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ILF-Afghanistan Opens New Office in Uruzgan Province
Province's First Criminal Defense Lawyer
Begins Defending Indigent Accused Persons

New York, NY – Earlier this month, ILF-Afghanistan opened a new office in Tirin Kot, the capital of the province of Uruzgan. The ILF-Afghanistan headquarters in Kabul assigned Gul Rahman as the head of the new Uruzgan office. Upon his arrival in Tirin Kot, Mr. Rahman was introduced to the local stakeholders and government officials, including the governor of Uruzgan, the head of the prison administration, the head of the prosecution office, and other important individuals.

Gul Rahman is the first criminal defense attorney in all of Uruzgan Province. The purpose of the new ILF-Afghanistan office in Uruzgan is to defend all of the indigent accused in Tirin Kot as well as, when possible, indigent accused in outlying districts. In Tirin Kot, there are currently 110 prisoners, including 3 juveniles. Some of the detainees (including one of the juveniles) have been detained for years without trial. These cases will be the office's first priority.

Overcrowding in Tirin Kot's prison has created appalling conditions; detainees are sometimes held in bathrooms due to the lack of space. Moreover, juveniles are detained alongside adults. Because of these problems, a new prison that adheres to international standards and a Juvenile Rehabilitation Center have been built and are scheduled to open soon.

The Uruzgan office has already agreed to represent more than 10 detainees and may send additional lawyers to Tirin Kot to help with the backlog of pending cases.

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About the International Legal Foundation:

Created in 2001, the ILF is an international nongovernmental organization that assists post-conflict and transitional countries in establishing public defender systems that provide effective, quality criminal defense services for the poor. It is guided by two fundamental principles: that laws must be drafted with an appreciation of the cultural realities of the country in which they will function; and that defense lawyers – as guardians of due process – are indispensable to any fair system of justice and must be provided to anyone accused of a crime.