



NEWSLETTER

JULY- SEPTEMBER 2025

32ND EDITION

RESHAPING SOLUTIONS FOR ACCESSING JUSTICE IN PAKISTAN

Message from the CEO



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As I reflect on this 32nd edition of our newsletter, I am deeply moved by the resilience and resolve that define the Legal Aid Society. In a year marked by funding constraints and uncertainty, we have continued to stand firm, adapting with courage and purpose to ensure that our mission to make justice accessible for all remains unwavering.

Our strength lies in our people: the dedicated staff, volunteers, board members, lawyers, and donor partners who make this journey possible. Your commitment fuels our ability to keep influencing change within Pakistan's justice system and to bring dignity and fairness to those who need it most.

Through our model of Prevention, Response, and Reform, we continue to build pathways where justice is not a privilege but a right made real for the less privileged and vulnerable communities we serve.

As you read through this newsletter, I hope you take pride in the stories and impact you witness. Each milestone is a reflection of your trust and support, which continue to inspire us every day.

Thank you for standing with us!

Barrister Haya Eman Zahid

EDITORIAL SECTION

ON THE DIGITAL FRONTLINES — CONFRONTING PAKISTAN'S TFGBV EMERGENCY



Pakistan today stands at a digital crossroads, where the rapid expansion of technology is overshadowed by an escalating crisis of gender-based violence online. The internet, once imagined as a space of freedom and connection, has become a terrain of risk for women. As connectivity grows, so do the stories of harassment, blackmail, and exploitation facilitated by digital platforms. In less than a decade, tens of thousands of Pakistanis overwhelmingly women have come forward with harrowing accounts: private photos leaked without consent, coordinated rape threats, malicious doxxing, and anonymous death threats. Each case underscores an undeniable truth: what happens online reverberates violently offline. For many, the consequences are devastating. Victims of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) endure psychological trauma, social withdrawal, and silencing. Many are forced out of digital spaces entirely, their voices muted and their participation in economic and political life curtailed.

The scale of the crisis is alarming. According to the Law & Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP), 48,395 new gender-based violence cases were registered in 2023, including 846 under PECA's TFGBV category. Pendency of TFGBV cases rose by 23% from 2022, reflecting growing court backlogs. Casework from the Legal Aid Society's Sindh Legal Advisory Call Center (SLACC) shows perpetrators are often not strangers but relatives, ex-partners, or organized gangs. LAS lawyers have supported survivors through FIA's cybercrime wing, filed Section 509 PPC complaints, and referred cases to FOSPAH and Women Development Departments. Yet these interventions remain piecemeal against the scale of harm. The justice system has failed to keep pace with technological realities, as Pakistan's 2016 cybercrime law struggles to address new threats like deepfakes and coordinated smear campaigns. Law enforcement remains under-equipped, with only 200 FIA investigators handling nearly 900 cases each. Of 135,000 cybercrime complaints filed in 2023, less than 1% were pursued as formal cases. This paralysis breeds impunity, emboldening perpetrators who exploit digital anonymity. Still, moments of judicial clarity offer lessons. In *Abdul Basit v. The State* (PCRLJ 2025 LHC 589), the Lahore High Court upheld conviction for rape and kidnapping after the accused drugged and assaulted a woman while also taking nude photographs to blackmail her. Yet the conviction rested largely on the

act of rape; the digital abuse was treated only as corroborative. This reflects both progress and limitation: courts increasingly accept digital evidence, but TFGBV remains rarely prosecuted as a distinct crime, leaving survivors without recognition of the full harm.

The crisis of TFGBV is not merely a legal gap, it is a national emergency. Every story, whether of a girl blackmailed over hacked photos or a journalist targeted by online mobs, reflects the same reality: TFGBV is shattering lives and silencing women across Pakistan. Unless we radically rethink our approach, we risk consigning an entire generation of women to digital fear and exclusion.

At a time when institutions falter, LAS stands as a beacon of resistance. We refuse to let digital violence drown out progress. Instead, we are working to transform this crisis into a catalyst for reform, fighting for a Pakistan where women and marginalized groups can engage online freely, equally, and without fear.

MALIHA ZIA

**DIRECTOR, GENDER, INCLUSION & DEVELOPMENT,
LEGAL AID SOCIETY**

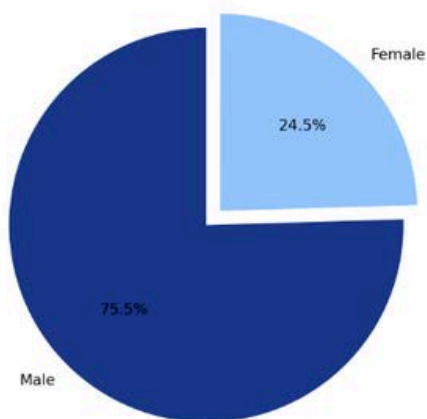
EMPOWERING CITIZENS AT THE FOREFRONT OF CRISES THROUGH ITS **TOLL-FREE NUMBER 0800-70806** – A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF SINDH AND THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

The Sindh Legal Advisory Call Center (SLACC) is a flagship project of the Legal Aid Society (LAS) and the Government of Sindh (GoS). SLACC is Pakistan's first and one-of-a-kind toll-free helpline, which through its Interactive Voice Recording (IVR) system has amassed an impressive record of 528,816 calls received, encompassing a diverse range of 308,634 queries registered from more than 600 cities across Pakistan. These queries are appropriately addressed by High Court enrolled Agent Lawyers and callers are provided conclusive guidance.

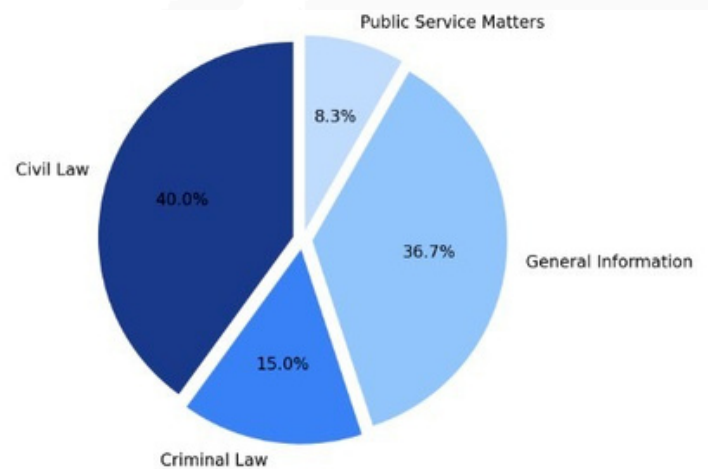
During this last quarter (July–September 2025), SLACC registered 11,546 queries. This quarter's statistics reveal that 75.4% of queries originated from male callers, 24.5% from female callers, and 2 from gender non-conforming individuals. The majority of calls originated from Sindh (70.3%), followed by Punjab (26%), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (1.8%), Balochistan (1.6%), Azad Kashmir (0.1%), and other regions (0.1%).

These calls were categorized based on different areas of law, with the following breakdown: Civil Law (4,619 queries), Criminal Law (1,736 queries), Public Service Matters (956 queries), and General Information (4,235 queries).

**Gender Bifurcation
of our Callers**



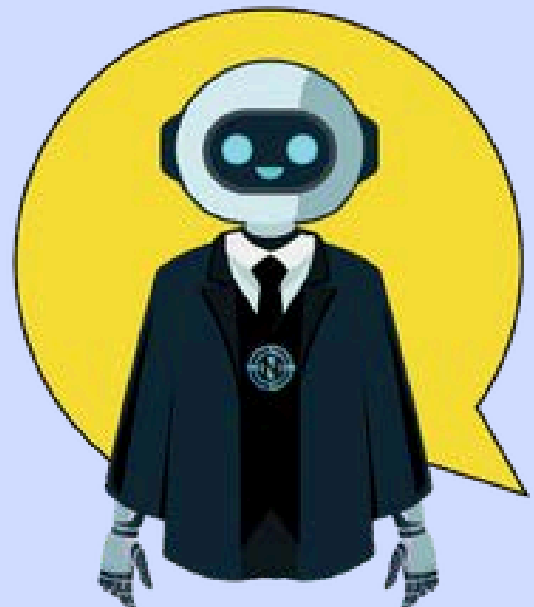
**Breakdown of Justice
Needs Served**



Pakistan's first multilingual free legal advisory Chatbot-NAZ Assist

Launched publicly on October 1st, 2024, NAZ Assist, a free, multi-lingual legal advisory service, has already supported over 7,000 users. Accessible through the Legal Aid Society's website (www.las.org.pk), NAZ Assist guides individuals through their legal concerns and connects them to appropriate support channels.

Together, SLACC and NAZ Assist continue to demonstrate how technology-driven initiatives can make justice more accessible for communities across Pakistan.

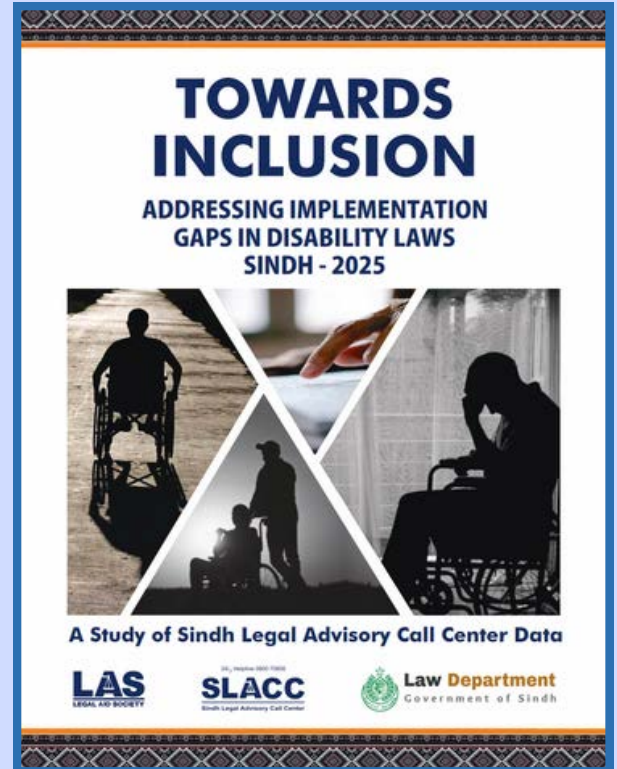


PUBLIC AWARENESS AND MARKETING EFFORTS

Building on the momentum of earlier successes, SLACC sustained its marketing efforts throughout the reporting quarter as part of its comprehensive Mar-Comms (Marketing-Communications) strategy. The media campaign was effectively executed, resulting in a noticeable uptick in engagement reflected by a significant increase in calls to SLACC's helpline (0800-70806).

SLACC AMPLIFIES DISABILITY RIGHTS THROUGH BROAD DISSEMINATION

SLACC launched "Towards Inclusion Addressing Implementation Gaps in Disability Laws Sindh," spotlighting the persistent challenges faced by persons with disabilities despite the Sindh Empowerment Act 2018. Based on 600+ real-life queries, the brief calls for inclusive communication, targeted outreach, and stronger collaboration to make legal rights a lived reality. It proposes reforms like awareness campaigns and digital employment portals. The publication was shared widely across sectors, with copies distributed at the PPRF event in Islamabad.



LEGAL LITERACY FOR YOUTH

SLACC, in partnership with Christian community schools, recently held Child Protection and Welfare sessions for adolescents in underserved neighborhoods of Karachi. The first session took place in Orangi Town on July 29, followed by another in Korangi on August 5, reaching more than 60 young participants. These sessions offered crucial guidance on understanding child rights, recognizing risks, and accessing legal support. The students showed strong engagement, and their feedback reflected how early legal awareness can foster safer communities, build resilience, and empower youth to advocate for themselves and others.

COLLABORATIVE ACTION FOR LEGAL EMPOWERMENT

LAS AND PROVINCIAL OMBUDSMAN SINDH SIGN MOU TO STRENGTHEN ACCESS TO JUSTICE



On July 30, 2025, the Legal Aid Society and the Provincial Ombudsman Sindh signed an MoU to enhance public service delivery and expand access to justice. Justice Arif Hussain Khilji highlighted a shared mission: making justice a fundamental right, not a privilege. This partnership aims to remove systemic barriers and ensure fair, timely hearings for all.

Strengthening Access to Justice: LAS Renews Partnership with Ismail Global

LAS has renewed its commitment with Ismail Global to ensure sustained legal representation in 150 pending cases and intake of 250 new ones. Under this partnership, five full-time lawyers will be funded to expand services for women, survivors of violence, religious minorities, the elderly, persons with disabilities, laborers, and systemic public interest cases, reinforcing our shared mission to make justice accessible for all.



STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO JUSTICE: CASEWORK IN FOCUS



Expanding Access to Justice Across Sindh

LAS continues to champion access to justice for women, children, and marginalized communities throughout Sindh. This quarter, LAS supported 80 new case filings. 71 involving women and 9 involving minor males. Most cases originated from Shaheed Benazirabad (19), Karachi South (14), and Karachi Central (12), with applicants including 68 Muslims, 7 Christians, and 5 Hindus. Matrimonial rights (42) and sexual and gender-based violence (18) remained the most pressing concerns, followed by harassment and police protection, habeas corpus, and child custody.

LAS also resolved 34 cases spanning a range of legal issues. These included 10 matrimonial rights matters, 10 harassment and police protection cases, 4 habeas corpus petitions, 3 Women's Right to Legal Marital Protection cases, 2 maintenance disputes, 2 cases involving sexual and gender-based violence, and individual cases related to labour, child custody, and other concerns. Of the resolved cases, 32 involved women and 2 involved men, with applicants comprising 34 Muslims, 2 Christians, and 2 Hindus.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS



Celebrating Unity: National and International Days Across Sindh

This quarter, LAS partnered with the police, district administration, and District Peace Committees to host major celebrations in Sukkur, Khairpur, and Dadu. Events included International Youth Day, National Minority Day, Independence Day, and Defense Day, each highlighting peace, inclusion, and shared citizenship. More than 3,600 participants joined, including families, youth, and senior officials. Their presence reinforced a strong commitment to interfaith harmony and community resilience.



Peace in Practice: International Day of Peace Observed

In September, LAS commemorated the International Day of Peace at Gurdwara Dhan Guru Nanak in Kandhra, District Sukkur. Religious leaders, civil society, educators, and officials gathered to discuss conflict prevention and inclusive decision-making. Together, they reaffirmed their vision for a Positive, Safe, and Inclusive Pakistan.



Representation and Inclusion: Milestones in Peace Committees

Through sustained advocacy, LAS facilitated transgender representation in the District Peace Committee Hyderabad and increased female inclusion in DPC Dadu. These efforts are helping make peace committees more reflective of the communities they serve.



ADVANCING PEACE, INCLUSION, AND JUSTICE ACROSS SINDH



Grassroots Mediation: Conflict Resolved in Hyderabad

In Hyderabad, a religious dispute was peacefully resolved through the efforts of the District Peace Committee and police. With support from Legal Aid Society, the committee received training in conflict resolution and mediation, enabling them to lead the dialogue and settle tensions independently. This case shows the strength of community-led peacebuilding when paired with the right tools.

National Impact: Formation of the National Peace Committee

A major policy milestone this quarter was the formation of the National Peace Committee. This federal body is tasked with countering violent extremism and hate speech, both offline and online. It includes religious leaders, minority representatives, and government officials. Mr. Rajesh Kumar Hardasani, a ROLE UK-trained DPC member from Sanghar, was appointed to the committee. His inclusion reflects LAS's impact on national-level representation.

Empowerment in Action: Vocational Training Announced in Sukkur

During the celebrations, the Mayor of Sukkur and the Metropolitan Corporation announced vocational training programs for religious minority communities. This initiative marks an important step toward economic inclusion and reflects LAS's ongoing advocacy and stakeholder engagement.

Building Momentum: Advocacy and Field Coordination

Ahead of these events, LAS held strategic meetings with district authorities to reactivate dormant peace committees and ensure institutional ownership. ROLE UK program leads, Mr. Israr Ahmed and Mr. Darya Khan, visited Sukkur, Dadu, and Khairpur to support coordination and promote peace and equality across communities.

ADVANCING GENDER JUSTICE: STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS FOR SURVIVORS

LAS deepened its commitment to gender justice through high-level convenings, targeted training, and policy reform across Pakistan.



Conference on Gender Justice in Courtrooms

Islamabad | 4 September 2025

In collaboration with the Federal Judicial Academy, LAS hosted a national conference focused on improving litigation practices in GBV cases. More than 75 participants including judges, prosecutors, police officials, and civil society engaged in critical discussions on the Anti-Rape Act 2021, survivor protection, consent interpretation, and secondary victimization. Speakers included Justice (R) Mushir Alam, Justice Muhammad Arabab Tahir, Hayat Ali Shah (DG FJA), and GBV judges from all provinces. The conference concluded with a shared commitment to shift from system-centric processes to survivor-centered justice nationwide.

ROUNDTABLE ON NIKAH REGISTRAR CERTIFICATION



Karachi | 30 June 2025

LAS and UNFPA convened over 30 stakeholders to strengthen mechanisms against child marriage. Key outcomes included finalizing certification criteria for Nikah Registrars, initiating a training manual with SHRC and the Local Government Department, and advocating for digitization and biometric verification of Nikah Nama through NADRA. Recommendations also focused on updating minority marriage laws, setting education criteria, and adding marital status for men.

CONSULTATION ON CHILD MARRIAGE PREVENTION



Karachi | 4 September 2025

Co-hosted by LAS, UNFPA, and NCSW, the consultation highlighted implementation gaps in Sindh's progressive child marriage legislation. The screening of UNFPA's short film Salma spotlighted the consequences of early marriage. Stakeholders called for more female SHOs, mandatory CNIC verification, and specialized registrar training, emphasizing the need for government buy-in and stronger documentation systems.

ADVANCING GENDER JUSTICE: STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS FOR SURVIVORS



Research and Evidence Generation

LAS is conducting focus group discussions and key informant interviews in Karachi, Hyderabad, and Larkana to explore the socio-political drivers of sexual violence. Insights from these hotspot regions will inform targeted interventions and advocacy strategies.

GBV JUDICIAL TRAINING STRENGTHENS ADJUDICATION



Karachi | 26 to 28 June 2025

LAS trained 20 GBV court judges in Karachi on trauma-informed adjudication, evidentiary standards, and consent interpretation. Post-training assessments recorded a 13 percent increase in knowledge, reinforcing the impact of targeted judicial capacity building.

GENDER SENSITIZATION FOR FIELD TEAMS



Sindh | OSF Project

LAS trained field officers and paralegals from five districts on GBV causes, survivor rights, and the role of men in prevention. These teams will now lead community video sessions to raise awareness and promote justice.

ADVANCING POLICY REFORM THROUGH STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT JUSTICE: STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS FOR SURVIVORS



Balochistan & Sindh | July–August 2025

In Balochistan, LAS prepared a file for a Special Sexual Offences Investigation Unit to be tabled before the provincial cabinet. Interviews with the Police Surgeon and BRSP managers, along with meetings across key departments, supported development of the Sexual Violence Response Framework (SVRF). LAS also obtained a training module from the Police Training Centre Quetta to align future police capacity-building with existing curriculum.

In Sindh, LAS held advocacy meetings with the Women Development Department, Human Rights Department, Social Welfare Department, and Sindh Child Protection Authority to advance SVRF 2025–2029 and its measurement plan, ensuring multi-sectoral coordination on prevention, response, and rehabilitation.



Stakeholder Engagement and Policy Reform

In Balochistan, LAS advanced the Sexual Violence Response Framework by preparing a file for a Special Sexual Offences Investigation Unit, conducting interviews with key stakeholders, and aligning police training modules with existing curriculum. In Sindh, LAS held advocacy meetings with the Women Development Department, Human Rights Department, Social Welfare Department, and the Sindh Child Protection Authority to strengthen SVRF 2025 to 2029 and its measurement plan.

Key Takeaways

- National convergence toward survivor-centered justice
- Policy progress in Balochistan and Sindh
- Capacity strengthening for judiciary, paralegals, and field teams
- Systemic alignment of police training, medical procedures, and data systems with SVRF 2025 to 2029

NATIONAL WOMEN PARALEGAL CONFERENCE 2025



Karachi | September 29, 2025

Empowering Women at the Grassroots

LAS hosted the National Women Paralegal Conference 2025 at the Marriott Hotel, Karachi, bringing together over sixty women paralegals from Larkana, Karachi, and Shaheed Benazirabad. With more than 700 trained paralegals active across Sindh, LAS continues to bridge the gap between communities and justice, empowering women and children through legal aid and awareness.

Stories that Inspire Change

A highlight of the conference was the screening of "Agents of Change: Paralegals Championing Women's Property Rights" by Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy Films. The documentary powerfully portrayed paralegals who help women reclaim their inheritance and dignity.

"Our paralegals are not just legal guides; they are catalysts of change,"

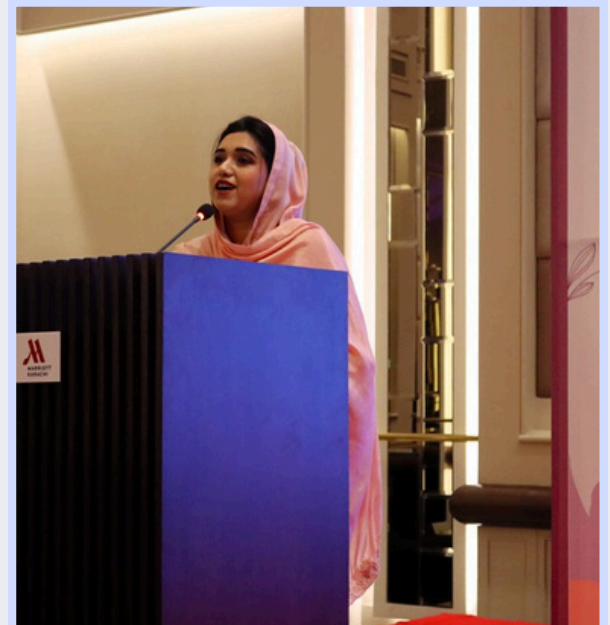
– **Maliha Zia, Director, Gender & Inclusion Department, LAS**

A Collective Call for Justice

The day featured heartfelt stories from district representatives, exploring how women paralegals are driving awareness and reform. MPA Ms. Maleeha Manzoor highlighted the need to recognize matrimonial property rights, while Dr. Habiba Hassan closed with a call to continue supporting paralegals as changemakers in access to justice. These women are not just trained. They are transforming justice across Sindh.

"Our paralegals are making justice tangible for those who need it most."

– **Dr. Habiba Hassan, Board Member, LAS**



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: AYESHA'S STORY OF COURAGE AND JUSTICE



In a deeply distressing case, Abbas threw acid on his sister, *Ayesha, and later attacked her husband and sons with a knife. The family suffered severe injuries and lasting emotional trauma. Despite these unimaginable hardships, LAS stood by them every step of the way through the trial. Eyewitness accounts and medical evidence revealed that the attack was deliberate and carefully planned.

On 25 August 2025, the court sentenced Abbas to 14 years of rigorous imprisonment, along with a fine of one million rupees and Daman compensation for the victims. This judgment not only brought long-awaited justice for Ayesha and her family but also sent a strong, unmistakable message that acid violence and domestic abuse will never be tolerated.

(*Name changed to protect identity)

“

My brothers were **jealous** of me because of my property and wanted a share so they could get married. But **the property was legally mine** — no one has **any right over it**.

— Ayesha (pseudonym), survivor

”



**Advocate Faheem Ahmed****Advocate Sher Hussain****Advocate Murtaza**

Case Spotlight: Criminal Revision and Habeas Corpus Relief

Advocate Faheem Ahmed guided a caller through a Sessions Court remand order and later advised filing a habeas corpus petition under Section 491 CrPC to address illegal detention and request a medical examination. The Sessions Court set aside the Magistrate's dismissal, allowed the revision, and remanded the matter for proper statement recording. The caller thanked SLACC for timely and effective support.

Case Spotlight: Legal Support for Tenant Eviction

Advocate Sher assisted a client dealing with a tenant who had defaulted on rent for several months and refused to vacate the property. LAS advised filing an application under Section 15 of the Sindh Rented Premises Ordinance, 1979 before the relevant Rent Controller to initiate eviction proceedings and recover outstanding dues. The caller followed through, and on 7 July 2025, confirmed successful progress. A testament to timely legal guidance and effective intervention.

Case Spotlight: Pension Relief Secured for Widow

In another case, Advocate Sher Hussain supported a widow whose late relative's pension was being withheld by the Municipal Committee, Taluka Moro. LAS guided her to submit a formal application to the Chairman and clarified that the Supreme Court had declared the "son quota" policy invalid. Acting on this advice, she filed her application and successfully secured the pension. Her family now receives their rightful benefits, achieving financial stability through strategic legal support.

Case Spotlight: Jurisdiction Upheld in Property Dispute

Advocate Murtaza guided a caller through a legal challenge to his wife's inheritance claim. By invoking Section 11 of the Punjab Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2021 and filing under Order VII Rule 11 CPC, the civil suit was dismissed, affirming the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.

Case Spotlight: Property Rights Protected in Dower Dispute

A caller's property title transfer was obstructed due to a pending dower claim. LAS advised filing under Order I Rule 10 CPC to assert third-party ownership. On 22 August 2025, the Family Court ruled in his favor, affirming his property rights through strategic legal action.

SUPPORT JUSTICE. EMPOWER COMMUNITIES. FUTUREPROOF LIVES

As LAS confronts the urgent challenge of sustaining its litigation services in the face of funding cuts, we are inviting Justice Champions; individual donors, professionals, and philanthropists to stand with us.

Support a Case. Sponsor a Cause. Stand for Justice.

Through the Justice Champions Initiative, you can:

Fund end-to-end legal representation for survivors of abuse, injustice, and persecution.

Sponsor a Justice Hub delivering legal empowerment and aid in underserved communities.

Join a donor circle and receive updates on the lives you've changed.

Together, we can ensure that no survivor is left without representation—and no injustice goes unchallenged.

Be their voice. Be their shield. Be a Justice Champion.

Donate now: Every training we deliver and every conversation we lead is part of a larger mission: to futureproof communities by building safer, more just workplaces and societies. Your support helps us scale this impact.

When you donate to the Legal Aid Society, you directly contribute to empowering survivors, vulnerable workers, and communities fighting for their rights. Your generosity enables us to train, protect, and advocate for those who need it most.

Let's build a future where justice isn't a privilege—it's a guarantee.

For partnerships and major gifts, contact: pdu@las.org.pk



BE A JUSTICE CHAMPION

Be Their Voice, Be Their Hope!

SUPPORT A SURVIVOR

315 USD

Per Case

88,000 PKR

Your contribution will support a survivor of sexual and gender based violence, child abuse, forced marriages and/or conversion, and minority persecution.

The average timeline for case resolution is 9 to 12 months

Your contribution will cover the lawyer's and court fee and will ensure comprehensive case management as well as quality assurance for each individual case.

SPONSOR A JUSTICE HUB

450 USD

For 10 Sessions

125,000 PKR

Your contribution will empower communities through creating legal literacy and awareness on social, political and legal rights.

Your contribution will cover one awareness and facilitation session, addressing legal queries, sharing information on legal rights, and connecting beneficiaries with administrative forums and bridging the gap between them and social security nets



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