

## General election 2018: Trends of terrorist and political violence

*A Pak Institute for Peace Studies' (PIPS) report*

Although attacks on political leaders and workers have become a regular feature of terrorist violence in Pakistan, frequency of such attacks usually increases before and during election times. Similarly, supporters and workers of different parties are also seen engaged in incidents of political violence in terms of armed clashes as well as attacks during election campaign and on the polling day.

Unlike 2013 election, when terrorist violence against political leaders, workers and election-related gathering and rallies, etc., had picked up at least 3 months before the election month (May 2013), this time much of such violence happened during the election month (July 2018).

On the whole, 18 terrorist attacks took place from May 1st to July 25th (the polling day) 2018 – including 3 suicide blasts – which claimed 183 lives and injured 323 others. Seven of these attacks were carried out by Baloch and Sindhi nationalist insurgent group, which were low-intensity and caused injuries to 26 people. Nonetheless, all 183 fatalities reported in such attacks resulted from 11 attacks perpetrated by the Pakistani Taliban such as the TTP and affiliated groups of like Ghazi Force Lal Masjid.

**Table 1: Terrorist attacks against election-related targets (May to July 2018)**

District	Attacks	Killed	Injured	Responsible group
Bannu	3	5	38	TTP
Chagai	1	0	20	Nationalist insurgents
D.I. Khan	1	4	2	TTP
Hyderabad	1	0	1	Sindhu Desh Liberation Army (SDLA/SDLF)
Karachi	1	0	3	Unknown militants
Kech	2	0	0	BLF
Khuzdar	1	0	2	BLF
Kohlu	1	0	0	BLA
Larkana	1	0	3	SDLF/SDLA
Mastung	1	151	185	Ghazi force Lal Masjid
North Waziristan	1	0	10	TTP
Peshawar	2	22	58	TTP
Qilla Abdullah	1	0	1	Unknown militants
Quetta	1	1	0	Unknown militants
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>323</b>	

A higher number of casualties in the terrorist attacks cited earlier was caused by some lethal attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces. Indeed a single suicide blast in Mastung district of Balochistan claimed 150 lives. Nawabzada Siraj Raisani, Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) candidate for a Provincial Assembly seat, was among those killed. The banned Tehreek-Taliban Pakistan's so-called Ghazi Force Lal Masjid wing in a Whatsapp message claimed responsibility for the suicide attack.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Dawn*, July 14, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1419972/128-perish-as-savage-attack-on-mastung-rally-stuns-nation>; Daily *Dunya* (Urdu), July 14, 2018, <http://dunya.com.pk/index.php/dunya->

Two such attacks were reported from Peshawar including a major one. Reportedly, ANP leader and a candidate for a provincial assembly seat Haroon Bilour was among 21 killed in a suicide blast in a corner party meeting in Yakatoot area of Peshawar; 65 others were injured. Haroon's father Bashir Bilour, a prominent ANP leader, was also killed in a suicide blast in Peshawar in 2012.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, in DI Khan district of KP, former provincial minister and PTI candidate for a provincial assembly seat Ikramullah Gandapur was killed along with his driver and a policeman in a suicide blast in Kulachi tehsil.<sup>3</sup> In Bannu, JUI-F leader and MMA candidate from NA-35 Akram Khan Durrani survived two terror attacks. In one of these attacks, a remote controlled motor cycle-fitted IED blast targeted his convoy killing 5 people.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from terrorist attacks cited earlier, as many as 13 incidents of political violence also took place between May and July 2018. These incidents claimed 3 lives including of Waqar Ahmed Wahla, candidate for PP-109 from the Aam Admi Party in Faisalabad district; a PTI supporter in Swabi; and relative of a Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) candidate in Charsadda. As many 37 workers and supporters of different political parties were also injured in thee incidents across Pakistan.

**Table 2: Incidents of political violence in Pakistan (May to July 2018)**

District	Attacks	Killed	Injured
Attock	1	0	0
Charsadda	1	1	0
Faisalabad	2	1	5
Karachi	1	0	0
Kohistan	1	0	12
Lahore	1	0	2
Lower Dir	1	0	2
Mansehra	1	0	5
Multan	1	0	0
Multiple	1	0	4
Multiple Districts	1	0	5
Swabi	1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>37</b>

### Comparison with election-related violence in 2013

In 3 months of run-up to elections in 2013 (March to May), as many as 148 terrorist attacks took place targeting political leaders, workers and election-related gathering, rallies and offices, etc. In 3 months of run-up to 2018 election (May to July), only 18 terrorist attacks hit such targets. This is a decrease of about 88 percent.

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headline/447938\_1#.W0oSTGQzbZs; Daily *Dunya* (Urdu), July 17, 2018, [http://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2018-07-17&edition=ISL&id=4046202\\_22010588](http://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2018-07-17&edition=ISL&id=4046202_22010588)

<sup>2</sup> Daily *Jang* (Urdu), July 11, 2018, <https://jang.com.pk/news/519095da>; Daily *Jang* (Urdu), July 12, 2018, <https://e.jang.com.pk/07-12-2018/pindi/pic.asp?picname=52.png>

<sup>3</sup> Daily *Jang* (Urdu), July 23, 2018, <https://e.jang.com.pk/07-23-2018/pindi/pic.asp?picname=517.png>; *Dunya* (Urdu), July 23, 2018, [http://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2018-07-23&edition=ISL&id=4056397\\_93712003](http://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2018-07-23&edition=ISL&id=4056397_93712003)

<sup>4</sup> *Dawn*, July 14, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1419972/128-perish-as-savage-attack-on-mastung-rally-stuns-nation>; Daily *Dunya* (Urdu), July 14, 2018, [http://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2018-07-14&edition=ISL&id=4038734\\_73415703](http://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2018-07-14&edition=ISL&id=4038734_73415703)

However despite a significant decrease in frequency of terrorist attacks on election-related targets, as compared to 2013 election, the number of people killed in such attacks in the selected 3 months of 2018 increased by over 2 percent; from 179 in 2013 to 183 in 2018. (See Chart 1)

One other contrasting difference in trends of election-related terrorist violence in 2013 and 2018 can be described in terms of perpetrators of such attacks. In 2013, out of 148 such attacks, at least 52 were perpetrated by nationalist insurgents, mainly Baloch, and the rest by the Taliban and others. However in 2018, nationalist insurgents perpetrated only 7 low-scale attacks against political leaders/workers and other election-related targets; that however corresponds to an overall decrease in such attacks.

Similarly, the number of incidents of political violence also declined significantly from 80 in 2013 (March to May) – 51 of these were concentrated in in Karachi alone – to 13 in 2018 (May to July).

**Chart 1: Comparison of election-related violence in 2013 and 2018**

