



**LEGAL CAMP ORGANIZED BY
SHARP/ALAC IV TEAM
AT AI-ASIF PLAZA KARACHI
(20th May, 2008)**

Introduction:

SHARP as an Implementing partner of UNHCR is rendering its legal services to the Afghan Nationals under the mandate of ALAC. ALAC IV team conducted a Legal Camp at Al-Asif Plaza on May 20, 2008 in order to make Afghans aware about their socio-legal rights in Pakistan and information dissemination about the project to provide them with legal assistance and provide updated information regarding repatriation and their homeland.



Back Ground of Al-Asif Plaza:

Over 0.1 Million Afghans have been living in different parts of Sohrab Goth for about 25 years. Sohrab Goth Constitutes of Al-Asif Plaza, Indus Plaza, Qayumabad, Jhang Abad, and Machar Colony. Al Asif Plaza consists of around 1,800, out of which most are occupied by Afghan Nationals. The people living in Sohrab Goth including Indus Plaza, Al-Asif Plaza, Mominabad and Qayyumabad and other adjacent laccolites, consist different ethnic groups such as the Tajik, Uzbek and Pashtoons. Most of the Afghan Nationals living here belong to the lower income group such as fruit and vegetable sellers, daily wagers and laborers. Some have small hotels and some are doing cloth business.



Objectives:

The main objectives behind conducting a legal camp are as follows:

- Information dissemination regarding their socio-legal rights in Pakistan
- To make them aware and encourage them about voluntary repatriation.
- To disseminates the information regarding their Country of Origin.

Participant:

Syed Musadiq Shah
Ms. Shahida Ghani
Ms. Fatima
Mr. Azam

(Field manager)
(Lawyer ALAC IV)
(Interpreter)
(ARRC)

Representative of ARRC and a large number of Afghan Elders living in the adjacent areas participated in this legal camp.

Legal Camp at Al-Asif Karachi:

After the arrival of ALAC IV team, the Afghans were duly briefed on their socio-legal rights in Pakistan and ALAC's mandate. They were briefed that ALAC can only provide legal aid to those Afghans who are PoR card holders and the Afghan PoR card holders have legal right to stay in Pakistan. Then the team further briefed them about SHARP (Society for Human Rights and Prisoners Aid) and its services in social and legal aspects. The introduction of ALAC lawyers and their Visiting cards were distributed for assistance in future.



The Afghans living in Al-Asif Plaza have been spending miserable life and have barely the basic facilities. There is a small school in their area in which their children are taught Persian, Geographic, Mathematics and Science only. The Elders informed the team that they don't have any Urdu teacher for their children who teaches their children Urdu subject

After briefing, the Afghans highlighted their problems. The problem highlighted by the majority was their complaint about the PoR cards. According to them there were some errors in the name and their native addresses. Some had their children unregistered. They team duly explained and told them that this problem would be highlighted to UNHCR for further action.

Some of the Afghans complained about police harassment that they are arrested without any charge.



The female Afghan Nationals also attended legal Campe The team encourage them and asked them that when ever they face any legal problem they must approach ALAC team. Some of them told the team about modification of POR cards and registration of their children names below five years and also told the team that they want to repatriate to their mother land but do not aware about their COI situation. The team provided them the updated information and distributed leaflets

and address of the Office incase they face any problem they can contact the ALAC office in Karachi for assistance.

The Elders of the adjacent areas of Al-Asif told the team that in some of localities they are deprived of basic facilities such as water, sewerage, sanitation, health, education and security problems. They told the team that police forcibly take the money when they bring their salaries or daily wages. The team assured them that it will contact police officials and will bring their problem in notice. They also raised the question about their COI and they were briefed accordingly.

Problems Highlighted:

The participators took keen interest in Legal camp & highlight their following issues:

Miserable living Condition:

It was observed that the Afghan Nationals are living in miserable condition even they are deprived of basic facilities.

Money Dispute/ Legal problems

Some of them highlighted that they are unable to repatriate to their mother land due to the reason that they have some money or legal dispute in their homeland.

Educational issue / Health problems:

The problem of unavailability of Urdu teacher and a very small school for their children was highlighted. Apart from that, they were also facing lack of health facilities. Either the doctors are too expensive or the hospitals are too far away.

Water & Electricity:

There were some water and electricity issues. The team was told that they only have one meter for the whole building by which they often experience low voltage and they are charged Rs. 1500/ to Rs. 2000/- per month for each flat which is too expensive for them. The water in the area is not suitable to drink so they are having health problems due to contaminated water.

POR Issues:

Some Afghan Nationals complained that they applied for POR cards in time and received token but they did not get the POR cards. Those who have got the cards, some of them have some mistakes in the cards.

Repatriation Grace Period:

During the legal Camp Afghan Nationals complained that after the expiry of repatriation deadline, grace period for repatriation should be given to those Afghans who could not get their POR and want to repatriate to their mother land.

Over all Situation:

It was observed that inhabitants of the Al-Asif plaza have been living in miserable condition and they are deprived from the basic facilities of life.

Out Come of Legal Camp:

The female Afghan Nationals fully participated in the Legal Camp and discussed their health, education and POR cards problems. Which express their confidence towards SHARP/ALAC. They also discussed about their employment opportunity.

The team was requested to arrange such types of seminars on the regular basis so that they should know their legal status in Pakistan and those Afghans who do not know ALAC's mandate should get to know that PoR holders will be given legal aid for free if they have any legal problems.