

## Unifying the Legal Education System: Justice Sector Aims to Combine Legal Stage Course

Mr Ahmad Rafe from AIBA Kabul said, 'The workshop served as an opportunity for the justice institutions to assess challenges and opportunities for improvement within stage education systems. This workshop also was an opportunity for the officers in charge of the mentioned legal stage systems to learn from each other and to update their education system. This can be the start of unifying and updating the future legal education system.'

There are currently four stages of the legal stage course. These include the Judiciary stage for judges, the National Legal Training Center (NLTC) for prosecutors, the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association (AIBA) stage for lawyers and the Legislative (Taqnin) and Huquq stages of MoJ. Under a unified structure, there would be one stage but different curriculums for the different legal professions. This would not only encourage interdisciplinary cooperation and coordination amongst graduates and institutions but would save resources by combining topics that are relevant across different legal professions. These resources could then be invested in improving the quality of education.

Head of Balkh provincial court Mr Mohammad Sharif Fani said, 'The workshop helped clarify different stage education systems for the audience. Working groups focusing on the pros and cons of unifying the system further helped pinpoint challenges, opportunities and feasibility which are very important.'

The successful completion of a stage programme is a requirement for employment in most justice organisations. Therefore, most students from law and sharia faculties apply for this intensive practical course after graduating from university.

During the workshop, participants assessed the current challenges in improving the quality of legal education. These include poor cooperation in the field of legal education and thus between different legal institutions. Participants were then divided into four groups to present challenges from their various stages to the audience. This was followed by a question and answer session led by group leaders and representatives from the justice sector. Participants then worked together in groups with a mix of people from different organisations to find potential solutions to common challenges and to detect opportunities for synergy. Conclusions will feed into plans for unifying the legal stage courses.

*The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH implements the programme Promotion of the Rule of Law in Afghanistan (RoL) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The programme is active in nine provinces and aims to improve legal certainty and access to justice for all citizens, especially women. Together with the Ministry of Justice, the project supports institutional and non-state legal structures in strengthening law and justice, and has provided training for around 1,400 employees of the justice sector. Over 108,000 civil law cases have been processed through Huquqs since 2009. Six universities have been supported to provide free legal aid through legal advice clinics. Since 2019, over 850 students have been assigned on legal cases for practical experience supervised by experienced lawyers. The project informs and advises women on their rights through more than 100 volunteer Gender Focal Points in over 80 districts and by training teachers at madrasas on women's rights in Islam.*

Teaser text:

Yesterday in Balkh, the Afghan-German Cooperation's Promotion of the Rule of Law project supported an assessment workshop on unifying the practical education of lawyers. Around 40 representatives from different justice organisations participated, including the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the Attorney General's Office, the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association (AIBA) and the Supreme Court. The workshop's purpose was to assess the possibility of unifying the practical education system across the country for future law practitioners by using just one legal stage course. The mandatory legal stage course is an advanced practical capacity- and skill-building programme within the legal education system. It gives graduates the credentials to be recognised as professional, skilled lawyers by justice organisations.

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