



Organized Crime Watch-2/2021

Pakistan's Organized Crime Monthly Review

Compiled by National Initiative against Organised Crime (NIOC)

February 2021

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. Terrorism Watch

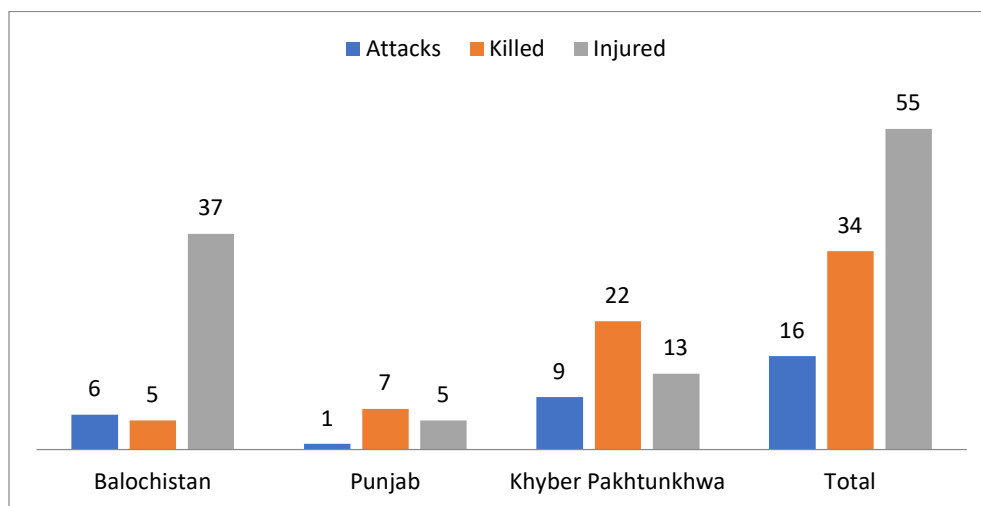
In February 2021, the number of terrorist attacks in Pakistan increased by over 33 percent from the month before, and the number of people killed in these attacks surged by about 62 percent. In all, 16 terrorist attacks took place in Pakistan during the month under review, which claimed 34 lives and injured 55 others.

Among those 34 killed in terrorist attacks were 14 civilians, 15 security personnel (7 FC men, 8 army soldiers), as well as five militants; those injured included 41 civilians and 14 security personnel.

Militants stepped up terrorist violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where nine reported attacks claimed 22 lives (including 21 in North and South Waziristan alone) and injured 13 others.

For a third month in row, six terrorist attacks took place in Balochistan, which caused five deaths – compared to 16 in the month before – and inflicted injuries on another 37 people. Meanwhile in DG Khan, six people were killed while five others sustained injuries when an alleged violent radical individual opened fire on people in Sheikhani Bridge area.

Chart 1: Terrorist Attacks in Pakistan in February 2021



The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other militants with similar objectives perpetrated 10 attacks in February 2021, killing 29 people and injuring 18 others. Baloch nationalist insurgent groups were believed to be involved in six attacks that killed five people and inflicted injuries on 37 others.

2. Terror Financing

- During the month under review, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) acknowledged the Pakistan efforts against the terror financing and decided that Pakistan will not be blacklisted even after the June plenary session. During its plenary meeting on February 23rd,¹ FATF has given one more month to Pakistan for submitting its next compliance report². For next compliance, Pakistan will also have to make further legislation on at least two counts to meet three outstanding benchmarks of the 27-point action plan of the FATF before the June deadline. To achieve the target, an important meeting of relevant stakeholders was held in

¹ Dawn. "Substantive progress made on FATF items, says FO", in *Dawn*. 13/02/2021. Available at: https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailNews.php?StoryText=13_02_2021_012_001 [accessed 14/02/2021]

² Dawn. "Pakistan to stay on FATF grey list until June", in *Dawn*. 26/02/2021. Available at: https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailNews.php?StoryText=26_02_2021_001_002 [accessed 26/02/2021]

Islamabad in late February, and Presiding over the meeting of the National Executive Committee (NEC) on Anti-Money Laundering, Finance Minister Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh asked the Financial Monitoring Unit (FMU) and chairman of the FATF Coordination Committee and Industries and Production Minister Hammad Azhar to immediately finalize the timelines for additional legislation in consultation with agencies of the federal government and the armed forces.³

Other events:

- On February 12th, an ATC in Karachi ordered the State Bank to unfreeze assets belonging to the late Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour. Mansour's assets, generated through the sale and purchase of property in Karachi using fake identities, will be transferred into the state treasury.⁴

3. Drug Trafficking

During the month under review, Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), Police and other concerned departments conducted 144 operations against the drug smugglers and dealers and arrested 1271 offenders apart from confiscating huge quantity of narcotics (See table below)

Total drugs seized:

Feb 2021	Response		Types of drugs seized (in kg)			
	Ops	Arrests	Hashish	Heroin	Ice/Meth	Others
Punjab	93	250	811.937	16.717	6.445	1498.6
Balochistan	10	20	294.35	28.9	57.53	721.15
Sindh	22	946	1782.197	1.45	64.9	19.315
KP	19	55	2553.87	38	1.04	20400
AJK/GB	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	144	1271	5442.354	85.067	129.915	22639.07

3.1. Trends observed:

- Hashish remains the most popular drug smuggled in Pakistan, with 5442.35kg smuggled during the month of February. Opium is a close second.⁵
- Most anti-narcotic operations have occurred in Punjab, due to it being a transit point for drugs coming from KP and Balochistan.

³ Dawn, March 2, 2021 <https://www.dawn.com/news/1610250/legislation-still-needed-to-meet-fatf-benchmarks>

⁴ Dawn. "Court orders SBP to unfreeze Mullah Mansour's assets deposited in bank", in *Dawn*. 12/02/2021. Available at: https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailNews.php?StoryText=12_02_2021_113_001 [accessed 13/02/2021]

⁵ While the statistics argue opium is the most popular drug, the large quantity observed is largely from a single operation, as opposed to multiple seizures over time.

- Ice and crystal meth are being found far more frequently, due to a shift in narcotics production in Afghanistan from opium to meth.⁶ The wide presence of the ephedra plant, from which ephedrine is extracted, allows for easier production of narcotics, as does the smaller footprint of meth labs.
 - Despite this, opium is still being produced in large quantities, indicating that the shift is not complete.
- Crystal meth and ice are most frequently found in Balochistan and the Arabian Sea
 - This is due to the proximity to the Afghan border (and Afghan meth labs) and the Arabian Sea being the gateway to transnational markets.
- On average, 1-2kg of narcotics are seized in busts.

3.2. Major seizures and busts:

Major Operations/Busts			
Date	Location	Arrests	Seizures
5/2/2021	Quetta, Balochistan	2	100kg hashish
7/2/2021	D.I. Khan, KP	2	2,500kg hashish, 20,400kg opium
10/2/2021	Nationwide	22	2,153.166kg various narcotics
13/2/2021	Karachi	1	4.1kg ice
18/2/2021	Sindh	4	104.4kg various narcotics
18/2/2021	Winder, Balochistan	4	122.85kg various narcotics
20/2/2021	Shikarpur Road, Sindh	0	323kg hashish
24/2/2021	Pishukan, Balochistan	0	700kg various narcotics

- Compared to January 2021, far more substances have been seized by authorities and far more arrests have taken place. This is likely a product of more drugs flowing into the country, as well as more aggressive action from law enforcement agencies.

3.3. Total drugs seized:

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⁶ Secunder Kermani. "Afghanistan, home to the heroin trade, moves into meth", in *BBC*. 24/11/2020. Available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-55048147> [accessed 05/03/2021]

4. Cybercrime

- The most prominent form of cybercrime has been the production and dissemination of child pornography.
- Some of the individuals caught uploading the material are part of global networks.⁷
- Other than this, scams and fraud are still occurring, defrauding victims out of hundreds of thousands of rupees.⁸
- No instances of cyber-warfare or cyber-terrorism observed.

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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 in November 2019 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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⁷ Dawn. "Two linked to international child porn ring arrested", in *Dawn*. 07/02/2021. Available at: https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailNews.php?StoryText=07_02_2021_001_005 [accessed 07/02/2021]

⁸ Dawn. "Gang deprives man of Rs.0.8 million thru TV game show fraud", in *Dawn*. 01/02/2021. Available at: https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailNews.php?StoryText=01_02_2021_002_002 [accessed 02/02/2021]