



Afghanistan Justice Sector Support Program Update July 2008

U.S. DOS/INL's JSSP program seeks to increase the capacity of the Afghan Government and Afghan legal practitioners to deliver fair and transparent criminal justice and rule of law services to the people of Afghanistan. To that end, JSSP advisors work with the Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Justice on a wide range of initiatives. In addition, JSSP conducts police/prosecutor training in four provinces and works to promote Afghans' access to justice services by implementing provincial justice conferences, training and mentoring of defense lawyers, and working on a range of other projects.

Afghanistan's First Independent Bar Association (AIBA) Established



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More than 400 advocates from across Afghanistan gathered this week to take part in the IABA's Inaugural General Assembly held July 27-30, 2008. For the first time in Afghanistan's history, lawyers will be self-regulating under a bar association framework. The General Assembly included addresses by 10 dignitaries including the Minister of Justice and the Acting Attorney General. Advocates elected 20 members to leadership positions, which include an executive board, a leadership council, and a monitoring board through direct voting and run-off elections. In addition, advocates approved the IABA by-laws chapter by chapter. The discussions led to some significant changes to the proposed by-laws including the removal of a two-tiered licensing system in favor of a unified system. The by-laws contemplated restricting less experienced attorneys to appearing only in the primary and appeal courts, but advocates favored a system where all licensed attorneys could appear in all courts, including the Supreme Court. JSSP's embedded Afghan Legal Consultants (ALCs) played an invaluable role providing technical and secretariat support to the Ministry of Justice in its endeavor to establish the IABA pursuant to the Advocates' Law. The IABA is the first ever independent bar association in Afghanistan.

Focused District Development-Law program graduates classes in Nangarhar and Herat

As part of the Focused District Development-Law Training, JSSP Justice Advisors and Afghan Legal Consultants (ALCs) in Herat taught classes on anti-corruption, case management, and crime scene investigation to Afghan police and prosecutors. Advisors also organized a lecture on first responder first aid after learning many students are the first to arrive at a crime scene. JSSP Advisors in Nangarhar also provided instruction to students on the Advocates' Law, gender justice issues, crime scene investigation and legal reasoning. FDD-Law offers legal training to Afghan prosecutors, as a complement to the Focused District Development (FDD) training for police offered by the Afghan Ministry of the Interior and the U.S. Military. The program is particularly intended to target prosecutors from provinces and districts distant from Kabul, who otherwise have limited training opportunities. A select number of police also participate in the training. On July 16th and 17th, 27 students from Farah, Helmand, and Kandahar graduated from the Herat program and 28 students graduated from the Nangarhar FDD-Law program.



FDD-Law Program Graduates in Nangarhar province