



## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

APRIL – JUNE '23



PUBLIC  
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OF PAKISTAN

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### VISION

A Pakistan where fundamental rights are enjoyed by all.

### MISSION

To work for the promotion and protection of fundamental rights of all Pakistani's through research, advocacy, lobbying, and litigation.

### VALUES

Inclusion and Diversity  
Accountability  
Transparency  
Commitment  
Sensitivity

## LAHORE PILAP EVENT

PILAP held a meet and greet event on May 27th in Lahore, jointly hosted by Lahore-based board members Mr. Maroof Ali Syed and Ms. Maliha Mimi Bangash, the Vice Chairperson. We were happy to see one of our founding member Mr. Khalid Mirza at the event who also gave us feedback and advice. The attendance was excellent: six individuals volunteered to become Citizens' Assembly members, one volunteered to help finance a researcher for a year, and another member Ahmed Uzair owner of AUC Law offered to handle PILAP litigation on a pro bono basis. A similar session is being planned in Islamabad in August.

To create engagement amongst members in each city, we have agreed to hold informal meetings in members' home once a month on a volunteer basis.



### MESSAGE OF THE CHAIRPERSON:

SAAD AMANULLAH KHAN

PILAP is working on its vision to become a pan-Pakistan and sustainable institution. In line with this vision, we held a meet and greet event on May 27th in Lahore and had excellent outpouring of support. A similar session is under plan in Islamabad in August.

To meet this vision, we plan to have formal presence in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad by 2024 and actively work on protecting and promoting the fundamental rights of the citizens of Pakistan.

To become sustainable, we are working on increasing our membership base as well as launching membership drive amongst the USA, UK and UAE based diaspora. If you have contacts or can help, please contact us. Let's together turn this into an institution.

*Please join PILAP's Citizens' Assembly and recommend other like-minded family and friends to join as well.*



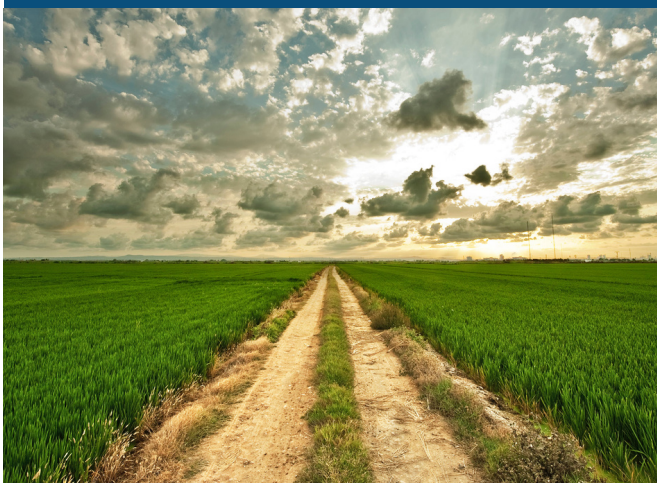


## PILAP IN THE NEWS

### A) Unlawful allotment of farmland to Military – Lahore High Court

On 21st June 2023, PILAP's petition in the Lahore High Court succeeded in achieving a landmark judgment which cancelled the lease of 45,000 acres farmland to the military in Punjab on the grounds that the same were granted without following the procedure under law. Land allotments should be transparent and market competitive for the best returns for the auctioned area with full participation from all claimants and an interim government cannot allocate State resources that bind future elected governments.

The decision is welcomed by concerned citizens and the efforts of PILAP team – Advocates Ahmed Rafay Alam and Fahad Malik – were hailed by the newspapers and on social media and is available at: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1761076>



### B) Sales Tax on Condoms

PILAP was successful in its advocacy initiative to remove sales tax on condoms which has been reflected in the 2023-24 Budget. This tax had been imposed since January 2022 and this success was accomplished through two initiatives:



(i) Writing letters to PM Shahbaz Sharif, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister of Economic Affairs Ayaz Sadiq, Commerce Minister Naveed Qamar, CMs of all provinces, President Arif Alvi, and Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani, questioning the decision to impose sales tax on contraceptives which goes against the prevailing law regulating the affordable access to contraceptives

(ii) Writing a news article on the issue to raise awareness was written by PILAP team members Summaiya Zaidi and Haider Naqvi and published in Aaj Digital titled: "Too hot to handle: the case of condoms vs. chai in Pakistan" and received a favourable response on social media.

The article is available online:

<https://www.aajenglish.tv/news/30320953/too-hot-to-handle-the-case-of-condoms-vs-chai-in-pakistan>



### C) Toshakhana

PILAP wrote one of the first RTI's that led to the 2022 revelation of the history of acquisitions from government officials in the Toshakhana. Building on this PILAP wrote a newspaper article exploring the income tax angle and questioned the Federal Board of Revenue on whether they had collected the income tax due on assets acquired by government officials through the Toshakhana. This article was written by a supporter of PILAP, Advocate Ammar Ather Saeed, and team member Summaiya Zaidi in April in the Daily Dawn titled "Not Personal Assets." The goal was to alert authorities and the general public that contents of the Toshakhana are public property and argued that the tax treatment of Toshakhana 'gifts' had escaped tax scrutiny and ensuing liabilities. It is available at:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1745479/not-personal-assets>



## RIGHT TO INFORMATION REQUESTS

### A) Population Management

PILAP has been actively sending RTI requests concerning the issue of population growth by contacting government departments charged with various duties under the Population Management Action Plan (2019-2024) as introduced by the

Supreme Court in its suo motu case on population in 2018. A total of 31 letters with more than 100 questions have been sent requesting updates on the tasks assigned in the Action Plan and PILAP has received a total of 8 responses thus far. PILAP intends to pursue responses from the remaining departments by filing appeals in the Information Commission.



### B) DHA-Storm Water Drains

PILAP had questioned Defence Housing Authority, Karachi (DHA) in September 2020 about the failure of installing storm drains during the monsoon rains due to which the residents in the area suffered immensely despite paying taxes and other charges to DHA. The appeal is ongoing at the Pakistan Information Commission – at a recent hearing in June 2023, DHA was instructed by the judges to disclose the cost of project after its completion and give information about the selection of vendors for the project because the slow construction work is causing havoc for the residents. DHA's generic response was contested by PILAP, and DHA is directed by the Commission to present a satisfactory reply in 10 days.



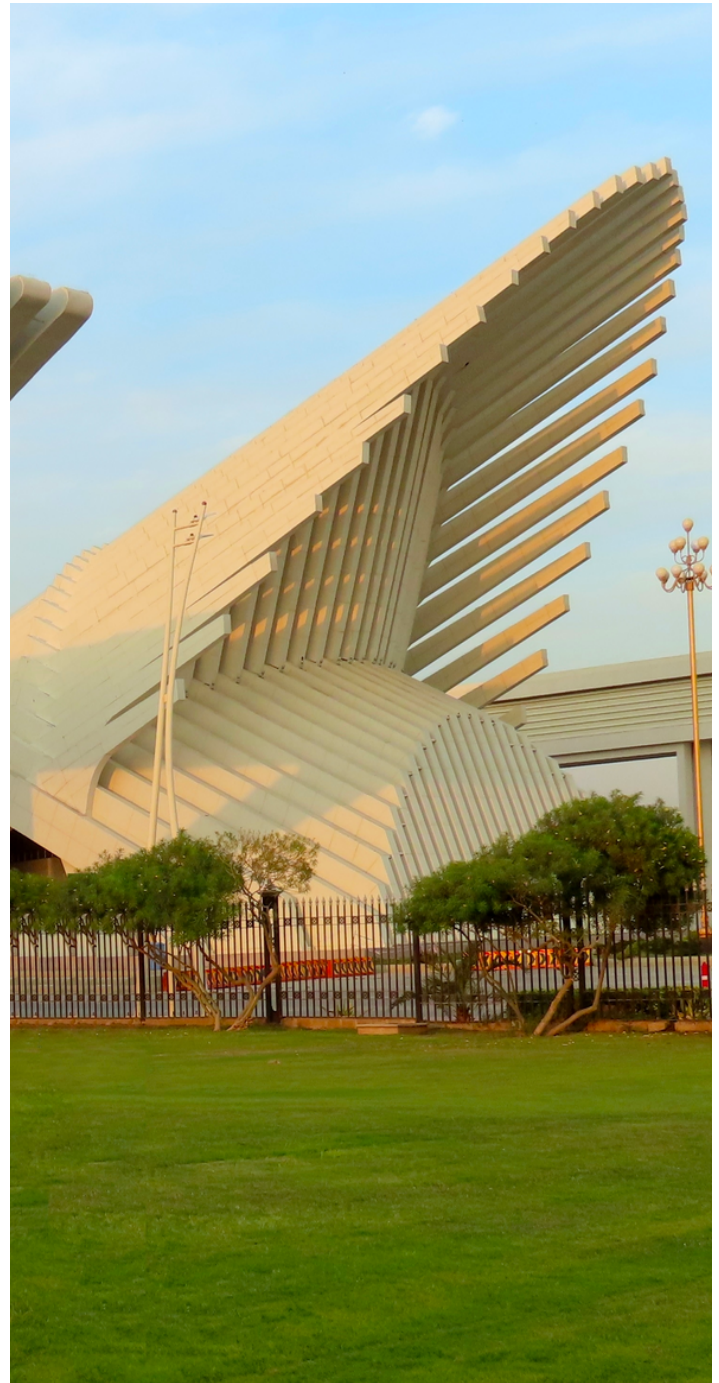
### C) DHA publishing of Annual Budget

PILAP questioned DHA in 2020 requesting it to share its budget for 2019-2020 year and was successful in receiving a favourable order before the Pakistan Information Commission (PIC). Since DHA is a public body, its budget should be available online and be publicly accessible. Hearings at the PIC office in Karachi were held a couple of times in the last quarter in which the Commission declared that DHA is a public body and is liable to publish its budget publicly. DHA's attempt at arguing that it is not a public body failed, and the Commission summarily rejected their plea stating that fines etc. could also be made applicable if DHA failed to share details of its budgets. A detailed order is expected soon.



### D) Malik Riaz-NCA Settlement Case

PILAP filed an RTI request with the FBR in December 2019 asking for details of income tax recovery from Malik Riaz from the disclosed sum of £190 million pounds of undeclared wealth in the UK. There has been no reply despite repeated show-cause notices to FBR from the Information Commission where this appeal is still pending. PILAP sent reminders in May 2023 to FBR in this regard and results are awaited.



### E) Bahria Town Karachi

PILAP filed an RTI request with NAB in May 2023 regarding implementation of the Supreme Court Order in 2018 fining Bahria Town Karachi an amount of Rs.460 billion. PILAP requested information about the implementation of the Order and collection of the fined amount as per schedule laid out in the SC judgment. PILAP is waiting for the results of this RTI.



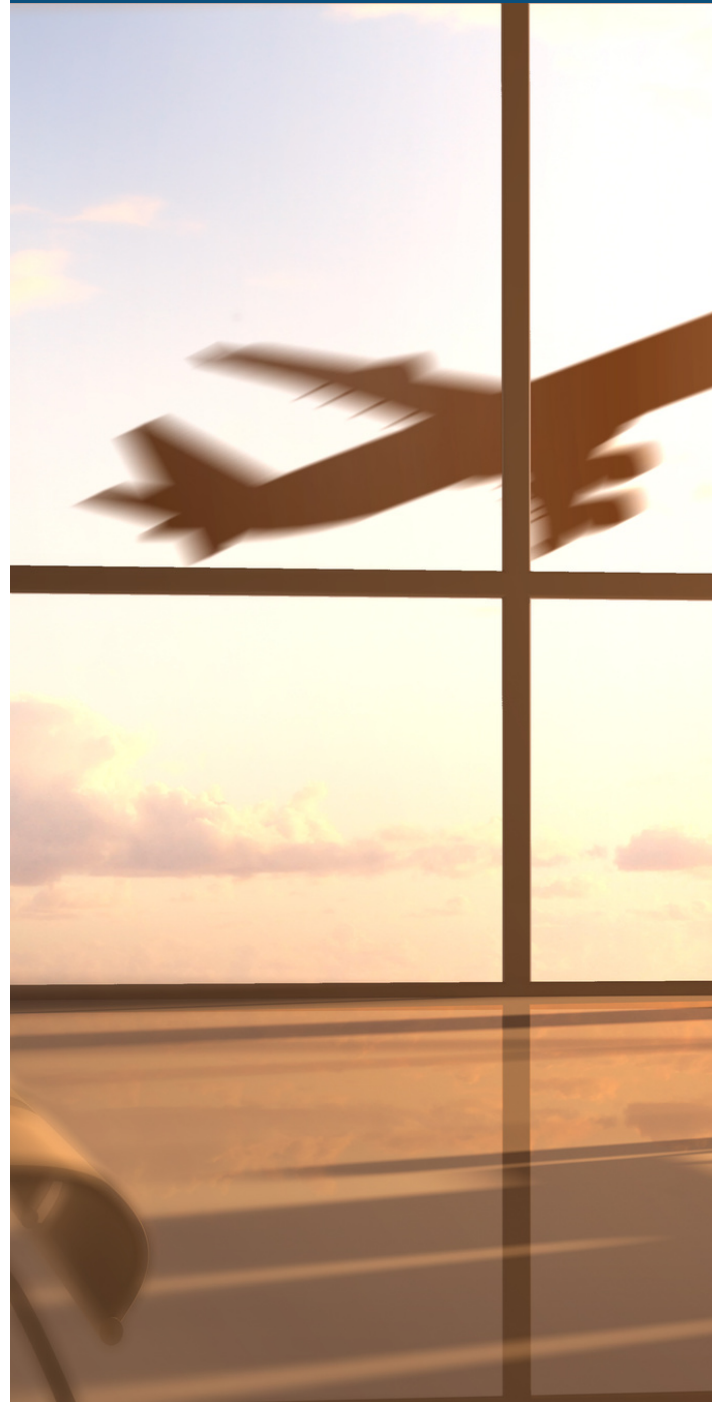


### F) Kirthar National Park Encroachment

PILAP filed RTI requests in March 2023 regarding reports of alleged encroachment and development on/or adjacent to the Kirthar National Park. Information regarding this development has been requested from the Sindh Forest and Wildlife Department, and other agencies. PILAP is waiting for the results of this RTI.

### G) Khoji Bomb Detectors used at Airports

PILAP has filed RTI requests in May 2023 with the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defense, ASF and CAA regarding the implementation of a 2019 Supreme Court Order about the use of “Khoji” bomb detectors. These detectors have been internationally discredited as effective against bomb detection. We are currently waiting for a response, failing which we will appeal to the PIC.





## GOALS FOR JULY-SEPTEMBER



### A) Islamabad Outreach Meeting

On the success of fruitful Lahore event, another meet and greet session is planned in Islamabad. Members and patrons from Islamabad are requested to gather up most concerned citizens and collaborate for a successful event there.

### B) Arabian Sea Pollution petition

PILAP is looking to hire more resources to assist Rafay Alam who has been unable to file the petition in the Sindh High Court due to his other public interest commitments.



### C) Child Labour

PILAP has been researching Child Labor and has been developing contacts with activists on the ground that are working on the issue. The acceptability of child labour in our country has been identified as the main problem and the aim is that following a review of the legislation, PILAP's social media will be geared towards trying to create more awareness on the unacceptability of this form of abuse.

## CALL FOR ACTION

Join PILAP as we work towards protecting the fundamental rights of the Citizens of Pakistan

**Become a member of the  
Citizens' Assembly of Pakistan  
-PKR 100,000 annual fees**

## CONTACT US



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