

International Conference on
**COMBATTING TRAFFICKING IN
PERSONS IN PAKISTAN:
DIAGNOSIS, DISCUSSIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**



February 27-28, 2023
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Scan the QR Code to watch the complete
conference on YouTube



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In terms of writing this report, we would like to especially acknowledge Ms. Zainab Qureshi for compiling the findings of the five breakout working sessions held during this conference, as these recommendations will be of significant use to all stakeholders for future evidence-based interventions on TIP. This also could not have been possible without the excellent moderation of the sessions by our experts Mr. Iqbal Ahmad Detho, Mr. Dan Nash, Mr. Kevin Metcalf, Ms. Alison Phillips, and Mr. Edward Ross, as well as our diligent team.

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Research Team, SSDO

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIG	Assistant Inspector General (of Police)
CNIC	Computerized National Identity Card
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DIG	Deputy Inspector General (of Police)
DSP	Deputy Superintendent of Police
ED	Executive Director
FIA	Federal Investigation Agency
FIR	First Information Reports
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRC	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ICT	Islamabad Capital Territory
IG	Inspector General (of Police)
ILO	International Labor Organization
IO	Investigation Officer
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LEA	Law Enforcement Agency
MNA	Member of National Assembly of Pakistan
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Member of Provincial Assembly
MRC	Migrant Resource Center
NADRA	National Database & Registration Authority
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
PEMRA	Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority
PPC	Pakistan Penal Code
PSA	Public Service Advertisement
PTPA 2018	Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2018
PUAN	Pakistan-US Alumni Network
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SHO	Station House Officer
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SSDO	Sustainable Social Development Organization
SSP	Senior Superintendent of Police
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
TVPA	Trafficking Victims Protection Act 2000
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
US	United States

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Pakistan's geographic location makes it a destination, transit, and source country for trafficking in persons (TIP). Since 2015, Pakistan remained five times in Tier II Watch List countries in the US Department of State's annual report on TIP. Nevertheless, in the annual TIP Report 2022, Pakistan's status improved from the Tier II Watch List to Tier II countries mainly because of some concrete measures taken by the Government of Pakistan to control human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, prohibiting non-state actors to recruit child soldiers and concrete steps to implement the legal framework to control human trafficking. For establishing this TIP legal regime, national and international civil society organizations including SSDO have contributed in capacity building, strengthening coordination and awareness raising about human trafficking among all relevant stakeholders.

Since 2021, with generous support from the US Embassy, we have been able to launch a holistic and comprehensive program that has made significant progress on strengthening the capacities and coordination among various stakeholders for the improved legal framework, institutional coordination for referrals, rehabilitation and social awareness on trafficking in persons. Through this grant, we were able to organize this conference which was attended by a multitude of stakeholders from Pakistan and the United States.

This report compiles, consolidates and summarizes the discussions, discourse, debates and recommendations that were presented throughout the conference by the experienced panelists and participants. We hope that it can provide a guideline and way forward for policymakers, policy influencers and policy implementers alike for a multi-sectoral and collaborative approach towards combatting trafficking in persons in Pakistan.



Executive Director

Syed Kausar Abbas

FOREWORD

Trafficking in persons is one of the most prevalent transnational organized crimes and is constantly evolving globally with advancements in digitization and technology. Pakistan is one of those countries that is significantly affected by this crime, resulting in widespread human rights violations. The two-day international conference organized by Sustainable Social Development Organization, with the support of the US Mission in Pakistan and Pakistan-US Alumni Network, diagnosed the state of the implementation of the legal framework to combat trafficking in persons in Pakistan. The conference was attended by a score of stakeholders from Pakistan and the United States, including parliamentarians, government officials, academia, TIP experts, law enforcement authorities, prosecutors, legal fraternity, media persons and development experts, along with common concerned citizens, and the diplomatic community in Pakistan.

The conference provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to sit together, deliberate upon identified challenges, share success stories, and suggest future action in breakout working sessions for effective implementation of the legal framework on TIP. The conference also focused on some serious measures that the Government of Pakistan took to combat TIP. For instance, in November 2022, Pakistan finally ratified the long pending Trafficking in Persons (TIP) protocol which is a significant milestone and helped Pakistan improve its ranking in the global *Trafficking in Persons Report*, published by the US Department of State. Similarly, Pakistan already responded to address SDG 5.2, 8.7, 8.8, 10.7 and 16.2 while enacting very a robust law i.e. *Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2018* as a demonstration of political commitment and ownership. However, the legal framework operates at the national level, whereas after the historic 18th Amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan and the transferring of several departments to the provinces, high-level coordination and cooperation is required at all levels to increase prosecutions and convictions of criminals.



Senior Director Programs & Operations

Muhammad Shahid Khan

Pakistan is making significant efforts to combat TIP, including registering FIRs and convicting traffickers under the current laws, imprisoning more traffickers of bonded labor, increasing registration of brick kilns nationwide, identifying more trafficking victims, and initiating investigations against suspected traffickers. However, the biggest challenges in the implementation of laws include the nonexistence of proper mechanisms for coordination and cooperation between the two law enforcement agencies- FIA and Police, no proper record keeping of trafficking cases, and no referral mechanism for rehabilitation of trafficking victims.

The conference outcomes recommended the need for enhancing parliamentary oversight and provision of adequate resources for the implementation of improvised laws, capacity enhancement of dedicated investigation officers and victim service providers on a victim-centered approach, creating spaces to work with national and international actors to combat trafficking through knowledge and information sharing, exchange of ideas, adoption of best practices and coordinating

efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking cases. The conference also stressed the need for developing a National Hotline for reporting TIP cases, better coordination among all stakeholders [provincial and district TIP committees] for increased and effective victim services, and for maintaining a centralized database on both internal and external trafficking cases. The conference participants also discussed the consolidation of the general and specialized laws and separate courts or benches for the implementation of the PTPA 2018. The conference also urged academia, think tanks, and media to focus on their work to advocate for the eradication of the root causes: poverty, lack of education, and discrimination.

Sustainable Social Development Organization feels gratitude for the support of all stakeholders, and especially the SSDO team for organizing this wonderful conference, a gigantic task that merits their hard work, team spirit, professionalism, and commitment to this national cause to put efforts to combat trafficking in persons in Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

SSDO organized a two-day (February 27-28, 2023) *International Conference on Combatting Trafficking in Persons* in Islamabad. The conference was attended by various stakeholders, including parliamentarians, government officials, law enforcement officials, media personnel, members of civil society organizations, victim service providers, academia, and rights activists from across the country. International TIP experts from the United States, namely Kevin Metcalf (Founder National Child Protection Task Force U.S.), Dan Nash (Co-founder Human Trafficking Training Center U.S.), Alison Phillips (Co-founder Human Trafficking Training Center U.S.), along with officials from the US Embassy namely Donald Blome (Ambassador), Andrew Schofer (Deputy Chief of Mission), and other officials including Edward Ross, Teresa Chang, and Cathryn Fischer participated. The Chief guests at the conference were Shehla Raza,

the Provincial Minister for Women Development Sindh and Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed. In addition, several experienced and knowledgeable guest speakers and participants were in attendance, including Additional Inspector General Islamabad Police Ehsan Sadiq, Deputy Inspector Generals of Karachi, Mirpur Khas, Sukkur, Quetta, Lahore, and Peshawar Divisions, and also the Director and officers of Anti Human Trafficking and Smuggling Wings of the Federal Investigation Agency from across Pakistan. These law enforcement officials were joined by other government officials from Interior, Social Welfare, Women Development, Human Rights, and Prosecution departments, along with academia, civil society and media, all of whom participated, deliberated and proposed recommendations as a way forward to combat and reduce trafficking in persons in Pakistan.



HIGHLIGHTS



Conference Stakeholders

More than 400 people participated in the event hailing from various sectors/organizations including:

- Parliamentarians & Policy Makers
- Federal Investigation Agency
- Pakistan Police
- Judiciary & Prosecution
- Pakistan US Alumni Network
- Journalists and Media
- Social Welfare Department
- Civil Society/Non-for-Profit Organizations
- Academia & Think Tanks
- National & International TIP experts
- Victim Service Providers

OPENING SESSION



DAY 1 - 27th Feb, 2023

OPENING SESSION – DAY 1



Opening the session, Ms. Sidra Iqbal welcomed all the participants and Chief Guests on behalf of Sustainable Social Development Organization, the US Embassy Islamabad, and Pakistan US Alumni Network. Ms. Iqbal appreciated the efforts by SSDO in playing its vital role to prevent human trafficking in Pakistan, calling the organization a “Champion of Social Welfare”. She then invited the Executive Director of SSDO to share the purpose and objectives of the conference. The ED of SSDO, Mr. Syed Kausar Abbas opened the plenary session with a welcome note for the Chief Guests of the event i.e., Mr. Donald Blome, US Ambassador to Pakistan, Ms. Shehla Raza, Provincial Minister of Sindh for Women

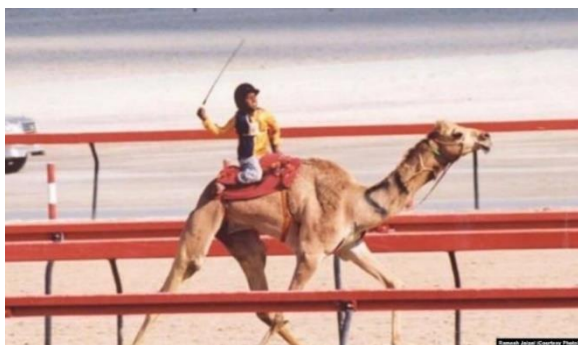
Development, Country President of PUAN and all other diplomats and government officials. He expressed gratitude to the US Embassy for supporting this initiative taken by SSDO, especially in the two provinces - Punjab and Sindh, where the project interventions are taking place.

He mentioned that SSDO is working with various stakeholders in both provinces including the parliamentarians, the law enforcement agencies [police, FIA], prosecution department and other relevant social departments, media, and academia. Furthermore, he shared that SSDO has established *Parliamentary Working Groups* to improve the oversight on the implementation

of laws related to TIP. He mentioned, “We have the stakeholders and working groups at provincial, regional and district-level to address the issues of trafficking in person in targeted project areas.”

He also highlighted the fact that the *Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2018* has not yet been implemented properly in Pakistan. He appreciated that after the enactment of new legislation, Director General FIA took the lead in developing a structure including national, provincial and district-level TIP committees for the control of trafficking in persons, hence, the number of registered TIP cases improved throughout Pakistan.

Mr. Abbas emphasized the need to develop an understanding among lawmakers and implementers to sensitize them on the issue of trafficking in persons. He also referred to international best practices to address the issue by taking initiatives for the rehabilitation of victims, the establishment of proper investigation units in law enforcement and a national hotline for proper reporting of TIP cases.



Mr. Ramesh Jaipal's childhood picture as a camel jockey in Dubai

Addressing the participants, Mr. Ramesh Jaipal, a TIP survivor and PUAN alumnus, shared his own story of being trafficked for bonded labor as a camel jockey when he was only 5 years old. His parents did this due to dire economic conditions, as they would receive 10,000 Pakistani rupees a month in

return for his forced labor. Mr. Jaipal and his family are *Dalit*¹ Hindus who lived in one of the poorest districts of Pakistan's Punjab province i.e., Rahim Yar Khan in Southern Punjab, which has long been a target for child trafficking. He recounted the inhumane conditions that he, along with several other children were subjected to, leading to abuse and even death.

“In the scorching hot weather, I was scrubbing camels and preparing them for races. In that time, I saw many deaths, many injuries. Even I was injured, and I still have those seven stitches on my head.”

- Ramesh Jaipal, TIP Survivor

At the age of 11 in 1995, Mr. Jaipal was rescued and reunited with his family back in Pakistan through the efforts of UNICEF and other child advocates. Since then, after facing many economic hardships and working several menial jobs, he was able to complete his higher education and was even the recipient of the *Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program*. As a result, he has been actively working to address the root causes of TIP such as poverty, unemployment and marginality, especially in his community, by setting up schools, vocational training centers, skills development programs and policy advocacy. He stated that his work is dedicated to ensuring that no individual ever has to undergo the same ordeal he was forced into as a child.

The Chief Guest of the Conference, Ms. Shehla Raza, Provincial Minister of Sindh for Women Development expressed: “I would like to pay special thanks to Sustainable Social Development Organization for providing me with an opportunity to speak on this significant topic. As a female leader, I believe that the primary role of Police Department is to ensure the implementation of law.” Ms. Shehla Raza emphasized that human

¹ Dalit, also referred to as *untouchable*, is the lowest stratum of so-called caste system in South Asia

trafficking is a disaster of its own kind which severely impacts women and children. There is a law-and-order imbalance, alongside poverty and illiteracy, which makes trafficking in persons easier to execute.

Ms. Raza further stated that her Ministry is working on legal aid and provision of

rehabilitation for victims. She emphasized the joint efforts of all relevant departments for the implementation of law and the rehabilitation of victims. She added, "Islamic scholars, NGOs, academia and journalists also have a role to play for the success of this campaign."



"Combating human trafficking has never been more challenging. It's a centuries old problem that will require innovative approaches as perpetrators develop more sophisticated techniques to exploit people. Everyone has a role to play. Governments, NGOs, the private sector and survivors alike." – Donald Blome, US Ambassador

In his keynote address, Mr. Donald Blome, US Ambassador, felt gratitude and expressed that the Embassy was proud to partner with SSDO for their ongoing project on combatting human trafficking in Punjab and Sindh through increased coordination and capacity building of relevant stakeholders on the TIP legislative framework. He emphasized that TIP is among the most widespread crimes worldwide, with millions of people living in modern-day slavery and therefore this is an issue that requires urgent attention and efforts from all relevant stakeholders. He shared with the participants several success stories of SSDO's project implementation, which included training of several key stakeholders, advocacy with provincial parliamentarians to enhance enforcement of TIP laws and the inclusion of the PTPA 2018 in the training curriculum at the *Punjab Judicial Academy*.

Concluding his address, the Ambassador urged all participants to leverage their expertise and forge partnerships to identify gaps in legislation and enforcement of PTPA 2018, while also working together to adopt the best practices to combat TIP at the provincial and federal level.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON TIP

Moderator:

Mr. Raja Nadeem Sadiq,

Head of English Department, Iqra University

Panelists:

Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Mahar

Deputy Inspector General of Police, Mirpur
Khas, Sindh

Mr. Azfar Mahesar

Deputy Inspector General of Police, Quetta,
Balochistan

Mr. Zaibullah Khan

Deputy Inspector General Investigation,
Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Ms. Nida Umer Chatha

Senior Superintendent of Police, Punjab

Mr. Muhammad Alam Shinwari

Director, Anti Human Trafficking and
Smuggling Wing, FIA, Islamabad

Dr. Ehsan Sadiq

Additional Inspector General of Police



THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON TIP

The first panelist, Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Mahar, DIG Mirpur Khas, shared with the conference participants a brief history and overview of the existing legislative framework for combatting TIP in Pakistan, the status of its implementation, the challenges faced, and the efforts being made by law enforcement.

Pakistan's parliament passed the **Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (PTPA)** in 2018 and repealed the *Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance 2002*. By October 2020, the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Rules were notified. From a legal



perspective, the PTPA 2018 has set a solid framework for law enforcement to take action against TIP perpetrators, especially organized criminal networks. Furthermore, Mr. Mahar discussed the comprehensive nature of the law as it covered all possible forms of TIP, has special clauses that focus on women and children as victims, and also clearly states proper definitions for various relevant terms such as “organized criminal group”, “victims”, “compelled labor”, “aggravating circumstances etc”, all of which proved to be very helpful for law

enforcement. For the provincial police in particular, the law gave them powers to register internal TIP cases, something that was originally thought to be purely in the domain of the FIA.

“Section 8 of the law defines the ‘investigation agency’ and it says that subject to Subsection 2, the police shall investigate an offense under this act.”

-Zulfiqar Ali Mahar, DIG Mirpur Khas, Sindh

Mr. Mahar further shared the progress made by the Sindh Police to curb TIP under this specific law. He informed the participants that in Sindh 488 cases of TIP were registered in 2022. These cases have been processed and are under trial at various stages. A challenge that the police faced in implementing this legal framework according to Mr. Mahar was the lack of awareness among the law enforcement agencies, and to address that, extensive training has been given to Sindh police staff. He shared that they have trained 1482 police officers, which includes inspectors, sub-inspectors, assistant sub-inspectors, constables, and the station *moharars*². Quite many of them men and women SHOs³. He assured the conference participants that the Sindh Police is making full effort to “play its part for this national issue.”

Mr. Mahar also discussed the lack of uniformity in legal frameworks on child marriage in Pakistan. Currently, Sindh is the only province in the country where the minimum legal age of marriage is 18 years as defined in the *Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act 2013*. Over the past year, there have been several highly publicized cases of trafficking of minor girls from Sindh into Punjab, under the guise of marriage as the legal age for marriage in that province is lower at 16. This

² A clerical police officer who is responsible for writing FIRs, as well as maintaining registers and records in the police station. A head *moharar* is supported by several *naib moharars*.

³ Station House Officer: The head of a police station in Pakistan

has unfortunately resulted in a rise in cases of both TIP and child marriage. He shared that some major initiatives for the protection, facilitation, and rehabilitation of victims in Sindh were the establishment of *Human Rights Cells* in 2009 and *Women and Children Protection Cells* in 2012. Additionally, in 2016, *Women's Police Stations* were converted into *Women and Children Protection Centers*, while since 2022, in every district of Sindh, a police officer of the DSP⁴ rank has been specially designated as the focal person for cases of TIP within that geographic region.

The next panelist, Mr. Azfar Mahesar, DIG Quetta, argued that in the province of Balochistan, due to the prevalence of both internal and international trafficking, the situation is quite complex. Balochistan



shares borders with two countries, Afghanistan and Iran⁵, both of which are porous borders, leading to frequent cross-border movements that are mostly dealt with by either the FIA or the law enforcement agencies deployed there, with limited involvement by the provincial police. Also, there are significant cases of trafficking internally within the province, where the Balochistan Police are playing an active role to catch the offenders. On this tangent, he stated, "We are currently facing so many issues. Cases of bonded labor in mines, debt traps and even slavery incidents are found in

the province of Balochistan. Initially, local police did not have efficient and sufficient laws, because of which the focus and efforts of local police were missing, but after the enactment of 2018 act (PTPA), this issue is being tackled at the police station level."

Mr. Mahesar argued that the most important initiatives were the police department's efforts towards gender mainstreaming, and the capacity building of police on TIP legal frameworks from the senior level, down to the police station level for the investigation officers and *moharars*.

"We have established women police stations in the province and today the first SHO of the Women Police Station of Quetta is present as a participant in the conference. We have also established daycare centers and have started campaigns of mass awareness for the communities and people of Baluchistan. Recently we have established Women Police Station in Turbat and subsequently it will be established in Gwadar and Sibbi districts as well. Without infrastructure, without sufficient knowledge and without capacity building, police department may not come up to expectations."

-Azfar Mahesar, DIG Quetta, Balochistan

The third panelist Mr. Zaibullah Khan, DIG Peshawar, shared that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police is focusing on the establishment of women police stations and capacity building of all police staff on TIP at all levels from constables to DSPs. He stated that the KP Police are actively engaging all relevant departments to sort out the problems, especially the proper investigation of the cases and the conviction rates, which are very important at the end. Unfortunately, the rate is still very low, but we are trying our level best to bring it to an acceptable level and for the difference to be seen on the ground."

⁴ Deputy Superintendent of Police: A gazetted officer in the police force in Pakistan, of BPS-17

⁵ One of the most active routes for traffickers to transport their victims from Asia to the Middle East and Europe passes through the Balochistan border

He was followed by the fourth panelist, Ms. Nida Umar Chatha, SSP, who discussed that most cases registered under the PTPA-2018 in Punjab are cases of forced prostitution. She believed that more work is needed to be done about curbing domestic labor of minors in Punjab, which also falls under the domain of TIP. Secondly, she also emphasized the need for better rehabilitation of victims, especially for women who are forced into sex work. She stressed, "We are lacking rehabilitation centers and unfortunately in Pakistan the victim support programs are not being given due consideration. We are all working in our personal capacity a lot, but since there is lack of coordination among the departments, which is the main thing... we need to work on that."

The next speaker, Mr. Alam Shinwari represented the FIA, a federal agency which deals with cross-border cases of trafficking.



He elaborated that 4P's framework i.e., Protection, Prevention, Prosecution, and Partnership, has formed the basis of the anti-TIP strategy in the second *Five Year National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Migrants Smuggling* launched in 2021, with the objective to establish vital mechanisms to develop and strengthen cooperation mechanisms among relevant bodies, capacity building, enhanced border control functions, raise public awareness, as well as develop and strengthen international cooperation. He shared that the FIA has been able to make significant progress and achieve most of the targets set forth in the

plan by increasing the number of prosecutions and convictions, raise public awareness, improve capacity of the institutions, and provide improved services to the victims."

Mr. Shinwari then followed by sharing that the FIA is making sure to comply with international standards as Pakistan has started complying with *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* and the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*. On the international front, Pakistan interacts with several countries and regions through bilateral and multilateral arrangements including the *Bali Process* and the *Budapest Process*. Adding to that, Mr. Shinwari also briefed the audience that the FIA has established focal offices in various countries, and is cooperating with Interpol, UNODC, ICMPD and IOM, all of whom are providing technical, legal, and logistic support.

On the domestic front, TIP-specific modules have been made part of the syllabi for FIA officials, while several joint training sessions have been organized with law enforcement, judiciary, prosecution, social welfare, home department and labor department. *Anti-human trafficking committees* have been established at national, provincial and district level for enhanced inter-departmental coordination, and the *Anti Human Trafficking and Smuggling Wing* of the FIA is already linked with all the relevant departments through their data center for accurate and timely data reporting, sharing and analysis. The FIA has also established a *Research and Analysis Center*, which has signed MoUs with several universities and initiated internship programs for researchers to conduct an in-depth analysis of the various aspects of TIP and suggest evidence-based recommendations to eradicate this crime. He

concluded by saying, “There are capacity and resource issues as departments have meager resources available at their disposal to provide all kinds of protection and assistance services to the victims. These circumstances pose a serious challenge to our efforts and therefore it would require a more vigorous and coordinated approach.”

The final speaker of the session was Dr. Ehsan Sadiq, Addl. IG, who called to attention that most TIP victims are from already marginalized backgrounds, and offenders capitalize on their vulnerability to further exploit them. He also called the passing of the PTPA-2018 and Pakistan’s accession to the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* as two very significant achievements over the past few years for curbing TIP. He stressed, “Most importantly there is now a very clear, single law that is dealing with this issue, which spells out in very unequivocal terms the status of victims that they have no criminal liability. As one of my colleagues said, this is a victim-oriented, victim-focused law because it ensures safety and support for the victims, which was not previously the case. Now increasingly these cases are being registered under this act and the persons who are subject to trafficking are treated as victims.”

Conversely, while discussing challenges, Dr. Sadiq stated that there is still a misconception among provincial police that TIP is only the domain of the FIA, while the terms “trafficking” and “smuggling” are used interchangeably, without understanding their nuance. Also, the provincial police need greater awareness that TIP cases must be registered under the PTPA 2018, rather than Sections 370 and 371 of the PPC which was the previous practice. He declared that high conviction rates are essential for deterrence. He also reiterated that in addition to the

conviction of offenders, rehabilitation of victims is equally important, for which all stakeholders need to be brought on board for a “holistic strategy”.

“The police cannot adopt the victim-oriented support unless there are proper referrals services... Infrastructure is very important for victims. FIA has made a purpose-built center at Taftan [border with Iran]. Such shelter homes need to be built across the country for lodging of the victims, especially women and children.”

-Dr. Ehsan Sadiq, Addl. IG

Dr. Sadiq proposed that comprehensive database and research facilities should be



built for an effective mechanism for data collection, compilation, analysis and sharing, especially for disaggregated data relating to age and gender, so that policies and strategies can be evidence-based. He further suggested enhancing the percentage of women in police, especially at front desks considering that most TIP victims are women and children. Specialized units and inter-departmental coordination are essential, while transparency and accountability are imperative for ensuring goals are reached.

In the Question & Answer session, Tariq Afghan, a lawyer from the Peshawar High Court put forth a question, “What if a person from law enforcement agencies is found to be involved in the act of trafficking in persons? Does the law contain any

punishment or penalty against such an offence?”

Mr. Khan responded that there is an internal accountability mechanism in the police department and there is certainly a need to follow it in case of any such complaints received. He also urged parliamentarians “to bring up this mandate in their respective assemblies to see how to proceed further on this issue.” Dr. Sadiq added on to the discussion of the complicity of law

enforcement by saying, “There are three or four reasons. Firstly, there is a lack of capacity, second, competence issues, thirdly negligence, and fourth involvement issue. This act [PTPA 2018] provides the remedy for that. Whosoever is an offender or an accomplice, will be punished according to this law. Additionally, departmental action will also be taken if the offender is from law enforcement.”

SESSION 2

INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES ON TRAFFICKING CONTROL



Moderator:

Prof. Dr. Farhan Yousaf

Director of Center for Peace and & Security
Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore

Panelists:

Mr. Dan Nash

Co-Founder, Human Trafficking Training
Center, US

Ms. Alison Phillips

Co-Founder, Human Trafficking Training
Center, US

Mr. Kevin Metcalf

Founder National Child Protection Task
Force, US

Mr. Edward Ross

Assistant Regional Security Officer
Investigator and Vice Consul, US Embassy,
Islamabad



INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES ON TRAFFICKING CONTROL

The first panelist Mr. Dan Nash discussed that in the US, they initially observed that about 17% of law enforcement officials were trained on countering TIP, and when they broke it down from awareness-based training to skills-based training, this percentage dropped down even further, as only 8% of them were trained properly on how to respond, identify, and investigate cases of human trafficking. Their training methodology for law enforcement was based on a *“victim-centered approach”*, and it educates law enforcement on how to contact and respond to potential victims of trafficking in a way that would lead to greater identification of TIP victims, something that was initially lacking.

“In the United States, only about 7% of all trafficking victims will disclose it to law enforcement. When we developed the special victims’ methodology... the traditional law enforcement approach does not work very well. So, when we created the special victim’s methodology, that has increased the disclosures from trafficking victims to around 45% from 7%.”

-Dan Nash, Human Trafficking Training Center, US

The second panelist, Ms. Alison Phillips, discussed that the increased identification of



victims is the byproduct and result of increased education and awareness campaigns on TIP across sectors. Many stakeholders are involved throughout the process of curbing TIP, which includes the people writing down the report, the police who will investigate the case, and the prosecutors and judiciary who will process the case in court. Therefore, the problems in any stage of this process will lead to the entire case falling apart, which is why she expressed the dire need to allocate resources for proper training of all these stakeholders.

Mr. Kevin Metcalf also added to the discussion about effective prosecution by sharing the need for utilizing technology as part of the investigation and prosecution process. As the *National Child Protection Task Force* in US is actively working on tackling cases of child exploitation, Mr. Metcalf stated they have brought on board many technological professionals, which have proved instrumental in identifying and catching predators. He urged that the utility of technology gives a prosecutor more evidence, tools, and ammunition to work with, however, the prosecutors have to be effectively trained for this purpose. He further elaborated that it has lessened the burden on victim-centered prosecution, as often only the testimony of a victim is not enough evidence for the jury to base the case on.

Next panelist Mr. Edward Ross briefed the conference participants about the work the US has done to curb TIP, both at a domestic and international level. He described the *Palermo Protocol*⁶ and *The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000*, as key points from where most of their work has evolved. The *Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons* in the US works at a global level,

⁶ Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the

United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000

which includes the publication of the annual *Trafficking in Persons Report*. He assured the participants that there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach when it comes to TIP as the US still has many human trafficking incidents, which means that tremendous work still needs to be done. He also challenged popular media representations of TIP by stating that it is not primarily just sex trafficking, as so far according to the data received from the national TIP helpline in the US, there is roughly an even fifty-fifty split between sex trafficking and forced labor. Through his experience working in the consular section,



he observed that many Pakistanis on J-1 visas⁷ and F-1 visas⁸, fall victim to being exploited by traffickers, something he linked to the ongoing phenomenon of “brain drain” in the country. Therefore, he underscored the need to ensure the protection of skilled labor, especially to prevent them from falling prey to traffickers.

In terms of discussing collaboration and coordination among key stakeholders, Ms. Phillips stated that the formation of task forces and convening all key groups together is a welcome step, but she had observed so far that many of these task forces are still not very effective. According to her, all of it boiled down to the fact that training and education are still required to increase their capacity.

She also recommended having inter-disciplinary training by having law enforcers coordinate with service providers.

Another key dimension discussed in the session was the need for victim assistance programs that effectively ensure their proper rehabilitation. Mr. Metcalf stated that in the past, much of the efforts towards curbing TIP were primarily centered on catching offenders and prosecuting cases. Something that also needs equal attention is the aftercare of the victim, for which therapy, counselling and even life skills training is essential. While describing the prosecution process, he declared that a major challenge is when victims back off from giving their testimony, which is often the key evidence the whole case depends on. Therefore, it is crucial that victims have adequate and continuous support throughout. He agreed with Ms. Phillips’ earlier comments that to get from identification, all the way to conviction, efforts are needed at every step.

“A lot of the victims don't fully get that they're being victimized, and they still have this attachment, this trauma-bond essentially to the trafficker. Those victims are going to need substance abuse counseling, they're going to need therapy, they probably need job skills because they don't have any skills that will allow them to earn a living. They've probably got kids to take care of, so there are so many things to consider on the victim's side.”

-Kevin Metcalf, National Child Protection Task Force, US

Responding to a question by a journalist about the Jeffery Epstein case where influential people were accused of committing TIP but nothing happened, Ms. Phillips answered that this is often a problem, as people working at the ground level are often trying their best, yet receive little support from their higher-ups in the chain of

⁷Non-immigrant visa issued by the United States to research scholars, professors and exchange visitors participating in programs that promote cultural exchange

⁸ Student visas for full-time students in the US

command. That is why she praised this conference as it convened officials working at all levels, and especially urged leadership in key positions to make sure they allocate adequate resources and support to facilitate those working as *"boots on the ground"*. Ultimately, according to her, a successful approach is one where proper commitment is shown by all stakeholders, at each level of the hierarchy.

Responding to a query by a parliamentarian of Sindh, Ms. Syeda Marvi Rashdi, about how



developing countries like Pakistan can work towards combatting this crime, with limited resources, Mr. Nash responded that combatting TIP requires international collaboration, and that the US has several mechanisms and tools in place through which different countries work together on

tracking and investigating cases of cross-border trafficking and smuggling. Mr. Metcalf added to the discussion by stating that due to the prevalence of many gangs and networks, it can be easy to get overwhelmed, but the focus should be on tackling one case at a time. He also stated that it is imperative to understand that due to the sheer magnitude of cases, this is not a problem that would be eradicated in a short span of time, rather, consistent efforts are needed for long-term results. For this, law enforcement cannot do everything alone, and he urged everyone to play their part as responsible members of the community to identify cases and use the pre-existing frameworks for an integrated approach that goes from the local, national and all the way up to the international level.



SESSION 3

THE ROLE OF CITIZENS FOR ADVOCACY, PROMOTION AND OVERSIGHT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF PTPA 2018



Moderator:

Ms. Sadia Hussain

Development Expert

Panelists:

Ms. Hina Maqsood

International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and Migrant Resource Centre

Ms. Nafeesa Inayatullah Khan Khattak

Member of the National Assembly of Pakistan

Mr. Fahad Khawaja

Deputy Director, Anti Human Trafficking and Smuggling Wing, FIA, Karachi

Ms. Shehla Raza

Provincial Minister of Sindh for Women Development



THE ROLE OF CITIZENS FOR ADVOCACY, PROMOTION AND OVERSIGHT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF PTPA 2018

At the outset, Ms. Hina Maqsood initiated the discussion by reinforcing the fact that many potential migrants, who already lack resources, are preyed upon by human traffickers due to a lack of awareness of the legal means and mechanisms for international migration. This was based upon her experience working with ICMPD and the *Migrant Resource Centers*⁹, especially in hotspot districts of irregular migration, most of which are in Punjab, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. She expressed that through proper awareness, individuals will not only be able to save themselves from potential harm but will have the potential to identify the indicators of TIP at the community level as well.



"An individual needs to be informed that 'What are the indicators?' How can an individual identify themselves as a potential victim of trafficking? Or maybe support others if they see the signs. That is why information about the identification of victims needs to be given at the ground level."

-Hina Maqsood, ICMPD

The second panelist, Ms. Shehla Raza stated that in Pakistan, the problem does not

necessarily lie at the policy level, as there is already the PTPA-2018, but rather there is a lack of awareness among the public. The government has formulated the *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Migrants Smuggling*, yet it is not in the realm of common knowledge. Furthermore, socio-cultural norms often make it difficult for victims to come forward or even for the community members to disclose cases in their vicinity, as they term such things to be *"a family matter"*. That is why Ms. Raza believed that this is a discussion not only for the Parliament, but something that needs to be discussed at the ground level, as she said, "It is the responsibility of the citizens that they raise the red flags."

Ms. Raza specifically pointed out forced marriages as a prime example of TIP, as the traffickers often trap young women under the guise of marriage to exploit them. She stated that this is extensively discussed within the assembly, but the question arises of how to inform society. Parliamentarians are raising awareness at the community and college level, while the *Women Development Department* is offering legal support to victims, but the victims often refuse this help. She shared several case studies, such as the *Nazia Khoso* case, where a woman who was kidnapped by influential groups, ended up confessing that she left home by her own will when she was produced in the court. In such cases, it becomes very difficult to prosecute the offenders. On behalf of policymakers, she stated that they are ready to make amendments in the PTPA-2018 if citizens raise any concerns, but for actual prosecution of cases, a collaborative effort is needed from all members of the community,

⁹ These centers are working with the support of the Government of Pakistan, one is in Islamabad under the

Ministry for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resources Development and the other one is in Lahore, with the *Punjab Labour and Human Resource Department*.

which includes law enforcement, service providers and the society at large. For this, she urged NGOs and civil society to organize events such as this conference at the provincial and district level as well.

Concluding her talk, like many speakers throughout the conference, Ms. Raza called to attention the fact that the legal age of marriage in Pakistan is still below 18 in all other provinces except Sindh.

"According to the law, you must be 18 years to have your CNIC registered, you have to be 18 to get your driving license, you have to be 18 to get a passport, you have to be 18 to cast your vote. Then how can we allow girls younger than 16 and 14 to get married."

-Shehla Raza, Provincial Minister of Sindh for Women Development

Another panelist Ms. Nafeesa Khattak, who was one of the prime movers behind the tabling and enactment of PTPA-2018 discussed in the session that the police got the mandate to deal with internal trafficking in 2018, so they need extensive capacity-building sessions to implement this law. Since the police work on a diverse range of crimes, Ms. Khattak recommended that every police station have one designated person who is an expert on TIP. She also asserted that the lack of awareness in the community is the biggest challenge. The awareness of people is already very limited, and they do not understand the nuances and nefarious purposes in trafficking, such as organ trafficking, forced sex work, debt bondage making them enslaved for life. She stressed on the role of the media, police and educational institutes for raising awareness, especially urging parents to take on a proactive role in teaching children about TIP. She summed that up by saying, "It should be part of our education, like in kindergarten, we teach children that if there's a fire how they can get out. If there's an earthquake, how can they get out of the building? So similarly,

some awareness should be given to the children, at least when they are a little bit grown up. I think that's going to play a very important role."

To reduce TIP in Pakistan, Ms. Khattak recommended that while prevention is key, it is vital to direct resources and energies towards the effective rehabilitation of victims and conviction of offenders. For law enforcement and the government, their role does not simply end at rescuing victims of TIP, they also have to ensure rehabilitation and adequate security for them as these rescued victims are now key witnesses that can put offenders behind bars. In addition, she stated that advancing technology can be harnessed to make mobile apps through which victims can secretly report to the police or quietly share their location with the discreet push of a button. For NGOs, she stated that they must also play a complementary role to the government by raising awareness and providing shelter, counselling, and rehabilitation services. To build the capacities of NGOs and CSOs so that they may undertake these roles, she called upon the government to train and facilitate them.

"There are seven ministries concerned with human trafficking alone. So, all of these ministries have to get together, put their heads together, fund it, plan it, train them, equip them and only then you can prevent trafficking. Otherwise, it's just like having a session and then going home and doing nothing."

-MNA Nafeesa Inayatullah Khan Khattak

Mr. Fahad Khawaja informed the participants about the role of the FIA, which is the lead agency in Pakistan to combat trafficking in persons and implements the legislation. He shared that the FIA is actively coordinating and liaising with international partners, and in collaboration with them has trained several

local stakeholders on TIP such as the *District Administration, Police Department, Labor Department and Social Welfare Department*. These stakeholders are also part of *District-Level TIP Committees*, that have been formed in 2022, and are part of a tiered system which comprises of *Provincial Level TIP Committees* and a *National Level TIP Committee*, which is headed by the Minister of Interior and also has the Chief Secretaries and IGs of all provinces of Pakistan. He voiced that these committees have been quite effective and that looking at all indicators and statistics, there has been a marked improvement since 2021. In terms of recommendations, he proposed that both parliamentarians and NGOs play the role of watchdogs for these committees to monitor progress and hold them accountable.

"Now the representatives of the people, the parliamentarians, or the people who are representing the public, they should take the lead, they should play the role of oversight bodies. The leaders of the people should seek reports from them and ask these committees about the victims. How many cases have you registered in this district? A concerned MNA or MPA can ask the concerned district committee to tell me how did you handle the victims? Because treating victims and rehabilitation of those victims is very important. Registration of cases is equally important, but most important is how one treats these victims."

-Fahad Khawaja, FIA

Responding to a question by a participant about the exact number of TIP victims, Mr. Khawaja answered that the FIA collects comprehensive data on the number of cases from the police and the number of victims that have been referred to social services. He continued that all this data is not only shared with international partners, but is also available to the public, though he did not know the exact figures now.



Responding to the question about the rising number of child beggars, Ms. Raza answered that the rising poverty levels are one of the major factors, so the government is actively working on economic empowerment and educational initiatives for these children. Ms. Khattak agreed that the root causes must be addressed and vowed that in the future, work will be done to make rehabilitative institutes that provide education and shelter for juvenile prisoners and street children, especially those whose parents are offenders.

While responding to a question about the



prevalence of cross-province trafficking, despite the presence of so many police check-posts, Ms. Khattak stressed the need of training of law enforcement on the identification of the signs of TIP victims.

SESSION 4

THE ROLE OF WOMEN LEADERSHIP TO CONTROL TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS IN PAKISTAN



Moderator:

Ms. Mahnoor Qureshi

Broadcast Journalist

Panelists:

Ms. Sehar Kamran

Former Member of the Senate of Pakistan

Ms. Suhai Aziz Talpur

Assistant Inspector General of Police,
Establishment, Sindh

Ms. Uzma Noorani

Activist and Member of the Human Rights
Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)



THE ROLE OF WOMEN LEADERSHIP TO CONTROL TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS IN PAKISTAN

Senator Sehar Kamran started the session by emphasizing the vulnerability of women and girls who are usually the majority of victims of trafficking. She expounded that the structural inequalities and gender risks exacerbating this vulnerability include the lack of opportunities, low literacy rates, discriminatory laws and processes, societal injustices, and barriers to women empowerment initiatives. Yet, despite making up almost 50% of the population, their representation in decision-making roles is starkly low. To address these compounding and intersectional issues, the Senator underlined that it is crucial to foster women's leadership at all levels to ensure a gender-sensitive approach towards effectively curbing TIP in Pakistan. For this, women from the community level, all the way up to the police, judiciary, and legislature, must be given avenues for development, awareness, and empowerment.

"We have seen that in the National Legislators, when the number of women is more, they are more likely to pass the laws which are women-friendly like against harassment, against rape, against victimization and violence. So, the more opportunities we give to women, the more we involve them in legislative and decision-making processes, the more we see that these exact issues are addressed."

-Senator Sehar Kamran

In terms of the policy landscape, Senator Kamran also shared that the *Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Bill, 2018* which aimed to bring up the legal age of marriage to 18 years, is yet to be passed by the National Assembly. Due to non-uniform legal frameworks on child marriage in Pakistan, these laws were being exploited to conduct inter-provincial trafficking.

In the session, the panelist Ms. Suhai Aziz Talpur discussed the role of the police, particularly women police in combatting TIP in Pakistan. She stressed the need to increase the representation of women in not just the police force and law enforcement, but also in rehabilitation centers, the criminal justice system and at the policymaking level. She argued that majority of TIP victims are women, children, and transgender individuals, and are often from marginalized backgrounds such as minorities and persons with disabilities. In this context, women officials can deal better with the victims as they are better able to empathize with them compared to men and are more cognizant of the victim's mental well-being.

Ms. Talpur stated that in Sindh, an overwhelming number of the 488 TIP cases in the year 2022 were of sex trafficking (399), which disproportionately affects women and children. A further 79 cases of forced labor were seen, while the remaining cases were of other types of TIP. She acclaimed the efforts of the Sindh Police to recover around 550 TIP victims and reunited them with their families. She believed that there is still scope for improvement in the investigation and trial of TIP cases.

The final speaker, Ms. Uzma Noorani started her talk by asserting that before any discussion on women's leadership, the first step is to ensure the protection of women's security, liberty and dignity as many women find themselves trapped in modern-day slavery. She posited that certain forms of TIP, such as forced beggary and domestic servitude of children, have been so normalized in Pakistani society, that the average person does not understand that this is, in fact, human trafficking. Many women are sold by their own families due to poverty.

"We want to see women in the police force, in the parliament and in every sphere of life women should be more visible. Unfortunately, in a country like ours, where there's lawlessness and lack of education, poor governance, lack of awareness, and other factors, these become breeding grounds for modern-day slavery like bonded labor, servitude, coercion and exploitation of women and children."

-Uzma Noorani, Activist and Member HRCP)



Ms. Noorani also commented on the rise of forced conversions of Hindu and Christian women and girls and termed it another manifestation of TIP and declared it to be *"a gross human rights violation"*. Additionally, sharing her experience as a founding member of the *Panah* [Shelter in Karachi], which is a public-private partnership, she said that many women there were, in fact, TIP victims, but the FIR lodged by the police was of kidnapping. She also underscored the need for the police to play a more active role in reuniting victims with their families by helping to trace them, as this is not a task that shelter homes can accomplish on their own. As for the shelters themselves, she categorized them as *"short-term solutions"*, because many women TIP victims have been subjected to forced prostitution and sexual exploitation, affecting both their physical and mental health, requiring them to need intense therapy and medical assistance. This is also made worse by the fact that many women in

shelter homes do not actually have a family or home to go back to, leaving them in a state of limbo, requiring a more concrete long-term solution. That is why she stated that there is a dire need to transform shelter homes into rehabilitation centers that offer life-skills and livelihood training, job placements and psychosocial counseling. She continued that for child victims in particular, these centers must provide them safe shelter until the age of 18, after which they can find them proper opportunities for further education and employment.

On the same tangent, Ms. Noorani also affirmed that those running shelters must be sensitized to be *"non-judgmental"*, while also stressing the need for sensitization at the police and judiciary level. She also suggested that some shelters be made exclusively for TIP victims. Ms. Talpur shared that there are three types of shelters currently operating in Pakistan, i.e state-run shelters, privately-run shelters, and makeshift shelters. The state provides shelters in the form of *Dar ul Amans* and 'one-stop crisis centers' which are upgraded women police stations that also include services from other relevant government departments, which include Women Development Department, Prosecution Department, and hospitals.



Senator Kamran added to the discourse by stating that societal stigmas and taboos need to be addressed that shame women victims and make them afraid to make

complaints in the first place. It is also imperative to ensure confidentiality and protection for the victims on behalf of the state, as many women are trafficked by their own guardians, or they are forced to leave due to associated risks of honor killing by families, and also due to perceived shame in the community if a woman is revealed to be a victim of TIP, particularly forced sex work. Ms. Noorani suggested that all births should be registered, there should be strict checking of CNICs at the time of marriage to determine if the bride is a consenting adult. She also

stressed the need for the implementation of cybersecurity laws and the strengthening of local government to give communities a direct avenue where they can report TIP cases to.

Responding to a question about the conviction rate of 488 cases of TIP in Sindh, Ms. Aziz asserted that the conviction rate has markedly improved due to designated *Investigation Officers* to deal with cases of abuse against women and children.

Breakout Sessions

1. Parliamentarians and Policymakers
2. Government Institutions, Interior and Home Ministries, Law Enforcement Agencies [FIA, Police]
3. Judiciary and Prosecution
4. Government Departments Including Service Providers & CSOs
5. Academia, Think Tanks and Media



BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Simultaneously, in the second half of Day 1, five breakout sessions were held, where different relevant stakeholders gathered to discuss the challenges in the existing mechanisms for curbing TIP, while also jointly brainstorming concrete recommendations to tackle these problems. The aim of these sessions was to allow the attendees to delve deeper into specific topics by engaging in discourse and debate. These sessions were facilitated by both international and local experts who hold vast experience in working on combatting TIP. Through their discussions, each of these groups compiled suggestions for a comprehensive and integrated approach for the curbing of TIP, each keeping in mind their specialties and expertise.

The group-wise breakdown for the 5 sessions was as follows:

1. Group 1: Parliamentarians and Policymakers
2. Group 2: Government Institutions, Interior and Home Ministries, Law Enforcement Agencies [FIA, Police]
3. Group 3: Judiciary and Prosecution
4. Group 4: Government Departments Including Service Providers & CSOs
5. Group 5: Academia, Think Tanks and Media

This section of the report reflects upon the outcome of the proceedings held in these breakout working group sessions. Based on the findings, the SSDO research team has compiled sector-specific achievements, challenges and lessons learnt for the implementation of new legal framework on TIP, investigation of cases, referral mechanisms and victim rehabilitation.

Achievements

1. Government institutions especially law enforcement authorities, labor and social welfare departments launched awareness-raising campaigns about trafficking in persons while collaborating with other stakeholders including several non-governmental organizations since the enactment of Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2018 (PTPA-2018).
2. Although Pakistan remains under Tier 2 as it does not fully meet the minimum standards set in TVPA for combatting TIP, however, it has now identified the existence and gravity of the issue and is making significant efforts for the elimination of human trafficking in the country.
3. All the relevant departments i.e., Police, FIA, Labor, and Human Rights departments of all provinces are putting efforts regarding registration and prosecution of TIP cases, besides working on victim services referrals. Resultantly, hundreds of cases have been registered both in internal and external TIP cases till now during the last 3 years.
4. Pakistan has established a national referral mechanism to assist and protect trafficking victims. The NRM is a systematic approach on strengthening response on victim protection and assistance and comprises of the national, provincial and district level anti-trafficking committees.
5. Pakistan has signed several bilateral agreements with other countries to combat trafficking in persons. These agreements include the exchange of

- information, joint investigation, and the repatriation of victims.
6. Before the enactment of Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2018, the focus on law enforcement was on transboundary trafficking, while now, the focus has shifted to the ever-increasing issue of internal trafficking as well.
 7. More than 1000 police officers have been trained in Sindh about the malaise of human trafficking and bonded labor.
 8. The Social Welfare Department in Sindh, especially its sub-unit the Child Protection Authority, has established an effective referral mechanism for dealing with cases of child abduction, including child victims of trafficking. As per practices, they also provide psycho-social counselling to victims along with their family members.
 9. The provincial and district level structures particularly Stakeholder Working Groups managed by SSDO were acknowledged as a positive step, which helps all relevant stakeholders to periodically interact and collaborate for swift registration of TIP cases, prompt and transparent investigation, and an organized service delivery. SSDO's work strengthened the capacity and knowledge of law enforcement and other departments working with local communities at the grassroot levels.
 10. The Social Welfare Department is now sensitized to continue awareness raising on TIP, especially with a child-focused and gender-sensitive approach, so that the masses can be sensitized.
 11. Many CSOs and NGOs are raising awareness on TIP, from the grassroots level to the national level, through various tools such as direct engagement with communities, social media etc.
 12. The law enforcement agencies have started viewing the correlation between terrorism and human trafficking in the regional context, as trafficking in persons is reportedly serving the purpose of child soldier recruitment and financing for terrorist activities.
 13. Gender Studies Department in Fatima Jinnah Women University has made successful efforts in adding *Gender Safety* and *Self Defense Topics* as part of their curriculum.
 14. Pakistan does not have a National Hotline to report TIP cases yet, but it has established a National Citizen Portal where crimes and issues of all categories are reported.

Challenges

1. While having a very significant role to tackle TIP, there is no proper and adequate coordination and communication among all relevant stakeholders including LEAs (FIA, Police), prosecutors, and victim service providers to ensure the prevention, protection, and prosecution.
2. A systematic coordination mechanism referred to as NRM (National Level TIP Apex Committee, Provincial TIP Committees and District TIP Committees) to refer TIP cases. However, the NRM and the committees are very loosely structured, underrepresented and incapacitated.
3. On all tiers, there is no appropriate allocation of funds and resources to deal with such an organized crime.

4. Political instability is directly linked with the increase in the crime rate of a country because LEAs are often busy dealing with the internal political affairs of the country.
5. Various region-specific human rights violations including early child marriages, child labor, domestic labor, violence against women & girls and bonded labor traditions in Pakistan are being exploited by traffickers.
6. There is an explicit lack of awareness among common citizens about the prevalence of the crime, the signs, and the reporting mechanism to report this issue.
7. Afghan refugees are vulnerable to being trafficked mainly because of having no proper legal identification documents and residential status.
8. Due to inadequate coordination among stakeholders, the victims are not referred properly to receive any assistance in the form of shelters, medical support, and psychological care.
9. Hyperinflation is the biggest challenge as people are now looking for all sorts of legal and illegal ways to escape the country to make both ends meet and for a better lifestyle. The constant increase in unemployment rates in the country is forcing people to leave. The aspirations attached with escapism make the common man overlook its vulnerabilities.
10. The relevant stakeholders, especially police, sometimes cannot differentiate between the victims of trafficking and that of other bonded labor and various types of violence against women and children.
11. Victims of TIP usually do not speak to the law enforcement agencies for support and seeking justice. They prefer to make compromises and out-of-court settlements with traffickers and do not pursue cases even if FIRs are registered. This behavior is mainly because of no-confidence on LEAs and judicial system.
12. There is no specialized investigation and prosecutors appointed for trafficking in person case. Further overlapping of laws on TIP, labor rights violations, and illicit trade of sex-related business and crimes, lead to traffickers benefiting by avoiding prosecution.
13. Out of around hundreds of cases registered under TIP in Punjab and Sindh, the conviction rate is below one percent.
14. Prosecution is a relatively new department, and the Police usually do not follow the guidelines given to them by the Prosecution Department. The prosecution department is authorized to send observations on the investigation of police and submit a separate report in court after their observation. If evidence is not up to the mark, prosecutors can report to the high-ups to take strict action against the IO. Therefore, the authority of prosecution needs to be revised and strengthened.
15. Internal Trafficking is difficult to be traced down forensically because many poor or marginalized communities are not even registered in NADRA.
16. In rural areas, the victims themselves are not aware of the fact that they are victims of TIP, making it incredibly challenging to identify and rehabilitate victims. "Giving them the awareness that they are victims, is their first right."
17. The 15-hotline to report criminal tendency is a good mechanism, however there is a need to further strengthen the oversight on this.

There were reports of harassment of women victims by 15-operators who have access to personal numbers of complainants.

18. Natural disasters exacerbate the vulnerabilities of potential victims, because in disguise, service providers can exploit women and children for sex and bonded labor.
 19. Families usually do not take back victims of TIP due to the social stigma attached with it or because they are too poor to support them. It is sometimes difficult to identify the victims in such a scenario, as there is no one to report the case.
 20. Even if victims or someone else tries to report a case of trafficking to the police, the officials at the police station are not often trained to register the case and deal with it. Often, their capacity and knowledge are lacking, particularly at tehsil and district level as they are not even aware of TIP law. Most of the training programs for police focus on senior level officials, while little or no attention is given to junior police officials in small stations in rural areas.
 21. The legal documents are usually complex and cannot be comprehended by police officials placed in police stations.
 22. People are unaware of the correct channels of migration, or even the laws of their destination countries.
- That is why they fall into the trap of human traffickers disguised as travel agents. The government should create websites/centers/desks at passport offices that give people authentic information on ways of migration and opportunities abroad.
23. Trafficking in persons often involves powerful criminal networks, and those who speak out against trafficking may be at risk of retaliation. As such, journalists reporting on trafficking in persons must be given training on what measures are to be adopted to protect themselves as well as their sources of information.
 24. Reporting on trafficking in persons can be emotionally challenging, both for journalists and for the victims and survivors they interview. The media must be sensitive to the trauma experienced by those affected by trafficking and ensure that their reporting does not re-traumatize victims.
 25. At times, the media and LEAs expose the identity of survivors without their consent, which inadvertently provides a platform for traffickers to harm the survivor or the victim, besides promoting their activities. Reporting on TIP raises ethical concerns, such as protecting the confidentiality and safety of victims and avoiding re-traumatizing them through interviews or surveys.

Lessons Learnt:

1. It is experienced that the increase in awareness about the state of human trafficking in the country among common citizens, law enforcement agencies, and government officials of all concerned departments is very beneficial for increased reporting on TIP. This could be achieved through public campaigns, awareness programs and training workshops.
2. A robust punishment of traffickers is essential to discourage criminals.

- Strengthening the legal framework through increasing punishments and by providing adequate resources for law enforcement agencies, developing specialized units to investigate and prosecute human trafficking cases and resources to provide assistance for victims.
3. For dealing with most complex and organized crime, the modernization, digitization, technology, and knowledge integrated capacity building sessions of law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and related line departments works better to combat the most organized crime of trafficking in persons.
 4. Enhancing border security by raising the number of border patrol agents, investing in surveillance technology, and implementing stricter screening procedures have helped countries in reducing illegal border crossings.
 5. Prevention is critical to combat human trafficking effectively. This could involve educating vulnerable populations about the dangers of trafficking through curriculum reforms and introducing specialized subjects, providing economic opportunities for marginalized communities through government-induced income support programs, and introducing and implementing programs to reduce poverty and inequality.
 6. UN's 2015 SDGs, Goal 10; Reduced inequalities to facilitate safe migration and mobility of people, key to bridging the gap, needs to be implemented through global cooperation.
 7. Labor laws compliance should be monitored through robust oversight mechanisms in all state-owned, public and private sector industries and commercial businesses to eliminate all forms of labor rights violations.
 8. Simplification of laws, development of handy standard operating procedures to register and prosecute TIP cases and admissibility of digital evidence in courts is needed.
 9. International cooperation, district-level collaboration and intelligence sharing among police, border security, paramilitary forces, intelligence, and investigation agencies are essential to effectively address TIP.
 10. All the relevant but overlapping general and specialized laws pertaining to TIP, bonded labor, sexual exploitation, organ selling, buying, and selling of girls and children for commercial sex, and related offence, need to be harmonized, consolidated, and promoted through social programming and introduced in institutional training programs.
 11. Separate courts or benches with specialized judicial officers can better trial the offenses related to Trafficking, Smuggling and Human Rights Violations.
 12. The investigation process independently done, free and transparent can help build the trust of citizens on judicial processes and democratic justice.
 13. There is a special need to hold sessions with investigation officers (IOs) of the Police and FIA, Prosecutors, Judicial officers regarding the act. IO and Prosecutors should be on the same page and challan of TIP case be submitted after the recommendations of prosecutors.
 14. For the programs focusing on effective strategies for the prevention of TIP, the starting point must be mapping out of all relevant

- stakeholders to gather their support to work collectively for the cause.
15. There is a need to build a good working relationship between service delivery providers and the police, so that they can work in tandem to provide the victims with the support they need.
 16. The Education Department should be given the mandate of raising awareness of TIP in the general community, from primary schools to even higher education. Modern, scientific methods are needed to impart education and change mindsets.
 17. District-level TIP committees be made functional across Pakistan. These committees shall essentially include different but relevant stakeholders including officials of District Administration, Police, FIA, Social Welfare, Women Development, Human Rights, Labor, And Health Department besides representatives from CSOs and NGOs working at the grassroots level and the media persons.
 18. Devise media policy and make comprehensive efforts for prime content virality as it is important to generate traffic so that issues are adequately reported and addressed as soon as possible.
 19. While drafting legislation and policies, it is pertinent to consider the language barrier as a major chunk of our population is unable to understand the English language.
 20. It is important to maintain the record and database of our workforce in all sectors across the country to monitor their safety and security. The labor force in informal sector including brick kilns, farms, hospitality and fashion industry are vulnerable to human rights violations and becoming victims of trafficking.
 21. It is essential to make it mandatory for all labor sectors to provide the labor force with employment benefits, legal documentation facilities, i.e., service contracts, appointment letters, education and health insurance, and retirement plans and above all feasible and safe work environment.
 22. Political parties can be pursued to ensure in their party manifestos to discourage modern slave practices and they also guarantee to regret party tickets to those allegedly involved in labor rights violations.

DAY 2 - 28th Feb 2023**OPENING SESSION - DAY 2**

The 2nd day of the conference was initiated with the presentations of all 5 Working Groups from the first day's breakout sessions. The participants of all of the groups showcased and discussed their ideas and recommendations collectively with all of the conference participants to tackle *Trafficking in Persons* in Pakistan. Their discussion was moderated by TIP experts who also took questions from the audience regarding the way forward and

recommendations presented by the panelists. These panelists included parliamentarians, law enforcement officials, socials activists, academics, and media, who entertained questions accordingly, which ranged from ideas on strengthening the legal framework to ensuring the implementation of laws and policies that criminalize human trafficking and protect the rights of victims from top to bottom, everything was talked through.



GROUP 1

PARLIAMENTARIANS AND POLICYMAKERS



Moderated by:
Mr. Iqbal Ahmed Detho
Legal Expert

GROUP 1 - PARLIAMENTARIANS AND POLICYMAKERS

Recommendations:

1. Strengthen the legal framework on TIP through amendments, especially criminalizing the law as non-pardonable, and ensuring implementation of laws and policies that criminalize human trafficking and protect the rights of victims from top to bottom through enhanced parliamentary oversight.
2. Strengthening law enforcement efforts by providing adequate resources for law enforcement agencies for capacity enhancement of officers, investigation, and prosecution of human trafficking cases. This also includes the establishment and training of specialized units in LEAs that are equipped fully to handle these cases.
3. There is an urgent need to conduct country-wide research on the root causes of trafficking in persons and generate evidence-based learning and database for comprehensive social and legal approaches to combat this organized crime.
4. Support in budgetary provision to both the public and private sectors for better victim services to ensure appropriate care including medical care, psychological counseling, income support and legal assistance. This may involve the establishment of specialized shelters and support services for victims.
5. Raise public awareness through initiating various campaigns about the risks of human trafficking and how to identify and report suspected cases. This can be done through community-specific campaigns, school programs, and community outreach efforts.
6. Address the root causes behind increasing human trafficking and bonded labor. This can be done through the provision of education, employment and economic generation opportunities targeted towards marginalized communities.
7. Build constructive relations and spaces to work with national and international actors to combat trafficking. This may include knowledge and information sharing, exchange of ideas, adoption of best practices and coordinating efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking cases.
8. Need to ensure oversight on the progress of efforts in combating human trafficking, evaluate the effectiveness of legal and policy framework and issue periodic reports through aligning the work in the report of SDGs Task Forces.

GROUP 2

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS, INTERIOR & HOME MINISTRIES, LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES [FIA, POLICE]



Moderated by:
Mr. Dan Nash
Co-Founder,
Human Trafficking Training Center, US



GROUP 2 - GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS, INTERIOR AND HOME MINISTRIES, LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES [FIA, POLICE]

Recommendations:

1. FIA already developed a National Action Plan against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (2021–2025) which needs to be implemented in its true letter and spirit.
2. To train the officers down to the grassroots level, especially the Investigation Officer at police station levels within the police department and at district level in FIA. For this purpose, the Police and FIA need to build partnership with capacity building organizations for TOT initially to further replicate training to their officials.
3. Victims and traffickers should not be treated alike while investigating the TIP cases. For example, “victim” should be taken as an individual who suffered harm because of the criminal conduct and requires a very empathetic approach. The IOs must be equipped enough for victim identification, outreach, and understand the referral mechanism for service strategies.
4. Police due to its omnipresence at local levels should act as the spearhead against human trafficking while a trans-boundary high-profile case be transferred to FIA.
5. Criminal records of human traffickers to be integrated with NADRA [National Database & Registration Authority] to identify their criminal history.
6. There shall be an improved focus on both cross-border internal trafficking cases between provinces within territorial jurisdiction of the country.
7. Data is available regarding cross-border trafficking on the FIA website, but no data is available regarding internal trafficking within provinces on police record or with FIA—therefore there is a need to develop and maintain a centralized database on overall trafficking cases.
8. District Intelligence Committees to include FIA officers to improve data sharing.
9. National Hotline to be established for reporting Human Trafficking, better coordination among all stakeholders [provincial and district TIP committees] for increased and effective victim services, and for maintaining a centralized database on both internal and external trafficking cases.
10. Encourage the LEAs schools and colleges to include human trafficking in the curricula.
11. Use social media platforms to raise awareness about human trafficking.
12. There is a need for more trained and subject specialized officers to be recruited for Police and FIA as the current number is too low.
13. Appointment of Migration Liaison Officers to guide the people on legal ways to migrate.

GROUP 3

PROSECUTION AND JUDICIARY



Moderated by:

Mr. Kevin Metcalf

Founder National Child Protection
Task Force, US

GROUP 3 - PROSECUTION AND JUDICIARY

Recommendations:

1. Consolidate the laws under one law. There is need to blend various provisions in the general laws [Pakistan Penal Code, 369-376], provincial Bonded Labor Abolition Acts, and Prevention of Trafficking in Person Act 2018, Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act 2018 for combating human trafficking and bonded labor in Pakistan.
2. Separate Courts or benches be established for implementation PTPA Act 2018.
3. Orientation program for prosecutors, legal fraternity, and judicial officers on new legal framework on TIP be included in judicial academies.
4. Investigation and prosecution system shall be free from political influence and pressure.
5. Better and effective coordination between IOs and Prosecutors for putting a strong challan for trial and conviction in the court.
6. Police shall be made responsible to prosecution to improve investigation and witness producing for increased conviction rate.
7. Prosecutors shall be appointed to work under the Prosecutor General Office especially for TIP cases.

GROUP 4

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS INCLUDING SERVICE PROVIDERS & CSOs



Moderated by:
Ms. Alison Phillips
Co-Founder,
Human Trafficking Training Center, US



GROUP 4 - GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS INCLUDING SERVICE PROVIDERS & CSOS

Recommendations:

1. Identification should be indicator based; not self-disclosure based. Victims do not always know that they are victims or cannot safely speak out in public. As a result, it is up to community members and influencers, especially leaders, educators, clergy etc., to recognize the signs of human trafficking in their surroundings.
2. Make an informative, detailed, and comprehensive video (in local languages) for potential migrants. The format should be innovative, engaging and should utilize a storytelling format. One such method is making dramas which can be "*edutainment*". Videos can be disseminated through various means such as TV shows, government websites, radio etc.
3. Police need to be trained in a multidisciplinary manner. Victim service providers should provide their input for this training, so that the police are better able to understand the problem. TIP needs to be part of the training and awareness programs (in local languages) for law enforcement, for all staff, regardless of level.
4. CSOs shall help support LEAs and other stakeholders in translating the legal framework and SOPs in local languages.
5. Strengthen the already functional Helpline-15 as the national, responsive, and inclusive helpline.
6. Labor department of provinces shall maintain the record and database of labor work force across all sectors to monitor their safety and security as the labor force with respect to workers' rights violations.

GROUP 5

ACADEMIA, THINK TANKS AND MEDIA



Moderated by:
Mr. Edward Ross
Assistant Regional Security Officer
Investigator and Vice Consul, US
Embassy, Islamabad



GROUP 5 - ACADEMIA, THINK TANKS AND MEDIA

Recommendations:

1. Mass awareness campaign for education of the common citizens once for all is required at the state level.
2. Academia to take lead on it through research and introducing special subjects, in addition to curriculum and courses.
3. Government and civil society should provide support and protection for victims.
4. Academia, Think Tanks, and Media focus in their work to advocate for eradicating the root causes: poverty, lack of education, and discrimination.
5. Collaborate with international partners: such as the UN and all the global institutions working for the cause.
6. The policies to hold businesses and industries accountable to avoid any complicity in trafficking.
7. Civil society organizations engage with communities to raise awareness, provide education, and encourage reporting of trafficking.
8. Governments and organizations should monitor and evaluate their efforts to combat trafficking.

PANEL DISCUSSION:

STRENGTHENING NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND COORDINATION TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Moderator:

Mr. Zaigham Khan

Senior Journalist

Panelists:

Ms. Teresa Chang

Political Officer, U.S Embassy, Islamabad

Ms. Shehla Raza

Provincial Minister of Sindh for Women Development

Mr. Mushahid Hussain Syed

Member of the Senate of Pakistan

Mr. Iqbal Ahmed Detho

Legal Expert

Mr. Syed Kausar Abbas

Executive Director SSDO



STRENGTHENING NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND COORDINATION TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The first panelist of the session, Ms. Teresa Chang stressed the need for international collaboration and partnerships, especially highlighting the US State Department's *Trafficking in Persons Report 2022*, which gives specific actionable recommendations. She admired the increase in the identification of cases in Pakistan, however, she advocated to ensure conviction through proper investigation so that it leads to the perpetrators getting punished. In addition, she also called upon the government and civil society to take a holistic approach to rehabilitate victims, give shelter, and provide legal assistance.

"This is a global issue and we also have this problem in the United States. I really congratulate every single one of you because you have really taken the first step in approaching this problem by being here, by being a participant in this conference, and by being a stakeholder on this issue."

-Teresa Chang, US Embassy

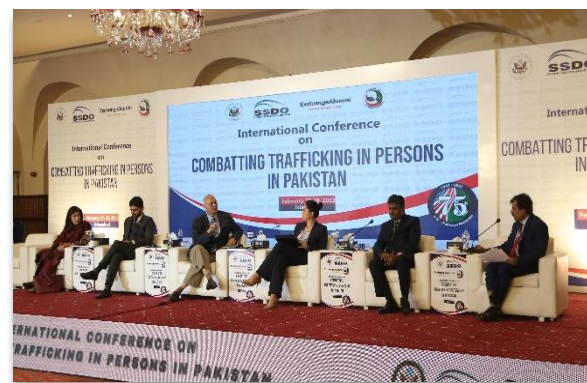


During the session, Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed discussed TIP to be an issue with global, regional, and national dimensions. He stated that the issue is also made graver due to its criminal nexus, as large trafficking rings are operating in

Pakistan, often with the support of transnational criminals in different countries. He identified Central Punjab as a hotspot area for these rings, including the regions of Gujrat, Mandi Bahauddin and Lala Musa. There is also a strong threat to human safety and security, as children are being trafficked to be recruited as child soldiers by terrorists and thousands of lives are lost due to dangerous traveling conditions that traffickers and smugglers put their victims through. He cited the recent incident in Italy which led to 28 Pakistanis losing their lives¹⁰. In this regard, the Senator agreed with Ms. Chang, calling for international collaborations, while also urging the parliamentarians to work on the legislative front.

"Parliament, practitioners, policymakers and opinion leaders have to forge hands and there should be a global partnership."

-Senator Mushahid Hussain



Ms. Shehla Raza discussed the work done by the Women Development Department in supporting victims, especially minor girls, by providing them with shelter, medical and legal assistance. However, the Minister also believed that the government cannot effectively implement its policies if all stakeholders and segments of society are

¹⁰ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/1044439-pakistanis-among-45-migrants-die-in-boat-wreck-off-italy>

not cooperating and supporting the process. She shared that many times legal action cannot be taken, simply because the victim's family or law enforcement end up creating unnecessary hurdles. Summing up this issue, she stated, "What can we do if the family is not ready to launch an FIR? What can we do if the police, before writing the FIR, asks us, 'First check to see if this girl was not in some sort of relationship with someone?'"

The next speaker, Mr. Iqbal Ahmed Detho, discussed Pakistan's international obligations and briefed the audience to the conventions Pakistan is signatory to. This included seven core conventions out of nine core *UN Human Rights Conventions*, as well as the ratification of eight core ILO conventions. He stated that TIP is connected to international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international criminal law. Therefore, for Pakistan to fulfill these obligations, Mr. Detho agreed with the recommendations put forth by the parliamentarians in their group presentation earlier, that there should be post legislative scrutiny. He stressed on the need for subcommittees on the delegated legislations, by citing the 'Committee on Delegated Legislation' in the Senate and the 'Rules of Procedures' in the National Assembly. He then strongly recommended that these mechanisms should be brought into the provincial assemblies' standing committees where they should not only legislate the law, but they should have the oversight and the implementation, by saying, "So, it is representation, oversight, as well as international cooperation and compliance."

In the end, Syed Kausar Abbas discussed the crucial role that the police department has to play to curb TIP after the passing of PTPA 2018. He said, since the police are looking after a plethora of criminal violations, there is a need to make designated investigative units at the district level that are solely dealing with TIP cases. He argued that it will

lead to better investigation and evidence collection that will ultimately help the prosecution, therefore increasing the conviction rate. The *Punjab Judicial Academy* has already included PTPA 2018 in their curriculum, and SSDO is in touch with the *Sindh Judicial Academy* to replicate this model. He also underscored the need for the same to be done with the police training syllabus, regardless of whether it is junior or senior staff.

Mr. Abbas also stressed that civil society organizations must collaborate with state institutions to facilitate and support them in curbing TIP in Pakistan. He said that this can be in the form of support for victim identification, rehabilitation and providing psychosocial support. Therefore, there is a need to develop the capacities of CSOs on TIP, especially those working at the grassroots level, which is why SSDO has launched the *Coalition on Combatting Trafficking in Persons*, made up of CSOs working all over Pakistan on service delivery and advocacy. Another key area for



collaboration identified by Mr. Abbas was the establishment of a national TIP helpline. SSDO has already proposed the idea of a helpline and dashboard to the FIA and plans to start its pilot phase on volunteer basis if approval is received from the government.

While answering a participant's query, Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed proposed a regional coalition of countries in South Asia

and Central Asia that are affected by TIP and are also part of the transit route that traffickers take. The US government and European Union should also be brought on board, and coordinated regional strategies should be formulated. He also added that this has become a lucrative industry worldwide, and many people are using illegal means for migration making them extremely susceptible to being trafficked. That is why he believed public service ads (PSAs) can be made to warn the public about human trafficking and smuggling by organized criminal groups, as *Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA)* is bound under law to have 5 to 10 minutes daily for PSAs. Ms. Chang also agreed on the importance of internationally coordinated efforts, such as the Senator's suggestion to form a regional coalition. She expressed that resources can be pooled, and that they can learn from the best practices and solutions of other countries by saying, "We don't have to recreate everything. We can look at what's been done regionally, internationally and be able to take from them the elements that work and establish them here."

The moderator then asked Ms. Raza to give her viewpoint on a potential national TIP helpline and referral network. She responded by underlining the need for national coordination and making a uniform system. She informed the audience about the 1094 helpline, which is digitized and is being used by government departments in Sindh, including Human Rights Department, Social Welfare Department and Women Development Department. Nevertheless, she opined that a single, national helpline is required where cases can be directly referred to the relevant department.

Mr. Detho ended the session by saying that on the international front, developed countries are supposed to provide 0.7% of their GDP to developing countries for socioeconomic development, a target that is currently not being achieved. This is essential for ensuring developing countries have the resources to address issues such as TIP and fulfil international obligations. On the domestic front, the space for civil society is shrinking and the paradigm of international aid has shifted.

"We need to have cooperation and coordination. We need to have supply and demand mechanisms so that we know which door to knock on. We have to build the institutional capacity if the police are not aware what section of the law to properly invoke the FIR into.

If police are not coordinating with the prosecution at the initial stage.

If the prosecution is not going to refer back.

If the judiciary is not going to sit in that way and is always in the ordering mode.

If prison is going to be retributive and punitive.

So, a whole paradigm shift in the criminal justice system towards protection and human rights has to be developed."

-Iqbal Ahmed Detho, Legal Expert

CONCLUDING REMARKS



CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Guest of Honor for the 2nd Day of the conference, Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, closed the ceremony by appreciating the efforts by SSDO for bringing together all relevant stakeholders including parliamentarians, policymakers, police, development practitioners, journalists, and civil society. He then summarized some of the best suggestions and recommendations presented throughout the conference by various experts:

- Human rights education to be made part of the curriculum
- Separate courts to process cases of child victims of TIP
- A national hotline exclusively for reporting cases of TIP to law enforcement
- Establishment of dedicated units for the investigation, prosecution and conviction of TIP offenders

He followed that by affirming that the Parliament of Pakistan is fully committed to working on this issue on the legislative front, while he also encouraged the growing civil society to take on programmatic interventions that can aid in combatting trafficking in persons. This matter, according to the Senator, is not something that requires coordination only at the national level, but rather collaborative efforts at the regional and global level. He further stated that Pakistan finds itself at *"the center of gravity"* for this issue, not only due to the sheer number of people being trafficked, but also its geographic location, as narcoterrorism is on the rise in neighboring Afghanistan and several transit routes from Central Asia to Europe also pass through the country. That is

why global partnerships are an integral component of tackling this issue.

The final closing remarks were delivered by Mr. Andrew Schofer, Deputy Chief of the US Mission in Pakistan. He appreciated the work SSDO has done under their ongoing grant



from the US State Department to curb TIP in Pakistan by strengthening the capacity and collaboration of all stakeholders through improved legal framework, institutional coordination for referrals, rehabilitation and social awareness. He also applauded the different stakeholders, both government and non-government, for their tireless work and support of all the project activities. He further elaborated that tackling this issue requires a coordinated approach by bringing on board both national and international stakeholders and stated that the US Mission is very proud to support SSDO's efforts to convene high-level government officials and civil society leaders at local and national levels to counter human trafficking in Pakistan. According to him, the exchange of ideas and coordination among all players will help reinforce the strong foundation upon which Pakistan can address the issue of trafficking in persons.

VISION

A just and equitable society where everyone enjoys their social, political, and legal rights.

MISSION

To ensure human rights by fostering rights based and responsive policy reforms leading to rule of law, transparency, citizen empowerment and inclusive service delivery.

ABOUT SSDO

Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) is a non-governmental organization founded in 2015 and registered under Societies Registration Act 1860. SSDO is a research-based advocacy organization working on issues of peace and sustainable development in Pakistan by engaging all stakeholders and citizens. To initiate a public and policy dialogue on democratic and just governance, rule of law, strengthening of democratic institutions, civic and human rights, countering violent extremism, and social development policies, SSDO in partnership with government institutions, parliamentarians, government departments, print and electronic media, academia and youth and religious fraternity works across country. In order to achieve vision and mission of organization, SSDO engages with stakeholders through research, advocacy, campaigns, capacity development, and technical support, and community engagement.

PROGRAM AREAS



APPROACH



Our Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



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