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Mam Tehmina



# Waves of Terrorism in Pakistan

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# Waves of Terrorism in Pakistan

## Introduction

Terrorism means using fear and violence to achieve political or religious goals. It is a global issue, but Pakistan has faced this problem very seriously for many years.

Different terrorist groups like Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), ISIS, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, and Baloch separatists have attacked many parts of the country. Terrorism has affected many regions, including Parachinar (Kurram Agency), Rahim Yar Khan, Balochistan, Karachi, Kacha area of Sindh, interior Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, North Waziristan, Swat, and Punjab. The roots of terrorism in Pakistan go back to the 1980s, during the *Soviet-Afghan war*. Pakistan supported Afghan fighters, which brought weapons and extremist ideas into the country. Later, after the *9/11 attacks*, Pakistan joined the global "*War on Terror*," but its role was seen as mixed—fighting some groups while being accused of protecting others.



Figure 1

Many young people in Pakistan are drawn into terrorism because of poverty, lack of education, and limited job opportunities. Terrorist groups often exploit these weaknesses to recruit new members. While military operations like *Zarb-e-Azb* have helped reduce violence, experts believe that fighting terrorism also needs social reforms and better education.

To bring peace, Pakistan needs unity, better education, strong justice, and development in all regions. "Islam is a religion of peace. It does not teach terrorism or the killing of innocent people."

Reference: – Dr. Zakir Naik, Islamic scholar

## Parachinar, Kurram agency

Parachinar, the main town in Kurram District of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, has unfortunately been a frequent target of terrorist attacks over the years. The violence there is mostly linked to sectarian tensions, especially between Sunni and Shia Muslim communities, as well as the activity of various militant groups.



Figure 2

## Causes of violence

The roots of terrorism in Parachinar are complex. Sectarianism plays a big role, extremist Sunni groups often target the Shia population. This has been documented in research like the 2020 ScienceDirect article titled *Sectarian terrorism in Pakistan: Causes, impact and remedies*. Beyond religion, tribal rivalries and disputes over land also add fuel to the fire.

"Do not kill any soul whom Allah has made sacred, except in the course of justice."

Reference: Surah Al-An'am (6:151)

## Militant groups

Militant groups such as the *Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan* (TTP), *ISIS-Khorasan* (ISIS-K), and the *Haqqani Network* are active in the area. The Haqqani Network, in particular, has a strong presence and is known for its influence in Kurram, as detailed by the Institute for the Study of War. These groups exploit local conflicts to maintain power and carry out attacks. Muhammad Amir Rana's book *The Making of Terrorism in Pakistan* (2019) provides important insight into how terrorism here is not just about religion but also involves political and social factors, including the impact of regional geopolitics.

## Notable Attacks

One of the most tragic recent events was the 2024 attack on a Shia convoy near Parachinar, where over 38 people lost their lives. This incident sparked further sectarian clashes, resulting in even more casualties. Such attacks have been a grim pattern in the region for years.

Other bombings and shootings have also targeted civilians, disrupting daily life and causing fear among residents.



Figure 3

## Effects on the Community

The ongoing violence has had a devastating impact on people's lives. Many have been killed or displaced, and economic activities suffer whenever insecurity rises. Schools and markets often shut down during periods of unrest. The Shia community has protested repeatedly, demanding better protection from the government. However, many feel neglected and vulnerable.

Malala Yousafzai said after the 2017 twin blasts in Parachinar which killed over 75 people: "The people of Parachinar deserve the same care and attention as any other citizen. Their lives matter. Their blood is not cheap."

## Government Actions and Challenges

The Pakistani government and military have tried to combat terrorism through operations and security measures. But the situation is complicated by the difficult terrain, tribal politics, and the entrenched presence of militant groups.

Moeed Yusuf's edited volume *Pakistan's Counterterrorism Challenge* (2010) argues that military action alone is not enough; political reforms and community engagement are also necessary to tackle terrorism effectively.

The Haqqani Network's dual role as both a militant group and a political actor further complicates efforts to restore peace, as highlighted by the Institute for the Study of War.

## Khyber Pakhtunkhwa North Waziristan

North Waziristan, a district in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, remains a critical context for terrorism in 2025. The region faces persistent militant activity, primarily from the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and affiliated groups, fueled by complex geopolitical, social, and security factors. Its rugged terrain and porous border have made it a



Figure 4

safe refuge for militant groups, primarily the *Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan* (TTP), which aims to destabilize Pakistan and impose strict laws.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "Do not kill women or children or non-combatants and do not kill old people or religious people in their places of worship." (Hadith reported in Abu Dawud)

## Causes of violence and militant groups

North Waziristan's geography—mountainous and bordering Afghanistan—provides militants with easy cross-border movement and hideouts. The *porous border* with Afghanistan allows militants to move freely, exploiting limited border control. Pakistan has been fencing the border but the gaps remain. The return of the Taliban to power in Afghanistan in August 2021 has emboldened TTP fighters, who allegedly find sanctuary across the border, leading to increased infiltration attempts into Pakistan.



Figure 5

The collapse of the ceasefire between the Pakistani government and the TTP in November 2022 further escalated violence, as militants resumed attacks on security forces and civilians. Socio-economic deprivation, weak governance, and tribal complexities also contribute to the persistence of militancy, as militants exploit local grievances and porous borders to sustain their operations.

Maulana Tariq Jameel said: "Islam is the religion of love and mercy. Those who spread hate and violence are not representing Islam."

## Background

The US-led Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and the consequent defeat of the Taliban regime resulted in massive infiltration of al-Qaeda from Afghanistan into neighbouring countries. Iran has always condemned the Taliban for their anti-Shia activities in Afghanistan. In these circumstances, al-Qaeda members and the Taliban had no other option except to take refuge in the border lands of Pakistan. Pakistan shares a 1500 miles long border with Afghanistan and some 300 passes link Afghanistan with KPK and Baluchistan.

## Recent Incidents

In **Peshawar** in 2014, terrorists targeted *APS school*. The bombing killed many of the students school staff and also many were injured badly.

Throughout 2025, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has recorded 284 terrorist incidents, with North Waziristan alone accounting for 53 attacks, the highest in the province. Authorities killed 148 terrorists in 2025 so far, reflecting intense counterterrorism efforts. In July 2023, a suicide bombing in *Miranshah* killed three soldiers and a child, injuring 10 others. The TTP targeted a security post but was intercepted.

in January 2023, a suicide bombing at the *police lines mosque* in **Peshawar** killed over 86 policemen and wounded more than 200, highlighting the high human cost of militancy in the region.

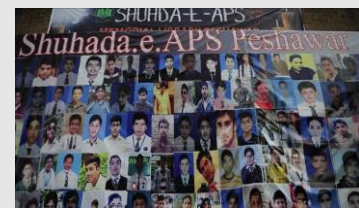


Figure 6



Figure 7

## Impact on Civilians

The violence has caused heavy civilian casualties and displacement. Attacks on markets, mosques, and peace committees disrupt daily life and create fear among residents. Security personnel face frequent ambushes and suicide attacks, suffering significant casualties. Locals, especially *Pashtuns*, suffer the most. Over 80,000 people, including civilians, have been killed in Pakistan's terror-related violence since 2003.

## Challenges to Stability

Militants freely move between Afghanistan and Pakistan due to the porous border. The *Afghan Taliban*'s reluctance to act against TTP fighters complicates Pakistan's efforts to secure its frontier. The breakdown of peace talks in late 2022 led to renewed militant attacks, reversing earlier gains made by Pakistani security forces. Tribal dynamics and local grievances sometimes hinder unified efforts against militancy. Weak governance and economic hardship also create conditions conducive to recruitment by militant groups.

## Government Response

Pakistan's military continues aggressive counterterrorism operations, including operation *Zarb-e-Azb* (2014) significantly weakened militant infrastructure but did not end insurgency. Post-2014, targeted raids and intelligence-based operations have been intensified.



Figure 8

*Pakistan Army* spoken during the launch of Operation Zarb-e-Azb against TTP and foreign terrorists. "The operation in North Waziristan is not just a military action, it is a war for Pakistan's survival."

In *April 25-28, 2025* security forces engaged a large militant group attempting to infiltrate from Afghanistan near *Hassan Khel*, killing 71 militants over multiple days. The military recovered weapons and explosives, thwarting planned high-profile attacks. In *April 23-24, 2025* security forces killed nine terrorists in two separate operations near North Waziristan, including six militants in *Bannu* and three in Khyber. These operations followed intelligence reports and aimed to disrupt militant networks.



Figure 9

In *February 2025*, security forces killed 12 TTP terrorists in an intelligence-based operation in *Hassan Khel*, North Waziristan, but one soldier also died. Weapons and ammunition were recovered from the militants.



Figure 10

Over 1,100 suspects have been named in terrorism-related cases in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2025, with arrests ongoing.

Intelligence agencies work closely with military units to prevent attacks.

Prime Minister *Shehbaz Sharif* and other leaders have publicly praised security forces' successes and vowed to continue combating terrorism.

## Current situation

Terrorism remains a serious challenge in North Waziristan, Pakistan, which continues to be the most violent district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. In **2025**, the district recorded **53 terrorist attacks** out of **284** in the province, with militants like the **Tehrik-i-Taliban** Pakistan (TTP) and affiliated groups actively involved. Recent clashes in April 2025 saw Pakistani forces kill **71 militants** attempting to infiltrate from Afghanistan, highlighting ongoing cross-border threats. Despite intense military operations and the killing of many terrorists, attacks on security forces and civilians persist, fueled by the porous border and militant sanctuaries in neighboring Afghanistan. The security situation remains fragile, requiring continued counterterrorism efforts

## Rahim Yar Khan

**Rahim Yar Khan**, a district in **southern Punjab**, Pakistan, has faced serious challenges from terrorism and violent crime over the past decade. The region has experienced sectarian attacks, militant violence, and organized criminal assaults, all of which have deeply affected the local population and security forces.



Figure 11

## Major Terrorist Incidents

On **January 15, 2012**, a remote-controlled bomb exploded during a **Shi'a Muslim Chehlum** procession in **Khanpur tehsil**. The attack killed 18 people and injured dozens, many critically. The bomb was planted near an electricity pylon and detonated as mourners gathered, causing immediate loss of life and widespread panic. **Lashkar-e-Jhangvi**, a sectarian militant group, was suspected. The attack sparked violent protests and heightened sectarian tensions in the district. Militants blew up a major **gas pipeline** near the **Sindh-Punjab border in Rahim Yar Khan**, disrupting gas supplies to thousands and damaging vital infrastructure. This act aimed at economic disruption and creating fear among civilians. On **August 22, 2024**, heavily armed riverine **dacoits ambushed police vans** in the **Machka** area, killing 12 policemen and injuring six others. The attack involved rocket fire and occurred when police were trapped in rainwater, highlighting the dangers law enforcement faces in remote areas. The incident shocked the nation and led to calls for intensified joint operations against criminal gangs operating in the riverine "kacha" areas. In **January 2025**, armed gangsters from the **Indhar gang** launched a revenge attack in **Basti Lashari**, killing four people, including three teenagers related to a police informant. This attack was part of ongoing violent feuds between criminal gangs, causing fear and insecurity among civilians.

## Aspects of Terrorism in Rahim Yar Khan

**Sectarian terrorism** mainly targets religious minorities, especially the **Shi'a community**. Groups like **Lashkar-e-Jhangvi** have been involved in violent attacks aiming to spread hatred and destabilize social harmony. Besides ideological terrorism, Rahim Yar Khan faces threats from militant groups and **organized criminals**, including dacoits who attack police and civilians to assert control and create fear.



Figure 12

Malala Yousafzai said:

**"With guns you can kill terrorists, but with education you can kill terrorism."**

Terrorists have attacked *vital infrastructure* such as gas pipelines, causing economic losses and disrupting daily life.

**"Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Verily, Allah does not love the transgressors."**

Surah Al-Baqarah (2:190)

## Impacts

Terrorist attacks and gang violence have resulted in significant casualties, including civilians, police officers, and security personnel. The **2012 bombing** and **2024 police ambush** alone caused dozens of deaths and injuries, devastating families and communities. Repeated attacks have created a climate of fear and insecurity. Sectarian violence has deepened mistrust between communities, while criminal violence has disrupted daily life and economic activities. Attacks on *infrastructure* like gas pipelines have caused shortages and economic hardship. Frequent violence in rural and riverine areas has forced some residents to relocate temporarily or permanently to safer places. The **killing of police personnel** demoralizes the force and complicates efforts to maintain law and order. Police face threats not only from militants but also from well-armed criminal gangs, requiring greater resources and coordination.

## Security Operations and Responses

Authorities have increased security by *deploying forces at sensitive locations*, conducting intelligence-led operations, and maintaining continuous patrolling. Special teams focus on arresting terrorists and dismantling criminal networks. Following the **2024 ambush**, calls for coordinated action among Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan police have intensified to tackle riverine dacoits and militants who exploit border areas for refuge. Efforts to involve local communities in reporting suspicious activities have been part of the strategy to prevent attacks and improve intelligence.

## Current Situation

While Pakistan has seen an overall decline in terrorism due to military operations, Rahim Yar Khan remains vulnerable to sectarian and criminal violence. Militants and gangs continue to exploit porous borders and remote areas, posing ongoing challenges to security forces and civilians alike.

## The Jaffar Express Incident (Terrorism in Balochistan)

The **Jaffar Express incident** was a significant terrorist attack that took place on **March 11, 2025**, near Sibi in Balochistan, Pakistan. The attack targeted the Jaffar Express train traveling from Quetta to Peshawar, carrying around 440 passengers, including military personnel. Militants from the **Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)** ambushed the train by blowing up tracks and opening fire, leading to derailment and hostage-taking.



Figure 13

## Major Details

The attackers, estimated to be around **33 militants**, detonated explosives on *the railway tracks*, causing the train to derail in a remote mountainous area. Militants separated passengers by ethnicity and killed many, including soldiers and civilians, demanding the release of Baloch political prisoners.

Pakistani security forces responded with *Operation Green Bolan*, a 30-hour siege that ended with the death of all militants and the rescue of over 300 passengers. The attack resulted in at least **64 deaths**, including **18 soldiers and 21 civilians**, and left **38 injured**.

The incident shocked the nation and was widely condemned by political leaders and the public.

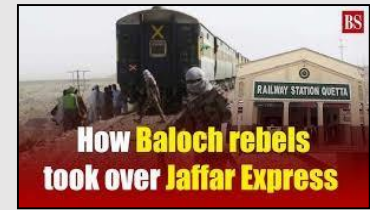


Figure 14

## Operation Green Bolan

Pakistan's military launched a complex rescue mission named Operation Green Bolan, involving the army, air force, Frontier Corps, and *Special Services Group (SSG)*. The operation lasted over **30 hours**, involving multiple raids on the train and surrounding areas. All **33 militants** were killed during the operation, and most hostages were freed. The rescue was complicated by the militants using hostages as human shields and the difficult mountainous terrain. Some passengers escaped by sneaking away during the chaos and reaching nearby security checkpoints.

## Political Aspects

The attack intensified political tensions, with the government blaming *foreign interference*, particularly from India and Afghanistan, though these claims remain disputed. Political parties across Pakistan condemned the attack, calling for unity against terrorism. The incident led to a *crackdown on Baloch political activists and human rights defenders*, raising concerns about human rights and political freedoms. The hijacking exposed the *deep-rooted grievances* in Balochistan, including demands for greater autonomy, economic rights, and political inclusion. It underscored the need for a combined approach of *security operations and political dialogue* to address the insurgency effectively.

## Impact on People

The attack caused significant loss of life and trauma among survivors and families of victims. It highlighted the vulnerability of civilian and military transport in conflict-prone areas. The incident intensified security concerns in Balochistan and underscored the ongoing insurgency by separatist groups like the *BLA*. Rail services on the affected routes were temporarily suspended, and security was heightened nationwide to prevent similar attacks.

## Security Response and Current Status

The swift military operation demonstrated Pakistan's capability to respond to complex terrorist attacks. The government accused external actors, including India and Afghan-based facilitators, of supporting the militants, though no conclusive evidence was publicly presented. The Jaffar Express resumed operations on **March 27, 2025**, under heavy security, symbolizing resilience and commitment to combating terrorism.



## Current Situation

The Kacha area remains volatile, with sporadic but deadly attacks on security forces continuing. Punjab Police claim to have killed over **60 criminals** and prevented hundreds of kidnappings through vigilant operations, but the challenge persists due to the terrain and cross-border movement of militants. A comprehensive approach combining security operations, political will, and socio-economic development is needed to stabilize the region.

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## PAKISTAN ZINDABAD



## PAK ARMY ZINDABAD