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## Ombudsman concerned over slow implementation of jail reforms in Punjab

### Says educational measures for children in jails be taken on priority

**SARWAR AWAN**

Federal Ombudsman Syed Tahir Shahbaz on Tuesday, chairing a high level meeting, showed great concern over slow progress in implementation of jail reforms recommendations in Punjab.

The Ombudsman said that he would not tolerate the casual attitude of the Prisons and Home Departments of Punjab, as he has to submit a quarterly implementation report to the apex court.

He directed to submit the TORs and SOP in his office within a week and finalize it within 15 days. Syed Tahir said that all the recommendations to constitute DOCs were framed after consultations with all the IG Prisons, therefore, no delay in implementation of jail reforms recommendations would be tolerated at any cost. He also said that no hindrance would be accepted in the visit of the members of DOCs in jails.

Earlier, the Federal Ombudsman

had ordered all the provinces to constitute District Oversight Committees in each district comprising the renowned members from all walks of life to monitor the implementation measures ordered by the Apex Court. Under these reforms and recommendations, the provinces were asked for the improvement of life of prisoners in jails especially for children, women and destitute/resource-less prisoners.

Hafiz Ahsaan Ahmed Khokhar, Senior Adviser informed in a presentation that in 89 jails of Pakistan there were 56,353 sanctioned prisoners, whereas, 78,160 prisoners are present in these jails. He also informed that in these jails, 25,195 prisoners are convicted, 48,780 under-trial, 1,955 women prisoners, 1,225 juvenile prisoners and 4,688 were condemned prisoners.

The rep. of Home Department Punjab informed that they are working to finalize the TORs and SOP for the members of DOCs and in this

respect prisons rules are being modified for their visits in jails.

The representatives of KP, Sindh and IG Prisons Balochistan informed that they had constituted the DOCs and they had also received the reports of their first visits.

The rep. of the KP informed that they had appointed one psychiatric in all jails. The Ombudsman asked the reps. of the other provinces to replicate the action of KP government and appoint a psychiatric in each jail.

The rep. of Punjab government informed that they have formulated the Juvenile Justice System Act in Punjab under which separate juvenile courts would be established and all Juvenile jails in Punjab have been declared as schools. On a question for construction of one jail in ever district by the Federal Ombudsman, the rep. of Punjab informed that the approval of construction of jails in Chakwal, Chinjot and Khushab have already been accorded and the construction process is underway.



Syed Tahir Shahbaz, Federal Ombudsman chairing a high level meeting in implementing the Jails Reform Recommendations to improve the lives of prisoners in jails especially the women and children.