

## Ombudsman stresses improved living conditions for prisoners in KP

**By our correspondent**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi has urged all stakeholders in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) to ensure the improvement of living conditions of prisoners in jails, especially children, women, destitute and hapless prisoners.

He was presiding over a meeting of the Prison Reforms to review the implementation of recommendations submitted in the 'Report on Prisons'.

This was desired by the apex court of Pakistan, during the hearing of the case on the miserable conditions of prisoners in jails in September 2018.

Federal Ombudsman commended the launching of "online meetings through Zoom" for the prisoners with their relatives which has been appreciated by the general public as well.

He urged upon the KP government to build additional accommodation to control overcrowding in district jails, which should have separate and independent portions for women and juvenile prisoners with sleeping space for every prisoner with adequate toilet and hygiene facilities.

He stressed the need to link the biometric system in Jails with courts to maintain records of prisoners and ensure the development of an interface between jails, courts and Nadra for monitoring and verification of prisoner's records.

He added that drug users and mentally challenged prisoners are to be kept outside of jail premises, in drug clinics (rehabilitation centres) with provisions for medical treatment. "Prisoners with ailments of HIV Hepatitis, TB and those who are drug addicts should be segregated and kept apart from other

prisoners and strict surveillance should be implemented in jails for protecting prisoners from physical and sexual assaults," he maintained.

The Home Secretary, Abid Majeed informed the members of the meeting that 39 prisons with an authorized capacity of 13375 have so far been made operational in KP with health and hygiene facilities, separate and independent detention facilities for women, juvenile inmates, where education with skill training to the prisoner have been ensured.

He further updated that efforts are in hand to allot dedicated rooms for the installation of the Prisons Management Information System (PMIS) main server and the conduct of examinations for prisoners by the HEC and other relevant institutions.

He mentioned that PMIS has also been installed in 14 jails with complete network-

ing in 38 jails.

Ejaz Ahmed appreciated the steps taken by the KP government as per recommendation on prison reforms and added that significant improvements and changes were visible in prisons and life of the jail inmates.

He also directed the provincial authorities to pursue the construction of jails in new districts of Upper Chitral, Kolai-Palas, Upper South Waziristan, Lower Kohistan and Torgher.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Ch, Secretary Home, Muhammad Abid Majeed, Inspector General Prisons, Muhammad Usman Masood, Provincial Mohtasib KP, Syed Jamal-ud-Din Shah, Advocate General KP, Amir Javed, DG (Prosecution) Mian Muhammad and Regional Head Peshawar Wafaqi Mohtasib, Mr. Badsha Gul Wazir.