

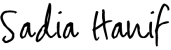
Strengthening Justice and Security Sector Governance in Pakistan (Rule of Law Programme)

B0424 - Pakistan - Islamabad

REPORTING PERIOD 2024- 2027

Narrative

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1. Executive Summary

2. Background

3. Key Results Achieved

- **Level of Reporting:**

Output level results

Project Outputs:

Capacity of justice and security stakeholders (duty bearers) enhanced to deliver inclusive, timely, and accessible services to all people with an emphasis on women and digital technologies

Contributing Outcomes:

Outcome 1 By 2027, the people in Pakistan, especially women, children, the most vulnerable and marginalized, have increased access to fundamental rights, gender equality and fundamental freedom through inclusive, accountable, effective and evidence-driven governance systems and rule-of-law institutions at all levels of government, contributing to good governance and stability

Contributing Outputs:

PAK_OUTPUT_1.2 Justice system is more accessible, efficient and affordable

Progress Note:

UNDP strengthened the institutional capacity of justice and security sector duty bearers across KP, Balochistan, Sindh, Islamabad Capital Territory, and GB, with a strong emphasis on gender-responsive service delivery, survivor-centred approaches, and the effective use of digital technologies. A total of 488 justice and security personnel benefited from structured capacity-building interventions, including 260 justice professionals (44 judges, 173 lawyers, and 43 prison officers—76 per cent women) and 228 Levies and Khasadars (10 per cent women) [E4] [E5] [E6] [E15] [E16] [E17] [E18] [E19] [E20] [E21]. Targeted trainings for judges and court staff strengthened capacities for survivor-centred adjudication, trauma-informed court processes, and gender-responsive handling of cases, including gender-based violence. Training-of-Trainers (ToT) programmes implemented through federal and provincial judicial academies enhanced the ability of judicial institutions to institutionalize these approaches within

regular court staff training systems. Pre- and post-training assessments showed an average 5 per cent increase in knowledge among judges, reflecting improved application of gender-responsive legal standards and court practices [IRRF 2.2.1]. Capacity-building interventions for women lawyers focused on representing vulnerable clients, engagement with District Legal Empowerment Committees (DLECs), trauma-informed legal practice, and the use of public interest litigation to advance gender justice. These trainings contributed to the development of a pool of trained women legal professionals capable of cascading knowledge at provincial and district levels. Participants demonstrated an average 19 per cent increase in knowledge, alongside improved confidence and readiness to provide legal aid services and support women-centred justice delivery [IRRF 2.2.1]. For prison officers, UNDP supported structured trainings on human-rights-based prison management, gender-responsive practices, and the management of vulnerable prisoner populations. Participants recorded an average 26 per cent increase in knowledge, strengthening institutional capacity to deliver more humane, accountable, and rights-based correctional services [IRRF 2.2.1]. In the security sector, specialized trainings for Levies and Khasadars in the Merged Districts of KP enhanced operational competencies in investigation skills, information technology, community policing, and gender-responsive policing. These interventions resulted in the highest learning gains, with an average 36 per cent increase in knowledge, significantly strengthening frontline service delivery in remote and marginalized contexts [IRRF 2.2.1]. In parallel, UNDP continued to leverage digital innovations to enhance institutional efficiency and expand equitable access to justice. In 2025, the KP Judiciary conducted over 116,000 case hearings through 72 virtual courts and 75 virtual points established with UNDP support—more than doubling from 50,720 hearings in 2024. This sustained increase demonstrates the scalability, institutional uptake, and long-term impact of digital justice systems in expanding access to justice for women and marginalized populations [E22] [IRRF E.1.3] [IRRF E.1.2]. Building on these results, UNDP expanded digital access-to-justice initiatives by establishing seven new virtual points in two KP prisons, as well as two additional virtual courts and one virtual point across three districts of GB, improving timely and affordable access to justice for remote and underserved communities [E14] [IRRF E.1.3]. To further institutionalize data-driven justice governance, UNDP initiated the development of a digital Rule of Law Dashboard for the GB Rule of Law Delivery Unit. The platform integrates data from police, prosecution, judiciary, prisons, and probation services, enabling real-time performance monitoring and automated analytics aligned with the GB Rule of Law Roadmap.

- **Level of Reporting:**

Output level results

Project Outputs:

Capacity of women, and the most vulnerable and marginalized (rights holders) strengthened to access referral pathways to justice and security

Contributing Outcomes:

Outcome 1 By 2027, the people in Pakistan, especially women, children, the most vulnerable and marginalized, have increased access to fundamental rights, gender

equality and fundamental freedom through inclusive, accountable, effective and evidence-driven governance systems and rule-of-law institutions at all levels of government, contributing to good governance and stability

Contributing Outputs:

PAK_OUTPUT_1.2 Justice system is more accessible, efficient and affordable

Progress Note:

Promoting gender equality and strengthening women's access to justice remained a central focus of UNDP's Rule of Law Programme in 2025, contributing directly to SDG 5 and UNSDCF Outcome 1. Through sustained legal literacy and rights-awareness initiatives, a total of 796 individuals (233 women) benefited from community-level awareness sessions across KP, including the Merged Districts, enhancing knowledge of legal rights, available remedies, and referral pathways to justice institutions [E11]. In parallel, UNDP scaled up access to direct legal aid services, enabling 411 individuals (374 women) to receive legal assistance for the resolution of family (52%), civil (23%), guardianship (7%), and succession (2%) cases. This marked increase in women beneficiaries reflects improved outreach, trust in justice mechanisms, and the effectiveness of women-centered legal support interventions [E12] [IRRF 6.2.1]. To strengthen women lawyers' capacity as key justice actors and referral agents, UNDP supported the organization of two flagship Women Lawyers Conferences in 2025. The Fifth Annual KP Women Lawyers Conference, held in Peshawar, brought together over 200 women lawyers from across the province to advance dialogue on women's professional advancement in the digital era, with a strong focus on Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV), workplace harassment, and protection of women's rights in public and digital spaces. The Conference facilitated evidence-based discussions, including preliminary findings from UNDP's diagnostic research on TFGBV, and generated actionable recommendations to strengthen survivor-centred referral mechanisms, institutional coordination, and gender-responsive justice responses. Similarly, the Second Annual Balochistan Women Lawyers Conference, convened in Quetta, engaged 88 women lawyers from across the province to address structural barriers to women's participation in the legal profession and access to justice, particularly in relation to TFGBV, gender bias, and weak enforcement frameworks. The Conference reinforced awareness of reporting and referral pathways, emphasized the need for legal and policy reforms—including gender-responsive amendments to cybercrime legislation—and promoted women-led legal networks and safe spaces as critical entry points for marginalized women seeking justice. Collectively, these interventions strengthened women's legal empowerment, enhanced confidence in justice institutions, and expanded women-led referral pathways, contributing to more inclusive, accessible, and gender-responsive justice delivery across KP and Balochistan.

- **Level of Reporting:**

Output level results

Project Outputs:

Justice and security sector institutional facilities enhanced to deliver inclusive, timely, and accessible justice and security services, through women friendly and gender-responsive infrastructure development support with an emphasis on flood resilience

Contributing Outcomes:

Outcome 1 By 2027, the people in Pakistan, especially women, children, the most vulnerable and marginalized, have increased access to fundamental rights, gender equality and fundamental freedom through inclusive, accountable, effective and evidence-driven governance systems and rule-of-law institutions at all levels of government, contributing to good governance and stability

Contributing Outputs:

PAK_OUTPUT_1.2 Justice system is more accessible, efficient and affordable

Progress Note:

UNDP strengthened justice and security sector infrastructure to improve access to inclusive, timely, and people-centred justice services, with a particular focus on women-friendly, gender-responsive, and sustainable facilities. In Balochistan, the five mediation centres established in 2024 became fully operational in 2025, demonstrating strong institutional uptake and service delivery outcomes. During the reporting year, these centres registered 871 cases, of which 612 were successfully resolved, achieving an average case-disposal rate of 70 per cent. The high resolution rate underscores the effectiveness of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms in reducing court backlogs, providing affordable and timely justice, and expanding access for women and marginalized communities [E8]. Building on these results, the mediation centre model was scaled up to two additional districts, demonstrating its sustainability and relevance as a locally owned justice delivery mechanism across Balochistan [IRRF 2.2.1 | IRRF 2.2.3]. Complementing ADR interventions, UNDP enhanced court-based and professional facilities to improve user experience, transparency, and gender inclusion. In KP, UNDP supported the construction of five litigant waiting areas, four court information centres, and one women lawyers' bar room, creating safer, more accessible, and dignified spaces for court users—particularly women litigants and legal professionals. These facilities improved access to information, reduced congestion, and strengthened the ability of courts to respond to the needs of vulnerable users. In the security sector, UNDP completed and operationalized the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Academy in Islamabad, equipping the facility with essential furniture, training equipment, and information technology systems. The fully functional academy strengthened institutional capacity for professional training and operational readiness, contributing to improved service delivery within the security sector. During the year, UNDP also initiated additional gender-responsive infrastructure interventions, including the establishment of three women lawyers' bar rooms and one court-annexed mediation centre in Balochistan [E9]. These initiatives are designed to further expand safe professional spaces for women legal practitioners and strengthen access to alternative dispute resolution at the district level. Collectively, these infrastructure and institutional investments enhanced the enabling environment for justice and security service delivery, improved physical access to justice institutions, and reinforced gender-responsive and people-centred approaches. By combining operational facilities

with sustainable ADR mechanisms, UNDP contributed to more inclusive, efficient, and accessible justice services aligned with national reform priorities and IRRF 2.2.1 and 2.2.3.

- **Level of Reporting:**

Output level results

Project Outputs:

Policy, legal and regulatory frameworks strengthened to warrant people – centered, equitable, timely, affordable justice and security delivery to all people with an emphasis on women, marginalized and vulnerable groups, and digital technologies

Contributing Outcomes:

Outcome 1 By 2027, the people in Pakistan, especially women, children, the most vulnerable and marginalized, have increased access to fundamental rights, gender equality and fundamental freedom through inclusive, accountable, effective and evidence-driven governance systems and rule-of-law institutions at all levels of government, contributing to good governance and stability

Contributing Outputs:

PAK_OUTPUT_1.2 Justice system is more accessible, efficient and affordable

Progress Note:

In 2025, UNDP advanced systemic justice sector reforms by supporting the Governments of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) to operationalize their respective Rule of Law Roadmaps as integrated policy frameworks for people-centred, efficient, and accountable justice delivery. Through structured provincial- and district-level engagement, UNDP supported the transition of these Roadmaps from strategic commitments into implementable coordination, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms across justice and security sector institutions [E1]. In KP, UNDP convened a Rule of Law Roadmap Week, comprising high-level policy dialogues, civil society consultations, and technical working sessions, to strengthen institutional ownership, clarify roles, and align reform priorities across the judiciary, police, prosecution, prisons, probation, bar councils, and civil society. These engagements reinforced a shared reform agenda focused on reducing case backlogs, improving access to legal aid, strengthening gender-responsive justice responses, and extending rule-of-law reforms to the Merged Districts for the first time under a unified provincial framework [E1]. To institutionalize coordination and performance oversight in KP, UNDP supported Provincial Justice Committee (PJC) and District Criminal Justice Coordination Committee (DCJCC) processes, resulting in the joint development and adoption of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and standardized coordination tools. These mechanisms enable justice institutions to systematically track progress on priority reform areas, including case pendency, prison overcrowding, legal aid provision, and the handling of gender-based violence cases, while strengthening vertical coordination between provincial and district levels and promoting evidence-

based decision-making [E2] [E3] [IRRF 2.2.1]. In GB, UNDP strengthened the operationalization of the GB Rule of Law Roadmap (2022–2026) by reinforcing the institutional capacity of the Rule of Law Delivery Unit (RoL-DU) housed within the Chief Minister’s Office. Support focused on establishing durable governance, coordination, and monitoring arrangements to translate roadmap priorities into actionable reforms, including the formation of a multi-institutional Technical Working Group, development of standard operating procedures for justice-sector data collection and reporting, and structured mechanisms for tracking progress against roadmap indicators. Complementing these coordination reforms, UNDP supported the design and operationalization of a centralized digital dashboard for the RoL-DU in GB, enabling real-time consolidation of justice-sector data across police, prosecution, judiciary, prisons, and probation services. The dashboard introduced a unified platform for monitoring institutional performance, tracking roadmap indicators, and generating automated visual reports to support data-driven policy decisions. By strengthening transparency, accountability, and the routine use of disaggregated data—including on gender-responsive justice outcomes—the dashboard laid the foundation for sustained, evidence-based oversight of rule-of-law reforms in GB. Collectively, UNDP’s support in KP and GB strengthened the enabling policy, coordination, and digital accountability environment required for inclusive, people-centred justice reform, and established institutional mechanisms capable of sustaining rule-of-law improvements beyond project support.

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4. Key Challenges Encountered

- **Level of Reporting:**

Output level results

Project Outputs:

Capacity of justice and security stakeholders (duty bearers) enhanced to deliver inclusive, timely, and accessible services to all people with an emphasis on women and digital technologies

Contributing Outcomes:

Outcome 1 By 2027, the people in Pakistan, especially women, children, the most vulnerable and marginalized, have increased access to fundamental rights, gender equality and fundamental freedom through inclusive, accountable, effective and

evidence-driven governance systems and rule-of-law institutions at all levels of government, contributing to good governance and stability

Contributing Outputs:

PAK_OUTPUT_1.2 Justice system is more accessible, efficient and affordable

Progress Note:

Despite notable progress in strengthening the capacity of justice and security sector duty bearers, several institutional, operational, and contextual challenges affected the pace and depth of implementation under Output-2 in 2025. Across provinces, high workloads, staffing shortages, and competing operational priorities limited the availability of justice sector personnel—particularly judges, prosecutors, prison officers, and police staff—to participate fully in multi-day training programmes. While Training-of-Trainers (ToT) models enhanced sustainability, institutionalization of gender-responsive, trauma-informed, and digital justice content within existing training systems remained uneven. Judicial, police, and correctional academies operate under fixed training calendars and approval processes, which slowed the mainstreaming of new modules, particularly at district level where human and financial resources are limited. Digital literacy gaps among justice and security personnel also affected the uptake of technology-enabled justice services. Although virtual courts, virtual points, and digital investigation tools are increasingly institutionalized, variations in familiarity with digital platforms—especially among frontline staff in remote, merged, and climate-affected districts—necessitated additional technical support. Connectivity challenges and inconsistent access to hardware further constrained the routine use of digital systems in some locations. Gender representation within certain cadres, particularly in the security sector, remained limited. Structural barriers—including deployment patterns, cultural norms, and the low presence of women at district level—continued to restrict women’s participation in capacity-building initiatives for Levies, Khasadars, and police personnel, slowing the pace of mainstreaming gender-responsive practices across frontline services. In Sindh, the planned expansion of digital justice infrastructure was terminated in 2025 following funding cuts from the U.S. Government, affecting the establishment of 14 virtual courts and 8 virtual points intended to extend digital justice services to approximately 5.7 million flood-affected citizens [E10]. The cancellation stalled progress in scaling online hearings and remote case management, limiting opportunities for justice institutions to adopt digital systems that enhance efficiency, transparency, and service delivery [IRRF E.1.3] [IRRF E.1.2]. As a result, momentum toward a fully inclusive, technology-enabled justice ecosystem was constrained, particularly for underserved and climate-vulnerable communities. In GB, capacity constraints within newly established governance and coordination mechanisms required phased implementation of digital and data-driven tools. Justice institutions needed time to adapt to new reporting requirements and performance monitoring systems, necessitating sustained technical accompaniment. UNDP addressed these challenges through adaptive planning, phased roll-out of digital tools, flexible training modalities, and continued engagement with institutional leadership to strengthen ownership, align interventions with institutional calendars, and support long-term sustainability.

- **Level of Reporting:**

Output level results

Project Outputs:

Capacity of women, and the most vulnerable and marginalized (rights holders) strengthened to access referral pathways to justice and security

Contributing Outcomes:

Outcome 1 By 2027, the people in Pakistan, especially women, children, the most vulnerable and marginalized, have increased access to fundamental rights, gender equality and fundamental freedom through inclusive, accountable, effective and evidence-driven governance systems and rule-of-law institutions at all levels of government, contributing to good governance and stability

Contributing Outputs:

PAK_OUTPUT_1.2 Justice system is more accessible, efficient and affordable

Progress Note:

In 2025, implementation of rights-holder-focused interventions under Output-3 was affected by a combination of procedural, operational, security, and human-resource challenges, particularly in the Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other remote and fragile locations. Procedural delays related to obtaining approvals, No Objection Certificates (NOCs), and official nominations from local administrations, judiciary institutions, and Bar Councils continued to affect the timely execution of planned activities. Although modest improvements were observed compared to 2024, approval processes often required multiple rounds of follow-up and coordination, resulting in delays to the scheduling of legal awareness sessions, legal aid outreach, and women-focused engagement activities. These delays constrained the Programme's ability to reach communities within originally planned timelines. Security conditions in certain districts further limited outreach efforts. In particular, intermittent security concerns in districts such as Dera Ismail Khan restricted the movement of project staff and partners. As a result, some community-level activities had to be postponed, rescheduled, or relocated to safer venues, affecting engagement in some of the most marginalized and hard-to-reach communities where access to justice needs are most acute. Institutional instability also posed challenges to sustained stakeholder engagement. Frequent transfers and postings of key judiciary, administrative, and bar leadership personnel disrupted continuity and slowed coordination processes. Newly appointed officials often required orientation on programme objectives, ongoing interventions, and expected collaboration modalities. This repeated onboarding process demanded additional time and effort from the project team and occasionally delayed approvals, decision-making, and implementation of planned activities. Human-centred and social barriers further influenced programme delivery. In conservative and remote contexts, women's participation in legal awareness sessions and referral mechanisms was constrained by mobility restrictions, social norms, and safety concerns. While women-led networks and female legal professionals helped mitigate these barriers, sustained engagement required careful community sensitization, trust-building, and coordination with local stakeholders. UNDP addressed these challenges through

adaptive planning, flexible scheduling, sustained engagement with provincial and district authorities, and close coordination with Bar Councils and civil society partners. Continuous relationship-building, proactive follow-up, and context-sensitive delivery approaches were critical to maintaining momentum and ensuring that women and marginalized groups continued to access justice information and referral pathways despite operational constraints.

- **Level of Reporting:**

Output level results

Project Outputs:

Justice and security sector institutional facilities enhanced to deliver inclusive, timely, and accessible justice and security services, through women friendly and gender-responsive infrastructure development support with an emphasis on flood resilience

Contributing Outcomes:

Outcome 1 By 2027, the people in Pakistan, especially women, children, the most vulnerable and marginalized, have increased access to fundamental rights, gender equality and fundamental freedom through inclusive, accountable, effective and evidence-driven governance systems and rule-of-law institutions at all levels of government, contributing to good governance and stability

Contributing Outputs:

PAK_OUTPUT_1.2 Justice system is more accessible, efficient and affordable

Progress Note:

In 2025, implementation of the Rule of Law Programme was influenced by a combination of external funding volatility, institutional capacity constraints, security risks, and contextual operational challenges, which affected the scale, sequencing, and sustainability of planned interventions. A key risk materialized during the reporting period following funding reductions by the U.S. Government, resulting in the termination of several planned and ongoing initiatives. These included justice and security sector infrastructure investments, expansion of digital justice services, and women-focused livelihood and empowerment facilities. The sudden withdrawal of resources constrained the Programme's ability to scale access-to-justice services, strengthen institutional training capacity, and extend digital and physical justice infrastructure to climate-affected and underserved populations. While mitigation measures were applied through reprioritization and adaptive planning, the funding shortfall reduced the overall reach and pace of reform implementation. Institutional capacity and absorption risks persisted across justice and security sector partners. High staff turnover, frequent transfers, and competing operational demands—particularly within police, prosecution, prisons, and district-level justice institutions—affected continuity, ownership, and follow-through on reform initiatives. These factors posed challenges to the institutionalization of coordination mechanisms, performance monitoring tools, and capacity-building gains beyond project-supported activities. The

Programme also operated in a volatile security environment, particularly in Balochistan and the Merged Districts of KP. The risk of militant attacks targeting civilians, government institutions, or project activities—especially infrastructure development and capacity-building initiatives—remained a concern. Such incidents could result in delays, increased operational costs, or damage to infrastructure. To mitigate this risk, the Programme adopted flexible implementation modalities, including virtual engagement where feasible, engagement of local partners with strong on-ground presence, and strict adherence to UNDP’s Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS). Operational risks related to access and administrative approvals also affected implementation. Delays in obtaining No Objection Certificates (NOCs), particularly in the Merged Districts and certain areas of Balochistan, slowed civil works, monitoring activities, and field engagement. The Programme mitigated this risk through close coordination with the Country Office Protocol function, early initiation of approval processes, and adjustment of activity timelines where necessary. Gender and inclusion risks continued to influence programme outcomes, especially in conservative and fragile contexts. Structural barriers, social norms, and security concerns limited women’s participation as justice users, legal professionals, and frontline service providers in certain locations. While women-friendly infrastructure and targeted capacity-building initiatives mitigated these risks to some extent, deeper systemic constraints—such as limited female staffing and workplace safety concerns—continued to affect equitable access and representation. Political and policy-level risks also remained present due to changes in government leadership and shifting institutional priorities. Rapid turnover among government counterparts affected continuity and ownership of reform processes. The Programme addressed this risk through regular engagement with new stakeholders, alignment with national and provincial reform frameworks, and sustained policy dialogue to maintain relevance and buy-in. UNDP managed these risks through continuous monitoring, adaptive programming, strong engagement with government counterparts, and phased implementation approaches.

- **Level of Reporting:**

Output level results

Project Outputs:

Policy, legal and regulatory frameworks strengthened to warrant people – centered, equitable, timely, affordable justice and security delivery to all people with an emphasis on women, marginalized and vulnerable groups, and digital technologies

Contributing Outcomes:

Outcome 1 By 2027, the people in Pakistan, especially women, children, the most vulnerable and marginalized, have increased access to fundamental rights, gender equality and fundamental freedom through inclusive, accountable, effective and evidence-driven governance systems and rule-of-law institutions at all levels of government, contributing to good governance and stability

Contributing Outputs:

PAK_OUTPUT_1.2 Justice system is more accessible, efficient and affordable

Progress Note:

The implementation of policy- and coordination-focused reforms under Output-1 faced several institutional and contextual challenges across both KP and GB. In KP, while the Rule of Law Roadmap provides a comprehensive and widely endorsed reform framework, translating strategic commitments into sustained institutional practice remains complex. Frequent transfers and postings of senior government and justice sector officials affected continuity in leadership and delayed follow-through on agreed reform actions, particularly at the provincial-district interface. Although coordination platforms such as the Provincial Justice Committee (PJC) and District Criminal Justice Coordination Committees (DCJCCs) are functional, inconsistent participation of members and competing operational priorities limited the regularity and depth of engagement in some districts. The availability, quality, and harmonization of justice-sector data posed an additional challenge. Justice institutions continue to operate parallel information systems with varying capacities for data collection, validation, and reporting. This constrained timely consolidation of information required for performance monitoring, particularly for cross-cutting indicators related to case pendency, legal aid delivery, and gender-based violence. Limited analytical capacity at district level further affected the consistent use of data for evidence-based decision-making. In GB, institutional capacity constraints posed significant challenges to the operationalization of the Rule of Law Roadmap. As a newly established coordination mechanism, the Rule of Law Delivery Unit (RoL-DU) required foundational systems, clear mandates, and dedicated technical expertise to effectively coordinate across justice institutions. Limited familiarity among line departments with roadmap objectives, indicators, and reporting requirements initially slowed engagement and ownership. The development and operationalization of digital accountability tools, including the RoL-DU dashboard, also faced challenges linked to uneven digital readiness across institutions. Variations in data availability, limited standardization of reporting formats, and capacity gaps in data management necessitated additional time for system design, testing, and user orientation. Connectivity constraints in remote areas further affected real-time data entry and routine system use. Across both contexts, aligning reform timelines with bureaucratic approval processes and budgetary cycles remained challenging. Policy-level reforms and coordination mechanisms require sustained political commitment and institutional follow-through beyond project timelines. Despite strong buy-in at the strategic level, operational pressures, security considerations in certain districts, and limited human resources continued to affect the pace of implementation. UNDP addressed these challenges through adaptive planning, phased implementation approaches, and sustained technical support, including continuous stakeholder engagement, capacity strengthening, and the gradual institutionalization of coordination and monitoring mechanisms to ensure longer-term sustainability.

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5. Project Risks and Issues

In 2025, implementation of the Rule of Law Programme was influenced by a combination of external funding volatility, institutional capacity constraints, security risks, and contextual operational challenges, which affected the scale, sequencing, and sustainability of planned interventions. A major risk materialized during the reporting period following funding reductions by the U.S. Government, resulting in the termination of several planned and ongoing initiatives. These included justice and security sector infrastructure investments, expansion of digital justice services, and women-focused livelihood and empowerment facilities. The sudden withdrawal of resources constrained the Programme's ability to scale access-to-justice services, strengthen institutional training capacity, and extend digital and physical justice infrastructure to climate-affected and underserved populations. While mitigation measures were applied through reprioritization, adaptive planning, and protection of core reform gains, the funding shortfall reduced the overall reach and pace of implementation. Institutional capacity and absorption risks persisted across justice and security sector partners. High staff turnover, frequent transfers, and competing operational demands—particularly within police, prosecution, prisons, and district-level justice institutions—affected continuity, ownership, and follow-through on reform initiatives. These dynamics posed challenges to the institutionalization of coordination mechanisms, performance monitoring tools, and capacity-building outcomes beyond project-supported activities. The Programme also operated in a volatile security environment, particularly in Balochistan and the Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The risk of militant attacks targeting civilians, government institutions, or project activities—especially infrastructure development and field-based capacity-building—remained a concern. Such incidents had the potential to delay implementation, increase operational costs, or damage physical assets. To mitigate this risk, the Programme adopted flexible delivery modalities, including virtual engagement where feasible, engagement of local partners with strong on-ground presence, and strict adherence to UNDP's Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS). Operational risks related to administrative access and approvals also affected delivery. Delays in obtaining No Objection Certificates (NOCs), particularly in the Merged Districts and selected areas of Balochistan, slowed civil works, monitoring activities, and community-level engagement. The Programme mitigated this risk through early initiation of approval processes, close coordination with the Country Office Protocol function, and adjustment of activity timelines where required. Gender and inclusion risks continued to influence programme outcomes, especially in conservative and fragile contexts. Structural barriers, social norms, and security concerns limited women's participation as justice users, legal professionals, and frontline service providers in certain locations. While women-friendly infrastructure and targeted capacity-building initiatives helped mitigate these risks, deeper systemic constraints—such as limited female staffing and workplace safety concerns—continued to affect equitable access and representation. Political and policy-level risks also remained present due to changes in government leadership and shifting institutional priorities. Rapid turnover among government counterparts affected continuity and ownership of reform processes. The Programme addressed this risk through sustained policy dialogue, regular engagement with newly appointed officials, and alignment with national and provincial reform frameworks. UNDP managed these risks through continuous monitoring, adaptive programming, strong engagement with government counterparts, and phased implementation approaches.

6. Lessons Learned

- Implementation of the Rule of Law Programme in 2025 generated several important lessons relevant to justice sector reform in fragile, climate-affected, and resource-constrained contexts. First, institutional ownership and political commitment are decisive for reform sustainability. Where provincial governments and justice institutions actively led implementation—such as through Rule of Law Roadmaps, coordination committees, and digital justice platforms—reforms demonstrated stronger uptake and continuity. At the same time, frequent staff transfers reinforced the need to embed reforms within institutional systems, standard operating procedures, and performance frameworks rather than relying on individual champions. Second, coordination mechanisms are most effective when anchored in data-driven governance. Platforms such as Provincial Justice Committees, District Criminal Justice Coordination Committees, and Rule of Law Delivery Units yielded more tangible results when paired with performance indicators, digital dashboards, and routine data sharing. This experience confirmed that structured monitoring and evidence-based decision-making are essential to strengthening institutional accountability and effectiveness [IRRF 2.2.1]. Third, capacity development delivers stronger and more sustainable outcomes when institutionalized. Training-of-Trainers models, integration of gender-responsive and digital justice modules into judicial and police academies, and alignment with institutional training calendars proved more effective than one-off interventions. Measurable learning gains demonstrated the value of linking training to institutional mandates and service delivery outcomes. Fourth, digital justice solutions can significantly expand access to justice but require enabling conditions. Virtual courts and digital case management systems improved timeliness and outreach to remote populations; however, uneven digital literacy, infrastructure gaps, and institutional readiness highlighted the importance of phased roll-out, user-centred design, and ongoing technical support. The cancellation of planned virtual courts in Sindh further underscored the need for stronger national ownership and diversified funding to sustain digital justice initiatives over the long term [IRRF 2.2.3]. Fifth, gender-responsive interventions must address both physical and structural barriers. Women-friendly infrastructure, legal empowerment initiatives, and women lawyers’ networks improved access and participation, but persistent social norms, safety concerns, and limited female representation within justice institutions constrained impact. Sustainable gender outcomes require parallel institutional reforms, leadership commitment, and protective measures alongside infrastructure investments. Finally, financial resilience and adaptive programming are essential in volatile environments. The termination of U.S.-funded initiatives highlighted the risks associated with concentrated funding streams and reinforced the importance of diversified donor engagement and resource mobilization. The experience demonstrated the need to embed risk-mitigation measures, flexible implementation modalities, and targeted capacity-building into programme design to safeguard institutional strengthening [IRRF 2.2.1] and access-to-justice gains [IRRF 2.2.3].
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7. Conclusions and Way Forward

In 2025, UNDP's Rule of Law Programme made meaningful progress in strengthening people-centred, inclusive, and accountable justice and security systems across Pakistan, despite operating in a volatile funding, security, and institutional environment. The Programme contributed to improved coordination among justice institutions, enhanced capacity of duty bearers, expanded access to justice for women and marginalized groups, and strengthened the enabling environment for alternative dispute resolution and digital justice. These results directly support UNSDCF Outcome 1 and national reform priorities across provinces. Key achievements included the operationalization of Rule of Law Roadmaps, strengthened justice coordination mechanisms, measurable capacity gains across justice and security institutions, expanded legal empowerment for women, and increased uptake of digital justice services. The Programme demonstrated that when policy frameworks are combined with institutional ownership, data-driven tools, and gender-responsive approaches, justice reforms are more likely to translate into tangible service delivery improvements. At the same time, implementation experience in 2025 highlighted important constraints. External funding volatility, particularly the termination of U.S.-funded initiatives, reduced the scale of planned infrastructure and digital justice expansions. Security risks, administrative delays, institutional turnover, and structural gender barriers continued to affect the pace and sustainability of reforms, particularly in fragile and climate-affected areas. Going forward, UNDP will prioritize consolidation, sustainability, and strategic scaling of proven interventions. Efforts will focus on safeguarding reform gains by deepening institutionalization of coordination mechanisms, performance monitoring tools, and training systems within government structures. Rule of Law Roadmaps will continue to serve as the primary vehicles for aligning policy, coordination, and investment priorities at provincial and district levels. To enhance resilience to funding volatility, the Programme will strengthen resource mobilization and donor diversification, while reinforcing partnerships with UN Women, UNODC, and provincial governments to maintain institutional momentum and protect gains already achieved. Future programming will embed risk-mitigation measures, phased implementation approaches, and flexible delivery modalities to ensure continuity in complex operating environments. Digital justice and data-driven governance will remain central to the Programme's future direction. UNDP will support the strengthening of judiciary IT units, institutionalization of digital governance mechanisms, and integration of digital justice systems within provincial reform frameworks to expand equitable access and improve efficiency. These efforts will be guided by key development enablers, including digitalization, innovation, and strategic partnerships. Gender equality and inclusion will continue to be mainstreamed across all interventions. The Programme will build on women-friendly infrastructure, legal empowerment initiatives, and women lawyers' networks while supporting institutional reforms and protective measures that address structural barriers to women's participation and access to justice. Overall, UNDP's Rule of Law Programme will move into the next phase with a clear focus on sustaining impact, strengthening institutional ownership, and scaling inclusive justice solutions, ensuring that reforms continue to deliver tangible benefits for women, vulnerable populations, and communities most at risk of being left behind.

8. Other Reporting Requirements

- **Reporting Requirements**

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Results

Promoting gender equality and strengthening women's access to justice remained a central focus of UNDP's Rule of Law Programme in 2025, contributing directly to SDG 5 and UNSDCF Outcome 1. Through sustained outreach and rights-awareness initiatives, 796 individuals (233 women) benefited from legal literacy campaigns across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including the Merged Districts, enhancing knowledge of legal rights, available remedies, and referral pathways to justice institutions [E11]. In parallel, **411 individuals—of whom 374 were women—**received direct legal aid for family (52%), civil (23%), guardianship (7%), and succession (2%) cases, reflecting improved outreach, increased trust in justice mechanisms, and the effectiveness of women-centred legal support services [E12] [IRRF 6.2.1]. To strengthen survivor-centred justice delivery, UNDP invested in targeted capacity-building for women legal professionals and justice actors. A total of 173 women lawyers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan were trained to provide quality legal aid, representation, and advocacy for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) [E4]. Practical skills were reinforced through moot court exercises involving 70 women lawyers, enhancing courtroom readiness and application of survivor-centred legal standards [E20]. In addition, 46 judges were trained as Trainers of Trainers to strengthen judicial handling of GBV cases and institutionalize gender-responsive adjudication practices [E5]. To improve frontline protection responses, 67 Levies and Khasadars (including 5 women) from the Merged Districts received training on gender-responsive policing, strengthening institutional understanding of women's protection needs and referral obligations [E6] [IRRF 6.2.1] [IRRF 2.2.1]. UNDP also strengthened women's leadership and professional networks within the justice sector by supporting two flagship Women Lawyers Conferences in 2025. The Fifth Annual Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Women Lawyers Conference convened over 200 women lawyers to advance dialogue on women's professional advancement in the digital era, with a strong focus on Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV), workplace harassment, and protection of women's rights in public and digital spaces. The Conference facilitated evidence-based discussions, including preliminary findings from UNDP's TFGBV diagnostic research, and generated actionable recommendations to strengthen survivor-centred referral mechanisms, institutional coordination, and gender-responsive justice responses. Similarly, the Second Annual Balochistan Women Lawyers Conference engaged 88 women lawyers from across the province to address structural barriers to women's participation in the legal profession and access to justice, particularly in relation to TFGBV, gender bias, and weak enforcement frameworks. The Conference reinforced awareness of reporting and referral pathways, emphasized the need for targeted legal and policy reforms—including gender-responsive amendments to cybercrime legislation—and promoted women-led legal networks and safe spaces as critical entry points for marginalized women seeking justice. To address emerging digital harms, UNDP conducted Pakistan's first multi-sectoral diagnostic research on Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence, examining legal, institutional, and socio-cultural responses to digital violence against women. The study identified major gaps in the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016, weak enforcement mechanisms, and systemic barriers faced by women survivors. It put forward evidence-based recommendations, including explicit legal definitions of TFGBV, establishment

of specialized investigation units, strengthened survivor support mechanisms, and enhanced platform accountability [E13] [IRRF 2.2.1 | 6.2.1].

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