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FIA Arrests NGO Head for Child Trafficking to US

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The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested Mubeena Qasim Agboatwala, chairperson of a Karachi-based NGO, for allegedly smuggling children to the United States under the guise of adoption.

On August 4, 2025, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Anti-Human Trafficking Circle in Karachi apprehended Mubeena Qasim Agboatwala, chairperson of a private non-governmental organization (NGO), on charges of illegally smuggling children to the United States, as reported by Geo News. The FIA alleges that Agboatwala facilitated the trafficking of at least 25 children, presenting the transfers as legal adoptions through her organization, which claimed to advocate for child welfare. The arrests followed a tip-off

from United States authorities, prompting a swift investigation into the NGO's operations, per The Express Tribune.

The FIA's probe revealed that Agboatwala's NGO, registered as a charitable trust, allegedly exploited vulnerable families by promising better futures for their children abroad. Sources within the FIA, cited by The News International, stated that the accused arranged fraudulent documentation to bypass immigration protocols, charging substantial fees for the illegal adoptions. The investigation uncovered evidence of 17 children smuggled to the US, with ongoing inquiries to identify additional victims and accomplices. The FIA's Anti-Human Trafficking Circle, under the leadership of Deputy Director Bilal Tariq, is coordinating with international agencies to trace the children's whereabouts, according to Dawn.

Agboatwala, during her initial court appearance, denied the allegations, claiming her organization acted in good faith to secure homes for abandoned children, as reported by Samaa TV. Her legal counsel argued that no evidence of abuse against the children has surfaced, but the court granted a two-day remand to the FIA for further interrogation, per The Nation. The FIA emphasized that the case reflects Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's directive to crack down on human trafficking networks, with a focus on dismantling operations exploiting vulnerable populations, as stated in a January 2025 FIA advisory.

The arrests have sparked public concern in Karachi, with local activists demanding stricter oversight of NGOs. The FIA has pledged to pursue all leads, with ongoing raids targeting potential accomplices. This case underscores Pakistan's intensified efforts to combat human trafficking, as highlighted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in a 2024 report praising the FIA's proactive measures.