

### Afghanistan faced with defence lawyers shortage

KABUL, Dec 16 (Pajhwok Afghan News): In need of more than 10,000 defence lawyers, Afghanistan has only 400 registered with the Justice Ministry, a minister said on Sunday.

Justice Minister Sarwar Danish, at a news briefing here, said there should be 10,000 defence lawyers for a population of one million people according to international Standards.

Based on Article 31 of the Constitution, the minister added, every Afghan was entitled to hire a defence lawyer to represent him or her in courts. The article says the government should hire defence counsel for the accused who cannot afford to hire their services.

Danish said the ministry would establish an independent association of the defence attorneys. Following the launch of the proposed body, defence lawyers will have to register with it to get licences.

Unable to pay the fees of lawyers, around 11,000 prisoners are languishing in jails across the country, with some of them already having served the jail terms awarded to them by courts.

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