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Over 77,000 inmates lodged in 114 jails with capacity of 57,742, SC told

Nasir Iqbal | Published November 10, 2019

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In a report, the Federal Ombudsman has conceded before the Supreme Court that a total of 77,275 inmates are currently housed in 114 prisons in the four provinces against a sanctioned capacity of only 57,742. — Creative Commons/File

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ISLAMABAD: In a report, the Federal Ombudsman has conceded before the Supreme Court that a total of 77,275 inmates are currently housed in 114 prisons in the four provinces against a sanctioned capacity of only 57,742.

Of the 77,275 inmates, 47,077 have been lodged in 42 jails in Punjab, where the sanctioned strength is

A total of 10,871 prisoners have been placed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's 37 prisons which should have only 9,642, and 2,088 inmates in the 11 jails of Balochistan that can house 2,585.

The report submitted to the apex court on behalf of the office of Federal Ombudsman (Wafaqi Mohtasib) through counsel Hafiz Ahsaan Ahmad Khokhar said the prisons had 1,248 juvenile inmates as well as 25,456 convicted and 48,008 under-trial prisoners.

Report submitted by Federal Ombudsman proposes steps for improvement in conditions in prisons

The Supreme Court is seized with a suo motu case about the poor conditions in which the prisoners live. The hearing was initiated to consider the plight and miseries of female prisoners lodged in the country's prisons and subsequently the ombudsman was tasked to formulate recommendations to redress the grievances of prisoners.

In the report, the ombudsman's office stated that 1,204 women prisoners were living in the prisons across the

The report said that 720 kanals of land had been acquired in the federal capital's H-16 sector where the Islamabad Model Prison was proposed to be built. The feasibility report about the prison's construction work had already been approved and the project would cost Rs3.9 billion.

So far an amount of Rs1.1bn had been released and utilised, the report said, adding that work on the prison's administration block, boundary wall and male barracks was underway. The project is expected to be completed by June 30, 2020.

The report said the ombudsman's secretariat had highlighted the measures needed and the areas where improvements could be brought about. It recommended that the interior ministry as well as the provincial home departments should appoint senior officers to act as focal persons who would undertake surprise visits to the jails.

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district headquarters and that every jail should have separate and independent portion for women and juvenile prisoners, having sleeping space for every prisoner and adequate toilets.

The report also suggested that a biometric system should be set up in jails for maintaining the records of prisoners and attendance rosters and other jail records should be automated.

The prisoners suffering from mental problems and the drug users among them should be kept outside the jail premises in drug clinics and homes for the retarded prisoners and provided adequate treatment. The prisoners with HIV or hepatitis should be segregated and kept apart from other prisoners, the report said.

The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, the university falling in the territorial area of a jail, the Allama Iqbal Open University and other institutions of good reputation should assist that prison in improving educational and skill training facilities there, the report said.

The federal and provincial ministries concerned should allocate necessary funds and resources for the improvement of jails. The setting up of the prisoners' voluntary donation fund at the provincial level should be ensured.

The report also urged the Pakistan Bar Council and the

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