

RightsNow Pakistan

human rights for all

Website: www.rightsnowpk.org , **Blog:** www.rightsnowpak.wordpress.com

The Role of Lawyers in Protection of Human Rights in Disasters & Normal Times in Sindh, Pakistan

RightsNow Pakistan believes that any society that lacks independent, professional, well trained and self-confident lawyers can't afford to protect human rights and civilians. RightsNow Pakistan has started working on it and highlights the role lawyers are playing in human rights promotion and protection of human rights both in peace time and disasters. By keeping this vision in mind, RightsNow Pakistan has successfully weaved lawyers into a network and conducts regular lawyers' capacity building initiatives through trainings, videos, talks and other different ways.

Lawyers Act for Sanghar

The following eight lawyers, who belong to district Sanghar, filed a petition at the High Court of Hyderabad, Sindh.

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Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs [redacted]

You are cordially invited for the seminar on
Collaboration among Lawyers, Journalists,
NGOs and other Civil Society Actors for the
protection of Human Rights in Disaster.

October 27, 2011, Thursday
Press Club Hyderabad Hall at 3 pm.

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Jointly Organized by:

RightsNow Pakistan Indus Institute for Research and Education-IIRE We Journalists

Advocates Mazhar Ali Laghari, Advocate Willayat Ali Magsi, Advocate Syed Ghulam Hyder Shah, Advocate Wali Mohammad Khoso, Advocate Hameed ullah Dahri, Advocate Haji Khan Hingorjo, Advocate Hassan Ali Liskani and Ghulam Mustafa. Today role of following lawyers is being appreciated more than elected representatives in Sanghar.

In this petition, 27 Government officials and elected representatives have been made respondent, including the Chief Secretary, Sindh Province, Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Provincial Management Authority (PDMA).

In this petition, honorable lawyers have raised the issue in Sanghar district which is severely affected by the floods caused by the monsoon rain. In their petition, advocates have raised the following issues:



Haider Unar members of District Bar Jamshoro distributes relief aid

- The drainage system, sim canals_distributaries, and water courses have overflowed, inundating the towns and villages of Sangahr district.
- The whole infrastructure of district Sanghar has completely been destroyed. The main roads of the district have been destroyed, which has disconnected the district from the rest of the country.
- The entire crops in the Sanghar have been washed out due to the overflow and breaches in Sim Canals.
- Thousands of people have been displaced and living without shelter, food, medicine, -and other facilities. Thousands of people are still trapped in the affected areas submerged in the water.



Member of Jamshoro Bar distributing relief aid RightsNow Pakistan facilitating distribution

Issues People are facing in the District Sanghar

The elected representatives have failed miserably to provide them with basic facilities and insure ensure the people's protection during the disaster. The elected representatives have misused their powers and authorities by misappropriating the relief funds, misusing fumigation spray machines, pumping machines, tents, first aid kits, and other non-food items. They have given these items to their friends and relatives affiliated with their political parties. In particular, they have ignored the alleged lower- caste people, those most in need. Livestock is dying. Diseases are being spread among the most vulnerable groups: the poor, women, children, and elderly. All of the groups are suffering from the negligence and corruption of both elected representatives and the government officials.



Jamshoro District Bar lawyers are welcomed by RightsNow Pakistan's Team (Advocate Mumtaz Jarwar & Advocate Kanjimal)

One important issue the lawyers have raised was the suspension of administration of justice due to closure of the District, Session and Civil Courts.

MIRPURKHAS:

The role played by the lawyers of district Mirpurkhas during and following the disaster is also praise worthy. Advocate- Salah ul din Panhwer, Advocate Shahzad Ahmed Talpur, Advocate Ubaid ullah Talpur, Advocate Mumtaz Jarwar, Advocate Kanji Mal Menghwar , Dalil Mari and other honorable lawyers from the district not only reached the affected community in disasters areas but also monitored the relief aid distribution process. These lawyers from Mirpurkhas also made a huge effort to collect donations from philanthropists and distributed the money and

goods to the affected people. They also invited fact finding missions of NGOs to report the human rights violations in the district.



Lawyers from Jamshoro District Bar have set up camp for collection of funds for displaced people

Lawyers from Jamshoro District Bar at Kotri played an important role in the raising money from fellow lawyers and other philanthropists, collecting 80,000 Pakistani rupees. District Bar Jamshoro is led by Advocates Haider Unar and Mir Mangrio who decided to use that money to buy Eid gifts for displaced children in Mirpurkhas district.

RightsNow Pakistan's Mirpurkhas team facilitated the visit of Lawyers of District Bar Jamshoro and supported them in identifying people in the district who were in need of financial and other kinds of help. 300 hundred people benefited from District Bar Jamshoro's philanthropy. Among them were 80 male, 130 women and 130 children who received clothes and money from the District Bar Mirpurkhas delegation.

RightsNow Pakistan Team Mirpurkhas also supported the displaced people by helping them access relief aid? They provided oversight at the aid distribution points to prevent corruption, political interference, and favoritism. The Lawyers

also provided a presence at the IDP camps and monitored the physical security of the displaced people, particularly women and children.



[Advocate Hameed ullah Dahri & Advocate Ameer Hussain from Sanghar](#)

Three organizations RightsNow Pakistan, We Journalist and Indus Resource Research Institute jointly organized a seminar.

The purpose of the seminar was to gather journalist, lawyers, and NGOs from district Badin, Mirpurkhas, Tando Mohummad, Khan, Tando Allahyar, and Sanghar to come and share their knowledge and form a network of journalists, lawyers, and NGOs which can play a role in exposing corruption, preventing gender biasness, discrimination and political interference in the relief aid distribution process in disaster hit areas and protection of human rights in normal situations.



Advocates Roshan Ali Azeem, Sana Memon, Sajjad Ali Chandio

This initiative has gained big support from lawyers, journalists and NGOs. So far 32 lawyers have registered themselves in the protection group.