

# NGOs, CBOs INGO January To June 2018



## **‘Policies for civil society organisations must be rooted in legislation’**

Policy frameworks for dealing with civil society organisation must be rooted in legislation and should not be done by security agencies accused of human rights violations and excesses against citizens, said Senator Farhatullah Babar on Wednesday

Speaking at a meeting of the Functional Senate Committee on Human Rights, the PPP senator said handing over the task of registering international non-government organisations (INGOs) to security agencies is like asking the wolf to guard the lamb.

The committee was meeting to discuss reports of curbs on civil society actors, especially INGOs and NGOs working in areas of human rights, social justice, rule of law and enforced disappearances.

“It must find a place in the annals of world record that the fate of NGOs working for the recovery of missing persons is in the hands of those very agencies accused of involvement in enforced disappearances and also are not accountable,” he told the committee headed by Muttahida Qaumi Movement Senator Nasreen Jalil.

Senator Babar said the Economic Affairs Division used to deal with INGOs previously but now the interior ministry deals with them through a committee which also includes the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI).

*Asking security agencies to register INGOs is like asking the wolf to guard the lamb, Senator Babar says*  
As a result, more than half of the over 100 INGOs which had applied for registration were not allowed to operate in the country, he quoted from a reply to a question recently asked in Senate.

The meeting was told that the new policy was based on the Fatemi report which was never made public and it was demanded that the report be made public.

“We need to have appropriate legislation to ensure the smooth working of NGOs and there is also need for legislation to regulate the working of state agencies,” he said, and reminding the parliamentarians that the Senate Committee of the Whole had also endorsed a draft bill in this regard.

He urged the government to come clean on the recommendations of the Committee of the Whole and explain why it is unable to bring the agencies under legislation.

The meeting was told that Pakistan is signatory to international conventions on civil society organisations, the non-implementation of which can result in serious embarrassment at the time of GSP Plus review.

Members of the committee agreed that the government is only pleased with NGOs which relieve the state of responsibility such as the building of schools and hospitals and has also allowed banned outfits to engage in this.

The senators said the concept of ‘national security interest’ is increasingly employed to silence the voices of civil society organisations lest they express alternate ideas and opinions and dissent.

Additional secretary interior ministry Sher Afghan said the government welcomes the INGOs which assist the government in bringing betterment, especially in the lives of marginalised segments.

“However, background checks on INGOs are necessary. They can work anywhere as long as their objectives are stated and they operate according to that objective,” he said.

Of the 149 INGOs, 27 are not registered, he said, adding that six did not apply and the remaining 21 will be registered when they declare foreign contributions, provide an audit report and present a report of their activities annually, among other details.

Senator Mohammad Mohsin Khan Leghari also said INGOs need to declare their source of funds and how they are utilised.

“However, legislation to register INGOs should come through parliament,” Senator Leghari said. During a discussion on the recent Universal Periodic Review of human rights record in Geneva, Senator Babar said that during the review from five years ago. Pakistan had agreed to a number of recommendations for criminalising enforced disappearances. He said no steps had been taken in this regard.

Similarly, the claim in the national report that blasphemy laws are non-discriminatory and that no one has been punished under them is not correct, the senator said, adding:” It will do us no disservice if we admit that the fair and just implementation of blasphemy law presents challenges that the state is trying to address”.

The claim of a strong commitment to protect the freedom of expression is belied in the face of undeniable facts and figures such as how the Cyber Crimes Act, 2016 has been misused by state agencies to stifle dissent in the name of national security considerations and for protecting the integrity of the federation, he said.

(By Jamal Shahid Dawn, 04, 04/01/2018)

### **New JIT formed to probe Perween Rahman’s murder**

The Sindh government on Saturday set up a new joint investigation team (JIT) to probe the 2013 murder of Perween Rahman, the then director of the Orangi Pilot Project, primarily to trace the motive for her killing and also to examine the role of police investigators, who allegedly “manipulated the initial findings”, said an official.

The fresh move, he said, by the provincial authorities came on a request from the Sindh inspector general, who sought the formation of a new JIT to trace more facts about the incident though key suspects of the killing were claimed to have been arrested by the law enforcement agency over the past five years.

“The new JIT has been set up on the request of IG A.D. Khowaja,” he said. “From police, the SSP West would be part of the team with officials from Pakistan Rangers, Sindh, and the intelligence agencies. The team would definitely like to meet the desired results within 15 days.”

The Sindh IG moved the request following the Supreme Court directives, which was approached by Aquila Ismail, sister of the slain Ms Rahman, and Zohra Yousuf of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan for reinvestigation into the case by police, and interrogation of the investigating officers — sub-inspectors Raja Ulfat Hussain and Ashfaq Hussain Baloch — for their alleged involvement in manipulating the initial investigation into Ms Rahman’s murder.

Ms Rahman was killed on a March 2013 evening while she was returning home from her office in Orangi Town. The very next day of Ms Rahman’s murder, police had claimed to have killed a Taliban operative named Qari Bilal in an encounter, declaring him the murderer, resulting in the closure of the case.

However, the Supreme Court in April 2014 ordered the authorities to conduct a fresh probe into the murder after a judicial inquiry revealed that the police officers had manipulated the investigation. The prime suspect in her murder, Raheem Swati, was arrested by Karachi police in May 2016 following the Supreme Court’s directives. The other prime suspect in the case, Ahmed Khan alias Pappu Kashmiri, was arrested in Mansehra in March 2015. Despite multiple arrests and progress the motive for the killing remained unclear that also raised questions about the role of police investigators assigned with the task.

(By Imran Ayub Dawn 17, 25/02/2018)

### **Why Tahera Hasan is an extraordinary Pakistani**

Tahera Hasan is one of the most remarkable women I've met in my life. Her safe space for kids in Machhar Colony, called *Khel*, is an oasis of life for Karachi's invisible children. Living in a one-bed room home, a typical family here has 9 children. Eighty-two per cent of people living in Machhar Colony, Karachi's largest katchi abadi, are uneducated.



This is why I admire Tahera's audacity so much. There are easier places, even in Karachi, to make an impact. Machhar Colony is defined by narrow streets ('the streets have no name here,' Tahera quips), heaps of garbage and seven lakh people living in very cramped living spaces. Streets are the only playground children grow up with here, until Tahera stirred a quiet revolution.

### **Extraordinary Pakistanis: Imran Shaukat**

Hundred and fifty children come to live, learn and play at *Khel*. The experience transforms the way they view the world and their own lives. This is why I decided to feature Tahera as an extraordinary Pakistani, in a documentary called *Khel: A playground for Karachi's invisible children*.

I'm inspired by Tahera because she is a dreamer and a doer. Her story, like every extraordinary Pakistani I've covered over the last five years, shines a spotlight on the heroes quietly making a difference in Pakistan. For every negative story that is amplified non-stop on TV, there are 10 positive stories that don't get coverage which is frustrating and disappointing.

I've been surprised by how many unsung heroes are quietly holding this country together, even as I struggle to cover them with the nuance, panache and punch they deserve. 'The last time I was at *Khel*,' Tahera shared, in a particularly poignant moment in the documentary. 'I was sitting on a carpet, when a child ran to fetch me a chair and said you sit here... I started crying. These are the same kids who stampeded over me a year ago. There is a behaviour change. How they view the world is transforming. This is the impact of *Khel* and it's very emotional for me.'

Usually, I'm an emotional person who cries pretty easily. I was the kid who cried, when my mother would read out a sad chapter in a fairytale story. Surprisingly, after visiting *Khel*, I had no tears or emotions. Instead, there was a piercing sense of guilt and shame. These are the children, who would knock on my car's window in Karachi to beg for money. I never bothered to ask their name, where they come from and what they need. In a city full of invisible children, I had become numb to the idea that they were kids, with dreams, ambitions and frustrations of their own.

Twenty-five million children in Pakistan don't attend school today. Many of them work and earn a living. Most of them spend the majority of their time on the streets. We need to create more safe spaces like *Khel* to give these children a place to be themselves. Machhar Colony is just a microcosm of what children go through in Katchi Abadis around the country.

Most adults in Machhar Colony are employed by the fishing industry as shrimp peelers, fishermen, fish cleaners, or labourers in the ship-building industry. Only three clinics serve a population of over seven lakh people. Fifty-three per cent of the population here discards their garbage on the streets. Almost half the women give birth at home. The list goes on and on.

This is what makes Tahera's work so powerful and why it needs our support. 'The more I do..., she shares, 'the more I realise how insignificant my contribution is.' And while that may be true for anyone trying to solve Pakistan's challenges, all of us must take the first step of starting somewhere.

For example, one of the most stunning pieces of feedback we've received on the documentary in the last twenty-four hours is how *Khel* is what our education or schooling system should look like. It's about giving children the confidence and discipline to live their lives, versus the narrow confines of academic learning, which often defines our schooling experience. One lady has already reached out, wanting to create a similar safe space for children in Lahore.

### **Extraordinary Pakistanis: Find My Adventure**

Sharing the story behind positive role models like *Khel* & Tahera, lights a fire within our hearts, to go out of our way to help others. But the Extraordinary Pakistani team can't do this alone. If you would like to help or donate to this cause, please visit [launchgood.com/extraordinarypakistanis](http://launchgood.com/extraordinarypakistanis). Our purpose is to serve as a social media platform, which shares extraordinary stories, connecting doers and donors in the process. If we don't share these stories, no one else will.

(By M Bilal Lakhani The Express Tribune, 09/03/2018)

### **Documentary on Perween Rahman wins award**

Perween Rahman: The Rebel Optimist has won an award at the 6th Nepal Human Rights International Film Festival that concluded on Saturday.

More than 60 films from across the world were selected for screening during the four-day international film festival held in Kathmandu.

The 67-minute documentary directed by Mahera Omar received the Special Jury Mention Award in the non-fiction category.

Perween Rahman: The Rebel Optimist captures the life and work of the architect, urban planner and a committed social activist who worked fearlessly for the less privileged in Karachi. She was killed in a targeted attack on March 13, 2013.

(Dawn 15, 12/03/2018)

### **'Perween taught us to not impose our policies on people'**

Young men and women, who have benefitted and are benefiting from the Perween Rahman Fellowship for Community Architects, and several eminent persons of the city gathered at the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) office in Orangi Town on Tuesday to interact with one another and remember the slain social activist on her fifth death anniversary.



The fellowship for community architects was instituted in Perween's name by the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, Bangkok, soon after her assassination. It enables fellows to train in mapping, AutoCAD, digitising-surveying, housing design, food security, water recycling, health surveys, port services, art education, entrepreneurship, etc.

In addition to the young people of katchi abadis, the OPP trains students of high-profile government and private universities along with hosting young artists who want to understand life in communities.

#### *Tribute paid to slain OPP head on fifth death anniversary*

"We gather here on March 13 every year to talk about our work and Perween. The work we do here is based on Perween's philosophy and thinking," said Aquila Ismail, the older sister of Perween and now also a part of the OPP.

One by one she invited all those who wanted to say a few words and share their memories of Perween with others.

Fazal Noor, head of the department of architecture at the Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology, said that Perween was his teacher at Dawood College.

"But she wouldn't let us call her 'madam'. She wanted us to call her by her name," he said. "And she taught us like a friend, not a teacher. The passion she carried for her work, she was able to transfer to us as well."

Rabia Siddiqui, who was in charge of school education projects at the OPP and has worked closely with Perween, said that she also studied at the Dawood College but unfortunately she was not Perween's student. "Still, I was so impressed by her personality. I liked the way she carried herself and the way she dressed," she said.

**Making others' lives better**

"So after graduating I wanted to work with her and came to OPP. Here I also learned how to work selflessly to make others' lives better. And as time passed I grew more engrossed in our work. It was more than work. It was a mission. Perween taught us teamwork. We were a team," she said.

Mohammad Younus of the Urban Resource Centre said that Perween always told them to first understand the ground realities.

"She was aware of the fact that development banks and the government overlook the ground realities. Later, the Asian Development Bank also acknowledged this while admitting their oversight and thanked her for putting them on the right path," he said.

Ashar Saagar, who learned mapping at the OPP, said that Perween believed in the old saying 'Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime'.

Naveed, another one of her students, said that he was confused about what line to take. "Madam guided me, helped me make my own decision and then supported my decision of going into community architecture. She told me to work for others like you work for yourself," he said.

"At OPP we were taught by Perween to not impose our policies on people. All we are to do is provide them with the ideas to generate their own thought pattern in the right direction and then leave it to their choice," said Tooba Aslam, who gives training in kitchen gardening.

Kiran, who runs a sewing programme and how to run a garments business, said that she has had the honour of working with Perween for seven years. "She always advised us to work hard but not to be overwhelmed by our work. She took us for outings and picnics. Those happy memories will stay with us forever," she said.

Other students and colleagues who spoke about her included Yasir, Shahnawaz, Zain, Samreen Anwar, Saima, Ms Farooqi, Mr Memon, Rana Khan and OPP's CEO Anwar Rashid.

A documentary on the life of Perween Rahman was also screened on the occasion.  
(By Shazia Hasan Dawn 17, 14/03/2018)

## **JIT links Perween Rehman's murder with land grabbing**

The Sindh police conceded before the Supreme Court on Wednesday that the mysterious murder of Perween Rehman, the director of the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP), Karachi, was the result of a conspiracy hatched by those threatened by her efforts against land grabbing and her championing of the Goth Abad scheme.

The report of the Joint Investigation Team (JIT), appointed to probe the March 13, 2013 murder of Ms Rehman, was furnished by Deputy Inspector General of West Zone, Karachi, Amir Farooqi before a three-judge bench headed by Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed.

The interim report stated that the linking of Qazi Bilal, believed to be a senior commander of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan who was reportedly killed in a police encounter on March 14, 2013 — a day after the murder of Ms Rehman — with the murder as prime suspect was in all probability false.

*Report disputes police claim that OPP director was killed by a Taliban 'commander'*

Ms Rehman was going home from her office when unidentified assailants approached her car on a motorcycle on Manghopir Road near Banaras Flyover and opened fire. She received gunshot wounds in her neck and was rushed to the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital by her driver where she died.

Advocate Raheel Kamran Sheikh, appearing on behalf of Aquila Ismail, Ms Rehman's sister, expressed his confidence over the interim report by stating that the JIT was heading in the right direction but expressed the apprehension that its composition might be changed in future.

However, Additional Advocate General for Sindh Shaharyar assured the court that the composition of the JIT would not be changed.

The JIT report contended that the JIT found the accounts of Sub-Inspector Ashfaq Baloch and former SHO of Peerabad police station Abdul Moeed about linking Qari Bilal with the murder simply unbelievable.

According to the report, Qari Bilal was probably killed over an internal dispute between Taliban factions but his body was subsequently picked up by the two police officials who claimed that he was killed in an encounter.

Other police staff conceded that Abdul Moeed was considered to be personal staff officer of District West SSP Asif Ijaz Sheikh and was more powerful than any other police functionary in the district, the report stated, adding that it would have been easy for him to manipulate the collection of evidence, for instance changing the spent bullet casings collected to ensure that they matched.

It said that Ashfaq Baloch had a patchy professional record and had been previously involved in professional missteps.

While Baloch lied about the facts of the encounter in which Qari Bilal was said to be killed, he was not involved in a wider manipulation.

The JIT held former SI Abdul Moeed as an officer who enjoyed extremely bad reputation both in terms of integrity and professionalism. Currently, he has been dismissed from police service over some other matter and also facing a murder charge in an unrelated case.

According to the report, the JIT was of the opinion that Moeed most likely did play a central role in the manipulation of evidence, but there was no evidence on record to prove this.

The JIT admitted that the 'real investigation' into the death of Ms Rehman began three years after her murder, and due to the lapse of time, it was difficult to gather technical evidence that would have assisted in the investigation.

While concluding, the report said the JIT needed to examine the context of a wider motive behind the murder before submission of a final report to try to find a concrete link between the work that Ms Rehman was doing and the elements or forces that were most affected and impacted by her efforts.

The court then ordered the JIT to submit the final report by April 24.  
(Dawn 01, 22/03/2018)

### **Five men indicted in Perween Rahman murder case**

An antiterrorism court indicted on Wednesday five accused in a case pertaining to the assassination of renowned social worker and former head of the Orangi Pilot Project Perween Rahman.

Ayaz Shamzai alias Swati, Mohammad Amjad Hussain Khan, Ahmed Khan alias Ahmed Ali alias Pappu Kashmiri, Mohammad Imran Swati and Mohammad Raheem Swati have been charged with killing Ms Rahman on Manghopir Road in March 2013.

*Read: Perween Rahman's murder: the great cover-up*

The judge of ATC-13, who is conducting the trial at the judicial complex inside the central prison, read out the charges against the accused persons. However, they pleaded not guilty and opted to contest the case.

The court summoned the prosecution witnesses with the direction to record their testimonies on April 3.

The prosecution said that some of the detained accused during interrogations confessed to their involvement in the crime and said that local leaders of the Awami National Party had hired Taliban militants to kill Ms Rahman.

*'Local Awami National Party leaders hired Taliban militants to kill OPP chief'*

Ayaz and Raheem, local leaders of the ANP, were living near the OPP office and tried to obtain a designated area to build a karate centre, but Ms Rahman refused to allow it, it added.

The prosecution further said that all the accused persons were present in a meeting held in January 2013 at the residence of Raheem in which they planned the assassination of Ms Rahman, adding that they hired local commander of TTP Moosa and Mehfoozullah alias Bhaloo to kill the OPP head.

The investigating officer claimed that two other accused in the case — Qari Bilal and Mehfoozullah — had already been killed while Bilal Ahmed alias Tension had been released after his arrest for lack of evidence while Moosa, Shaldar Khan and others were at large.

A case was registered under Sections 302 (premeditated murder) and 34 (common intention) of the Pakistan Penal Code at the Pirabad police station. Later Section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997 was incorporated in the case on a directive of the Supreme Court that also had ordered a judicial inquiry into the case by the then district and sessions judge (West), Ghulam Mustafa Memon.

The judicial inquiry report, placed before the SC in 2014, recommended that the murder be reinvestigated by an efficient, independent and honest police officer. It expressed dissatisfaction over the probe stating that the police investigators had not hesitated to manipulate key aspects of the investigation.

Qari Bilal, the man blamed for Ms Rahman's murder, was allegedly killed in a shootout with police a day after the killing of the OPP head. However, the inquiry report said the story of the mysterious encounter and recovery of a pistol did not impress them.

A new joint investigation team was constituted last month to review the investigation on the directive of the Supreme Court, which was approached by Aquila Ismail, sister of the slain Ms Rahman, and Zohra Yousuf of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan for reinvestigation into the case and interrogation of the former investigating officers of the case sub-inspectors Raja Ulfat Hussain and Ashfaq Hussain Baloch for their alleged involvement in manipulating the initial investigation of the case.

(By Ishaq Tanoli Dawn 17, 29/03/2018)

## **Social welfare adviser says around 4,500 NGOs sitting idle in Sindh**

Announcing that there was a ban on the registration of new non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Sindh social welfare department on Tuesday said more than half of the registered NGOs were sitting idle for years and a significant number of them had been 'de-listed' by the government.

"There is a ban on the registration of new NGOs in Sindh," said Shamim Mumtaz, adviser to the chief minister on social welfare.

She told Dawn that the ban had been imposed by the government on the recommendation of the Apex Committee to make necessary arrangement to ensure that all things involving the security of the country were made foolproof before allowing new organisations to begin working.

"With this ban in place," said Ms Mumtaz, "we are meticulously engaged in sorting out the details of the NGOs which are already registered for years."

She said as the department began searching records, it found out that out of over 8,000 registered NGOs, at least 4,500 were not working at all in the field.

*People advised to be vigilant while donating to any individual or organisation*

"As we rummaged around, we found a good number of such organisations which have been given by the actual managements to others with no information to and permission from us," she said.

She said a number of those organisations "have been de-listed" for being idle for years and failing to update their records.

For the remaining ones, she said, her ministry had received requests from the managements with the assurance that they would file their records and make those organisations active.

Ms Mumtaz said after lifting of the ban on the registration of new NGOs, each management would be required to furnish a no-objection certificate (NOC) from the provincial home department, which was not needed in the previous arrangement.

She said the new policy was formulated in the light of the Apex Committee's guidelines to impede every possibility of terrorism and terror financing.

Earlier, she said, a number of organisations were working without audit of records and without showing the sources of their funding.

The new policy would require every NGO to renew its registration on a yearly basis.

The international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) would need a NOC from the social welfare department before beginning work in any district of Sindh with details about the local NGOs partnering with them.

Besides, she said, "any INGO working in a particular district or districts would require hiring at least 50 per cent of its employees from the local population".

She said she took notice of complaints vis-à-vis collection of donations in Mehran Town and other parts of Karachi by certain individuals and groups who were showing them as working for certain NGOs.

"I have directed the social welfare secretary to take strict action against such elements and fake NGOs who are defrauding people across Sindh," she said, adding that police and district administrations across Sindh were being engaged for action against those individuals and groups.

She said fake NGOs and individuals had started collecting donations in the name of charity ahead of Ramazan, "which is illegal".

She said certain individuals were apprehended by the police who were asking for donations at weekly bazaars. They included some members of a registered NGO as well, "who are not allowed to be engaged in such activities".

"No individual or unregistered organisations have permission to collect any type of donation," she added. She appealed to citizens that before donating money, they should confirm whether these organisations or institutions were recognised and registered with the government. "Miscreants and outlawed organisations

may use these donations for their nefarious designs and people should be extremely careful and vigilant while making donations.”  
(By Hasan Mansoor Dawn, 04, 04/04/2018)

## **JIT unable to identify who killed Perveen Rehman**

A Joint Investigation Team (JIT) has failed to identify the murderer of Orangi Pilot Project Director Perveen Rehman.



The JIT strongly stated that land mafia's elements were the clearest beneficiaries of Perveen Rehman's murder. The JIT comprising all federal and provincial agencies has submitted a final report in the apex court regarding Ms Rehman, who was assassinated in Karachi on March 13, 2013.

“In the opinion of the JIT members, the root cause of Ms Rehman's murder had to lie with her efforts to make it more difficult to grab the land ...in the case of Ms. Rehman's murder, the clearest beneficiaries were land mafias”,

says the report.

### **Sharifs, Zardari among other sugar mill owners summoned by Supreme Court**

It is also stated that OPP's work of documenting the Goths to attain their land rights stopped almost immediately. Some efforts were made to continue Rehman's work but several other members of the OPP started receiving constant threats and in at least one incident, a cracker or generator was thrown at a senior member of the OPP's staff. The result was that the OPP suspended its operations working with Goths and those operations have not been reopened till date.

“With the suspension of the OPP's work, the entire process of regularising and recognising the goths that Ms. Rehman had initiated came to a standstill...it was the land mafia...that became the direct beneficiaries of the murder of Parveen Rehman”, says the report.

However, the JIT said that identifying the motive does not necessarily make it any easier to pinpoint the connection between those who pulled the trigger and those who benefited. Moreover, the lapse of time between the murder and when the investigation began was so long that it has become virtually impossible to gather evidence that would enable the investigation team to properly inquire into any connections between the arrested accused individuals and wider mafia organizations.

“What can be said about these individuals is that they exactly fit the bill for the types of characters who were involved and used as foot soldiers by the land mafia. Raheem Swati and his associates were basically small time gangsters, who, when it suited their purpose, took political cover by declaring themselves local members of the ANP in Orangi...may well have had a localized dispute with the OPP over the establishment of a Karate club...since they were neighbours of the OPP, logistically involving them in any plan to kill Parveen Rehman would have made perfect sense as they knew the locality,” says the report.

The report also states that Ms Rehman's connections with some members of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) facilitated the process of government recognition of Goths. The recognition of such a large number of goths and, by implication, their land rights over significant and lucrative areas of land on the northern and eastern outskirts of Karachi, represented a clear and present danger to the land mafia of the city.

The development of the Northern Bypass was a route for the transport of all sorts of valuable cargo upcountry, including NATO supplies to Afghanistan, which naturally further increased the value of the land and the desperation of individuals to gain control of that land. According to OPP estimates, the number of goths would likely double and even treble from the 1,182 that had been identified by 2012.

The report says that the threat and actions of the land mafia must also be placed in the context of the law and order and political situation in Karachi at the time. The period 2006-12, during which Ms Rehman began her work against land grabbing, was perhaps one of the most lawless periods of Karachi's history.

The city's ethnic conflict, between Pashtun and Mohajir, was at its peak, with the cadres of both the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and Awami National Party (ANP) heavily involved in various criminal activities, especially land grabbing. Moreover, the Taliban had also emerged as a potent militant force in the city.

All of these groups had their involvement in illegal land grabbing activities going on at the outskirts of the city. Several of the JIT members testified that from their experience that whatever their stated political differences were in this period, all three groups worked hand in glove, often supporting each other's activities in land grabbing.

Big developers in the city would associate themselves with these groups using the militant wings of these groups as their 'muscle' in order to forcibly seize land.

Members of the JIT also testified that in their experience murders that were declared as politically motivated or acts of terrorism were in fact based on land disputes that were made to look like political killings to cover up the real facts.

The state apparatus in the shape of the land revenue administration or the police was either too weak or complicit in the face of the great Karachi land grab. It was not just the street level operatives of these groups that were the beneficiaries of this land grabbing bonanza. The allegations of illegal land grabbing have been placed on every single major project that cropped up on the outskirts of the city. The report also says that the politically influential individuals benefited by misusing the Goth Abad scheme.

It is also stated that recent media reports claimed that high profile individuals like former Sindh governor Ishrat-ul-Ibad and former Malir Development Authority chairman Ameerzada Kohati, as well as prominent builders and developers like Chaudhry Tanveer and even Malik Riaz allegedly benefited from the misuse of these schemes.

### **Top court issues notices to Musharraf, Zardari in NRO case**

The foot soldiers for these high profile beneficiaries were the local land grabbers like Qadeer Shah, Aalim, Abid Arai, and Abdul Wasey who took cover in MQM and ANP to protect their illegal business.

Meanwhile, Raheel Kamran Sheikh counsel for petitioner sought time to file a reply over the JIT's report. The three judge bench headed by Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed has adjourned the hearing until May 21.

(By Hasnaat Malik The Express Tribune, 02, 25/04/2018)

## **Governor lauds role of NGOs in social sector**

It is a matter of pride for the whole country that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in the social sector in Pakistan are recognised globally and are supported by international donor agencies.



occasion.

Governor Mohammad Zubair said this while being briefed on the services of an NGO, the Health and Nutrition Development Society (HANDS), at Governor House. HANDS Patron-in-Chief Dr Abdul Ghaffar Billoo was also present on the

The governor was of the view that endorsement of HANDS' work in the fields of health, education and livelihood by international agencies such as United States Agency for International Development and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation was a reflection of the NGO's credibility.

### **Governor returns universities amendment bill for lack of uniformity**

Welfare and charitable organisations act as an extended arm of government in providing basic amenities of life to people across the country, Zubair said.

Citing examples of development projects in Thar that have been undertaken by companies operating in the area under corporate social responsibility, the governor said the residents of Thar had access to better education, health and infrastructure facilities due to such projects. Many schools, health centres, hand pumps and sanitation schemes have been completed in Thar and work on several other projects is in different phases of completion, he added.

HANDS Chief Executive Dr Tanveer briefed the governor about the projects of the NGO. He informed him that HANDS was established in 1979 and it was present in 17,000 villages in 48 districts across Pakistan. Lauding the 37-year-long services of HANDS in 48 districts of the country, the governor said it was a remarkable achievement.

(By PPI The Express Tribune, 05, 18/05/2018)

## **Time to review NGO policy**

LESS than a fortnight before the expiry of the deadline for them to leave Pakistan, 21 international NGOs were told that they could continue working till the disposal of their appeals. The decision was widely welcomed not only as a respite for the INGOs but also as an opportunity for the government to review a policy that is backed neither by law nor mature appreciation of the national interest.



Earlier, the 21 INGOs had been curtly told that their application for registration had not been approved by the INGO committee. The first reaction to the order was that it was arbitrary and without legal authority as the INGO committee could not be invested with any authority under a law that was yet to be made. Further, the agreement with these organisations could not be terminated without a legally valid reason and without giving them an opportunity for defence.

But this is more of a political-economic matter than a purely legal one, though the aggrieved parties retain the right to redress under the law. Besides, the interior minister did well to mention some of the government's concerns during the meeting with a delegation of foreign envoys.

The envoys are believed to have highlighted the important role played by the development INGOs and the lack of transparency in the appeals process. The interior minister is said to have appreciated the contribution made by development-sector INGOs in the implementation of national social policies. More importantly, he referred to the security context and the need to have control over foreign financial flows.

Besides, some INGOs had not provided the information required and a few of them had raised security concerns. While the interior minister deserves to be lauded for his candour and a bit of openness, he would do well to seriously examine the indefensible policy he has been saddled with. Punishing all or most INGOs for unverified charges against some of them smacks of action under the FCR provision about collective responsibility.

*The government must rethink its policy of strangulating civil society organisations.*

The fact to be borne in mind by the authorities is that all foreign governments back their nationals and their non-official societies against any attacks that appear unfair to them. That Islamabad risks losing considerable resources that are brought in not only by INGOs but also by their governments is pretty clear. A fair deal for the INGOs is essential — not for securing money; it is demanded by the logic of

retaining the goodwill of as many members of the comity of nations as possible. Those who raise isolationist slogans in today's world do not know what harm they are doing. This is, of course, subject to the condition that anyone abusing Pakistan's hospitality deliberately and with criminal intent will have to pay for his actions.

The time gained by the government to rethink its policy should enable it to also review what is an ill-concealed plan to strangulate indigenous civil society organisations. No unbiased mind will fail to conclude that by trying to exterminate CSOs, various governments are inflicting far greater harm on the state than on the victims of their high-handedness.

Almost all CSOs worth the name are registered under enabling laws, and attempts to convert these laws into punitive mechanisms, to the detriment of the organisations registered under them, is not only a gross violation of the principle of natural justice, it is also contrary to the national interest. Nobody can deny the services rendered by the CSOs in the fields of education, music, theatre and youth's awakening.

While the government's preference for development and charitable CSOs is understandable, its aversion to rights-based CSOs is hard to justify. Even when these CSOs criticise the government they provide it with a second opinion that it cannot receive otherwise. For any authority that is not known for intra-establishment consultation, the importance of civil society's input cannot be exaggerated. In many areas of national interest, such as the deepening of democracy, promotion of fair elections, increase in women's political participation, recognition of the democratic rights of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, attempts to end bonded labour, child labour and women workers' (especially home-based workers') exploitation, the CSOs have played a path-finding role.

The two common official complaints against rights-based CSOs are that they receive foreign funding and that they provide information to foreign critics regarding Islamabad's performance. Neither grievance has any basis in the facts. The authorities should not be unaware of the UN resolution that slated interference in CSOs' foreign funding as a denial of their basic rights. As regards the other complaint, the outside world does not need any non-government source to find out what is happening in Pakistan; through their own sources they are better informed about us than the CSOs and perhaps the government itself. In any case, in this age of transparency no country can and should keep its skeletons in its cupboard.

That over the past few years several states have been trying to reduce the space for civil society is known. These states are known for their aversion to democracy and the rule of law. No responsible Pakistani should want his country to join these secrecy-loving, brittle states. An African country drafted a law to create a security/government committee, including intelligence services and representatives of the interior ministry, to approve foreign funding for NGOs, to give INGOs a licence to work and to oversee the work of NGOs. The move was immediately denounced by the president of the International Federation of Human Rights in these words: "Hindering the legitimate activities of civil society groups is contrary to international human rights standards, in particular freedoms of expression and association."

Civil society is not blind to the government's concerns and it will not defend any group that is not democratically organised or does not have an accountability mechanism or is actually involved in any wrongdoing. The best way for the government and civil society is to sit down together and lay down the parameters of civil society's functioning, based on its fundamental right to defend the citizens' interests against encroachment from any side.

(By I.A. Rehman Dawn 08, 25/06/2018)

### **'Witnesses afraid to testify in Perween Rahman murder case'**

The trial in the murder case of renowned social worker Perween Rahman has been stalled since the police remain unable to produce witnesses and have also failed to provide them security despite clear directives of the Supreme Court, it emerged on Wednesday.

Perween Rahman, head of the Orangi Pilot Project, who devoted her life to the development of the impoverished neighbourhoods across the country, was gunned down near her office in Karachi's Orangi Town on March 13, 2013.

Judicial sources told Dawn that the antiterrorism court concerned had indicted five accused, including Ayaz Shamzai alias Swati, Mohammad Amjad Hussain Khan, Ahmed Khan alias Ahmed Ali alias Pappu Kashmiri, Mohammad Imran Swati and Mohammad Raheem Swati, on March 29.

*Police have failed to provide security to witnesses despite SC orders*

They pleaded not guilty and opted to contest. Therefore, the trial court had summoned the prosecution witnesses to record their statements.

However, the sources in the prosecution department said the trial had yet to take a formal start after the lapse of almost three months, as not a single witness of the prosecution had come forward to record their statement.

"There are around 23 prosecution witnesses in the case, but none of them seems willing to come forward to record statements due to security concerns," advocate Salahuddin Panhwar, the lawyer representing the complainant, told Dawn.

On the last hearing on June 22 the antiterrorism court had once again issued summons to the prosecution witnesses, as all of them were called absent.

Mr Panhwar recalled that the Supreme Court, where certain human rights groups had filed a petition to seek investigation into the social worker's murder, had in October 2017 directed the Sindh police to provide adequate security to the slain activist's family as well as witnesses.

The directive came when Rahman's sister complained that the family was receiving serious threats following arrest of the key suspect, Azam Swati.

Later, the trial court had also directed the then West DIG to provide security to the complainant, witnesses and counsel appearing in the case, but nothing had been done so far, said the complainant's lawyer.

"The witnesses' absence can delay the proceedings," he apprehended.

Officials in the prosecution department said two of the arrested suspects — Ayaz Swati and Amjad — had filed bail application with the Sindh High Court while the third — Mohammad Imran Swati — had moved bail plea in the trial court.

"The absence of the witnesses and all others related to the case might not only delay the trial but also benefit the suspects," they said, sharing the apprehension of advocate Panhwar.

The investigating officer was not available for comment. However, some of the petitioners Dawn spoke to urged that the trial may be completed without any delays and those involved should be punished according to the law.

The very next day after Ms Rahman was shot dead by unknown motorcyclists, police claimed to have killed a Taliban operative named Qari Bilal. It was further claimed that he was the murderer, resulting in closure of the case.

However, a group of 12 human rights organisations, including the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research, and members of civil society groups, moved the Supreme Court to seek an investigation into the murder.

Therefore, the apex court in April 2014 ordered authorities to conduct a fresh probe into Perween Rahman's murder after a judicial inquiry, which was conducted on the orders of the apex court, revealed that police officers had manipulated the investigation.

During the trial, the antiterrorism court had released one suspect, Bilal alias Tension, after the police investigating officer filed a report stating that no concrete evidence was found against the suspect to link him with the alleged crime. The IO sought his release under Section 497(2) of the Criminal Procedure Code.

A case was registered under Sections 302 (premeditated murder) and 34 (common intention) of the Pakistan Penal Code at the Pirabad police station.

Later Section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997 was incorporated in the case on a directive of the Supreme Court that also had ordered a judicial inquiry into the case by the then district and sessions judge (West), Ghulam Mustafa Memon.  
(By Naeem Sahoutara Dawn, 17, 28/06/2018)