Society for Human Rights & Prisoners' Aid

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SERVING HUMANITY | PROTECTING RIGHTS | BUILDING PEACE



SHARP-Pakistan remains committed to sharing leadership perspectives on critical humanitarian challenges. This month, an exclusive article from the CEO-SHARP is featured on page # 13

Protection Overview – April 2026:

In April 2026, protection risks for Afghan refugees and migrant communities in Pakistan escalated significantly under the continued enforcement of the Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan (IFRP). Reports indicated a marked increase in verification checks, arrests, and pressure on undocumented individuals, Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders, and segments of PoR card holders facing documentation uncertainty.

Heightened enforcement led to more frequent detentions and movement restrictions, driving fear and limiting mobility. Many individuals avoided public spaces, severely constraining access to livelihoods, healthcare, education, and essential services. The unpredictable nature of enforcement has further deepened insecurity and fear across affected populations.

Economic conditions worsened. Daily wage opportunities remained scarce, while inflation and rising rents intensified financial hardship. Informal evictions and landlord pressures persisted, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas, leaving many families at heightened risk of displacement and homelessness.

Women and children continued to bear the brunt of the crisis. Female-headed households faced critical barriers to legal aid, protection services, and income opportunities. Restricted mobility and social norms increased isolation and psychosocial stress among women and girls. Children, especially those out of school or engaged in labor, remained highly vulnerable to exploitation, unsafe conditions, and prolonged disruption to education.

Psychological distress intensified, driven by fear of detention, legal uncertainty, and concerns over forced return. Families contemplating a return to Afghanistan faced difficult decisions amid fragile conditions, including limited access to basic services, livelihoods, and reintegration support. Overall, April 2026 signals a deepening protection crisis in Pakistan, underscoring the urgent need for clear policy communication, strengthened legal safeguards, expanded psychosocial support, and a coordinated humanitarian response to protect vulnerable communities.

SHARP Response

In response to the evolving protection environment in April 2026, SHARP continued to provide life-saving legal and protection assistance to Afghan refugees and migrant communities across Pakistan, with a focus on individuals affected by enforcement measures under the IFRP.

SHARP strengthened its legal aid services through Reception Desk Centres (RDCs) and field-based interventions, ensuring timely counseling, documentation support, and referrals for individuals facing verification checks, arrests, or detention risks. Priority was given to vulnerable groups, including ACC holders, PoR card holders, undocumented individuals, women, and persons with protection concerns.

Mobile and outreach teams remained active in high-risk areas to improve access for those unable to travel due to fear of detention or movement restrictions. Through these interventions, SHARP facilitated legal awareness sessions, provided individualized case management, and supported clients in navigating documentation and protection challenges.

Psychosocial support and referral pathways were further strengthened, particularly for women and children affected by isolation, distress, and economic hardship. SHARP also continued coordination with protection actors and relevant stakeholders to enhance information sharing and improve response mechanisms.

At the policy and advocacy level, SHARP continued to highlight emerging protection risks and advocate for predictable, rights-based approaches to migration governance, emphasizing the need for clear communication, due process, and safeguards for vulnerable populations.

SHARP remains committed to ensuring access to protection, dignity, and justice for all affected communities amid an increasingly complex protection landscape.

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN LAW | A NEW CHAPTER BEGINS







SHARP has officially launched the SHARP Women Project through a Project Orientation Session, marking the beginning of a transformative initiative aimed at strengthening women's leadership in Pakistan's legal sector. Funded by the German Embassy in Islamabad, the project will build the capacity of **125 young female lawyers,** promote **GBV-sensitive legal practices**, and expand **youth-focused legal awareness.** A key component of the initiative is the establishment of a **Women Human Rights Champions Network,** designed to strengthen advocacy, peer learning, and institutional coordination for improved access to justice.

The Orientation Session was conducted in a hybrid format, reflecting strong organizational cohesion and nationwide engagement. SHARP teams from Islamabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Lahore, and Karachi participated, with the Islamabad office joining in person and regional teams connected virtually. The session was facilitated by Mr. Aatif Afzal, Project Director, alongside Ms. Sonia Mansoor, Training, Engagement & Advocacy Coordinator, who presented the project's strategic framework, objectives, and implementation roadmap.

SHARP CEO, Mr. Mudassar Javed, also joined the session, congratulating the team on this important milestone and emphasizing the significance of empowering women lawyers as key agents of change in advancing justice, human rights, and social inclusion.











SHARP, under its protection project, organized a one-day capacity-building workshop for lawyers at the Fateh Jang Bar Association to strengthen the understanding of human rights and protection frameworks.

The session was attended by Chief Guest MNA Mr. Malik Sohail Khan, along with SHARP Chairman Mr. Syed Liaqat Banori, CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed, and Ms. Saima from IOM Pakistan, reflecting strong institutional collaboration. Ms. Huma Aziz (Project Manager, SHARP) opened the session with an overview of SHARP's mandate and interventions.

Technical sessions were led by Mr. Aimal Khan (Senior Protection Legal Expert) and Ms. Soharwardia Rawadia (Protection Lawyer), with facilitation by Mr. Inkasar, ensuring active engagement.During the discussion, Mr. Mudassar Javed emphasized the importance of practical, rights-based legal approaches.

In his remarks, Mr. Malik Sohail Khan appreciated SHARP's efforts and highlighted the critical role of lawyers in protecting vulnerable communities, while Mr. Sajjad Haider Khan (President, Fateh Jang Bar Association) expressed support for continued collaboration.

Chairman SHARP, Mr. Syed Liaqat Banori, delivered the vote of thanks, underscoring the shared responsibility of the legal community in upholding human rights and justice. Workshop concluded with certificate distribution and the presentation of a souvenir to the chief guest.



SHARP's vision for empowering youth through skills development and safe migration awareness was highlighted during a productive meeting between SHARP CEO, Mr. Mudassar Javed, and Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan, Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme.

The discussion focused on SHARP's strategic initiatives to equip young people with practical, market-driven skills through structured training and internship opportunities. Mr. Mudassar also emphasized SHARP's continued commitment to raising awareness on safe and regular migration pathways as a preventive response to the risks of irregular migration.

Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan appreciated SHARP's forward-looking vision and strong commitment to youth development. Both sides agreed to formalize collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to expand opportunities for young people. The partnership reflects a shared commitment to the Prime Minister of Pakistan's vision of empowering youth and building a resilient, future-ready generation.



As part of its continued partnership with UNHCR, a high-level delegation visited SHARP's Regional Office in Peshawar to review ongoing activities and strengthen coordination. The delegation, comprising Ms. Kiran Kaur, Mr. Richard Grindell, and Mr. Sahibzada Younas, was received by Ms. Memoona Batool Khan (Project Director – KP), who acknowledged UNHCR's continued support.

The visit included briefings on SHARP's key interventions, achievements, and operational challenges. Mr. Manzoor Ali, Manager Legal, highlighted legal aid services and emphasized the need for sustained protection support for vulnerable populations. Field teams also shared insights, success stories, and implementation challenges, reflecting SHARP's strong grassroots engagement. The delegation appreciated SHARP's efforts, and the visit concluded with a shared commitment to further strengthen coordination and service delivery.



SHARP CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed participated in SIA Summit 2.0, organized in Islamabad by the Social Innovation Academy (SIA), engaging with innovators, policymakers, entrepreneurs, journalists and civil society activists championing women-led social enterprises across Pakistan.

He also met the Chief Guest, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, Chairman of the Prime Minister's youth program, exchanging valuable insights on strengthening collaboration and advancing inclusive, women-centered development. Through active networking and dialogue, he explored opportunities in financial inclusion, digital empowerment, and policy reforms—reaffirming SHARP's commitment to driving sustainable impact.



SHARP CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed attended the St. Patrick's Day reception hosted by the Embassy of Ireland in Islamabad, bringing together diplomats and members of the international community. H.E. Mary O'Neill, Ambassador of Ireland to Pakistan, highlighted Ireland's commitment to human rights, peacebuilding, and the UN Charter. He also engaged with representatives from the Netherlands, Sweden, and Canada to explore opportunities for future collaboration, with a focus on advancing protection, justice, and inclusive development for vulnerable communities.



In a separate engagement, Mr. Mudassar Javed met H.E. Raimundas Karoblis, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, and #EUPakistan colleagues, expressing appreciation for their principled leadership and reaffirming SHARP's strong partnership with the European Union, the EU Delegation to Pakistan, and DG INTPA, highlighting its impact in delivering justice, protection, and hope to migrants, refugees, and vulnerable communities. These engagements reflect SHARP's continued commitment to strengthening international partnerships and advancing human rights, peacebuilding, and inclusive development through coordinated action.



Under the German Embassy–supported SHARP Women Project, SHARP convened a series of high-level coordination meetings in Karachi to strengthen women's empowerment and improve access to justice. The engagements brought together key stakeholders from the legal fraternity, law enforcement, prosecution, judiciary, and academia, providing a strong platform for dialogue and partnership building.

Led by SHARP PD-ICT Mr. Aatif Afzal and Team Lead Karachi Ms. Qurat-ul-Ain, the meetings included representatives from the Sindh Bar Council, Sindh Police (AIGP Human Rights & Gender Crimes), Prosecutor General Sindh, Sindh Judicial Academy, Environmental Protection Tribunal, University of Karachi, and the Sindh Law Department. The discussions focused on strengthening collaboration for the identification, capacity building, and professional engagement of female lawyers, particularly in underserved and vulnerable contexts. Participants also explored joint trainings planned for June 2026, legal awareness initiatives, mentorship opportunities, and institutional linkages to enhance gender-responsive legal services. These engagements mark a significant step toward building a more inclusive justice ecosystem where women, both as legal professionals and rights holders, are empowered to play a stronger, more visible role.



SHARP continues to strengthen its teams and enhance program effectiveness through focused leadership engagement.

During a visit to Peshawar, CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed met with EU staff and newly recruited Child Protection team members. The discussion centered on improving coordination, strengthening teamwork, and ensuring alignment for ongoing and upcoming activities. Appreciating the team's dedication, he emphasized that strong collaboration and shared commitment are essential for delivering effective, rights-based services to vulnerable communities.



During a recent visit to Karachi, Project Director (ICT) Mr. Aatif Afzal, accompanied by Team Lead Karachi Ms. Qurat-ul-Ain Khan, engaged with Afghan community members and key stakeholders under SHARP's UNHCR-supported project.

Community interactions with Afghan elders highlighted the importance of grounding interventions in local realities to ensure inclusive and responsive programming. Strategic meetings were held with representatives from the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (Sindh), UNHCR, Imkaan Welfare Organization, and the Ismaili Council of Pakistan to strengthen coordination, exchange insights, and reinforce a shared commitment to effective protection responses.

An internal session with the SHARP Karachi team focused on reviewing ongoing interventions, addressing field-level challenges, and enhancing service delivery approaches. These engagements reaffirm SHARP's commitment to delivering community-centered protection services through strong partnerships and a people-first approach.



An orientation session was conducted at SHARP's Peshawar office for newly recruited staff under the Child Protection Program to strengthen service delivery and ensure quality implementation.

The session focused on familiarizing staff with organizational policies, roles, and responsibilities. Mr. Noor Khan (Child Protection Associate, UNHCR) provided guidance on child protection principles, stakeholder coordination, and field practices. Ms. Memoona Batool Khan, Project Director KP, highlighted SHARP's mandate and emphasized professionalism and accountability, while Mr. Daniyal Ahmad, Project Manager – Child Protection, outlined implementation processes, coordination mechanisms, and reporting requirements.

The session concluded with an interactive discussion, enhancing staff readiness for effective field engagement.





A one-day capacity-building workshop was organized for Judicial Officers at the KP Judicial Academy (KPJA), Peshawar, bringing together 35 Civil Judges/Ilaqa Qazis from across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The workshop provided an interactive platform to enhance understanding of refugee protection, human rights, and the Foreigners Act 1946. Ms. Memoona Batool Khan, Project Director KP, welcomed participants, while SHARP CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed reaffirmed the organization's commitment to advancing access to justice and protection for vulnerable communities.

DG KPJA, Mr. Jehanzeb Shinwari, attended the opening and closing sessions and appreciated the initiative in strengthening judicial capacity on protection-related issues.

Technical sessions covered the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), with emphasis on Article 14, international refugee protection frameworks, durable solutions, and relevant domestic legal provisions. Resource persons included Mr. Fareed Nadeem (University of Peshawar), legal experts, and Mr. Sahibzada Younas from UNHCR. The workshop concluded with certificate distribution, reinforcing a shared commitment to promoting justice, human rights, and refugee protection in Pakistan.



Promoting safe migration and fair recruitment practices, a one-day stakeholder consultation on safe migration and fair recruitment was organized by ILO in collaboration with the Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment (BEOE) in Karachi.

Representing SHARP, Ms. Quratulain Khan (Team Lead RDC) and Mr. Ilam Uddin (Area Coordinator) engaged with government officials, CSOs, legal experts, recruitment promoters, and youth representatives. The session was attended by Mr. Javed Zia, Director General BEOE, as Chief Guest. Discussions focused on challenges such as fraudulent recruitment, protection of migrant workers, and the need for transparent, digital recruitment systems. SHARP contributed field insights, emphasizing community awareness and stronger legal safeguards for vulnerable migrants.





Reinforcing its commitment to strengthening law enforcement capacity, SHARP–ALAC III organized a training workshop on “Human Rights & Refugee Laws” in Mianwali for police officials. A total of 28 officers (24 male, 4 female) participated.

Project Director (ICT) Mr. Aatif Afzal led an interactive session on human rights, focusing on core principles, legal frameworks, and their practical application in policing. Field Manager Mianwali Mr. Imran Yousafzai, with online support from UNHCR representative Ms. Ghazala Mirza, delivered a session on international refugee law and the status of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, highlighting UNHCR's mandate, national policy context, and emerging protection risks, including the Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan (IFRP).



SHARP ALAC-1 successfully conducted a training on Human Rights & Refugee Rights for police officials at the Capital Police College (CPC), Islamabad, engaging around 30 participants in rights-based policing and protection frameworks.

Ms. Ghazala Mirza (UNHCR Representative) delivered an in-depth session on refugee rights under UNHCR's mandate, focusing on international protection principles and safeguarding vulnerable groups. Mr. Taufiq Ahmad, Team Lead ALAC-1, led a session on human rights and their practical application in policing, including detention procedures, non-discrimination, and community engagement through case-based learning.

Project Director Mr. Aatif Afzal, in his vote of thanks, emphasized the critical role of police in upholding human rights and highlighted such trainings as a step toward a more rights-respecting society. Ms. Madiha Shah moderated the session, while Mr. Qamar Iqbal introduced SHARP's mandate.Chief Guest Mr. Shams Durrani, Director Special Initiatives CPC, appreciated SHARP's efforts and underscored the importance of integrating human rights into police training curricula, reaffirming CPC's commitment to professional and humane policing.



SHARP, in collaboration with UNHCR conducted a training session at Police Lines Lahore for key stakeholders, including representatives from the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees.

Miss Ghazala Mirza, Senior Protection Officer UNHCR, delivered an insightful session on the current protection landscape and legal frameworks governing refugee protection under international and domestic law. Field Manager Ms. Arooj briefed participants on international conventions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), while Mr. Hassan Zaman (Lawyer) highlighted constitutional human rights, fundamental rights, and principles of policy safeguarding citizens of Pakistan.

Mr. Usman Ghani, Director Legal at the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees, Lahore, shared the joint efforts of UNHCR and SHARP in promoting a human rights–friendly environment and strengthening protection mechanisms. Concluding the session, DSP/In-Charge Police Lines Mr. Babar Ahmed appreciated the initiative, noting that in an evolving human rights context, organizations like SHARP play a pivotal role in promoting inclusion and protection within society.



SHARP, as Co-Chair of C-SAM, joined IOM and Quaid-i-Azam University in a seminar on “Migration: Risks, Choices and Regular Pathways” held at the Taxila Institute of Archaeology & Civilizations. The event brought together experts and students to highlight the risks of irregular migration, including smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons.

IOM experts Mr. Shahnawaz and Ms. Nimra shared key insights on the consequences of unsafe migration and emphasized the importance of awareness and informed decision-making. The session reinforced the value of education in preventing exploitation and promoting safe mobility.

SHARP reaffirmed its commitment to empowering youth with knowledge on safe and regular migration pathways. CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed highlighted that education is essential for enabling safe and dignified migration, while Dr. Nadeem, SHARP representative, stressed that access to information is a necessity for protection and informed choices. Through its partnerships with QAU, IOM, IRCC Canada, and the Ministry of Interior, SHARP continues to promote regular migration pathways and equip youth with skills and information to make informed life decisions. The seminar marked another step toward building a more informed and empowered community committed to safe, skilled, and dignified migration.



SHARP's Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) team conducted a series of four impactful outreach sessions in Karachi, engaging 160 skilled Afghan refugees (80 male and 80 female) to promote safe and legal pathways to international employment.

The sessions were led by Project Director (ICT) Mr. Aatif Afzal and brought together key stakeholders, including Mr. Qaim Din, Commissioner, Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR Sindh), along with senior representatives from the Ismaili Council of Pakistan, who also attended the closing session. Their participation reflected strong institutional collaboration and shared commitment to expanding livelihood opportunities for refugees.

Participants received practical guidance from Ms. Shanila Zafar and Mr. Nadeem Ahmad (TBB Livelihood Assistants) on Talent Catalog registration, CV development, autonomous pathways, and interview preparation. The sessions provided an interactive and supportive environment where participants could discuss challenges, seek guidance, and build confidence for accessing international employment opportunities.

Mr. Qaim Din appreciated SHARP's proactive efforts in creating dignified livelihood pathways through structured and legal mobility opportunities. Mr. Aatif Afzal reaffirmed SHARP's commitment to empowering refugees through sustainable self-reliance and global access to skills-based opportunities.

The initiative was successfully coordinated under the leadership of Ms. Qurat-ul-Ain Khan, Incharge Karachi Office, whose dedicated efforts ensured smooth planning and execution across all sessions.



Muhammad Mudassar Javed is an Anthropologist, CEO of SHARP–Pakistan & Afghanistan, and Co-Chair of the Civil Society Alliance on Migration. A humanitarian leader shaping migration governance, refugee protection, and human rights policy in South Asia and beyond, he advocates for human-centered behavioral approaches to transform communities.
Mudassar.sanghaira@gmail.com
Mudassar@sharp-pakistan.org

JUSTICE, JOBS, AND DIGNITY: WHY THE EU-PAKISTAN PARTNERSHIP MATTERS DEEPLY TODAY

The memory of the 2005 earthquake remains with us, a reminder of how quickly lives can be upended, and how essential dignity is in times of crisis. Today, Pakistan is managing a different set of challenges: security concerns, economic pressures, rising prices, and increasing poverty that weigh heavily on millions of households.

I have had the privilege of working across Pakistan for two decades, from post-quake communities in AJK to refugee settlements in KP and urban neighborhoods in Islamabad. I have listened to mothers making difficult choices for their children, to members of minority communities seeking equal opportunity, to talented young graduates striving for work, and to out-of-school girls who deserve a future at home rather than the risks of irregular migration. It was in this context that I was grateful for the opportunity to meet a high-level EU delegation in Islamabad recently. Our discussions were thoughtful, constructive, and deeply focused on people.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif welcomed Peteris Ustubs of the European Commission, Ms. Thourya Triki of the European Investment Bank, and senior leaders from Adidas, Andritz, IKEA, and other respected European companies. They were here for the EU-Pakistan Business Forum. They graciously acknowledged Pakistan's efforts toward de-escalation in the Middle East and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening trade and investment ties. The European Union remains Pakistan's largest trading partner, and that relationship carries great significance.

Having had the honour of engaging with the delegation, I respectfully believe that the EU partnership represents one of the most important opportunities for Pakistan's vulnerable communities today. This perspective comes not from politics, but from years of witnessing how human rights, rule of law, and economic dignity are interlinked on the ground.

Across the country, families are facing tough realities. Inflation has stretched household budgets, and volatility in oil prices linked to Middle East developments adds further uncertainty. Security challenges can disrupt access to schools, courts, and markets, institutions that protect the poor, minorities, migrants, and refugees. With over 26 million children out of school, and girls disproportionately affected, we must also recognize that a lack of opportunity can increase the risks of irregular migration for young people seeking a better life. These are not only economic issues; they are human rights and justice issues.

Recovery and resilience will require more than short-term support. They will require sustainable jobs, strengthened institutions, and inclusive growth. In this regard, partnerships built on shared values are invaluable.

My engagement with the delegation highlighted three encouraging elements. First, there was a genuine emphasis on human rights and rule of law. The EU team engaged thoughtfully on questions of minority inclusion, access to justice, labour protections, and opportunities for women and girls. The GSP+ framework, which connects trade with human rights commitments, offers a constructive pathway for reform that benefits all. Second, there was a clear focus on investing in people. Companies such as Adidas, IKEA, and Andritz bring not only capital but also global standards on fair wages, gender inclusion, and environmental responsibility. The European Investment Bank's interest in financing youth employability, women-led enterprises, and skills for out-of-school children aligns closely with the needs of Balochistan, South Punjab, Tharparkar, KP's merged districts, and other underserved communities. Creating dignified work at home is the most effective way to address the root causes of irregular migration and human trafficking. Third, there was a shared understanding that justice and stability go hand in hand. Strengthening legal aid, improving labour courts, and ensuring non-discrimination are important for both human dignity and investor confidence.

The way forward should place the most vulnerable first. Every new EU-linked initiative could include meaningful participation of youth, women, persons with disabilities, migrants, and refugees. Second-chance education and digital skilling programs can offer out-of-school girls a pathway to opportunity. Protecting minority workers, refugees, and migrant, labourers in supply chains through transparency, contracts, and grievance mechanisms must remain a priority. And pairing economic forums with support for rule of law ensures that growth is both inclusive and sustainable.

We deeply appreciate the EU's continued confidence in Pakistan during a challenging period. We are grateful to the Prime Minister for his commitment to facilitating trade despite external shocks. And we value that our dialogue with the delegation reflected a shared purpose: aligning economic cooperation with human dignity.

The real measure of success will be seen in lives changed. Will a young person from a minority community in Youhanabad access skilled employment? Will a girl in Dera Ghazi Khan or Tharparkar find training and hope at home rather than risk an unsafe journey? Will a daily wage earner or a refugee be able to seek timely justice?

As a regional nonprofit, we are committed to supporting this vision. We will share field insights to help direct investment to those most in need, support independent monitoring so that “Made in Pakistan” reflects justice and dignity, and establish Youth, Women & EU Jobs Helpdesks in 10 districts to connect vulnerable communities with opportunity and legal support.

Pakistan faces challenges, but its people remain resilient and full of potential. With the European Union, a partner that consistently emphasizes rights, rule of law, and inclusion, we can transform trade into trust, investment into opportunity, and growth into shared progress. True security is when families can afford daily needs. True stability is when every girl can learn and every young person can work with dignity. And true progress is when no one feels compelled to leave, because hope and justice exist at home.