



## **Promoting Ombudsmanship**

# **A Catalogue of Activities at the National Level 2024-25**



**AOA Secretariat, Islamabad**

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## **Foreword**

It is with profound satisfaction that I present the yearly document titled, “Promoting Ombudsmanship: A Catalogue of Activities at the National Level for 2024-2025”. Beginning from the last year, this document has been compiled by the AOA Secretariat, Islamabad, drawing upon the valuable contributions and inputs received from our esteemed member institutions.

The principal aim of this document is to prepare an authentic and comprehensive record of diverse activities, special projects, strategic initiatives, notable achievements and best practices adopted by member institutions in pursuit of their national objectives. The document offers a consolidated picture of the commendable efforts being undertaken by member institutions in advancing the goals and purposes of Ombudsmanship in the region. While this document outlines the current programmes and practices being pursued by the Ombudsman and ombudsman-like institutions in the region, it simultaneously underscores our strong commitment to the shared principles of good governance, the rule of law and the sanctity of human rights. The activities by our member institutions at the national level, not only reinforce the spirit of unity among the AOA fraternity but also serve to enrich the collective professional standing of our Association.

I am happy to share with you that during 2024 and part of the current year 2025, an impressive array of activities including international conferences, seminars/webinars, training events and alike were arranged by the AOA member institutions. These activities were aimed at promoting the concepts of Ombudsmanship and developing professionalism as envisaged in the Bye Laws of our Association. I am confident that the AOA membership will continue to undertake such activities in order to advance the objectives of the Asian Ombudsman Association.

Following the presentation of this document to the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors and the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the General Assembly (Nanjing, 9-10 September 2025), it will be uploaded on the AOA website and placed in the AOA Resource Centre to serve as reference material for researchers, scholars and ombuds practitioners within the region and beyond.

**(Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi)**  
**President**  
**Asian Ombudsman Association**

## **1. Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman), Republic of Azerbaijan**

- Following the adoption of the Action Plan for Awareness Raising in 2024, the Ombudsman Office (hereinafter, the HRCA) organized educational training and seminars for the employees of state bodies, staff of educational institutions, and representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs). The topics included the right of access to information, protection of the rights of children and persons with disabilities, protection from discrimination, implementation of the NPM mandate, etc.
- On the eve of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) hosted by Azerbaijan, the Ombudsman organized the International Baku Forum on “Climate Change and Human Rights: International Forum of Ombudsmen and National Human Rights Institutions” in cooperation with the UNDP Azerbaijan, which brought together almost 60 representatives from ombudsmen and national human rights institutions, information commissioners’ offices of nearly 30 countries, regional and international organizations, state bodies, and non-governmental organizations. Moreover, a video was prepared by the Ombudsman Office featuring the interviews with participants regarding their views about the discussions regarding the topic of the Forum.<sup>1</sup>
- The participants of the International Baku Forum adopted Baku Declaration of Ombudsmen as an outcome document. The key commitments under the Declaration are monitoring and research, proposals for action, legislative cooperation, educational events, solidarity principles, conflict resolution support, condemnation of environmental harm, and support for mitigation measures.
- The HRCA announced an essay writing competition<sup>2</sup> jointly with the UNDP in Azerbaijan for university students under the motto “Youth Vision for Climate Change” which was held in a social Hackathon format. As part of the competition, the participants (6 teams) conducted research on the human rights-related effects of climate change, in particular its influence on displacement, health, vulnerable population groups, gender equality, corporate responsibility, policymaking, and administration. The winning team members were awarded at the Forum on Climate Change and Human Rights: International Forum of Ombudsmen and National Human Rights Institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZASPEScda0>

<sup>2</sup> <https://ombudsman.az/en/pages/136>

- HRCA organized an interactive discussion within the framework of the COP29 on the topic of “Human Rights-Based Climate Justice: The Role of National Human Rights Institutions” devoted to the protection of vulnerable population groups in the context of climate change. Representatives of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), the Human Rights Commissioner’s Office of Honduras, international experts, members of the Parliament of Azerbaijan, relevant state bodies, international organizations, and civil society institutions took part in this side event.<sup>3</sup>
- The Ombudsman established independent monitoring groups according to the amendments made to the Constitutional Law, which broadened the mandate on monitoring and promoting the implementation of the UN Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Rights of the Child, and ensuring the right to equality and prevention of discrimination.<sup>4</sup>
- Ombudsman established a Working Group on Mental Health and Human Rights<sup>5</sup>, which involves staff members of the Ombudsman Office, representatives of relevant state bodies, non-governmental organizations, WHO, and experts. While establishing this group, the guidance and practice published by the WHO and the OHCHR on “Mental health, human rights, and legislation” were taken into consideration. This also originated from the Law on Psychiatric Care, according to which the Ombudsman monitors the compliance with rights and legitimate interests of persons while they receive psychiatric care. The Working Group has conducted social media monitoring and public opinion surveys to determine instances of stigmatization, discrimination, and attitudes towards individuals with mental illness in society and has published general information about the results of the survey.<sup>6</sup>
- During the Child Rights Month, which is announced by the HRCA on the eve of World Children’s Day every year, the HRCA held educational events for students and school staff in the liberated Karabakh and Eastern Zangazur regions for the first time.<sup>7</sup>
- HRCA developed a child-friendly version of the text of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>8</sup>, in collaboration with the UNICEF Country Office, which is distributed among the children and staff of the secondary schools during the awareness raising events.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://ombudsman.az/en/news/2077>

<sup>4</sup> <https://ombudsman.az/en/news/2054>

<sup>5</sup> <https://ombudsman.az/en/news/2113>

<sup>6</sup> <https://ombudsman.az/en/news/2145>

<sup>7</sup> <https://ombudsman.az/en/news/2078>

<sup>8</sup> <https://ombudsman.az/en/news/2074>

- As part of the networking among the member institutions of the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA), at the initiative of the Ombudsman of Azerbaijan, an online event was held on “Business and Human Rights” for the ombudspersons and NHRI representatives from Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Tatarstan, and other countries, members of the Ombudsman Association of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC OA), and representatives of state authorities and transnational companies.<sup>9</sup> The participants were briefed about the national baseline assessment on Business and Human Rights, which was prepared by the Ombudsman Office by considering the opinions and recommendations made by international experts.
- On December 3 - International Day of Persons with Disabilities, HRCA organized a visit to “Kashalata”, which is the first inclusive cafe opened in Baku, employing persons with autism and Down syndrome. During the visit, the Ombudsman met with those employees and held talks with them to get acquainted with the working conditions.
- A special educational product titled "National Preventive Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture," was prepared in Braille for people with complete visual impairments upon the Ombudsman’s initiative on the eve of January 4 - World Braille Day.<sup>10</sup>
- As is known, Azerbaijan suffers from the landmine problem, and HRCA also attaches high importance to this issue during the post-war period. As part of the supportive measures for landmine victims (survivors), the staff members of the HRCA attended a friendly match held between amputee football teams that was organized by the Azerbaijan Mine Action Agency and the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan to promote the societal integration of the landmine survivors who became disabled due to explosions.<sup>11</sup>
- HRCA prepared social videos regarding right to equality<sup>12</sup> and the protection of child rights<sup>13</sup> to increase awareness of society and shared these educational videos on mass media as well.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://ombudsman.az/en/news/2114>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ombudsman.az/en/news/2133>

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=1337674767845807&id=100048098900917](https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1337674767845807&id=100048098900917)

<sup>12</sup> <https://ombudsman.az/en/news/2213>

<sup>13</sup> <https://ombudsman.az/en/news/2220>

## **2. National Commission of Supervision (NCS), China**

- In January 2024, the 3<sup>rd</sup> plenary session of the 20<sup>th</sup> Central Commission for Discipline Inspection was held in Beijing. The plenary reviewed China's anti-corruption and supervision work in 2023 and made plans for anti-corruption and supervision work in 2024. Chinese president XI Jinping attended the plenary and made an important address, highlighting that China will carry on with the self-reform revolution and promote the high-quality development of the supervision work.
- In March 2024, China initiated the Sky Net Operation 2024 to bring back corrupt fugitives and their stolen assets. This was the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive year for China to initiate similar operations. 1597 corruption fugitives were repatriated to China during the "Sky Net 2024" campaign, with over 18.28 billion yuan worth of illicit assets recovered.
- In August 2024, China held a workshop themed "denying safe haven through enhancing mutual legal assistance", together with Peruvian presidency under the APEC ACTWG, in Lima during APEC SOM3. APEC economies and relevant international organizations were invited to the workshop to share experiences and best practices in enhancing MLA cooperation in corruption cases.
- In September 2024, China, together with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, held the 5<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting and the 8<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting of the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (the Globe Network) in Beijing, bringing together about 400 participants from 105 countries and international organizations. The Beijing Consensus on Law Enforcement Cooperation and Denial of Safe Haven for Corruption was passed during the high-level forum of the plenary meeting, demonstrating the strong determination of zero-tolerance towards corruption and promoting international anti-corruption law enforcement cooperation.
- In 2024, China organized 3 training workshops for 83 participants from 18 developing countries and international organizations. At these training workshops, participants have a chance to know the major internal legal frameworks for anti-corruption cooperation, and shared experience in supervision work.

- In January 2025, the 4<sup>th</sup> plenary session of the 20<sup>th</sup> CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection took place in Beijing. It laid out a comprehensive plan for 2025, stressing that China will continue to enhance anti-corruption efforts and strengthen supervision, so as to safeguard the realization of Chinese modernization. Chinese president XI Jinping highlighted at the plenary that China will continue to hold zero-tolerance against corruption, keep up the strong anti-corruption momentum, and address petty corruption and misconduct at people's doorstep, in particular those related to education, rural fund management, and elderly care, so that the fruits of reform and development will be shared by all Chinese people.
- In March 2025, China initiated the Sky Net Operation 2025 to bring back corrupt fugitives and their stolen assets.
- In April 2025, the National Commission of Supervision of China held domestic training workshop on the pursuit of fugitives and asset recovery. Practitioners from different provinces of China were invited to participate in the workshop and enhance their capacity building.
- In June, China will receive the country visit of the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of review on Chapter II prevention and Chapter V Asset Recovery of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. China will work closely with reviewing experts and the Secretariat to ensure the timely completion of the review.
- In September, China will hold the 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Board of Directors, the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the General Assembly of the Asian Ombudsman Association as well as a workshop themed on "Effective Ombudsmanship in Addressing Malpractices Related to People's Livelihood", in Nanjing, Jiangsu province of China.
- In 2025, China will continue to hold training workshops for participants from developing countries.



### **3. The Ombudsman, Hong Kong, China**

- In the year 2024/25, the Office received 4,402 complaints on various topics and completed 4,664 cases (including complaints received in the previous year), of which 3,009 were assessed and closed and 1,655 pursued and concluded. The remarkable success of the Office's mediation efforts is evident in the resolution of 555 cases, accounting for 34% of the cases pursued. This achievement marks nearly three times the number of cases resolved through mediation last year, setting a new record for the Office.
- The Office completed 40 full investigations and eight direct investigation operations, delivering a total of 254 recommendations for improvement of public administration. The total number of recommendations has increased by 37% as compared to that of last year.
- During the year, the Office held six press conferences and issued two press releases to announce the results of eight direct investigation operations. Furthermore, the Office declared the launch of five direct investigation operations, inviting stakeholders and the public to submit their views.
- To foster positive interaction and communication with stakeholders from all sectors, the Office employed a diverse range of communication channels, including exchange meetings, publicity campaigns, educational initiatives and commendation schemes. The Office also stepped up public education and publicity efforts to cultivate a positive complaint culture, particularly among the younger generation, and stress the importance of quality public administration. During the year, 13 school talks at universities, tertiary institutions and secondary schools were organised.
- To recognise and encourage contributions to the promotion of a positive complaint culture, a dual-track commendation scheme was introduced this year. The Office issued 41 appreciation letters to 16 government departments and public organisations and presented 19 appreciation certificates to complainants, acknowledging their role in improving public administration.
- The Presentation Ceremony of the 27th Ombudsman's Awards was held on 31 October 2024. This year's Grand Award went to the Hong Kong Fire Services Department, whereas the Social Welfare Department and the Water Supplies Department were the runners-up. Other

winning organisations included the Housing Department (Mediation Award), the Immigration Department (Customer Services Award) and the Hospital Authority (Information Technology Application and Creativity Award). Individual awards were presented to 79 public officers in recognition of their exemplary performance and professional attitude in public service.

- To commemorate its 35th anniversary, the Office hosted the inaugural International Ombudsman Summit 2024 (“IOS 2024”) on 3 December 2024 at the Hong Kong Palace Museum. With the Closing Ceremony and the Opening Ceremony officiated respectively by the Chief Executive and the Chief Secretary for Administration of the HKSAR, the Summit, themed “Ombudsman in a Changing World: Learning from the Past; Preparing for the Future”, featured many illuminating keynote speeches and panel discussions including speeches delivered by senior leaders from the National Commission of Supervision and the National Public Complaints and Proposals Administration.
- IOS 2024 was attended by about 140 participants from some 40 jurisdictions across six continents. It provided a global platform for distinguished speakers from international institutions, including the International Ombudsman Institute and the Asian Ombudsman Association, and representatives from other ombudsman related institutions and international bodies to exchange insights and share experiences and discuss best practices. It also facilitated meaningful conversations on the evolving challenges faced by ombudsman systems and institutions, while fostering in-depth deliberations on future developments in the field.
- In a commitment to fostering cooperation and sharing, the Office signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Bilateral Cooperation with representatives from eight countries and regions across five continents, including Ontario, Canada, and Hawaii, the United States, in North America; Curaçao in South America; Slovakia in Europe; Indonesia, Korea and Macao in Asia; and Zambia in Africa. The signing of these Memoranda of Understanding demonstrates Hong Kong’s distinctive advantage of having strong support from our motherland and close connection with the world and our important role as a “super connector” and “super value-adder”.

#### **4. Administrative Evaluation Bureau (AEB), Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIAC) – Japan**

##### **Overview of Administrative Counselling Activities 2024-2025**

- During the fiscal year from April 2024 to March 2025, the Administrative Evaluation Bureau (AEB) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) of Japan handled 137,496 cases of complaints, opinions, and requests from the public regarding the government administration. These cases include those received by Administrative Counsellors, who are public contributors with extensive knowledge and experience in various fields and are appointed by the Minister of MIC. The top three most common topics were real estate registration/family registers, tax, and social welfare.

##### **Special Administrative Counselling Services for Large-scale Disaster**

- In January 2024, a large earthquake struck the Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa Prefecture, forcing many victims to evacuate. In addition, Japan experienced multiple large-scale disasters throughout the year, including heavy rains, typhoons, and forest fires across various regions. In response to each major incident, Special Administrative Counselling Services were promptly conducted to provide support and assistance to those victims.
- The AEB, in cooperation with local governments, relevant organizations, and Administrative Counsellors, implements Special Administrative Counselling Services to promptly support disaster victims.
- The Special Administrative Counselling Service consists of three main components: providing valuable information to the victims through a comprehensive guidebook that consolidates support systems from all government ministries and related organizations, a dedicated toll-free counselling hotline for immediate assistance, and in-person counselling sessions offered at one-stop consultation booths, jointly operated with relevant agencies.
- During the Noto Peninsula earthquake, the AEB distributed guidebooks to affected municipalities and evacuation centres, listened to the voices and concerns of disaster victims and local government staff, acted as a liaison with relevant organizations, and provided support that was more closely aligned with the actual needs of the victims. The most common issues included rebuilding or repairing damaged houses and the payment of support grants

for reconstructing livelihoods of disaster victims. As of December 2024, approximately 5,300 counselling cases had been received.

- These initiatives by the AEB have been recognized and commended by the Cabinet Office's Central Disaster Management Council and Special Administrative Counselling Service was newly specified in the Basic Disaster Management Plan of the government.

### **Launch of Govbot**

- In March 2024, MIC released a chatbot called Govbot for consultations regarding various national systems, subsidies, etc. This chatbot provides answers to frequently asked questions on topics that are in high demand among residents, such as child-rearing, medical insurance system, pension, tax, real estate registration, family register, and disaster prevention and response. Govbot currently includes about 1,600 sets of questions and answers.

### **Promoting Administrative Counselling Service**

- In 2024, the AEB extended the period for focused consultation and publicity activities from one month to two months (September and October) in order to raise public awareness and encourage greater use of Administrative Counselling Services.
- During these months, One-day Administrative Counselling Centres were set up at 159 locations nationwide, handling 9,047 cases. These temporary counselling sites provide citizens with one-stop access to a wide range of consultations, thanks to the cooperation of national agencies such as the Legal Affairs Bureau and the Labor Bureau, local governments, and professionals including lawyers, judicial scriveners, and tax accountants.
- Complementing these efforts, local offices of the AEB carried out distinctive public relations activities tailored to their respective communities. One example is their participation in a cosplay event: the AEB's iconic mascot character, Kikoon, has participated in many events across Japan in the past to promote the Administrative Counselling Service. This year, for the first time, Kikoon took part in a nationwide cosplay event held in Tokushima Prefecture. Photographs of the event were shared through the official X account to increase public engagement and raise awareness about Administrative Counselling.

### **Supports for Administrative Counsellors**

- The AEB held several workshops for Administrative Counsellors in local areas to help them support foreign residents. In the workshops, counsellors learned how to communicate using simple and easy Japanese, and how to use translation apps effectively. This effort comes as the number of foreign residents has been increasing year by year, especially after the return to normal life following the COVID-19 pandemic. These workshops are also in line with the government's key initiative, the "Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals".

### **Other Public Relations Activities**

- In 2024, as in the previous year, the AEB strengthened collaboration with post offices, which are located throughout the country and serve as key social infrastructure in local communities. The AEB held opinion exchange meetings with administrative counsellors and community leaders, such as local postmasters, neighbourhood council presidents and community support coordinators, to discuss various local issues. This initiative also aims to uncover hidden complaints that may lead to improvements in administrative operations.

## 5. Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC), Republic of Korea

### Actively Handling Civil Complaints

- The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) of the Republic of Korea proactively resolves illegal or unjust administrative actions, unfair decisions, and daily inconveniences, thereby achieving its highest citation rate in five years.
- Resolved 2,840 cases out of 9,579 civil complaints received in 2024, marking a continuous improvement in citation rates for five consecutive years.
- Trend in citation rates for civil complaints: 18.5% (2020) → 21.1% (2021) → 25.7% (2022) → 28.7% (2023) → 29.6% (2024)

### Major Cases of Civil Complaint Resolution

- Recommended corrective action for a local government that removed a disabled parking area, citing no legal obligation to widen parking spaces.
- Advocated for a veteran couple recognized for national merit, enabling their continued residence in rental housing despite temporary relocation to care for their young grandchild.
- Assisted a 67-year-old lifelong learner in applying for a university entrance exam by locating and verifying his outstanding high school academic records from the 1970s held by educational institutions.
- Recommended that the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs reexamine the eligibility of a Korean War veteran who was denied burial at the National Cemetery due to a record of desertion, which resulted from delayed reporting due to medical treatment.

### On-Site Focused Handling of Civil Complaints

- The ACRC provided direct, customized complaint-resolution services, reaching out to residents in remote island areas, rural and remote communities, youth populations, small businesses, and small business owners.
- **On-site e-People Service:** Conducted 105 annual visits to 36 rural and fishing communities and 69 locations housing vulnerable groups, such as youth and tenants in rental housing, to resolve civil grievances on-site.
- **On-site Meetings to Address Business Grievances:** Visited companies operated by persons with disabilities, social enterprises, and other vulnerable businesses facing challenging economic conditions, actively listening to and resolving their concerns through 12 annual visits.

### Intensive Support for Vulnerable Groups

- The ACRC swiftly resolved urgent civil complaints regarding safety threats and livelihood challenges faced by vulnerable and disadvantaged populations, thereby ensuring comprehensive protection of their rights and interests.

- Received a total of 263 civil complaints from vulnerable groups, handling 247 cases, of which 125 were cited (resolved in favor of complainants).

### **Emergency response and field support included**

- Emergency dispatch to crisis sites: Earthquake-affected areas in Buan (June 2024), manufacturing facilities affected by fire (April 2024), five visits and dialogue sessions at care facilities for Hansen's disease patients, and meetings with North Korean defectors (August 2024), among others.
- Provided emergency livelihood assistance (KRW 1 million per household) in cooperation with five public agencies, including Korea Racing Authority (KRA), and implemented mentoring programs for youths preparing for self-sufficiency in collaboration with private-sector social contribution projects.

### **Handling Collective Civil Complaints**

- The ACRC resolved 318 collective civil complaints having significant societal impacts through mediation and consensus-building, benefiting approximately 86,000 citizens and effectively mitigating social conflicts at an early stage.
- Trend in collective civil complaints resolved: 113 cases (2020) → 116 cases (2021) → 247 cases (2022) → 230 cases (2023) → 318 cases (2024)

### **Key Examples of Collective Complaint Resolutions**

- Mediated between relevant government agencies (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs) to develop a comprehensive solution for residents of Anmado Island experiencing crop damage due to abandoned deer.
- Facilitated a compromise on rock-removal methods in residential development areas, ensuring the safety of nearby residents.
- Improved the living conditions at Hansen's disease patient settlements by mediating agreements among relevant government agencies to promote environmental improvements.

### **Operation of a Dedicated Grievance Consultation Desk for Foreign Businesses**

- Provide consultation on grievances experienced by foreign businesses in relation to illegal or unfair administrative actions and unreasonable regulations imposed by public institutions; receive and handle grievance petitions
- Establish a hotline\* for grievance consultations by foreign businesses → Provide consultations via phone and email → If necessary, receive and process grievance petitions or pursue institutional improvements

\*Contact points: International Relations Division (Tel: +82-44-200-7155), On-site Grievance Investigation Division (Tel: +82-44-200-7832/7834), Email: [acrc@korea.kr](mailto:acrc@korea.kr)

## **6. Macao SAR Commission against Corruption (CCAC)**

- Out of the total complaints and reports, 165 were sent to the Ombudsman Bureau for investigation which concluded 137 (among them include 83 cases was open in previous years) cases including 28 cases required follow up by the respective departments.
- The CCAC continued to made efforts to encourage direct dialogue with Macao citizens to promotion balance between the principle of confidentiality and transparency in the handling of cases. For this purpose, the CCAC continued to call on citizens to file their complaints responsibly.
- About half of the cases handled by the Ombudsman Office during the period in reference were related to three specific areas of public administration: the public service regime; municipal affairs; and land and public works matters.
- The public service regime continued to be a focus of attention, accounting for about 30% of the total cases, primarily involving disciplinary issues of public service workers, management and functioning of public services, and staff recruitment, among other areas.
- Cases related to municipal matters and land and public works represented more than 10% of the total. With respect to municipal matters, the cases mainly involved situations of environmental hygiene, noise issues, administrative licences, and the occupation of public land, while in the area of land and public works, the cases primarily concerned illegal constructions, the process of land concessions, and the lack of rigor in the inspection actions of public works.
- The CCAC continued to disseminate results of some investigations by the Ombudsman Bureau on the CCAC Webpage for the general public.
- As a contribution to the measures to encourage self-confidence in public administration, the CCAC has always expressed its opinions and positions regarding all cases to the relevant services or bodies during the course of the investigations, in order to give more room for self-assessment and self-improvement, preventing this way that those services or bodies to passively wait for the opinions or recommendations of the CCAC.



- In order to fulfil the duties assigned to CCAC by law regarding its role in the continuous oversight of the improvement of government action, the CCAC continued with the implementation of the work of the “retrospective review”, continuing to place some cases on this list due to their relevance in the context of government activities in Macao.
- The CCAC also took advantage of opportunities for exchange and direct communication with the public services and bodies, discussing and coordinating certain more complex legal issues or specific measures of the government action, in order to reach consensus, contributing to a better performance of the CCAC’s duties within the scope of the ombudsman, and also facilitating the more accurate implementation of government actions in accordance with the law by the administrative services and bodies.
- Regarding the awareness and outreach actions during the referenced period, the CCAC continued its approach of “focusing on youth”, particularly through the implementation of various innovative activities and the organization of exchange actions between the youth of Macao and of the other cities in the Greater Bay Area, aiming to further broaden the horizons of young people in the context of promotion of integrity.
- Furthermore, the CCAC continued to implement the “All for Integrity” long term awareness project, through the dissemination of videos and by keeping enhancing the effectiveness of integrity education.
- The CCAC also continued to organize lectures on different topics to promote culture of honesty and integrity among citizens from different ages and backgrounds, namely among those who work both in the private and public sectors, as well as among students of all ages.
- In the case of public servants, CCAC attached particular importance to the training of civil servants for promoting knowledge, responsibility, respect for law, noble character and upright conduct. In this context, the contents of the Integrity Academy Column of the Integrity Information Network for Civil Servants thematic website kept being updated to highlight the provisions of the civil service law.

## **7. Wafaqi Mohtasib (Federal Ombudsman) – Pakistan**

- The institution of Wafaqi Mohtasib (Federal Ombudsman) – Pakistan, over the last four decades has emerged as a truly poor man’s court serving the people and the downtrodden segments of the society. The institution believes in transparency, inclusivity and accountability, upholding the core values of Ombudsmanship. It has consistently taken steps to enhance its efficiency and efficacy besides fine tuning its complaints handling mechanism comprising investigation, appraisal, review and implementation of its findings/decisions.
- During the year 2024, it processed a record number of 226,372 complaints out of which 223,198 were disposed of satisfactorily marking an increase of 17% and 16% over the figures of the previous year. During the first six months of the current year, 121,706 complaints were received and 123,281 complaints were disposed of. The Office also recorded an impressive increase in the implementation rate of its decisions/findings during 2024, which reached 93.21% as compared to 85.70% for the year 2023. In financial terms, total relief equivalent to Rs.8.22 billion was provided to the complainants during 2024 as compared to Rs. 4.9 billion in 2023.
- The ever-increasing number of complaints is, in fact, an outcome of various initiatives including opening of new regional offices across the country, holding Public Courts (Khuli Katcheries) in remote areas, launching of the Informal Resolution of Disputes (IRD) mechanism and the visits of Ombudsman’s Inspection Teams to various service delivery agencies, in addition to leveraging technology for enhanced accessibility. There is no requirement to hire services of an advocate nor the complainants have to face lengthy legal processes as the cases are disposed of within the prescribed time frame of sixty days. The procedure for filing a complaint is simple as it can be done without visiting the Office personally, either by post or through email or Mobile App. Hearings can be organized online, too, whereby the elderly or the poor complainants are saved of any discomfort in the process. 40 to 45% complainants are availing the facility of online hearing while about 39% are lodging complaints online or using Mobile App for the purpose. Helpline number 1055 is available for general complainants whereas 1056 is dedicated for children’s complaints.
- The institution made a modest beginning with four regional offices, one each at four provincial capitals besides its Head Office at Islamabad. It has now presence in 26 cities across the country. One Regional Office was opened in 2024 while three Regional Offices were opened during the year 2025.

- The Federal Ombudsman, according to Article 9 of the President Order No.1 of 1983 is empowered to initiate action on his own motion and undertake any investigation into any allegation of maladministration on the part of any agency or any of its officers or employees. Exercising these powers, the Federal Ombudsman initiated actions in 2024 on various issues including non-availability of Anti-Rabies Vaccine in government hospitals, late delivery of Passports to the citizens, Anti-Dengue spray in the city and alike. These interventions proved to be very useful and brought about considerable improvement in the state of affairs.
- Pursuant to the relevant provision of the order governing functioning of the Federal Ombudsman's institution, inspection teams carry out inspections of the agencies against whom frequent complaints are received, to identify problems and suggest remedial measures. These visits have proved to be an effective measure to reach out to the general public and to improve service delivery of these organizations. During 2024, 79 such visits were undertaken at the Head Office and the Regional Offices. 20 inspection visits have already been undertaken during the first six months of the current year (2025). It is worth mentioning that such inspections have resulted in marked improvement in the service delivery of various organizations, thereby, contributing to the protection and promotion of the citizen's rights.
- While resolving individual complaints relating to maladministration, this Office has not lost sight of the need for introducing long-term reforms with a view to addressing systemic issues. It has so far prepared 80 studies/reports, which focus on crucial areas such as pension reforms, jail reforms, national savings, street children in ICT etc. By addressing systemic issues, the Ombudsman's Institution strives to introduce long-term improvements in public administration.
- The institution's commitment to upholding the children's rights is manifested in the appointment of Grievance Commissioner for Children providing institutional mechanism and collaborative endeavours with other stakeholders in the country. It has been instrumental in the enactment of the Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Act 2020. This Act reflects the country's commitment to adapt its legal framework to modern challenges, providing a robust mechanism for addressing threats to children's safety and well-being.
- Grievance Commissioner's office for Overseas Pakistanis in the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat offers yet another important service to the Pakistani diaspora. It provides institutional framework for addressing individual complaints and systemic issues faced by overseas Pakistanis. One Window Facilitation Desks (OWFDs) established on the direction of Wafaqi

Mohtasib at all international airports of the country to facilitate overseas Pakistanis and their families have been functioning well. In addition, Focal Persons have been appointed in Pakistan Missions abroad to personally hear and resolve problems faced by the overseas Pakistanis.

- Building public awareness is an essential feature for any successful ombuds system. The Wafaqi Mohtasib institution has an elaborate strategy for building public awareness by using all necessary tools in the media kit. In the outgoing year, 382 Articles appeared in the newspapers, 141 radio programmes were aired and about 1318 short T.V/Video clips along with 110 awareness lectures at various universities and institutions.
- Pakistan has also played a pivotal role in promoting ombudsmanship in Asia and hosted the first Asian Ombudsman Conference at Islamabad establishing the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) in April 1996. The Asian Ombudsman Association is a major non-political, independent, democratic and professional body of international character. Wafaqi Mohtasib is the current President of the AOA and its Secretariat is housed in the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat.
- During 2024-2025 Federal Ombudsman Secretariat in cooperation with the AOA Secretariat arranged five webinars on professional themes including; (i) Webinar on Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace (27 March 2024); (ii) Webinar on Building Public Awareness: An Essential Feature of Ombudsmanship (15 May 2024); (iii) Webinar on Addressing Maladministration in the Insurance Industry: An Ombudsman's Perspective (29 October 2024); (iv) Webinar on Ombudsmanship: Complying with the International Standards (29 May 2025); (v) Webinar on Ombudsmanship and the SDGs: A Framework of Shared Principles and Commitments (14 July 2025).
- The Federal Ombudsmen Institutional Reforms Act, 2013 sets out that the redressal of public grievances is the means to an end, i.e. to promote good governance. The Ombudsman institution enjoys full support of the citizenry and the government in Pakistan. It is playing due role in dispensation of quick administrative justice, thereby, acting in support of the superior judiciary. It aligns its operations with the internationally acclaimed benchmarks like the Paris Principles and the Venice Principles in addition to the guidelines contained in the UNGA Resolution 79/177 for the ombudsman and the mediator institutions worldwide. The Office of Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman), therefore, is not merely a Complaint Resolution Office but serves as an architect of good governance. It is no longer a mere complaint redressing office, but an architect of good governance in the country.

## **8. Banking Mohtasib Pakistan (BMP)**

### **Complaint Resolution Statistics**

- During the first six months of the current year (2025), the Banking Mohtasib has received 16915 new complaints, including 3,482 from the Prime Minister's Portal.
- The Banking Mohtasib Pakistan has provided relief amounting to Rs. 882.25 (M) to Banking customers by disposing of 16006 complaints during the first half (Jan – June) of the current calendar year 2025.
- The Banking Mohtasib Pakistan, Mr. Sirajuddin Aziz called on the President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari on 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2025 at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad and presented him the institution's Annual Report for the year 2024.
- The Banking Mohtasib, Mr. Sirajuddin Aziz also called on the Governor, State Bank of Pakistan, Mr. Jameel Ahmad on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2025. Matters of mutual interest with reference to redressal of public grievances against banks were discussed at length during the meeting besides the Annual Report 2024 of BMP was presented to SBP Governor.
- The Institution of Banking Mohtasib Pakistan (BMP) has provided relief amounting to Rs 1.65 billion to the banking customers by disposing of 27,753 complaints against commercial banks during the calendar year 2024.
- The total complaints received during the year 2024 were 30,602, out of which 7193 complaints were received from the Prime Minister's Portal. There was an increase of 6% in public complaints lodged with BMP Office against commercial banks during the year 2024 as compared to the previous year (2023)

### **CSR Activities**

- The first ever conference of the Banking Mohtasib Pakistan with the theme "Focus on Values in Public Sector Services" "عوامی خدمت کی اعلیٰ اقدار" was held at Karachi on August 31, 2024. Beside the Banking Mohtasib Pakistan, the conference was addressed by various dignitaries. Two officials of Banking Mohtasib Pakistan, made presentation on 'Measures to Enhance Security of Digital Banking Products and Services' and 'Breaking Pakistan's Debt Spiral' respectively.

- The Banking Mohtasib Pakistan, Mr. Sirajuddin Aziz attended the 4<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OICOA) held in Tehran on 13-14 May, 2025. The meeting was hosted by the President of the General Inspection Organization, Islamic Republic of Iran/ Vice President of OICOA.

Mr. Sirajuddin Aziz briefed the participants of the meeting on the working of Banking Mohtasib Pakistan and its achievements. He asked the member states to share their experiences of handling banking complaints, involving frauds, inclusive of digital frauds and offer to share our own experiences with them. The offer was appreciated by the participants of the meeting.

- The Banking Mohtasib Pakistan Mr. Sirajuddin Aziz attended the 30<sup>th</sup> Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman meeting held at Punjab Civil Officers Mess (PCOM), Lahore on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2024. The meeting was hosted by the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman, Punjab led by Ms. Ayesha Hamid (Ombudsman of Punjab).
- In a series of lectures planned for grooming the staff of Banking Mohtasib, the former Acting Governor, State Bank of Pakistan, Mr. Riaz Riazuddin was invited to make a presentation on “Debt Management and Sustainability issues in Pakistan at the Banking Ombudsman Secretariat, Karachi. Besides the Banking Mohtasib Pakistan, Mr. Sirajuddin Aziz, Senior Advisors, Advisors and the Investigation Officers attended the said presentation.
- Mr. Muhammad Ali Jangda, Sr. Advisor made a presentation on “State Bank Guidelines on Enhancement of Security of Digital Banking Products and Series to Mitigate Fraudulent Activities (SBP Circular# 4/2023) while Mr. Nawroz Mohammad Ali, Advisor made a presentation on “RAAST (a product introduced by SBP)”.
- The Officers of Banking Mohtasib Pakistan were nominated to attend the following trainings.
  - ✓ Customized Training Programme on “Recent Changes in PPRA Rules/ Procedures and E – Procurement organized by National Institute of Banking & Finance (NIBAF), Karachi.
  - ✓ Course on Financial Fraud – (From Prevention to Examination) organized by Learning Resource Centre.
  - ✓ In addition to above our officers actively participates in the webinar/online training organized under the umbrella of AOA/ OICOA/FPO.
- Talks were initiated with the State Bank of Pakistan and Institute of Business Administration to impart training to the BMP officers for further improvement of their drafting and

investigation skills. In this connection, representative of the relevant organizations visited BMP Secretariat on 24 June 2025.

- New entrants in the professional field visited Banking Mohtasib Secretariat, Karachi on 04 September, 2024 to have firsthand knowledge of the functions of BMP.

### **Enlargement of Scope & Working**

- Easypaisa Bank Limited (formerly Telenor Microfinance Bank Limited) had commenced operations as Pakistan first Digital Bank after it was awarded license by the State Bank of Pakistan on 28 January, 2025. After undertaking commercial banking activities, Easypaisa Bank Limited has now also come under the ambit of Banking Mohtasib.
- Further, with a view to handling complaints against the Digital Banks, the Banking Mohtasib Pakistan has made arrangements with the State Bank of Pakistan for making presentation on organizational and functioning structure of the 'Digital Banks' for the benefit of the officers/staff of BMP.
- The Banking Mohtasib Pakistan, Lahore Regional Office has started handling complaints on a three-month trial basis w.e.f 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2025. Earlier, like all the Regional Offices, Lahore Office used to only receive complaints which were forwarded to Karachi Secretariat for their disposal.
- The Organization of Islamic Cooperation of Ombudsman Association (OICOA) Secretariat organized a week-long study visit of a five-member delegation of Senior Officers of Investigation Cell of the General Secretariat of the Ombudsperson of Bahrain to Pakistan with the primary objective of examining best practices in Ombudsmanship and enhancing inter-institutional cooperation. On nomination by Banking Mohtasib, Sr. Advisor, Mr. Muhammad Ali Jangda and Ms. Samreen Tanveer, Deputy Director (Coord) visited Islamabad and made a presentation on the functioning of the Banking Mohtasib Pakistan to the delegates from Bahrain.



## 9. Federal Insurance Ombudsman (Pakistan)

### Complaint Trends and Performance Analysis of the Federal Insurance Ombudsman

- The Federal Insurance Ombudsman (FIO) plays a pivotal role in safeguarding the rights of policyholders by addressing their grievances effectively and impartially. The complaint trends observed during the year 2024 highlight critical developments, ongoing challenges, and emerging concerns within Pakistan's insurance sector.
- In 2024, a total of 6,116 complaints were registered with the FIO from policyholders across the country. Out of these, 5,596 complaints were successfully disposed of, reflecting an impressive resolution rate of 95.27%. This high percentage signifies the Ombudsman's efficiency and strong commitment to providing timely justice to aggrieved policyholders. Despite this, 289 complaints remained pending at the end of the year, pointing to the need for improved case management systems to accommodate the rising caseload.
- A few key observations emerge from the data. First, there was a marked increase in the volume of complaints compared to previous years, which can be attributed to growing consumer awareness. Second, the sustained high-resolution rate demonstrates the institution's capacity to deliver outcomes efficiently. Third, the existence of unresolved cases calls for further streamlining of internal processes to enhance responsiveness.
- Complaints were received from across three main segments of the insurance sector: life insurance, general insurance, and Takaful (Islamic insurance). The life insurance segment accounted for the overwhelming majority of complaints, with 5,448 cases. This points to systemic issues in the sector, particularly in areas related to claim processing, delays in settlement, and misrepresentation of policy terms.
- A company-wise analysis revealed that Jubilee Life Insurance Company Limited accounted for over 61% of total complaints, indicating substantial customer service or operational gaps. EFU Life Assurance Limited and Adamjee Life Assurance also recorded a significant number of complaints. Takaful providers, notably Pak-Qatar Family Takaful Limited, received a moderate volume of complaints, consistent with the sector's increasing market penetration. It is important to note that complaints pertaining to State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan fall outside FIO's jurisdiction, and any reflected in the record may be due to misfiling or ancillary issues.
- To ensure transparency and fairness, the Federal Insurance Ombudsman provides avenues for review and representation. In 2024, the office processed 199 review cases, all of which were upheld, suggesting a strong foundation in the original decisions. Additionally, 99



representations were entertained; 71 were upheld, while 28 were set aside, reflecting the institution's openness to revisiting cases based on new evidence or legal merit.

- In conclusion, while the Federal Insurance Ombudsman's performance in 2024 reflects commendable efficiency and dedication to policyholder protection, the rising number of complaints signals ongoing challenges that require continued attention. Strengthening regulatory frameworks, promoting ethical practices, and raising public awareness will be key to fostering greater trust and accountability in Pakistan's insurance sector.

### **FIO's Stakeholder Engagement & Awareness Efforts**

- In line with its mandate to protect policyholders and strengthen complaint redressal systems, the Federal Insurance Ombudsman (FIO) launched several public engagement and awareness initiatives to enhance outreach and promote transparency within the insurance industry. A quarterly magazine was introduced to educate stakeholders—including policymakers, insurers, consumer rights organizations, and the general public—on insurance-related issues and the FIO's role in dispute resolution. This publication has become a key tool in promoting ethical practices and informed decision-making.
- The FIO maintained a strong media presence through prominent features in print and electronic outlets. Media coverage showcased its success in resolving claims and promoting policyholder rights. Press releases and briefings further helped raise awareness, resulting in increased complaint filings and improved public trust. To foster institutional cooperation, FIO held strategic meetings with other ombudsmen, including the Federal Tax Ombudsman, the Federal Ombudsman (Wafaqi Mohtasib), the Banking Mohtasib, and the Provincial Ombudsmen on Women Harassment. These interactions facilitated knowledge-sharing on best practices, joint awareness campaigns, and improved coordination in consumer protection frameworks.
- Recognizing the importance of digital engagement, FIO addressed an international webinar hosted by the Asian Ombudsman Association, attended by insurance professionals, legal experts, and policyholders. The discussions focused on improving service delivery, enhancing sector transparency, and responding to emerging trends in complaint resolution.
- The Federal Insurance Ombudsman also met with the Chief Minister of Sindh to discuss expanding awareness efforts in both rural and urban areas of the province, addressing the grievances of low-income policyholders, and enhancing consumer outreach. The Chief Minister expressed full support and assured cooperation in extending FIO's initiatives throughout Sindh.

- A key engagement was held with the Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), where discussions revolved around addressing the growing volume of complaints, ensuring fair claim processing, and aligning regulatory oversight with consumer protection goals. This collaboration helped streamline dispute handling procedures and promoted a more robust regulatory environment.
- To provide visible relief and encourage confidence in the ombudsman's role, FIO organized a cheque distribution ceremony for policyholders who had experienced delays or denials in claim settlements. Beneficiaries shared their experiences, and the event received positive media coverage, reinforcing public trust in FIO's effectiveness as a grievance redressal platform.
- In its dialogue with the Insurance Association of Pakistan (IAP), FIO advocated for stronger claims processing standards, dispute prevention through improved communication, and the adoption of customer-centric policies by insurers. These efforts emphasized the need for a proactive approach to handling consumer grievances within the industry.
- Seminars and webinars were also organized to highlight the presence and importance of the institution, including a webinar in collaboration with the Asian Ombudsman Association and a seminar held in association with the Express Forum. In addition, various workshops have been conducted to enhance the capabilities of the institution's Advisors, Consultants, and other staff members.
- The Federal Insurance Ombudsman's performance reflects a balanced approach of operational efficiency and public engagement. Through effective complaint resolution, stakeholder collaboration, and targeted awareness initiatives, FIO has strengthened the culture of Ombudsmanship at the national level. Moving forward, these combined efforts will be vital in ensuring a fair, transparent, and consumer-friendly insurance system across Pakistan.

## **10. Federal Ombudsperson for Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace – Pakistan**

- Federal Ombudsperson Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment (FOSPAH) is operating as an autonomous quasi-judicial statutory body under the “Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 (Act of 2010),” with the primary mandate of safeguarding individuals against workplace harassment. Notably, FOSPAH has been entrusted with additional responsibilities through the “Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2020,” empowering it to adjudicate cases pertaining to women's legal rights in properties situated in Islamabad Capital Territory. FOSPAH's unwavering commitment to a harassment-free workplace revolves around cultivating a secure work environment devoid of abuse, violence, intimidation, and discrimination.
- FOSPAH remains steadfast in its mission to uphold dignity, ensure justice, and protect fundamental rights, particularly for women, through a transparent, victim-centered legal framework. The past year has been one of exceptional growth, outreach, and innovation. It is with great pride that we present the Federal Ombudsperson Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment (FOSPAH)'s major accomplishments during the year 2024–25.
- During the current fiscal year alone (July 2024 to date), FOSPAH has addressed 1,411 complaints, comprising 1,118 workplace harassment cases and 293 property rights cases. Since inception, we have resolved over 3,860 harassment and 985 women's property rights cases—empowering survivors and restoring their agency without cost or bias.
- A new regional office in Quetta and a sub-office in Multan were established to ensure accessibility across Balochistan and South Punjab.
- FOSPAH's footprint expanded nationwide through 350+ awareness and training sessions, reaching women and workers in underserved areas like Larkana, Mardan, Jamshoro, Sukkur, and Gilgit-Baltistan and Muzaffarabad.
- Our mass awareness campaign, run in collaboration with PTA, reached over 16.5 million mobile users, resulting in a noticeable rise in complaint registration.
- Conducted targeted sessions in schools, colleges, and universities, reaching young audiences and shaping future attitudes toward workplace dignity.

- Held Khuli Katchehreis (open forums) to engage with grassroots communities directly at Tarlai and Tarnol Revenue Centers and an online Khuli Katcheri to allow people to access justice accessibly.
- Observed “16 Days of Activism” against Gender-Based violence and International Women’s Day through multimedia campaigns and awareness sessions at educational institutes, government organizations, and telecommunication companies. Held a dedicated awareness for transgenders with 60+ transgenders in attendance.
- Partnered with the Youth General Assembly to conduct National Moot Court competitions, fostering legal discourse and youth engagement from all over Pakistan.
- Launched the “My Sentry” mobile app in collaboration with Iylus Systems Pvt Ltd., an AI-enabled solution offering immediate support and redress for victims of harassment. Collaborated with Becky’s Button, a UK-based charity that donates wearable panic alarm buttons, enhancing safety for women in public spaces.
- Developing a Complaint Management Information System, enabling e-filing, case data base, online access to judgments, and streamlined case tracking.
- Rolled out in-depth, evidence-based training formats for inquiry committees and HR professionals across sectors.
- Successfully trained all 600+ employees of the Bank of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, ensuring institution-wide compliance with anti-harassment frameworks.
- Drafted key amendments to the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010, and the Enforcement of Women’s Property Rights Act, 2020.
- Led multi-stakeholder consultations with provincial ombudspersons, the Islamabad Police, CDA, and High Court representatives to strengthen legal protections, for protection of women rights.
- Submitted revised Employee Service Rules 2014 and introduced a gender-responsive, performance-linked budget, aligning institutional goals with women’s empowerment.

- Formalized a landmark MoU with GIZ to address grievance redress in Pakistan's export industries, including textiles, leather, and sports.
- Sustained impactful collaborations with UNHCR, UNDP, UN Women, and Islamic Relief Pakistan.
- Extended FOSPAH's international profile through dialogue and cooperation with global ombudsperson institutions, including the Bahrain Ombudsperson.
- The Federal Ombudsperson, FOSPAH presented and got endorsement for establishing a sub-committee for women rights at the OICOA's 4<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Meeting at Iran. She spoke in the high-level International Conference on Women's Marriage Rights (ICWMR) in Kuala Lumpur.
- The Federal Ombudsperson also visited Gilgit-Baltistan and met with dignitaries including Chief Minister of GB, Chief Judge of the Supreme Appellate Court Gilgit-Baltistan, and Chief Judge of the Supreme Appellate Court, among others. The meeting focused on the establishment of FOSPAH's regional office in Gilgit-Baltistan.
- Due to an increase in harassment cases in public parks, and walking trails, in Islamabad, FOSPAH sent a letter to the Inspector General of Police ensuring proper patrolling and monitoring of these parks/trails, to ensure safety of women. The initiative received a positive response, and necessary measures were subsequently implemented.
- FOSPAH also conducted various trainings for bureaucrats, bankers and others achieving the statutory role of FOSPAH.
- Through these milestones, FOSPAH continues to evolve as a dynamic institution rooted in justice, compassion, and innovation. We remain committed to championing safe, inclusive, and harassment-free workplaces across Pakistan.

## 11. Federal Tax Ombudsman (Pakistan)

From January 2024 to June 2025, the Federal Tax Ombudsman Secretariat, under the leadership of Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah, has significantly advanced in complaint resolution, systemic tax reforms, outreach expansion, and digital transformation. This report highlights the key achievements, statistical performance, and strategic initiatives undertaken during this period.

### Institutional Performance

#### A) Complaints Received

Year	Regular	Informal	Own Motion	Review	Total Complaints
2024	11,791	1,540	32	143	13,506
2025 (Jan–June)	15,284	5,536	01	96	20,917

- 50.68% increase in complaints from 2023 to 2024.
- Fresh complaints in 2025 (first half) already surpassed the entire year of 2024.

#### B) Complaints Disposed of

Year	Total Disposal
2024	12,914
2025 (Jan–June)	12,403

- FTO maintained high disposal capacity despite exponential rise in fresh complaints.
- 2025 disposal rate remains efficient and proactive, controlling backlog growth.

#### C) Carry Forward Complaints

Category	2024	2025 (Jan–June)
Regular Complaints	969	1,809
Own Motion Cases	122	32

- Efficient complaint management has kept pending cases under control, reflecting process maturity.

#### D) Average Disposal Time

Year	Average Working Days
2024	34.11
2025	34.18

**Year                      Average Working Days**

- Well within 60-day statutory limit
- Ensures timely justice and taxpayer facilitation

Relief Provided to Taxpayers

**Year                                      Amount Refunded (PKR Millions)**

- |                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 2024            | 22,793.00 |
| 2025 (Jan–June) | 12,199.06 |
- **Rs. 34.99 billion** refunded in just 18 months
  - Substantial financial redressal reflecting FTO’s impactful recommendations

Implementation of Recommendations

**Year                      Cases Requiring Implementation                      Recommendations Implemented**

- |                 |        |       |
|-----------------|--------|-------|
| 2024            | 7,747  | 6,318 |
| 2025 (Jan–June) | 12,440 | 4,987 |
- Thousands of decisions translated into effective administrative action by FBR and attached departments.

**Recommendations Challenged**

**Year                      Review Challenges                      Representation Challenges                      Total % Challenged**

- |      |     |       |        |
|------|-----|-------|--------|
| 2024 | 266 | 1,030 | 10.03% |
| 2025 | 96  | 470   | 4.56%  |
- Significant drop in percentage of recommendations challenged.
  - Reflects growing credibility and legal soundness of FTO decisions

**Outreach and Public Engagement**

**Year                                      Sessions / Seminars Held**

- |                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|
| 2024            | 251 |
| 2025 (Jan–June) | 95  |
- Aggressive awareness campaign across Pakistan including rural, business, and academic zones.

**Key Strategic Initiatives (2024–2025)**

Youth Engagement Programme

- 150 students engaged in internships, law moots, and tax awareness campaigns.
- FTO emerged as a youth-centric public office, leveraging social media and academia.

**Campus Ambassador Programme (Launched 2025)**

- First-of-its-kind initiative to build tax culture on campuses.
- 39 students selected from 32 top institutions for a 6-month national-level engagement.

**Diplomatic Grievance Redressal Cell (Inaugurated April 11, 2025)**

- Established to address tax-related grievances of embassies and international organizations.
- Special liaison officers and fast-track grievance resolution introduced under Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah.

**Digital Transformation**

- Real-time complaint monitoring via CMIS and KPI-based dashboards.
- Use of WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and email to engage taxpayers, especially overseas Pakistanis.
- Training session on “Conduct of Effective Research at Ombudsman Office” (24 January, 2024).
- Training session on “Implementation of Findings and Recommendations by the Ombudsman Office (05 March, 2024).
- Training session on “Ways to Access Information Regarding Maladministration by Public Functionaries” (08 August 2024).
- Webinar on “Evolution, Working and Performance of Federal Tax Ombudsman Office in the Last Twenty Five Years” (20 March 2025).

**Conclusion**

The Federal Tax Ombudsman’s office has made transformative progress between 2024 and mid-2025, both in volume and quality of services. Record-breaking complaint resolution, high taxpayer relief, expanded outreach, and innovative youth and diplomatic initiatives have reinforced FTO’s reputation as an efficient and responsive institution in the public service domain.



## **12. Provincial Ombudsperson Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Pakistan)**

- The Ombudsperson of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ms. Rukhshanda Naz, and the Registrar, Ombudsperson, Mr. Muhammad Masood Afridi, attended the annual stakeholders learning session held from July 2, 2024, to July 3, 2024, in Bhurban. The KP Ombudsperson delivered a session on July 3, 2024, shedding light on the role and responsibilities of the Ombudsperson in safeguarding women's property rights. She further stated that the Ombudsperson office is committed to handing over possession to the rightful owners at the earliest possible time.
- An awareness session regarding the role of women as leaders in society and women empowerment was conducted by Ms. Natasha Kainat, Legal Officer, Ombudsperson, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, at Peshawar Model School Girls V on 12.07.2024. The provincial Ombudsperson honoured the inauguration ceremony of Referral Directory of Da Hawa Lur organized by Da Hawa Lur in close collaboration with NCHR.
- On August 2, 2024, the Institutional Referral and Coordination Mechanism meeting was held at the conference hall of the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) Benevolent Funds Building, Peshawar. The main agenda of the meeting was sharing quarterly progress reports of the concerned departments, challenges, ways forward, and recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the Institutional Referral and Coordination Mechanism meetings in the future. Ms. Rukhshanda Naz, a worthy Ombudsperson, emphasized strengthening the referral mechanism and recommended that already-set guidelines and proforma designed for sharing reports may be adopted for sharing quarterly progress reports.
- The Provincial Harassment Watch Committee (PHWC) meeting was held in the Bureau of Statistics Hall, Benevolent Funds Building Peshawar, on August 7th, 2024. The latest statistics regarding harassment complaints filed with the Ombudsperson's office from 2019 to 2024 were presented to the audience. The presentation included data on complaints lodged during the second quarter under the harassment law, broken down by district and institution. Members were also briefed on the awareness sessions conducted by the Ombudsperson's team in various institutions. The participants were then asked to share their report regarding the number of complaints lodged under harassment law and the number of awareness sessions organized during the 2nd quarter of 2024 in their respective institutes. The Ombudsperson Khyber Pakhtunkhwa gives comprehensive feedback on issues and problems faced by various institutions and Standing Inquiry Committees.

- The Ombudsperson Khyber Pakhtunkhwa attended the launch ceremony of the Women Facilitation Desk organized by the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) under Enriching Local Governance via Citizen Participation in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa project on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The primary objective of establishing the Women Facilitation Desk at the Deputy Commissioner offices is to enhance development and humanitarian services in Khyber, Mohmand, Kohat, and Swat districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. To ensure women's accessibility to file complaints, a set of knowledge boards was provided to SRSP about the complaint process for women's property rights. Moreover, a toolkit about law and Standing Inquiry Committee procedures and relevant legislation were also provided to ensure safe work places. A directory about legal services of the government and non-government institutions was also included in the information package.
- The celebration of women's week organized by the District Administration, Peshawar was concluded on September 19, 2024 at Hayatabad Sports Complex, where Ms. Rukhshanda Naz, Provincial Ombudsperson, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa attended the closing ceremony as chief guest. The Ombudsperson shed light on the importance of women rights and their development. She stated that "Women are the foundation of our society, and their role is vital not only within a family but in the entire society".
- She further acknowledged the role of women in various sectors, including health, education, the economy, and social development. The Ombudsperson added that encouraging women's participation in every field of life will bring positive and impactful changes to society and lay the foundation for a better future.
- The Ombudsperson Khyber Pakhtunkhwa addresses PODA's 17th Annual Rural Women Leadership Conference in Islamabad at a strategy session on "Women's Rights Commitments in Political Party Manifestos 2024: Joint Review for Future Actions by Rural Women and Parliamentarians". The overarching aim of annual conference was to bring visibility to rural women's contributions, ideas, and recommendations and link them with policymakers, legislators, and media in Pakistan. Ms. Rukhshanda Naz delivered session at the conference to encourage the rural women of Pakistan who are working at the grassroots level.
- The provincial Ombudsperson Khyber Pakhtunkhwa conducted Khuli Katcheri on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2024 in district Kalam to ensure legal rights of Women of district Kalam who are deprived of their rights of representation in inheritance mutation and revenue record. The

Ombudsperson Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and her team played key role in successful arrangement of Kuli Kacheri and conspicuously ensuring the participation of large numbers of women's besides heavy snow and resistance from community conservative elements.

- On 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2024, Ombudsperson Khyber Pakhtunkhwa conducted hearing in the complaints lodged by 99 women from district Khyber for their inheritance rights. In the open court (Kuli Kacheri) 500 women's CNIC were received for registration in inheritance mutation. Training was imparted to 25 young women lawyers regarding the two Acts promulgated to Ombudsperson office.
- On the request of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judicial Academy, a session was conducted with 25 Session and Senior Civil Judges on "Gender Sensitive Hearings and Judgment Writings". She also shared information concerning role, responsibilities and jurisdiction of Ombudsperson.
- A Khuli Kacheri was conducted in collaboration with Deputy Commissioner Peshawar office on 22<sup>nd</sup> February in Archives and Library Hall. The main aim of conducting Kuli Kacheri was to focus on pending complaints pertaining to Women Property Right and its early disposal. During Kuli Kacheri women litigants presented their issues related to Property Right, Harassment, challenges encountered by them in the Government offices and other legal issues before the Ombudsperson Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, staff of Deputy Commissioner Peshawar and other state functionaries.

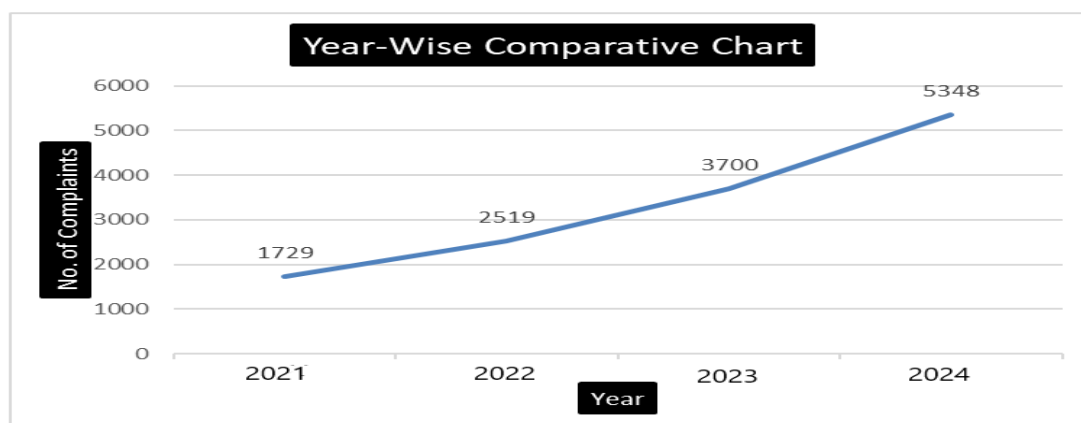
### 13. Provincial Ombudsman, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Pakistan)

#### Legal Reforms: Strengthening of Provincial Ombudsman Secretariat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

- The Provincial Government has made several amendments to the Ombudsman Act over the years for betterment of the Ombudsman Institution. For instance, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Ombudsman (Amendment) Bill, 2024, was passed to introduce changes to the original Act. These changes came into effect on July 29, 2024, highlighting the ongoing efforts to refine the ombudsman's role and effectiveness.
- These amendments aim to enhance the ombudsman's powers, jurisdiction, and functions, ultimately strengthening the institution's ability to investigate complaints, promote transparency, and ensure good governance. By refining the ombudsman's mandate, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government seeks to improve public services, reduce corruption, and increase citizen satisfaction. For instance, Section 14 (e) was added in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Ombudsman Act, 2010 vide amendment 2024 to implement the orders of the Ombudsman during the course of proceedings. Similarly, another amendment was made to refrain the Agency / Department from taking any action in matters pending before the Provincial Ombudsman. Introduction of Implementation Committee to implement the Ombudsman Findings.

#### Achievement of highest target in number of complaints

- In the year 2024, a significant surge in complaints was recorded, totalling over 5,348 cases with 4,043 complaints disposal - a notable increase from the previous year. This substantial rise in complaints filed with the Ombudsman Office indicates a growing awareness among the general public about their rights and the available avenues for redress. The increased number of complaints and the Ombudsman Office's prompt response reflect a positive trend, showcasing the growing trust of citizens in the institution. This upward trajectory also underscores the expanding awareness among the masses about their rights and the importance of holding public authorities accountable.



### **Successful completion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Phase of Awareness Campaign regarding role and responsibilities of Ombudsman Institutions**

- Provincial Ombudsman Secretariat is set up to provide prompt and effective relief to the complainants. As majority of people are unaware of the fact that Ombudsman provides free access to justice and about the mandate and redressal mechanism of the Ombudsman Office. To this effect backward areas were targeted and were focused about awareness campaign for the general public about the role and responsibilities of Provincial Ombudsman. To this effect various backward areas were visited regarding the awareness campaign.

### **Visit of a delegation from Centre of Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) to Head Office Provincial Ombudsman Secretariat**

- A delegation of civil society members from Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan, and Haripur visited the KP Ombudsman Secretariat in Peshawar. The visit was led by Ms. Sarwat Jahan, Team Leader of the Good Governance Project.
- The purpose of the visit was to orient the civil society members on the mission and mandate of the provincial Ombudsman Office. The visit will enable the delegation members to further raise awareness about the office and assist communities in their districts in addressing their grievances through the Ombudsman's office free of cost.

### **Minister for Law, Parliamentary Affairs & Human Rights visited Provincial Ombudsman Secretariat, KPK**

- Mr. Aftab Alam Afridi, Minister for Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa visited office of the Provincial Ombudsman, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He was briefed by the Hon'ble Provincial Ombudsman, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa about achievements of the Secretariat in the year 2024. He was also briefed about digitization of the Secretariat and other systemic issues. The Hon'ble Minister appreciated the target achieved by the Ombudsman Office and assurance has been given for all possible help in strengthening of the office.

### **Free of Cost Justice Done**

- The main role of Ombudsman is to bring the citizens closure to the government organizations and to minimize the gap in between them. To this effect awareness campaigns were launched in different backward districts with the ample support of International Ombudsman Institute (IOI). The public highly appreciated this initiative, however, due to limited financial resources, this important task was carried out in few districts. Due to the awareness campaigns carried out in different districts, the complaint receiving ratio increased from 3,700 to 5,348 per year.

## **14. Provincial Ombudsman Punjab (Pakistan)**

### **Landmark Statistical Achievements in 2024**

- The year 2024 marked a defining moment for the Office of the Ombudsman, Punjab, as it recorded unprecedented public engagement. For the first time in the history of this institution, the office received the highest number of complaints, illustrating the growing trust of the people of Punjab in its effectiveness. Complaints were received through a wide variety of channels, including the official website, the user-friendly mobile app, Helpline 1050, email, postal correspondence, and in-person visits. This multi-channel accessibility led to a significant rise in the number of complaints received and disposed of during the year.
- Specifically, 2,804 complaints were brought forward from 2023, and an additional 34,105 new complaints were received in 2024. In total, the office processed 36,909 complaints during the year and successfully disposed of 33,277, with 3,632 remaining pending at the close of 2024. This achievement reflects the institution's strengthened capacity for timely and effective resolution of public grievances.

### **Expansion and Integration of ICT for Public Service**

- To enhance accessibility and ensure expeditious redressal of grievances, the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab has strategically leveraged Information and Communication Technology (ICT).
- Among the key innovations is the Overseas Pakistanis Complaint Management System (OPMIS), which enables Pakistanis abroad to directly lodge complaints through a dedicated portal. The mobile application, available free of cost on both Android and iOS platforms, further simplifies this process for users.

### **Outreach Initiatives and Regional Expansion**

- Understanding the need for justice at the grassroots level, the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab launched several initiatives to bridge the gap between the institution and the people. One such programme is the introduction of a mobile van to serve remote areas of South Punjab by addressing complaints directly on the ground.
- In 2025, the institutional footprint was further extended through the establishment of new regional offices in three newly notified districts, ensuring justice even in the remotest corners of Punjab.

## **Media Engagement and Public Awareness**

- The Media Wing of the Office of the Ombudsman, Punjab, played a pivotal role in creating mass awareness across the province through a multifaceted communication strategy. Public service messages highlighting the availability of Helpline 1050 and regional offices were broadcast via print, electronic, and social media. This greatly amplified outreach and informed the public about the complaint registration process. Additionally, the “Sunwai Campaign” was launched to further educate citizens about the services and accessibility of the Ombudsman’s Office. Social media platforms were actively leveraged to engage with the public to raise awareness about citizens’ rights, and share impactful success stories.

## **International Representation and Collaboration**

- The Office of the Ombudsman Punjab has also gained recognition in the international ombudsman community. In 2024 and 2025, the Ombudsman Punjab attended key global events, including the International Ombudsman Conference held in Hong Kong. Additionally, the Ombudsman Punjab attended the 4th General Assembly Meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OICOA), held on 14 May 2025 in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran.

## **National Representation and Collaboration**

- Our office had the privilege of hosting both the 29th and 30th sessions of the Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman. The 29th session, held on January 3, 2024, at Punjab Civil Officers Mess, Lahore, highlighting the Punjab Ombudsman’s exemplary achievements, and advancing international cooperation, particularly in preparation for upcoming OICOA engagements, whereas the 30th meeting was convened on December 17, 2024, Punjab Civil Officers Mess, Lahore, where comprehensive discussions were held on institutional reforms, innovative practices, and enhanced mechanisms for addressing public grievances.

## **Advocacy and Safeguarding Child Rights**

- A significant area of focus for the Office of the Ombudsman, Punjab has been the protection and promotion of child rights. A dedicated redressal system has been created for complaints from and about children. Special mechanisms have been developed to handle such complaints with sensitivity, including child-friendly investigation procedures. These procedures ensure that child complainants are dealt with in a secure, respectful, and empathetic environment.
- Moreover, the office actively engages in research and advocacy to advise the government on systemic issues impacting children, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **Institutional Development through Strategic Partnerships**

- The Research and Development Wing of the Office achieved a major milestone by entering into Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with three leading institutions: the University of the Punjab, the Information Technology University (ITU), and the National School of Public Policy (NSPP).
- The key collaborative areas include joint research on public administration, academic exchange programs, capacity-building initiatives, and knowledge-sharing through conferences, seminars, and scholarly publications. The partnerships are expected to enhance internal capabilities and contribute to long-term policy formulation and training.

### **Green Governance: Environmental Sustainability Initiatives**

- The Office of the Ombudsman, Punjab demonstrated its commitment to environmental sustainability through the launch of its Greener Tomorrow initiative. This included a Tree Plantation Drive across all regional offices, supporting broader national goals of combating climate change and promoting ecological responsibility.
- In addition, the office initiated the solarization of its regional offices to promote energy efficiency. This transition to renewable energy sources not only ensures uninterrupted operations but also significantly reduces the office's carbon footprint and electricity expenses.

### **Historic Leadership Transition**

- The term of Maj. (R) Azam Suleman concluded on 30 June 2024. On 9 October 2024, Ms. Ayesha Hamid took the oath as the 9th Ombudsman of Punjab, making history as the first woman to ever hold this esteemed position in the province. Her appointment symbolizes the advancement of women in leadership and reinforces the institution's commitment to inclusive governance.

### **Upcoming IOI Asian Regional Meeting in October 2025**

- Looking ahead, the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab will proudly host the Asian Regional Meeting of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) from 7 to 9 October 2025. This prestigious event will bring together ombudsman institutions from across Asia to share insights, best practices, and strengthen regional collaboration. Distinguished members and guests are cordially invited to attend and contribute to this historic occasion.
- The institution continues to uphold its mission of justice, transparency, and public service excellence.



## **15. Provincial Ombudsperson Punjab for Protection Against Harassment (Pakistan)**

### **Property Complaints received and disposed across Punjab**

- During the year 2024–25, the Office of the Ombudsperson Punjab received a total of 2,460 complaints. Out of these, 743 were disposed of, while 1,945 remain under process.

### **Harassment Complaints received and disposed**

- During the year 2024–25, a total of 1,950 cases were registered, with 1,910 decided and 40 cases pending.

### **Activities, Awareness Campaigns and Trainings**

- On December 4, 2024, the Ombudsperson Punjab participated in a 16 Days of Activism awareness event organized by BARGAD and NCA Alliance. Themed # No Excuse for Gender-Based Violence, the event emphasized collective efforts to end violence against women. Stakeholders from diverse sectors engaged in dialogue on creating safer spaces and advancing gender equality.
- On December 6, 2024, BARGAD, in collaboration with the Youth Affairs Department Punjab and VSO, celebrated International Volunteers Day. The event highlighted the power of volunteerism and youth empowerment, uniting stakeholders to promote collective efforts for community development.
- On February 17, 2025, the Office of the Ombudsperson Punjab, in collaboration with Shirkat Gah, installed the Code of Conduct for the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace. This initiative promotes awareness, reinforces a zero-tolerance policy, and ensures safer, more inclusive workspaces across government institutions.
- On February 20, 2025, the Office of the Ombudsperson Punjab, in collaboration with Shirkat Gah, hosted a roundtable conference at Avari Hotel, Lahore on workplace harassment laws and remedies. Ombudspersons from all provinces, legal experts, and parliamentarians discussed successes, challenges, and strategies to strengthen protections for women in the workplace.

- On February 25, 2025, the Office of the Ombudsperson Punjab conducted inspections at Mian Mir Hospital and THQ Hospital to assess compliance with anti-harassment protocols. The visit aimed to ensure institutional accountability and reinforce workplace safety for women.
- On March 18, 2025, Ombudsperson Punjab Ms. Nabila Hakim Ali Khan visited the Deputy District Education Officer's Office and Central Model School to inspect the implementation of anti-harassment committees.
- On April 24, 2025, Ombudsperson Punjab Nabila Hakim Ali Khan visited Allied Hospital and the CEO Education Office in Faisalabad to assess anti-harassment measures, review complaint mechanisms, and direct improvements, including appointing focal persons and displaying awareness materials.
- Ombudsperson Nabila Hakim Ali Khan Advocates for Women's Rights at Women University Multan 24 September 2024, Tuesday.
- Ombudsperson Punjab Leads Awareness Seminar on Women's Rights at Sahiwal Bar 7 Oct, 2024 Monday.
- Awareness Seminar on Women Property Rights and Workplace Harassment at University of Gujrat on October 16, 2024.
- IDAP conducted a Seminar on Protection against Workplace Harassment in Collaboration with Ombudsperson Punjab on October 17, 2024.
- Ombudsperson Punjab Conducts Awareness Seminar at Sahiwal Medical College on Women's Rights on November 4, 2024.
- Ombudsperson Punjab Addresses Harassment at Workplace in Civil Services Academy Session on 13 November 2024.
- Advocates for Safe Workplaces and Women's Rights at the University of Poonch on 13th December 2024.
- Seminar on HEC Policy on Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace on 12 February 2025.
- Empowering Women: Seminar on Protection against Workplace Harassment at King Edward medical University on 11 March 2025.

- October 23, 2024, Ms. Nabila Hakim Ali Khan, the Provincial Ombudsman Punjab, paid a surprise visit to Rawalpindi Women University to assess the institution's anti-harassment measures. She visited various departments, reviewed the code of conduct, and emphasized the need for raising awareness about women's protection.
- On October 26, 2024, Ombudsperson Punjab, Ms. Nabila Hakim Ali Khan, conducted a surprise visit to King Edward Medical College to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of anti-harassment protocols.
- Ombudsperson Punjab, Nabila Hakim Ali Khan, during her visit to Bahawalpur, ensured the transfer of 51 kanal 15 marla of urban land to a woman from Ahmadpur Sharqia. She also resolved an inheritance case in Lodhran, securing 37 marla property worth Rs. 4 crores for its rightful female heir, reinforcing women's property rights.
- On February 27, 2025, the Office of the Ombudsperson Punjab organized a training session for Health Authority workers on the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010. The session aimed to raise awareness, promote prevention, and strengthen response mechanisms for workplace harassment.
- On March 20, 2025, the Ombudsperson Punjab held a training session for Education Department officials, focusing on the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010. The session emphasized awareness, policy enforcement, and the effective implementation of inquiry committees in educational institutions.
- On April 9, 2025 an awareness and training session was held with Punjab Police officials on the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010, aiming to enhance institutional understanding and implementation of the law.
- On April 30, a training session was held to educate members of Harassment Inquiry Committees from universities across Faisalabad Division.
- In order to raise awareness about The Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010, various Offices in Punjab were visited. During these visits, officials were briefed on the provisions of the Act and were provided with the Code of Conduct and other relevant materials for prominent display within their workplaces.

## **16. Provincial Ombudsman Sindh (Pakistan)**

### **Summary of the Activities**

- Launched Brand Ambassador Program with leading Universities, Students selected as Ambassadors for Ombudsman Sindh. The Ambassadors were given a briefing on the mandate of Ombudsman Sindh, nature of complaints received and guidelines to disseminate the message of Ombudsman Sindh.
- Constituted two standing committees.
  - i) On Inclusive Education
  - ii) 5 % job Quota of differently abled persons
- Launched Mobile App, The Sindh Ombudsman Mobile App revolutionizes citizen-government interaction, through seamless complaint submission, tracking complaints, and promoting transparency and accountability.
- This initiative aligns with Ombudsman Sindh's commitment to addressing public grievances efficiently. By leveraging technology, the Sindh ombudsman enhances citizen engagement and provides relief through unbiased investigation.
- Three days Capacity Building Program at Sindh Judicial Academy, Karachi. The Regional Directors and their allied staff attended a three days capacity building program at Sindh judicial academy, Karachi.
- Step taken to improve the working of the Sindh Ombudsman Institution.
  - i) Archiving Complaint Data from November 24 and made a mechanism to scan the documents / decisions prior to Nov 24.
  - ii) Asset Tagging Initiative at Head Office.
  - iii) Ombudsman's role as a bridge between the public and government departments and agencies. Agreement signed between office of provincial Ombudsman Sindh and M/s. DPL for development and launching Complaints Management System (CMS) by Nov 2025.

- Conducted two Internship Program at Ombudsman Sindh Office with 8 students of Sindh Madrasat ul Islam University, Salim Habib University and Hamdard University.
- Training of Master Trainers of Private Inclusive Education School conducted by DEPD on the recommendation of standing committee on Inclusive Education, constituted by Honourable Ombudsman Sindh under the provisions of Act, 1991.
- On the Directives of Honourable Provincial Ombudsman Sindh Advisors / Regional Directors visited educational institutes to disseminate awareness about working of Sindh ombudsman.
- On the Directives of Honourable Provincial Ombudsman Sindh Advisors / Regional Directors Conducted site visits / Khuli Katcheries in their respective districts.
- Ombudsman Sindh launches collaborative outreach initiative with UN agencies and civil society organizations to formally launch the awareness and outreach program a collaborative initiative this initiative is aimed at strengthening public awareness of citizens' rights, promoting transparency and accountability and enhancing the visibility and accessibility of grievance redressal mechanisms across Sindh.
- Ombudsman Sindh Establishes Climate & Disaster Justice Unit (CDJU). The Provincial Ombudsman Sindh, Mr. Muhammad Sohail Rajput, inaugurated a one-of-its-kind climate and disaster justice unit (CDJU) a pioneering initiative to insure expeditious and justifiably redress of complaints stemming from climate related and man-made disasters. The unit will be a fast-paced mechanism resolving issues of delay corruption or neglect and relief rehabilitation and public service delivery.

## **17. Office of the Ombudsman of Thailand**

### **Cooperation with Domestic Networks (2024)**

- In 2024, the Thai Ombudsman undertook several significant initiatives in collaboration with domestic partner networks. One of the key areas of focus was promoting the active participation of the Ombudsman network. Various programs and activities were continuously implemented to encourage engagement within the network, aiming to strengthen relationships among members and foster mutual support. These efforts were designed to enable network members to assist in fulfilling the duties and exercising the powers of the Ombudsman effectively. Moreover, the initiatives aimed to enhance understanding among network members regarding the roles, responsibilities, and powers of the Ombudsman, thereby increasing their capacity and readiness to serve as role models and expand the network's presence across various regions. The initiatives were implemented through three main programs as follows:

#### **Project to Promote Multi-Sectoral Participation in Addressing Public Grievances and Unfairness**

- This project includes the activity “Place of Justice”, a public consultation forum aimed at fostering fairness in society. The primary objectives are to enhance public understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and powers of the Ombudsman; to support the work of the Ombudsman and the Office of the Ombudsman; and to raise awareness regarding citizens’ rights and freedoms in relation to the performances of state agencies. Additionally, the project seeks to identify and examine key issues causing grievances or unfairness to the public, encouraging participation from all sectors in supporting the Ombudsman’s mandate in ways that benefit both individuals and communities.

#### **Project to Promote Good Governance for Anti-Corruption Efforts**

- This project involved integrated collaborative activities among relevant agencies to advance the “Moral Province” initiative, including a seminar for the development and implementation of the initiative in 22 provinces of the Central Region. The primary objective was to establish a network of cooperation among government agencies to foster understanding and implementation of ethical governance as a mechanism to address local grievances and unfairness. The project also aimed to promote public participation in cultivating a culture of anti-corruption, thereby influencing the conduct of government agencies and officials. These efforts led to practical approaches for addressing public concerns through coordinated state agency performances.

### **Project on Integration and Enhancement of Public Sector Good Governance**

- This project focused on integrating cooperation among relevant agencies to strengthen public officials' understanding and implementation of good governance principles, as well as laws, rules, and regulations applicable to addressing public grievances. The goal was to equip government personnel with the knowledge and ethical values necessary to uphold integrity and accountability in the exercise of their duties.
- As part of the project, training activities were organized to reinforce understanding of good governance practices and relevant legal frameworks. Participants included local leaders such as subdistrict chiefs, village heads, village committee members, and other public sector staff. The initiative played a crucial role in fostering a culture of integrity, professionalism, and lawful conduct among public servants across all levels of government.
- The 2024 domestic network cooperation initiatives highlight the Ombudsman's key role in linking citizens with the government, promoting justice, strengthening good governance, and protecting citizens' rights through broad participation. By integrating collaboration at both policy and local levels, these efforts build public trust in state oversight and lay a strong foundation for a fair, transparent, and sustainable society.

### **Seminar to Commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Establishment of the Office of the Ombudsman of Thailand (2025)**

- On the occasion of its 25th anniversary, the Office of the Ombudsman of Thailand organized a seminar on 24–25 April 2025 at the Centara Life Government Complex Hotel and Convention Centre Chaeng Watthana, Bangkok. The event aimed to reaffirm and advance the office's commitment to a proactive, people-centered approach and to strengthen its role as a trusted institution for citizens. The seminar brought together key stakeholders, including the Ombudsman institutions from various countries, distinguished experts, and representatives from both domestic and international institutions.
- The first day of the seminar commenced with a keynote address titled “25 Years of the Ombudsman: Advancing as a Pillar of Support for People Affected by Grievance or Unfairness,” delivered by Mr. Somsak Suwansujarit, Chief Ombudsman of Thailand. This was followed by an expert panel discussion on the roles, duties, and powers of the Ombudsman, drawing from 25 years of institutional experience. The discussion emphasized five strategic directions moving forward: (1) Enhancing Problem Resolution: Prioritizing swift and effective resolution of complaints and grievances through a proactive, systems-level approach that addresses individual and public injustices. (2) Improving Operational Efficiency: Strengthening organizational capacity through restructuring and integration of modern digital technologies in case management, fact-finding, rulings, recommendations, and follow-ups, to

become a fully digital institution. ( (3Fostering Good Governance Networks: Supporting state agencies in evolving toward governance-oriented institutions, thereby reducing actions that cause public grievance or unfair treatment. ( (4Adapting to Global Changes: Embracing global trends such as globalization, democratization, human rights, and governance to ensure institutional relevance and responsiveness. ( (5Upholding a People-Centered Approach: Maintaining a strong collaboration with public agencies while protecting citizen rights at the core of the Ombudsman's mandate.

- The second day of the seminar began with a special lecture on “Good Governance and the Duties and Powers of the Ombudsman,” followed by a discussion on “Strengthening Governance: Addressing Public Grievances Toward Sustainable Development.” The discussions reinforced that good governance - defined by transparency, accountability, and public participation - is essential to public administration and fundamental to fostering citizen trust. Particular attention was given to the role of local administrative organizations in embedding governance principles, while the Ombudsman was acknowledged as a crucial mechanism for monitoring the exercise of state power and proposing systemic solutions.
- The afternoon session featured an international seminar under the theme “Fostering Fairness in Society: The Ombudsman's Role in Achieving SDG ”.16Esteemed speakers included Mr. Vitit Muntarbhorn (Professor Emeritus of Law, Chulalongkorn University and UN Special Rapporteur), Ms. Niamh Collier-Smith (The UNDP Resident Representative in Thailand), Mr. Bobby Hamzar Rafinus (Vice Chairman of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia), Mr. Surichai Wun'Gaeo (Professor Emeritus of Sociology, Chulalongkorn University), and Mr. Songsak Saicheua (Ombudsman of Thailand). The session was moderated by Mr. Songpol Sukchan, Former Ambassador of Thailand to Indonesia. In addition, there are participants from the Ombudsman institutions in various countries and representatives from international institutions via electronic media (Zoom Cloud Meeting).
- The discussion highlighted the critical importance of Sustainable Development Goal 16 ) SDG (16, which seeks to build peaceful, just, and inclusive societies with strong institutions. In the face of geopolitical tensions, environmental crises, and shifting global norms, SDG 16serves as the foundational pillar for all other development goals. Ombudsman institutions, through their mandates of rights protection and governance oversight, are uniquely positioned to advance justice and public accountability at both national and international levels.



## **18. Ombudsman Institution of the Republic of Türkiye**

Following the end of the tenure of the former Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref MALKOÇ, Mr. Mehmet Akarca was elected as the new Chief Ombudsman by the General Assembly of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye on 12 November 2024, and officially took office through a handover ceremony held at the Institution. Mr. Mehmet Akarca is a distinguished jurist who has held senior positions in the Turkish judicial system and is renowned for his extensive judicial experience and institutional leadership. He has rendered valuable services to the legal community for many years with the positions he has undertaken at different levels of the judiciary organization including as the First President of the Court of Cassation.

### **Activities Performed at the National Level**

#### **Relations with Universities**

- The Ombudsman Institution attaches great importance to its relations with youth. Ombudsman Student Clubs have been established in 156 universities in all across Türkiye. Frequent meetings are held with the university students with the aim of establishing awareness and consciousness regarding the Ombudsman and human rights among the young generations.

#### **Provincial Working Visits**

- Acting as a bridge between the citizen and the administration, the Ombudsman Institution continued its regional meetings and provincial working visits with the theme “Ombudsman Meets the Public” in 2025 where citizens and NGOs were informed about the Institution and brought together with local administrators.

#### **Activities for Children’s Rights:**

- Our Institution’s law stipulates that one of the five Ombudspersons shall be specifically assigned to issues concerning women’s and children’s rights.
- Our Institution receives applications from children without asking the consent of their parents/guardians. Under the celebrations of our National Sovereignty and Children’s Day, a stand was set up in the garden of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye.
- On 6 April 2025, Chief Ombudsman visited children staying with their mothers at Sincan Closed Prison for Women in Ankara.
- Our Institution works in cooperation with international institutions and organizations as well as national ones. We have been cooperating with UNICEF based on annual work plans. On 28 April 2025, our Institution participated in the Child Inter-sectoral Board meeting held within the scope of the 2021-2035 Country Programme carried out in cooperation with UNICEF.

#### **Miscellaneous Activities**

The mandate, mission and vision of our Institution is not limited to investigating complaints alone. Our institution also conducts visits to care homes for the elderly, children or the disabled without waiting for any complaint to be filed, thereby both informing citizens and employees in these centers

about our institution and conducting on-site inspections. Some rehabilitation centers were visited by the Chief Ombudsman in January 2025.

### **Activities Performed at the International Level**

The Ombudsman Institution attaches great importance on international collaborations and the exchange of knowledge and experience. It participates in and contributes to the activities of various international ombudsman networks of which it is a member, including the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OICOA), which it currently chairs. Additionally, our Institution conducts numerous working visits and hosts visits from representatives of international organizations and institutions, as well as members of diplomatic missions.

**Participation in International Activities:** Throughout 2024, former Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref Malkoç participated in international conferences held in Qatar, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Italy, North Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo, and Hong Kong, where he contributed through his speeches.

**Delegations Hosted by the Ombudsman Institution in 2024:** During 2024, the Ombudsman Institution of Türkiye hosted delegations from various Ombudsman Institutions and organizations, including: (i) Ombudsman of Georgia, Mr. Levan Ioseliani; (ii) Ombudsman of Serbia, Mr. Zoran Pasalic; (iii) Ombudsman of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela Mr. Alfredo Ruiz Angulo; (iv) Vice-Chairperson of the Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) of Republic of Korea Mr. Kim Tae-kyu, (v) UNICEF's Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, Ms. Regina De Dominicis; (vi) Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid and UNICEF Türkiye Representative Mr. Paolo Marchi; (vii) Ombudsman of Russian Federation, Ms. Tatiana Moskalkova; (viii) Chair of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination of the Republic of Bulgaria, Ms. Ana Dzhumalieva; (ix) Representatives from the Ukrainian NGO "The Heart of Azovstal"; (x) Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe, Dr. Michael O'Flaherty; (xi) Council of Europe, Director Human Rights.

### **Official Visits – 2024**

- Former OICOA President and Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref Malkoç participated in the 10<sup>th</sup> BoD meeting of the OICOA held in Islamabad on 29-30 January 2024 and 11<sup>th</sup> BoD Meeting of the OICOA, held in Marrakesh, on 25–26 June 2024.
- Former Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref Malkoç paid a comprehensive visit to Ukraine in March 2024, upon the invitation of the Ombudsman of Ukraine, Mr. Dmytro Lubinets, in order to observe the destruction of the ongoing war in city centers, to visit Russian POWs and come together with the families of the Ukrainian POWs.
- Former Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref Malkoç visited Ombudsman of Poland, Mr. Marcin Wiącek. On 21 May 2024, Former Chief Ombudsman and Ombudsman of Azerbaijan, Ms. Sabina Aliyeva paid a study visit to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

## AOA: A Catalogue of Activities at the National Level

- On 28 July 2024, former Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref Malkoç paid a visit to Venezuela to observe the presidential elections. An MoU was signed between the two Ombudsman Offices.
- Former Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref Malkoç paid a visit to Uzbekistan to monitor the Parliamentary Elections held on 27 October 2024.

### **Other Important Activities:**

- Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) Meeting: On 27-28 June 2024, the Ombudsman Institution of Türkiye hosted the 25<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting of the AOA in Istanbul.

### **Delegations Hosted by the Ombudsman Institution in 2025**

- On 23 January 2025, the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Committee of Qatar (NHRC) Ms. Maryam bint Abdullah Al Attiyah paid a visit to Türkiye. A memorandum of understanding was signed between the two institutions.
- On 28 January 2025, Chief Ombudsman Mr. Mehmet Akarca received the officials from the ICRC and discussed about the potential cooperation between our Institutions.
- On 17 April 2025, Chief Ombudsman Mr. Mehmet Akarca hosted Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence against Children, Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid.
- On 5 May 2025, Ombudsperson of Turkmenistan Ms. Yazdursun Gurbannazarova paid a visit to our Institution for a UNICEF-supported study focused on children's rights.
- The Head of the Council of Europe Programme Office in Ankara Mr. William Massolin paid a courtesy visit to Chief Ombudsman Mr. Mehmet Akarca.
- The Co-Rapporteurs of the PACE Mr. Stefan Schennach and Lord David Blencathra, were received by the Chief Ombudsman.

### **Official Visits – 2025**

- On 27 February 2025, Chief Ombudsman participated in the international conference organized by the Ombudsman Institution of Uzbekistan, themed “A Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment – A Guarantee for the Protection of Human Rights” held in Tashkent.
- Chief Ombudsman presided over the 4<sup>th</sup> General Assembly and 12<sup>th</sup> Board of Directors Meeting of the OICOA on 13-14 May 2025 held at Tehran.
- **On 27-28 May 2025**, Chief Ombudsman participated in the conference organized by NHRC of the State of Qatar, on “Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights: Opportunities, Risks, and Visions for a Better Future” held in Doha.

**Online Meetings:** Chief Ombudsman Mr. Mehmet Akarca held online meetings with; (i) TURKOMB (15 January 2025); (ii) Board of Directors of the OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA) (17 February 2025). (iii) High Commissioner for Human Rights of the Russian Federation Ms. Tatiana Mosalkova (06 March 2025); (iv) Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Dmytro Lubinets (26 March 2025).

**19. Commissioner of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (Ombudsman)**

- On January 15, 2025, the Commissioner of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (Ombudsman), F. Eshmatova, participated in the next working meeting of the Association of Ombudsmen and National Human Rights Institutions of Turkic-Speaking States held online.
- On February 27, 2025, an international conference titled “A Clean and Favorable Environment – A Guarantee of Human Rights” was held in Tashkent to mark the 30th anniversary of the institution of the Commissioner of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (Ombudsman). This event aimed to highlight the interconnection between human rights and the environment, ensure ecological security, and strengthen the right of citizens to live in a clean environment. Additionally, special attention was given to experience exchange and the strengthening of cooperation between Ombudsmen from foreign states, national institutions, authorized state bodies, and international organizations.
- On March 3, 2025, the Commissioner of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (Ombudsman), in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, the Rule of Law Center at the University of Helsinki, and the International Nordic University, organized a seminar-training for the staff of the Ombudsman’s Office.
- As part of the international conference "A Clean and Comfortable Environment – A Guarantee for Ensuring Human Rights", dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the Institution of the Commissioner of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (Ombudsman), a visit was made to the Samarkand region. As a symbol of international cooperation, more than 15 foreign Ombudsmen participated in the establishment of "Ombudsman Park" in Samarkand. Over 20 fruit trees were planted in the park, representing the inseparable connection between human rights and sustainable development.
- The Commissioner of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for human rights (Ombudsman), Feruza Eshmatova, met with Andrew Jeremy Gray, Head of the Tashkent Office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) under the UN. Andrew Jeremy Gray emphasized the significance of the Ombudsman institution and positively assessed the state support it receives.
- Ombudsman Schools and Ombudsman Hours are held on a regular basis in all regions. To explain the rights of citizens and raise awareness of the law. An analysis of appeals sent to the Ombudsman across different regions shows that the most common issues raised by

citizens relate to employment, access to social assistance, youth support, pensions, court proceedings, and housing matters. As a result, these topics have been selected for focus during the “Ombudsman School” events, which involved representatives from relevant agencies. These sessions aim to increase public awareness about available opportunities and benefits in these areas.

- The Ombudsman Met with the Representative of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime On March 25, 2025, The Commissioner of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for human rights (Ombudsman), Feruza Eshmatova, held a meeting with Oliver Stolpe, Head of the Regional Office of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Uzbekistan. During the meeting, the parties discussed ways to further strengthen mutual cooperation, particularly in various areas related to the protection of human rights.
- Since 2023, the Commissioner of Oliy Majlis for Human Rights (Ombudsman), in cooperation with the Ministry of Preschool and School Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, has been implementing the “Ombudsman Hour” project across the country with the goal of increasing students' legal awareness. To make the lessons non-traditional, creative, and engaging, the Ombudsman has prepared a series of video lessons. A video lesson titled “Protecting the Environment Means Caring for the Future” was presented to make ecological and legal concepts more accessible and engaging for the students.
- The Ombudsman Joined the Asia-Pacific Forum. On April 4, 2025, an online meeting was held between the Commissioner of Oliy Majlis for Human Rights (Ombudsman), Feruza Eshmatova, and the Director of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, Kieren Fitzpatrick.
- On April 14, 2025, the Commissioner of the Oliy Majlis for Human Rights (Ombudsman) Feruza Eshmatova met with Wim Geerts, the Human Rights Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and Nico Schermers, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Uzbekistan. During the meeting, the parties exchanged views on strengthening mutual cooperation and shared experiences regarding the ongoing efforts in the field of human rights protection. The guests acknowledged the progress made in recent years in Uzbekistan in ensuring and promoting human rights.
- On April 25, 2025, the Commissioner of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (ombudsman) held an open dialogue with citizens in Nurata District of Navoi Region. The meeting was organized within the framework of the "Ombudsman School" project.
- On April 25, 2025, the Deputy Ombudsman, B. Narimanov, participated in an online event titled “The Role of the Ombudsman in Strengthening Justice in Society”, organized to mark the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Ombudsman Institution of Thailand.

- On May 13, 2025, a roundtable discussion titled “Improving Approaches to Raising Legal Awareness among the Population” was held in cooperation with the Commissioner of Oliy Majlis for Human Rights (Ombudsman), the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Uzbekistan, and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.
- On May 7, 2025, members of the Ombudsman Club — students specializing in International Law at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED) — visited the Secretariat of the Commissioner of Oliy Majlis for Human Rights (ombudsman). During the visit, the students received detailed information on the role of the Ombudsman institution in the protection of human rights, the procedure for reviewing citizens' appeals, as well as mechanisms for public and international cooperation.
- On June 18, 2025, an international symposium on the theme “Strengthening the Rule of Law: The Role of Ombudspersons and National Human Rights Institutions” was held in Baku, Azerbaijan. The event was organized by the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan in cooperation with a number of organizations. This prestigious forum brought together heads of ombudsperson institutions and national human rights institutions from more than 20 countries, including Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Egypt, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, the Slovak Republic, Turkey, Serbia, Oman, and Montenegro. Representatives of international organizations also took part, including the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ombudsman Association (OIC Ombudsman Association), among others. During the first session, the Ombudsman of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Feruza Eshmatova, delivered a speech outlining the ongoing reforms in Uzbekistan aimed at ensuring the protection of human rights. She emphasized that the new version of the Constitution has significantly strengthened the legal foundations for guaranteeing human dignity, honor, freedoms, and rights.
- 23 – 25 June, 2025, a three-day seminar-training on the topic “Current Issues in the Preparation of Alternative Reports to UN Treaty Bodies” has commenced in our capital. The event is organized in cooperation between the Commissioner of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (Ombudsman) and the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan.