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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANP:	Awami National Party	JM:	Jaish-e-Muhammad
AQIS:	Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent	JuD:	Jamaatud Dawa
Arm:	Army	JUI-F:	Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl
ATCs:	Anti-Terrorism Courts	Kid:	Kidnapping
BH:	Beheading	KP:	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
BLA:	Balochistan Liberation Army	LeJ:	Lashkar-e-Jhangvi
BLF:	Balochistan Liberation Front	LI:	Lashkar-e-Islam
BNA:	Baloch Nationalist Army	LM:	Landmine Blast
BRA:	Baloch Republican Army	LoC:	Line of Control
BRAS:	Baloch Raji Aajoi Sangar	Lvs:	Levies Force
BRG:	Baloch Republican Guard	Mil:	Militant
BT:	Bomb Blast	MNA:	Member of National Assembly
CIA:	Central Intelligence Agency	MPA:	Member of Provincial Assembly
Civ:	Civilians	MQM:	Muttahida Qaumi Movement
CPEC:	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor	NACTA:	National Counter-Terrorism Authority
CT:	Counter-Terrorism	NAP:	National Action Plan
CTDs:	Counter-Terrorism Departments	NATO:	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
CVE:	Counter-Violent Extremism	NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
DGMOs:	Director Generals of Military Operations	NSA:	National Security Advisor
DSP:	Deputy Superintendent Police	NSC:	National Security Committee
ETIM:	East Turkistan Islamic Party	NSP:	National Security Policy
FATA:	Federally Administered Tribal Areas	OIC:	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
FATF:	Financial Action Task Force	P-mil:	Paramilitary Forces
FC:	Frontier Corps	PCG:	Pakistan Coast Guard
FIA:	Federal Investigative Agency	PIPS:	Pak Institute for Peace Studies
Fr:	Firing	PkMAP:	Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party
HG:	Hand Grenade	PML-N:	Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz
HRCP:	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan	Pol:	Police
IDP:	Internally Displaced Persons	PPL:	Pakistan Petroleum Limited
IED:	Improvised Explosive Device	PPP:	Pakistan People's Party
IS-K:	Islamic State-Khorasan	PTI:	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf
ISI:	Inter-Services Intelligence	PTM:	Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement
ISIS:	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria	QWP:	Qaumi Watan Party
ISPR:	Inter-Services Public Relations	RA:	Rocket Attack
JI:	Jamaat-e-Islami	RCB:	Remote-controlled Bomb
JID:	Joint Intelligence Directorate	Rng:	Rangers
		SA:	Suicide Attack
		Sab:	Sabotage

SECP:	Securities and Exchange	TA:	Terrorist Attack
Sect:	Sectarian	TIP:	Turkistan Islamic Party
SM:	Sipah-e-Muhammad	TLP:	Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan
SP:	Superintendent of Police	TTP:	Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan
SPA:	Sindhudesh People's Army	UBA:	United Baloch Army
SRA:	Sindhudesh Revolution Army	UN:	United Nations
SSP:	Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan	UNSC:	United Nations Security Council
ST:	Sunni Tehreek	WB:	Working Boundary

FOREWORD

What has encouraged and provided space to the banned TTP to regroup and escalate terrorist violence in Pakistan? Two factors stand out; first, the Afghan Taliban's taking power in Kabul, and, secondly, Pakistani state's persistent ambition to engage in peace talks with the group. As the country has witnessed a 27 percent increase in the incidence of terrorist violence in 2022, the TTP was a major actor of violence in the year. In May 2022, annual report of the UNSC-led 1988 Taliban sanctions committee monitoring team noted that the group is focused on a long-term campaign against the Pakistani state and has arguably benefitted the most of all the foreign extremist groups in Afghanistan from the Afghan Taliban takeover. Meanwhile, insecurity and violence at the Pak-Afghan border have been growing gradually since the Taliban took power in Afghanistan. The Taliban have apparently taken a stricter and nationalistic stance in their response to Pakistan's efforts to fence the border.

The Islamic State's Khorasan chapter also stepped up its attacks in Pakistan in 2022. Its members were believed to be active in Bajaur, Peshawar, Mohmand, Orakzai, and Kurram areas of KP; Bolan, Sibi, Awaran, Mastung, and Quetta districts of Balochistan; and Karachi and northern Sindh.

On the other hand, while the Baloch insurgent groups mainly the BLA continued to carry out attacks in 2022, a new group Baloch Nationalist Army also emerged in the year, which claimed one major attack in Lahore, the provincial capital of Punjab province. Similarly, a new Sindhi insurgent group, which calls itself Sindhudesh People's Army (SPA), claimed the heinous attack that targeted a dental clinic run by a Chinese couple in Karachi. Over the past few years, Sindhi insurgent groups have been trying to be more assertive. There were reports that some of them even forged alliance with some Balochi insurgent groups. Still, the operational strength and threat of the Sindhi insurgent remains low to medium. But the emergence of new groups such as SPA is a sign of warning, especially for Pakistan's bilateral and multilateral economic and trade engagements in the province and country.

Against this backdrop, realization is growing among the policymakers and security agencies about the security threats being posed by the TTP and other militants in Pakistan. For one, in October 2022, the senators from both the government and opposition benches sounded alarm over surge in terrorist activities by the outlawed TTP. Earlier in the month, the Ministry of Interior had issued a nationwide alert asking for 'extreme vigilance', instructing (the home and chief secretaries of the four provinces, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, as well as the Islamabad chief commissioner) that targeted search and strike missions be carried out wherever militant activity is reported. In December, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari termed the TTP as a red line for Pakistan. Similarly, the National Security Committee (NSC) meeting held on December 30th vowed to respond with full force against the terrorists.

The National Counter-Terrorism Authority (NACTA) also proposed the setting up of National Counter-Terrorism Department (NCTD). The NACTA National Coordinator had reportedly

forwarded the proposal to the Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif early December. The proposed NCTD would operate under NACTA on the federal level and will be authorised to conduct counter-terrorism operations across the country.

In October 2022, the FATF removed Pakistan from its grey list that warrants increased surveillance for terrorism financing. In recent years, Pakistan has taken multiple legislative, administrative, and operational measures to fulfil the conditions set out by the Financial Action Task Force. The FATF decision to remove Pakistan from its grey list was made by consensus that Pakistan has completed all substantial, technical and procedural requirements of both 2018 and 2021 Action Plans.

However, to counter the rising security and terrorist threats in the country, Pakistan needs a complete reorientation of its policy towards Afghanistan, and needs to bilaterally engage and talk with Afghanistan, i.e., the Taliban, on the issues of countering terrorism, enhancing trade, and evolving mechanism on border security and refugees, etc. Similarly, the country needs to come up with a proper implementation mechanism to implement National Security Policy as well as revised NAP. There is also a need to increase capacity and role of civilian law enforcement agencies, which will prevent the terrorist threat to a significant extent. While observing a zero-tolerance policy on terrorism, Pakistan also needs to take a different, multi-dimensional approach to deal with the factors, dynamics, and actors of Pakistan's growing extremism challenge, which is not confined to fighting the terrorists militarily only.

PIPS hopes that this 17th edition of its annual security report would help the policymakers, academics, media, and civil society understand the gravity of the security situation in Pakistan with a view to moving towards sustainable solutions. This year too, the report includes the comprehensive data on violent incidents, comparative analysis of various security variables, the changing targets and tactics of militants and nature of state responses.

Safdar Sial

January 6, 2023

Chapter 1

OVERVIEW OF SECURITY IN 2022: CRITICAL CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Muhammad Amir Rana and Safdar Sial*

- 1.1 Overview of Security Situation in 2022
- 1.2 Critical Challenges and Recommendations

-
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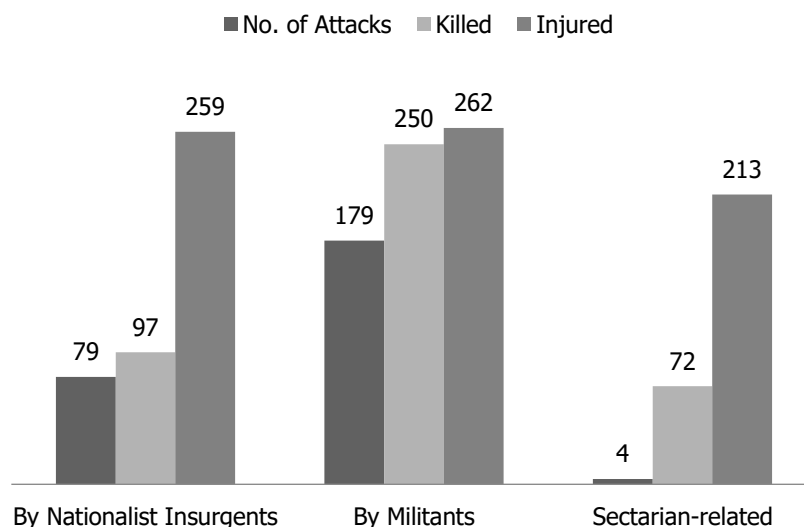
1.1 Overview of Security Situation in 2022

In 2022, the number of terrorist attacks in Pakistan continued to rise for the second consecutive year. Different nationalist insurgent, religiously inspired militant, and violent sectarian groups perpetrated a total of 262 terrorist attacks in Pakistan in the year – including 14 suicide bombings. – which marked an increase of 27 percent from the year before. These terrorist attacks claimed in all 419 lives – an increase of 25 percent from those killed in such attacks in 2021 – and injured another 734 people.

About half of the total fatalities or deaths caused by terrorist attacks in 2022 concentrated among personnel of security forces and law enforcement agencies including 38 FC men, 108 policemen, 52 army officials, 7 Levies, and one unspecified paramilitary soldier. Another 234 personnel of security and law enforcement agencies were also injured in the reported terrorist attacks. Similarly, 152 civilians lost their lives and another 498 were wounded in these attacks. Meanwhile 61 militants were killed and another two were injured, either in suicide blasts they perpetrated, or in security forces' retaliatory fire following some attacks.

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), local Taliban groups such as Hafiz Gul Bahadur group, Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K), and other similar religiously inspired groups perpetrated a combined total of 179 terrorist attacks – compared to 128 in previous year – which killed 250 people and injured 262 others. Different Baloch and Sindhi nationalist insurgent groups carried out 79 attacks – as compared to 77 such attacks in 2021 – which claimed 97 lives and wounded another 259 people. Meanwhile, compared to two in 2021, four sectarian-related terrorist attacks were recorded in 2022 claiming 72 lives and inflicting injuries on another 213 people.

Chart 1: Classification of Terrorist Attacks in Pakistan in 2022



Out of the total 262 terrorist attacks recorded in Pakistan in 2022, as many as 180, or about 69 percent, targeted personnel, vehicles, convoys, and posts or facilities of security and law

enforcement agencies. Civilians were apparently hit in 14 attacks, while another 14 attacks targeted pro-government tribal elders and former members of peace committees. Meanwhile terrorists targeted political leaders/workers in eight attacks; polio vaccination workers and their security escorts in seven attacks; power pylons and railway tracks in a combined total of seven attacks; government officials, institutions, and state symbols in four attacks; educational institutions in another four attacks; and non-Baloch workers and settlers in Balochistan in two attacks. CPEC/Chinese workers were also targeted in two major attacks. A combined total of three attacks targeted Shia and Sunni community members, including a major suicide blast at a mosque of Shia Muslims in Koocha Risaldar near Qissa Khwani Bazaar, Peshawar. Other sporadic targets hit by the terrorists in 2022 are given at Table 1.

Table 1: Targets Hit in Terrorist Attacks in 2022

Targets	Attacks	Killed	Injured
Security/law enforcement agencies (personnel, convoys, posts)	180	268	390
Education/institutions/teachers	4	2	4
Non-Bloch settlers/workers	2	3	7
Gas pipelines	1	0	0
Govt. officials/institutions/symbols	4	7	7
Power pylons/cell phone towers	4	0	0
Pro-govt. tribal elders/peace committee members	14	19	20
Militants	1	2	0
Civilians	14	13	54
Shia religious scholars/community	2	68	211
Worship places/shrines/madrassas	1	0	3
Govt. offices/public property (hospitals, banks etc.)	3	1	1
Sunni religious leaders/community	1	1	0
Political leaders/workers	8	10	10
Christian community/Church	2	2	4
Sikh community	1	2	0
Unknown	1	0	0
Alleged spy	4	3	2
Health/polio workers, security escorts	7	7	6
CPEC/workers/Chinese	2	6	6
Railway tracks / trains	3	0	5
Development, exploration projects, companies, workers	3	5	4
Total	262	419	734

The terrorists mainly used direct fire in most attacks including infantry fire or direct shootout in 129 attacks and tactical fire such as hand grenades in 53 attacks. They also used a total of 67 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) of various types including 14 suicide bombings. The terrorists also used other attack tactics, though less frequently, including 9 coordinated gun-and-bomb attacks, two rocket attacks, one act of abduction, and another terrorist act of sabotage and lynching.

About 95 percent of the total recorded terrorist attacks in Pakistan in 2022 concentrated in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces.

Out of the total 262 terrorist attacks that took place in the country in 2022, as many as 169, or over 64 percent, concentrated in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. That also represented an increase of 52 percent from such attacks that happened in the province in the year before. The reported attacks from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa claimed 294 lives - as compared to 169 in the previous year - and inflicted injuries on another 393 people. North Waziristan continued to be a major flashpoint of insecurity and militant violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for a third year in a row. Compared to 31 in 2020 and 37 in 2021, as many as 30 terrorist attacks took place in the district in 2022; meanwhile 12 terrorist attacks happened in the neighboring South Waziristan tribal district. Other KP districts where 10 or more attacks took place in the year included Peshawar (17 attacks), Khyber and DI Khan (14 attacks each), Lakki Marwat (13), Bannu (12), and Bajaur (11 attacks). On the whole, terrorist attacks were recorded from 21 districts of the province in 2022. Moreover, about 77 percent of the reported attacks from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa targeted personnel of security and law enforcement agencies, mainly army and police.

Balochistan faced the second highest number of terrorist attacks in 2022, after Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Baloch insurgents as well as religiously inspired militant groups perpetrated a total of 79 attacks in the province, compared to 81 in previous year, which claimed 106 lives and wounded 271 others. Different Baloch insurgent groups, mainly the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), perpetrated 71 attacks in Balochistan killing 86 people and wounding 199 others. The attacks by Baloch insurgent groups spread over 21 districts of the province, mainly targeting security forces. Meanwhile, religiously inspired militant groups such as the TTP and the Islamic State terrorist group (IS-K), etc., were reportedly involved in as many as seven attacks in Balochistan including two suicide blasts. These attacks caused death to 17 people and injuries to another 47 people. One sectarian-related attack killed three and wounded 25 others in Balochistan in 2022.

Same as in the previous year, eight terrorist attacks took place in Sindh province including six in Karachi and two in interior Sindh (one attack each in Naushahro Firoze, and Tando Muhammad Khan). These attacks killed a total of eight people and injured 31 others. Five of the reported attacks from Sindh in 2022 were perpetrated by Sindhi nationalist insurgents – mainly Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army (SRA) and a new group Sindhudesh People's Army; the

latter targeted a clinic in Karachi run by a Chinese dentist couple. Other targets hit by Sindh insurgents included a railway track in Naushahro Firoze, a power pylon in Tando Mohammad Khan, and security forces personnel in Karachi. Two Baloch insurgent groups, the banned BLA and a hitherto new group Baloch Nationalist Army, perpetrated two attacks in Karachi targeting Confucius Institute at the Karachi University, and security forces, respectively. The banned TTP also perpetrated one attack in Karachi injuring a policeman.

A combined total of five (5) terrorist attacks took place in Punjab and Islamabad which claimed 11 lives and injured 39 others. Three (3) terrorist attacks happened in Punjab which claimed six lives and injured 30 more people. Two of these attacks took place in the provincial capital Lahore including a major vehicle-borne blast by Baloch Nationalist Army targeting security and bank officials in Anarkali bazaar. The banned TTP claimed the third attack that target killed a policeman in Kallar Syedan, Rawalpindi. Meanwhile, two reported attacks from Islamabad including a suicide blast, targeted security forces, killing two policemen; three militants were also killed in these attacks including a suicide bomber.

One terrorist attack was also recorded in Gilgit-Baltistan, which did not cause any casualty, but militants torched a girls' school in Darel valley. *(See Table 2)*

Table 2: Terrorist Attacks in Pakistan in 2022

Region	Attacks	Killed	Injured
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	169	294	393
Balochistan	79	106	271
Punjab	3	6	30
Karachi	6	8	31
Sindh (excluding Karachi)	2	0	0
Islamabad	2	5	9
Gilgit-Baltistan	1	0	0
Total	262	419	734

1.1.1 Comparison

When counted together, as many as 398 incidents of violence of different types – as listed at Table 3 – were recorded in Pakistan in 2022. Apart from 262 terrorist attacks cited earlier, these violent incidents also included: 87 anti-militant operational or kinetic strikes carried out by security forces and their 11 armed clashes/encounters with militants; a combined total of 15 cross-border attacks from Afghanistan, India and Iran; eight (8) incidents of communal/faith-based violence including mob attacks; five (5) thwarted/failed terror plots; four (4) incidents of ethno-political violence; one sectarian clash; two inter-militant clashes/attacks; two clashes between security forces and protestors; and one targeted attack,

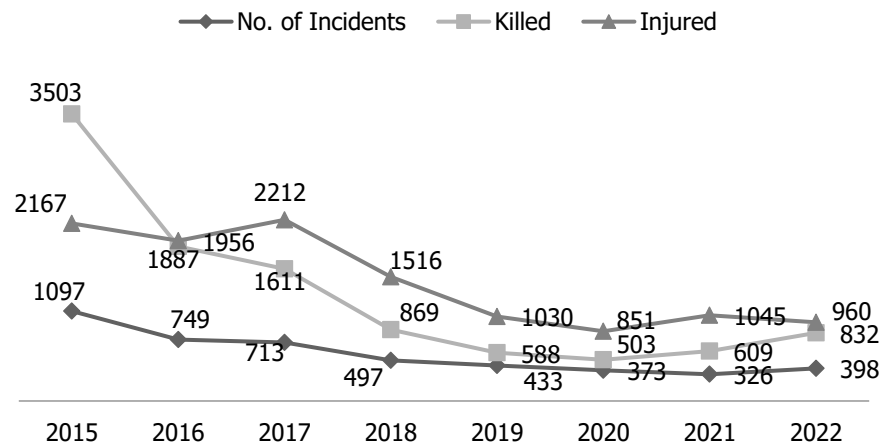
whose motivation was not clear (*See Table 3*). These overall incidents of violence killed a total of 832 people and injured 960 others.

Table 3: Nature of Overall Incidents of Violence

Nature of Incident	Incidents	Killed	Injured
Terrorist attacks	262	419	734
Political/ethnic violence	4	3	11
Clashes & encounters between security forces & militants	11	25	6
Cross-border clashes/attacks	15	35	56
Operational attacks by security forces	87	327	51
Sectarian clashes	1	2	17
Inter-militant clashes/attacks	2	4	0
Communal/faith-based violence	8	5	2
Plot/foiled terror attempts	5	3	0
Targeted attacks [not clear if by terrorists]	1	5	0
Protests/clashes with security forces	2	4	83
Total	398	832	960

The number of overall incidents of violence also posted an increase, from 326 in 2021 to 398 in 2022, or 22 percent. That increase in overall violent incidents was mainly contributed by considerable increase recorded in the number of terrorist attacks as well as counterterrorism operations. The overall number of people killed in these violent incidents increased by about 37 percent; from 609 in 2021 to 832 in 2022. However, the number of people injured in all such incidents of violence decreased from 1,045 in 2021 to 960 in 2022. (*See Chart 2*)

Chart 2: Comparison of Overall Incidents of Violence & Casualties (2015-22)



For a second year in a row, the number of terrorist attacks posted an upsurge in the year 2022. Since 2014-15, when military operations including Zarb-e-Azb, and National Action Plan were launched, there had been a gradual decline in the incidence of terrorist violence and consequent casualties in the country that continued until 2020. But from 2021-onward this declining trend did not sustain, and the incidence of terrorist attacks took an upturn. (See *Chart 3 and Table 4*) This clearly indicates that the militants have once again increased their presence and activities in Pakistan over the past two years.

Chart 3: Comparison of Terrorist Attacks and Fatalities in Pakistan (2015-2022)

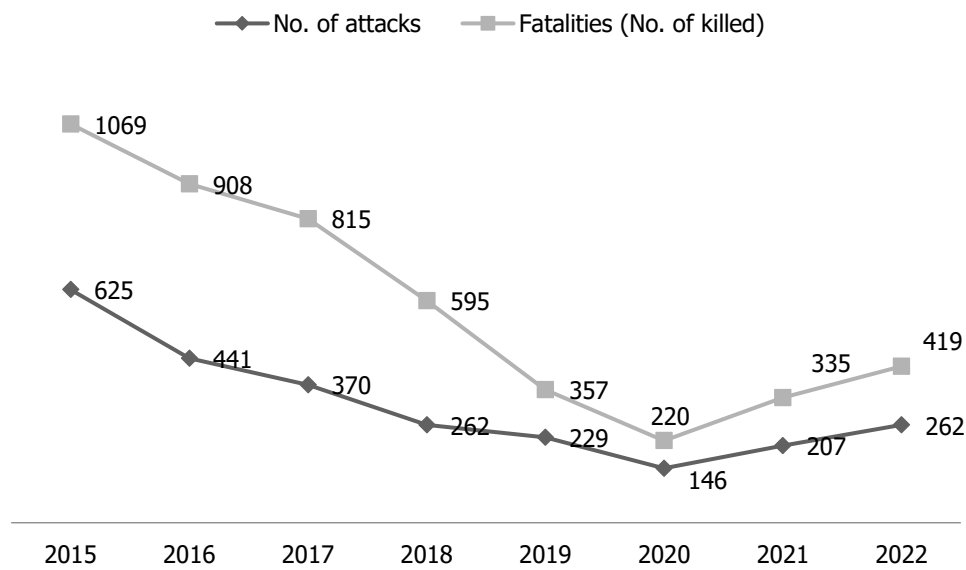


Table 4: Comparison of Terrorist Attacks and Fatalities in Pakistan (2009-22)¹

Year	No. of Terrorist Attacks (%Change)	No. of Killed (% Change)
2009	Baseline year (2,586 attacks)	Baseline year (3,021 Fatalities)
2010	18%↓	4% ↓
2011	7%↓	18%↓
2012	20%↓	14%↓
2013	9%↑	19%↑
2014	30%↓	30%↓
2015	48%↓	38%↓

¹ ↑ and ↓ represent increase and decrease, respectively, from previous year.

Year	No. of Terrorist Attacks (%Change)	No. of Killed (% Change)
2016	28%↓	12%↓
2017	16%↓	10%↓
2018	29%↓	27%↓
2019	13%↓	40%↓
2020	36%↓	38%↓
2021	42%↑	52%↑
2022	27%↑	25%↑

As described in the Table 4, in the year 2022 the number of terrorist attacks in Pakistan marked an increase of 27 percent from the previous year. That comparative upsurge in terrorist violence was greatly contributed by a significant increase in the number of attacks reported from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The frequency of terrorist incidents in the province increased by 52 percent, compared to 2021, and the number of those killed in these attacks also increased, by 74 percent. This can be further explained by the fact that about two-third of the total attacks reported from Pakistan in 2022 concentrated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa alone.

With the exception of KP, the number of terrorist attacks in all other regions of Pakistan either decreased or remained unchanged from previous year. But the decrease was not significant enough to cause an overall decline in the number of attacks. For instance, while the number of terrorist attacks in Balochistan fell by only 2 percent, it remained unchanged in Sindh and Islamabad. While in Punjab, the number of terrorist attacks appears to have posted a significant decline of 40 percent from the year before, but that only reflects a decrease of 2 attacks, i.e., from 5 in 2021 to 3 in 2022.

Compared to five in the year before, as many as 14 suicide attacks happened in 2022 including 10 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (9 in North Waziristan and one in Peshawar), two in Balochistan's Quetta and Sibi districts, and one each in Karachi (Sindh) and Islamabad. These attacks claimed 108 lives – compared to 30 in 2021 – and injured 287 others. The TTP was involved in six of these attacks, four of which targeted personnel of security and law enforcement agencies in North Waziristan, one hit police in Islamabad, and another attack targeted security escort of polio vaccinators in Quetta. Hafiz Gul Bahadur group and a hitherto unknown group Ittehad Musallah Islami Mujahideen were believed to be involved in one suicide bombing each in North Waziristan, while another three suicide blasts reported from North Waziristan remained unclaimed. Islamic State-Khorasan terrorist group (IS-K) claimed two suicide blasts that took place in Peshawar (KP) and Sibi (Balochistan). These attacks by IS-K claimed a combined total of 71 lives besides wounding another 205 people. Most of these casualties resulted from the suicide blast in a mosque in Peshawar. Similarly, Baloch insurgent group BLA

perpetrated a suicide attack targeting Chinese teachers of the Confucius Institute at the Karachi University.

Table 5: Comparison of Terrorist Attacks & Casualties (2022 vs. 2021)²

Province / Region	Number of Attacks (%Change)	Killed (% Change)	Injured (% Change)
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	52%↑	74%↑	222%↑
Balochistan	2%↓	22%↓	21%↓
Punjab	40%↓	57%↓	41%↓
Sindh	Unchanged	38%↓	11%↓
Islamabad	2; unchanged	5 compared to 2 in 2021	9 compared to 2 in 2021
Gilgit- Baltistan	1 compared to 0 in 2021	0	0
Total	27%↑	25%↑	32%↑

Down by 35 percent from the year before, 15 cross-border attacks took place in Pakistan from across its borders. Most of these attacks happened from across the country's border with Afghanistan (13 attacks) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces. These attacks from Afghanistan killed 34 people and injured 52 others. Meanwhile one attack happened from across the Working Boundary with India in Punjab but did not cause any casualty or damage. Similarly, another attack was reported from across the Iranian border in Panjgur (Balochistan), which claimed the life of one FC man and injured four people. Among those 35 killed in overall cross-border attacks were 15 army soldiers, 12 civilians, six FC officials, and two militants. Indeed, the security situation at the Pak-Afghan border has been deteriorating since the Taliban took power in Kabul in August 2021. Nonetheless, since February 2021, when Pakistan and India recommitted themselves to the 2003 ceasefire arrangement at the Line of Control, there has been a significant decline in Indian violations of the Line of Control (LoC) and Working Boundary ceasefire. Indeed, there have been only three cross-border attacks from Indian side since February 2021, including two in 2021 (post-February), and one in 2022.

Compared to 63 in the year before, security forces and law enforcement agencies conducted 87 anti-militant operational strikes in 2022 in 25 districts and regions of Pakistan. These actions caused a total of 327 fatalities (302 militants, 22 army soldiers, one FC man, one policeman, and one civilian), as compared to 197 in 2021, besides injuring 51 others. Out of the total 87

² ↑ and ↓ represent increase and decrease, respectively, compared with previous year, i.e., 2021.

operational strikes recorded in 2022, as many as 57 happened in KP, 28 in Balochistan, and two in Sindh's provincial capital, i.e., Karachi. There were a dozen districts across Pakistan where two or more anti-militant operations happened in the year including North Waziristan (24 operational strikes), Lakki Marwat (8), DI Khan (7), Peshawar (6), Bannu (5), Khyber (4), and Tank (2 strikes) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as well as Kech (7 strikes), Quetta (4) and Kohlu, Mastung and Ziarat (2 strikes each) in Balochistan, and two such strikes in Karachi. The operational strikes in North Waziristan, Bannu, Lakki Marwat and DI Khan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Kech, Quetta, Ziarat, and Kohlu in Balochistan killed significantly a greater number of militants as compared to other districts.

Security and law enforcement agencies also entered into in a total of 11 armed clashes and encounters with militants – compared to six such incidents in previous year – in six districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. These armed clashes and encounters claimed 25 lives (13 militants and 12 army soldiers) and injured six security personnel. As many as eight of these clashes and encounters (or about 73 percent) took place in the twin Waziristan and DI Khan districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (between the security forces and the TTP militants). Meanwhile one attack happened in each of Bajaur, Peshawar, and Swat districts.

As many as five (5) incidents of communal or faith-based violence as well as three incidents of mob violence against blasphemy accused individuals were also recorded in Pakistan in 2022. These incidents claimed the lives of five people including two persons accused of blasphemy, and three members of Ahmedi community. In one of such incidents, a Hindu temple was also damaged in Karachi. Apart from Karachi, such incidents were recorded in Chiniot, Faisalabad, Khanewal, Muzaffargarh and Okara districts in Punjab, and DI Khan and Peshawar districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Compared to five in 2021, as many as four (4) incidents of ethno-political violence, including election-related, also took place in 2022, which claimed three lives and wounded 11 others. One of these incidents was recorded in each of four provinces of Pakistan. In Sindh and Punjab, respectively, the reported incidents were linked to by-polls in Karachi's Korangi districts, and Lahore's Johar Town. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Awami National Party election nominee for a general council seat Musawir Dawar was shot dead in Mirali Bazaar. Meanwhile, in the reported single incident from Balochistan, Sardar Mohammad Ashraf Kakar, a senior leader of the Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), was shot dead by unidentified attackers in Loralai town.

The number of people killed in overall violent incidents in 2022 (832) represented an increase of about 37 percent from those killed in such incidents in the year before (609). The reported increase in fatalities was marked by the death of 264 personnel of security forces and law enforcement agencies in overall violent incidents, compared to 227 in 2021. Fatalities among civilians in 2022 (184) were nonetheless about 13 percent more from the previous year's fatalities among them (163). There was also an increased number of militants killed (384), in

these violent incidents, compared to 2021 when 219 militants were reportedly killed. (See Table 6)

Table 6: Casualties in Overall Violent Incidents in 2022

Category	Killed	Injured
FC	45	80
Militants	384	30
Civilian	184	613
Police	110	135
Paramilitaries [unspecified]	1	1
Army	101	93
Levies	7	7
Rangers	0	1
Total	832	960

1.2 Critical Challenges and Recommendations

1.2.1 The Fallout of Afghan Situation and Pakistan's Concerns

Most analysts and independent sources seem in agreement that since the August 15th 2021 (when the Taliban took over Kabul), Afghanistan has been, once again, becoming a fertile ground for local and transnational terrorist groups. A United Nations report on terrorism early February 2022 validated that argument when it said: "There are no recent signs that the Taliban ha[ve] taken steps to limit the activities of foreign terrorist fighters in the country. On the contrary, terrorist groups enjoy greater freedom there than at any time in recent history."³ Another report released by the UN in July 2022 noted that while the situation in Afghanistan remained complex, international terrorist organizations based there view the victory of the Taliban as a motivating factor for disseminating their propaganda in the neighboring regions of Central and South Asia, and globally.⁴ Earlier, towards end of May 2022, annual report of the UNSC-led 1988 Taliban sanctions committee monitoring team said, "the group [TTP] is focused on a long-term campaign against the Pakistani state," and that it "has arguably

³ United Nations Security Council's twenty-ninth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, February 3, 2022, <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2F2022%2F83&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>

⁴ The report was released around mid-July 2022 and can be downloaded here: <https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2075689/N2239429.pdf>

benefitted the most of all the foreign extremist groups in Afghanistan from the [Afghan] Taliban takeover.”⁵

Similarly, most analysts also appear unconvinced that the Taliban will or could fulfil their promises on foreign militant groups such as Al-Qaeda, Islamic State Movement of Uzbekistan, ETIM or TIP, and TTP, etc.; the Taliban have so far only acted against Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K).

A Pak Institute for Peace Studies report released in September 2022 noted that it was not hard to foresee the dreadful fallout for Pakistan of the ill-fated fall of Kabul last August. In one year, since the Taliban took power in Kabul, there had reportedly happened 250 terrorist attacks in Pakistan which represented an over 51 percent increase from the previous year.⁶ The data and statistics provided in the report indicated that since the Taliban takeover of Kabul last year there has been significant increase in the number of terrorist attacks and consequent killings in the two key conflict and militancy-prone areas of Pakistan, i.e., Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. The incidence of such attacks in Punjab, Islamabad and Sindh has however declined, though only slightly.⁷

Pakistan is concerned about the Taliban not being willing or able to help in countering the TTP threat. However, apparently Pakistan's counterterrorism cooperation with the US is growing. The US State Department has recently said that the United States was committed to employing all counterterrorism tools to counter the threat posed by terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan. The announcement also identified Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and the TTP as the two groups that were using the Afghan soil for spreading terror in the region. It identified the TTP deputy emir Qari Amjad, or Mufti Hazrat Deroji, one of the four leaders added to the US list of designated terrorists, as the man who oversees TTP's operations and militants in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. His 15-year campaign of violence against Pakistan has stepped up since the Taliban seized control in Afghanistan last year, the State Department noted. The three AQIS leaders added to the list included the group's emir Osama Mehmood, Atif Yahya Ghouri, the deputy emir of AQIS, and Mohammad Maruf who is responsible for AQIS' recruiting branch.⁸

The TTP is becoming a major irritant in Pakistan's relations with the Taliban government, which many in the beginning saw as a "friendly" regime in Afghanistan. Foreign Minister Bilawal

⁵ Baqir Sajjad Syed, "Prospects of success in ongoing talks with TTP 'bleak'," *Dawn*, May 29, 2022, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1692031/prospects-of-success-in-ongoing-talks-with-ttp-bleak>

⁶ Data and statistics have been derived from Pak Institute for Peace Studies' digital database on security incidents.

⁷ Ahmed Ali, "Fallout of Afghan situation and Pakistan's policy responses," PIPS, September 9, 2022, <https://www.pakpips.com/article/7039>

⁸ Anwar Iqbal, "US designated four TTP, AQIS leaders as global terrorists," *Dawn*, December 3, 2022.

Bhutto Zardari recently termed the group as a red line for Pakistan.⁹ Later, the National Security Committee (NSC) meeting held on December 30th (2022) vowed to respond with full force against the terrorists terming them enemies of Pakistan. The statement came after rising terrorist violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan and a botched suicide bombing attempt in Islamabad not only set off alarm bells in the power corridors but also left several countries worried about the security of their nationals.¹⁰

Meanwhile, insecurity and violence at the Pak-Afghan border have been growing gradually, since the Taliban took power in Afghanistan. While the situation at the Chaman border (Balochistan) has been tense for several weeks now, some major cross-border attack from Afghanistan also happened in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, such as the one in Kurram tribal district during the month of November. The Taliban have apparently taken a stricter and nationalistic stance in their response to Pakistan's efforts to fence the border. Secondly, the refugee issue as well as illegal cross-border movements have also added to border tensions. As a result, not only the number of cross-border attacks and clashes has increased but intensity of such incidents has also grown resulting in more deaths and injuries. Only in 2022, 34 Pakistani citizens lost their lives (including 20 security officials) in 13 such attacks/clashes along the Durand Line. Importantly, in the past, or during Ghani regime, most of the cross-border attacks from Afghanistan were carried out by the TTP or other militant groups, but now many of such incidents involve Afghan border forces under the Taliban regime.

Pakistan needs to be careful in its dealing with the Afghan situation as well as the Taliban. Some PIPS recommendations, based on expert consultations it held on Pakistan's Afghan policy priorities in the year 2022, are listed below:

- Pakistan needs a complete reorientation of its policy towards Afghanistan in the wake of growing threats of terrorism in the country after the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) called off a ceasefire it had agreed to with the government earlier 2022. Civil-military leadership, political parties, bureaucracy and ulema should be on the same page to tackle the threat, and there should be an inclusive policy on how to deal with Afghanistan and the TTP.
- Pakistan needs to bilaterally engage and talk with Afghanistan, i.e., the Taliban, on the issues of countering terrorism, enhancing trade, and evolving mechanism on border security and refugees, etc. Pakistan can formulate such agreements under the table, and once the Taliban government is recognized, these can be made formal. It seems strange

⁹ *The Express Tribune*, December 22, 2022, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2392314/ttp-red-line-for-pakistan-says-fm-bilawal>

¹⁰ Sanaullah Khan, "Terrorists are enemies of Pakistan: NSC vows to respond to terror with full force," *Dawn*, December 30, 2022, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1729017>

that despite their proximity, Afghanistan and Pakistan share no formal agreement regarding refugees, trade, or border.

- Pakistan's Afghan policy has largely remained centred upon the groups, warlords, and politicians, instead of citizens of Afghanistan. Therefore, Pakistan may work on developing a policy that focuses on winning hearts and minds of the Afghan people. Reaching out to different factions of Afghan society and polity will help in removing misperceptions held by many Afghans about Pakistan.
- Pakistan should continue taking lead in ensuring the reach of humanitarian assistance to poverty-ridden Afghanistan. The primary pathway to achieve this is by keeping its humanitarian air and road corridors open, along with the land routes for UN agencies, NGOs and other donors. Moreover, Pakistan shall be on the front foot with regards to implementation of OIC's commitments pertaining to the Afghan situation.
- Pakistan may devise a policy that facilitates trade with Afghanistan include doing so in Pakistan's national currency and enabling barter mechanism until Afghanistan gains financial stability. This will be a practical implementation of Pakistan's National Security Policy that asserts that Pakistan's security-oriented outlook has shifted to economic. An impetus to Pak-Afghan trade can be a game changer for both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

1.2.2 Growing Terrorist Threat from TTP, IS-K and Others

The Taliban government in Afghanistan and Pakistan's negotiation ventures emboldened the banned TTP to regroup and escalate terrorist violence in Pakistan. According to yearly data collected by PIPS, the group carried out 89 terrorist attacks in Pakistan in the year 2022. However, the TTP itself issued an infographic for attacks it carried out in 2022 (for 8 months excluding 4 months of ceasefire) according to which the group perpetrated 367 attacks, compared to 282 in 2021.

Overall, terrorist violence has gradually been picking up and intensifying in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces. An upsurge was reported after the banned TTP formally announced to call off a ceasefire it had agreed to with the government few months back. A review of geographical spread of terrorist attacks in KP suggests that the twin North Waziristan districts and neighboring Lakki Marwat and Bannu districts extending to DI Khan, besides Peshawar, emerged as flashpoints of insecurity and violence in 2022.

The TTP reportedly also threatened political leaders, elders, and businessmen to extort money from them. For one, after a letter, issued on the TTP Mardan letterhead and addressed to the KP Minister for Science and Information Technology, circulated on the social media, the Minister Muhammad Atif Khan confirmed on October 19th that he had received a ransom note purportedly from the outlawed TTP, demanding Rs8 million in three days or he would be

targeted.¹¹ However, the TTP issued a formal statement denouncing the letter as fabricated. The TTP spokesman said the group will investigate and punish the perpetrators.¹²

August witnessed reported relocation of few small groups of Pakistani Taliban militants into parts of KP from Afghanistan. Defence Minister Khawaja Asif also admitted on the floor of the National Assembly that anti-Taliban feelings were growing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) as people were holding protest demonstrations in various parts of the province against the Taliban presence in their areas.

Meanwhile the Islamic State's Khorasan chapter stepped up its attacks in 2022. Compared to eight in 2021, the IS-K conducted at least 23 terrorist attacks in Pakistan in 2022 including few major ones such as the suicide blast that killed over 65 people in a mosque in Peshawar in March. In KP, one of the IS-K's main targets has been Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam leaders, mainly in Bajaur. The group also perpetrated one attack in Mastung district of Balochistan targeting members of Christian community there. Similarly, in one of Pashto versions of Ghahg (Voice of Khorasan), the group warned that they will carry out attacks targeting Hindus to avenge the insulting remarks for the Holy Prophet (PBUH) delivered by Indian politician Nupur Sharma.

While the Baloch insurgents continued to carry out attacks, a new Baloch group emerged in 2022 with the name of Baloch Nationalist Army (BNA). The emergence of different factions and alliances of Baloch insurgent groups reflects a major shift in Baloch insurgency. First, traditionally the Baloch nationalist struggle, political and militant, was led by tribal elites or elders, but the BLF, BRAS and now BNA are emerging phenomenon in the way that they are largely led by middle-class educated Baloch youth. Secondly, this phenomenon could also be a reflection of growing dissatisfaction among the insurgent leaders on the ground about the Baloch leaders living abroad in self-exile.

Similarly, a new Sindhi insurgent group, which calls itself Sindhudesh People's Army (SPA) has claimed the heinous attack that targeted a dental clinic run by a Chinese couple in the busy Saddar area of Karachi, near Empress Market.

To effectively deal with internal security situation, PIPS recommends the following:

- Pakistan needs to come up with a proper implementation mechanism to implement National Security Policy as well as revised NAP, which are discussed further in the following section. A yearly review of both NSP and NAP is also needed to improve the responses to rapidly changing security scenarios. A parliamentary oversight committee can be formed to ensure broader transparency and effectiveness.

¹¹ Manzoor Ali, "'Militants' threaten KP minister, attempt to extort money," *Dawn*, October 20, 2022, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1715959/militants-threaten-kp-minister-attempt-to-extort-money>

¹² <https://twitter.com/khorasandiary/status/1582705017550606337?t=QdxkEIF-I3A9qvrKHSr7Bg&s=08>

- There is a need to increase capacity and role of civilian law enforcement agencies, which will prevent the terrorist threat to a significant extent. Civilian law enforcement structures are rooted in the people and enjoy more freedom to operate due to their frequent interaction and confidence-level with the communities.
- The Baloch and Sindhi nationalist insurgents pose major threat to foreign engagements and workers in Balochistan and parts of Sindh. The terrorist operations by BLA, BLF and BRAS are highly unpredictable and recently they have acquired the resolve and capacity to perpetrate high-impact attacks, also targeting foreign nationals and interests. Therefore, a very high vigilance level is required to counter the threat.
- There should be a zero-tolerance policy towards the terrorist groups, and there should be no negotiations with those who are unwilling to quit violence.
- Pakistan needs to introduce critical shifts in foreign policy pursuits. For one, peace with the immediate neighbors including India would enable the government in Pakistan to invest more in basic social services like health and education and improve governance.
- The government may also ensure that while dealing with suspected insurgents, fundamental rights and legal frameworks are not violated, because otherwise the state tends to lose legitimacy in the eyes of public. For instance, high-handed policies in Balochistan have tended to further aggravate the sense of alienation among the Baloch. The issue of missing persons has become a point of reference in the center-Baloch relations.

1.2.3 National Action Plan & Security Policy

National Action Plan came under discussion a few times during 2022 whenever there was some major terrorist attacks. The previous government had also approved the country's so-called first-ever National Security Policy (2022-26) which is no more heard about.

As in 2021, PIPS recommends the following measures in 2022 to make the frameworks and implementation of revised NAP and national security policy more effective.

- Civilianize NAP and counterterrorism regime giving leading role to the parliament.
- Modernize and reform police, strengthen its investigation branches, reform the Evidence Act and enhance police's operational autonomy.
- Devise well-defined, realistic, and achievable plans/objectives with effective monitoring and evaluation systems against individual NAP goals/clauses. Monitoring and evaluation be done using clearly defined and concrete performance indicators, otherwise NAP would continue to be judged subjectively on the basis of varying perceptions.
- Strengthen NACTA; the prime minister may take ownership of NAP and use the NACTA platform to regularly review the status of and progress on NAP provisions.
 - Inter-Provincial Coordination Ministry (IPCM) be activated to work along with NACTA for better coordination and results.

- Reform the criminal justice system with much greater urgency and focus as this particular NAP action has practically remained a nonstarter so far.
 - The government shall review and refine key definitions in the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997 in consultation with relevant stakeholders, which will also contribute to avoiding delays in prosecution.
 - Afford rigorous training and sensitization to the ATC judges in handling terrorism cases.
 - Strengthen ATCs through infrastructural uplift and capacity building.
- Develop and run an effective de-radicalization and rehabilitation program, led by civilians that also engages or partner with civil society organizations.
- Build and promote counter-narratives.
 - The Paigham-e-Pakistan can be a significant ideological response to the extremist ideologies; the message be disseminated widely and transformed into national narrative.
 - Categorization of militants into pro-state and anti-state must end.
 - Curb the access of militant/jihadist and sectarian groups to cyberspace and other means of communications without misuse of related laws, with a view to evade loss of public trust and confidence in state institutions.

1.2.4 The Need for Soft Approaches to Counter Violent Extremism

Since 2014, Pakistan has achieved considerable success in its counterterrorism endeavors leading to an improved overall security environment, which has only recently started to become problematic again. However, Pakistan's counterterrorism campaign, since early 2000s, has been largely kinetic, or muscular, and less soft, or political.

Experts agree that Pakistan needs to take a different, multi-dimensional approach to deal with the factors, dynamics, and actors of Pakistan's growing extremism challenge, which is not confined to fighting the terrorists militarily only. While successful in the short-term, kinetic or hard approaches fail to address the wider issues or causes factoring in violent extremism. For instance, even as hard approaches eliminate terrorists already on the ground, as long as the ideology driving them survives, more will continue to take their place. Therefore, "soft" approaches must be an indispensable component in any CT framework; more so in the case of Pakistan, where not just terrorism but also religious extremism is rampant.

Not only the state but civil society organizations equally need to engage in soft approaches to counter violent extremism. In its Resolution 2354 (adopted in 2017), the Security Council recognized that "efforts to counter terrorist narratives can benefit through engagement with a wide range of actors, including youth, families, women, religious, cultural, and education leaders, and other concerned groups of civil society.

indeed, civil society organizations have been part of CVE and de-radicalization programmes in many Muslim-majority countries mainly including Algeria, Nigeria, Indonesia, Egypt, and Bangladesh, etc. For instance, the role of civil society in Algerian experience is an important source of 'soft power'. Similarly, many appreciate Bangladesh's strategy of involving and exploiting the extensive influence and reach of its civil society organizations in the country's de-radicalization efforts.¹³ Similar lessons regarding the role of civil society are on the offer in the northeast of Nigeria¹⁴ and Somalia.¹⁵ In Indonesia, too, "some civil society organizations are engaged in facilitating the disengagement and eventual reintegration of ex-offenders" including through skills training and employment placing such as "employ[ing] former extremists as chefs and waiters in restaurants."¹⁶ Lessons learned from these initiatives coupled with Pakistan's own needs and context can help in framing CVE responses in the country.

PIPS believes that the following suggestions, if adopted by the state and society, can contribute to undermining the foundations upon which the extremist and terrorist movements are built.

- Despite all challenges, democracy has survived in Pakistan, and this reflects the wishes of the people of Pakistan and their firm belief in the democratic political system. Hence, the first and foremost strategy to counter terrorism in Pakistan comes through a true democratic system with free and fair elections, the supremacy of the parliament and sacrosanctity of the constitution.
- Parliament is the center of collective decision-making, and the Parliament must take a lead role in counterterrorism efforts. It must build a clear stance on terrorism, and extremism.
- This is the right of the people's elected representatives to play lead role in policymaking, especially Pakistan's foreign policy towards its neighbors, and play a pivotal role in defining Pakistan's strategy towards CVE and CT.
- The role of political parties is central in this regard. Political parties must articulate their vision for addressing the challenges facing Pakistan and should present their ideas for countering extremism and terrorism at the parliament. All political parties must also

¹³ For instance, see "The rise of religious-based radicalism and the deradicalisation programme in Bangladesh," and "Transforming terrorists: examining international efforts to address violent extremism."

¹⁴ For instance, one CSO there provides psycho-social and trauma counseling for both the victims of Boko Haram and former perpetrators.

¹⁵ Few organizations there are engaged in enhancing vocational and trade skills of former combatants.

¹⁶ Christina Nemr and Rafia Bhulai, "Civil Society's Role in Rehabilitation and Reintegration Related to Violent Extremism," The Global Observatory, June 25, 2018, <<https://theglobalobservatory.org/2018/06/civil-societys-role-rehabilitation-reintegration-violent-extremism>>

refrain from seeking any sort of assistance from extremist groups for electoral matters or political gains.

- While acknowledging the bulging youth population, all political parties also need to empower the youth by providing them space and platform for free expression and creativity as well as leadership.
- Comprehensive educational reforms are needed, aiming at removal of hateful, discriminatory, and insensitive contents from the textbooks and inclusion of more scientific inquiry, debate, and critical thinking and reasoning. There is also a need to increase in education budget to improve the quality of education.
- For ensuring the sacrosanctity of the constitution, it is pertinent to ensure uniform application of the constitution in all parts of Pakistan. It is equally important to promote the values derived from the constitution, including through enhancing constitutional literacy among the people, particularly among the youth.
- It is the duty of the state of Pakistan, being a republic, to reinstate rule of law across the country and to ward off any perception that the state is weak or fragile.
- Similarly, the role of civil society, as a bridge between people and the state, must be acknowledged and exercised. No effort against extremism or terrorism would be viable without the support of civil society. The state must build partnership with civil society to ensure maximum advantage from all soft measures.
- The state and society need to reaffirm freedom of religious beliefs and that no citizen can be denied his/her fundamental rights on account of their beliefs. Parliament and the government shall take all necessary steps for the protection and equitable development of all religious communities.
- It is utmost essential to include women in all walks of life and protect their social, political, and economic rights; the Parliament needs to rectify laws that discriminate against women in any shape or form. Women should also be included in efforts meant to CVE as the UN resolution 1325 acknowledges the role of women in the promotion of peace and security.
- The state needs to own and celebrate the indigenous cultures and promote cultural identities in Pakistan.
- The state is suggested to approach CVE and de-radicalization in a holistic manner with involvement of multiple stakeholders. The subject must not be an exclusive domain of the security agencies.
- No reintegration, rehabilitation and mainstreaming [of militants] beyond the frameworks of the Constitution shall be accepted.
- The prison system needs a major overhaul as it often serves as breeding grounds for violent extremism and ideological radicalization.

1.2.5 Persisting Conflict and Insecurity in Balochistan

While the frequency of terrorist attacks has been varying, but the most recent phase of the Balochistan conflict that started in 2005-06 continues unabated. There have been some fundamental shifts in the Baloch insurgency, such as emergence of educated, middle class leadership, and emphasis on more lethal, high-impact attacks on what the BLA claims 'political targets' or the ones which brings them into the limelight and international focus.

Meanwhile, as the banned TTP ended ceasefire, Balochistan also started to face the terrorist violence by the group; the TTP claimed a suicide bombing in the provincial capital Quetta targeting a police truck in November. The TTP in the past had remained very active in Balochistan; it had established its Balochistan chapter also, which was known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Balochistan. After the group's relocation to Afghanistan following the 2014 Zarb-e-Azb operation, its presence, and activities in the Balochistan province also decreased significantly. But the group has declared to carry out attacks across Pakistan in its statement that called off the ceasefire. Experts warn that Balochistan and Sindh could be the group's next targets after it has already made its presence felt in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The banned BLA was the major of violence in 2022 in Balochistan. The BLA's Majeed Brigade also claimed the suicide attack on a van of the Confucius Institute at the Karachi University, saying that the Director and other Chinese teachers were the target, who the group believed were members of the Chinese communist party. The BLA and other Baloch insurgent groups have been vocal against and targeting Chinese engagements in Pakistan and also the China Pakistan Economic Corridor and its lynchpin project of Gwadar Port that lies in southern Balochistan. While the use of a female suicide bomber was perhaps the first incidence by the BLA, the group has been nonetheless carrying out such *fidayeen* attacks in recent years. Its Majeed Brigade, which was established in 2011, is an elite suicide squad, which has been mainly targeting Chinese interests and CPEC.

In March 2022, a report presented by Interior Ministry in the National Assembly said that terrorist groups were regrouping in Balochistan. The report however emphasized the growing threat from Iranian border noting that anti-Pakistan terror outfits were regrouping in Balochistan via Iranian province of Sistan and Baluchistan.¹⁷ The report, which was indeed interior ministry's reply to a query posed by PPP MNA Dr Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro, also revealed that persistent intelligence-based operations were being undertaken to neutralize terror organizations and operational capabilities of the counterterrorism apparatus were being enhanced. It also recalled recent government initiatives to engage disgruntled Baloch youths for reconciliation, including "special socio-economic development packages for mitigating extremist threats in Balochistan and KP, and addressing the most marginalized segment of

¹⁷ "Terror outfits' regrouping in Balochistan, NA told," *Dawn*, March 29, 2022.

society through the 'Ehsaas Programme' along with engaging the youth in constructive activities.¹⁸

Traditionally the Baloch insurgents had been carrying out low-intensity attacks mainly targeting state infrastructure (such as power pylons and railways tracks), non-Baloch settlers and workers as well as security forces. But in recent years, as cited earlier, some significant transformations have happened in Balch insurgency. First, it has come increasingly under influence of middle-class, educated youth who are not as much connected to tribal chieftain system as those before them. Secondly, those leading the insurgency on the ground have apparently become more focused on adding to destructive edge of their terrorist violence including through high-impact *fidayeen* and coordinated gun-and bomb attacks. Thirdly, in recent years, the targets of Baloch insurgents have become more confined to security forces and Chinese engagements including CPEC. Fourthly, they have started to use sophisticated weapons and assault attacks also as they did in their invasion of FC camps in Nushki and Panjgur early this year, ie 2022. Fifthly, the thrust of the insurgency has been shifting to south and southwest of Balochistan.

The Pakistani state, nonetheless, is largely employing the same traditional methods to counter the insurgent movement. For one, relying merely on kinetic actions, the state does not seem interested in engaging the insurgent leaders and/or Balochistan's legitimate nationalist political leadership in talks or process of reconciliation. The issue of missing persons is adding fuel to fire. Meanwhile, by intensifying their terrorist attacks, the Baloch insurgent groups are not only increasing their prospects of recruitment from disgruntled Baloch youths but also putting pressure on moderate nationalist political forces of Balochistan. Balochistan is not merely a security problem but a political conflict which calls for corresponding efforts at achieving reconciliation as well as security.

These are some Balochistan-specific suggestions that emerged during PIPS conversation with the Baloch people, leaders and experts:

- As the socioeconomic trickledown impact of mega development projects for masses in the Balochistan has been minimum so far, Pakistan needs to make sure that people in the province start reaping the benefits of big projects as soon as possible.
- The people of Balochistan demand free and fair elections so that their 'elected' representatives can decide about their affairs.
- There is a need to increase the socio-cultural engagements between the foreigners working on development or other projects and local populations. Government of Balochistan and development-related departments/authorities need to reach out to

¹⁸ Ibid.

people in the province to address the concerns of general public, educated youth and the civil society.

- The Baloch demand a network of technical institutions to be set up in the urban areas of the province to train youth from the area to be actively becoming part of development projects. Most of the educated youth of the region is unemployed, according to local, as they do not qualify the technical and experience requirements needed for most of the jobs at Gwadar port and industries that will be set up in future.

1.2.6 Reforms in Ex-FATA

The government's failure to speed up the process of introducing reforms in erstwhile FATA region after it was made part of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has left the people complaining and even questioning the merger. Many local groups have been asserting that the merger is not solving their problems and issues and hence it should be reversed; a demand that the banned TTP also made during peace talks with the government. Some tribesmen even filed the petitions before the court for that. In March, the Supreme Court of Pakistan decided to establish larger bench on petitions against the 25th Amendment that allowed the integration of erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Amendment had received presidential consent on March 31, 2018.¹⁹

The growing attacks on police once again reminded the need of reforming and capacitating the law enforcement structures of the tribal districts. Apparently, the government is aware of that need. For one, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Inspector General of Police Moazzam Jah Ansari said while briefing journalists in Peshawar on April 28th that they were focusing on better training, equipment and communication system for police in tribal districts. He said that besides several of police arms and other needs were also being met under the Accelerated Implementation Programme. "We are going to make setup of CTD in all merged districts by June 30 this year," he added.²⁰

The establishment of police stations and training of law enforcement agencies also needs to be stepped up. Although the process is underway, but it is quite slow, according to local accounts.

The revised NAP also places emphasis on introducing reforms in merged tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including ensuring an adequate share in NFC, capacity building of law enforcement agencies and introduction of political-administrative structures like local

¹⁹ "SC decides to form larger bench on FATA integration petitions," *The Express Tribune*, March 9, 2022.

²⁰ "Terrorists infiltrating from Afghanistan: KP IG," *Dawn*, April 29, 2022.

government elections and land reforms. There is a need to rehabilitate the internally displaced persons from ex-FATA and develop educational, road and other infrastructure in these areas.

It is heartening that local body elections were successfully held in ex-FATA in 2021-2022. During first phase of local bodies election held in KP on December 19th, polls were also held for the first time in Khyber, Mohmand and Bajaur tribal districts. In the second phase, voting was held in 65 tehsils in 18 districts of the provinces on March 31st including in tribal districts of Orakzai, North and South Waziristan, and Kurram.

PIPS believes that to heal and rehabilitate the citizens of ex-FATA, there is a need to:

- Enhance the economic and infrastructure development of this strategically critical area.
- Bring back the internally displaced persons and rehabilitate them.
- Speed up the process of political, administrative, and judicial reform in tribal districts.

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