

Consultation with Vulnerable Communities

- RightsNow Foundation/Center for Migration and Displacement (CMD) with the support of Sindh Human Rights Defenders Network has held consultation with vulnerable communities for knowing their challenges and issues.
- Attended meeting on GBV in refugee community, Psychosocial support for the women and other rights (education, health, water etc).



RightsNow Foundation/Sindh Human Rights Defenders' Network (SHRDN) organized a seminar in collaboration with Karachi Bar Association (KBA) on human rights situation.

- RightsNow Foundation and Sindh Human Rights Defenders Network held a seminar on human rights situation in Sindh province and role of media, Bar Associations, NGOs in its protection in collaboration with Karachi Bar Association (KBA). Issues of refugees, stateless were mainly raised with the Representatives of Federal Ministry of Human Rights, Directorate of Sindh, National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), Sindh Human Rights Commission and Human Rights Committee of the Karachi Bar Association (KBA). Renewal of POR cards of refugees living in Karachi, Kotri, Mirpurkhas, police harassment to those who are earning bread and butter for their children.
- Bar Associations are eager to support RNF CMD SHRDN initiatives on protection of vulnerable
- Women's access to health facilities particularly reproductive health, education of their children which is causing mental stress for parents, particularly mother and other women of the family.



RNF, CMD, SHRDN Team conducts consultation with vulnerable population

RightsNow Foundation and Sindh Human Rights Defenders Network (SHRDN) jointly held consultation with vulnerable communities in the Sindh province. Consultation was also held with women and transgender refugees affected by the Government of Pakistan's policy of forced repatriation. RightsNow Foundation was focusing on vulnerable communities and Sindh Human Rights Defenders Network (SHRDN) was identifying human rights defenders raising voices for those communities or individuals. 35 such meeting are planned to be held across the province but half have been done yet.



Repatriation was forced and intimidated, on one side consent was being discussed on the other side police was raiding shelter/homes of the refugees in Karachi, Kotri, Sukkur.

Session with Refugee women of Bilal Muhala, Korangi, Karachi was organized and issues faced by women were discussed. RightsNow Foundation is also doing GO & SEE Visits to these areas where vulnerable communities are residing for deterring threats. During Repatriation RightsNow Foundation & Center for Migration & Displacement (CMD) provided presence with lawyers to deter harrasment and threats since September 2023.

Activists working on rights of vulnerable population shared that during the operation announced by the Pakistani authorities, police and other law enforcement authorities got the licence to detain Afghan refugees, snatched their valuables, livestock and destroyed their documents to find excuse to expel them. It was felt as they had given target of expelling the refugees, asylum seekers and more shocking was that it was being carried out without any legal protection or intervention. Huge amounts were obtained from them for their release by the police.

The Government of Pakistan was successful in creating scary environment for vulnerable communities which make them not to speak of rights but to find a way of survival and seek the mercy of the police and other officials.

Lawyers were also not aware of the law (refugee or citizenship law) of Pakistan or jurisdiction and same was the condition of the police which caused frustration for the refugees and stateless. Target of the policy was Afghan refugees but police had an excuse to raid houses of homes of Rohingyas and other refugees and snatch money from them.

Visited City Court, Jamshoro court areas and offered legalaid if the accused arrested had not lawyers or were without legalaid.



Adv Fakhar Sindh Human Rights Defenders said when needs of human rights defenders were discussed, those who are protecting the community identified themselves as defenders but they said their representation is done by their body known as Shoora.

Three sessions were held with stateless community of Karachi who seemed scared of the campaign against refugees and living low profile life said many times promises have been made by the political parties, the Governments but yet not fulfilled.

More robust advocacy need for fulfilment of their rights. Their freedom of movement, association, expression, social, economical, cultural rights are affected.

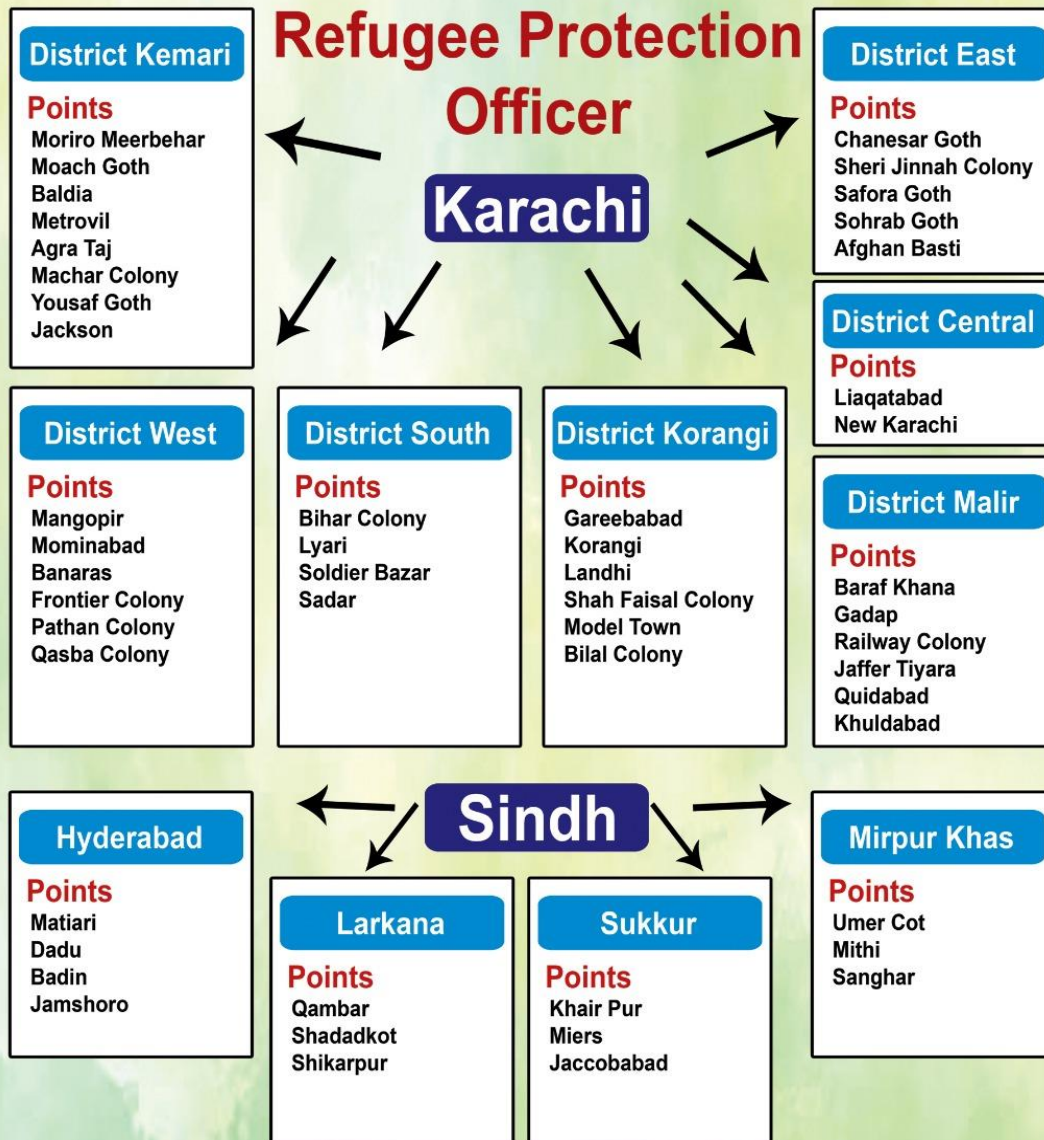
They also raised the issues of supply of electricity and water. Documentation is their main issue which is in limbo and every time issues of crimes, law and order are connected with them despite their peaceful residence.

During Eid ul Zuha, our teams paid Go & See Visits of 25 points where refugees and stateless are residing to improve their safety and security.



Recommendations:

More workshops on refugee law needs to be held with the Bar Association and lawyers who provide general legal aid but they are not aware of refugee law.



**Sindh human rights defender(SHRDN)
RightsNow Foundation(RNF)
Center for migration and displacement (CMD)
Provincial working group.**

- More than half million refugees repatriated forcibly by the Government from the country without considering the conditions at destination. Afghanistan population shared with the RNF and CMD teams.

- Children's wellbeing is main issue, police raids and detention have traumatized children, their education, sport activities were also halted. Those organization with mandates stopped working during the operation and they suspended their work which created an open space for Pakistani Government and state to do what they wanted to do.
- Crackdown was targeted to Afghan refugees but it also had an adverse impact on Rohingya, Biharis, African refugees living in Pakistan and Stateless community of Pakistan particularly Karachi.
- Government of Pakistan should introduce travel documentation for stateless so their children should participate in educational, civic forums and sports activities.
- Social mechanism for Prevention of gender-based violence is needed in areas where stateless and refugees are living because legal mechanism are complicated and require documentation which is difficult for refugees and stateless to get and show. Social protection includes empowerment of activists of local areas and host community supporting them.
- A workshop should be designed for lawyers provide pro bono legal aid to the refugees, stateless and also to general lawyers who does their practice on commercial basis.
- Psycho social activities are suggested for the children and also for women who are the main target of the whole the crises.
- A male and female paralegal event is suggested for legal empowerment of the human rights defenders of the vulnerable community.
- Transgender population was left alone, their needs were not supported and protected. Communication gap between local and refugee/stateless transgenders is huge. Something should be done which can bridge that gap. Joint workshops are suggested.
- Courts where cases were being proceeded were observed by RightsNow Foundation, Center for Migration & Displacement (CMD) and SHRDN team, policy was dominated on the law which requires trainings of prosecution and Judges.
- A practice was suggested by the participants was travel documents for people as provided by some countries to refugees, stateless so they can go to Saudi Arabia for performing their religious rituals.

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