**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Vision:**

“Together towards a Just Society; upholding human rights for all, independently and responsibly.”

**Mission:**

To support in increasing State’s capacity to deliver on its responsibility to protect and promote human rights for all by:

1. Providing for speedy investigation and redressal by acting as a watchdog on state machinery to respond to violation of Human Rights
2. Mainstreaming human rights awareness and education in the society;
3. Bringing all state legislation, policies, institutions and actions in conformity with the Human rights obligations enshrined in the Constitution and ratified international treaties and conventions;
4. Creating a culture of collaboration for a pro-rights environment in Pakistan.

**Background:**

The establishment of National Commission for Human Rights (“NCHR”) is a key step towards promotion and protection of Human Rights enshrined in the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973. The Government of Pakistan created the NCHR in order to meet its International commitments and obligations made under Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP+) Status which facilitates Pakistan’s exports to the EU.

In 1991, for the first time International Workshop on National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights took place in Paris which laid down the principles (commonly known as “Paris Principles”) relating to the requirements of National Human Rights Institutions. In 1993, World Conference for Human Rights formally recognized the Paris Principles as an important actor for the promotion and protection of human rights. The Paris Principles laid down the following criteria for a fully functioning National Human Rights institution:

* **Mandate and competence**: a broad mandate based on universal human rights standards;
* **Autonomy from Government**;
* **Independence guaranteed by statute or constitution**;
* **Pluralism**, including through membership and/or effective cooperation;
* **Adequate resources;**
* **Adequate powers of investigation.**

**Mandate:**

Complying with its international obligations, Pakistan established a National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) through the Act XVI of 2012 in accordance with the Paris Principles. In its preamble, the Act provides its *raison d'être* as follows;

“WHEREAS it is expedient to provide for the creation of National Commission for Human Rights, for the purpose of promotion and protection of Human Rights as provided in the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and various international instruments to which Pakistan is state party or shall become a state party.”

The National Commission for Human Rights Act, 2012 stipulates a broad and overarching mandate for the promotion, protection and fulfillment of human rights, as provided for in Pakistan’s Constitution and international treaties. As an impartial state body, the NCHR works independently of the Government and is directly accountable to the Parliament of Pakistan. The NCHR’s financial and performance reports are also directly presented to the Parliament for approval on an annual basis.

**Powers and Functions of the Commission:**

1. **Redressal of human rights violations :**

The Commission is competent to receive petitions or take *suo-moto* notices or inquire into complaints of violation of human rights or abetment thereof; or negligence in the prevention of such violation, by a public servant.

1. **Inquiries and Investigation:**

The Commission is empowered to investigate or inquire in respect of any incident of violation of human rights in Pakistan.

1. **Review of the Legislation:**

The Commission is competent to review the safeguards provided by or under the Constitution of the Islamic republic of Pakistan or any other law for the time being in force for the protection of human rights and recommend adoption of new legislation, the amendment of existing law and the adoption or amendment of administrative measures for their effective implementation.

1. **Human Rights and Acts of Terrorism:**

The Commission is competent to review the factors, including acts of terrorism that inhibit the enjoyment of human rights and recommend appropriate remedial measures.

1. **Human Rights Treaties and State Reports:**

The Commission is competent to study treaties, other international instruments on human rights and reports submitted by the Government of Pakistan on them including the comments thereon, to make recommendations for their effective implementation. The Commission is empowered to submit independent reports to the Government on the State of human rights in Pakistan for incorporation in reports to the United Nations’ bodies or committees.

1. **Research and Awareness of Human Rights:**

The Commission is competent to undertake and promote research in the field of human rights and spread human rights literacy among various sections of society for the promotion and protection of human rights in Pakistan.

1. **National Plan of Action:**

The Commission is competent to develop a national plan of action for the promotion and protection of human rights in Pakistan.

1. **Human Rights Courts:**

The Commission is competent to advice the Federal Government to establish/declare human rights court at District Level for the purpose of speedy trial of offences arising out of violation of human rights.

**Composition of the Commission:**

Section 3 of the National Commission for Human Rights Act, 2012 states that the Commission shall consist of

* A Chairperson
* One member from each Province, Federally Administrated Tribal Areas and Islamabad Capital Territory
* Chairperson of the National Commission on Status of Women
* One member from Minority communities
* A Secretary appointed by the Commission.

**Reports:**

1. First Report on the Marginalised Segments
2. Proposed Procedural Amendments to check Misuse of Blasphemy Laws in Pakistan
3. A Study on Honour Killings in Pakistan and Recommendatory Checks through Law
4. PIMS Hospital – An Appraisal Report
5. Forced ouster of Tenants of Okara Farms
6. A report on Exploitative Trade of Human Organs in Pakistan
7. Report on Transgender Persons ( A need for Mainstreaming)
8. Report on FATA South Waziristan IDPs: Plights, Issues and Challenges
9. Understanding the Agonies of Ethnic Hazaras
10. A report on the Protection, Preservation and promotion of Constitutional Rights of Indigenous Kalash People
11. Balochistan Prisons: an Expose
12. Born in Chains: Understanding the vicious cycle of Bonded Labour
13. Right to Health in Pakistan
14. Report on Water as Basic Human Right
15. Human Trafficking and Human Smuggling: A Modern Manifestation of Slavery
16. Police Reforms
17. Report on challenges faced by Rural Women in Pakistan
18. Prison Manual
19. The unending saga of enforced disappearances
20. Towards abolishing bonded labour in Pakistan
21. Death in mines (A report on coal mines in Balochistan)

***Investigative/ Inquiry Reports***

* Kasur Child Abuse Incident;
* Kasur:The Horror Prevails
* Kasur: Polices Failure, A fact finding report on the Rape and Murder case of Zainab
* An Investigation into the extra-judicial killing of Naqeeb Ullah.
* An investigation into D.I Khan Incident (Shareefan Bibi case)
* Fact finding report: The issue of microcephalic children & adults exploited as beggars at the Shrine of Shahdaula in Gujrat
* A report on Tharparker Crisis: The Haunting Footprints of Drought, Hunger and poor Governance
* Police Torture in Faisalabad

***Legislative Input***

* Model Legislative Framework to Eliminate Exploitation of Children in Pakistan
* Criminal Law Amendment Act 2016
* Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace (amendment) Bill 2016
* The Transgender persons (protection of rights) Bill 2017
* National Commission on Rights of the Child Bill 2017
* Juvenile Justice System Bill 2017
* ICT Child Protection Bill 2017

***Treaty Body Reporting***

* NCHR’s submission on implementation of United Nations Convention against Torture and other form of Cruel, Inhuman, Degrading Treatment and Punishment (UNCAT);
* NCHR’s submission on ‘List of Issues’ pertaining to International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR);
* NCHR’s submission on ‘List of Issues’ pertaining to International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR);
* NCHR’s submission on 3rd Universal Periodic Review of Pakistan (UPR).