

NGOs, CBOs INGO



4,500 NGOs in Sindh exist only on paper, confirms CM adviser

Out of the around 6,000 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) registered in Sindh, as many as 4,500 have been revealed to be dummies. The provincial government has decided to cancel the registration of all such NGOs after issuing them a final notice. Two years ago, the government had directed the NGOs working in the province to have their registrations renewed and perform an audit of their finances. However, around 4,500 NGOs did not approach the authorities for the renewal of their registration nor did they submit any audit report, prompting the social welfare department to send letters to their registered addresses. However, the letters were not received and were returned to the department.

Talking to Express News, Adviser to the Chief Minister on Social Welfare Shamim Mumtaz revealed that the government could not find any trace of those NGOs. They have not kept any contact with the social welfare department after they were registered, which arouses suspicion, she said.

Civil society, NGOs demand protection of human rights' defenders in K-P

No one received notices that were sent to their addresses, which suggests that the registered addresses of these NGOs are fake, Mumtaz said, adding that the government has now decided to revoke the registration of such NGOs. Next week, these NGOs will be notified through newspapers for the last time to fulfil their obligations, and if they do not respond, their registration will be cancelled, the adviser to CM maintained.

Spurious claims

Mumtaz also criticised NGOs for working beyond their scope in the province. There are many international NGOs which work in collaboration with the local ones, she said. These NGOs also conduct different surveys. However, they are not authorised to do so, she said.

The adviser to CM also pointed out NGOs which perform a lot of services on paper. However, in reality they accomplish nothing. An NGO in Tharparkar claims that it has been working for 25 years to plant trees in Mithi, Tharparkar, Mumtaz said, adding that she did not find any 25-year-old tree in Mithi during her visit.

New policy

After the disclosure of the presence of a large number of bogus NGOs in the province, the government has formed a new policy for the registration of new NGOs.

Minister vows to implement differently-abled quota

Mumtaz revealed that according to the new policy, an NGO, at the time of its registration, will also be notified of the date of the registration's expiry. After the expiry date, the NGO will have to renew the registration, otherwise it will cease to exist.

Grants

The adviser to the CM also commented on the policy of grants to the NGOs. The government only gives grants to NGOs for their projects which it considers worthy of support, she said.

The authority to approve grants to NGOs for any project is not vested in an individual, Mumtaz maintained, adding that the council of the social welfare department decides whether funds should be granted for a particular project or not. The amount of grant is in between Rs10,000 and Rs50,000, she said.

(By Vakeel Rao THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 15, 16/10/2017)

4,000 NGOs warned to renew registration or face cancellation

The Sindh government has warned more than 4,000 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to get themselves registered by submitting updated financial details and other required documents within a week or face cancellation, officials in the social welfare department said on Wednesday.

Thousands of NGOs are registered with various ministries and departments of the Sindh government, including the departments of social welfare, industries, and cooperative societies. Of them, officials said, more than 12,000 NGOs were registered with the social welfare department.

A meeting presided over by Shamim Mumtaz, adviser to the Sindh chief minister for social welfare, was informed that the ministry had got details of around 8,000 NGOs for renewal of their registration. However, still there were more than 4,000 organisations which had not answered the ministry's notices sent to them repeatedly.

Move designed to weed out inactive NGOs

Officials said Ms Mumtaz "advised" the errant NGOs to get their registration renewed within a week.

"Their registration will stand cancelled if these organisations fail to apply for the renewal of their registration in time," she said.

The meeting was told that more than 12,000 NGOs were registered with the ministry, which itself was a huge figure.

Sources in the department said given the resources and capacity of the ministry, it was a gigantic task to accomplish.

"In fact," said a source privy to the ministry, "they [social welfare ministry] have almost turned it into a place which is dedicated more to the clerical job of maintaining the records of the affiliated NGOs. And, unfortunately, it does not have the required capacity to do this work proficiently as well."

Before the flooding of NGO culture in the province, it is said, the social welfare department was actively engaged in various fields in which it would offer people jobs and skills through its own limited resources. However, with so many NGOs having filled the spectrum, the performance of the ministry has declined further.

Ms Mumtaz said as per rules it was mandatory for all NGOs to get annual renewal after submitting audit reports.

She said the errant NGOs had been served with notices, but they had failed to submit any reply.

Sources said the renewal of registration was aimed at pruning the organisations which were inactive. This would shed unnecessary clerical burden on the ministry.

Besides, they said, financial details and audit reports were mandatory to ensure transparency.
(By Hasan Mansoor Dawn 17, 19/10/2017)

Perween Rahman's alleged killer arrested

Police claimed to have arrested on Tuesday a suspect allegedly involved in the targeted killing of Orangi Pilot Project Director Perween Rahman. Separately, the paramilitary force claimed to have arrested at least ten suspects during raids in different parts of the city.

A suspect, allegedly involved in the targeted killing of Rahman, was arrested during a raid conducted on a tip-off in the SITE area.

Veteran activist Lala Rukh breathes her last

Investigations SP Zeeshan Siddiqui said that Manghopir police station inspector, Muhammad Urs Rajar, arrested the alleged killer, Amjad Hussain Khan alias Amjad Afridi, son of Jameel Khan, and recovered a pistol and hand grenade from his possession. The officer claimed that the accused is an absconder in Rahman's murder case.

Rahman, a social worker who devoted her life to the development of the impoverished neighbourhoods across the country, was gunned down near her office in Orangi Town on March 13, 2013. The very next day, police killed an alleged Taliban operative, Qari Bilal, in an encounter and claimed that he was the murderer, resulting in closure of the case.

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Activist among nine suspects held in Karachi raids

The Supreme Court, on April 15, 2014, ordered the authorities to conduct an investigation into the murder case after a judicial inquiry revealed that the police officers had manipulated the investigation. Two other prime suspects, Rahim Swati and Ahmed Khan alias Pappu Kashmiri, have already been arrested from Karachi and Mansehra respectively.

Rangers' raids

A militant of a banned outfit was arrested by the Rangers during a targeted raid conducted on a tip-off in the Jackson area. According to a Rangers' spokesperson, the suspect, identified as Qari Zulfiqar, was affiliated with Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and had been involved in facilitation of terrorists.

Eight terrorists killed late Saturday belong to Ansarul Sharia: Rangers

Two more suspects were arrested during a targeted raid conducted on a tip-off in the Jackson area. The suspects arrested were identified as Syed Javed alias Tarzan and Adnan Shabbir alias Pakori alias Manjan. A Rangers' spokesperson said that the suspects were affiliated with the Muttahida Qaumi Movement – London and involved in various cases of crime, including killings, extortion as well as propaganda against the state and the Pakistan Army on the directives of its leadership.

Four more suspects, identified as Suleman alias Kalu, Bilal, Kashif and Shahid, were also arrested during raids in Saudabad, according to the spokesperson. The suspects had been involved in various cases of street crime.

Eight suspected terrorists killed in Karachi gunfight

Meanwhile, three alleged drug peddlers were arrested during targeted raids conducted at Saudabad, Gulbahar and Jackson areas, according to the Rangers. Arms and ammunition and narcotics were recovered from the suspects' possession and they were handed over to the police for further interrogation.

(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 15, 25/10/2017)

Police claim arrest of suspect in Perween Rahman murder case

Police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested in Manghopir a suspect involved in the 2013 murder of Perween Rahman, the director of the Orangi Pilot Project.

The police said Mohammad Amjad Hussain was arrested after a raid on his hideout which also led to recovery of a hand grenade and a 30-bore pistol.

"We wanted to arrest him as other suspects of the murder including the prime one had already been nabbed by us last year," said SSP West Younis Chandio.

Ms Rehman was shot dead in March 2013 in Orangi Town when she was returning home from work in the evening.

The city's leading social worker was attacked near the office of the research and training institute of the OPP, located in Qasba Colony, reportedly by four gunmen who fired at her when her car slowed down at a speed breaker.

The prime suspect in her murder, Raheem Swati, was arrested by the Karachi police in May 2016 following Supreme Court directives.

Another important suspect, Ahmed Khan alias Pappu Kashmiri, was arrested from Mansehra in March 2015.

The police had killed a TTP operative named Qari Bilal in an encounter the very next day of Ms Rahman's murder, terming him the murderer and closing 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 police officers had manipulated the investigation.

Man shoots father-in-law

A man shot dead his father-in-law and left his wife wounded over some domestic dispute on Tuesday.

Police said Naeem Sheikh visited his in-laws in Federal B Area Block 16 where his wife was staying with her parents after developing some differences with him.

The suspect asked his wife to return home with him but she refused.

"The refusal led to heated arguments which prompted Naeem to pull out his pistol and fire indiscriminate shots which left his father-in-law Zazar Ahmed and wife badly wounded," said an official of the Yousuf Plaza police station.

"The wounded persons were moved to the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital where Zazar died. He was 57 and hit by a single bullet in the chest," the official added.

Hearing gunshots, neighbours gathered outside the house and overpowered Naeem, who was later handed over to the police. The police had also seized the pistol which was not licensed.

"The victims' family is in a state of shock. We will lodge a case once they come out of it," added the official.

Roof collapses

A labourer died and five others sustained injuries when the roof of a pharmacy company collapsed at the Federal B Industrial Area, police said.

They said the roof collapsed in the first half of the day when workers were on a tea break and only a few of them were inside that part of the building which was used for packaging of different products.

"That particular part of the roof which collapsed was under construction," said the area's sub-divisional police officer DSP Mohammad Zubair.

"The incident left six labourers injured, who were rushed to the hospital where one of them died of injuries."

He was identified as 25-year-old Abdul Sattar who originally hailed from Muzzaffargarh.

"It was a tea break when the incident happened, otherwise it could have led to more casualties," the police officer added. He said the police were investigating the incident and questioning the company's management.

The case would be lodged if any criminal negligence was found on part of the management or company owners, he added.
(By Imran Ayub Dawn 18, 25/10/2017)

Suspect remanded in Perween Rahman murder case

The administrative judge of antiterrorism courts remanded on Wednesday a suspect in police custody in a case pertaining to the murder of renowned social activist Perween Rahman.

The police contended that Mohammad Amjad Hussain Khan was arrested on Oct 24 in Manghopir and they found a hand grenade and an unlicensed pistol in his custody.

The investigating officer produced the suspect before the court and submitted that the suspect was one of the absconders in Ms Rahman's murder case and sought his custody for questioning as well as to arrest the other absconders.

The IO further submitted that the Supreme Court had directed the police on Oct 10 to arrest the absconders and now the matter is fixed before the apex court on Nov 15.

According to the remand papers, two suspects in the case, Qari Bilal and Mehfoozullah, have already been killed.

The administrative judge handed over the suspect to police on physical remand till Oct 27 and directed the IO to produce him again at next hearing along with a progress report.

The murder case is pending trial before an ATC against detained accused Ahmed Khan alias Ahmed Ali alias Pappu Kashmiri, Mohammad Imran Swati and Mohammad Raheem Swati, while Ayaz Swati, Amjad Afridi, Moosa and Shaldar Khan had been shown as absconders in the last charge-sheet.

The charge-sheet said Imran had disclosed that Rahim of banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan along with his brother-in-law Shaldar and others carried out the killing.

It contended that Imran also confessed that he was associated with Awami National Party in 2010 and was part of the meeting in which the murder was planned.

According to the prosecution, Ms Rahman, director of the Orangi Pilot Project, was gunned down on Manghopir Road in March 2013.

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 judge of a district and sessions court.

The judicial inquiry report, placed before the apex court 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 shoot-out 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 inspire confidence.
(By Ishaq Tanoli Dawn 18, 26/10/2017)

Film on Perween Rahman wins award in Turkey

A film on the life and work of renowned social worker Perween Rahman, who was gunned down four years ago, has won the second prize for best documentary at the 11th Istanbul International Architecture and Urban Films Festival.

Directed by film-maker Mahera Omar, the feature-length film Perween Rahman: The Rebel Optimist was screened to audiences at several venues in Turkey throughout the week-long festival.

Ms Rahman, an architect and urban planner, was director of the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) — a non-governmental organisation based in Karachi. She was shot dead on March 13, 2013 on her way home from her office in Orangi Town.

The OPP provided technical guidance to low-income communities in Orangi Town for laying of sewage lines in their lanes on a self-help basis since the 1980s. She was instrumental in the development of this unique model of sanitation. Her work was based on extensive mapping of the lanes of Orangi, which soon spread to the entire city.

She led the team that developed a concept for a sewage disposal plan for Karachi, which was accepted by the city government. She also mapped more than 2,000 urban villages in Karachi and helped people get land rights.

Ms Rahman was a champion for the youth and women of Orangi and a role model for many.

"Perween believed in cultivating human relationships. She had a very special connection with the people of Orangi. She won not only their hearts, but of whomever had the good fortune to come across her. I wanted to tell her story and that of her very important work in Karachi," says Mahera Omar.

The film has previously been screened at the 2017 Karachi Literature Festival, the Lund International Architecture Film Festival in Sweden, Architecture Film Festival of South Africa, Beijing International Women's Film Festival and Awareness Film Festival in Los Angeles.

(Dawn 05, 30/10/2017)

Court grants bail to absconding accused in Perween Rahman's murder case

The Sindh High Court on Tuesday granted interim pre-arrest bail to an absconding accused in the murder case of Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) Karachi director Perween Rahman.

A two-judge bench granted Ayaz Swati pre-arrest bail in the sum of Rs500,000 and directed him to approach the trial court within seven days for further remedy.

The principal accused, Mohammad Rahim Swati, Ahmed Khan alias Pappu Kashmiri, and Mohammad Imran were arrested and their cases were pending before the Anti-Terrorism Court-VII Karachi.

Ms Rahman was killed on March 13, 2013 while going home from her office.

The assailants riding a motorbike opened fire on her car on the main Manghopir Road near Banaras Flyover wherein she received bullet injuries to her neck. Her driver rushed her to the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital where she succumbed to her injuries.

According to police, accused Rahim Swati, who was arrested in July 2016 after an encounter in the Manghopir area, confessed before a joint investigation team (JIT) that he was an office-bearer of the Awami National Party and a councillor of UC-8 in PS-86.

About the motive behind the murder, the police said that in 2011, Ayaz Swati sought assistance of Rahim Swati for opening a karate centre on the land owned by the OPP.

Knife-attacks case

Meanwhile, the Rangers informed the SHC that they had no powers to investigate the mysterious incidents of women's stabbing in Karachi.

A division bench headed by Justice Naimatullah Phulpoto was hearing a petition filed by Justice Helpline, a non-governmental organisation, against failure of police and other law enforcement agencies in tracking down the attacker.

The petitioner submitted that over a dozen women had been attacked with sharp-edged weapon in Gulistan-i-Jauhar, Gulshan-i-Jamal, Dalmia, Nipa Chowrangi and adjacent areas but police have miserably failed to track down the attacker.

The police in their report stated that five cases registered after stabbing of women had been declared A-class as the investigators found no clue whatsoever about the identity of the attacker.

The bench put off the hearing to Dec 13 and issued notice to the federal and provincial governments' law officers.
(Dawn 18, 22/11/2017)

Edhi, Perween Rahman praised for services to humanity

Services of Abdul Sattar Edhi and Perween Rahman were recalled on Wednesday at a talk titled 'Saving humanity: remembering legends of Pakistan'. Meant to pay homage to the two legends, the event was held at the department of social sciences, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology.



Shedding light on his father and his contributions to humanity, Faisal Edhi said that Edhi sahib belonged to a small town called Bantva in Gujarat. "His mother, and my grandmother, was able to turn his attention to charity and social work from the start," said Faisal Edhi.

"She would hand him two pennies every day before he left for school with the advice to spend one on himself and one for the good of any poor fellow. But when my father returned sometimes with the admission that he had spent both pennies on himself, she would call him a heartless tyrant who eats the poor's share," he said. "Her reaction to his spend-thriftiness was something he could never forget," he added.

"Whenever my father wanted to help others he turned to the common man. It is that common man who helped us build the Edhi Foundation," he said.

While sharing aspects of her younger sister Perween Rahman's life, writer and researcher Aquila Ismail said that Perween's was a simple but complicated life. "Her life was based on principles such as being true to oneself, being fair to everyone, being fair to nature, being fair to animals and leading life with equity and justice," she said.

"My sister got gold medals in nine out of the 10 semesters she completed in Dawood College for her architectural degree. Then as soon as she graduated she was hired by a big and reputed architectural firm. But watching others designing cool landscapes and houses made her anxious. She couldn't see herself doing it so she ran away. In her panic she didn't even stop to take her salary," said Aquila.

"Perween had witnessed homelessness in East Pakistan as a child. She knew what it felt like to have things totally out of one's control. She wanted to help the common people, not the elite class. So she ran to her teacher, town planner Arif Hasan for advice, and he sent her to the social scientist and development practitioner Dr Akhtar Hameed Khan," she said, adding that Dr Khan's philosophy was to watch and learn from people how they are helping themselves.

"This was 1982. Perween would roam about among the people of Orangi, who had been left to fend for themselves by the government without being given any facilities such as water or sanitation. After researching for months she came up with the pro-poor model where a liaison could be created with the government by letting the people do part of the work such as putting in lines for water and sanitation and the government to give them connections, etc," she explained.

"The Orangi Pilot Project is a development NGO. Perween's work with them and the model they created later spread to other colonies such as Pak Colony, Manzoor Colony, etc. From there it was adopted for the development of various places in Sindh and even Punjab now. Her way of helping the poor help themselves was also followed in five countries, including Bangladesh and Nepal, and it is also taught at universities abroad," she said.

"She was also researching goths and settlements where the poor were being deprived of their rights and ownership of land on which they have lived for generations. She made the government regularise several such settlements but it also earned her the wrath of the land mafia, which eventually resulted in her assassination," she shared.

"I was living abroad when I heard that Perween had been shot dead. When I rushed here I saw so many people outside her home. It seemed as if the entire city was there," Aquila recalled.

"But at the time I just wanted to take my mother away from there. I felt that my sister lived for Karachi and Karachi killed her. But gradually I realised that she lived for Karachi, which was mourning her murder. Now I have decided to take up her work. We have introduced several new projects as well but we are not working on land. It is just not worth getting killed for," the older sister said.

Keeping hope alive

Later, answering a question regarding hopelessness in these times, Faisal Edhi said that losing hope was not a good thing. "Look for hope around you. When you start thinking about the poor, that in itself is a positive change," he said.

"There is no need to look to the government for hope. The government has totally failed in the service sector, in health, education, housing. Karachi is a big city where 70 per cent of the textile industry's produce is exported in exchange for dollars. But even after earning so much revenue there are no services extended to the common people here."

The debate then turned to donating human organs and whether it was right to donate Edhi sahib's eyes. "My father's eyes are still alive. I wish I knew which two people are seeing through them," he said, adding that around the time of Edhi sahib's passing he had thought about this becoming the cause for a debate and he was glad that people were talking about it. "Awareness needs to be spread on this issue," he added.

The event was presided over by veteran journalist and columnist Zubeida Mustafa. She urged the students to think about the things they had heard during the talks. "Think about why so many people here can be at such a disadvantage while others are enjoying their lives, and think about what you can do about this," she said.

Earlier, Szabist dean of social sciences Dr Riaz Shaikh shared his memories of watching Edhi sahib accepting donations from common middle-class people while sitting on the floor in Quetta. He also informed students that Perween Rahman earned a salary of Rs33,000 from the Orangi Pilot Project though she could have made millions designing big houses for rich people. (By Shazia Hasan Dawn 18, 30/11/2017)

Edhi Foundation adds 100 ambulances to its fleet

The Edhi Foundation, a welfare organisation started by philanthropist Abdul Sattar Edhi, added 100 ambulances to its fleet on Sunday.



In a ceremony held at the Edhi Foundation office near Tower on Sunday, Faisal Edhi, the head of the foundation, handed the ambulances' keys over to the organisation's drivers. The ambulances will be used in the welfare organisation operations all over the country.

Currently, there is a fleet of 1,800 ambulances managed by the Edhi Foundation. It provides services across the country. However, according to Faisal, at least 400 ambulances in the fleet are worn out and need to be replaced.

Talking to The Express Tribune, Faisal said the foundation wants to acquire 200 new ambulances in the coming year in order to maintain its fleet. He has also requested donations to achieve this target.

CM seeks report on Edhi Centre encroachments

Faisal added that the addition of the new ambulances has been made keeping in mind the population explosion in the country. "We couldn't offer services during many bombings that took place recently in various parts of the country. Now, we can cater to more people," he said.

The newly-acquired ambulances will be used in Sukkur, Larkana, Shaheed Benazirabad, Hyderabad, Multan, Quetta, Peshawar, Lahore, Islamabad, Chitral and other parts of the northern areas of the country.

Out of the 100 ambulances, four were donated by a philanthropist, Faisal said, adding that the remaining vehicles were purchased by the Edhi Foundation with the donations it collects.

The Edhi Foundation head also said that after 10-day emergency first responder training, the ambulances will be given support of on-board paramedic staff.
(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 14, 04/12/2017)

Another suspect in Perween Rahman murder case held after bail cancellation

Police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested another suspect named as an alleged facilitator in the Perween Rahman murder case. Prime suspect Raheem Swati had named Ayaz Swati as the person who facilitated the killing of the director of the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) in 2013.

SSP Investigation (West) Zeeshan Siddiqi said that during the course of investigations Raheem Swati told investigators that Ayaz was actively involved in the planning of Ms Rahman's killing.

He lived near the OPP office and once contested the local government elections as an independent candidate.

"After his name came in the investigation he approached a court for obtaining pre-arrest bail," said SSP Siddiqi. "The bail was granted. Today, [on Tuesday] his bail was cancelled by the honourable court, paving the way for police to arrest him." He said that the suspect was taken into custody and would be produced before a court of law for remand.

Two killed, five hurt in Lyari gunfight

A builder and a suspect were killed and five others wounded during an exchange of gunfire in Lyari on Tuesday.

Police said two armed men — later identified as brothers Fazal Dad and Mobin alias Bobby who allegedly belonged to the notorious Raja Pathan gang — came to the office of a local builder, Rozi Khan, in Street No. 6, Nayabad near Ali Mohammad Hotel and demanded 'protection money' from him.

The two sides had an altercation that led to a gunfight, they added.

"The suspects pulled out pistols and fired shots that attracted reaction from the armed guards of Rozi Khan," said City SP Adeel Chandio. "The gunfire triggered fear and panic in the densely-populated area which houses mainly residential places and a few commercial facilities."

He said the firing left some seven people wounded, including a woman passer-by. They all were shifted to the Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi, where two of them died, he added.

The dead were identified as 28-year-old Raees Khan, a son of the builder, and suspect Fazal Dad, the SP said, adding that his brother Mobin also sustained bullet wounds and was arrested by the police from the hospital.

Police sources said that the Pathan gang was actively involved in taking extortion in the area despite the ongoing targeted operation in the city.

They said that the builder was recently asked to pay Rs1 million for continuing his "safe business operations".

The deadly episode has exposed the government's tall claims about an improved law and order situation in the metropolis.
(By Imran Ayub Dawn 17, 13/12/2017)

Crackdown on INGOs

REPORTS this week that the government has ordered anywhere between 10 to 30 INGOs to cease operations in the country is further evidence of the state's escalating paranoia. Viewed in tandem with attempts to crack down on the media, social media and local activism, this suspicion of all foreigners and Pakistanis working with international aid threatens to plunge us deeper into darkness, isolated from the world and even each other. True, many foreign states do attempt to influence policy agendas through the disbursement of grant funding, particularly when it comes to national security. But when these policies align with what our government ought to be pursuing anyway, and when the ultimate beneficiaries of such activities are our own neglected people, the government must explain why it is preventing necessary humanitarian, development, research and advocacy work from taking place within the country. It is a legitimate demand that the development sector comply with stringent rules. But transparency and accountability are also required from our elected representatives.

None of the INGOs that have spoken to the media have been given a reason for why their registration applications were not approved by the interior ministry. Confirming its arbitrariness, at least one local NGO was also included in this wholesale culling, even though its application is currently under review with the SECP. The government must provide grounds for its denials and ensure an independent review process for appeals. It must provide an answer to the no less vital question of whether it has the funds, capacity and will to fill the vacuum left behind by INGOs and, concomitantly, local NGOs. International groups contribute billions of rupees, supply technical assistance and employ thousands of Pakistanis to strengthen access to education, healthcare, disaster relief, food security and human rights. Human Rights Watch estimates that INGOs along with local partners reach about 20m Pakistanis annually. They do this because successive democratic governments and military regimes have failed to discharge their duties to the people, despite donor agencies' attempts to work with the public sector. If the state is committed to the people's uplift, it must see a way past its myopic distrust of the progressive values of the development sector and work with it to provide

sustainable human security. Anything less is a disservice to our underprivileged, marginalised, disaster- and conflict-affected citizens.
(Dawn 08, 17/12/2017)

Civil society censures govt for banning NGOs

Civil society organisations from across Sindh have expressed concern over the government notification asking 21 international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) to close down their operations because they could not be regularised under the new policy.

Civil society members were speaking at a consultation titled 'Intimidations to Civil Society in Pakistan and Way Forward to Tackle the Issue', organised by the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (Piler) on Thursday.

"We express solidarity with the INGOs and fear this step would create a bad name for Pakistan at international forums," read a resolution passed on the occasion.

The gathering resolved to challenge the government's policy for the regularisation of INGOs and local non-governmental organisations in superior courts as such a policy was a violation of the fundamental rights of association and freedom of expression.

Civil society prepares 'Charter for Police Reforms'

The meeting underlined the need for unity among all the civil society organisations and building links with all the sections of society including political parties and legislators. It was decided that political parties, which were currently in the process of preparing their election manifestos, would be asked to clarify their policy towards civil society organisations.

Piler Executive Director Karamat Ali said on the occasion that freedom of association and expression were important rights and a compromise on these rights would be tantamount to enter again into the era of slavery. "We have to tell the bureaucracy that [bureaucrats] are public servants, not rulers."

Ali added that imposing ban on INGOs was a clear violation of the fundamental right of association. Martial law regimes compromised on fundamental rights, he maintained, adding that Quaid-i-Azam who was the president of All India Postal Staff Union in 1926 had struggled for the passage of India Trade Union Act, 1926 in the Imperial Legislative Assembly, however, military dictator Ayub Khan abolished that law usurping the right of association.

In 1947, about 209 trade unions were registered and their membership exceeded 500,000 and over all participation of workers in trade unions was 25%. However, today, only 1% workers are registered under trade unions, Ali said.

Civil society activists demand release of missing colleague

Sharing the background of the issue, the Piler executive director said the federal interior ministry had written a letter to INGOs asking them to close down their operations within 60 days. The committee which heard the appeals of the affected INGOs did not undo the order, Ali informed the gathering, adding that the closure of INGOs was ordered without any legal reason.

Making a presentation, Piler member Zulfiqar Shah said many prominent INGOs, including Action Aid, Trocaire and Open Society Foundation which were working in Pakistan for many years, had been asked to close down their operations. The entire process of the regularisation of INGOs was vague, he said, adding that it seemed many INGOs were arbitrarily denied to work.

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum Chairperson Muhammad Ali Shah said only rights based and advocacy based organisations like Action Aid were targeted by the government.

We live in a controlled democracy where media and civil society do not enjoy complete freedom, said Punhal Sariyo of Sindh Hari Porhiat Council.

Minorities part of Pakistani society

Rights activist Iqbal Detho said the affected INGOs could seek many international forums which dealt with the violation of fundamental rights.

(THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE 14, 29/12/2017)