



CoronaCrimeWatch Pakistan

Weekly Review of Organised Crime and Pandemic

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

16 May to 22 May 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.

Corona cases in Pakistan:

The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Pakistan rose to 51,889 on May 22. Province-wise break up of the total number of cases as of 11:00 pm, May 22, is as follows:

Total confirmed cases: 51,889

- Sindh: 20,883
- Punjab: 18,455
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: 7,391
- Balochistan: 3,074
- Islamabad Capital Territory: 1,326
- Gilgit-Baltistan: 602

- AJK: 158

Deaths: 1,087

- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: 381
- Sindh: 340
- Punjab: 310
- Balochistan: 39
- Gilgit-Baltistan: 4
- Islamabad Capital Territory: 12
- AJK: 1

English daily *Dawn* on May 22 published a warning by the Director General National Institute of Health that a further increase in the CIVOD 19 cases can be problematic and it may compel the government to reconsider its decision regarding lifting of lockdown.¹

1. General Trends

1.1 The trend in Street Crime:

During the week under review, the provincial capital, Karachi, witnessed a sharp increase in street crime during the ongoing coronavirus lockdown. According to a media report, mask-wearing dacoits are on the loose in the metropolis.² The reporting TV channel claimed that it had obtained CCTV footages of several incidents in the city, where suspected robbers wearing surgical masks could be seen snatching valuable goods from the citizens.

1.2 Terrorism Watch:

The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab province claimed a success against the banned Islamic State (IS) after killing four of its terrorists in an intelligence-based operation in Bahawalpur district of southern Punjab. Three accomplices of the terrorists were reported to have escaped. As per the CTD, the killed terrorists belonged to the banned Islamic State (IS) militant group. The terrorists were planning to target a worship place of a minority community, said the security officials. The CTD recovered hand grenades, SMG rifles and other weapons from their possession.³

The terror campaign continued in Balochistan province during the week under review and separatist insurgents killed seven soldiers in two separate terror attacks in Bolan and Kech districts. According to a statement issued by ISPR – military’s media wing – six FC soldiers including a Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) and a civilian driver embraced martyrdom in an IED attack in Pir Ghaib, Mach (Bolan) on FC vehicle returning to base camp after routine

¹ *Dawn*, May 22, 2020, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1558854/covid-19-cases-may-increase-by-15-20pc-next-week>

² ARY TV website, <https://arynews.tv/en/dacoits-start-surgical-masks-police/>

³ *The Express Tribune*, May 17, 2020, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2223338/1-four-terrorists-killed-bahawalpur-ctd/>

patrolling duty. Separately, during an exchange of fire with terrorists near Mand (Kech), FC soldier Imdad Ali lost his life.⁴

In North Waziristan, Security forces were patrolling the main Eidek bazaar of Mirali when a remote-controlled device went off near their vehicle close to Nizameia Mosque. One soldier, Amir, was martyred and three others were wounded in the blast.⁵

3. Drug Trafficking

In its monthly review, Federal Ministry of Narcotics Control said it had noted a downward trend in drug smuggling since the onset of COVID 19; that decline was visible in April compared to previous month. According to the statistics shared by the ministry in April, only 38 instances of drug smuggling were registered, which were 50 percent less than in March. The Law Enforcement Agencies apprehended 36 drug smugglers in April and recovered 410 KG opium, 214 KG morphine, 1887 KG heroin, and 988 KG Hashish. The ministry handout detailed the reasons for the declining trend and linked it with the border closure with Afghanistan and lockdown, which has restricted the moments of the traffickers. While the moment of a small quantity of drug through highways in private cars and inter-provincial moment of the drug continue but frequency and quantity have been significantly reduced.

The KP police have arrested 16 drug paddlers and recovered 73 KG hashish, 21 KG Opium and 12 KG heroin in different operations conducted in districts of Peshawar,⁶ Jamrud,⁷ Swabi,⁸ and Karak.⁹ The media reports also indicated that most of the drugs were destined to Punjab province. However Punjab police also continued its campaign against the drugs trafficking and dealers. They arrested two dozens of drug peddlers and recovered sizable amounts of drugs across the province. Some operations are listed below:

- District Rawalpindi police recovered 4 KG hashish and arrested three drug peddlers.¹⁰
- District Sargodha police arrested 13 nacro-dealers and recovered 2 KG of hashish.¹¹

⁴ *The News*, May 19, 2020, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/660544-seven-soldiers-martyred-in-two-separate-incidents-in-balochistan>; *Dawn*, May 20, 2020, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1558421/seven-troops-martyred-in-two-attacks-in-balochistan>

⁵ *Dawn*, May 19, 2020, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1558176/soldier-martyred-three-injured-in-blast-in-north-waziristan>

⁶ *Daily 92*, May 18, 2020 and May 21, 2020 (two different operations)

⁷ *Daily 92*, May 20, 2020,

https://www.roznama92news.com/efrontend/web/index.php/?station_id=4&page_id=5&is_common=&xdate=2020-05-20&n=n25

⁸ *Daily 92*, May 19 and 18 and 17, 2020 (Three different incidents)

⁹ *Dawn*, May 16, 2020, https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailNews.php?StoryText=16_05_2020_183_012

¹⁰ *Daily 92*, May 22, 2020,

https://www.roznama92news.com/efrontend/web/index.php/?station_id=3&page_id=1&is_common=&xdate=2020-05-22&n=n18

¹¹ *The Express Tribune*, May 20, 2020

https://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI_ID=11202005200333&EN_ID=11202005200104&EMID=11202005200042

- District Multan police arrested two narco-dealers and seized large quantity of drugs from him.¹²
- District Hafizabad police in a major bid against drug traffickers recovered heroin worth of three million rupees and arrested members of four drug gangs.¹³

During the week under review, the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) also launched operations against drug mafia across the country and seized 451 kg drugs besides arresting 19 suspected smugglers. ANF has impounded nine vehicles that were being used by the smugglers for transporting drugs, and the value of seized narcotics is Rs 25.16 million in international market, according to a media report.¹⁴

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About NIOC:

National Initiative against Organized Crime (NIOC) is the first-ever such initiative in Pakistan, which was launched in collaboration with the Global Initiative's Resilience Fund. It is led by a group of committed professionals and experts with law enforcement, media and other public service backgrounds. Through developing an empirical evidence-base and conducting hand-on consultations, NIOC aims to build community resilience and influence public policy to combat organized crime including terror financing, drug trafficking, human trafficking and cybercrime.

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¹² Daily *Dunya*, May 18, 2020 https://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2020-05-18&edition=MUL&id=5185651_80614775

¹³ Daily *Dunya*, May 16, 2020 https://e.dunya.com.pk/detail.php?date=2020-05-16&edition=GUJ&id=5183683_95733205

¹⁴ *The Nation*, May 20, 2020, <https://nation.com.pk/E-Paper/islamabad/2020-05-20/page-14/detail-3>