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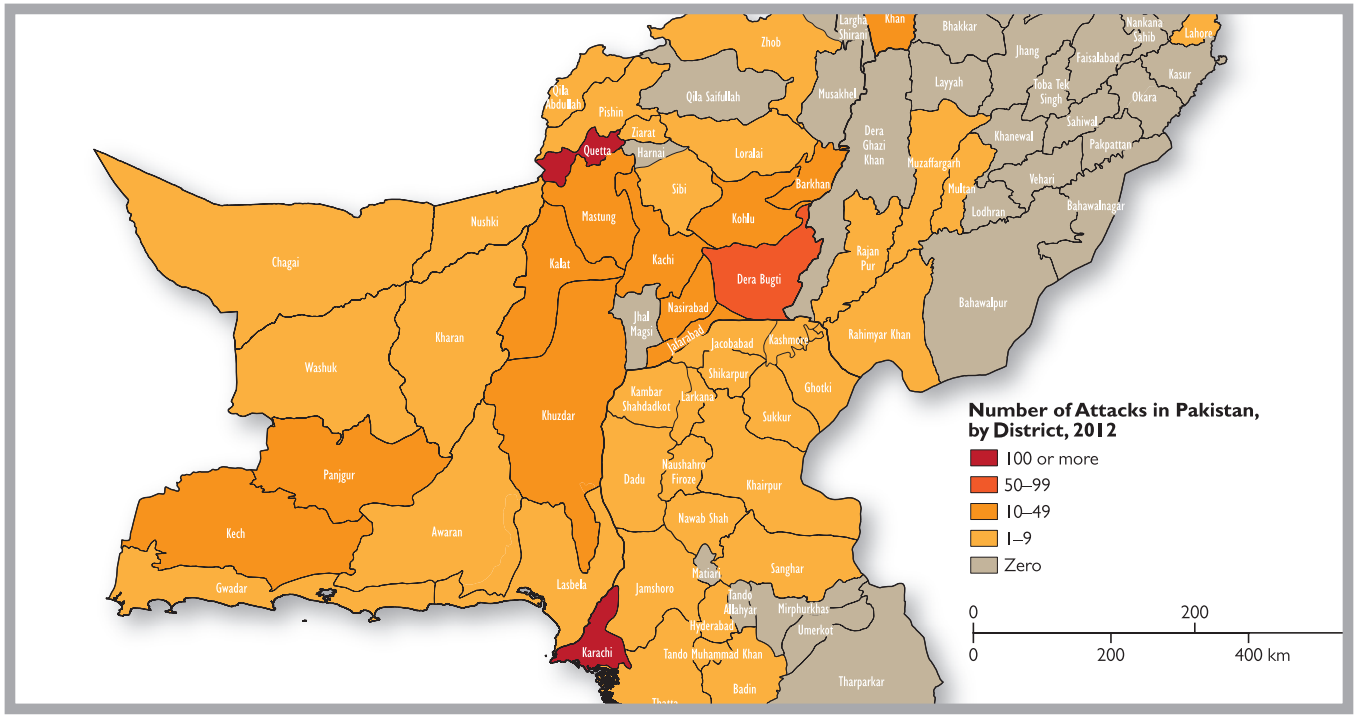

MAPPING CONFLICT TRENDS IN PAKISTAN

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and Salma Malik

United States Institute of Peace

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About the Report

Over the past decade, Pakistan's domestic security landscape has become increasingly volatile and complex. An examination of the incidence of violence during this period reveals a multiplicity of conflict actors, varying patterns of violence in different regions, and an unprecedented number of casualties. This report, sponsored by the United States Institute of Peace, maps recent conflict trends in Pakistan and explores the trajectory of violence in the provinces—namely, Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Paktunkhwa, and Balochistan—and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Gilgit-Baltistan and draws from a variety of Pakistani and international sources to present as comprehensive a picture as possible.

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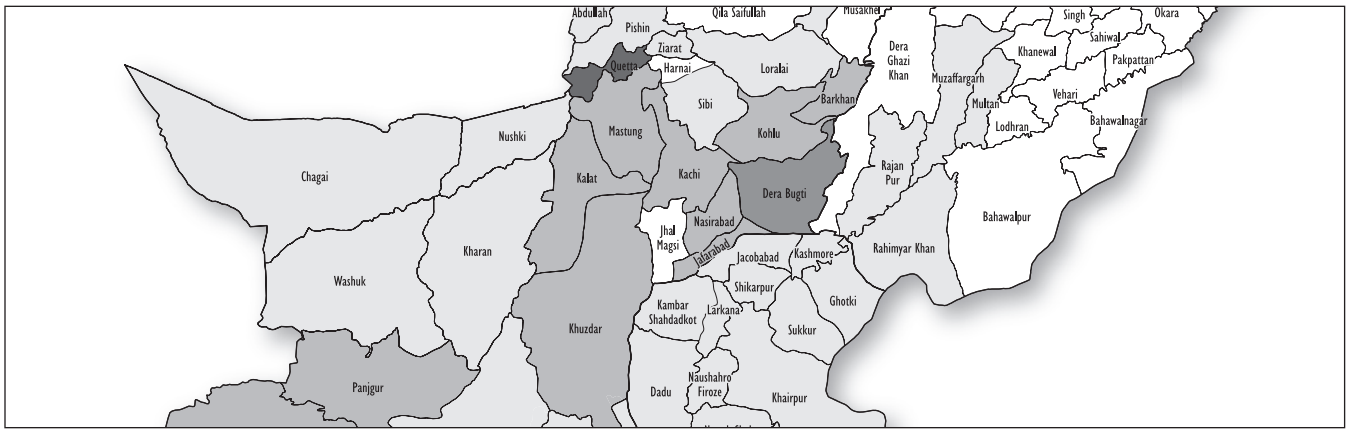

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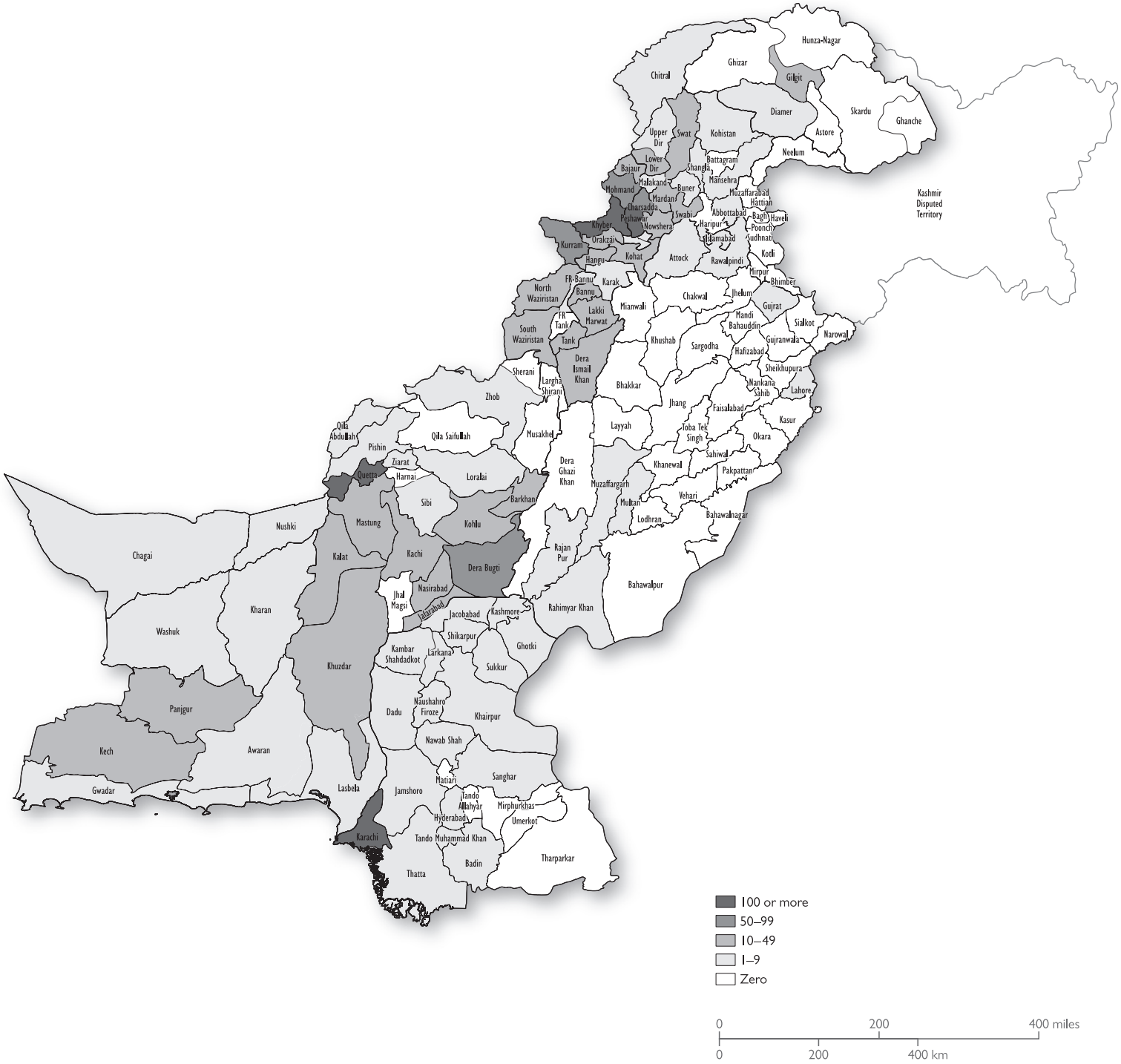
[During the past decade, violence has become endemic across many parts of Pakistan. The country's own experience suggests that if the existing conditions persist, the country could face escalation of violence levels, widespread lawlessness, and potential fragmentation.]

Summary

- Over the past decade, Pakistan has experienced a significant rise in violence in terms of frequency, scope, and magnitude. The origins and intensity of violence vary regionally and involve both long-standing conflict actors and new groups.
- Violence is most concentrated along the Afghan border in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Other regions of Pakistan lying along the border with Afghanistan, including Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan, have also experienced a significant escalation in violence. This escalation is in part a result of the nexus between sectarian militants and terrorist outfits.
- In Sindh, most of the violence is concentrated in Karachi, which witnessed a tenfold increase in violence between 2006 and 2013. The security landscape there has become increasingly complex over the years with the addition of many types of actors, including sectarian militant groups, terrorist outfits, political parties, and criminal gangs.
- The scale, scope, and magnitude of violence in Balochistan, the largest province in Pakistan in terms of territory, remain unprecedented and unabated. Sectarian and terrorist activities targeting the Shia Hazara community have compounded the effects of a high-intensity conflict between a secessionist insurgency and the military that has been under way in the province since 2006. Balochistan also provides safe haven to the Quetta Shura, a key Afghan Taliban group headed by Mullah Omar.
- For the past decade, Punjab has experienced the least violence of any province in Pakistan. However, the province is increasingly a breeding ground for terrorist and militant recruits engaged in violence in other regions.
- Given the diverse and broad spectrum of conflicts afflicting Pakistan, it is important to analyze and address each conflict in its own context and plan for comprehensive state stabilization and peacebuilding processes entailing both short- and long-term measures.

Number of Attacks in Pakistan, by District, 2012



Introduction

Over the past decade, Pakistan's domestic security landscape has become increasingly volatile and complex. An examination of the incidence of violence during this period reveals a multiplicity of conflict actors, new and old (including armed state, nonstate, domestic, and transnational groups); varying patterns of violence in different regions, both high and low intensity in nature; and an unprecedented number of casualties. In some cases, the symptoms are the product of long-standing unresolved issues, while in others, new sources of conflict have emerged to compound existing ones, exacerbating the scope and magnitude of violence.

Across Pakistan, the various types of organized political and extremist violence include but are not limited to terrorism, secessionist insurgency, interfaith and intrafaith extremist violence, sectarian strife, and ethnic turf wars. The strategic nexus and close coordination among various groups perpetuating the violence often make it difficult to draw a distinction between the typology of violence and the motivations guiding the groups' behavior. The government's response to the intense and chronic nature of these incidents has over the years ranged from apathy to reliance on short-term security measures, including heavy-handed military operations to counter terrorism; alleged extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances involving the police and intelligence agencies; and external military intervention, primarily in the form of a U.S. Predator drone campaign under way since 2004, with the state's tacit consent.[1] Efforts to meaningfully address underlying socioeconomic and political conditions contributing to the fragile environment have been negligible.

Pakistan's recent experience with extreme high-intensity levels of violence has been reported in a number of prominent empirical studies. The Uppsala Conflict Data Program identifies Pakistan as one of six countries that qualifies to be in the category of "war," having crossed the unfortunate figure of one thousand battle-related deaths in a year's time.[2] The Global Peace Index (GPI) positions Pakistan among the ten least peaceful countries in the world. It suggests that, since 2004, Pakistan has ranked among the top five countries showing the fastest decline in peacefulness globally.[3] Pakistan ranked 149 out of 162 countries in the 2012 GPI and slipped to 157 for the year 2013.[4] It noted that Pakistan was among the worst performers in the South Asian subregion in terms of the number of conflicts fought.[5]

This report maps the various manifestations of protracted political and extremist conflict in Pakistan involving state, nonstate, and transnational actors; highlights the main zones of violence; identifies key players; and offers a contextual description of conflict dynamics. It examines various regions in Pakistan, including the provinces—namely, Punjab, Sindh, KP, and Balochistan—FATA, and Gilgit-Baltistan (formerly known as the Northern Areas). The report does not, however, address organized political or extremist violence in Kashmir, territory disputed by Pakistan and India. Although Kashmir presents a protracted conflict, one of the oldest on the agenda of the United Nations, and has been a perpetual battleground for a number of armed nonstate actors mentioned in this report, the issue is beyond the scope of this study due to its predominantly interstate nature.

The Global Peace Index (GPI) positions Pakistan among the ten least peaceful countries in the world. It suggests that, since 2004, Pakistan has ranked among the top five countries showing the fastest decline in peacefulness globally.

The External Environment: Regional and International Pressures

Although this report focuses primarily on Pakistan's internal conflicts, the country's overall security situation is also shaped, both directly and indirectly, by relations with its neighbors and the role of the Great Powers, particularly the United States and the erstwhile Soviet Union. It is therefore important to acknowledge this outer layer of complexity and the key external players influencing security dynamics within Pakistan.

The Pakistani state has historically ascribed a very low priority to socioeconomic development generally across the country, allocating a large proportion of its annual budget to compete in an arms race with India.

Pakistan's history of warfare and outstanding territorial disputes with nuclear archrival and neighbor India have contributed to the country's evolution as a security state, one where military security has been pursued at the cost of human security. Thus, the Pakistani state has historically ascribed a very low priority to socioeconomic development generally across the country, allocating a large proportion of its annual budget to compete in an arms race with India. The India-centric security posturing is also the driver of Pakistan's nuclear program, estimated to cost the country about $800 million annually since 2011, approximately 10 percent of its annual conventional military expenditure.[6]

Pakistan and India have been engaged in full-scale war three times. The unresolved Kashmir dispute led to two of these wars (1948, 1965) and a low-intensity confrontation known as the Kargil War (1999). The two states have been perpetually engaged in border skirmishes across the disputed frontier in Kashmir since their independence from the British in 1947.[7] The year 2013 has seen violation of a cease-fire agreement reached in 2003 and the highest levels of violence between the two neighbors in a decade.[8] Pakistan and India also engaged in full-fledged warfare in 1971, leading to the secession of East Pakistan as the independent state of Bangladesh. Other outstanding political disputes between Pakistan and India include the Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation water dispute, unresolved since 1998; the Sir Creek Boundary dispute over the undemarcated sixty-mile strip of water along the Rann of Kuch marshlands, unresolved since 1965; and the Siachin Glacier dispute, unresolved since 1984.[9]

While the Pakistani state has historically mismanaged the conflict in Balochistan by neglecting to equitably share national resources toward the socioeconomic development of the province and attempting to suppress the insurgency with an iron fist, neighboring India has been accused of adding fuel to the fire by covertly supporting the secessionist movement in Balochistan.[10] India, on the other hand, accuses Pakistani security agencies of supporting militant groups in Kashmir and providing safe haven to transnational terrorist groups active in India. The alleged roles of security agencies in both India and Pakistan in the affairs of the other call for significantly greater confidence building between the two countries.

Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan have also been historically tenuous. The Durand Line marking the 1,500-mile international border between the two countries is not recognized by Afghanistan and remains a stumbling block in the way of a congenial regional environment. Moreover, successive Afghan governments have taken the position that the entire Pashtun belt in Pakistan should be under Afghan territorial control.[11] The Pakistan government's alleged support of the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan also remains a core point of contention between the two states. Given the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) spy agency's historical reliance on militant nonstate actors as proxies during the Soviet-Afghan war, it is quite possible that it would continue to engage them as a firewall against the threat of encirclement by a hostile India, adding to the complexity in the security equation.

One of the most direct consequences of war and violence in Afghanistan has been the flow of refugees into Pakistan that began with the Soviet-Afghan war in 1979 and continues in the post-9/11 landscape.[12] Pakistan has been home to the largest refugee community in the world for over three decades. At peak levels, approximately 5 million Afghan refugees lived in Pakistan.[13] Although it is claimed that 3.5 million Afghan refugees have been repatriated to their home country with the assistance of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) since March 2002, about 2.2 million Afghan refugees remain in Pakistan.[14] Afghan refugees who are often unable to find means of employment remain vulnerable to crime as well as recruitment by militant groups.

With protracted war conditions in Afghanistan and a supply of arms from different parts of the world, Pakistan also developed a weapons culture, now deeply entrenched in society. This became visible when Kalashnikov-toting men became a common sight in Pakistan's northwestern regions soon after the Soviet-Afghan war broke out.[15] All forms of small arms and ammunition have made their way into the country over the past three decades. The clearest and most adverse consequence of the unchecked arms traffic has been an exponential rise in the culture of violence and terrorist incidence across Pakistani society.

U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan—aimed at dismantling and disrupting international terrorist networks, including al-Qaeda and the Taliban—has also spilled over into Pakistan. It is most visible in the U.S. Predator drone campaign under way in FATA, the most violent region in the country. As noted elsewhere in this report, the civilian casualty rate from drone attacks remains disputed across various studies. According to the Washington, DC–based New America Foundation, between 2004 and 2010, the civilian casualty rate in the drone campaign was particularly high, at about 32 percent.[16] The year 2010 was seen as the deadliest in terms of number of fatalities, which according to the same source stood at 849.[17] The Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) reports 961 dead in drone strikes, an even higher number of casualties for the same year.[18] Since 2010, however, there has been a decrease in the number of drone strikes and people killed. In all, from the launch of the drone campaign in 2004 till July 2013, the New America Foundation reports between 2,044 to 3,377 people killed in 360 drone strikes, whereas PIPS reports 2,777 deaths in 342 drone strikes during the same period.[19] The deployment of drones, though selected for their precision, has fueled recruitment in militant organizations and solidified the resistance against the state in the form of an increasingly strong Pakistani Taliban movement, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The TTP often justifies its attacks as a response to the U.S. Predator drone strikes, which occur with the Pakistan government's tacit approval primarily in tribal areas. On another level, the legality of Predator drone strikes has been questioned by Phillip Alston, the United Nation's special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions, who argues that the use of Predator drones to carry out targeted killings lacks legal basis and may be in violation of international law. [20] Pakistani public opinion regarding this form of U.S. military engagement remains unfavorable, contributing to strong anti-U.S. sentiment.

The deployment of drones, though selected for their precision, has fueled recruitment in militant organizations and solidified the resistance against the state in the form of an increasingly strong Pakistani Taliban movement.

Domestic Conflict Trends by Region

Research findings suggest that Pakistan has generally experienced a significant rise in violence levels during approximately the past decade. The causes of violence vary regionally and involve both old and new conflict actors. The scope and intensity of violence also varies by region. Violence is most concentrated along the Afghan border in FATA and the province of KP. While FATA has historically been a zone of violence, KP was previously one of the most peaceful regions of Pakistan. Reports suggest that al-Qaeda- and Pakistani Taliban–led terrorist activity and Pakistan military operations have resulted in the highest number of violence-related fatalities. Karachi, Pakistan's largest city and economic engine, is another critical flashpoint. The city, which has experienced chronic instability since the mid-1980s, has demonstrated a tenfold increase in violence between 2006 and 2013 and remains volatile. Balochistan, Pakistan's largest province in terms of territory, has also experienced a dramatic increase in violence. Sectarian and terrorist activities have compounded high-intensity conflict in the province involving an armed insurgency and counterinsurgency operations. The scale, scope, and magnitude of violence in the province is unprecedented and unabated. During the past decade, Punjab, Pakistan's core

province, has experienced the least violence among all regions. Previously high levels of sectarian violence have not shown a significant propensity for reescalation. However, the intensity of terrorist attacks that have taken place in Punjab in the past decade has been dramatic and unprecedented, and the province provides a breeding ground for terrorist and militant recruits operating at national and transnational levels.

Federally Administered Tribal Areas

The FATA region, Pakistan's semiautonomous tribal frontier along the Afghan border, is the most volatile conflict zone in Pakistan.[21] A safe haven for local and transnational terrorist outfits and a hotbed of terrorist activity in the post-9/11 landscape, FATA is often dubbed the most dangerous place on earth. The South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) suggests that FATA is currently the most violent region in South Asia.[22] While FATA has been the most violent region for well over two decades, the incidence of violence in recent years has been unprecedented, both on a per capita basis and in absolute numbers.[23] Statistics on current levels of violence (recorded between 2009 and 2013) reveal approximately 16,578 casualties involving civilians, security forces, and militants as a consequence of sectarian strife, terrorist-related activity, Pakistan military operations, and the U.S. Predator drone campaign.[24] The Stimson Center reports that between 2002 and 2011 the FATA region experienced eighty-two mass casualty attacks resulting in 1,392 deaths, amounting to approximately 19 percent of the national total.[25] These figures suggest that FATA has the highest number of violent deaths in the country.[26] The severity of violence is significant given the region's small population of approximately 3.2 million, around 2.2 percent of Pakistan's total. [27]

While FATA has been the most violent region for well over two decades, the incidence of violence in recent years has been unprecedented, both on a per capita basis and in absolute numbers.

Divided into seven administrative agencies—Khyber, Kurram, Orakzai, Mohmand, Bajaur, North Waziristan, and South Waziristan—FATA is often described as an ungoverned space. The tribal agencies are not governed by Pakistan's constitution or legal codes, and law and order is instead maintained under a draconian legal framework in place since colonial rule. The federal government appoints political agents in each agency to supervise development, oversee the provision of services, and manage intertribal trade regulation.[28] These political agents hold sway in the tribal agencies by offering stipends to *maliks*, or tribal elders, a system widely perceived as unfavorable to human rights and development. The negligible pace of political and administrative reform in the region has led to an acute sense of alienation and disaffection across FATA. For instance, the Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR), a centuries-old, highly controversial legal framework instituted by the British, remains in place despite former prime minister Yusuf Raza Gilani's pledge to repeal it.[29] Under this law, the residents of FATA do not have the rights to appeal detention, to legal representation, or to provide reasoned evidence in their defense.

Some measures to reform the system were taken by the Gilani government, including efforts to bring FATA into the political mainstream through the extension of the Political Parties Act (2002) to the region in 2011, which permitted local political parties to conduct political activities and campaign for elections in the area, and the FATA Local Government Regulation of August 2012 to establish an elected local council system to build civilian governance capacity.[30] However, most of these proposed reforms remain at best cosmetic and vague. With the lack of a viable alternative to the FCR, the entire process appears to have failed to deliver, compounding the challenges of governance and political disarray. The possibility of people-centered development and meaningful reforms has been further undermined by the provision of sweeping arrest and detention powers to security forces through the regressive Regulation to Provide for Actions in Aid of Civil Power in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, passed in June 2011.[31]

Rise of Militancy and Terrorist Networks

The flow of arms from Afghanistan to FATA is an important factor enabling militancy and terrorism in the region in recent years. It can be traced to the Soviet-Afghan war (1979–88), when the region became a convenient training ground, operational base, and safe haven for the mujahideen (religious warriors). The mujahideen included Afghans waging jihad (religious struggle) and thousands of volunteers who had poured in from around the world to fight against the Red Army. Over the years, many foreign fighters, particularly of Arab and Central Asian origin, were able to integrate in FATA by marrying local women and bringing gifts in the form of money for the local tribes.[32] They remained in the region after the retreat of the Soviet forces. During the Soviet-Afghan war, FATA was also used as the primary supply conduit for arms and aid from the CIA, Saudi Arabia, and the ISI to support the Afghan jihad.

In tandem with these developments, then military ruler of Pakistan, General Zia ul-Haq, introduced his policy of Islamization, cultivating the unregulated institution of *madrassas* (religious seminaries) to win favor with the religious constituency and consolidate his rule. Many of these schools, particularly the orthodox Deobandi madrassas, flourished in the tribal belt and supplied graduates to the Afghan jihad.[33] Years later, former mujahideen, primarily of Deobandi orientation, returned to Pakistan organized as the Taliban. Rasul Bakhsh Rais notes that the Taliban are the product of two decades of interstate and civil warfare in Afghanistan.[34] Contrary to popular opinion, he argues, the Taliban are not a new entity; he refers to the most prominent commanders as "the veterans of the Mujahideen resistance."[35]

Post-9/11, FATA served as an operational base of al-Qaeda and other affiliated national and international terrorist organizations. According to the U.S. Department of State's *Country Reports on Terrorism 2012*, the organization has the "ability to inspire, plot and launch regional and transnational attacks from its safe haven in Western Pakistan, despite its leadership losses."[36] Although the core of al-Qaeda is now believed to have been significantly diminished, [37] it has over the years provided fertile grounds for the political and military organization of the TTP or Pakistani Taliban, allied with other local and transnational militant outfits, relying extensively on these networks to pursue its strategic objectives.[38] Though the precise number of terrorist actors affiliated with transnational militant organizations is not known, at least fourteen such organizations are active in Pakistan.[39] Of these, the TTP has emerged as one of the most prominent and potent groups.

Although the core of al-Qaeda is now believed to have been significantly diminished, it has over the years provided fertile grounds for the political and military organization of the TTP.

Originally established in 2007 as an umbrella outfit commanded by Baitullah Mehsud, the TTP at its peak is alleged to have encompassed tens of thousands of militants fighting Pakistani, Afghan, and coalition forces.[40] According to the Islamabad-based FATA Research Center, the TTP originally formed as an umbrella organization of 40 militant groups, but today it includes as many as 130 minor and major militant groups.[41] Its founder, Mehsud, was widely believed to have been responsible for masterminding Benazir Bhutto's assassination in December 2007, and in 2009, he was killed in a U.S. drone strike in a joint Pakistan-U.S. intelligence operation.[42] His death resulted in the fracturing of the TTP into many splinter groups, as well as a relative loss in its organizational capability under his successor, Hakimullah Mehsud. On November 1, 2013, Hakimullah Mehsud was also killed by a U.S. drone strike in the outskirts of Miranshah, the capital of North Waziristan. In the absence of a predesignated successor, the iron-fisted Maulana Fazlullah was elected the new chief of the TTP. While Fazlullah proved himself to be a ruthless commander during his two-year rule of the Swat Valley (2007– 09), and in leading a number of significant terrorist attacks in Pakistan, it is widely speculated that he may not be able to command widespread authority over the TTP because he lacks tribal af-

filiation with the Mehsud and Waziri tribes, which form the core of the organization.[43] He has been held responsible for organizing a number of terrorist attacks, including on both soft and high-profile targets, such as the killing of Asfandyar Amirzeb, the *nazim* (district administrator) of Swat and grandson of the Wali of Swat in December 2007; the attempted assassination of school girl activist Malala Yousafzai in October 2012; and the killing of Pakistani Major General Sanaullah Khan Niazi in September 2013.

Pakistan Military Operations

Between 2001 and 2010, the Pakistani military has conducted a number of operations in FATA province along the Afghan border. By one assessment, Pakistani troop levels along its frontiers with Afghanistan have ranged roughly between 55,000 and 145,000 from 2001 to 2011.[44] During 2011 and 2012, the Pakistan military carried out 144 and 107 operational attacks respectively against militants in various agencies of FATA.[45] Despite these efforts, terrorist activity in FATA in particular and in Pakistan in general has not abated significantly.

The Pakistan military deployed between seventy thousand and eighty thousand troops in South and North Waziristan agencies in FATA in Operation Al Mizan between 2002 and 2006 and Operation Zalzala in 2008.[46] Operation Zalzala was targeted primarily at Mehsud's network in South Waziristan. During the operation conducted in January 2008, the Pakistani military is reported to have attacked four thousand homes and displaced two hundred thousand locals.[47] Another military offensive by the name of Operation Sher Dil was launched in Bajaur Agency between August 2008 and February 2009. It resulted in the killing of at least one thousand Taliban militants and the displacement of thousands of locals in the combat zones.[48] The high-intensity confrontation between the military and Taliban militants and affiliated groups in FATA in 2008 led to the deaths of 3,067 people.[49]

A key Pakistan military offensive to dismantle the Mehsud-led Taliban bases in South Waziristan, Operation Rah-e-Nijat, was conducted between 2009 and 2010 with some support from the U.S. military and the CIA primarily through coordinated drone strikes.[50] During this operation, the Pakistan military deployed armor units with main battle tanks, infantry units equipped with heavy artillery and mortars, helicopter gunships, and fixed-wing aircraft.[51] In early June 2013, following the killing of TTP's second-in-command, Qari Waliur Rehman, in a drone strike in North Waziristan Agency, the Pakistan military stepped up its military operations in various parts of FATA, scaling up targeted operations in North and South Waziristan agencies and carrying out major offensives in Khyber and Kurram agencies.

While the SATP noted a minor 4 percent decline in terrorist-related casualties from 3,034 in 2011 to 2,901 in 2012, 2013 showed a significant decline with only 84 casualties reported from January to April in the FATA.[52] A more recent report by PIPS, spanning January to June, 2013, suggests that 248 people, including civilians, law enforcers, and tribal elders, were killed in 174 terrorist attacks, confirming a significant decline in terrorist-related casualties.[53]

Widespread devastation caused by the Pakistan military's counterterrorism operations has contributed to a strong sense of alienation among the politically disenfranchised and economically disgruntled communities in FATA.

The GPI notes that heavy fighting between the Pakistan military and the Taliban during 2010, particularly in Kurram and Orakzai agencies, led more than two hundred thousand people to flee from their homes.[54] Further, widespread devastation caused by the Pakistan military's counterterrorism operations has contributed to a strong sense of alienation among the politically disenfranchised and economically disgruntled communities in FATA. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre reported at least 415,000 conflict-displaced people from FATA as of December 31, 2012.[55] An additional 131,000 people are reported to have fled from their homes since mid-March 2013.[56]

U.S. Predator Drone Campaign

Since FATA has become the operational base of TTP and al-Qaeda in the post-9/11 landscape, it has become the target of the covert U.S. Predator drone campaign. Between 353 and 369 drone strikes have been reported from 2004 to July 2013, mainly in FATA and KP.[57] While only ten strikes were reportedly conducted between 2004 and 2007, the number has increased significantly since 2008.[58] Since 2008, 93 percent of all reported drone strikes have taken place in North and South Waziristan.[59] Since the inception of the Predator drone campaign in 2004 through mid-2013, the New America Foundation reports that drone strikes have killed an estimated 2,077–3,424 people, including between 1,620 and 2,783 suspected militants.[60]

Sectarian Violence

In 2007, FATA saw the highest levels of sectarian violence in the country, with two stints of continuous sectarian violence spanning twenty-four and twenty-six days in Khyber and Kurram agencies respectively, resulting in 1,663 fatalities (48 percent) out of a national total of 3,448.[61] Khyber and Kurram remained most affected by sectarian violence in 2008 in FATA, but other agencies including Orakzai and South Waziristan were also impacted by sectarian clashes.[62] General data on sectarian violence across the whole of FATA in 2008 are not available, but according to one report, Kurram, the worst-hit area, suffered approximately 1,125 fatalities.[63] Most of the clashes were between Shia and Sunni groups, but Mohmand agency experienced clashes between Salafi and Deobandi Taliban groups.[64] While Kurram has been troubled with sectarian violence since 1987, the Taliban presence in neighboring tribal agencies and their alleged support for Sunni groups is believed to have been a key factor in the exacerbation of sectarian clashes. Ironically, Sunni and Shia leaders are believed to have put an end to the sectarian warfare under pressure to come to terms by the militant Haqqani network.[65] Sectarian violence declined significantly between 2009 and 2011, with FATA recording a total of 366 casualties in forty-nine such clashes. [66] The de-escalation in violence levels was also partly the result of military operations, such as Operation Rah-e-Nijat, which as mentioned resulted in the killing of Baitullah Mehsud and the fracturing of the TTP.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Conditions in KP province, which borders and surrounds the FATA region, have deteriorated significantly in recent years. Between 1988 and 2005, KP was generally very stable, remarkably maintaining the lowest levels of violence in the country with 0.9 casualties recorded per year per one hundred thousand people compared with 3.3 casualties per year per one hundred thousand people in the rest of the country. [67] Recent evidence suggests that its landscape has become extremely volatile since 2005, and it now ranks as the second most violent region after FATA.[68] Between 2005 and 2012, KP recorded approximately 11,862 casualties involving civilians, security forces, and militants, primarily as a result of terrorist-related activity and Pakistan military operations.[69]

On an encouraging note, SATP reports that the year 2012 witnessed a considerable decrease in terrorist-related fatalities in KP. There were 656 fatalities in 147 incidents reported in 2012, compared to 1,206 fatalities in 242 incidents of terrorism in 2011.[70] PIPS data show a considerably lower number of fatalities in 2011 in KP, with 820 killed, but it suggests that this figure was the highest in Pakistan in terrorism-related violence during this period.[71] PIPS also notes that 1,684 people suffered injuries in KP during the same year, another indicator of the violent impact of terrorist strikes.[72] For the first six months of 2013, the number of killed and injured

is estimated by PIPS at 548 and 1,212 respectively in 351 attacks.[73] SATP data (from January to mid-August 2013) show 620 people killed in various incidents, including 100 terrorists, 124 security personnel, and 396 civilians.[74] Despite the decline in terrorist-related casualties, KP continues to suffer at the hands of terrorist organizations. Many prominent political and religious figures and security personnel have been targeted and killed, including provincial minister Bashir Ahmed Bilour, Awami National Party (ANP) parliamentarian Alamzeb Khan, Peshawar Deputy Inspector General of Police Malik Saad, and Frontier Constabulary Commandant Sifwat Ghayur.[75] Also of note are terrorist attacks on sensitive civil military installations, such as the Kamra Airbase and the Bacha Khan International Airport in Peshawar.[76]

Sectarian Violence

KP experienced peak levels of sectarian violence in 2009 and continues to suffer such attacks today. Between 2006 and 2011, the provincial capital of Peshawar and the cities of Dera Ismail Khan (D. I. Khan) and Hangu remained the flashpoints of sectarian violence.[77] In 2008 and 2009, levels of sectarian violence in KP were the highest in the country, with the highest numbers of attacks reported in D.I. Khan.[78] The city experienced sixteen major attacks and sixty-three fatalities in 2008.[79] The attacks have been attributed to the increasing strength of the banned Sunni Deobandi sectarian groups Sipah-e-Sahaba and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), which mainly target the Shia community. [80] In 2009, a total of forty-seven sectarian attacks and seventy-two fatalities were reported in D.I. Khan, the highest number in a national total of 104 incidents involving sectarian violence. [81]

While there has been a national increase in the level of sectarian violence,[82] KP recorded a de-escalation of sectarian conflict with fourteen sectarian attacks in 2010 and thirteen in 2011.[83] SATP notes that both the TTP and TTP-linked sectarian outfit LeJ were responsible for these attacks.[84] In 2010 and 2011, other cities of KP, including Kohat, Mardan, Nowshera, Swat, and Swabi, have also experienced low levels (between one and two incidents) of sectarian attacks. This decline, according to Muhammad Amir Rana from PIPS, "has partly been attributed to Pakistan's military operations, improved surveillance by law enforcement agencies and death of key militants in U.S. drone strikes in FATA."[85] But, Rana argues, stability in the province remains elusive owing to poor governance and weak political institutions. From 2012 through mid-2013, sectarian-related terrorist attacks and violence have been concentrated mainly in Peshawar, D. I. Khan, Hangu, Khyber, and Orakzai agencies. During this period, twenty sectarian attacks were reported. Sunni sectarian groups—including LeJ, Ahle Sunnat wal-Jamaat Pakistan (ASWJP), Sunni Tehrik, Jaishul Islam, and Jundullah—and Shia sectarian group Sipah-e-Muhammad Pakistan were responsible for most of these attacks. TTP has also claimed responsibility for many attacks targeting members of the Shia community.[86]

Military Operations

The Pakistan military conducted two major military operations against the Taliban in the scenic Swat Valley, Malakand and Buner, known as Operations Rah-e-Haq and Rah-e-Raast, commencing at the end of 2007 and concluding in mid-2009. In 2008 alone, 2,944 people were killed as a result of these operations in the province.[87] The operations are believed to have led to the displacement of up to 2.5 million people.[88] The total number of civilian casualties during this period remains unknown.[89] However, SATP reports that between 2005 and 2012, 11,862 lives have been lost in KP as a whole as a result of continuous engagement between security forces and

militants.[90] Correspondingly, the PIPS reports 13,180 killed and 16,523 injured between January 2005 and June 2013.[91] The casualties reported include civilians, security forces, and militants.

Sindh

In the last decade, the third-highest number of fatalities in Pakistan has been reported in Sindh province.[92] However, 93 percent of the fatalities are concentrated in the provincial capital of Karachi, Pakistan's largest city and economic engine.[93] While Karachi has been rife with violence since the mid-1980s, evidence suggests that the intensity of political violence in Karachi was significantly reduced between 1999 and 2005. Prior to 2005, Sindh ranked as the second most violent region after FATA in terms of casualties on per capita basis, although in terms of absolute numbers, the province has been a conflict hotspot since the mid-1980s.[94] Karachi's initial experience with intense political violence involving ethnic clashes resulted in at least 9,000 fatalities between 1985 and 1998.[95] During this phase, the highest levels of violence were observed in the years 1994 and 1995, which recorded 1,113 and 2,095 casualties, respectively.[96]

Karachi observed a tenfold rise in the scale of political acts of violence and related deaths between 2006 and 2011.[97] The years 2012 and 2013 have demonstrated significant escalation of violence with attacks of various nature involving civilians, criminal gangs, security forces, terrorists, and militants.[98] The year 2013 has seen the worst violence levels in the history of Karachi with 2,700 people killed.[99] Ethnic target killings, sectarian violence, terrorism, political riots, and demonstrations are frequent in the province.[100]

Ethnopolitical Turf Wars

With an ever-expanding metropolitan population of approximately eighteen million, Karachi is one of the world's largest cities, and demographic changes have contributed significantly to a sharp resurgence in ethno-sectarian violence in the past decade.[101]

The ethnic composition of the city has transformed since 1941, when Sindhis formed more than 62 percent of the population and the Urdu-speaking Muhajir immigrant population from the territories of northern India represented a mere 6 percent.[102] Pakistan's last countrywide census was held in 1998, making it difficult to state exact population figures, but by one recent conservative estimate, Karachi is now approximately 43 percent Muhajir, 17 percent Pashtun, 11 percent Punjabi, 6 percent Sindhi, 5 percent Balochi, 3 percent Seraiki, and 2 percent Hazara or Gilgiti.[103] Another high-end estimate of the Muhajir population in Karachi suggests that they now form well over 50 percent of the population, with Pashtuns representing about 22 percent of the city's population.[104]

Regardless of the exact figures, Karachi is now believed to be home to the largest urban population of Pashtuns, surpassing predominantly Pashto-speaking cities, such as Peshawar and Quetta.[105] Relations between the Muhajirs and the Pashtuns have been tenuous, as conflict is driven by economic and political competition for greater control over land and resources. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan reports that "much of the violence is aimed at changing the demographics of those constituencies where there is an unequal mixed ethnic population among a larger homogenous one."[106] Much of the ethnic violence in Karachi in recent years has involved turf wars between rival gangs backed by political parties, including the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM),[107] a political party founded to represent the interests of the Muhajir community, and the ANP, a Pashtun nationalist party. More recently, Baloch gangs allegedly associated with the Pakistan People's Party have also been involved in clashes with the

Much of the ethnic violence in Karachi in recent years has involved turf wars between rival gangs backed by political parties.

MQM. Additionally, Jamaat-e-Islami, a prominent religious political party, is seen as having some responsibility for the ethnic and political violence.[108]

The political turf battles in Karachi have resulted in target killings, kidnappings for ransom, and extortions; they are exacerbated further by a large presence of underworld gangs, some of which are allegedly supported by political parties, and those operating as independent criminals.[109] Kidnappings and killings are so common that people are afraid to leave their homes and send their children to schools.[110] Afghan and Pakistani Taliban groups are also consolidating in Karachi, engaging in criminal activity, recruiting and fundraising, and, in the case of the TTP, organizing attacks on security personnel and political or sectarian rivals.[111]

Sectarian Violence

On the sectarian front, most of the recent violence in Karachi has involved target killings between Sunnis and Shias. PIPS reports suggest that sectarian violence has been steadily on the rise in Sindh in recent years with most of the incidents concentrated in Karachi.[112] Between 2009 and 2011, 98 sectarian attacks resulting in 191 reported fatalities. Intrasectarian violence between the orthodox Deobandi Sunnis, such as the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), and the relatively moderate Barelvi Sunnis, represented by the Sunni Tehreek, has also increased.[113] A number of militant organizations are engaged in sectarian violence in Karachi.

One of the most prominent outfits active—not only in Karachi but elsewhere in Pakistan—is the SSP, the largest Deobandi sectarian organization in the country. Established in the 1980s, it was renamed Ahle Sunnat wal-Jamaat Pakistan (ASWJP) after it was banned by the government in 2002 and continues to operate openly under this banner today. The SSP's militant affiliate wing, the LeJ, has claimed responsibility for multiple sectarian attacks in Karachi and Balochistan and is believed to maintain links with al-Qaeda and the Pakistani Taliban. The LeJ have organized suicide bombings and attacked Western targets in Karachi and participated in insurgencies in Afghanistan and Kashmir.[114]

Other radical elements in Karachi include the Tehreek-e-Islami Lashkar-e-Muhammadi (TILM), formed by militants from banned Sunni outfits Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM). TILM is capable of organizing high-intensity attacks with sophisticated weaponry and seeks to target non-Muslim and foreign NGOs.[115] Shia militant organizations active in Karachi include the Sipah-e-Muhammad Pakistan, established in the 1990s to counter and attack SSP/ASWJP and LeJ targets.[116] The outfit, now banned in Pakistan, is recognized by the United States as a foreign terrorist organization.

Balochistan

Balochistan is Pakistan's largest province in terms of its geographic size, comprising about 42 percent of the national territory. It ranks as the fourth most violent region over the past decade.[117] The province has experienced a significant escalation in violence levels since 2002–03.[118] PIPS reports the loss of 4,320 lives between September 11, 2001, and June 30, 2013, as a result of different types of political and extremist violence.[119] Another report by the SATP estimates 3,679 fatalities in Balochistan between January 2004 and January 2013 alone.[120] Insurgency and counterinsurgency operations, sectarian strife, and the presence of local and transnational terrorist outfits in the province have contributed to an increasingly complex and deteriorating security landscape. An examination of Balochistan's security environment preceding the wave of escalating social and political unrest in the province during the past decade reveals that the security landscape has changed radically in the province. High-intensity conflict between security forces and nationalist groups

has contributed to an internal displacement crisis in the province, with at least 140,000 persons affected; these include members of the Bugti tribe, Punjabi settlers, and Shias. [121]

Insurgency

Balochistan has had a troubled relationship with the federal government since its controversial accession to Pakistan in March 1948.[122] Despite an abundance of natural resources, Balochistan remains the least developed part of Pakistan. The federal government owes billions of Pakistani rupees to Balochistan in natural gas revenue arrears, compounding the trust deficit.[123] In 2004, under the interim setup of Prime Minister Shujaat Hussain, a thirty-eight-member committee was formed to make recommendations addressing Balochistan's grievances and its relationship with the center.[124] Based on the findings of this committee, subsequent reconciliation committees, and provincial devolution plans proposed during the 2008 elections, the former government of Prime Minister Gilani announced the "Aghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan" (Initiation of Rights and Privileges for Balochistan) package in November 2009.[125] The package spelled out the government's determination to correct the wrongs of history by conferring the political, economic, and cultural rights of the province. Aghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan was designed as a comprehensive process providing for, among other measures, constitutional reforms for increased provincial autonomy and local government control; a restructuring of the revenue-sharing formulas of the National Finance Commission Award, shifting from previous population-based formulas that had left Balochistan with a small share of national resources; increased educational quotas and employment programs; and the release of political workers and investigation into missing persons cases and the death of Baloch nationalist leader Nawab Akbar Bugti in 2006.[126]

Recent reports suggest that the provincial share of the national budget has more than doubled and that the center has also started a process of paying back natural gas revenue arrears to the province under the Aghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan package. [127] However, the perception of exploitation of resources, widespread poverty, chronic underdevelopment, and disproportionate underrepresentation of the Baloch people in state institutions continue to challenge the relations between the central government and the province. The province has seen five armed revolts since Pakistan's inception in 1948, 1954, 1966, and 1977. The roots of a fifth ongoing insurgency were sown in 2002, when Pakistan military set up cantonments in the resource-rich Kohlu and Sui districts of Balochistan, exacerbating antistate resentment.[128] 2005, prominent Baloch nationalist leaders Nawab Akbar Bugti and Mir Balach Marri issued a fifteen-point list of demands to the federal government calling for greater autonomy and control over the province's resources, protection for the Baloch populace, and an end to building of military bases.[129] In August 2006, Bugti's death in a military crackdown ordered by former president Pervez Musharraf triggered a sharp spike in violence widely regarded as fueling the conditions for the current insurgency.

The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) is the most prominent militant separatist group in the province. It is headed by Harbyar Marri, who currently resides in London and is highly influential in Quetta, Bolan, Kech, Khuzdar, and Kohlu districts in Balochistan. The BLA is also allegedly active in Karachi and bordering parts of South Punjab, where it is believed to be involved in criminal activities such as abduction, extortion, and armed robbery.[130] Another influential militant organization is the Baloch Republican Army, led by Brahamdagh Bugti, whose membership is mostly drawn from the Bugti tribe. In 2012 alone, the group carried out 121 terrorist attacks in Dera Bugti, Naseerabad, Dera Murad Jamali, Barkhan, and Loralai districts. [131]

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Lashkar-e-Balochistan, led by Javed Mengal, is an emerging insurgent group concentrated in the Khuzdar, Panjgur, Gwadar, and Turbat areas of Balochistan. The organization has expanded its terrorist operations in Punjab and Karachi. It is suspected to have been involved in terrorist attacks on the Chinese consulate in Karachi in July 2012 and a blast at the Lahore Railway Station in August 2012. The Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), another active insurgent group, is led by Dr. Allah Nazar Baloch. It operates across Balochistan but is primarily focused in the southern coastal Makran belt. The United Baloch Army, led by Mureed Baloch, is a splinter group of the BLF, which is known for attacking settlers from Punjab and Pakhtun areas. On June 15, 2013, the official residency—and historic landmark—of Pakistan's founding father, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, was attacked, torched, and razed to the ground; the BLA claimed responsibility.[132] Besides these organizations, many other actors—such as the TTP, Tehreek-e-Taliban Balochistan, and progovernment groups such as the Baloch Musallah Difa'a Tanzeem, led by Shafiq Mengal—have played a role in the fractured security landscape of the province.[133]

PIPS reports that most violence in Balochistan is generated by the insurgency. According to the think tank, between September 2001 and June 2013, 2,430 people were killed and 4,692 injured in 3,694 attacks by nationalist insurgents.[134] PIPS has also documented twenty-six operational attacks by security forces during the same period leading to ninety killed and fifty-two injured.[135]

Fatalities reported in Balochistan, however, do not account for the increasing number of enforced disappearances, people who are frequently found dead.[136] The victims are mostly from the ethnic Baloch and Brahui communities.[137] The enforced disappearances are allegedly a dynamic of the ongoing confrontation between various Baloch insurgent groups—as they demand autonomy, greater political rights, and control over their resources and the security forces—and the Pakistani government. In 2012, Pakistan's then minister of interior, Rehman Malik, acknowledged that 2,390 people had been reported missing in the province while also questioning the credibility of the reports filed on behalf of the suspected victims.[138] International human rights organizations have linked the enforced disappearances to alleged extrajudicial killings by members of the Pakistani security services.[139] Members of insurgent groups are also allegedly killed in target attacks by security forces.[140] Punjabis and Urdu-speaking settlers in the province, particularly professionals, such as doctors, engineers, and teachers, have been killed in targeted attacks by insurgent outfits who regard them as usurping local resources.

Sectarian Conflict

Hazara Shia immigrants from neighboring Afghanistan have borne the brunt of sectarian violence in Balochistan province. Most of the world's eight to ten million Hazaras live in Afghanistan; facing persecution there, they have sought safety through emigration for well over a century, including to neighboring Pakistan. Approximately 25,000 Hazaras are believed to have emigrated to Pakistan over the past decade, where the current Hazara population is now estimated at around 600,000.[141]

Within Pakistan, the Hazara community has come under increased attack in recent years. The LeJ and SSP Deobandi Sunni sectarian groups claim most of the attacks against the Hazara Shias;[142] these militant organizations often mobilize their manpower based in Punjab, Sindh, and KP against targets in Balochistan.[143] A report by the provincial home department in Balochistan estimates that more than 450 Shias and Hazaras were killed in the province in over 110 sectarian attacks between 2008 and 2011 alone.[144] This is likely a low-end estimate.

In 2012, more than one hundred Hazaras were killed in the province, mostly in the provincial capital of Quetta and the Mastung district.[145] A single mass sectarian attack on January 10, 2013, claimed more than one hundred Hazara Shia lives in the capital city Quetta; these losses were further compounded by another brutal suicide bombing in a vegetable market on February 16, 2013, that claimed another eighty-four lives.[146] The trends in sectarian violence appear to be consistent over the years, showing a propensity to increase rather than decline. From January 2012 to June 2013, 311 Shia community members have been killed and another 558 have been injured in sixty-one attacks.[147]

Terrorist Organizations

A number of transnational and local terrorist outfits have been active in Balochistan during the past decade. Among them, al-Qaeda, the Quetta Shura Taliban, and Tehreek-e-Taliban Balochistan are prominent.[148] Operations by these groups in the province have further exacerbated existing separatist conflict conditions. Chaman, a city bordering Afghanistan, and the provincial capital Quetta appear to have the greatest Taliban presence.[149] The province has been noted as the location of the highest number of attacks against NATO supply trucks bound for Afghanistan, with 158 attacks on NATO trucks reported between 2008 and June 2013.[150] SATP has also noted the arrests of several al-Qaeda and Afghan Taliban militants in the province since 2009.[151]

Punjab

By virtue of its economic strength and large population size, Punjab is considered the core province of Pakistan. Evidence suggests that it is currently the least violent of all provinces in the country.[152] Although the total number of violence-related deaths is much lower in relative terms compared with other regions in Pakistan, the absolute numbers of violence-related deaths are indicative of significant instability in the province. As Jacob Shapiro and Saad Gulzar note, "The average death toll per militant attack in Punjab has increased by more than 1000% since 2005, and that for terrorist attacks has more than doubled."[153] This dramatic increase in casualties is attributed to the deadly nature of terrorist attacks in the province. The assessment points toward an unprecedented rise in terrorist-related activity in Punjab.[154] While the incidence of political riots and demonstrations did not increase significantly between 1988 and 2010 in the province, the number of casualties associated with such incidents more than doubled.[155]

Militant and Terrorist Organizations and Operations

Punjab is home to a number of extremist militant organizations, particularly those based in the province's south.[156] Over the years, the country has experienced a large number of attacks organized by these groups on their own and in collaboration with local and transnational networks. According to the SATP, between 2006 and 2012, a total of 1,495 people were reported killed in Punjab as a result of terrorist-related activity.[157] The first six months of 2013 claimed seven lives and twenty injured in fifteen such attacks.[158] Many of these groups are also active beyond Pakistan's borders; prominent Punjabi militant outfits such as HuM, JeM, and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) have been responsible for cross-border attacks in the Indian-held Kashmiri territory.[159] The Pakistan government's alleged reliance on these groups as proxies in its protracted dispute with India has long been a source of deep mistrust between the nuclear archrivals.[160] The involvement of these groups in the terrorist attacks on the Indian Parliament in December 2001

led to a tense military standoff in 2002, when India and Pakistan were widely believed to be on the brink of nuclear war. Likewise, the terrorist attacks in Mumbai in 2008 resulted in India's suspension of a composite dialogue process under way between the two neighbors.

Increasingly Punjab province is also being watched as a supply line of money and new recruits for locally focused terrorist groups. The TTP have been actively recruiting in the province directly and through their alliances with various militant organizations. According to Pakistani intelligence reports, they are known to be openly raising funds in the province.[161] While a 2010 report published by the Brookings Institution suggests that there are approximately two thousand Punjabi militant group members affiliated with the TTP, more recent accounts suggest that the number is probably much higher and growing.[162]

Sectarian Violence

Sectarian violence in Pakistan has strong roots in Punjab. The district of Jhang emerged as the epicenter of sectarian violence directed against Shias in the late 1980s and 1990s. The SSP—now known as the ASWJP—was founded in the district along with the LeJ and subsequently "institutionalized the politics of sectarian violence in 1985."[163] SSP militancy targeting the Shia community went unchecked by the state for many years. Some measures were taken by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif to deter the SSP, resulting in an assassination attempt against him.[164] The SSP's ongoing influence across Pakistan, and the activities of the LeJ, has been a major factor in spreading anti-Shia violence to other parts of Punjab and Pakistan.[165]

A report by the Jinnah Institute suggests that within a period of two years (September 2010–12), Punjab experienced sixty-seven incidents of extremist violence, including thirty-five interfaith attacks, twenty-eight sectarian attack, and three attacks on religious shrines, among others.[166] These attacks led to the loss of 106 lives and 528 injured. Punjab showed a significantly higher number of incidents of sectarian violence during the 1990s than during the past decade.[167] PIPS data on incidents of sectarian violence in Punjab between September 11, 2001, and June 30, 2013, document thirty-two attacks that resulted in 242 dead and 560 injured. These attacks peaked in 2010, with twelve attacks claiming 111 lives and 222 casualties,[168] and have since declined, with only five attacks reported in the year 2011, three in 2012, and only one as of July 1, 2013.[169] Data suggest that while sectarian violence has abated in Punjab in recent years, it could potentially flare up at any time given the presence of militant organizations presently focusing on other regions in Pakistan.

Gilgit-Baltistan

Gilgit-Baltistan, formerly known as the Northern Areas of Pakistan, is also a conflict hotspot, although the level of violence is significantly lower than other zones of violence due to low population density. The region lies in a strategic location along KP's north and to the west of the disputed Jammu and Kashmir territory; it also shares borders with China and Afghanistan. Gilgit-Baltistan is the only majority-Shia region in an otherwise predominantly Sunni Muslim country and has been a flashpoint of sectarian violence over the past two decades in particular. Prior to the 1970s, the Gilgit-Baltistan area was generally peaceful.[170] The abrogation of the State Subject Rule by former prime minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, a policy prohibiting nonlocals from acquiring land and other assets, was the initial trigger that exacerbated the politics of ethnic and sectarian identity in the region during the 1970s.[171] Although sectarian tensions between Sunnis and Shias have been on the rise since 1973, they did not escalate to armed conflict until May 1988, when a Shia insurgency demanding wider rights for the people

broke out.[172] Izhar Hunzai notes that a combination of factors have compounded the problem and contributed to local violence. These factors include General Zia's Sunni-oriented policies of Islamization through the 1980s, the ideological contagion of the Afghan jihad during the decadelong Soviet-Afghan war, the associated spillover of religious extremism in other parts of Pakistan, and demographic engineering by the state.[173] Other sources confirm that the denial of political representation in the national government and policies favoring Sunni migration in Gilgit-Baltistan have aggrieved the local communities and upset the traditional demographic balance.[174]

Sectarian Violence

From 1988 to March 2011, 122 sectarian murder cases were registered in the jurisdiction of Gilgit police.[175] According to police records, since 1988, a total of 229 people have been reported killed as a result of sectarian clashes—of those killed, 125 were Shias and 96 Sunnis.[176] Victims also included seven members of the Ismaili and one member of the Noor Bakhsi minority sects in the district.[177] PIPS data recorded between September 11, 2001, and June 30, 2013, suggest that sectarian groups in Gilgit-Baltistan organized fifty-seven terrorist attacks and six sectarian clashes.[178] The year 2012 was a particularly deadly one for Gilgit-Baltistan, claiming eighty lives as a result of sectarian violence.[179] On the night of June 23, 2013, eight foreign mountaineers—five Ukrainians, three Chinese, and a Russian—were killed at their base camp while trekking the Nanga Parbat Mountain. The nighttime raid was among the worst attacks on foreigners in Pakistan in a decade. Responsibility for the attack was claimed by the Janud-e-Hafza faction of the TTP, which, according to its spokesperson, was intended to "avenge the May 29th killing of Waliur Rehman" in a drone strike.[180]

Key sectarian militant groups in Gilgit-Baltistan include the anti-Shia ASWJP and the pro-Shia Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Fiqha-e-Jaffria, both active since General Zia's rule.[181] The Shia group Sipah-Muhammadi Pakistan is also active in the region.[182] The nexus between sectarian outfits and local and transnational jihadist groups is an important factor contributing to violence in the area. Hunzai notes that the region's proximity to Taliban and al-Qaeda strongholds makes it vulnerable to their influence.[183] In the same vein, a report by the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency notes that the influence of the Taliban has contributed significantly to preexisting sectarian schisms, exacerbating the security environment.[184] The TTP have also claimed responsibility for their engagement in anti-Shia attacks.[185] Likewise, al-Qaeda is known to have colluded with the LeJ to target the Shia community in many cities around Pakistan, including Gilgit.[186]

Conclusions and Recommendations

Since partition from India and independence from British colonial rule in 1947, Pakistan has navigated a checkered military and civilian political trajectory whereby the economic growth and political development process has been interrupted time and again by competing political and military interests. Even when democratically elected civilian leaders have been at the helm of political power, key state institutions and policies appear to have been predominantly under the control of the military. Enabling the military's intervention in affairs of government, civilian regimes in Pakistan have often leaned toward the institution as an instrument for short-term solutions to deep-seated social and political problems and unrest. Long-term people-centered approaches promoting socioeconomic development, equitable and just provision of human rights, and conflict resolution processes to address genuine grievances of disaffected communi-

ties have generally been overlooked. Government by successive military and civilian regimes has traditionally served the interests of the ruling rather than the ruled.

Corruption levels and the ineptitude of various democratically elected governments in Pakistan have over the years served to undermine the credibility of the democratic process itself. The military by virtue of its capacity to enforce a relatively greater semblance of law and order in the country was, for a long time, the most highly respected institution of the state. In Pakistan's recent history, however—particularly since retired general Pervez Musharraf's nine-year-long rule (1999–2008)—there has been a dramatic reduction in the society's appetite for the militarization of politics and government. In a demonstration of this shift toward democratic consciousness across Pakistani society, the most recent elections held in May 2013 were the first occasion in the country's political history that an elected government, having completed a full five-year term uninterrupted by a military coup d'etat, handed over power to a new government also elected by popular vote. Regrettably, however, military dictatorships and civilian authoritarianism throughout Pakistan's history have undermined the development of robust state institutions upholding the social contract, the principle that government exists to serve the interests of society rather than those of the state and the ruling elites.

The state's unwillingness or inability to adequately provide public goods and services and justice and security, coupled with poor socioeconomic development, have extensively undermined its legitimacy, most evident in the zones of violence identified in this report. Pervasive insecurity; ungoverned spaces; parallel legal systems; the erosion of the social contract; the acute perception of relative deprivation; and ethnic, religious, and sectarian fragmentation are among some of the factors challenging the state's writ, thereby sowing the seeds of political and extremist violence and perpetuating protracted conflict. The state's own security-centered posturing continues to spur confrontations with various groups across the country, exacerbating the perception of alienation and victimization in many regions affected by violence.

The state's security-centered posturing continues to spur confrontations, exacerbating the perception of alienation and victimization in many regions affected by violence.

Data suggest that during the past decade violence has become endemic across many parts of Pakistan. The country's own experience suggests that if the existing conditions persist, the country could face escalation of violence levels, widespread lawlessness, and potential fragmentation. There is a dire need for a robust effort at good governance and people-centered policy reform where socioeconomic development is accorded high priority to mitigate the perception of alienation and marginalization among various groups. Appropriate institutional responses by the state, particularly in the conflict-affected regions identified in this report, are critical and necessary to transform the volatile environment.

Given the diverse and broad spectrum of conflicts afflicting Pakistan, it is important to analyze and address each conflict in its own context and plan for comprehensive state stabilization and peacebuilding processes entailing both short- and long-term measures. While providing a comprehensive framework for conflict resolution and transformation in Pakistan's various zones of violence is beyond the scope of this study, the authors recommend prioritizing policy intervention in those regions most affected by violence. These regions include FATA and KP, Karachi, and Balochistan.

FATA and KP

For several decades, FATA and KP have been adversely affected by the spillover of conflict in neighboring Afghanistan. The conflict contagion, including the flow of illicit arms, narcotics, and nonstate actors, has been compounded by homegrown elements. Over the years, many militant outfits have germinated as a consequence of Pakistan's support for the Afghan jihad

of the 1980s. This is most evident in FATA and KP (as elsewhere) in the presence of transnational outfits and their nexus with indigenous militant groups. The clearest example of this is the unprecedented phenomenon of al-Qaeda- and Pakistani Taliban-led terrorism in FATA and KP, the most violence-prone regions over the past decade. To curb the illegal passage of nonstate actors, Pakistan's newly elected government, headed by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, should ensure effective control and surveillance of its porous borders using technologies such as biometrics. Border patrols should be enhanced through electronic measures and equipment. The government should also discourage private funding by international actors, state parties, and donors to individual organizations supporting networks of madrassas in FATA and KP as in the rest of the country.

The culture of appeasement, support, and protection rendered to extremist elements by political actors as well as vested interest groups and agencies must be curtailed through a sustained effort. The government should especially be mindful that when peace accords with militants have neglected to address the critical issues of de-weaponization and demobilization, they often result in emboldening nonstate outfits, with FATA and KP witnessing an associated rise in militancy and lawlessness. The organization of private militia and citizen armies, in particular, should be discontinued. Creating "aman lashkars" (peace militias) or jihadi groups as a proxy for the state, whether they operate within or across borders is counterproductive, often resulting in arming and training groups that may otherwise not engage in the spectrum of political and extremist violence.

FATA requires a comprehensive political and economic development strategy to engender lasting stability. This strategy calls for graduated policy interventions to transform existing political and legal structures. Robust short- and long-term development plans must be put in place for improving the economic conditions of the local communities and for integrating local communities with the socioeconomic mainstream of the country. Measures announced by former prime minister Gilani to abolish the Frontier Crimes Regulation were a welcome first step. Yet the delay in its implementation is widely perceived in FATA as the government's apathy toward the fundamental human rights of the people.[187] Constitutional measures to effectively integrate FATA with the mainstream political system through the abolition of its special (yet unfavorable) status and the swift implementation and monitoring of legal reforms to support the socioeconomic development process are imperative.[188]

In areas affected by militancy, the government should aim for a greater balance in political, economic, and military interventions. Military operations should aim to minimize the extent of collateral damage. Swift reconstruction and rehabilitation of communities affected by counterterrorism campaigns, including through the provision of speedy and cost-effective access to justice, could reduce the margin for exploitation by nonstate actors and would help build the government's credibility.

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Karachi (Sindh)

Karachi presents another very critical zone of violence with strong implications for Pakistan's overall stability, especially given its economic significance for the country. Demographic pressures, a high crime rate, sectarian strife, and terrorist activity have turned the city into a boiling cauldron. The nexus between extremists, militants, terrorists, and criminals is very strong in the provincial metropolis. Analysis of the incidence of violence suggests that the underlying political and economic causes of the city's troubles range from intense demographic pressures to poor delivery of public services, from competition for greater control of its political and economic

resources to the lack of a policy to address deep-seated sectarian and ethnic strife. The city has a strong propensity for volatility and forms a microcosm of sectarian and ethnic schisms evident in various parts of the country.

Huma Yusuf aptly notes that "the key to Karachi's stability is a representative power-sharing agreement among the major political parties that reflect the city's evolving demographics."[189] Going forward, the capacity of the government to respond to the increasing demands of urban management through greater investments in public infrastructure and the provision of security to Karachi's citizenry are of utmost importance. Security sector reform responsive to the needs of the people through more effective, efficient, and legitimate mechanisms for law enforcement and the provision of justice should be a policy priority for the provincial and federal government. Security sector reform should reflect greater transparency in procedures and accountability and also encourage local participation in the review process. Unemployed youth are especially vulnerable to recruitment by nonstate militant actors and also partly responsible for Karachi's high crime rate. Creating meaningful employment opportunities for the city's large youth bulge, often a feature of megacities and, in this case, reflective of Karachi's realities, is equally critical for engendering a sustainable social order.[190]

Balochistan

The insurgency in Balochistan has emerged as a significant destabilizing factor for Pakistan. The ongoing armed insurgency—the fifth one since the country's inception in 1947—is a clear manifestation of the government's mismanagement of its relations with the province and the acute sense of alienation pervasive in Balochistan. Insecurity in the province is further exacerbated by the influx of Afghan Taliban and terrorist operations by local Taliban and sectarian outfits.[191] Trends in violence suggest an increasingly deteriorating environment with grave implications for Pakistan's cohesion. A comprehensive plan to integrate the Baloch population into the political and economic mainstream through institutional restructuring is imperative. The Aghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan package, if implemented in letter and spirit, could go a long way toward infusing trust and building confidence between the center and the province. Increased engagement of local stakeholders in policymaking and implementation would bolster efforts at good governance. Law enforcement by civilian agencies through adequate mobilization of resources respectful of the Baloch sociocultural landscape and a reassessment of current military engagement in the province are important in this regard.

The role of intelligence agencies in diffusing insecurity in Balochistan, as elsewhere in the country, is an important concern. Extrajudicial disappearances and killings must come to an end. Intelligence agencies must be reformed to ensure that they operate within the bounds of law, such that they are perceived as effective and efficient and conform with human rights conventions and laws. There is a strong need for increased accountability and transparency in their code of conduct for influencing Pakistan's interests and building greater credibility for the Pakistani state locally and internationally. While in practical terms it would be a challenge for intelligence agencies to maintain transparency in their operations, parliamentary and judicial oversight could provide a mechanism for enhancing and ensuring the professionalism and effectiveness of intelligence services in responding to Pakistan's security dilemmas, both internal and external.

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