

## **Interactive Session with Police Personnel of Cyberabad Commissionerate Telangana State**

**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2015

**Time:** 11 am to 1:30 pm

**Venue:** Conference Hall, Cyberabad Police Commissionerate

**Resource Persons:** Mr. Valan Michael Sachithananda, UNHCR India, Chennai  
Dr. Mazher Hussain, Executive Director COVA Hyderabad.

**Participants:** Mr. Shashidhar Reddy, IPS, Joint Commissioner of Police, Mr. AR. Srinivas, IPS, DCP, Shamshabad, Assistant Commissioners of Police, Assistant Commissioner of Police (Passport) Inspectors from Special Branch, Circle Inspectors, Counter Intelligence and Sub Inspectors of Police from Mylardevpally and Pahadi Sherif Police stations, Mr. Naseer Siddiqui, Ms. Shilpa, Ms. Amreen Khatoon and Mr. Kiran Kumar from COVA

The Session was organised at Conference Hall, Cyberabad Police Commissionerate from 11 am to 1.30 pm

Dr. Mazhar Hussain started the Session with introduction of COVA, UNHCR and an overview of refugees and their status and situation in India. After the introduction, he asked the police officers present to raise challenges and questions they might be facing with respect to Refugees in Hyderabad. Circle Inspectors from Pahadi Sherif and Mylardevpally put forward the issues they are facing with regard to keeping track of the movement of refugees in their areas, concerns of national security and the legal status of refugees. Mr. Valan and Dr. Mazhar Hussain clarified the doubts raised by police officers and a number of suggestion came up from both the sides. Mr. Shashidhar Reddy, IPS, Joint Commissioner, Mr. AR. Srinivas, IPS, DCP, Shamshabad, took active part in the discussions. Some of the key issues raised were:

- Identification of refugees and recording their addresses. Police officers told that refugees are residing in huts and open lands where there are small rooms built and these lands are actually government lands occupied by locals illegally. These places do not have door numbers. Then suggestion came up from the DCP and COVA that the names of landlords / house owners along with local landmarks could be listed for the identification of addresses of refugees.
- Migration of refugees is a constant phenomenon, new refugees arrive on a regular basis and those moving away do not inform about their movement to anyone. The list being shared by UNCR is not reflecting the actual situation in Hyderabad. COVA informed that henceforth, data updation will be done on a monthly basis and will be communicated to UNHCR who in turn will share it with the concerned departments.
- In some cases, only wives and children are in Hyderabad. Husbands are reported to be in Haryana, Aligarh etc. on work. It was suggested that a Movement Register should be maintained to track refugees.
- Refugees should inform local police station before leaving Hyderabad and after arrival to Hyderabad and it should be made mandatory.
- It was suggested that one COVA staff member should be made as a representative for approximately 100 members to update lists. Dr. Mazher told that it is not possible because

COVA has limited staff but arrangements are already made to assign specific areas to different staff members so that all the areas and refugees are covered.

- It has come to light that some refugees are obtaining local ID cards like passports, Aadhar, ration, election voter IDs illegally and they should be dissuaded from getting any such cards. It was informed that COVA is already giving counseling on this to refugees and they have started realizing the dangers of acquiring such cards illegally as some refugees are already caught and legal action is initiated against them.
- Suggestion came up that training of CIs, SIs and other lower order staff should be organised so that they can also provide legal awareness sessions to refugees periodically.
- 90 percent of refugees have mobile phones and SIM cards that are acquired illegally. This is mainly to enable them to be in touch with the employers and get employment. DCP suggested that if possible COVA can facilitate as a nodal agency to provide group SIM cards to refugees legally and police department will speak with service providers. This will also enable Police to keep track of the sim cards in use. It was informed that UNHCR and COVA have already discussed with FRRO that MHA should allow UNHCR card as a valid document for issue of SIM cards.
- Police officers agreed that access to legal and honest employment is a key to keep any one away from illegal activities and agreed to explore the possibility of securing employment for the refugees, especially in construction field in which most of them are currently engaged and find it difficult to get employed daily.
- Special Branch police sought clarification about the legality of the entry of refugees and the duration of their stay in India. Mr. Valan informed that no definite period can be given for the stay of refugees in any country as their return would depend on improvement of the situation in their countries that can be from a few years to a few decades. Examples of Sri Lankan and Tibetan refugees were cited. UNHCR gives the Refugee Card after a thorough process with 2 years validity and the refugee should renew it after its expiry. As long as they are in India, they have to renew it.

The meeting concluded with a Vote of Thanks by Dr. Mazher Hussain.