

Pakistan AGP to Present Mechanism for Detained Persons

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ISLAMABAD – Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Awan has assured the National Judicial Policy Making Committee (NJPMC) that a mechanism for producing detained individuals in cases of enforced disappearances will be presented in the committee's next meeting. The NJPMC, established in 2002, is responsible for improving judicial efficiency, setting performance standards for judicial officers, and ensuring skilled and effective administration of justice.

The committee recently formed a dedicated subcommittee to address enforced disappearances, a longstanding human rights concern in Pakistan. In its 54th meeting, chaired by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi and attended by high court chief justices and AGP Awan, the NJPMC emphasized the need for a comprehensive mechanism to ensure any detained person is produced before a magistrate within 24 hours.

AGP Awan confirmed that such a framework would be developed and submitted for review in the committee's next session.

The issue of enforced disappearances has been highlighted in a recent report by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). Their fact-finding mission in Balochistan from July 9-12, 2025, documented concerns over deteriorating fundamental rights and civic freedoms, noting that enforced disappearances have contributed to public alienation and political instability in the province.

According to the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances, 125 cases were reported in the first half of 2025, with a total of 10,592 cases submitted since inception. Of these, 1,914 cases have been disposed of and 6,786 individuals traced, highlighting both progress and ongoing challenges in addressing unlawful detentions.

The NJPMC also discussed measures to protect judicial independence and improve case disposal timelines. High courts have been urged to implement standard operating procedures (SOPs) that include stage-wise timelines from complaint filing to final action, with extraneous influence reported within 24 hours and addressed within 14 days.

Uniform timelines for various types of cases were also approved, ranging from two months for uncontested succession cases to 24 months for criminal trials involving murder. These timelines are now considered key performance indicators in judges' evaluations.

The committee's actions signal a commitment to balancing judicial efficiency with the protection of human rights, ensuring detained individuals receive timely access to judicial oversight, and reinforcing accountability mechanisms across the legal system.

By institutionalizing these measures, Pakistan aims to strengthen human rights safeguards while addressing the persistent challenge of enforced disappearances, particularly in sensitive regions such as Balochistan.