



INDIA NEWS

Fourth Meeting of the India-Pakistan Judicial Committee on Prisoners

Pakistan

April 18-23, 2011

Joint Press Statement

Members of the India-Pakistan Judicial Committee on Prisoners visited Pakistan from 18-23 April 2011 and visited jails in Karachi, Rawalpindi and Lahore. The members of the Committee are Justice (Retd) Mr. Nagendra Rai, Justice (Retd) Mr. Amarjeet Chaudhary, Justice (Retd) Mr. A. S. Gill and Justice (Retd) Mr. M. A. Khan from the Indian side and Justice (Retd) Mr. Abdul Qadeer Chaudhary, Justice (Retd) Mr. Fazal Karim, Justice (Retd) Mr. Nasir Aslam Zahid and Justice (Retd) Mr. Mian Muhammad Ajmal from the Pakistani side.

2. During the visit, the Pakistani side shared the lists of Indian Fishermen and civilian prisoners. Consular Access was conducted in respect of some of the fishermen and prisoners on the spot. Further it was recommended by the Committee to reconcile the figures of the prisoners and the fishermen at the earliest and to allow consular access to rest of the fishermen and prisoners in the second week of May 2011.

3. The Committee appreciated the release of 89 fishermen by Pakistani authorities and 1 Pakistani fisherman and 44 civil prisoners by Indian authorities. The Committee also appreciated the recommendations of the Home/Interior Secretary level talks held on 28-29 March 2011 at New Delhi to task the Coast Guard of India and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency to work on setting up a mechanism for release of inadvertent crossers (fishermen) and their boats on the same lines as the inadvertent crossers on land. The Group will submit its report to the Home/Interior Secretaries before the next round of Talks.

4. The Committee suggested that the Nationality verification process should be facilitated and all those prisoners who have completed their sentences and whose travel documents are available should be repatriated to their respective countries at the earliest.

5. The Committee also recommended humane approach in dealing with the cases of fishermen, women and juvenile prisoners, prisoners terminally ill or suffering from serious illness or physical disability and mentally disabled persons.

6. The Committee also recommended that all the prisoners shall be provided legal aid at all stages of their cases by the respective government.

7. The Committee suggested that the next visit to Indian jails by the Committee may be scheduled preferably during the second half of June, 2011 subject to the confirmation of dates by both the sides through diplomatic channels at an early date.

Lahore

April 22, 2011

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