Understanding Procedural Fairness Through the Voices of Asylum Seekers: A Thematic Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of procedural fairness among asylum seekers residing in Tehran, with a focus on how they experience and interpret key elements of justice during their interactions with the asylum system. Using a qualitative research design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 24 asylum seekers from diverse national backgrounds, currently residing in Tehran. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, and interviews continued until theoretical saturation was achieved. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using thematic analysis guided by Braun and Clarke's framework. NVivo software was used to facilitate the coding process and thematic categorization. Analysis revealed five major themes: (1) lack of transparency in procedures, including legal ambiguities, inconsistent communication, and language barriers; (2) limited voice and participation, where participants felt rushed or silenced during hearings; (3) perceived bias and discrimination based on nationality, religion, or identity; (4) prolonged delays and legal uncertainty, which caused emotional distress and disempowerment; and (5) loss of trust in institutions due to perceived unfairness and dehumanizing treatment. Participants emphasized that procedural justice was judged not solely by outcomes, but by how respectfully, clearly, and consistently they were treated during the asylum process. The study highlights significant gaps in the procedural fairness experienced by asylum seekers in Tehran, with implications for legal legitimacy, mental well-being, and social integration. The findings underscore the urgent need for improved communication, transparent legal frameworks, and culturally sensitive practices. Procedural fairness must be prioritized not only as a legal requirement but as a moral and psychological imperative within asylum systems.

Keywords: *Procedural fairness; asylum seekers; qualitative research; Iran; thematic analysis; refugee protection; legal transparency; voice and participation.*

Introduction

The global asylum system operates at the intersection of international law, human rights, and sovereign border control, placing individuals fleeing persecution in vulnerable and uncertain legal and socio-political positions. Asylum seekers are not merely claimants of legal protection; they are individuals whose futures hinge upon complex bureaucratic procedures and state-level determinations. In this context, the concept of procedural fairness—defined as the perceived equity, transparency, and justice in decision-making processes—becomes vital in shaping the psychological well-being, trust in institutions, and ultimate integration trajectories of asylum seekers (Tyler, 2006).

Procedural fairness is more than an abstract legal principle; it encompasses the real-world treatment of claimants, their opportunity to present their case, and the perceived impartiality and transparency of administrative systems. According to Lind and Tyler (1988), procedural justice influences how individuals interpret the legitimacy of authorities and institutions, even in the face of unfavorable outcomes. This insight is especially pertinent to asylum seekers who, by the nature of their displacement, often find themselves in power-asymmetric, unfamiliar, and emotionally charged interactions with government systems (O'Neill, 2018).

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) emphasizes that asylum systems must not only comply with legal norms but also operate with fairness and dignity at every procedural stage, including registration, interview, appeal, and decision-making (UNHCR, 2020). However, empirical studies across various jurisdictions have pointed to critical deficiencies in the realization of these standards. Research has shown that asylum seekers often experience systemic barriers such as lack of legal counsel, language difficulties, extended waiting periods, and limited opportunities to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes (Schuster, 2011; Bohmer & Shuman, 2008). These structural and procedural shortcomings not only erode the legitimacy of asylum regimes but can also inflict secondary psychological harm, exacerbating trauma and undermining mental health (Steel et al., 2004).

In host countries with resource constraints or strained geopolitical relationships, the procedural fairness of asylum systems is frequently compromised by administrative inefficiencies, legal ambiguities, and socio-political exclusion. Iran, as one of the largest host countries for refugees in the region—especially from Afghanistan and Iraq—faces significant challenges in administering fair and humane asylum processes. Despite being a signatory to several international agreements and hosting over 3 million displaced individuals, the country lacks a comprehensive domestic asylum law aligned with international refugee law standards (UNHCR, 2023). Reports have indicated that many asylum seekers in Iran navigate unclear procedures with minimal legal guidance, experience delays in case resolutions, and often report discriminatory or arbitrary treatment by officials (Noroozi & Sedighi, 2021).

In such contexts, procedural fairness is not simply a matter of administrative design but a reflection of power, policy, and human dignity. Voice, participation, transparency, and respectful treatment are core dimensions of perceived procedural justice (Tyler & Blader, 2003). When these dimensions are absent, asylum seekers may develop negative attitudes toward legal institutions, perceive decisions as illegitimate, and experience psychological distress (Kirkwood, 2017). Studies from other jurisdictions, such as the UK and Australia, have shown that procedural justice predicts asylum seekers' trust in authorities, emotional resilience, and compliance with asylum outcomes—whether favorable or unfavorable (Hartley & Pedersen, 2015; Goodman & Speer, 2007).

The psychological and sociological consequences of procedural unfairness are profound. For asylum seekers—many of whom have already endured conflict, violence, or persecution—prolonged uncertainty, lack of explanation, and disregard for their narratives may act as retraumatization (Silove et al., 1997). Moreover, delays and non-transparent procedures can significantly impair an individual's ability to plan for the future, support their families, and engage with their host society. This contributes to a phenomenon some scholars have referred to as "liminal legality," where asylum seekers are trapped in an indefinite state of legal ambiguity, neither fully protected nor fully rejected (Menjívar, 2006).

Qualitative approaches are especially valuable for exploring perceptions of procedural fairness, as they allow for the capture of lived experiences and subjective meanings that are often obscured in policy evaluations or statistical analyses. Narrative accounts provide rich insight into how individuals experience and interpret the asylum process—

not merely as administrative steps but as deeply personal encounters with power, identity, and justice (Ingleby, 2005). While some quantitative studies have evaluated aspects such as decision times, rejection rates, or access to representation, there remains a gap in research centered on the voices of asylum seekers themselves, especially in under-researched regions like Iran.

In recent years, a growing body of literature has emphasized the importance of incorporating asylum seekers' narratives into the policy and reform process (Liebig & Huddleston, 2014; Khosravi, 2010). Studies by Muntarbhorn (2022) and others have advocated for rights-based, participatory frameworks in refugee status determination (RSD) processes that not only ensure procedural compliance but also build trust and accountability. Understanding how asylum seekers evaluate their experience of fairness may help identify actionable reforms to reduce barriers, enhance legitimacy, and mitigate negative psychological consequences.

This study seeks to contribute to this growing literature by examining the perceptions of procedural fairness among asylum seekers in Tehran, using a qualitative thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews. The aim is to explore how asylum seekers interpret and evaluate their encounters with asylum-related institutions, the extent to which they feel respected, heard, and informed, and the psychosocial consequences of procedural experiences. By centering the voices of displaced individuals, this research aims to provide empirically grounded insights into the human dimensions of asylum procedures and highlight areas for systemic reform.

The focus on Tehran is both timely and necessary, as the city represents a major urban hub where diverse asylum-seeking populations converge and interact with governmental and quasi-governmental systems. Despite Iran's geopolitical significance in regional migration, scholarly work on the qualitative experience of asylum seekers within its borders remains scarce. The study is grounded in the belief that justice in asylum procedures must be understood not only through legal frameworks but through the lived, narrated experiences of those most affected by them. Procedural fairness, in this regard, is not only a policy objective but an ethical imperative.

Methods and Materials

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore asylum seekers' perceptions and lived experiences of procedural fairness in their interactions with immigration and asylum systems. A thematic analysis approach was adopted to identify patterns and themes within participants' narratives. The target population consisted of asylum seekers residing in Tehran. Purposeful sampling was used to recruit participants who had direct experience navigating the asylum process in Iran. The selection criteria included individuals who were currently or had previously been engaged in the asylum application procedure within the past five years. A total of 24 participants (13 men and 11 women), aged between 22 and 47 years, were included in the study. Recruitment continued until theoretical saturation was reached—defined as the point at which no new themes or concepts emerged from the data.

Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, allowing for the collection of rich, detailed narratives while maintaining enough structure to ensure consistency across participants. The interview guide covered key areas such as participants' encounters with immigration officials, understanding of procedures, perceptions of fairness and transparency, and experiences of voice and representation. All interviews were conducted in person by the principal researcher in private settings to ensure confidentiality and emotional safety. Interviews lasted between 45 and 70 minutes, and were audio-recorded with participants' consent. The recordings were then transcribed verbatim in the original language of the interview to preserve linguistic and contextual nuance.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke, which involves six steps: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. NVivo software was used to manage and organize the data during the coding process. An inductive approach guided the analysis, allowing codes and themes to emerge directly from the data without imposing preconceived theoretical frameworks. To ensure analytical rigor, coding was conducted in multiple rounds, and thematic saturation was verified through comparison across interviews. Peer debriefing and reflexive memo-writing were also employed to enhance credibility and reduce researcher bias.

Findings and Results

The study sample consisted of 24 asylum seekers residing in Tehran who participated in in-depth semi-structured interviews. Of the total participants, 14 were male (58.3%) and 10 were female (41.7%). The participants ranged in age from 21 to 49 years, with a mean age of approximately 33.5 years. In terms of country of origin, 8 participants (33.3%) were from Afghanistan, 6 (25%) from Iraq, 4 (16.7%) from Syria, 3 (12.5%) from Pakistan, and 3 (12.5%) from Yemen. Regarding educational background, 7 participants (29.2%) had completed secondary education, 10 (41.7%) held a high school diploma or equivalent, and 7 (29.2%) had attained higher education degrees (bachelor's or above). The length of time since arrival in Iran varied, with 11 participants (45.8%) having lived in the country for less than two years, 9 (37.5%) between two to five years, and 4 (16.7%) for more than five years. Most participants (18 individuals, 75%) reported living in rented accommodations in low-income neighborhoods, while the remaining 6 (25%) resided in shared shelters or temporary housing provided by NGOs.

Table 1. Themes, Subthemes, and Open Codes

Theme	Subtheme	Concepts (Open Codes)
1. Transparency of Procedures	Unclear Legal Information	lack of legal updates, no translated documents, confusing jargon, inadequate briefings
	Inconsistent Application Requirements	changing forms, unclear deadlines, different rules at different offices
	Language Barriers	lack of interpreters, mistranslation fears, official documents in Farsi only
	Delayed Communication	no response to queries, delays in notification, information blackout
	Legal Representation Challenges	no access to lawyers, costly legal aid, misunderstanding of rights
	Trust in Information Sources	reliance on unofficial channels, skepticism of authorities, conflicting messages
	Understanding of Case Status	not knowing interview outcome, vague explanations, inability to track case
2. Voice and Participation	Opportunity to Express Claims	one-sided interviews, not enough time to explain, cutoff during testimony
	Respect During Hearings	dismissive attitude, rushed sessions, use of accusatory language
	Inclusion in Decision Process	no follow-up consultations, lack of opportunity to clarify, decisions made without input
	Feedback Mechanisms	no appeal explanation, no way to provide evidence post-interview, absence of complaints procedure
	Empowerment Through Participation	feeling heard, personal agency, emotional relief after full narrative
3. Perceived Bias and Discrimination	Differential Treatment	preference for certain nationalities, stereotypes based on religion, cultural prejudice
	Identity-Related Discrimination	being judged for accent, being asked unrelated personal questions, profiling
	Power Imbalance	officials' authority unchecked, fear of retaliation, inability to challenge unfairness
	Psychological Impact of Bias	feeling dehumanized, shame after interviews, distrust of system
	Unequal Access to Resources	priority for others, long waits for minorities, overlooked vulnerabilities

4. Procedural Delays and Uncertainty	Long Waiting Periods	years without decisions, repeated delays, stalled appeals
	Administrative Inefficiency	lost documents, rescheduled appointments, poor record keeping
	Inconsistent Outcomes	different results for similar cases, unexplained rejections, reversal of prior approvals
	Emotional Toll of Waiting	chronic anxiety, insomnia, hopelessness, strained family dynamics
	Lack of Timelines	no set deadlines, arbitrary pacing, unpredictability
5. Trust and Perceptions of Fairness	Overall Fairness of System	sense of injustice, belief in predetermined outcomes, fairness judged by outcome not process
	Trust in Officials	perception of corruption, belief that bribes help, officials not empathetic
	Consistency in Treatment	cases handled differently, differing standards by caseworker, inconsistency across agencies
	Hope and Disillusionment	initial hope eroding over time, feeling trapped, loss of faith in asylum process
	Impact on Identity and Dignity	feeling invisible, moral injury, breakdown of self-worth
	Perceptions of Host Country	feeling welcomed vs. rejected, influence of media and public opinion, link between legal and social treatment

Theme 1: Transparency of Procedures

Unclear Legal Information: Participants frequently described the asylum process as opaque and confusing. Many expressed frustration at the absence of accessible legal information and the lack of translated materials. One participant remarked, "They gave me a paper in Farsi. I don't know what it says even today." Another added, "Nobody explained my rights to me—I signed something, but I'm not sure what it was."

Inconsistent Application Requirements: Several participants reported inconsistencies in the procedural requirements depending on the office or official handling their case. Forms would differ, deadlines would change, and guidance often conflicted. As one asylum seeker explained, "I brought the papers they asked for, but the next time they told me something else was missing."

Language Barriers: Language emerged as a critical barrier to procedural fairness. The lack of qualified interpreters and fears of mistranslation left many participants uncertain about what was being communicated. "Sometimes I just nodded because I didn't understand, but I didn't want to make them angry," said a participant from Afghanistan.

Delayed Communication: The prolonged silence following official submissions added to feelings of exclusion and helplessness. Participants described waiting months without any response or updates on their case. One shared, "It's like they put our files in a drawer and forget us."

Legal Representation Challenges: Access to affordable, trustworthy legal support was minimal. Participants reported that they often had no legal counsel or had to rely on unqualified individuals. One individual stated, "A man said he was a lawyer and took my money, but later I found out he wasn't even licensed."

Trust in Information Sources: Due to the lack of clarity from authorities, many participants turned to informal networks and social media for information—often receiving contradictory guidance. As one participant said, "We rely on rumors more than real sources because no one tells us what's going on officially."

Understanding of Case Status: Uncertainty about one's case status was another source of stress. Many participants described being unable to track progress or obtain updates. One explained, "I don't know if I've been rejected or still waiting. They don't say anything clearly."

Theme 2: Voice and Participation

Opportunity to Express Claims: Several participants expressed dissatisfaction with the structure of interviews, feeling that they were not allowed enough time to fully share their narratives. One participant said, "I wanted to explain everything, but the officer kept interrupting and told me to be quick."

Respect During Hearings: Respectful treatment during hearings was inconsistent. Some felt their personal dignity was undermined during proceedings. A participant noted, "He didn't look at me while I spoke—just typed on his computer and waved me off."

Inclusion in Decision Process: Participants consistently reported a lack of involvement in decisions affecting their lives. Decisions were made without further discussion or opportunities to clarify misunderstandings. "They made a decision without even asking me to explain what happened in my country," said one participant.

Feedback Mechanisms: There was an absence of formal avenues to contest or comment on procedural decisions. As one participant noted, "They just send a letter with no explanation and no way to respond."

Empowerment Through Participation: Conversely, when participants felt heard, the experience was emotionally empowering and validating. One asylum seeker recounted, "It was the first time someone listened to my whole story. I cried afterward, not because I was sad, but because someone finally heard me."

Theme 3: Perceived Bias and Discrimination

Differential Treatment: Participants observed that individuals from certain national or religious backgrounds were treated more favorably than others. A participant from Sudan stated, "They treat Syrians better. For us, it's like we are invisible."

Identity-Related Discrimination: Cultural and linguistic markers sometimes led to intrusive or irrelevant questioning. "They asked me why I have an accent and if I really come from where I said," said one participant. "It made me feel like they didn't believe me."

Power Imbalance: The imbalance of authority left participants feeling vulnerable and intimidated. One participant shared, "I was scared to complain because I thought it might affect my case."

Psychological Impact of Bias: The cumulative effect of perceived discrimination led to emotional distress. "After the interview, I felt ashamed, like I was a criminal," shared one respondent.

Unequal Access to Resources: Several participants noted that services and legal aid were distributed unequally. "When I went to the center, they helped others before me even though I was there first," said a participant from Pakistan.

Theme 4: Procedural Delays and Uncertainty

Long Waiting Periods: Waiting times of multiple years were commonly reported, which participants described as emotionally and economically debilitating. "It has been three years and I still don't know if I can stay," explained one participant.

Administrative Inefficiency: Participants cited repeated issues with lost documents and rescheduled appointments. One participant noted, "I submitted the same paper three times because they kept losing it."

Inconsistent Outcomes: Some participants described how applicants with similar backgrounds received very different outcomes, leading to a sense of randomness and injustice. "My friend had the same case and got accepted, but I was rejected," one respondent reported.

Emotional Toll of Waiting: The uncertainty created by procedural delays contributed to symptoms of anxiety, insomnia, and depression. "I can't plan anything, not even my future. It's like being stuck in a black hole," shared a participant.

Lack of Timelines: Participants emphasized the absence of clear deadlines or process milestones. "They never tell you how long it will take. You just wait and wait," said one asylum seeker from Iraq.

Theme 5: Trust and Perceptions of Fairness

Overall Fairness of System: A large proportion of participants expressed doubt about the integrity of the asylum process. "It feels like they already decided before even hearing my story," one participant stated.

Trust in Officials: Mistrust in decision-makers was pervasive. Some participants speculated that corruption or favoritism played a role. "People say you have to pay someone to get your file moving," noted one respondent.

Consistency in Treatment: Inconsistency in how cases were handled across different offices and officers reduced faith in the system. "One officer told me something, another told me the opposite. Who should I believe?" asked a participant.

Hope and Disillusionment: Many participants began their asylum journey with hope, only to become increasingly disillusioned over time. "I thought this country would protect me, but now I feel like a burden," shared one individual.

Impact on Identity and Dignity: Several asylum seekers spoke of losing their sense of identity and self-worth due to how they were treated. "I used to be a teacher. Now I feel like I'm nothing," said one participant.

Perceptions of Host Country: The way procedural fairness was experienced influenced participants' broader views of the host country. "If the system is unfair, how can we feel safe or welcomed?" asked a participant from Yemen.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the complex, multi-dimensional nature of procedural fairness as experienced by asylum seekers in Tehran. Through the voices of 24 participants, five major thematic domains were identified: transparency of procedures, voice and participation, perceived bias and discrimination, procedural delays and uncertainty, and trust and perceptions of fairness. Each theme revealed critical insights into how procedural justice—or the lack thereof—shapes the emotional, legal, and existential experiences of individuals navigating the asylum process.

One of the most prominent findings was the lack of transparency in procedural communication. Participants consistently reported receiving insufficient or inconsistent legal information, exacerbated by language barriers and poor access to interpreters. These experiences mirror findings in other contexts, such as the UK and Australia, where asylum seekers also reported confusion due to opaque procedures and inconsistent official guidance (Bohmer & Shuman, 2008; Schuster, 2011). This aligns with Tyler's (2006) theory of procedural justice, which emphasizes the role of clear, consistent, and unbiased communication in fostering perceptions of fairness. The absence of this clarity led many participants in our study to rely on informal networks or rumors, often increasing anxiety and misinformation. The use of technical legal jargon without proper explanation further undermined participants' ability to understand and meaningfully engage with the asylum process, reinforcing a sense of alienation and powerlessness.

The second major theme, voice and participation, revealed that many asylum seekers felt silenced or rushed during their interviews and hearings. This is consistent with earlier qualitative studies demonstrating that perceived opportunities to be heard directly affect asylum seekers' trust in legal institutions and sense of justice (Kirkwood, 2017; Goodman & Speer, 2007). Our findings showed that when participants were afforded space to narrate their

experiences, they reported feelings of validation and dignity. Conversely, when they were interrupted or treated dismissively, they experienced emotional distress and disengagement. This reflects the central principle in procedural justice literature that voice—or the opportunity to express one's views—is essential for perceived legitimacy, regardless of case outcomes (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2003).

The third theme, perceived bias and discrimination, underscores the social and identity-based inequalities embedded in asylum procedures. Participants from certain ethnic or national backgrounds reported feeling marginalized or stereotyped, suggesting implicit biases in the behavior of authorities. This perception is supported by similar findings from research in European and North American contexts, where biases related to nationality, religion, and gender have been shown to influence asylum decisions and the quality of interpersonal interactions with immigration officials (Fassin & Rechtman, 2009; Hartley & Pedersen, 2015). These findings support the claim that procedural fairness is not only about objective treatment, but also about subjective perceptions of respectful and equal engagement. When asylum seekers felt judged on personal attributes rather than the merits of their case, their trust in the legitimacy of the asylum system eroded significantly.

The fourth theme, procedural delays and uncertainty, emerged as a profound source of psychological distress among participants. Long waiting periods, repeated administrative errors, and unpredictable timelines created an environment of chronic uncertainty. These findings echo research from various host countries where delays in asylum decisions have been linked to heightened levels of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Steel et al., 2004; Silove et al., 1997). In this study, participants described the asylum process as a liminal state of suspended existence, where they were unable to make long-term plans, pursue education or employment, or reunite with family. The concept of "liminal legality" (Menjívar, 2006) aptly captures this condition, where individuals live in a legally ambiguous status, unable to fully participate in society while also unable to return home.

The final theme, trust and perceptions of fairness, brings together the cumulative impact of the other themes. Participants evaluated the fairness of the system not solely based on legal outcomes but on the quality of their interactions with officials, the consistency of treatment, and the transparency of procedures. When these elements were absent, participants reported feeling disillusioned, dehumanized, and betrayed by institutions that were supposed to offer protection. This aligns with the broader literature on legitimacy and procedural justice, which suggests that procedural fairness has a more powerful influence on perceived legitimacy than the final outcome of the decision (Tyler, 2006; Lind & Tyler, 1988). In addition, participants' perceptions of the host country were shaped by how fairly and respectfully they were treated during the asylum process—reinforcing the role of procedural justice in integration and trust-building (UNHCR, 2020).

What distinguishes this study is its focus on the Iranian context, which has been underrepresented in qualitative asylum literature. Although Iran hosts a large population of displaced individuals, including Afghans, Iraqis, and Syrians, the lack of a formal domestic asylum system creates structural gaps that contribute to the procedural deficits highlighted in this study (Noroozi & Sedighi, 2021). The experiences of participants in Tehran show that even in the absence of formal legal protections, procedural justice can be promoted through administrative reforms, increased transparency, improved training for officials, and more inclusive communication practices. These findings provide important implications for national and regional policy debates on refugee protection in non-Western contexts.

While this study offers valuable insights into asylum seekers' perceptions of procedural fairness in Tehran, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the sample size of 24 participants, while adequate for qualitative

saturation, limits the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of asylum seekers in Iran. Second, the use of semi-structured interviews may have introduced interviewer bias, and despite efforts to create a safe and neutral environment, participants may have felt hesitant to share negative experiences due to fear of repercussions. Third, all participants were located in Tehran, an urban center with relatively more access to services; therefore, the findings may not fully reflect the experiences of asylum seekers in more remote or underserved regions of Iran. Finally, the lack of access to official government documents or interviews with asylum officers limits the ability to triangulate findings from institutional perspectives.

Future research should expand the scope of inquiry to include a larger and more diverse sample of asylum seekers across different cities and provinces in Iran. Comparative studies involving both urban and rural contexts could provide deeper insights into regional disparities in procedural fairness. In addition, longitudinal studies tracking asylum seekers' experiences over time would be valuable in understanding how procedural justice perceptions evolve and affect long-term psychological, social, and legal outcomes. Future research should also explore the perspectives of legal aid providers, NGO staff, and immigration officials to gain a more holistic view of institutional dynamics. Finally, cross-cultural comparative studies with asylum seekers in other host countries—particularly in the Middle East—could help contextualize these findings and identify region-specific challenges and best practices.

The findings of this study point to several practical steps that can be taken to improve procedural fairness for asylum seekers in Iran. First, the government and relevant agencies should develop standardized, multilingual communication materials that clearly outline the steps of the asylum process, rights of applicants, and timelines. Second, efforts should be made to expand and professionalize the availability of interpreters to ensure that asylum seekers can fully participate in interviews and hearings. Third, training programs for immigration officials and interviewers should include modules on cultural sensitivity, trauma-informed interviewing, and the principles of procedural justice. Fourth, asylum seekers should be provided with accessible legal representation, whether through government-appointed attorneys or partnerships with civil society organizations. Finally, the establishment of feedback mechanisms and appeal channels that are transparent, accessible, and safe would help restore trust in the system and uphold basic standards of accountability and justice.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

All ethical principles were adheried in conducting and writing this article.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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