



## **Organized Crime Watch-3/2021**

### **Pakistan's Organized Crime Monthly Review**

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

#### **March 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) has initiated a monthly monitor on Organized Crime as a civil society initiative to support the institutional and community responses. The monthly 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**

Compared to 16 in the month before, as many as 11 terrorist attacks took place in Pakistan during March 2021. These attacks claimed 16 lives, compared to 34 in the previous month, and injured 43 others. Among those 16 killed in terrorist attacks were 10 civilians, five security

personnel (2 policemen, 2 army soldiers, and one Rangers), as well as one militant; those injured included 26 civilians, 16 security personnel, and one militant.

Although the number of terrorist attacks fell from previous month, yet the reported 11 attacks in March centred in all four provinces and the federal capital Islamabad.

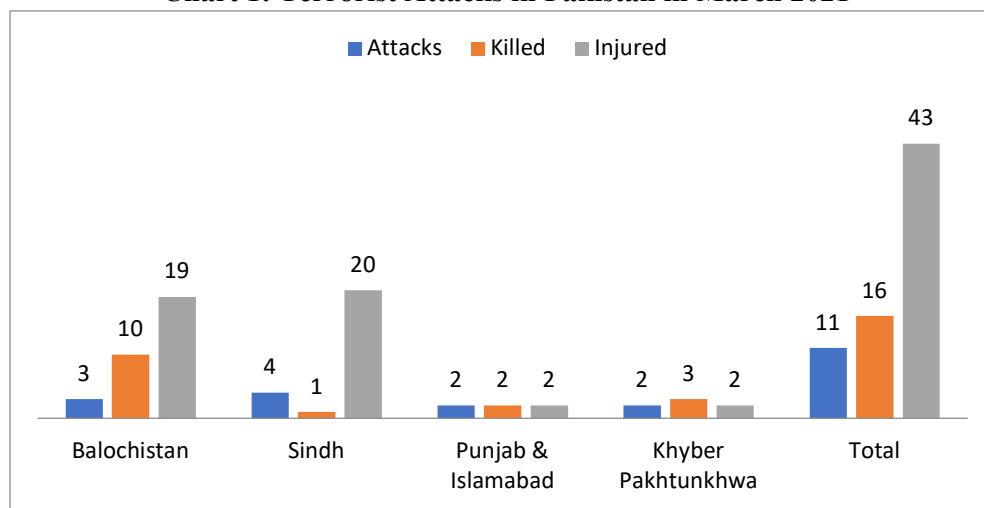
Marking a significant decline from nine in the previous month, two terrorist attacks took place in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in March 2021. These attacks claimed three lives and injured another two people.

Similarly, although the number of reported attacks from Balochistan fell in March but the consequent deaths increased significantly. Half than the month before, three terrorist attacks took place in Balochistan, which caused 10 deaths – compared to five in the month before – and inflicted injuries on another 19 people.

In all, four terrorist attacks happened in Sindh – including three in Karachi and one in Khairpur – which claimed the life of one Rangers personnel and injured 20 others.

Two terrorist attacks took place in twin cities of Islamabad-Rawalpindi, which targeted police officials on the same day. The TTP claimed the attacks that killed two police officials and injured as many.

**Chart 1: Terrorist Attacks in Pakistan in March 2021**



The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other militants with similar objectives perpetrated five attacks in March 2021, killing eight people and injuring 17 others. Baloch and Sindhi nationalist insurgent groups were also believed to be involved in five attacks that killed eight people and inflicted injuries on 25 others. Meanwhile one reported sectarian-related attack injured one person.

## 2. Drug trafficking

### 2.1. Trends observed:

- Hashish remains the most popular drug to smuggle in Pakistan. Opium is second.
- The most operations and arrests took place in Punjab, whilst Sindh saw the most drugs seized.
  - This is likely because of drugs being smuggled through the Arabian Sea.
- More frequent busts in excess of 100kg than in February.
- Increase in hashish seizures from February.
  - Increase from 5442.35kg seized in February, to 8087.73kg seized in March.
- Seizures of ice and crystal meth have become more frequent.
  - Increase from 129.92kg seized in February, to 834.48kg seized in March.
  - This is reflective of the shift in Afghanistan to producing ice and crystal meth. In spite of this shift, opium remains popular.
- LEAs have increased rhetoric and activity during the month of March.
  - Multiple nationwide crackdowns.
  - Specialized units set up for anti-narcotics operations – Hazara police set up a horseback police unit to patrol rugged terrain.<sup>1</sup>
  - Reshuffling of high-level staff.
  - Greater rhetoric espoused by authorities against drug trafficking.
- Most drugs moved through Sindh and Balochistan, likely due to proximity to borders. Sindh has access to transnational markets via the sea, whilst Balochistan borders Iran and Afghanistan – the other two countries in the Golden Crescent smuggling network.
- Punjab sees the most arrests as it appears to be a transit point for narcotics smugglers. Drugs move there from KP, before either going into Sindh or circulating within Punjab itself.

**Chart No 2: Major busts**

Major Operations/Busts			
Date	Location	Arrests	Seizures
5/3/2021	Karachi/Arabian Sea	5	2040kg hashish (2.04 tonnes)
5/3/2021	Nationwide	24	2698.09kg various narcotics (2.7 tonnes)
8/3/2021	Gwadar/Gwadar Coast	4	1100kg hashish (1.1 tonnes)
9/3/2021	Karachi	4	450kg ice
15/3/2021	Peshawar	2	130kg heroin, 30kg ice
18/3/2021	Nationwide	24	794kg various narcotics
25/3/2021	Sindh	0	496kg hashish, 24kg opium
28/3/2021	Sindh	2	632kg hashish, 7kg opium
28/3/2021	Balochistan	3	340kg crystal meth, 30kg cocaine
31/3/2021	Sindh	1	1520kg hashish (1.5 tonnes), 0.11kg ice

<sup>1</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2289820/horse-mounted-police-planned-for-hazara>

**Chart No 3: Total drugs seized**

Mar 2021 - NIOC	Response		Types of drugs seized (in kg)			
	Ops	Arrests	Hashish	Heroin	Ice/Meth	Others
Punjab	54	233	721.81	69.32	3.38	20.88
Balochistan	15	25	2051.62	0	340	30
Sindh	23	33	4894.12	0	450.11	373.07
KP	14	52	420.18	144.34	40.99	881.15
AJK/GB	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>8087.73</b>	<b>213.66</b>	<b>834.48</b>	<b>1305.1</b>

### 3. Terror Financing

Currently, the government is working to implement the remaining goals of the FATF action plan. As seen last month, 24 out of 27 of the FATF's action goals have been successfully implemented. Meanwhile, several developments occurred nationwide:

2/3/2021

- Further legislation required to meet remaining 3 FATF action goals, as well as submitting an updated report by end of month to the FATF. Pakistan has implemented and amended over three dozen laws thus far.<sup>2</sup>

12/3/2021

- US-based MQM-L activist accused of plotting political assassinations, money laundering and terror financing.<sup>3</sup>
  - She ran a network of target killers and paper trail of payment has led to investigation.

17/3/2021

- DIG CTD has issued a request to Belgium for the extradition of MQM-L terrorist Saleem Baloch to Pakistan. Baloch was allegedly involved in terror financing for MQM target killing cells in Pakistan.<sup>4</sup>

29/3/2021

- 2 TTP-affiliated militants arrested for committing extortion. The militants were planning to use this illegally obtained money to fund their activities and plan an attack.<sup>5</sup>

30/3/2021

<sup>2</sup> Dawn. "Legislation still needed to met FATF benchmarks", [https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailNews.php?StoryText=02\\_03\\_2021\\_001\\_003](https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailNews.php?StoryText=02_03_2021_001_003)

<sup>3</sup> Dawn. "US-based MQM-L woman activist found plotting assassinations in city, say officials" <https://www.dawn.com/news/1611948>

<sup>4</sup> The Nation. "CTD seeks legal assistance from Belgium authorities for arrest of MQM-L's Saleem Baloch". <https://nation.com.pk/17-Mar-2021/ctd-seeks-legal-assistance-from-belgium-authorities-for-arrest-of-mqm-l-s-saleem-baloch>

<sup>5</sup> Dawn "Two militants arrested over extortion", <https://www.dawn.com/news/1615143/two-militants-arrested-over-extortion>

- Perpetual arrest warrant issued for the arrest of Mullah Akhtar Mansour's brother-in-law for terror financing.<sup>6</sup>
  - The slain Mansour committed terror financing in Karachi through the sale and purchase of property to fund acts of terror.

#### 4. Cybercrime

Child pornography and financial fraud remain an issue in Pakistan. The most prominent example was the presence of an international gang defrauding Pakistanis, which was busted by the FIA Cybercrime wing. The gang would utilize multiple modus operandi to defraud their victims, such as frequent sales purchases, requesting deposits of money into fraudulent accounts and confidence trickery. 32 foreigners were involved in the scam, 30 Nigerians and 2 Afghans, who worked with an unknown number of Pakistani to steal Rs.40 million from their targets.

##### 4.1. Additional cases:

2/3/2021

- PUNJAB: 3 pedophiles arrested in DG Khan for raping children, filming it and uploading the footage online.<sup>7</sup>

18/3/2021

- PUNJAB: 3 people lost a total of Rs.1.3 million from their bank accounts in Bahawalnagar. According to the UBL bank manager, the money was lost to "hackers".<sup>8</sup>

27/3/2021

- SINDH: Man in Karachi arrested for sharing inappropriate photos of 15-year-old. He uploaded the material after she rejected his marriage proposal<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the above, the situation with regard to cyber-security in Pakistan is dire. Examples of Data Theft were shared at a symposium in Karachi, such as that of a transport app leaking the info of 14 million users.<sup>10</sup>

#### 5. Human Trafficking

While kidnapping is very frequent in Pakistan, some cases involve transnational human trafficking. Though few in number, they involve the smuggling of people across the borders, usually into Iran and Afghanistan.

6/3/2021

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<sup>6</sup> Dawn. "Perpetual warrant out for Mullah Mansour's brother-in-law", <https://www.dawn.com/news/1615378/perpetual-warrant-out-for-mullah-mansours-brother-in-law>

<sup>7</sup> Express Tribune. "Gang of paedophiles who posted videos online busted", <https://tribune.com.pk/epaper/news/Lahore/2021-03-02/Y2U3NDk5MmExZTEyMGZmODAyZThmY2Y2MmIxN2YzNjguanBlZw%3D%3D>

<sup>8</sup> Dawn. "Rs 1m withdrawn from bank accounts in cyber attack", <https://www.dawn.com/news/1613135/rs1m-withdrawn-from-bank-accounts-in-cyber-attack>

<sup>9</sup> Express Tribune. "Man remanded for sharing obscene photos on social media", <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2291697/man-remanded-for-sharing-obscene-photos-on-social-media>

<sup>10</sup> Express Tribune. "Extremely serious situation in Pakistan", <https://tribune.com.pk/epaper/news/Karachi/2021-03-21/ZWZhOGUyODE2MjZkZTNkZTEzTgwODE1NTc4N2NhNWEuanBlZw%3D%3D>

- PUNJAB: Human trafficker arrested in Lahore. Suspect would take money from people under false pretext of sending them to Oman for employment. The trafficker was wanted by the FIA for many cases.<sup>11</sup>

10/3/2021

- KP: Police in Peshawar busted a couple for human trafficking and recovered a 10-year-old girl. This couple would smuggle people to Khost province in Afghanistan and sell them.<sup>12</sup>

24/3/2021

- PUNJAB: 4 men arrested for running a fake visa scam. The FIA's anti-human trafficking division were tipped off by a man recently deported from Turkey.<sup>13</sup>

29/3/2021

- BALOCHISTAN: Iran repatriated 113 illegal immigrants from Pakistan.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Express Tribune. "Human trafficker caught", <https://tribune.com.pk/epaper/news/Lahore/2021-03-06/MjQ1NjBiMmM4MjU0MzViMTU2ZmE3ZmJmZjRkMGM4ZTEuanBIZw%3D%3D>

<sup>12</sup> Express Tribune. "KP Police bust trafficking gang, recover minor girl", <https://tribune.com.pk/epaper/news/Lahore/2021-03-10/MzBhNzQ2N2JjOWE3NDZhMWQzNWUwMmY3NWQyODI3MjEuanBIZw%3D%3D>

<sup>13</sup> Dawn. "Four held for running fake visas business" <https://www.dawn.com/news/1614254/four-held-for-running-fake-visas-business>

<sup>14</sup> Dawn. "Iran hands over 113 illegal migrants to Pakistan" <https://www.dawn.com/news/1615223>