



Situation Update: **Tightening Crackdown on Refugees:** The situation for Afghan refugees in Pakistan has worsened during the month of February 2025 as government actions against them intensify. Following a directive from the Prime Minister's Office on January 29, 2025, authorities have ramped up relocation and repatriation measures targeting Afghan nationals across various legal categories. The past few weeks have seen an even more aggressive crackdown, with enforcement efforts expanding beyond Islamabad and Rawalpindi to several cities in Punjab including Gujrat, Narowal, Shakargarh and Mandi Baha-ud-Din.

Widening Arrests, Detentions & Deportations: The enforcement of stricter residency requirements has led to a surge in arrests, with over **4,000 Afghan nationals detained in Islamabad and Rawalpindi since 1st January and 1042 deported from Pakistan.** The Interior Ministry's insistence that Afghan refugees must obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to remain in the capital has resulted in widespread fear and uncertainty, forcing many to go into hiding. Reports from Punjab confirm that security forces have begun similar actions in other cities, escalating the crisis for vulnerable individuals, including women, children, and elderly refugees.

Mounting Humanitarian Concerns & Psychological Impact: The relentless crackdown has fueled distress within Afghan refugee communities, with many fearing arbitrary arrests, separation from families, and deportation to an uncertain future. The lack of access to legal aid, shelter, and basic services has worsened their vulnerability.

Of particular concern is the impact on mental health, especially among women and children, who are experiencing heightened anxiety, depression, and trauma due to forced displacement, harassment, and insecurity. Reports indicate a sharp rise in psychological distress, requiring urgent psychosocial support and crisis intervention. Amid escalating diplomatic tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan, the humanitarian response remains critical. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organization for Migration (IOM-UN) and other international actors continue to advocate for refugee protections, yet the on-the-ground reality remains dire, with urgent legal and humanitarian intervention needed.

SHARP Response: **Stepping Up Legal & Humanitarian Assistance:** As the crisis deepens, SHARP-Pakistan remains on the frontlines, responding to the surge in arrests, detentions, and forced deportations of Afghan refugees. With enforcement now extending to multiple cities in Punjab, SHARP has scaled up its legal aid, advocacy, and humanitarian assistance efforts to mitigate the suffering of affected individuals.

Legal Support & Rights Advocacy

Expanded Legal Assistance: SHARP's legal teams are working tirelessly to provide legal representation, monitor detention cases, and intervene in urgent deportation situations.

Engagement with Authorities: Regular coordination with law enforcement and government officials to ensure procedural fairness and prevent rights violations.

Policy Advocacy: Ongoing engagement with government authorities, UNHCR, diplomatic missions, and human rights bodies to press for humanitarian solutions and safeguards against forced repatriation.

Strengthening Protection & Well-Being: SHARP's Response to the Refugee Crisis

Psychosocial Support for Women & Children: SHARP is actively providing psychological first aid and counseling services to Afghan refugees facing trauma due to displacement, uncertainty, and fear of deportation.

Community-Based Coping Mechanisms: We are facilitating peer support networks and mental health awareness sessions to help refugees build emotional resilience and strengthen their capacity to cope with stress.

Unwavering Commitment to Refugee Protection & Dignity

Defending Fundamental Rights: Advocating for the safety, protection, and dignity of refugees while opposing forced repatriation.

Strengthening Legal & Humanitarian Support: Providing urgent legal aid, psychosocial support, and humanitarian assistance to those facing persecution and distress.

Advocating for Humane Policies: Calling for ethical and rights-based approaches to safeguard vulnerable refugee communities.

In this critical time, SHARP urges humanitarian agencies, civil society, and international partners to unite in protecting refugee rights, ensuring access to essential services, and delivering emergency relief. The need for immediate legal protection, mental health support, and humanitarian assistance has never been greater.

VISITS & MEETINGS

SHARP Leadership meeting with Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees (CCAR) in Islamabad to Strengthen Collaboration

Chairman SHARP Mr. Liaqat Banori and CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed met Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees (CCAR) in Islamabad, Mr. Asmatullah Shah, to discuss the urgent issues regarding refugees in Pakistan. They discussed ways of increasing protection services, bettering access to crucial resources, and reinforcing support measures to enable the refugees to be provided with adequate support.

During the meeting, SHARP leadership emphasized the importance of fostering strong collaboration between SHARP, government authorities, and international partners to develop sustainable and long-term solutions. They also explored future initiatives aimed at reinforcing humanitarian response, awareness and policy development to better support displaced communities.

This engagement aimed to establish a robust liaison and coordination mechanism between SHARP and the government. CCAR Mr. Asmatullah Shah assured his full cooperation with SHARP and commended the organization's unwavering commitment to protecting refugee rights and providing critical support services.

As a gesture of gratitude for his continued support, Chairman Mr. Banori presented a SHARP souvenir to Mr. Asmatullah Shah.



SHARP Welcomes UNHCR Delegation to Discuss Protection Initiatives and Strengthen Collaboration

SHARP was honoured to welcome a distinguished UNHCR delegation at its head office, led by Ms. Kiran Kaur, incoming Assistant Representative (Protection), accompanied by Mr. Richard Grindell, Senior Protection Officer, and Mr. Peter Waita, Senior Information Management Officer. Chairman Syed Liaqat Banori, CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed, and PD-ICT Mr. Aatif Afzal warmly received the delegation and briefed them on SHARP's protection operations, legal assistance, and the vital role of the Reception Desk Centre (RDC).



During the boardroom meeting, both teams engaged in productive discussions on the prevailing protection environment, challenges faced by persons of concern, and avenues for further strengthening partnership to enhance support mechanisms.

Delegation from People Help - Refugee Support Network Visits SHARP Head Office in Islamabad to Strengthen Collaboration

SHARP hosted a delegation from the People Help – Refugee Support Network - at the head office in Islamabad. The delegation, led by Ms. Monica Moya (Founder & President), Ms. Silvia Sala (Founder), and Mr. Waqas Ahmed (Project Manager) engaged in a meaningful



discussion with SHARP team on enhancing mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services for refugees.

Led by Mr. Mudassar Javed (CEO SHARP) and joined by Mr. Aatif Afzal (Project Director, ICT), Ms. Hina Saleem (Media and Communication Coordinator), and Ms. Maleeha Sami (Project Coordinator), the meeting focused on exploring collaboration opportunities to strengthen mental health support for refugees.

Strengthening Refugee Protection: SHARP's Engagement with Commissioner for Afghan Refugees, K-P

SHARP Project Director (K-P), Ms. Maimoona Batool Khan, held a pivotal meeting with the Commissioner for Afghan Refugees, K-P, Mr. Shakeel Muhammad Khan Safi, to discuss enhancing refugee protection efforts, promoting human rights, and advancing key project objectives.

During the discussion, they emphasized on the importance of collaborative strategies to improve legal aid, access to essential services, and community engagement initiatives for Afghan refugees. The meeting also focused on strengthening coordination between SHARP, government authorities, and international stakeholders to ensure sustainable support mechanisms. Commissioner Mr. Shakeel Muhammad Khan Safi acknowledged SHARP's continued efforts in providing legal assistance, advocacy, and protection services for refugees and expressed his commitment to fostering stronger cooperation in addressing humanitarian challenges.



SHARP Signs MoU with Sindh Prosecution Department to Strengthen Legal Collaboration and Justice Initiatives

SHARP is pleased to announce the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Sindh Prosecution Department, marking a significant step toward enhancing legal collaboration for justice and protection.

The MoU was formally signed in Karachi yesterday by Mr. Mudassar Javed, CEO of SHARP, and Mr. Muntazir Mehdi, Additional Prosecutor General, representing their respective organizations. This partnership aims to strengthen legal assistance, capacity-building initiatives, and coordinated efforts in addressing key justice and human rights challenges in Sindh province.



SHARP CEO convened a productive meeting with the RSD staff and ALAC team in Karachi

SHARP CEO, Mr. Mudassar Javed, recently visited the Karachi office, where he convened a productive meeting with the RSD staff and ALAC team. During the session, he commended the team's dedication and impact, acknowledging the team's commitment to legal aid and protection services. He also conducted a thorough review of RDC and ALAC operations, discussing key achievements, ongoing challenges, and areas for strategic improvement to enhance service delivery.



Engaging in an interactive discussion, he encouraged team members to share their experiences, operational concerns, and suggestions for further strengthening SHARP's initiatives. Mr. Mudassar emphasized the importance of collaboration, proactive problem-solving, and continued capacity-building to address challenges effectively.



SHARP Strengthens Engagement with Law Enforcement in Sindh

CEO SHARP, Mr. Mudassar Javed, held productive meetings with senior police officials in Karachi to enhance collaboration on human rights, prisoner welfare, and capacity building.

At the Inspectorate General Sindh (Prisons & Correctional Service), he met IG Prisons Sindh, Qazi Nazir Ahmad, for a detailed discussion on prisoner welfare and staff training,



with a commitment to future cooperation. PO Mr. Ilam-ud-Din assisted CEO during the meeting.

At the Central Police Office (CPO), he met AIG (Human Rights & Gender Crimes), Ms. Shahla Qureshi, and SSP Mr. Tariq Mastoi, discussing matters of mutual interest, including human rights protections, gender-based violence prevention, legal aid for vulnerable groups, and strengthening law enforcement responses. ALAC Lawyer Ms. Qurat-ul-Ain was also present on this occasion.



SHARP Joins Radio Pakistan Discussion on Anti-Human Trafficking & Migrant Smuggling

SHARP had the privilege of participating in an insightful discussion on anti-human trafficking and migrant smuggling on Radio Pakistan National Network (Islamabad Station).

SHARP Project Director, Mr. Aatif Afzal, represented SHARP, emphasizing our commitment to advocacy and



awareness in combating these crimes. The program, hosted by Mr. Manazar Husain and produced by Mr. Inam Soomro, featured distinguished panelists: Mr. Ammar Jafri, Former Additional Director General, FIA & Dr. Saeeduzzaman, Head of Department (International Relations), NUML University.

The conversation explored trafficking networks, legal frameworks, victim protection, and the crucial role of civil society in addressing these challenges.

Coordination meeting with Child Protective Case Management Officer from IRC

SHARP-Timergara team held a coordination meeting with Mr. Fazal Khalid, Child Protective Case Management Officer from IRC. The discussion focused on referral mechanisms for child protection, Persons with Special Needs (PWSNs), and legal assistance, ensuring a seamless process between organizations.

Mr. Khalid reaffirmed IRC's commitment to sharing cases that align with SHARP's expertise, fostering a collaborative approach to safeguarding vulnerable children and communities.



UNHCR's Advice & Legal Aid Centers (ALAC)

Enhancing Professional Standards: SHARP Conducts Training Workshop on Code of Conduct for RDC Staff in Islamabad

SHARP successfully organized a one-day refresher training workshop for Reception Desk Centre (RDC) staff at its Head Office in Islamabad, focusing on the Code of Conduct, organizational culture, and professional ethics.

The training session was led by Mr. Jahanzeb Aftab, Senior Admin & HR Officer, who provided comprehensive guidance on workplace ethics, compliance with SHARP's



policies, and the importance of maintaining a professional and respectful work environment. He elaborated on key principles such as integrity, accountability, and transparency, ensuring that staff members uphold the highest standards in their daily interactions with refugees and stakeholders.

The workshop aimed to strengthen professional conduct, promote a culture of responsibility, and ensure that RDC staff are fully equipped to provide quality support services while upholding SHARP's core principles.

Legal Aid and Protection Services (LAPS) Project

SHARP Conducts Capacity-Building Training on Reporting Protocols and Formats

SHARP Protection Teams from Islamabad and KP participated in a one-day capacity-building training on "Reporting Protocols and Formats" at the SHARP Office in Islamabad. The session aimed to strengthen participants' skills in reporting standards, protocols, and documentation formats to ensure clarity, accuracy, and consistency in reporting.



Representatives from Peshawar, including Ms. Memoona Batool (Project Director, KP), Mr. Manzoor Ali (Manager, Legal Protection Team), and Mr. Shabir Hussain (Team Coordinator), along with Mr. Syed Muhammad Saleem (Project Coordinator) and the Protection Team from Islamabad, actively engaged in the training.



The session was further enriched by the valuable insights of SHARP CEO, Mr. Mudassar Javed, and Project Director-ICT, Mr. Aatif Afzal, who emphasized the importance of a robust reporting mechanism and the critical role of accurate documentation in achieving organizational objectives. This training reinforced SHARP commitment to enhancing documentation standards, equipping participants with essential principles for effective reporting and improved service delivery.

Two-Day Consultative Workshop in Karachi with Judicial Officers on Refugee Protection!

SHARP-Pakistan, in collaboration with Sindh Judicial Academy, organized a Consultative Workshop on International Protection & Legal Framework for Refugees in Pakistan. The workshop aimed to enhance judicial understanding of refugee rights, legal frameworks, and policy challenges in Pakistan.

Key discussions covered the 1951 Geneva Convention, principles of non-refoulement, and the legal status of refugees in Pakistan. Participants also examined judicial decision-making in refugee cases, the Foreigners Act 1946, and government policies on refugee protection. Additional sessions addressed trafficking in persons and the Juvenile Justice Act 2020, highlighting legal challenges and protection mechanisms.



Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro (Judge, Sindh High Court & DG, Sindh Judicial Academy) emphasized the judiciary's vital role in ensuring justice for refugees, stating, "Judicial officers play a pivotal role in upholding justice for vulnerable communities. Strengthening legal understanding and applying international protection principles are essential for a fair and just system."

SHARP CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed reaffirmed the organization's commitment, stating, "For over two decades, SHARP has been at the forefront of refugee rights advocacy and legal aid in Pakistan. This workshop is another step toward strengthening judicial engagement and improving the legal framework for refugee protection."



CEO held an engaging session with the Protection Project Team in Karachi

During his recent visit to SHARP Karachi Office, CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed held an engaging session with the Protection Project Team, commending their dedication to legal aid and human rights protection. He emphasized key principles, including adherence to ethical standards, zero tolerance for fraud and harassment, continuous learning, and accountability in service delivery.

Mr. Mudassar also highlighted the importance of strong coordination with stakeholders and encouraged the team to enhance their quality of work to attract donor support. He urged them to embrace innovation, uphold integrity, and take pride in their roles, reinforcing SHARP's mission to protect and empower vulnerable communities.

Strengthening Legal Advocacy: SHARP Conducts Capacity-Building Training for Taxila Bar Association Lawyers

SHARP Protection Team in Islamabad successfully conducted a one-day capacity-building training for 30 lawyers from the Bar Association, Taxila (RWP). This training aimed to enhance coordination and collaboration with the legal fraternity while sensitizing participants on



The workshop, facilitated by SHARP's Legal Manager Mr. Manzoor Ali and Protection Officer Mr. Ilam-ud-din, concluded with a certificate distribution ceremony and a group photograph, reinforcing a collective commitment to advancing refugee rights in Pakistan.



International Humanitarian Laws, national and international legal frameworks, refugee protection, and the critical role of lawyers in safeguarding human rights.

Mr. Syed Muhammad Saleem, Project Coordinator, welcomed participants and provided a comprehensive overview of SHARP's 25-year journey in advocating for

Afghan nationals' rights. The session was led by Ms. Aneela Sarfaraz, Senior Legal Expert, and Ms. Ayesha Saeed, Protection Lawyer, who conducted insightful presentations. Advocate Taufiq Ahmed, Head of the ALAC Team, actively engaged participants in discussions through interactive sessions, case studies, and group work.

Mr. Mudassar Javed, CEO SHARP, appreciated the continued support of the legal community in providing protection services to refugees. He emphasized the indispensable role of lawyers as custodians of justice and extended a special vote of thanks for their dedication to uplifting Afghan nationals.

Chief Guest, Mr. Tajamal Hassan Kazmi, President Bar Association, Taxila, commended SHARP for organizing the session and pledged continued collaboration. He announced the formation of a Lawyers' Wing to support SHARP's mission in Taxila and suggested displaying SHARP's helpline banner at the Taxila Bar Association.

SHARP & WEO Collaborate on Psychological First Aid Training to Strengthen Crisis Response

In collaboration with the Women Empowerment Organization (WEO), SHARP Protection team participated in a one-day Psychological First Aid (PFA) training at the SHARP Office in Islamabad. The training aimed to equip 23 participants from both organizations with essential skills to effectively respond to emergencies and distressing situations, fostering resilience and emotional well-being within communities.



Facilitated by Ms. Kianat Nadeem, Assistant Program Officer for Case Management, the session covered the core principles of PFA, including safety, hope, and access to social, physical, and emotional support. SHARP's senior leadership, including CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed, Project Director-ICT Mr. Atif Afzal, and Admin & HR Manager Ms. Huma Aziz, also attended the session.

In his remarks, Mr. Mudassar Javed underscored the importance of mental health and advocated for continued training sessions to enhance the well-being of SHARP employees. Mr. Atif Afzal expressed his appreciation to the



facilitator for delivering a highly impactful and well-structured session to strengthen the capacity of both teams to respond effectively to crisis situations.

SHARP Visits Afghan Camp Malir to Enhance Case Management and Protection Activities

Under its protection project, the SHARP team conducted a field visit to the Afghan Camp in Malir, Karachi, to identify Protection and Case Management (PCM) cases, carry out Protection Screening (PS) visits, and enhance stakeholder engagement.



During the visit, the team met with Mr. Syed Zumair, Assistant Registration Officer, CAR-Sindh, to discuss the establishment of a new office at the Afghan Camp. They explored strategies to facilitate the enrollment of displaced Afghan individuals in essential support programs.

Through ongoing collaboration and advocacy, SHARP remains committed to ensuring refugees have access to protection services, legal aid, and sustainable opportunities for a more secure future.

SHARP Karachi Team Enhances Preparedness for IFRP Through Mock Session

Under the Protection Project, a mock session was organized for the SHARP Karachi team, led by Ms. Jamal Khatoon, Senior Program Assistant. The session aimed to enhance preparedness for the resumption of the Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan (IFRP) by focusing on strategic planning, strengthening coordination, and refining response mechanisms.

Through proactive discussions and scenario-based problem-solving, the team identified key challenges, developed coping strategies, and reinforced inter-agency collaboration. This initiative ensures that SHARP remains equipped and responsive in providing critical support to vulnerable communities with efficiency, professionalism, and compassion.



AMNA-supported MHPSS project

SHARP Conducts Empowering Healing Session for Caregivers & PWDs in Attock Under AMNA Project

SHARP, under the AMNA project, brought together 38 caregivers, including 5 Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), for an empowering and healing session in Attock. Facilitated by project coordinator Ms. Maleeha Sami, TBB Coordinator Ms. Rukhsana Jaffar, and Interpreter Mr. Ahmed Taufiq, this session used AMNA's approach to



create a safe, trauma-sensitive space for self-expression, mutual respect, and community bonding.

Through engaging activities like the emotional station, trust walk, and laughter chain, participants experienced reduced stress, strengthened bonds, and developed valuable healing tools for their journey. The session focused on empowering individuals, fostering shared resilience, and validating the worth of both caregivers and PWDs.

AMAN-KAAR

AMAN-KAAR: Empowering Youth Through Theatre to Foster Peace & Social Harmony

SHARP, in collaboration with National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), successfully conducted four theatre workshops at various educational institutions, including Khyber Technical College, Government Dr. Khan Shaheed Degree College (Swat), Superior College Peshawar, City University, Government Post Graduate College Muzaffargarh, and Allama Iqbal Open University (Multan Campus). These workshops were held under the EU-funded "AMAN-KAAR (Performers for Peace)" initiative, aiming to promote social harmony, inclusivity, and tolerance while preventing violent extremism.



While opening the sessions, Project Manager Mr. Zahid Usman highlighted SHARP's unwavering commitment to peacebuilding and the transformative power of creative expression. He encouraged participants to see theatre as a powerful tool for driving social change, fostering unity, and promoting acceptance within their communities.

Facilitated by renowned theatre director and activist Mr. Safeer Ullah Khan, the workshops provided a platform for youth from diverse backgrounds to express real-life experiences through creative storytelling and performance. These interactive sessions fostered dialogue, strengthened peaceful coexistence, and encouraged critical thinking on societal issues.

Through initiatives like AMAN-KAAR, SHARP continues to leverage the arts as a powerful tool for peacebuilding, inspiring a culture of tolerance, inclusivity, and coexistence across communities.

