



# Society for Human Rights and Prisoners Aid



## REPORT OF LEGAL CAMP

HELD AT SANGIAN PULL, LAHORE

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## **ONE DAY FREE LEGAL CAMP CUM TRAINING SESSION OF FIRE-FIGHTING FOR AFGHAN NATIONALS**

“Homelessness is not just an isolated social evil. It is the catalyst and the breeding ground for other problems such as marriage difficulties and family breakup, stress, unemployment and alcoholism.”

**Eva Burrows**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Protection of fundamental Rights, Refugee Rights and Human Rights was a Foundation stone in the establishment of the SHARP ALAC II office 3 years ago in Lahore, which was established for the protection of legal and socio legal needs of Afghan Nationals living in Pakistan. Since then, a central goal of SHARP ALAC II team policy has been the promotion of respect for refugees and human rights, as embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights .SHARP/ALAC II understands that the existence of human rights helps secure the peace, deter aggression, promote the rule of law, combat crime and corruption, strengthen democracies, and prevent humanitarian crises.

Because the promotion of Refugees and Human rights is an important interest, the SHARP ALAC II team seeks to:

- Hold meetings with the government officials to be considerate towards the obligations under universal human rights norms and international human rights instruments;

- Promote greater respect for human rights, including freedom from torture, freedom of expression, press freedom, women's rights, children's rights, and the protection of minorities;
- Team also assumes to promote the rule of law, and change cultures of impunity;
- Assist efforts to reform and strengthen the institutional capacity of the governmental offices regarding understanding of Refugees and Human Rights in Pakistan and
- Coordinate human rights activities with important stake holders and other working NGOs in this regard.

SHARP/ALAC II sub-office Lahore keeping in the view the mandate of the ALAC supports rights of all the vulnerable segments of the society like Refugees, women's, children, labour and other poor neglected and destitute communities. To help survivors of domestic abuse and honor crimes, SHARP works with a resource center to train its staff on gender-based violence and strategic planning and to support its public outreach efforts on gender-sensitization and human rights. For the approximately two million remaining Afghan nationals in the country, SHARP ALAC is trying its best to accommodate the beneficiary community in meeting the health, education, and legal assistance and supported efforts to alleviate gender-based violence in Afghan nationals.

On 4<sup>th</sup> of June, 2008 SHARP/ALAC II Lahore sub office organized one day free legal camp along with the Awareness Raising Session for Afghans living at Manzoor Park Sagian Pul Lahore.

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE AREA**

Sagian Pul is located at gap of almost 14 to 15 kilometers from ALAC II Lahore. This area consisted of approximately 1000 Afghan families belonging mostly to Pushtoon ethnic group. Most of the families are very poor, they are mostly scavengers, papers picker, garbage collectors, Hawkers and have small shops in various markets of Lahore. There is rare trend for education of children and

almost all the family members (except women in cases of Pushtoon families), work for their livelihood. These Afghans have been living in Pakistan for the last 20/25 years; they came from various camps and cities of Pakistan to Lahore for business and earnings.

### **ETHNICITY**

Most Afghans residing in the area are Pushtoos but some are Tajiks.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The free legal camp was organized mainly with two main objectives one was to train and educate the Afghans of the said locality that how to save their selves and fight fire if it breaks down in their locality, while other part was to address their problems keeping in view the miseries of the Afghans, i.e. to provide them assistance on the spot, as many Afghan nationals could not approach the ALAC office due to multiple factors. The other objectives included:

- \* To train and educate them on fire fighting techniques and enabling them to overcome the situation with best possible way and also to avoid losses through fire.
- \* To inform them that only Afghan nationals having PoR cards fall under the mandate of ALAC and in future team would not entertain non PoR cards holders.
- \* To brief them the time frame and procedures of voluntary repatriation of GOP / UNHCR's assisted programme.
- \* To confer upon the current issues of that very locality and ascertain the keys of the same by providing them legal aid or advice.
- \* To have an inner and true view of the problems faced by the Afghan community, and to take steps in solving these issues.
- \* To have direct interaction with female refugees as they are the most neglected class of refugees in the context of awareness of the rights and remedies.; and

\* To have a beneficial association with the Afghan Mashers of that locality so as to have better working coordination.

## **PUBLICITY & PROJECTION**

In order to secure the maximum attendance of the targeted Afghan community so as to provide them with free legal aid/assistance a plan was made for projection of the legal camp. In this regard prior to the specific date visits were made in the concentrated areas. Furthermore pamphlets were distributed and meetings were held with Afghan nationals. Banners and posters (in Persian, Pashto & Urdu) were pasted in the locality, and team made announcements in the mosque, where the legal camp was going to be organized.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

The ALAC team was comprised of the following:

Mr. Allah Ditta	Station Officer Fire Brigade Department
Mr. Ayyaz Ahamed Khan Sial	Field Manager/Lawyer ALACII
Mr. Sher Afgan Khan	Lawyer ALACII
Mr. Nabeel Shah	Interpreter ALACII
Mr. Basheer	Driver
Mr. Abdul Salam	Driver

## **DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL**

The team left the office on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> of June, 2008 at 9:00 hours in the morning. When team reached the locality, already tents and other things were arranged and a number of refugees both children and adults welcomed the team.



The legal camp was arranged for two purposes so the camp was divided in two segments. First segment of the camp was “Awareness Raising Session” and its objectives were to create awareness among the Afghans in saving their lives and valuables in event of breaking of fire and how to take safety measures and precautions in the course of Prevention of Fire. ALAC II team in coordination with City Government invited Station Officer Fire Brigade Department, Chaudry Allah Ditta Lahore, who is a distinguished trainer and is skilled in the field of Fire Fighting.

Mr. Allah Ditta has also served in abroad and won many prizes for his achievements and valuable services. He educated Afghans in the safety, prevention and precautionary measures in the eventuality of breaking of fire. It should also be kept in mind that in the month of May, 2008 a fire was broke



down in the area of Manzoor Park in which 25 Afghan families suffered a great loss. This fire incident was not a first one in the Afghans locality. ALAC II team has observed that in the last over three years happening of these like sad incidences of fire is frequent and because of the same Afghans has to suffer heavy losses due to lack of knowledge.

## **LEGAL CAMP DETAILS**

### **TRAINING SESSION (FIRST SESSION)**

The training session was divided into two sessions. The first session included training given by Mr. Allah Ditta. The training was further divided into two parts in which Mr. Allah Ditta told the Afghans some definitions and precautionary measures and in the second part he told them safety



measures to be taken at the event of fire. Some of the same are reduced hereunder:

### **Risk**

(In relation to any potential injury or harm) The likelihood and consequence of that injury or harm occurring.

### **Chemicals and Substances**

Any natural or artificial substance, whether in the form of a solid, liquid, gas or vapor;

### **Environment**

Surroundings include air, water, land, natural resources flora, fauna, humans, and their interrelation.

### **The Nature of Fire**

Fires are likely to start in many places in the home including the kitchen, living room, bedroom and storage areas such as, the attic, workroom or storeroom. Causes of fire include overheated or overloaded electrical wire, cigarette ashes, smoldering ashes in the couch, sparks from the fireplace, unattended outdoor fires and barbecues, appliances in poor repair and unattended cooking in the kitchen.

- ❖ Precautionary measures: Mr. Allah Ditta told the Afghans the precautionary measures for prevention of fire. He instructed them
- ❖ He said to understand the nature of fire, we must understand the element causing the fire to burn and if any of the elements is missing fire will be controlled. Fire occurs any time if four elements are present - fuel, heat, oxygen and the chemical chain reaction. When these four elements are together, fire occurs. If any one element is removed, fire is prevented. These elements are collectively known as the "Fire Tetrahedron" or the "four faces" of fire.

- ❖ He further said Fuel, such as wood, paper or clothing (essentially anything that can burn) provides the energy for the fire. Oxygen, found in the air we breathe, is required for the burning process to occur. Heat provides a source of ignition, such as a match or a lighter, and causes the continued vaporization of solids such as wood in flammable gases. Anytime just one of the four sides of the fire tetrahedron is removed, the possibility of fire is eliminated. A home fire inspection does just that. When a fire hazard is identified, one side from the fire tetrahedron has been removed. For example, we know that "Smokers Need Watchers." If a live cigarette ash is discovered behind a couch after a party and extinguished, the heat side of the fire tetrahedron is eliminated.
- ❖ He specifically said that if a pile of rubble lying next to the house is discarded, the fuel for a potential fire is removed from the fire tetrahedron. If a grease fire is covered with a lid, oxygen is removed from the fire tetrahedron. If the fuel cells are removed from a nuclear reactor, the chain reaction is reduced.
- ❖ Not to keep flammable things in the house like diesel, petrol etc,
- ❖ Take care of lighters and match boxes and in no case be given or allowed to children to play with the same and insisted to promote the use of lighters rather match boxes.
  
- ❖ Keep children away from electric switches, electric wires
  
- ❖ Always keep two tubs of water available all the time
  
- ❖ Do not add oil in a pan which is already on the stove for longer time, for adding oil in the heated pan then switch off the stove and add oil in it
  
- ❖ Before sleeping switch off the main switch of Sui gas
  
- ❖ Never throw away lighted cigarette or matchstick

- ❖ Do not keep any items of firecrackers at home
- ❖ Do not keep explosive things at home or in shops etc
- ❖ Safety measures during fire incident: After giving thorough instruction regarding prevention of fire Mr. Allah Ditta then told the safety measures to be taken at the incident of fire. The same are mentioned in the following lines.

### **Home/Huts Inspection**

One of the best ways to prevent fire in the home is to do a home inspection specifically looking for the fire hazards or preparing for emergency measures in case of a fire. Inspect your home one section at a time:

All electrical appliances and tools should have a testing agency label. Have the appliances repaired if they aren't working right. If an appliance gets wet, have it serviced.

- Check the cords on all appliances. If they are worn or frayed, have them repaired.
- Don't overload the outlets.
- Make sure appliance cords are kept on the counter to prevent them from being pulled down by young children.
- Don't store things over the stove. People get burned while reaching.
- Wear tight sleeves when cooking. Loose-fitting garments can catch fire.
- Check to see if curtains or towel racks are close to the stove.
- Check to see if the stove is clean of grease and oil.
- All cleaning products and other chemicals should be stored out of the reach of young children, not under the sink. Cleaning products and other chemicals also should be stored separately from foods.
- Be sure portable space heaters are at least three feet away from anything that can catch fire including walls and curtains.
- Put lighters and matches where small children won't find them.

- Too small or too full ashtrays are no good. Ashtrays should be large, deep and emptied frequently, but only when all signs of heat and burning are gone.
  - Before going to bed, look under cushions for burning cigarettes. Check carpeting where ashtrays have been used.
  - Allow plenty of air space around the TV and stereo to prevent overheating. If these appliances are not working correctly, be sure to have them repaired. In the meantime, unplug them.
  - Check for worn or frayed extension cords or other electrical cords.
  - Check for overloaded outlets or extension cords.
  - Electrical sockets should be covered with a child-proof fitting.
  - Lamp and light fixtures should be used with bulbs with wattage at or below maximum.
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- Store gasoline and other flammables in tight metal containers. Don't use flammable liquids near heat, a pilot light or while smoking.
  - Don't store things near the furnace or heater.
  - Get rid of stored newspaper or other rubbish. Newspapers stored in a damp, warm place may ignite spontaneously.
  - Oily, greasy rags should be kept in labeled and sealed non-glass containers, preferably metal.
  - Keep all chemicals, paints, etc. in their original containers.
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- Is your roof fire retardant? Roofing material, whether it is asphalt shingle, shake shingle, tile or slate can be treated with fire retardant processes.
  - Don't ever use gasoline on a grill. Once the fire has been started, never use lighter fluid or gasoline. Use dry kindling to revive the fire.
  - Don't store more of anything than is needed.

### **Things to Think About**

- Spraying aerosols while smoking or near a space heater, range or other ignition sources.
- Using a cigarette lighter after spilling fluid on the hands or clothing.

- Leaning against a range for warmth or standing too near a heater or fireplace.

He further told that these points should be borne in mind that if fire lights up then they should

- Immediately call at toll free Number 16 and ask for immediate help
- If the cause of fire is due to electricity then switch off the main electricity switch
- In the incident of fire till they reach the exit/safety door they should keep trying to cool down the fire
- When the fire brigades officials reach at the incident give them way so that they can immediately reach and give help
- If the cause of fire is due to any tiny flame then try to control it at the earliest time so that spreading of fire could be controlled
- Throw dry soil on the burning flames. It helps in calming the fire  
Immediately close all the windows and doors so that passage of airstreams could be blocked and
- Keep the children in secure and safe place so that they could be saved.

In the fire incident which happened in the month of May, Afghans suffered extreme loss firstly due to lack of knowledge in prevention of fire and secondly all the women were alone at home at the time of incident and as they are not even aware of the helpline number it was difficult for them to communicate, due to which 25 families suffered loss in shape of money, huts, utensils, clothes and even pet animals.

## **SECOND SESSION**

The second session was to discuss and facilitate the Afghan nationals in legal and socio legal matters. The ALAC II team gave detailed instructions to Afghans

on the procedure of registration. The team told the Afghans that so far no intimation has come from UNHCR regarding the opening of

Registration for PoR cards, but if in future registration gets open then same would be intimated to them accordingly.



As part of beneficiary community welfare services SHARP ALAC II has conducted a one day free legal Camp for residents of Sagian Pul, slum area locality of Afghans in Lahore on 04-06-08. The ALAC II team comprising of lawyers assisted by interpreter attended the camp thus ensuring a direct access to help them in the resolution of the problems faced by the Afghans residents of the slum area for the following problems:

- Police Harassment
- Illegal Detentions
- Money disputes
- Family Disputes
- Women, Child & Human Rights.

More than 160 Afghans attended the camp. Lawyers explained the rights and duties of the Afghans under the law. Afghan nationals and their representatives submitted the advice and legal Aid cases to the ALAC II team. ALACII team visited Sagian Pul locality on regular basis so the Afghan know very well about SHARP/ALACII team and its services for them because ALACII team always assisted whenever they required the same.

# **PROBLEMS OF AFGHAN NATIONALS**

## **REPATRIATION OF AFGHAN NATIONALS**

ALACII team briefed Afghan nationals that repatriation is on and if they want to repatriate they may contact Voluntary Repatriation Centers of UNHCR at Hayat Abad Peshawar or Baleli Quetta. They were also told that that only those Afghans would be assisted who would be in possession of POR cards.

## **Money Disputes**

Afghan nationals told the team that Afghans have been living in Pakistan since long time so are engaged in various businesses with locals, mostly they provide plastic, leather and other materials which they collect from garbage and sale them to the locals, they complained that the Purchaser of the heaps do not pay them regularly and properly. They requested the help of the team in getting their pending money with the locals and team advised them to visit office with the relevant documents if any so that legal proceedings could be initiated for the realization of their money.

## **Medical Assistance**

Mostly Afghans complained that they were facing various medical problems; they told the team that collection of solid waste is the only source of their earning which causes different hazardous diseases such as hepatitis, tuberculosis, serious dyspepsia, malaria, typhoid, arthritics, eczema, infertility in women and seasonal diseases in children etc. They visit Private Doctors but they are not treated and facilitated like Pakistani citizens and their ailment is not perfectly diagnosed. Furthermore, the Private Doctors charge high fee which they can not afford. ALAC II team told them that team has close working coordination with AMRC (Akhter Mubarik Referral Center) and team will refer their cases to them. They will give them free medical treatment, further team will Insha Allah soon arrange Medical camp for Afghan nationals residing Sagian Pul Lahore.

## **Police Harassment**

Few participating Afghan nationals reported the team that they have PoR cards, but despite cards some police officials harassed & threaten them. They try to extract money from them while they are going back to home late night after winding up their daily business. ALACII team told them that the team would immediately arrange meeting with CCPO Lahore and this problem would be resolve soon.

## **Education**

Some Afghan nationals complained that they don't have the education facility for their children. The team enlightened them that if they are so interested they should make visit to the ALAC office so as to resolve this issue by referring them to the NGOS like, Care Foundation, Ghazali Education Trust& Bunyad working on that very project.

The ALAC II team gave every participant very reasonable time for sharing their respective problems and advised them where needed and in the matters pertaining to the legal aid and associated matters assured them that all possible effort and help would be extended in meeting their needs and addressing their problems effectively.

## **CONCLUSION**

The legal camp ended with a dua, over 160 Afghan nationals were met during the camp. At first general introduction was given and the problems faced by the Afghan nationals were discussed generally. Then the individual cases were dealt with full privacy, and they were given proper advice and in some



cases SHARP/ALACII team advised the Afghan nationals to visit the office so that their problems could be solved on priority basis. The team has decided to

arrange a meeting with the local district government and CCPO, in the near future in order to eliminate the problems of Afghan nationals with the said officials. Furthermore, by the end of the day the team realized that the decision of organizing the legal camp in that locality was quite a wise one, as almost all the targeted objectives have been achieved through the camp.

It was observed that female population of the Afghan community of the above-mentioned areas was fully contributing to meet their daily expenses along with their husbands. They were engaged in stitching and embroidery. After observing their interest in skills it is recommended that a vocational institute



may be opened in the nearby locality which would not only provide the skills training to the Afghan refugee female community but it would also be helpful in providing skills to the local female population as well so that they would be able to earn their livelihood independently.

"Determination gives you the resolve to keep going in spite of the roadblocks that lay before you."

**Denis Waitley**

## Picture Gallery

