

PRESS COUNCIL OF PAKISTAN

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The Press Council of Pakistan Ordinance 2002 was promulgated on 26th October, 2002 but the Council could not be constituted for one or the other reasons. It was a dormant body and became functional on completion of its composition which was notified by the Federal Government on 18th October, 2011.

Composition:

- The Press Council of Pakistan (PCP) is an independent and autonomous body. It consists of 19 members including Chairman. The other members are four nominated by APNS; four by CPNE; four by PFUJ; two MNAs (one nominated by Leader of the House and the other by Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly); Vice Chairman of Pakistan Bar Council; a nominee of Higher Education Commission, a nominee of the National Commission on the Status of Women and a mass media educationist.
- The tenure of Chairman and previous members of Council and expired on 06-09-2014 and 17.10 2014 respectively. The (new) members of the Council were notified on 6.3.2015. The Inquiry Commissions for headquarters and provincial sub offices were constituted on 25.3.2015.
- The (last) Chairman PCP, Dr.Rana Shamim, appointed by the President of Pakistan on January 02, 2015, relinquished charge on August 28, 2015 on his elevation as Chief Judge, Supreme Court, Gilgit- Baltistan.

Functions of Press Council of Pakistan :

- The main functions of the PCP are to keep under review any development likely to restrict the dissemination of news of public interest and importance; to receive complaints regarding the violation of Ethical Code of Practice by newspapers, news agencies, editors and journalists; to revise, update, enforce and implement the Ethical Code of Practice and to appoint Inquiry Commissions to decide complaints. The Council also acts as shield to the freedom of the press.

General Body Meetings:

- The first meeting of the Council was held on November 01, 2011. Regulations were framed on 28-10-2011 and were sent to Government for notification. They have been notified on 6.3.2015.PCP Rules were notified on 2.3.2015.
- During the last 3 years, eleven meetings of the General Council and five meetings of Special Inquiry Committee have been held. In the last general meeting held on 25.3.2015 the Council constituted 5 Inquiry Commissions , one for the federal capital and 4 for the provincial capitals

- Five meetings of the Inquiry Commission were held during 2015.
- After holding regular hearings, the Commission decided four complaints in June 2015.

Complaints/Suo Moto Cases:

- **102 complaints** were received regarding violation of Ethical Code of Practice. Two were pending due to litigation in the Courts; 67 were disposed of, while 15 are under process. 13 complaints have been sent to Inquiry Commissions in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi.
- **Suo moto** notice has been taken on 60 matters regarding aggression against media persons and matters affecting freedom of media

Seminars and Public Awareness Campaign for Promotion of Ethical Journalism:

- To propagate and create unanimity of views on Media Ethics and Ethical Journalism, PCP initiated debates /discussions across the country to sensitize media and public. 18 seminars were conducted in this regard. These were mostly organized in collaboration with civil society groups, Bar, Academia, etc.

Publicity Campaign:

- Distribution of Ethical Code of Practice to different organizations/media houses, press clubs and community based groups to sensitize Journalists on media ethics and code of conduct, publication of advertisements in newspapers to create awareness about PCP and its complaint procedure
- Public Service messages have been formulated and provided to media for publication/telecast/broadcast through DEMP, PEMRA, PBC, PTV and Min.
- Hand bills have been prepared and distributed to general public
- Translation and distribution of Ethical Code of Practice in Urdu and regional languages
- PCP's official website has been redesigned/updated, to educate public about the PCP and procedure for filing the complaints.

Member ship of International Organizations:

- The Executive Council of World Association of Press Councils (WAPAC) has accepted PCP's membership
- PCP have joined the Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe (AIPCE) as an Observer
- Contacts have been established with the Press Councils of SAARC countries, Indonesia, Tanzania, New Zealand, Turkey, Germany, etc.

PCP as Observer:

- Necessary steps have been taken by PCP to send its members as Observers for elections, in coordination with ECP.
- Officers of PCP were deputed as observers for By elections held in Gujranwala (PP100) on 26.7.2015 and Haripur (NA 19) on 16.08.2015 and Local Bodies Elections.

Anti Harassment Inquiry Committee:

- In compliance with the provisions of Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2010, an Inquiry Committee has been constituted to ensure zero tolerance against sexual harassment in PCP.

Miscellaneous

- The PCP's main Secretariat was shifted from the highly unsafe building at Zero Point to Block 7, Sector G-6 , Islamabad.
- In order to make PCP an effective and responsive entity, a number of amendments in the Ordinance have been proposed. The amendments duly vetted by the M/o Law Justice and Human Rights are under process at the Ministry of Information, Broadcasting & National heritage..
- In addition to the above, the Press Council of Pakistan, apart from undertaking a number of initiatives to establish its mandate and writ to enhance its scope with regard to implementation of media ethics through complaints driven mechanism has also suggested legislation, through amendments in the Ordinance 2002, to strengthen its efficacy as a media regulatory body.
- A set of guidelines for improving awareness and responsiveness of media to environmental issues are under consideration. The PCP intends to hold consultative meetings with stakeholders for the finalization draft guidelines to promote environmental journalism in Pakistan
- Concerted efforts are being made to ensure payment of PCP's annual fee by registered publications. So far 160 publications have complied.