**Policing Beyond Retirement**

[Dr Syed Kaleem Imam](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/dr-syed-kaleem-imam)

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“Information is not knowledge. The only source of knowledge is experience. You need experience to gain wisdom”- Albert Einstein
Retirement from service is a blessing: An opportunity to explore the nature, do gardening, play with the grandchildren, and read as much as you can. Some set to write their memoirs as well. If few turn into a recluse, many set to pass on their rich experience to the next generation. When we begin a practical life as a young enthusiast, we do come across the challenges we had never thought of, but then come to our rescue our elders at home as well as at workplace. For me, my father being a government servant, was a source of confidence. Though not in a senior cadre, he knew through his hard-earned experience what to do and how.
I was lucky to have some seniors who were epitome of honesty and professionalism. I vividly remember when I was made OSD, though for standing steadfast on a professional matter, I got little disturbed. Then came a telephone call from a senior officer, known as “Babae OSD” (Father of OSD). Gohar Zaman sahab, then DG IB, laughingly said, “The feather of OSD decorates the honest officers. Abhi ishq kei aur bhin imtahan aangei. (Many tests of love have yet to come). Relax and enjoy your OSD tenure” My anxiety flew in the air.
I am indebted to luminaries such as Zafar Iqbal Rathore, Afzal Ali Shigri, Dr. Shoaib Suddle, Tariq Pervaz, Saud Gohar, Tariq Khosa, Javed Noor, Pervez Rahim Rajput, and Asghar Reza Gardezi, whose mentorship has left an indelible mark on my life and the field of law enforcement.
Policing in the face of deteriorating governance, security challenges, and economic instability is an arduous task. In a society grappling with instability and a fraying rule of law, the police cannot evade scrutiny. They are often perceived as corrupt, a perception that holds some truth. However, merely criticizing without implementing corrective measures is a graver sin. We must not forget the sacrifices made by martyrs and those injured in the line of duty; to do so would be unforgivable. Allowing decay and corruption to persist in various state institutions while scapegoating a few, others as virtuous is unjust. It reveals a senseless mindset and underscores the reality that we are only exacerbating our problems by failing to address the root issues.
During service, I always remained in touch with the retired officers because I knew they carry the tag of experience which one cannot buy, it comes through time alone. A young officer may be competent, intelligent, hardworking, and enthusiastic but he is likely to err if not guided well by his or her seniors. For elderly officers, nothing is more important than passing on their knowledge to the right people at the right time.
Ihsan Ghani, then DG of the National Police Bureau, led a group of retired police officers in 2015 to establish an association for retired Inspector Generals of Police. While no longer in positions of power, they recognised that their collective wisdom and the strength of their ideas could still carry significant weight. These experienced veterans derive a sense of purpose and value when their recommendations are not only acknowledged but also translated into action. For instance, the findings of the Police Reforms Committee, initiated under the auspices of the Supreme Court, serve as a notable example, even though they have yet to be fully implemented.
Formed in 2017, the Association of Former Inspector Generals of Police (AFIGP) has contributed significantly to the national cause since its inception. It holds regular conferences annually where many former IGs participate enthusiastically. The deliberations and outcomes are shared with the police organisations and the government for consideration.
This year, the conference took place on December 8-9, 2023, at the National Highway and Motorway Police auditorium. AFIGP extended gratitude to NHMP, SDPI, Mobilink Jazz, FC, Sindh, AJK, and FC Balochistan for their valuable logistic support. Record attendance helped make the conference a resounding success, with a tacit reminder that law enforcement faces pressing challenges and the current situation needs to be addressed.
‘Navigating the Complexities of State Response in the Criminal Justice System’ was the theme of this year’s conference. During five sessions, participants discussed law enforcement challenges and the rule of law in relation to criminal justice in tough times. The reverend speakers Rai Tahir, Mohammed Ali Babakhel, Ali Naseer, Ehsan Sadiq, Sultan Khawaja, and Dr. Abid Suleri deliberated in length on these critical topics. They shared their experiences and after a very exhaustive academic but frank and candid discussion, some real jewels of wisdom emerged.
We had the honor of having chief guest for the occasion the fervent interim Prime Minister Mr. Anwar Ul Haq Kakar. During his speech, he called the former police officers, “the chosen one” and lauded Siffat Ghayur, Malik Saad, and Hamid Shakeel among others. He said that we forget that each one of us is the best creation of Allah. The sacrifices of police and armed forces in the fight against terrorism should always be held in high esteem. Amid the prevalent cynicism and focus on the negative aspects of life, it remains an undeniable fact that a significant portion of police officers, particularly those in lower ranks, struggle to make both ends meet. This statement draws from my service experience, where I had the opportunity to visit the families of martyrs, getting firsthand insight into the modest and often hand-to-mouth lifestyles that many police officers and their families live.
Lastly, the resolve of AFIGP is to continue working for the betterment of the country. It is a great forum for the veterans to see each other after a long time and share their thoughts. They have removed uniform but not their “will and commitment. The rank never retires!
On a lighter note, retirement is a privilege, but let’s not get so old that our heavenly friends wonder if we’ll ever arrive.