Society for Human Rights & Prisoners' Aid

SHARP

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026

Urgent Appeal for Peace and Humane Treatment of Displaced Persons During Ramzan

The ongoing conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan is rapidly worsening the humanitarian situation of displaced people, refugees, and migrants in the region. With the border currently closed and tensions escalating, vulnerable populations—already living on the margins—are facing increasing uncertainty, hardship, and fear.

It is deeply unfortunate that, despite the prevailing humanitarian concerns and border closure, refugees and migrants continue to be arrested and sent to prisons. Such actions further compound their suffering, particularly during the sacred month of Ramzan, when families and communities traditionally come together in compassion, reflection, and solidarity. These arrests also place additional strain on already overcrowded detention facilities and jails, creating further challenges for both detainees and authorities.

At this critical moment, we strongly reiterate our call for peace, restraint, and constructive dialogue in the region. The humanitarian dimensions of displacement must be addressed with empathy, responsibility, and respect for human dignity. Sustainable and amicable solutions to the refugee crisis can only be achieved through cooperation, adherence to humanitarian principles, and a commitment to protecting the rights of vulnerable populations.

In the spirit of compassion that defines the holy month, we appeal to the concerned authorities for the release of detained refugees and migrants so they may spend Eid al-Fitr and the remainder of Ramzan with their families and loved ones. Such a gesture would not only alleviate their suffering but would also reflect the values of mercy, humanity, and justice that the region's cultures and faith traditions uphold.

Above all, we hope for peace, stability, and a humane resolution to the refugee situation—ensuring that those already displaced by conflict are not subjected to further hardship.

SHARP-Pakistan is initiating staff contribution to express their views and insights on humanitarian issues. Two articles this month on page # 8 & 9.







In a continued spirit of partnership and shared commitment, SHARP convened a high-level strategic coordination meeting with a senior delegation from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Pakistan at its Islamabad Head Office to strengthen ongoing collaboration and advance future initiatives in KP and Islamabad. Led by Ms. Daniela Gjuroska Gogarty, Head of Resource Management, the IOM delegation engaged with SHARP's senior management, headed by Chairman Mr. Syed Liaqat Banori and CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed, along with project and finance leadership.

Discussions centered on partnership modalities, programmatic priorities, compliance frameworks, and opportunities to enhance joint protection and legal assistance interventions. Both organizations reaffirmed their commitment to accountable, rights-based, and impact-driven implementation.

The meeting concluded with a shared resolve to further deepen coordination and strengthen protection outcomes for vulnerable communities.





In a significant step toward strengthening human rights advocacy and refugee protection, SHARP was honored to host Mr. Richard Bennett, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, at its Reception Desk Centre.

Welcomed by CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed and Project Director Mr. Aatif Afzal, Mr. Bennett observed SHARP's rights-based service delivery model, including legal aid, counselling, and case management support for Afghan refugees. He also interacted directly with persons we serve, who shared first-hand experiences of growing protection risks, documentation challenges, and socio-economic hardship.

The visit concluded with a focused meeting with SHARP's leadership and protection team to discuss the evolving human rights situation in Afghanistan, existing protection gaps, and the critical role of civil society. Mr. Bennett appreciated SHARP's efforts, and both sides explored avenues to further strengthen advocacy and coordinated protection responses.

SHARP is driving transformative initiatives under the EU-funded Prisons Welfare Project, aimed at improving detention conditions, expanding legal aid and psychosocial support, and safeguarding the rights of women, juveniles, and other marginalized detainees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

SHARP management, led by CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed, Project Director ICT Mr. Aatif Afzal, and Project Director KP Ms. Memoona Batool, held a strategic coordination meeting with the project team—including Project Manager Mr. Javed Khan, Legal Manager Mr. Manzoor Ali, Finance Manager Mr. Irfan Shujrah, and AHRM Manager Ms. Anila Kanwal—to review implementation strategies, upcoming work plans, and preparation for engagement with EU management.

Separately, SHARP Peshawar conducted an orientation session for newly recruited staff, led by Project Director Ms. Memoona Batool, with Senior Manager Legal Mr. Manzoor Ali and Project Manager Mr. Javed Khan briefing participants on project objectives, compliance requirements, and collaborative strategies. The session equipped staff to deliver coordinated and effective interventions in detention facilities.





Bringing frontline perspectives to critical human rights discussions, SHARP CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed participated as a key speaker at the Sixth Asma Jahangir Conference in Lahore. The gathering brought together leading national and international experts, policymakers, and development practitioners to deliberate on pressing issues, including freedom of expression, fair trial, conflict resolution, climate change, gender equity, and protection of marginalized communities.

In his session, Mr. Javed highlighted the stark realities faced by displaced persons and asylum seekers—individuals living without land, security, or a horizon of hope—emphasizing the urgent need for rights-based and humane responses across South Asia and beyond.

On the sidelines, he engaged with prominent experts, including a meaningful discussion with Mr. Richard Bennett, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Afghanistan, focusing on evolving challenges for displaced Afghan communities and strategies to strengthen their protection.







SHARP hosted two key engagements at its Head Office, reflecting its commitment to strengthening collaborations and advancing evidence-based protection and justice initiatives. Ms. Sarosh Sultan, Project Manager for the Mid-Term Evaluation of UNHCR's Protection and Solutions interventions in Pakistan, conducted a KII focusing on protection programming. SHARP CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed and Project Director Mr. Aatif Afzal expressed full support for the study and facilitated access to relevant refugee respondents.

The Pakistan Legal United Society (PLUS), led by Advocate Altaf Hussain Khoso, also met with SHARP leadership to exchange insights on shared priorities, discuss legal and human rights challenges, and explore avenues for future collaboration.

In line with its mission to strengthen protection and governance for vulnerable communities, SHARP welcomed Dr. Katja Mielke from BICC, Germany, for a strategic discussion with CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed, Project Director KP Ms. Memoona Batool, and Project Director ICT Mr. Aatif Afzal. The meeting focused on the evolving protection landscape and explored avenues for collaboration, underscoring a shared commitment to evidence-based protection strategies and strengthened governance for migrants.





The SHARP Management Committee convened to review emerging challenges, assess organizational performance, and set strategic priorities, reaffirming its commitment to placing the rights, dignity, and well-being of the people we serve at the center of every decision.

Attended by CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed, Project Directors Ms. Memoona Batool (K-P) and Mr. Aatif Afzal (ICT), Manager Finance Mr. Irfan Ahmed Shujrah, and Admin & HR Manager Ms. Anila Kanwal, the meeting focused on expanding thematic areas, strengthening Programme development and sustainability, advancing regulatory compliance, addressing short-term financial risks, and enhancing efficiency through role empowerment and restructuring. These measures reinforce SHARP's dedication to accountability, effective resource management, and delivering timely protection and legal assistance where it matters most.






Progress thrives when teams are inspired and united. Project Director–ICT, Mr. Aatif Afzal, engaged multiple teams to keep members motivated, aligned, and focused on results. Under his supervision, the monthly coordination meeting brought together ALAC I, II & III, RDC (Islamabad & Karachi), and TBB teams to review activities, follow up on action points, and address field-level challenges.

Mr. Afzal recognized the ALAC-I team, led by Mr. Taufiq Ahmed, for outstanding performance and held a session with the LAP Project Team to celebrate achievements, strengthen collaboration, and encourage open communication. These efforts reflect SHARP's commitment to teamwork, purpose-driven action, and meaningful impact.





SHARP engaged in a series of strategic networking and coordination meetings to strengthen collaboration with government and partner stakeholders.

CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed met with Mr. Shahid Iqbal Gondal, Deputy Secretary at the Ministry of Law and Justice, Pakistan, and Mr. Gohar Ayub, Principal Consultant at DEIGS, to discuss human rights, governance challenges, and potential areas of joint action, highlighting coordinated efforts to advance the rule of law and promote a rights-based, inclusive society.

At the operational level, Advocate Quratulain, RDC In-Charge Karachi, met with Mr. Qaim Uddin at the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR), Sindh, to discuss the protection of vulnerable refugees, ongoing challenges, and the 2026 work plan, while exploring coordination and support mechanisms under the IFRP to strengthen assistance and protection services.







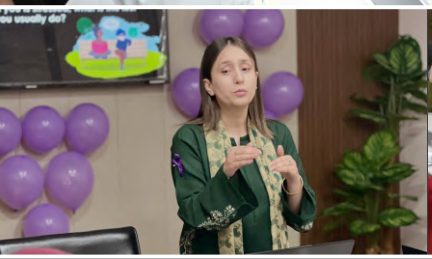




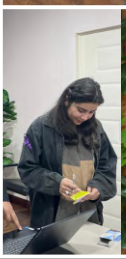
Committed to empowering its teams for effective service delivery, SHARP organized a two-day orientation workshop in Islamabad for newly recruited staff under the Protection Project, bringing together teams from Attock, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Chakwal, and Sialkot. The workshop provided an overview of SHARP's mandate, free legal aid services, protection principles, and organizational standards, including the Code of Conduct and PSEA.

Sessions were conducted by Project Manager Ms. Huma Aziz, Senior Protection Legal Experts Ms. Aneela Safraz and Ms. Shandana Afridi, and M&E Officer Mr. Zahid Usman, covering project objectives, human rights, legal frameworks, reporting tools, and data management. Administrative and HR policies were presented by Mr. Javed Chandia and Mr. Jehanzeb Aftab. While addressing participants, CEO Mr. Mudassar Javed and Project Director Mr. Aatif Afzal emphasized SHARP's core values, teamwork, and accountability, preparing staff to deliver protection and legal services with professionalism, integrity, and compassion.








At SHARP, staff wellbeing is central to building a resilient and compassionate organization. In line with this, the RDC Islamabad team organized a focused session on Staff Mental Wellbeing, fostering collaboration and a psychologically safe workplace culture. The session, facilitated by Ms. Samman Aman (Protection Counsellor), Ms. Maham Raja (MHPSS Officer), and Mr. Anas Zeb (Psychosocial Counsellor), covered workplace mental health, Psychological First Aid (PFA), peer support, and practical self-care strategies to enhance team resilience.

Project Director Mr. Aatif Afzal commended the initiative and emphasized the importance of making staff wellbeing a continuous priority, encouraging everyone to actively practice self-care for a healthier and stronger workplace.



Global Opportunities for Skilled Refugees

SHARP Pakistan, in partnership with UNHCR, is arranging an **online outreach session** for skilled refugees interested in exploring international employment through safe and regulated labour mobility pathways. This initiative is part of the **Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) Project** and highlights SHARP and UNHCR's **commitment to youth empowerment, refugee talent development, and global opportunities**.

The **Zoom session** will guide participants on creating a profile on the **TBB Talent Catalog** and exploring pathways to international employment, including autonomous opportunities.

Session Details:

📅 Date: 12th March 2026
🕛 Time: 12:00 PM (PKT)
🔵 Platform: Zoom

Registration is **FREE. Sign up via SHARP Pakistan's official Facebook page.**

TWO-WAY MIGRATION CRISIS:

Why Pakistan Needs a National Migration Policy Now



Zohrab Ahmad
Project Officer - Lahore
SHARP-Pakistan

Pakistan stands at a pivotal migration crossroads. Thousands of its citizen's risk irregular journeys toward Europe, while the country manages one of the largest return movements in the region. These parallel trends reveal a structural gap in migration governance.

In 2023, 8,778 Pakistanis were detected reaching Europe via unauthorized routes, primarily through Iran, Türkiye, and the Mediterranean corridor (Frontex, 2023). Reports in 2025 indicate continued detention of Pakistanis in transit countries after attempted sea crossings toward Italy (International Organization for Migration, 2025). These journeys involve smuggling networks, exploitation, and financial loss, with families often funding attempts through loans or asset sales — increasing vulnerability when plans fail.

Simultaneously, over two million Afghan nationals returned to Afghanistan since late 2023 under documentation and repatriation drives (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2025). In 2025 alone, more than one million crossed back amid stricter enforcement (Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Interior, 2025). Such movements strain border management, provincial authorities, and host communities.

The issue is not migration itself but unmanaged migration. Pakistan lacks a comprehensive framework integrating labor mobility, refugee management, reintegration planning, anti-trafficking enforcement, and centralized migration data, leaving responses reactive rather than strategic.

Field experience shows solutions are possible. Organizations such as SHARP have provided legal aid, protection services, and community awareness initiatives for vulnerable migrants and refugees across Pakistan, demonstrating how targeted interventions reduce risk and inform policy.

A modern National Migration Policy could turn these pressures into an opportunity. Expanding safe labour pathways would protect citizens while stabilizing remittances. Stronger recruitment oversight would disrupt smuggling networks. Structured reintegration programs would convert return flows from administrative burdens into organized transitions. Countries like Canada, with coherent labour mobility and refugee frameworks, report minimal irregular migration, illustrating how structured policies transform challenges into strategic advantage (Government of Canada, Immigration and Refugee Board, 2025). A centralized migration data platform would enable evidence-based planning instead of reactive measures.

Pakistan's migration landscape is no longer temporary. With coordinated leadership and a forward-looking policy, today's pressures can become tomorrow's national asset — converting recurring crises into sustainable opportunities.

Disclaimer: The content reflects the personal views of the author and does not necessarily represent SHARP-Pakistan's official position.

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA AT A CROSSROAD:
Social and Political Challenges and Opportunities



Abdul Aziz Khan
Protection Assistant - Mardan
SHARP-Pakistan

Pakistan today stands at a pivotal moment where political volatility, economic strain, and institutional pressures intersect with the everyday lives of its citizens. At the national level, political polarization has narrowed the space for constructive dialogue, while economic instability marked by inflation, financial challenges, and unemployment continues to deepen social vulnerability.

For marginalized communities, these pressures directly affect access to justice, education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities. Sustainable governance, therefore, requires not only policy reform but also institutional consistency and public trust.

Within this context, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa represents both a challenge and an opportunity. As a strategically significant border province shaped by regional dynamics and historical transitions, KP continues to face institutional capacity gaps, limited service delivery mechanisms, and resource constraints, despite the transformative constitutional merger of the former FATA districts aimed at extending the rule of law and equal citizenship.

At the same time, KP possesses immense social capital. Its young and dynamic population has the potential to drive innovation and economic growth if provided with meaningful opportunities. However, youth unemployment and outward migration remain pressing concerns while women's participation in economic and civic spaces, though gradually increasing, continues to face structural barriers.

Climate vulnerability further complicates governance challenges. Floods and natural disasters disproportionately affect rural and low-income communities, exposing weaknesses in preparedness, infrastructure resilience, and coordinated response systems. Strengthening disaster governance frameworks must therefore remain central to long-term provincial planning.

Despite these challenges, there are growing signs of progress and reform. Civil society engagement is expanding, legal awareness is strengthening, and community-based initiatives are promoting accountability. Citizens increasingly demand transparency and equitable service delivery, creating a foundation for democratic maturity and institutional reform.

Pakistan's future will depend not only on political transitions but on the strength of its institutions, the inclusion of its people, and the resilience of its communities. Building accountable institutions that serve every citizen with dignity and justice remains essential for sustainable progress.

The future of Pakistan depends not only on leadership but on our collective commitment to building accountable institutions that serve every citizen with dignity and justice.

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