



CoronaCrimeWatch Pakistan

Weekly Review of Organised Crime and Pandemic

(Compiled by National Initiative against Organised Crime (NIOC))

11 to 17 April 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic is not only affecting the economies and societies across the world but also changing the trends of the organized crime and illicit markets. Pakistan is already facing critical economic challenges as well as issues related to governance and internal security. While the coronavirus pandemic has complicated these challenges, it can also bring to fore new challenges related to organized crime and non-state actors in the country. There is a need for institutional vigilance to monitor the changing trends for better understanding and preparedness to cope with future challenges. The National Initiative against Organized Crime (NIOC) is initiating a weekly monitor on Organized Crime as a civil society initiative to support the institutional and community responses. The weekly brief is a result of information collected from open sources, mainly the mainstream media reports, both Urdu and English as well as information collected from various experts associated with the Project.

1. General Trends

1.1 Action against profiteers:

The price hike and hoarding of essential items have emerged as one of the biggest challenge in corona pandemic situation in the country. The regulatory authorities have failed to stop the smuggling of the essential items and police is already overstretched to implement the government order of the lockdown. In this backdrop Prime Minister Imran Khan has assigned the task to the law enforcement agencies mainly Intelligence Bureau (IB) to curb the menace.¹

¹ *Dawn*, Islamabad, April 18, 2020.

1.2 Street crimes:

After rising complaints about the growing street crimes in the federal capital Islamabad, the police have chalked out a night patrolling plan covering all sectors of the city. The capital police have also deployed additional strength, and Falcon Squad vehicles have been provided to all Zonal SPs to ensure the implementation on the plan. Police claimed on April 15 to have arrested 19 persons during 24 hours during a crackdown campaign against criminal elements and have recovered narcotics and weapons from them.²

1.3 Police under threat:

The number of coronavirus cases is increasing among the police personnel on duty. Until April 12th, 16 Punjab Police employees were reportedly infected by Covid-19.³ Despite putting their lives at risk, the policemen are facing issues in enforcing the lockdown orders especially on Fridays. A women police officer in Orangi Town, Karachi, was injured when police came under attack while trying to stop people from praying in large numbers at a mosque in the locality.⁴ Police is fearful of such more attacks in coming weeks especially during the holy month of Ramadan as people observe the month with all religious zeal, and praying in mosques is considered an important tradition.

1.4 Terrorism watch:

No significant decline has been seen in the activities of the militants during the coronavirus pandemic. They are regularly targeting security forces, mainly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. During the week under review one soldier was martyred and two terrorists were killed during an exchange of fire in North Waziristan tribal district.⁵ Separately, the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) KP province foiled an attempt by the terrorists to enter Swat valley and during the encounter two terrorists were killed.⁶ Yet in another incident, an anti-militant search operation, a member of an elite police force lost his life and a soldier of the Pakistan Army sustained injuries in Buner district of KP province.⁷

2. Terror Financing

An Anti-Terrorism Court in Karachi is hearing a case of alleged forgery by slain Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Mansour and his front men. During the last hearing of the case on April 11th, the court observed that the case has serious application for the country in the context of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) restrictions and directed the investigation officer to ensure the

² *The Nation*, April 17, 2020, <https://nation.com.pk/17-Apr-2020/islamabad-police-devise-night-patrolling-plan-as-crackdown-continues-against-criminals>

³ *The Express Tribune*, April 13, 2020, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2196650/1-punjab-police-fighting-crime-illness-amid-coronavirus/>

⁴ *The News*, April 10, 2020, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/642364-coronavirus-lockdown-woman-sho-wounded-as-mob-attacks-police-outside-karachi-mosque>

⁵ *Dawn*, April 15, 2020, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1549297/soldier-martyred-in-north-waziristan>

⁶ *Daily Jang* (Urdu), April 16, 2020, <https://e.jang.com.pk/04-16-2020/pindi/pic.asp?picname=636.png>

⁷ *Dawn*, April 18, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1550106/policeman-killed-soldier-injured-in-clash-with-militants>

presence of witnesses during the next hearing for fast proceedings.⁸ The court's vigilance reflects that judiciary is taking terror-financing issue seriously. According to the challan, Mansour owned multiple plots, flats and other residential properties in Karachi and had acquired two fake computerised national identity cards in the names of Muhammad Wali and Gul Muhammad to run an illegal business with his front men Ammar and Akhtar.

An Urdu-language newspaper reported, on April 11th, that FATF has asked Pakistan to introduce new mechanism on foreign currency trade up to USD 500 and make it obligatory for financial institution to keep record of the customers purchasing 500 dollars.⁹ The government and FATF website, however, did not provide any details on such advisory and the report seems based on speculations but there is need for extra vigilance on issues related to terror financing as experts are continuously warning that pandemic should not cause a slowdown in the reform process with a view to fulfill the FATF requirements. An Op-Ed last week rightly warned about the spoilers: "It will be prudent to note that while spoilers will keep casting shadows on the earnest efforts of Pakistan, the synergy within the government seen so far to get out of the FATF Grey List should continue. It is also hoped that this synergy extends to other areas of governance so that building blocks of efficient government functioning are placed to take a positive economic trajectory for good".¹⁰

3. Drug Trafficking

Drug traffickers are posing a key challenge for Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA's) during the times of coronavirus pandemic. During the week under review, law enforcement agencies confiscated a large number of drugs, mostly heroin, hashish, opium and crystal meth. Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) and Frontier Crops in Balochistan and Karachi have confiscated huge quantities of these drugs in different operations. In Chagai district of Balochistan, ANF has recovered 1,020kg heroin, which was dumped in a forest, while FC South seized 8 ton of hashish and 120kg crystal from district Turbat, which was being smuggled to Iran.¹¹ In another major operation ANF Karachi at Qasim Port recovered 700kg heroin and 80kg opium from a container bound to Belgium.¹² The container was booked from Sahiwal district of Punjab and it contained drug worth Rs 7 billion in the international market. ANF also recovered 15kg opium and 270kg hashish in another search operation.¹³

⁸ *The Express Tribune*, April 12, 2020, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2196243/1-io-asked-present-witnesses-mullah-mansoor-properties-case/>

⁹ *Daily 92* (Urdu), April 11, 2020, https://www.roznama92news.com/efrontend/web/index.php/?station_id=7&page_id=0&is_common=&xdate=2020-4-11&n=n43

¹⁰ Zeeshan Ahmed, *The Express Tribune*, April 15, 2020, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2198710/6-spoilers-may-cast-shadow-pakistans-fatf-commitment/>

¹¹ *Daily Jang*, April 12, 2020, https://e.jang.com.pk/04-12-2020/Quetta/images/main_page_images/page2.jpg

¹² *Daily Jang*, April 12, 2020, <https://e.jang.com.pk/04-12-2020/pindi/pic.asp?picname=85.png>

¹³ *Daily Jang*, April 13, 2020, https://jang.com.pk/news/758031?_ga=2.33703521.136125725.1586806291-1881721181.1586806291

A nationwide campaign against drug paddlers also continued in other parts of the country during last week where LEA's have also made some successful seizures. For instance, Swabi District Police in KP Province foiled two attempts at smuggling the drugs and recovered 15 kg hashish.¹⁴¹⁵ District Faisalabad Police in Punjab arrested 19 drug traffickers and seized 22 kg of hashish, while district Sargodha Police arrested 4 drug pushers and seized 2 kg of hashish. Islamabad police also arrested four drug paddlers in two different cases¹⁶ and recovered considerable quantity of hashish.

4. Cybercrimes

During the week under review, data breach of 115 million Pakistani mobile users caused concern across the country and Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Interior Senator Rehman Malik has directed the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) to probe reports about data breach involving sale of data of 115 million Pakistanis on darknet.¹⁷

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About NIOC:

National Initiative against Organized Crime (NIOC), in collaboration with the Global Initiative Resilience Fund is the first-ever initiative in Pakistan launched by a group of committed professionals and experts with law enforcement, media and other public service backgrounds. NIOC aims to build community resilience and influence public policy to combat organized crime.

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¹⁴ Dawn, April 14, 2020, https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailNews.php?StoryText=16_04_2020_182_002

¹⁵ *Daily 92*, April 11, 2020, https://www.roznama92news.com/efrontend/web/index.php/?station_id=4&page_id=1&is_common=&xdate=2020-4-11&n=n24

¹⁶ *Daily 92*, April 14, 2020, https://www.roznama92news.com/efrontend/web/index.php/?station_id=3&page_id=1&is_common=&xdate=2020-04-12&n=n4

¹⁷ *Dawn*, April 12, 2020 <https://www.dawn.com/news/1548536/fia-asked-to-probe-data-breach-of-115m-mobile-users>