC



Ayesha Raza Farooq
Chairperson



Khalid Latif
Secretary NCRC



Khalid Naeem
Member ICT



Mehek Naeem
Member Punjab



Pirbhu Lal Satyani
Member Sindh/Minorities



Nadia Bibi
Member
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



Muhammad Hassan
Male 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.



Biquarterly Key Achievements

NCRC Appoints Sarwat Gilani as Brand Ambassador

The NCRC announced the appointment of acclaimed actress, social activist, and dedicated mother, Ms. Sarwat Gilani, as its Brand Ambassador. A long-time advocate for children's and women's rights, Ms. Sarwat Gilani brings passion and purpose to advancing NCRC's mission of protecting and promoting child rights across Pakistan.

At the official appointment ceremony in Islamabad, NCRC Chairperson Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq emphasized the significance of having her onboard, stating, "We are honoured to have Sarwat Gilani join the NCRC family. Her dedication to advocating for the rights of children has inspired millions, and her influence will undoubtedly spotlight critical child rights issues."

Ms. Sarwat Gilani expressed her gratitude, noting, "It is both an honour and a responsibility to serve as NCRC's Brand Ambassador. Every child deserves a safe, educated, and empowered future, and I will work tirelessly to amplify their voices across the country."



During the event, children from the Pakistan Girls Guide Association (PGGA) engaged directly with Sarwat Gilani, sharing personal stories and highlighting issues such as child abuse, lack of education, child labour, child marriage, malnutrition, and challenges faced by

minority children. Their advocacy reinforced the urgency of protecting children's rights and fostering safe, inclusive communities. Ms. Sarwat Gilani pledged to raise these concerns on all platforms, ensuring that children's voices remain central to NCRC's initiatives.



Government of Sindh Agrees to Become Party in the Fatima Phuriro Case

A significant step forward in the pursuit of justice for vulnerable children has been taken with the support of Chief Minister Sindh, Mr. Murad Ali Shah, in the Fatima Phuriro case. In response to a formal request by the NCRC, the Chief Minister has directed the Government of Sindh to become a party in this critical case. This decision sets an important precedent for other provincial governments across Pakistan and underscores the vital role that provincial authorities can play in ensuring that justice is served for children.

The Fatima Phuriro case, which involves serious child rights violations, has been a focal point for child protection advocates across the country. By becoming a party in this case, the Sindh government has demonstrated its commitment to the protection of children's rights and the rule of law. This proactive approach not only sends a strong message about the need for justice in individual cases but also highlights the importance of provincial governments working closely with national institutions like NCRC to address systemic issues of child rights violations.

By engaging the Sindh government in the Fatima Phuriro case, the Commission is ensuring that such cases are not only addressed in court but that there is broader institutional support for justice.

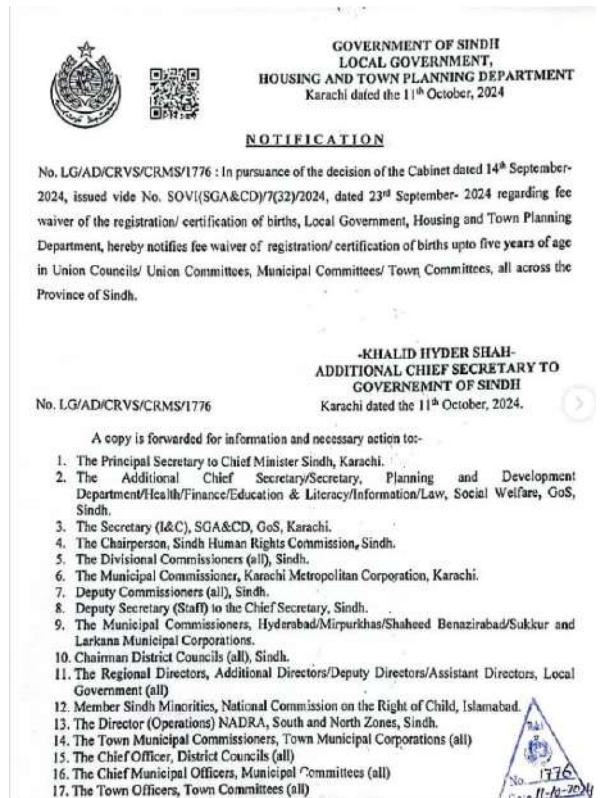


Sindh Government Waives Birth Registration Fee for First 90 Days

The Sindh Government and Chief Minister Sindh, Mr. Murad Ali Shah, took a landmark decision to waive the birth registration fee for the first 90 days after birth. This step will make birth registration more accessible, especially for marginalized communities, ensuring that every child has a legal identity and access to essential services like healthcare, education, and social protection.

The step is followed by NCRC's advocacy efforts, led by Chairperson Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq, urging Chief Secretary Sindh Mr. Syed Asif Hyder Shah to implement reforms in the Civil Registration & Vital Statistics (CRVS) system. The NCRC recommended waiving birth registration fees, integrating health services with CRVS, simplifying legal procedures, and streamlining the registration process.

In response, the Sindh Government established a Provincial Steering Committee comprising representatives from key departments, including NCRC, UNICEF, National Database & Registration Authority (NADRA), the Ministry of Human Rights, and the Ministry of National Health Services. This committee will oversee reforms aimed at enhancing birth registration coverage and improving the CRVS system across Sindh.



NCRC Presents its Annual Report to the Parliament

The NCRC has achieved a significant milestone as it presented its comprehensive Annual Report 2023-24 to the Parliament. This marks the first time since the Commission's formation in 2020 that its comprehensive report on child rights and welfare has been laid before the Senate and National Assembly by Federal Minister of Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar.

The report, which outlines the Commission's key initiatives, achievements, and challenges over the past year, also provides details about ongoing work in supporting legislative reforms related to child rights, such as advocating for child protection laws, improving birth registration processes, countering child marriage, and advancing education rights for marginalized children at national and provincial levels.



The Minister of Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, applauded the Commission's significant work in advancing child rights. He acknowledged the collective efforts of the NCRC team under the visionary leadership of

Chairperson Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq on the floor of the Parliament, which have resulted in substantial progress in policy advocacy, child protection, and educational reforms.

Pakistan Pledges to Ending Violence Against Children at First-ever Global Ministerial Conference in Colombia

Pakistan reaffirmed its commitment to protecting children's rights and eradicating violence against children as its delegation, led by Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson NCRC, and Ms. Sarah Ahmad, Chairperson of the Child Protection Welfare Bureau (CPWB) Punjab, represented Pakistan in the first-ever Global Ministerial Conference on Ending VAC.

This event, hosted by the Government of Colombia in collaboration with Sweden, UNICEF, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, and the World Health Organization, aimed to accelerate global efforts toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of ending violence against children by 2030. Hosted in Bogotá, Colombia, the conference gathered representatives from 143 countries, along with global leaders, child rights organizations, and United Nations bodies, to address the universal challenge of ending violence against children.

The conference commenced with an inspiring plenary session, where Mr. Gustavo Petro, President of Colombia, underscored the urgent need to eliminate violence against children. Leaders and stakeholders worldwide pledged their commitment to ensuring children's safety through universal access to comprehensive parenting support, secure and enabling environments, and effective response services for victims of violence to prevent recurrence and

foster resilient pathways for children and families.

Pakistan's delegation presented the commitments followed by the National Preparatory Session held in Islamabad on October 3, where key stakeholders from national and provincial governments, civil society, and academia discussed the nation's child protection goals. At the conference, Pakistan presented two significant pledges:

- **Strengthening Integrated Child Protection Services:** Pakistan pledges to expand and enhance child protection services across the country by 2027. This includes reinforcing district-level child protection units, enacting and enforcing child protection laws, and developing a gender-responsive, child-sensitive workforce. This initiative aims to support at least 18,000 child survivors and their families while extending protection services to over 28 million children.
- **Promoting Positive Parenting and Non-Violent Discipline:** Recognizing the key role of parents and caregivers in preventing violence, Pakistan will implement nationwide parenting programmes that promote non-violent, positive discipline. The initiative aims to equip approximately 28 million parents and caregivers with tools to create safe, nurturing environments for children while

challenging harmful social and gender norms.

In her address, Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq shared the pledge on behalf of the Government of Pakistan “I make this pledge on behalf of children of our country Pakistan to ensure that every child is safe from all forms of violence in all contexts through strengthening and expanding integrated child protection services, by 2027. Supported by a comprehensive policy framework, enhanced inter-departmental coordination, a well-capacitated workforce and

a dedicated allocation of financial resources. The pledge emphasizes the strengthening and enforcement of child protection laws including those against corporal punishment, child marriage, and online sexual abuse and exploitation. Additionally, the government will focus on building a child-sensitive and a gender-responsive workforce, capable of providing equitable necessary and timely support to children in need while ensuring that responsive services are accessible and effective across all provinces and territories.”



NCRC Establishes Inclusive Child Advisory Panel (CAP) to Amplify Young Voices

The NCRC successfully established its first-ever CAP, comprising 22-30 children from diverse backgrounds across Pakistan. This initiative aimed to bring children into the heart of decision-making processes, ensuring their voices are heard and their perspectives shape the future of child rights in the country.

On July 19th, 2024 the CAP held its inaugural meeting, marking a crucial step forward in promoting child rights alongside NCRC. During

the meeting, NCRC Member KP Ms. Nadia Bibi, and Member Punjab, Ms. Mehek Naeem, led an in-depth orientation session, discussing the panel's terms of reference and laying out a clear roadmap for the panel's role in influencing child rights policies.

By involving children directly, the CAP will facilitate their meaningful participation in developing, implementing, and monitoring policies related to their well-being. This initiative

reflects NCRC's commitment to ensuring that children's voices are not just heard but actively

considered in shaping a safer and more inclusive future for all.



Strategic Partnerships

During the reporting period, the NCRC forged several partnerships to protect and promote child rights across Pakistan.

NCRC Partners with EU Delegation and UNDP for Advancing Human Rights



The NCRC has collaborated with the EU Delegation to Pakistan in upholding and protecting child rights through the newly launched Huqooq-e-Pakistan II (Promotion of Human Rights in Pakistan II) project. Announced ahead of Human Rights Day 2024, this initiative is a significant step toward strengthening human rights frameworks in the country.

The project focuses on four strategic pillars aimed at advancing human rights across Pakistan:

- **Strengthening Government Capacity:** Enhancing the government's ability to implement and report on human rights commitments.
- **Empowering Human Rights Institutions:** Building the capacity of human rights bodies to function as effective watchdogs and ensure accountability.
- **Advancing Human Rights Education:** Collaborating with universities to

integrate human rights education into academic programs, fostering a culture of awareness and advocacy.

- **Engaging the Private Sector:** Encouraging businesses to adopt human rights-friendly practices and contribute to a more just and

equitable society.

The NCRC looks forward to working closely with the EU Delegation, UNDP and other partners to promote human dignity, equality, and justice, ensuring that child rights remain a central focus of Pakistan's human rights agenda.

NCRC and Alhamra Arts Council Partner to Promote Child Rights through Art and Culture

The NCRC and Alhamra Arts Council signed a partnership agreement to promote child rights through cultural programming. The MoU was signed by Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson NCRC, and Mr. Razi Ahmed, Chairman Alhamra, at a special ceremony held in Lahore. This collaboration aims to raise awareness about child protection and welfare through theatre, music, art exhibitions, and creative workshops

designed for children and youth.

As part of this collaboration, the Alhamra Arts Council staged a theatrical performance during the WCD celebration in Islamabad, organized by the NCRC. The performance highlighted the importance of preventing corporal punishment and promoting positive parenting practices, effectively raising awareness through the power of art and storytelling.



NCRC Signs MoU with Roshni Helpline 1138 to Strengthen Child Protection Efforts

The NCRC has signed an MoU with Roshni Helpline 1138, marking a significant milestone in the fight against child abuse and exploitation in Pakistan. Roshni Helpline, dedicated to the recovery of missing children for the past 25 years, is a national organization focused exclusively on this critical mission.

This partnership aims to strengthen coordinated

efforts for the recovery and protection of missing and exploited children. By pooling expertise and resources, both organizations will work toward building a safer environment where every child's rights are protected, and immediate action is taken in cases of child exploitation or disappearance.



NCRC and Sindh Child Protection Authority (SCPA) Sign Agreement to Strengthen Child Protection Efforts

The NCRC signed a Letter of Agreement (LoA) with the SCPA with an aim to enhance child protection mechanisms in Sindh. This collaboration aims to foster effective coordination, data sharing, and joint efforts to address pressing child protection issues in the province, creating a safer and more supportive environment for children.

The official signing ceremony took place at the

SCPA office in Karachi, where Mr. Moazzam Ali Marri, Director General of SCPA, and Mr. Pirbhu Satyani, Member Sindh/Minorities, NCRC, formally marked this important partnership. Both institutions expressed their commitment to strengthening child protection frameworks, improving response mechanisms, and ensuring that children's rights remain a top priority in Sindh.



CAPACITY BUILDING

During the reporting period, the NCRC undertook various capacity-building initiatives to strengthen child protection mechanisms and enhance stakeholders' abilities to safeguard and promote child rights across Pakistan.

UNICEF and OHCHR Conduct Capacity-Building Workshop for NCRC, NCHR, and NCSW on Child Rights

UNICEF and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights co-organized a workshop titled **"Child Rights & the Role of Specialized Commissions"**, fostering collaboration among key human rights institutions in Pakistan. Representatives from the NCRC, the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), and the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) participated in this workshop.

The workshop focused on strengthening inter-commission coordination to promote and protect child rights more effectively. Participants explored collaborative strategies, shared best practices, and discussed policy alignment to address pressing child rights issues. A key aspect of the workshop was a deep dive into the Paris Principles, which outline international standards for the independence of human rights institutions. Day 2 of the session introduced these principles, explaining that the Global Alliance rules recognize only one national human rights institution but also acknowledge

the significant role of specialized commissions.

It was emphasized that the Paris Principles should generally apply to all human rights institutions, with the resources developed for National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) also being made available to specialized commissions like the NCRC, NCHR, and NCSW. The workshop provided a valuable platform for strengthening the capacity of these institutions to work together and effectively address child rights challenges in Pakistan.



PIPS Conducts Orientation Session for NCRC on Parliamentary Business

The Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) organized an orientation session on 'Parliamentary Business' for the NCRC team at its headquarters in Islamabad. The orientation session featured a series of interactive sessions covering key aspects of parliamentary functioning, including the working of parliament, oversight tools, roles and functions of parliamentary committees, and legislative tools in parliament.

The sessions provided valuable insights into legislative processes, parliamentary oversight mechanisms, and committee functions, enhancing the NCRC team's understanding of how to engage effectively with legislative bodies. This orientation strengthened the Commission's advocacy and policy engagement efforts to promote and safeguard child rights across Pakistan.



Meta and NCMEC Conduct Capacity-Building Workshop for NCRC on Child Online Safety



In an ongoing effort to strengthen child protection mechanisms, Meta and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) conducted a capacity-building



workshop for the NCRC team. This insightful training session was aimed at enhancing the NCRC's understanding of Meta's child safety policies and the cutting-edge tools available to

safeguard children in the digital world.

The workshop provided NCRC staff with a comprehensive overview of Meta's child protection framework, including strategies and protocols designed to keep children safe on social media platforms. Participants were introduced to innovative tools and techniques used by Meta to detect, prevent, and respond to child exploitation, allowing for more proactive protection of minors online.

A key highlight of the session was the in-depth discussion of NCMEC's CyberTipline, an

essential resource for reporting and combating child abuse material. The CyberTipline, a globally recognized platform, allows users to report suspected child exploitation content, ensuring rapid action to protect vulnerable children. The NCRC team gained critical insights into how the tipline operates, the reporting process, and its importance in protecting children from online harm. This workshop is part of a broader initiative aimed at fostering a safer digital environment for children in Pakistan and beyond.

Legal & Policy Reforms

In Pakistan, child marriage remains a serious issue, disproportionately affecting young girls and depriving them of their rights to education, health, and personal development. Despite existing laws, underage marriages continue due to weak enforcement, societal pressures, and loopholes in the legal framework.

The Child Marriage Restraint Amendment Bill 2024 has been introduced in the National Assembly and referred to the Standing Committee on Law and Justice for review. In Punjab, the Bill is currently under consideration by the Cabinet, while in Balochistan, it has already been approved by the Cabinet following NCRC's persistent advocacy to raise the minimum marriageable age to 18 years for both boys and girls.

Child Marriage Bill Introduced in National Assembly

Senator Sehar Kamran has introduced the Child Marriage Restraint Amendment Bill 2024 in the National Assembly. This bill represents a critical step towards addressing the root causes of child marriage and strengthening legal protections for girls at risk.

The bill, now referred to the Standing Committee on Law and Justice, proposes crucial amendments to Pakistan's existing child marriage laws. Key provisions include setting the minimum age for marriage at 18 years and requiring the use of the National Identity Card (NIC) at the time of the nikah ceremony. Furthermore, the bill introduces stricter punishments for violators, ensuring greater accountability and enforcement.



As a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Pakistan recognizes every individual below the age of 18 as a child. Child marriages not only violate their rights but also expose them to lifelong physical,

mental, and emotional abuse and exploitation. By reinforcing the minimum marriageable age and imposing stricter penalties, this amendment is a crucial step toward ending the harmful tradition of child marriage in Pakistan.

The NCRC is committed to advocating for the

swift enactment of this legislation. We believe that this bill will contribute significantly to the protection and empowerment of girls, allowing them to grow and thrive in a safe environment free from the dangers of premature marriages.

NCRC Engages with Balochistan Assembly on Child Marriage Legislation

Chairperson NCRC Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq and Member Sindh/Minorities Mr. Pirbhu Satyani held a productive meeting with Deputy Speaker Balochistan Ms. Ghazala Gola to discuss the Balochistan Child Marriage Restraint Bill 2024. The discussion focused on key concerns related to the definition of minimum marriageable age, punishment clauses, and gender-specific protections. The Deputy Speaker assured them that these concerns would be thoroughly reviewed before the Bill is presented in the Assembly. The meeting also covered insights from recent Hindu, Christian, and Sikh Marriage

Acts, emphasizing the need for uniformity in marriageable age across different laws in Pakistan.

Additionally, the NCRC team engaged with the Chairperson of the Provincial Commission on the Status of Women, parliamentarians, and civil society organizations (CSOs) to advocate for the Bill. This bill has been approved by the Balochistan Cabinet as a result of NCRC's consistent advocacy to raise the minimum marriageable age for both boys and girls to 18 years.



Pakistan Enacts Christian Marriage (Amendment) Act 2024, Raising Marriageable Age to 18 Years

In a significant step, the Christian Marriage (Amendment) Act 2024, introduced by MNA Mr. Naveed Aamir Jeeva, has been enacted into law,

raising the marriageable age for Christian men and women to 18 years. Previously, the minimum age for marriage was 16 years for men and 13

years for women within the Christian community.

This legislative reform promotes gender equality and child protection while aligning with NCRC's ongoing advocacy efforts to raise the minimum marriageable age to 18 years across Pakistan. By ensuring consistency in the legal marriage age

across communities, this new law represents a significant step towards safeguarding the rights and well-being of all children in Pakistan.

The NCRC continues to push for similar reforms across the country, reinforcing its commitment to ending child marriages and protecting the future of Pakistan's youth.

National

Pakistan raises marriageable age to 18 for Christians

President Zardari says he will write to govt to seek an increase in job quota for minorities

NCRC and CSJ Lead High-Level Consultation on Forced Conversions and Child Marriages



The NCRC, in collaboration with the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), organized a high-level consultation with legislators, civil society organizations, and key stakeholders to address the critical issues of forced conversions and early and forced marriages in Pakistan.

In her opening remarks, NCRC Chairperson Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq emphasized that these harmful practices disproportionately affect girls and religious minorities, persisting despite legal frameworks. "Societal pressures, legal loopholes, and limited awareness of rights

continue to enable these violations,” she stated.

Mr. Peter Jacob, Executive Director of CSJ, highlighted the urgency of addressing these issues. “Although successive governments have made efforts to raise awareness and introduce safeguards, consistent reports of involuntary and forced conversions and marriages remain a challenge. Therefore, the government and civil society must take concrete measures as early as possible.” He shared alarming data: “Between 2021 and 2023, at least 338 cases of abduction and forced conversions of minority girls and women were reported in Pakistan. These violations not only damage the lives of individuals but also stir frustration and anger among minority communities. It is imperative for Pakistan to address these human rights violations through robust legal measures.”

Mr. Pirbhu Satyani, Member Sindh/Minorities NCRC, reiterated Pakistan's international obligations. “Pakistan has received five recommendations under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), one of which calls for the protection of victims of forced conversions and ensuring their access to justice. Despite this, forced conversions have become a routine violation of religious freedom and fundamental human rights. There is an urgent need for effective protection mechanisms and accountability.”

Mr. Allah Dino Khawaja, Secretary of the

Ministry of Human Rights, stressed the need to raise the legal marriage age to 18 and prevent child marriages. “There is no justification for opposing the increase in the legal marriage age. We must understand that no consent should be taken from a girl under 18 for marriage, even if she appears willing. Legal safeguards must be enforced uniformly, as this is not just a minority issue, but a child protection issue affecting all Pakistani children.” He also proposed further legal reforms: “There should be a legal mechanism to give girls time and space to reconsider their decisions following conversion, particularly regarding marriage.”

The consultation explored ways to strengthen child protection mechanisms, close legal loopholes, and ensure enforcement of laws to combat forced conversions and child marriages. The NCRC reaffirmed its commitment to driving legislative and policy reforms in collaboration with civil society and government partners, ensuring a safer and more inclusive environment for all children in Pakistan. Insights from this consultation will inform future advocacy efforts and policy recommendations.

As a result of this consultation, the NCRC and CSJ are working on drafting the Regulation of Faith Conversions Bill, 2024 to legislate adequately on preventing girls from forced conversions.

Out-Of-School Children

Meeting on Pakistan's Education Emergency at Prime Minister's Office

In a meeting held at the Prime Minister's Office under the directive of the Honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan, key stakeholders gathered to address the country's escalating education emergency. The meeting was presided over by the Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, and attended by senior government officials, education experts, and representatives from civil society, and NCRC.

The primary focus of the meeting was the alarming number of Out-of-School Children in Pakistan and the urgent need to enhance technical and vocational education. Minister Ahsan Iqbal stressed the critical role of technology and innovation in driving an education revolution, remarking, “Quality in education isn't merely about infrastructure but fundamentally about the quality of education itself.”

Chairperson NCRC, Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq, highlighted the direct correlation between

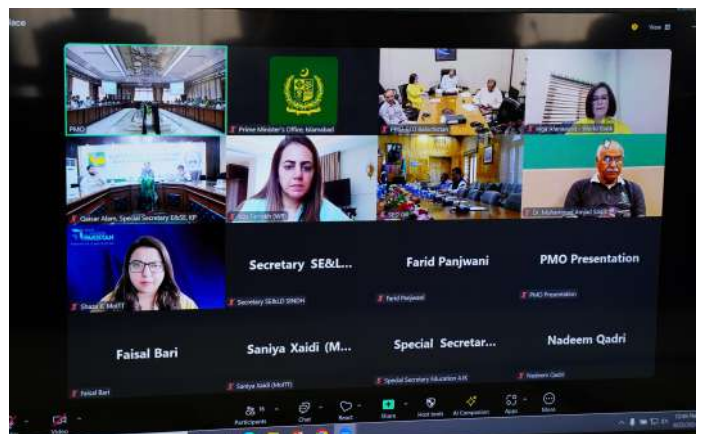
children being out of school and severe child rights violations such as child marriage, child labour, sexual abuse, and exploitation. She emphasized, "Children excluded from the education system are at heightened risk of abuse and exploitation. Ensuring that every child is enrolled in school is not just an educational goal but a human rights imperative."

The key recommendations by NCRC to tackle the education crisis included:

- **Curriculum Updates:** Modernize the curriculum to reflect market-driven skills and promote critical thinking.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborate with private sector stakeholders to expand educational outreach and reduce the burden on public resources.

- **Vocational Trainings:** Strengthen technical and vocational education to prepare youth for an evolving job market.
- **Provision of School Meals:** Introduce school meal programs to combat malnutrition and encourage regular school attendance.

The meeting concluded with a commitment from all stakeholders to address the education crisis through coordinated efforts, policy reforms, and innovative strategies. It is pertinent to mention that the Chairperson NCRC is a member of the Prime Minister's Task Force on Education Emergency established to address Pakistan's pressing education challenges and accelerate efforts to improve access, quality, and inclusivity in education across the country.



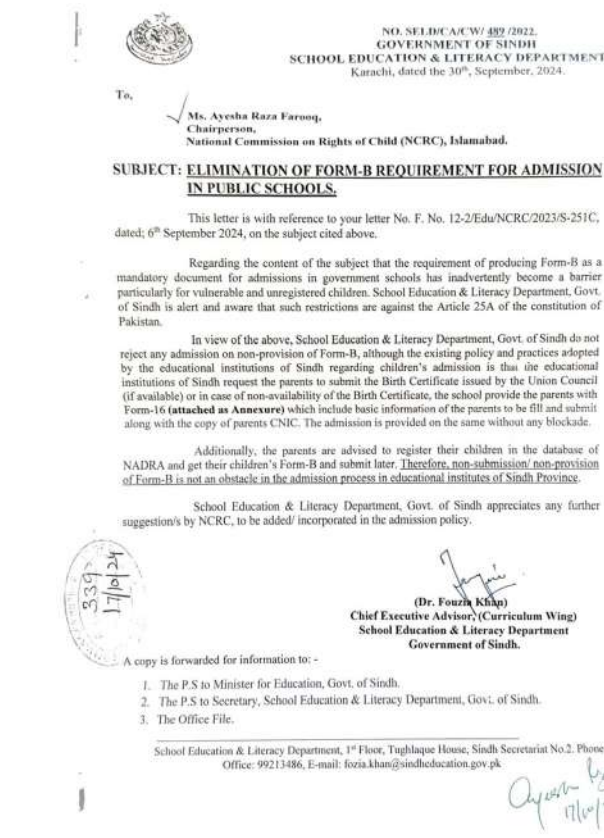
NCRC Acknowledges Sindh School Education & Literacy Department's Efforts for Inclusive Education

The NCRC commends the efforts of the **Sindh School Education & Literacy Department** in ensuring that vulnerable and unregistered children are not denied their right to education. Following NCRC's follow-up, the department clarified that the **non-submission of Form-B** will not be a barrier to admission in government schools. This aligns with **Article 25-A** of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to free and compulsory education for all children. This important step ensures that every child has access to education, while also guiding parents to complete the registration process without interrupting their children's schooling.

The NCRC is also advocating with other provincial governments to eliminate the requirement of Form-B for admission in public schools.

NCRC Advocates for Safer and Inclusive Educational Spaces in Punjab

The NCRC remains committed to creating safer and more inclusive educational environments for all children. Recently, NCRC Member Punjab, Ms. Mehek Naeem, along with Complaint Handling Officer Mr. Muhammad Khalid, met with Punjab's Education Minister, Rana Sikandar



Hayat, and Secretary of School Education Department, Khalid Nazir Wattu. The meeting focused on advancing key initiatives to prevent corporal punishment and promote inclusive education, both critical priorities for NCRC in ensuring that every child in Punjab has access to a safe and supportive learning environment.



Birth Registration



Punjab: With an aim to ensure children's right to a legal identity, Member Punjab, Ms. Mehek Naeem, participated in the CRVS working group meeting, focusing on improving birth registration across the province. The meeting, chaired by the Special Secretary of Local Government, brought together key stakeholders to address the challenges and opportunities related to universal birth registration in Punjab.

During the meeting, participants emphasized the importance of officially registering every



child's birth, as it grants them access to essential rights and services such as healthcare, education, and legal protection. A legally recognized identity is the foundation of a child's ability to claim these rights throughout their life. The working group aims to strengthen Punjab's birth registration system by addressing existing gaps and barriers, ensuring the process is inclusive, streamlined, and accessible to all children, regardless of socioeconomic background.



Balochistan: NCRC members Mr. Pirbhu Satyani and Ms. Shania Khan met with Additional Secretary Mr. Mumtaz Marri & Deputy Secretary Mr. Anwer Maqsood to discuss key birth registration issues. The NCRC actively advocates for strengthening Pakistan's CRVS framework. Recent discussions with the Balochistan Local Government Department focused on waiving birth registration fees through updates to the Local Government (LG)



Act. The NCRC is also coordinating with NADRA to expedite the launch of the Birth Notification Tool (BNT), enabling real-time birth registration at healthcare facilities. Through these efforts, NCRC aims to build a robust CRVS system that safeguards child rights, promotes social inclusion, and strengthens legal protections for all children in Pakistan.

Another follow-up meeting was conducted with Rauf Baloch, Secretary of Local Government, to

discuss ways to improve birth registration rates in the province. As part of this initiative, a summary has been submitted to the Chief Secretary of Balochistan, recommending the waiver of birth registration fees to encourage

more families to register their children's births. This proposal aims to increase birth registration and strengthen child protection efforts across Balochistan.



Sindh: In a recent meeting with Chief Secretary Sindh, Mr. Syed Asif Hyder Shah, NCRC Chairperson Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq discussed the progress of the birth registration and CRVS program in the province. While praising Sindh's proactive efforts in encouraging birth registrations, Chairperson NCRC emphasized the critical importance of these measures in safeguarding children's rights and ensuring access to essential services like healthcare, education, and social security.

The Chief Secretary expressed his full support



for the initiative, pledging to personally oversee the efforts to streamline and strengthen the birth registration systems across Sindh. As an outcome of NCRC's advocacy efforts the Sindh Government and Chief Minister Sindh, Murad Ali Shah, took a landmark decision to waive the birth registration fee for the first 90 days after birth. This step will make birth registration more accessible, especially for marginalized communities, ensuring that every child has a legal identity and access to essential services like healthcare, education, and social protection.

COORDINATION

Knowledge Sharing Workshop: Enhancing Child Protection Through Data Management and Inter-Provincial Coordination

The NCRC organized a two-day knowledge-sharing workshop focused on Enhancing Information Management and Inter-Provincial Coordination Mechanisms for Child Protection. The workshop brought together key stakeholders from federal and provincial child protection authorities, police, social welfare departments, and relevant ministries with a shared goal of creating a safer and more

protective environment for children in Pakistan. The objectives of the workshop were:

- **Enhancing Child Protection Data Management:** Standardizing data collection and reporting mechanisms across provinces.
- **Improving Inter-Departmental Coordination and Stakeholder Collabo-**

ration: Strengthening cooperation among relevant institutions.

- **Fostering National Coordination and Cooperation:** Promoting unified efforts toward child protection policies.
- **Establishing a Child Protection Data Working Group:** Creating a dedicated platform for continuous data sharing and analysis.

Chairperson NCRC Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq, in her opening remarks, highlighted the critical need for streamlined data management, stating: “One of the core objectives of this workshop is to enhance child protection data management and information sharing. Without accurate, reliable data, it is impossible to track the progress of child rights interventions or identify gaps that need attention. As it stands, different departments collect data in different ways, using different tools and formats, which makes it difficult to build a clear picture of the situation of children across the country.

We need to strengthen our data repositories,

ensuring that information on child protection is centralized, up-to-date, and accessible to all relevant stakeholders. This will not only improve our ability to monitor and report on child rights but also ensure that our policies and programs are driven by evidence, rather than assumptions.”

Member Sindh/Minorities Mr. Pirbhu Satyani facilitated an interactive session where provincial child protection authorities presented their inter- and intra-departmental coordination mechanisms for addressing child rights complaints. Since each province faces unique challenges, the session enabled participants to share best practices, learn from one another, and propose actionable strategies for strengthening child protection systems.

The workshop concluded with an assurance to building a unified, data-driven approach to child protection in Pakistan, ensuring that every child's right to safety, education, and protection is upheld through effective national and provincial coordination.



10th Commission Meeting

The NCRC held its 10th Commission meeting, chaired by Chairperson Ayesha Raza Farooq. During the meeting, the Chairperson presented comprehensive updates on the Commission's key activities and milestones achieved in the quarter.

A significant highlight of the meeting was the completion of the NCRC's Annual Report, which is now ready for submission to the Ministry of Human Rights, the National Assembly, and the

Senate. The report outlines the Commission's efforts in advocating for child rights, addressing violations, and engaging with stakeholders to create a safer and more inclusive environment for children across Pakistan. The Chairperson emphasized the importance of continued collaboration with government bodies, civil society, and international partners to ensure that NCRC's mandate is fulfilled effectively.



ADDRESSING CHILD RIGHTS ISSUES

Launch of "Take It Down" Portal to Ensure Children's Online Safety



In a significant step towards enhancing child online safety, the MoHR and the NCRC, in partnership with the NCMEC and Meta,



launched the "Take It Down" portal in Pakistan. This online platform, developed by NCMEC is designed to empower children by providing

them with a proactive tool to prevent the non-consensual sharing of intimate images or videos on public online platforms.

Ahead of the launch, the NCRC Chairperson Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq and Federal Minister for Human Rights Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar held a productive meeting with the teams from Meta and NCMEC to discuss the rollout of this critical online safety tool. During the meeting, the importance of safeguarding the online safety of children was emphasized.

Take It Down works by assigning a unique digital fingerprint, or hash value, to sensitive images or videos that minors fear might be shared without their consent. This hash value ensures that the original files never leave the child's device. Participating tech platforms use these hash values to detect any attempts to upload matching content and swiftly remove it, thus preventing its spread and protecting the minor's

privacy.

Launched in Urdu, this initiative reflects the Government of Pakistan's commitment to ensuring a safer digital environment for children. By preventing the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, Take It Down not only shields children from exploitation but also provides a powerful tool to combat child sexual abuse online.

A video produced as part of this collaboration highlights Meta's zero-tolerance policy on creating profiles for children under 13, marking a significant step in creating a safer digital environment for children. By watching and sharing this video, you can help raise awareness and take meaningful action to protect children online.

Scan the QR code to access the take it down portal.



4th Meeting of Religious Scholars Working Group



The 4th meeting of the working group of religious scholars convened a diverse group of religious scholars, child rights experts, and advocates to discuss critical child protection issues in Pakistan. Key topics included corporal punishment and birth registration, both of which continue to undermine children's rights and well-being despite existing legal prohibitions.

Corporal punishment remains prevalent in schools, homes, and religious institutions, while



millions of children in Pakistan are still not registered at birth, denying them access to fundamental services such as education, healthcare, and legal protection.

To tackle these pressing issues, the working group proposed the following actionable recommendations:

- **Addressing Corporal Punishment:** Launch awareness campaigns targeting

parents, teachers, and communities; provide training to educators and parents; strengthen existing laws; build institutional capacity; and engage communities in efforts to eliminate this harmful practice.

- **Improving Birth Registration:** Simplify the registration process, collaborate with Madrassahs and utilize NADRA's mobile registration vans to facilitate birth registrations, engage religious

and community leaders to raise awareness, and emphasize the importance of legal identity for every child.

These proposals highlight the working group's commitment to creating a more protective environment for children, ensuring their access to rights and services vital for their development and security.

Meeting with Punjab Health Minister to Address Children's Critical Health Issues

The NCRC delegation, led by Chairperson Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq held a meeting with Punjab's Primary and Secondary Health Minister Mr. Khawaja Imran Nazir and Secretary Ms. Nadia Saquib. The discussion focused on pressing child health issues and policy enhancements. Key agenda points included:

- **Polio and Immunization:** Improving vaccination coverage through the campaign and strengthening routine immunization programs to ensure no child is left behind.
- **Health Interoperability with CRVS:** Integrating health services with the CRVS system to enhance service delivery and policy planning.
- **Adolescent Health Neglect:** Raising concerns about adolescent health being

overlooked in the broader healthcare framework and inclusion of mental health services, reproductive health education, and strategies to prevent early child marriages.

- **Punjab Infant Nutrition Board and Breastfeeding Act:** Expressing reservations regarding the Punjab Infant Nutrition Board's current structure and review of the Punjab Breastfeeding and Nutrition Act to ensure effective implementation and safeguard children's right to proper nutrition.

The meeting concluded with a commitment to continued collaboration for policy improvements and effective child health service delivery in Punjab.



Meeting with Secretary Social Welfare, Sindh to Address Child Rights Issues

NCRC Member Sindh/Minorities, Mr. Pirbhu Satyani, held a meeting with Mr. Pervez Ahmed Seehar, Secretary of Social Welfare, Sindh, to discuss advancing child rights and protection efforts in the province. The meeting emphasized NCRC's commitment to fostering collaboration among key stakeholders to address urgent child protection issues and accelerate policy progress. Key discussion points included updates on the

Sindh Child Protection Policy and the pending stakeholder feedback, as well as the outcomes of the NCRC knowledge-sharing workshop held in Islamabad. Additionally, both parties agreed to establish a coordinated working group that would include the police, SCPA, NCRC, and the Social Welfare Department, aimed at improving coordination for child protection in Sindh.



Meeting with UNICEF's Deputy Regional Director to Discuss Child Rights Progress

Chairperson NCRC, Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq, met with Ms. Noala Skinner, UNICEF's Deputy Regional Director, to share the Commission's achievements during its first year in upholding and protecting children's rights across Pakistan. Ms. Farooq highlighted key milestones, including policy advocacy, legislative reforms, and strengthened child protection mechanisms, emphasizing the Commission's dedication to creating a safer environment for children.

Expressing gratitude for UNICEF's continued support, she reaffirmed NCRC's commitment to advancing its child rights agenda through collaborative partnerships. The discussion also focused on intensifying efforts to eradicate polio, ensuring that every child in Pakistan



receives life-saving vaccinations. Both sides agreed on the need for sustained joint action to secure a healthier and safer future for all children.

Meeting with LAJA to Enhance Legal Aid for Children in Conflict with the Law

The NCRC is working closely with the Legal Aid and Justice Authority (LAJA) to ensure vulnerable children, particularly those in conflict with the law, have access to essential legal aid services.

Mr. Khalid Naeem, Member Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), and Mr. Khalid Lateef, Member/Secretary NCRC, held a detailed meeting with Dr. Muhammad Raheem Awan, Director General of LAJA, to strategize effective approaches for delivering legal aid to children facing legal challenges.

In the meeting, it was agreed to work together for providing children in conflict with the law the support they need to navigate the justice system, reinforcing NCRC's commitment to ensuring every child's right to legal protection and fair



representation. The NCRC and LAJA aim to enhance access to justice for children, focusing on those who are often overlooked and ensuring their rights are upheld at every stage of the legal process.

NCRC Hosts Delegation from CHILDLIGHT-Global Child Safety Institute



The NCRC welcomed a delegation from the CHILDLIGHT-Global Child Safety Institute, comprising experts in academics, data analysis, and law enforcement. The delegation is in Pakistan to explore the country's strategies for combating Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA), both online and offline. During their visit, the team focused on key areas, including legal



frameworks, collaborations with stakeholders, victim support mechanisms, societal awareness, and the availability of evidence-based data. Their goal is to work closely with federal and provincial law enforcement agencies to identify successful approaches and highlight areas for improvement.

Promoting Child Rights in Gilgit-Baltistan through Collaboration and Legislative Efforts

Members of the NCRC, Mr. Pirbhu Satyani (Sindh/Minorities) and Mr. Khalid Naeem (ICT) conducted a productive visit to Gilgit-Baltistan, engaging with key government officials and stakeholders to advance child protection initiatives in the region.

During their visit, they met with Gilgit Baltistan (GB) Assembly Speaker Mr. Nazir Ahmed Advocate, emphasizing the urgent need to extend NCRC's jurisdiction to Gilgit-Baltistan and secure the approval of the pending GB Child Protection Policy. Mr. Raja Karamat from the GB Ombudsman's Office also participated, reinforcing institutional support. The Speaker assured them that these matters would be prioritized in the upcoming legislative session.

Additionally, the NCRC team met Mr. Fida Hussain, Secretary of Social Welfare, and representatives from the Departments of Women Development, Human Rights, and Population Welfare. They discussed pressing

child rights challenges, reviewed NCRC's mandate, and presented the Commission's annual progress report.

Secretary Hussain shared updates on the Child Protection Policy's status, pending approval by the Chief Minister. Ms. Shazia from the GB Child Protection Commission was appointed as the focal person for coordination. In response to a request from Secretary Hussain, NCRC committed to organizing capacity-building training for GB staff to strengthen local expertise on child protection laws and practices.

In another meeting NCRC team called upon Chief Secretary GB, Mr. Abrar Ahmad Mirza, to explore avenues for enhancing child rights collaboration despite jurisdictional limitations.

These strategic engagements were step toward to enhance child protection mechanisms in Gilgit-Baltistan through legislative reform, inter-agency coordination and capacity-building efforts.



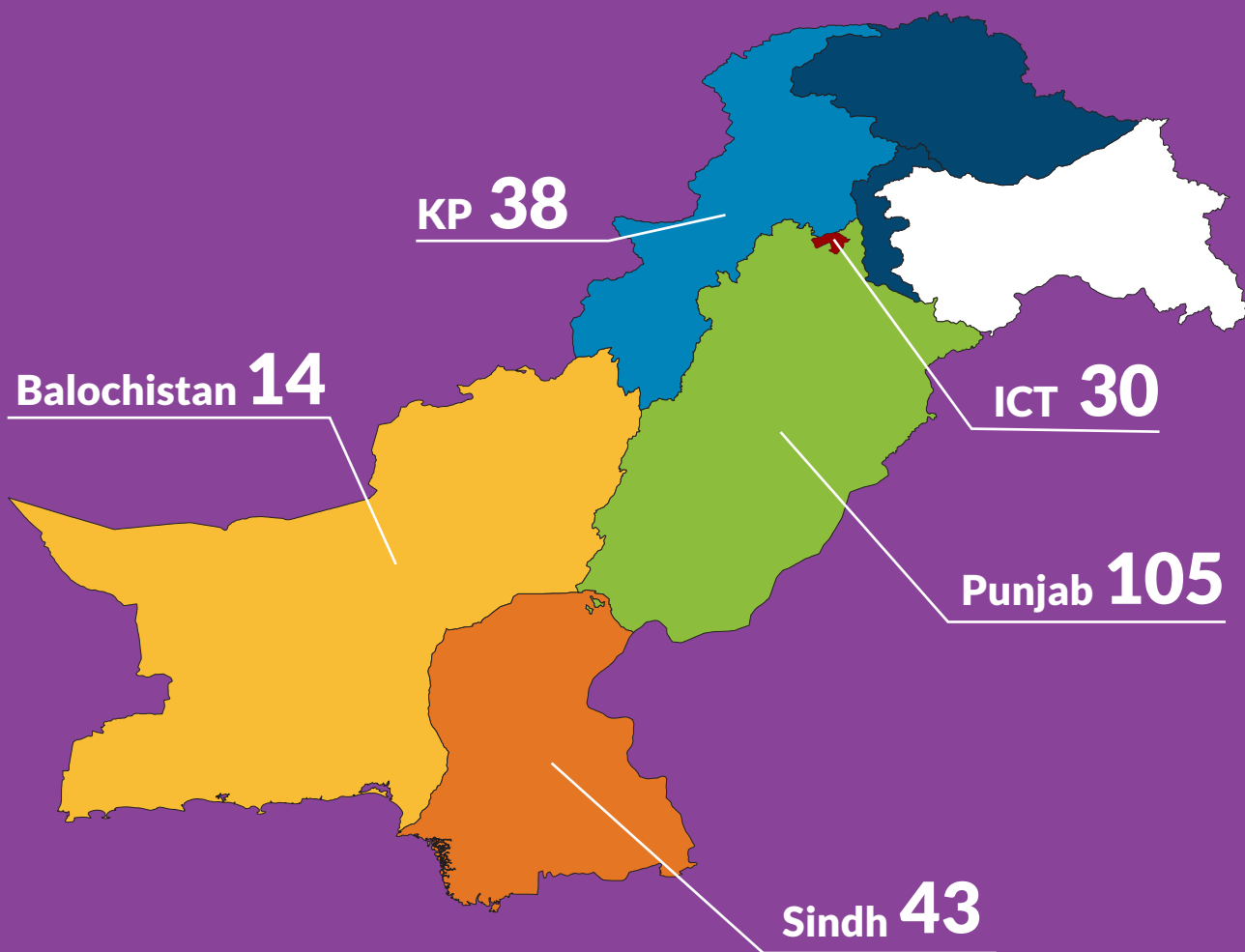
Inquiries Related to Child Rights Violations

Complaint Handling

The NCRC's commitment to the well-being of children remained strong as we received **236** complaints related to children's rights during July to December 2024. Another **161** complaints were followed up and **280** cases were disposed off. These cases serve as a reminder of the vital role the NCRC plays in advocating for and

protecting children's rights. Each complaint handled represents a child whose voice was heard and whose rights were defended, reinforcing our dedication to creating a society where children can thrive without fear or injustice.

Provincial Breakdown of Complaints



NCRC Takes Swift Action in Abduction and Forced Conversion Case



In response to the abduction and forced conversion of an 11-year-old girl from a minority community in Faisalabad, the NCRC took immediate action to ensure justice. The NCRC actively followed up with the District Police Officer (DPO), conducting a formal hearing and summoning both the victim's family and police authorities to inquire into the matter.

As an outcome of the Commission's swift intervention and collaboration with law enforcement, the girl was safely recovered and reunited with her family within a week of the hearing. This successful recovery underscores NCRC's commitment to protecting vulnerable children and ensuring their rights are upheld.

In light of such incidents, the NCRC continues to advocate for urgent legal and policy reforms to



F.No.1-I/Complaints/NCRC/2024/PB-31
Government of Pakistan
National Commission on the Rights of Child

Islamabad, 6th June 2024

To,
District Police Officer,
Faisalabad.


Subject: **REQUEST FOR INTERVENTION TO PROTECT A MINOR
CHRISTIAN GIRL IN FAISALABAD**

The Government of Pakistan has established the National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) as an independent statutory body for the promotion, protection and fulfillment of Children's rights. It has the mandate to examine and review laws and inquire into violations of child rights and advise the Government on legislative and policy matters by virtue of the National Commission on the Rights of Child Act, 2017.

2. A self-explanatory complaint on the captioned subject received through an email (Annex-I) to this commission is attached along with B-form (Annex-II), Certificate of Conversion (Annex-III), Marriage Certificate (Annex-IV) and the copy of FIR (Annex-V) herewith.

3. In accordance with the mandate of the NCRC as stipulated in section 15(e) of the NCRC Act, 2017, you are requested to share the progress on the aforementioned FIR.

A prompt action in this regard will be greatly appreciated.


Pirbhu Lal Satyani
Member NCRC

Copy to:

1. The IGP Punjab Lahore
2. Ms. Shazia George,
Executive Director,
AWAM Pakistan.

Office # 302, 3rd Floor, Executive Trust Complex, F-3/1, Algha Khan Road, Islamabad
011-4203214, 011-4202704, 011-420733 Email: complaints@ncrc.gov.pk

combat child marriages and forced conversions. The Commission is pushing for an increase in the minimum marriageable age and the introduction of stricter punishments for those involved in underage marriages, safeguarding the future of all children in Pakistan.

NCRC Conducts Case Hearings Across Provinces

The NCRC remained committed to addressing violations against children through active case hearings conducted across Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Punjab. In pending cases which were not resolved timely by the concerned authorities or the complainant was not satisfied, the Commission summoned complainants, police officials, and accused individuals to ensure transparency and accountability in resolving the complaints.

In Punjab, the NCRC took cognizance of cases involving forced conversions, early marriages, physical abuse, and corporal punishment. Notices were issued to relevant stakeholders, and hearings were conducted to inquire into these violations by Ms. Mehek Naeem Member Punjab. After reviewing evidence from both parties, the Commission issued necessary directives aimed at protecting the affected children and holding perpetrators accountable.

Similarly, in Sindh, NCRC Member Sindh/ Minorities Mr. Pirbhu Satyani and Complaint Officer Mr. Mohammad Khalid led hearings in Karachi involving cases of missing children, child marriage incidents, and serious offences against minors, including those affecting minority communities. Law enforcement agencies are actively pursuing these cases under the Commission's oversight.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, hearings were

conducted by Ms. Nadia Bibi, Member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ms. Sheherazade Amin, Legal Advisor and Mr. Mohammad Khalid Complaint Officer on urgent cases related to child abuse and neglect, emphasizing coordinated responses from police, social welfare departments, and child protection authorities.

In ICT, Mr. Khalid Naeem, Member ICT presided over hearings on cases involving corporal punishment and early child marriage.



RESEARCH

Breaking the Silence: Addressing Menstruation Taboos Among Adolescent Girls in Pakistan

Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) Pakistan and the NCRC launched a research report titled "Hamari Kahani, Hamara Mustaqbil: Addressing Menstruation Taboos Among Adolescent Girls in District Rawalpindi, Pakistan" at the NCRC office in Islamabad.

This comprehensive report explores the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of school girls regarding menstrual health, with a specific focus on the cultural myths and taboos that often shape their understanding of menstruation. The findings highlight the pervasive challenges faced

by young girls in accessing accurate information and support, underscoring the pressing need for open conversations and education on menstrual health.

By addressing these cultural barriers, the report calls for collective action to create an environment where menstruation is no longer a taboo subject. Both SSDO Pakistan and the NCRC remain committed to promoting

awareness, empowering adolescent girls, and ensuring their health and dignity are prioritized in communities across Pakistan. This report represents a crucial step toward breaking the silence around menstruation and advocating for the rights of young girls to live healthy, informed lives.

Scan the QR code to download the report



NCRC and RASTI Launch Policy Brief on Employment of Children in Pakistan

Child labour remains a significant challenge in Pakistan, depriving millions of children of their fundamental rights to education, health, and a safe environment. To address this pressing issue, the NCRC, in collaboration with RASTI, has launched a comprehensive policy brief titled “Employment of Children in Pakistan: Legislative Gaps and Policy Recommendations.” The policy brief highlights critical gaps in child labour laws and calls for urgent legislative reforms and policy

interventions.

Based on an in-depth review of national and provincial legislation, the policy brief identifies fragmented legal frameworks, weak enforcement mechanisms, and limited resources as major hurdles in combating child labour. It emphasizes that inconsistent definitions and regulations across provinces create challenges in effectively addressing the issue. Many

children remain trapped in hazardous occupations such as agriculture, brick kilns, domestic work, and the informal sector, where monitoring is minimal and exploitation is rampant. The lack of enforcement further exacerbates the situation, leaving children vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and interrupted education.

The policy brief outlines several key recommendations, including harmonizing child labour laws across provinces, strengthening labour inspection mechanisms, and ensuring better inter-agency collaboration. It also stresses the importance of linking child labour reduction efforts with access to free and quality education to break the cycle of poverty and

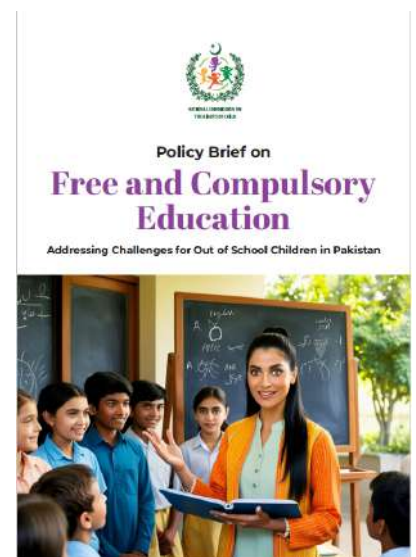
exploitation. Community awareness campaigns are essential to inform the public about the negative consequences of child labour and encourage families to prioritize education.



NCRC Finalizes Policy Brief on Out-of-School Children

Education is the cornerstone of a child's development and a fundamental human right guaranteed by article 25-A of the Constitution of Pakistan. Yet, millions of children in Pakistan remain out of school, facing barriers such as poverty, gender inequality, and limited access to educational institutions.

To address this pressing challenge, the NCRC after a detailed consultative process at federal and provincial levels with key stakeholders finalized its policy brief titled "Free and Compulsory Education: Addressing Challenges for Out-of-School Children in Pakistan." The policy brief identifies key obstacles, including inadequate infrastructure, social norms discouraging girls' education, and gaps in policy implementation. It offers evidence-based recommendations such as enhancing school enrollment campaigns, improving teacher training, and ensuring policy coordination across provincial and federal levels.



AWARENESS RAISING

NCRC Celebrates World Children's Day 2024

The NCRC, in collaboration with the MoHR, UNICEF and key stakeholders, celebrated Universal Children's Day 2024 at the PNCA, Islamabad. This year's theme, "Listen to the Future," emphasized amplifying children's voices and promoting their active participation in decision-making processes.

The event featured a range of interactive activities designed to engage children from diverse backgrounds, including students, differently-abled children, and religious minorities. The celebration began with an inspiring national anthem performance by children from the Special Education Department, followed by cultural and theatrical performances by child artists and students from various schools.

In her address, Chairperson NCRC Ms. Ayesha

Raza Farooq highlighted that the Commission has been working tirelessly to safeguard the rights of children. From combating child marriage and child labour to ensuring access to education and online safety, the Commission has undertaken various initiatives ranging from legal and policy reforms to research, advocacy and awareness raising.

She said "World Children's Day reminds us of our collective responsibility to ensure every child in Pakistan thrives in a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment. Let us commit to shaping a society where children are respected, protected, and empowered because they are not just the architects of tomorrow but active contributors to shaping the present."

One of the event's highlights was a thought-provoking session led by NCRC's Child Advisory



Panel members, who shared real-life stories reflecting the gap between legislative promises and children's lived experiences in Pakistan. The discussion underscored the importance of child-centred policies and equitable access to education, healthcare, and protection services.

The celebration concluded with a keynote speech by Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, Minister of Law and Justice / Minister of Human Rights, who reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening child rights frameworks and ensuring children's voices are integral to policy development.

He highlighted the importance of listening to children's voices, reflecting this year's theme, "Listen to the Future." He emphasized that children are not only the future of the nation but also an integral part of shaping its present.

The outdoor segment featured a Fun Fair, where ministries, NGOs, and civil society organizations including Ministry of Health, Group

Development Pakistan, Justice Project Pakistan (JPP), SSDO, Idara Taleem-o-Agahi (ITA), SAHIL, SPARC, PAHCHAAN, Research Advocacy and Social Training Institute (RASTI), and ROSHNI hosted interactive stalls, games, quizzes, and educational demonstrations on child protection, health, and safety. Free health check-ups, including BMI and eye exams, were also offered.

Other partners such as the PGGA, Al-Hamra Arts Council Lahore, members of the CAP, students from Westminster School Islamabad, and Islamabad College for Girls (ICG) F-6 actively participated through musical performances, theatrical plays, and engaging dialogues on child rights.

The event successfully created an inclusive platform for children to express their views, engage with decision-makers, and learn about their rights, reinforcing NCRC's mission to build a future where every child is heard, protected, and empowered.





Promoting Inclusivity in Education: NCRC and NUML Commemorate National Minorities Day 2024

The NCRC, in partnership with the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), organized a celebration to mark National Minorities Day 2024. Themed around fostering inclusivity for religious minorities in Pakistan's education system, the event brought together key stakeholders, academics, policymakers, and students for meaningful dialogue and awareness-building.

The event began with a warm welcome by NCRC team and Ms. Maham Afridi, Programme Officer at the NCRC, in her opening remarks highlighted

the significance of National Minorities Day, reflecting on Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's historic address to the Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947. "Jinnah's vision was of a nation where every individual enjoys equal rights, regardless of race, colour, or religion," she stated, setting a thoughtful tone for the event.

Mr. Khalid Naeem, Member ICT, NCRC, provided an overview of the event, emphasizing the collaborative commitment between NCRC and NUML to promote equality and educational

access for children from minority communities.

The event's highlight was an engaging panel discussion moderated by Dr. Riaz Ahmed Saeed. Esteemed panellists included Prof. Dr. M. Akram, Mr. Pirbhu Lal Satyani, Prof. Dr. A. H. Nayar, Ms. Romana Bashir, and Prof. Dr. Alvi. They explored issues such as educational disparities faced by minority children, access to education and employment opportunities, policy reforms needed to support minority students and interfaith coexistence within educational institutions.

Their insightful perspectives shed light on

current challenges while proposing actionable steps to create a more inclusive learning environment.

Ms. Kashish Satyani, a student from the Hindu community, shared her experiences navigating Pakistan's education system, highlighting both challenges and opportunities.

Dr. Shoaib Suddle, Chairman of the One Man Commission on Minority Rights constituted by the Supreme Court of Pakistan, delivered the keynote address. He underscored the need for legislative and institutional reforms to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students.



Dialogue on Challenges and Solutions For Minority Children In Pakistan

The NCRC and SSDO organised a dialogue on the challenges to interfaith coexistence and the role of religious leaders and communities in promoting harmony.

The discussion, titled 'Empowering Minority Voices: Advancing Social Inclusion, Legal Protection, and Social Harmony with a Focus on Minority Children,' aimed to address critical issues facing religious minorities in Pakistan, particularly minority children with reference to the National Minorities Day 2024.

Executive Director of SSDO, Syed Kausar Abbas, emphasized the importance of inclusion and legal protection for minority communities. He highlighted Jinnah's vision of Pakistan as a democratic state founded on the principles of equality, justice, and religious freedom. Kausar

Abbas also introduced the Azm-i-Masawat program launched by SSDO to empower the youth of religious minorities. This program offers fellowships providing training in functional English, leadership skills, advocacy, and entrepreneurship to minority youth, promoting inclusivity and enabling meaningful contributions to the nation's development.

MNA Sehar Kamran, a Guest of Honour, highlighted the government's commitment to promoting social harmony and ensuring the rights of all minority communities, particularly focusing on the challenges faced by minority children. She also mentioned notable appointments and elections of individuals from minority communities, emphasizing the government's efforts toward inclusivity.

The event featured two-panel discussions. The first, "Promoting Inclusion and Addressing Challenges Faced by Minority Children," focused on issues such as access to education and employability, access to justice in cases of violence against children and trafficking, and the

impact of climate change on these vulnerable communities. The panellists underscored the urgent need for inclusive policies and the removal of barriers hindering the educational and professional growth of minority children.



NCRC Chairperson Co-Chairs Consultative Workshop on Polio Eradication

Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson NCRC, co-chaired a consultative workshop on Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIAs) in Islamabad, engaging key district leaders from Southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The workshop focused on strengthening local leadership, enhancing immunization strategies, and ensuring every child receives life-saving polio vaccines.

Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq commended Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Minister Mr. Qasim Ali Shah for his commitment to polio eradication and urged all stakeholders to intensify efforts for a polio-free Pakistan. She emphasized that protecting children from preventable diseases like polio is a shared responsibility requiring coordinated action from health officials, local leaders, and communities.



NCRC Chairperson Calls for Urgent Action Against Child Trafficking

On World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson NCRC, addressed an event organized by Federal Investigation Authority (FIA), ICMPD, SSDO, International Organization for Migration (IOM) Pakistan, International Labour Organization (ILO), and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Pakistan. She highlighted the alarming fact that Pakistan identified 2,047 child trafficking victims in 2023 alone.

Emphasizing Pakistan's unique challenges due to its geographical and socio-economic vulnerabilities, Chairperson NCRC called for strengthening legal and policy frameworks to combat all forms of child trafficking, including bonded labour, domestic servitude, forced marriages, organ trafficking, and drug trafficking. She urged collective action from all stakeholders to ensure every child's safety, freedom, and dignity.



NCRC Hosts Interactive Workshop for Young Citizen Interns at the National Assembly

The NCRC organized an engaging workshop at the National Assembly for 70 participants of the Young Citizen Internship Program. The workshop aimed to raise awareness about child rights, digital privacy, and youth empowerment through interactive discussions and learning sessions.

Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson NCRC, opened the workshop by introducing the Commission's mandate and its efforts to protect and promote child rights in Pakistan. Mr. Pirbhu Lal Satyani, Member Sindh/Minorities, shared insights on pressing child rights issues such as child marriage, child labour, and access to

education, emphasizing the role of youth in advocacy and social change.

Digital safety was a key focus, with Meta representatives conducting a session on online privacy and safety tools. They provided practical tips on secure online behaviour, helping participants understand how to protect themselves in the digital space.

A comprehensive session on the UNCRC, linking its key articles to real-life child rights issues in Pakistan was conducted. Participants actively engaged in discussions, asking insightful questions and sharing perspectives. Interactive

group activities focused on identifying and addressing child rights violations, encouraging teamwork and problem-solving. The workshop concluded with a call to action, emphasizing the

importance of understanding and advocating for children's rights as a foundation for future leadership and social justice.



Strengthening the Implementation of the Anti-Rape Act 2021



Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson of the Special Committee on Anti-Rape and the NCRC, recently presided over a session on the Anti-Rape Act 2021. The session brought together experts from law enforcement agencies, civil society organizations, and survivor support groups to address key challenges in implementing this critical legislation. Key focus areas of the discussion were:

- **Strengthening Legal Frameworks:** Ensuring legal provisions are effectively enforced.
- **Improving Survivor Support Mechanisms:** Enhancing support services such as



counselling, legal aid, and safe housing.

- **Enhancing Law Enforcement Training:** Equipping police and judicial officers with knowledge on survivor-sensitive investigation and trial processes.
- **Fostering Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration:** Promoting partnerships between the government, civil society, and survivor advocates.

During the session, Chairperson NCRC emphasized the need for collective action, stating: "Collaboration is essential to overcome the barriers that hinder the effective

implementation of the Anti-Rape Act 2021. We must strengthen inter-agency coordination, build capacity within law enforcement, and ensure survivors receive the support and justice they deserve. Together, we can create a safer society and restore hope and dignity to survivors.”

The discussion concluded with actionable recommendations aimed at reinforcing legal

safeguards, increasing accountability, and ensuring that survivors' voices remain central to policy reforms and implementation efforts.

To further support enforcement and accountability, a Sex Offenders Register has been launched, to track and monitor offenders to prevent repeat offenses. This will also help in preventing children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

NCRC Chairperson Participates in Panel Discussion at Huqooq-e-Pakistan II Launch

NCRC Chairperson Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq participated as a panellist at the launch event of Huqooq-e-Pakistan II on Human Rights Day 2024, engaging in a critical discussion on “Drivers for Promotion of Human Rights in Pakistan through Institutional Collaboration.” She highlighted NCRC's proactive approach to addressing pressing child rights issues, including child marriage, domestic labour, birth registration, out-of-school children, and online

child safety. Emphasising the importance of collaboration, she outlined how partnerships between human rights institutions, government, and civil society are vital to fulfilling Pakistan's obligations under the CRC. She reaffirmed NCRC's commitment to advocating for legislative reforms and awareness-raising initiatives to safeguard every child's rights and ensure no child is left behind.



Launch of Pakistan Girls Empowerment Forum on International Day of the Girl Child

On International Day of the Girl Child, UNICEF Pakistan, in collaboration with the PGGA and with support from the MoHR and the NCRC, launched the Pakistan Girls Empowerment Forum. The event brought together over 500 girls from across the country to develop a shared

vision for their future, which will be presented to the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

In her keynote address, NCRC Member Punjab, Mehek Naeem, emphasized the transformative power of empowering girls. “At the Commission,

we believe that every girl has the right to a safe, educated, and healthy life. And if girls are effectively supported during their adolescence, they will grow to become not just empowered individuals but agents of change—workers, entrepreneurs, leaders, and mothers who shape the future of our communities, our nation, and

our world,” she stated.

The forum served as a crucial platform for advancing advocacy efforts for girls' rights, amplifying their voices, and paving the way for a future where girls can excel as leaders and change-makers.



NCRC Hosts Pre-Conference Workshop and Conference on Child Protection at the 27th Biennial Pediatric Conference

The NCRC, in collaboration with the Child Rights Group of Pakistan Pediatric Association (CRG-PPA), PAHCHAAN, and UNICEF, played a key role in organizing both a pre-conference workshop and a conference session at the 27th Biennial Pediatric Conference held at the Pearl Continental Hotel in Lahore.

The pre-conference workshop focused on the Case Management and Referral System in

Pakistan, bringing together key government and non-government child protection stakeholders. Discussions emphasized the need for professionals to be equipped with technical knowledge to effectively detect, prevent, and understand child abuse and neglect. Keynote discussions highlighted the importance of incorporating child protection awareness into curricula for professionals working with

children, including healthcare workers, teachers, and doctors.

The conference session further explored the status of the Government of Punjab's Child Protection Case Management and Referral System, a joint initiative by CRG-PPA, PAHCHAAN, UNICEF, and the CPWB. The session underscored the importance of a systematic case management and referral

framework across hospitals in Pakistan, promoting strong coordination between hospitals, schools, child protection authorities, and relevant government departments to better protect children from abuse and neglect.

These activities reflect the ongoing commitment to enhancing child protection systems and ensuring that professionals across sectors are empowered to safeguard children's rights.



Women Activist Forum Visits NCRC for Orientation Session

The Karakorum Area Development Organization (KADO) organized an exposure visit for members of the Women Activist Forum (WAF) from Gilgit and Chitral to the NCRC. Member Sindh, Pirbhu Satyani, conducted an informative orientation session, highlighting NCRC's mandate, core functions, and ongoing

efforts to promote and protect children's rights across Pakistan. The session aimed to strengthen collaboration and raise awareness about child rights issues, enabling WAF members to advocate more effectively within their communities.



NCRC Highlights Maternal Mental Health at Early Childhood Development Roundtable

Ms. Mehek Naeem, Member Punjab participated in the launch ceremony of the Center of Excellence for Early Childhood Development by Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) and Rupani Foundation. After the launch ceremony, a roundtable discussion focusing on maternal mental health challenges and their impact on early childhood development in Pakistan was

held in which Ms. Mehek Naeem participated.

Experts from diverse fields shared insights on addressing critical gaps in maternal and child health services. The discussion emphasized developing actionable strategies to support mothers, ensuring healthier early childhood outcomes across the country.



NCRC Conducts Session on Child Rights for Minority Youth in Sindh

The NCRC continued its mission to empower young minds through education and awareness. Mr. Pirbhu Satyani, Member Sindh/Minorities, led an engaging educational session for minority children in Sindh, introducing them to the

UNCRC and NCRC's vital role in safeguarding child rights.

Through engaging discussions and interactive activities, the children learned about their

fundamental rights, including the right to education, protection from harm, and participation in decisions affecting their lives.



They also explored ways to advocate for their rights within their communities.



NCRC Advocates for Minority Rights and Child Protection at National Dialogue

In a recent dialogue titled "Fostering Tolerance and Inclusivity: Understanding Minority Rights in Pakistan," organized by the Ministry of Human Rights, Mr. Pirbhu Satyani, Member Sindh/Minorities participated as a panellist. During the discussion, Mr. Satyani highlighted the urgent need for action on the Supreme Court's 2014 judgment on minority rights. He emphasized several critical steps that must be taken, including the printing of model books for religious minority students, developed by the National Curriculum Council, and the establishment of a statutory minority rights

commission. He also called for the implementation of the 5% job quota for minorities and the introduction of quotas in education. Mr. Satyani underscored the importance of passing the Rules of Business for the Hindu Marriage Act in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and recognizing the personal laws of minorities, such as inheritance rights for Hindu women and girls. Additionally, he advocated for affirmative action to uplift the socio-economic status of scheduled caste communities and children in Pakistan.



Advocating for Girls' Health: NCRC Member Highlights HPV Awareness at National Workshop

Ms. Nadia Bibi, Member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa spoke at the two-day consultative workshop titled "Sehatmand Beti, Sehatmand Gharana" (Healthy Daughter, Healthy Family), organized by UNICEF with the support of the Ministry of National Health Services Regulation & Coordination (MoNHSR&C) held at Pakistan Girls Guide Association in Islamabad. The focus of the workshop was on challenging restrictive gender norms and strengthening girls' agency

and parental support for vaccination acceptance. Nadia Bibi highlighted that all girls regardless of where they live, their economic status, race or education deserve the chance to lead healthy lives and achieve their full potential. She also emphasized that cervical cancer is preventable and curable with access to prevention, screening and treatment services. We must raise awareness about the benefits of the HPV vaccine to save millions of lives.



Launch of Reimagine Justice For Children in Pakistan Initiative



The Federal Judicial Academy, in partnership with UNICEF-Pakistan and GDP, launched the Reimagine Justice For Children in Pakistan



initiative under the Justice for Children (J4C) Program on December 7, 2024. The event, held at the academy's campus, was graced by the

Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan as the Chief Guest.

Representing the NCRC, Ms. Nadia Bibi participated as a speaker. In her address, she highlighted the critical role of the judiciary in

safeguarding children's rights and ensuring access to justice in compliance with the UNCRC and the Reimagine Justice for Children Global Agenda.

Honouring Blind Girls Goalball Team at PTV Training Academy

Mr. Khalid Naeem, Member ICT, NCRC, participated as the guest of honour at an event organized by the Zakat Foundation of America and the Pakistan Blind Sports Association in

collaboration with PTV Training Academy. This event was held to honour our incredible Blind Girls Goalball team, who recently won the tournament in Kenya.



Discussion on Strengthening Minority Rights Commission

Mr. Pirbhu Satyani, Member Sindh/Minorities, NCRC participated in a high-level discussion in Islamabad with key stakeholders, including MNA Mr. Amir Jeeva, Mr. Zaffarullah Khan, Mr. Ch Shafiq, Ms. Romana Bashir, Mr. Peter Jacob, and representatives from the Ministry of Law and Justice. The meeting focused on ensuring the inclusivity and effectiveness of an independent Minority Rights Commission in Pakistan, aligning with the Paris Principles. The discussion centred on strengthening legal frameworks to protect minority rights and ensuring that such a commission is equipped with the necessary



resources and autonomy to advocate for marginalized communities.

Advocating for Collaborative Efforts to Combat Child Labour at Nepal Workshop

Mr. Khalid Naeem, Member ICT participated in a workshop focused on child labour, organized by RASTI Pakistan, AASMAN Nepal, and KNH Germany in Nepal. During the workshop, Mr. Naeem shared valuable insights into the history, mandate, and functions of the NCRC, highlighting the Commission's dedication to advocating for child rights and tackling issues like child labour in Pakistan. His presentation highlighted the NCRC's efforts to raise awareness, push for policy reforms, and collaborate with key stakeholders to protect children from exploitation.

He also emphasized the importance of fostering a coordination mechanism between Pakistan and Nepal to address child labour more effectively. Both countries face similar challenges, and he stressed that a collaborative



approach is essential to creating meaningful change. By strengthening partnerships and exchanging knowledge, Pakistan and Nepal can work together to protect children from harmful labor practices and promote their right to education and a safe environment.

Workshop to Address Child Marriages and Immunization

Muhammad Khalid, Complaint Officer, NCRC represented NCRC took part in a three-day Mind-Heart Dialogue workshop organized by Islamic Relief Fund in collaboration with UNICEF. The workshop focused on leveraging faith-based perspectives to address critical issues such as child marriages and immunization. The dialogue aimed to foster understanding and

cooperation among stakeholders to create positive social change, with special emphasis on protecting children's rights and well-being. By engaging faith leaders, civil society, and policymakers, the workshop sought to align efforts in combating child marriages and promoting health through immunization.



NCRC Collaborates with Meta and Digital Rights Foundation for Youth Online Safety Roundtable

The NCRC collaborated with Meta and the Digital Rights Foundation (DRF) to host the Youth Online Safety Roundtable in Islamabad. Ms. Nadia Bibi, Member KP, along with the NCRC team, actively participated in discussions aimed at addressing online safety challenges faced by youth in Pakistan.

The session focused on strengthening parent-

teen communication, customizing Meta's safety tools and policies to align with local needs, and exploring ways to empower youth against cyber risks. NCRC emphasized its commitment to co-hosting future initiatives, building partnerships, and advancing a unified framework to protect young people from cyber threats while promoting safe and responsible internet use.

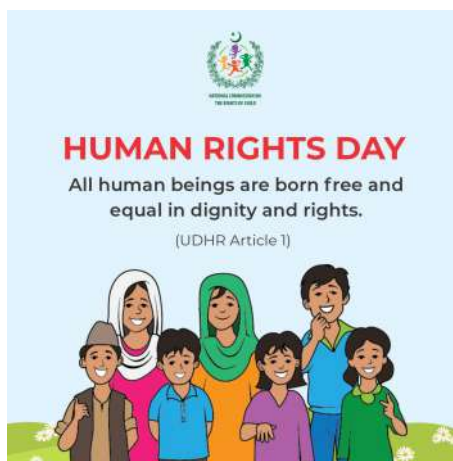
Advocacy via Social Media

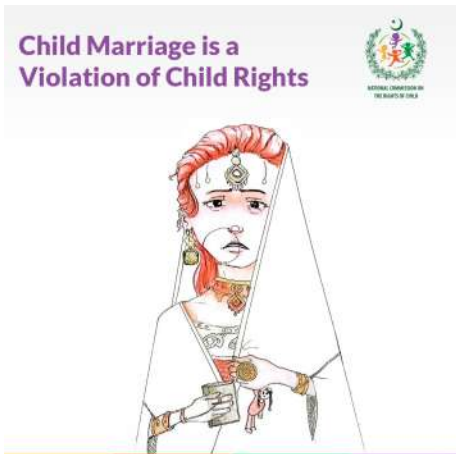
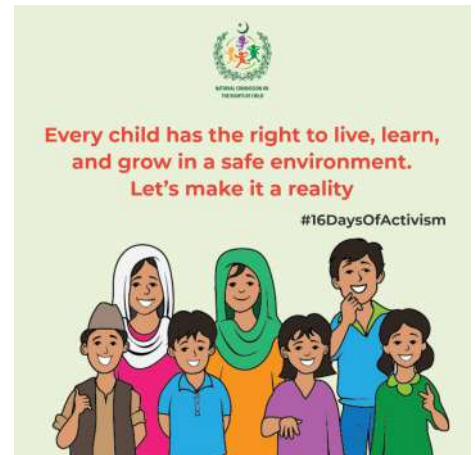
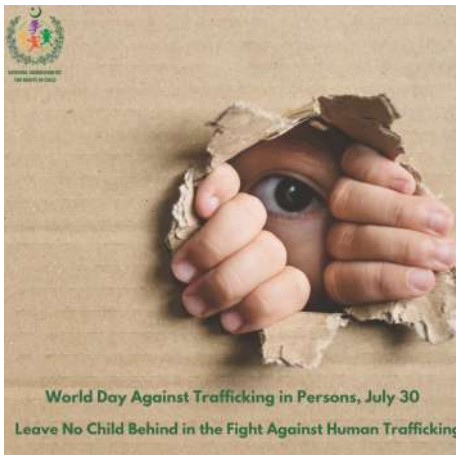
Recognizing the power of social media in raising awareness and fostering dialogue, the NCRC has actively leveraged social media to advocate for child rights on significant international days. Through targeted campaigns, the Commission highlighted critical child protection issues, encouraged stakeholder engagement, and promoted actionable solutions.

Key Themes Covered:

- World Hepatitis Day
- World Day Against Trafficking in Persons
- World Breastfeeding Week

- National Minorities Day
- International Youth Day
- Child Marriage Awareness
- World Mental Health Day
- International Day of the Girl Child
- 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities





NCRC in the Media

PTV World: On National Minorities Day, Mr. Pirbhu Lal Satyani, Member Sindh/Minorities, appeared on PTV World to shed light on the challenges faced by children from minority communities in Pakistan. He underscored that addressing issues like access to quality education, protection from discrimination, and safeguarding religious freedoms is essential for building a society where all children can reach their full potential. He called for collective action from policymakers, civil society, and communities to promote harmony and mutual respect.



Geo News: While speaking with Geo News, Prime Minister's Focal Person on Polio and NCRC Pakistan's Chairperson, Ayesha Raza Farooq emphasized that the Polio team is tirelessly working with provincial governments, district administrations, and law enforcement agencies to ensure every child has access to vaccines. Health is a basic right of every child,

essential for a fulfilling and nurturing life. To protect your children from the debilitating effects of polio, please cooperate with polio workers. Ensure your children under 5 are vaccinated, and encourage your neighbours and communities to do the same.

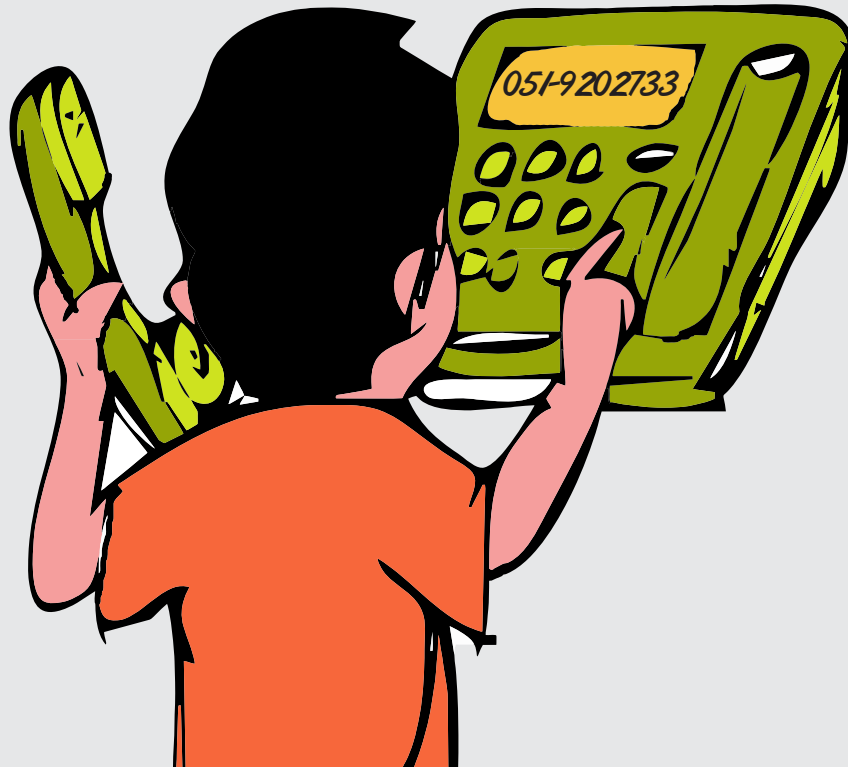


365 News: Prime Minister's Focal Person for Polio Eradication, Ayesha Raza Farooq, emphasized Pakistan's unified approach to combating polio under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Speaking on 365 Digital News, she expressed optimism that conducting three to four high-quality polio campaigns in the coming months could play a pivotal role in eradicating the disease.



365 News: On International Day of the Girl Child, NCRC Member Sindh/Minorities, Pirbhu Satyani, participated in a special program on 365 News. He emphasized the importance of protecting girls' and women's rights and

Report Complaints



National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC)

5th Floor, Evacuee Trust Complex, Agha Khan Road, F-5/1, Islamabad
Tel: +92-51-920-2733 | Email: complaints@ncrc.gov.pk | Website: www.ncrc.gov.pk

☒ NCRC_Pakistan

📘 NCRC Pakistan

📷 NCRC Pak