

ONLINE CONSULTATIVE MEETING WITH ATC JUDGES OF SINDH FOR TAILORING SOUTH ASIA REGIONAL TOOLKIT FOR JUDGES IN PAKISTAN

❖ On 23 June 2020, Sindh Judicial Academy (SJA), on the kind directions and superior guidance of the **Hon'ble Mr. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Judge High Court of Sindh & Acting Director General of Sindh Judicial Academy**, organized a virtual expert group meeting (EGM) for Anti-terrorism Courts (ATC) Judges from Sindh.



❖ This online consultative meeting was organized in collaboration with the UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Country Office Pakistan) and National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA).



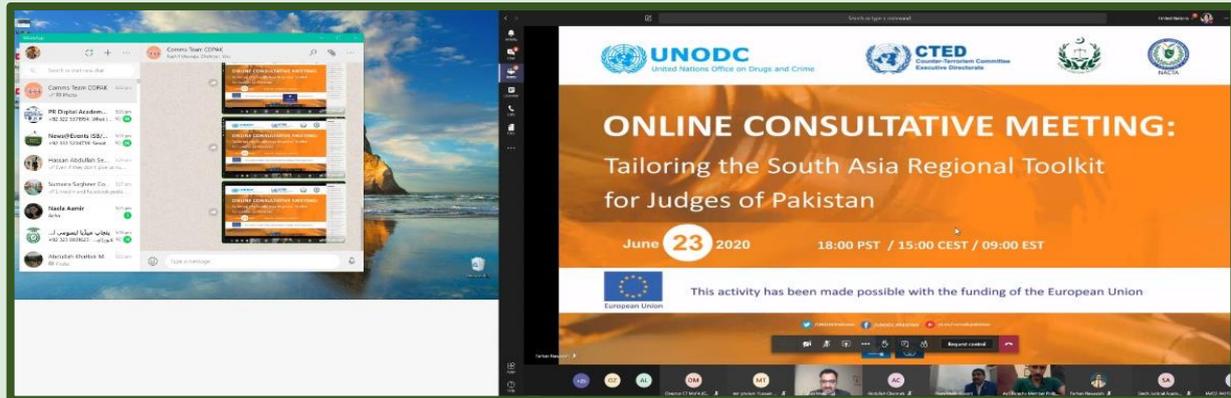
❖ **Mr. Jeremy Milsom, UNODC Country Representative**, apprised the learned participants about the background of this initiative, development of this toolkit and its salient parameters.

• Under the framework of PACT Sindh, UNODC along with SJA is well-positioned to recognize the judiciary's needs for specialized national tools, specifically designed to address their unique and emerging requirements. This initiative would also complement Government of Pakistan and Sindh's efforts under the National Action Plan and the Provincial Rule of Law Roadmap initiatives.



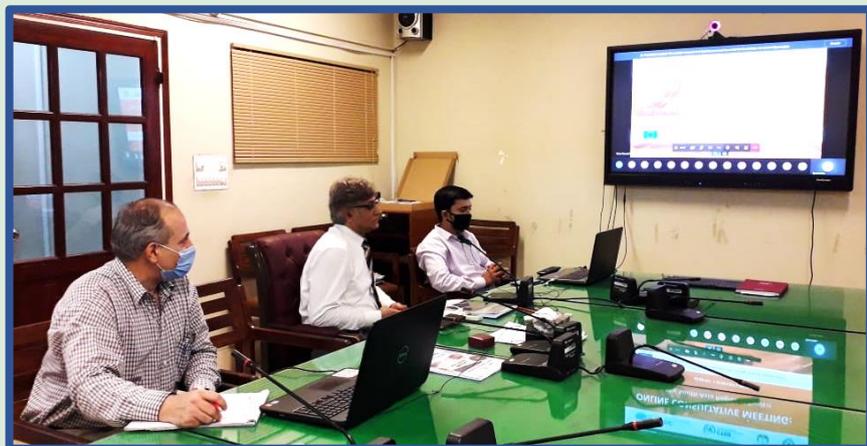
• The regional toolkit was developed with the active support and engagement of many senior judges from all South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries, including Pakistan as Honourable former Chief Justice of

Pakistan Mr. Asif Saeed Khosa, along with eight additional judges attended series-of-meetings and extended their support to this important regional initiative.



- The toolkit elaborates and builds on relevant Security Council resolutions and international instruments on counter-terrorism, as well as the Global Counter Terrorism Forum memoranda, notably The Hague Memorandum on good practices for the judiciary in adjudicating terrorism offences.
- The toolkit also provides practice-oriented guidance to judges and judicial training academies of SAARC countries on the foundations for effective adjudication, judicial management of proceedings and international cooperation in terrorism matters in the South-Asian region.

❖ **Sindh Judicial Academy** welcomed the participants and thereafter highlighted upon the need & importance of customizing this toolkit which would support moving towards a harmonized approach during the adjudication of terrorism cases. It was further elaborated that:

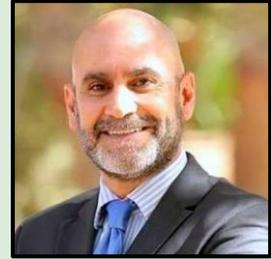


- Recognizing that Law enforcement and Criminal justice agencies in Pakistan face unique challenges and evolving threats posed by terrorism and its financing, SJA and UNODC have been successfully working in close cooperation to design & conduct various training programs and formulate various training manuals, handbooks and SOPs etc.
- Continuing the endeavours, SJA and UNODC are further working in close cooperation & partnership with relevant stakeholders to deliver technical assistance

to the Police, Prosecution and Judiciary in the province of Sindh to strengthen their collective response to preventing and countering terrorism.

- Under the framework of “Pakistan’s Action to Counter Terrorism” (PACT) project, one of the key activities includes customizing this toolkit in close consultation with the Sindh Judicial Academy for the Anti-terrorism Courts (ATC) Judges of Pakistan.

❖ **Mr. Masood Karimipour, Chief of Terrorism Prevention Branch, UNODC** appreciated the efforts of UNODC (country office, Pakistan), SJA, NACTA and other stake holders. He observed that:



- Pakistan has come a long way in the last decade in its criminal justice system’s response to terrorism. Terrorism incidents have decreased across the country, through joint efforts at all levels. Effective adjudication of cases remains a challenge, but progress is being made there, too.
- The Pakistan-UNODC cooperation is producing results through targeted training and tools. One such tool is “The South Asia Regional Toolkit”, customized for Judges in Pakistan, which will serve as a reference guide tailored towards meeting the needs of Judges in the country.



❖ **Mr. Asif Paracha, the Member NACTA**, expressed appreciation for the technical assistance being delivered by SJA and UNODC under the framework of PACT and acknowledged the financial support of the European Union.

❖ **Anne Marchal, the EU Chargé d’Affaires**, stressed upon the important role which judiciary plays in the criminal justice system especially in terrorism cases for upholding rule of law and human rights. Having worked in the South Asia region for over two decades she acknowledged the challenges judges encounter during the adjudication process and highlighted that the toolkit, gives us an opportunity to learn from the knowledge and experiences of our fellow colleagues from this region for incorporating good practices during the proceedings, she added.



❖ The initial online consultative meeting was attended by Faculty Members of SJA, related experts from UNODC, NACTA as well as over 25 ATC Judges from Sindh, 02 United



States District Court Judges along with a Magistrate from Australia who participated as subject-matter experts. They shared their experience and knowledge with participants on

judicial management of the proceedings and alluded on the importance of physical evidence including forensic, electronic, and financial along with their admissibility in parallel to the witness testimonies.

❖ The last session of the meeting provided with the opportunity to obtain feedback and input from the judges on how the toolkit could be tailored to the specific context of Pakistan, including local procedures and legal frameworks which the participants identified. UNODC, in collaboration with the Sindh Judicial Academy, will now begin drafting the tailored toolkit under the European Union funded project PACT Sindh.

