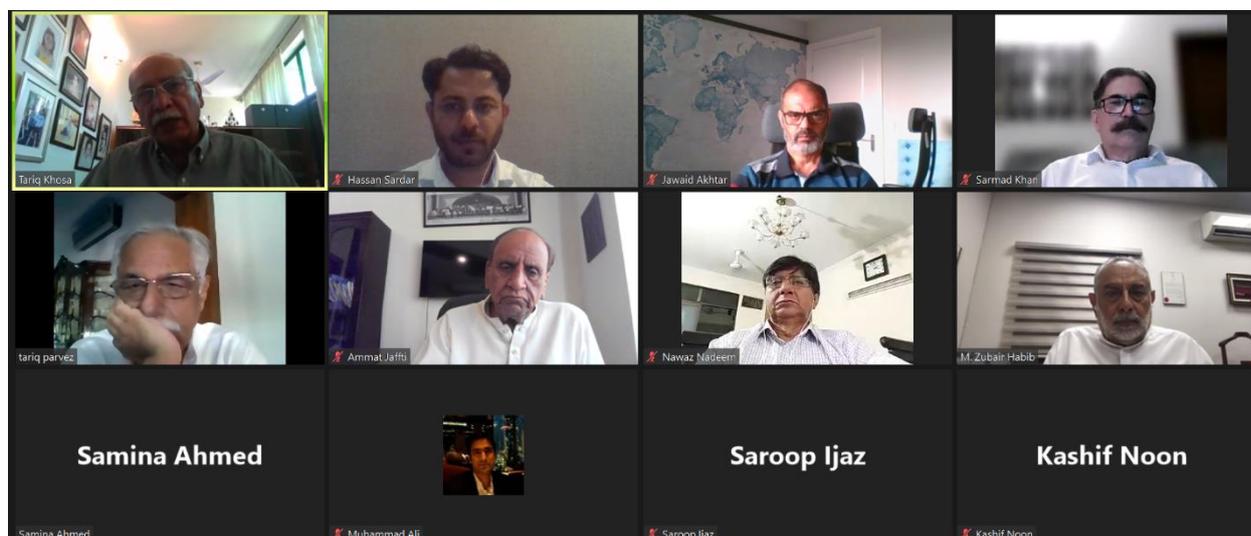


## In This Issue

- Minutes of the NIOC 32nd Advisory Board Meeting
- A ghastly crime
- Truce with TTP
- Mob lynching
- Security policy
- Sepoy martyred in gun battle after terrorists attack military post in North Waziristan: ISPR
- UNODC to assist institutions tackling illicit trafficking
- Society: What 'Gun Culture' Research Tells Us
- 7 terrorists killed in North Waziristan, Bannu IBOs
- Shadow economy
- Stem the rot
- Repressive law
- Soldier martyred during exchange of fire with terrorists in North Waziristan: ISPR
- The cost of peace talks
- TTP Talks: Lasting Peace May Still be a Longshot
- Terror financing charges against NBP withdrawn
- There and back again: A timeline of Pakistan's unfortunate 'grey listing' by FATF
- Soldier martyred in exchange of fire with terrorists in North Waziristan: ISPR
- Four social activists among six killed in North Waziristan
- On refugees
- Right to fair trial
- Murdered workers
- Top LeT man Sajid Mir quietly held, jailed in terror financing case
- DG FIA underscores urgent need to modernize national laws, enforcement
- Terrorism increased as provinces' role in NAP ignored
- Soft on the TTP
- Outlawing torture
- High-profile case
- A dangerous idea
- From a strong state to a vibrant nation with a shared destiny
- Waziristan in shock over quadruple murder
- State apathy
- Two policemen, polio worker shot dead during inoculation drive in North Waziristan
- Albanian recipe
- Attack on polio team



# NIOC's 32nd Advisory Board Meeting



**T**HE NIOC's 32nd Advisory Board Meeting was held on Friday 24 June at 2 pm. The following participated: Tariq Parvez, Samina Ahmed, Zubair Habib and Jawaid Akhtar. Zahid Hussain could not attend as he was travelling in Northern Areas of the country. NIOC directorate was represented by the following: Tariq Khosa, Sarmad Saeed, Ali Nekokara, Kashif Noon, Saroop Ijaz, Ammar Jaffri, Nawaz Nadeem and Hassan Sardar.

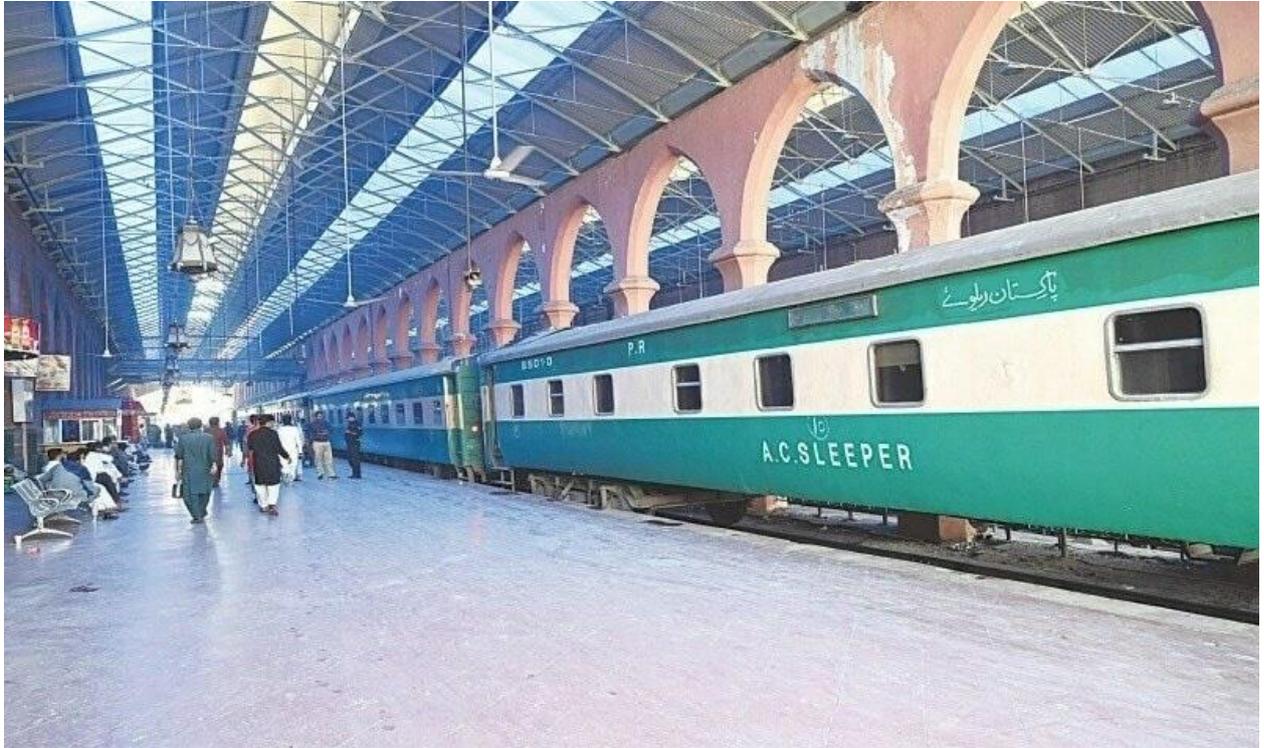
The following agenda items were discussed:

- 1) Pakistan UNTOC Review: GOP Focal Person Ehsan Sadiq, assisted by NIOC consultants Azam Khan and Nawaz Nadeem, were giving final touches to the first draft responses to 8 UNTOC articles under cluster-1 review. Those draft responses will soon be shared with the GOP stakeholders and with the NIOC-CGR team for further feedback and review.
- 2) Pakistan UNTOC Pilot Initiative will be launched in FIA for which a mission from UNODC Vienna will visit Islamabad from 12 to 16 September 2022.
- 3) NIOC-CGR team comprising Sarmad, Saroop, Kashif and Vaqas have identified the CSOs and Experts for civil society engagement strategy for UNTOC review consultations. The list will soon be shared with UNODC and GITOC and formal interactions will be held during July-August 2022.
- 4) Saroop Ijaz, assisted by Kashif Noon and Vaqas Ali will draft a parallel civil society report on the implementation of UNTOC articles under review from the civil society perspective. This report will be finalised before 30 September 2022.

- 5) NIOC will issue two policy briefs on Police Reforms and Terrorism respectively in July 2022.
- 6) NIOC-CGR is laying a foundation to build a National Alliance of NGOs, CSOs, Experts, Lawyers, Academics and Private Sector to chart a consensus strategy against Organized Crime in Pakistan. The following NIOC-CGR team members will steer the process: Kashif Noon and Ammar Jaffri in Islamabad and KP Province; Saroop Ijaz and Sarmad Saeed in the Punjab Province; Zubair Habib in Sindh Province.

# A ghastly crime

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Lahore Railway Station being almost deserted as the Karachi-bound Khyber Mail waits for clearance to continue its journey.

**A** **NOTHER** horrific incident of sexual violence has come to light, underscoring how a cavalier approach to security arrangements can embolden criminally inclined men to indulge their worst instincts.

A few days ago, an unfortunate young woman was reportedly subjected to gang rape while travelling from Multan to Karachi by the Bahauddin Zakriya Express. As per the FIR, the three perpetrators are employees of the private firm to which Pakistan Railways had outsourced the train's commercial operations.

Speaking to this paper, an official of the PR police said none of their personnel were deployed on the train because the contract under which it was being operated stipulated that security arrangements were the responsibility of the private contractor. The woman's medical examination, according to the doctor concerned, has confirmed that she was indeed gang raped.

The question is not, why was the victim travelling alone? Instead, what must be asked is this: why was proper security not provided on board that could have prevented this terrible crime?

The private firm has a duty of care towards those using the service it operates; and PR should have ensured that the company was abiding by the terms of the contract.

Such incidents have serious consequences. Aside from the long-term trauma that the victim in this case is likely to suffer, women in general are left – once again – feeling ever more insecure in the public space; the message to them is that without the ‘protection’ of a man, they are easy prey.

In the notorious Motorway gang rape of 2020 where a woman was assaulted in front of her minor children on the outskirts of Lahore, there was a public outcry against the city police chief for suggesting that the victim bore some responsibility for her ordeal because she was out late at night.

As in that case, the suspects must be proceeded against swiftly and punished. And all public transport must have proper security arrangements on board; women’s safety is the barometer of a nation’s values.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 1, 2022**

# Truce with TTP

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**T**HE ceasefire with TTP is holding. The good point is that the banned outfit and the military authorities have made some headway, and agreed to extend the truce for an indefinite period.

This trust could go a long way in furthering peace and prosperity in one of the most volatile bordering regions of the world, and pave the way for exterminating terrorism. Nonetheless, there are some contentious issues that are being ironed out, and Kabul's patronage has blessed it with due acknowledgment. It is hoped that the dialogue, which will now be conducted by the Haqqani Network chief, will double down with assured results, and help ensure tranquillity across the board. This second phase of the deal simply consolidates the understanding reached earlier between warring factions. The thrust is to secure Pakistan's territory from cross-border attacks and infiltration, which has literally unnerved its security. With the change of guard in Afghanistan and splinter groups on the run, the TTP too has holed itself in the war-torn country and plotting operations inside Pakistan. This is an enigma and a serious threat, and has to be checked somehow. The reason behind the format of dialogue is to find an amicable settlement so that the tendency of militancy could come to end. But this strategy is not owing to any weakness or a compromise from the military brass, but to give real peace a chance and pull the region back from the brink.

The talks provide a moment of realisation, and the prime target is to chalk out a roadmap for serenity. Pakistan has worked selflessly for regional peace, and has been at the vanguard for providing relief to the distressed Afghans. It has been a victim of terror as it saw millions of people displaced and more than 80,000 casualties. These aspects cannot be ignored while striking a peace deal involving the conflicting parties. Some of the demands from TTP are untenable, to say the least, such as release of convicted criminals and calling off mop operations inside Pakistan. Whereas, other points related to CBMs and ensuring harmony can be worked out. This necessitates some critical balancing, and a firm denominator to bring under the peace umbrella all nonstate actors. The region desperately needs a break from jingoism. The fault-lines are many and need to be watched out.

**SOURCE: THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE, JUNE 2, 2022**

# Mob lynching

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**T**HE deteriorating justice system of Pakistan has increasingly urged citizens to take matters into their own hands.

In this regard the police in Gujranwala recently arrested 14 people in connection with the death of a scrap dealer on suspicions of him being a motorcycle thief. The unfortunate man, who was pushing his vehicle towards a petrol station after running out of gas, was tied up and viciously tortured by people around.

He later succumbed to his injuries in the hospital.

Mob lynching has become a frightening norm and surging trends reveal the pent-up anger of the people. The entire nation has witnessed a 49-year-old Sri Lankan man lynched by his factory colleagues. The case of Mashal Khan and the two brothers, Mughees and Muneeb Butt, are similar gruesome reminders. While many cases involve religious accusations, this particular incident was ignited by the fact that instances of robbery have increased drastically across the country due to high inflation and deplorable socio-economic conditions. It is common that when robbers are caught by the people, onlookers gather around to release their frustration on them in a violent manner. Many a time, the police are forced to step in and save the perpetrators. People claim that these notorious robbers are relentless in looting and killing innocent citizens, and therefore need to be treated in a similar manner as a form of deterrence. However, regardless of the justifications presented, no one should be allowed to take the law into their own hands. Basic rights need to be upheld and human dignity must prevail. We, as a society, cannot descend to such a horrendously low moral level.

That being said, the government must acknowledge that there is a tremendous gap between the common man and institutions that uphold justice. Work must be done to reform the court, prison and police system of the country in order to ensure that adequate services are being provided by the state so that such trends do not emerge in the future.

**SOURCE: THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE, JUNE 2, 2022**

# Security policy

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MOHAMMAD ALI BABAKHEL

**I**N developing countries, national security was the exclusive domain of the state, with state institutions enjoying monopoly over the subject under the cover of secrecy policies. As the 21st century progressed, we got stronger democracies, freedom of expression, better access to information and improved transparency. Globalisation revolutionised the pace of information dissemination, impacting the dynamics of national security positively and negatively. The post-9/11 era not only multiplied security challenges, it also made civil society an active stakeholder in the process.

After the National Internal Security Policy of 2014, the National Action Plan was the second consensually drafted policy document approved by Pakistan's parliament. The drafting of NAP, Nisp I, Nisp II, and, recently, the National Security Policy (NSP) 2022-2026 speaks of a growing realisation in policy circles of the need to transition from a whole-of-state to a whole-of-government approach to find answers to Pakistan's many security challenges.

The NSP's formulation began in 2014, and the end product is said to be the result of consultation with 120 experts. The document represents a policy transition from a security-centric approach to an economy- and human security-centric approach. It has eight sections, including one focusing exclusively on internal security.

Ideally, a security policy should reflect a government's policy, the input of state institutions and public opinion. But its desired goal can't be achieved without a communication strategy. In this age of openness, defining the exact boundaries of national security is tough. Participation in the national security dialogue, therefore, makes it incumbent on the media to adopt a balanced approach between freedom and responsibility.

The ideals of NSP cannot be realised without good governance. Though the NSP quotes the term 'governance' 13 times, its objectives cannot be accomplished without institutional and administrative reforms and capacity-building exercises. Administrative reforms in Balochistan and Punjab and the creation of new provinces will improve public service delivery, governance, peace and development pace. Fata's merger with KP is a step in the right direction; but the merger's dividends can't be attained solely by applying a security-centric approach; it will also require a reforms-based approach to overhauling social development and the criminal justice system.

The NSP rightly identifies the need to check growing violent sub-nationalist tendencies and incorporates a four-pronged policy of engagement, including separating reconcilables from irreconcilables; cutting off recruitment; constricting financial sources; and pursuing targeted socioeconomic policies to address governance concerns. Since 2001, Pakistan has notified 78 organisations as proscribed. Of the total, 19 are violent sub-nationalist and 20 sectarian

organisations. This indicates that addressing societal fault lines needs the adoption of a combination of hard and soft approaches.

With the 18th Amendment in the backdrop, exactly how ministries and provincial departments convert ideas into actionable plans is a challenge. The synchronisation of internal security priorities requires active inter-provincial coordination and allocation of greater resources by provinces for security purposes. Owing to weak institutional capacity and response, law-enforcement agencies usually try to meet public expectations by employing a statistical approach, due to which public satisfaction generally remains unfulfilled.

The police are vital in this context, but the Nisp mentions them only once. Without police reform and a depoliticised police, internal security cannot be guaranteed. The underperforming cybersecurity sector, polarisation, regional instability, weak governance, poor public service delivery, poor monitoring apparatus, ethnic and sectarian fault lines and weak coordination among LEAs are irritants that negatively impact policy implementation.

The NSP emphasises the need for strengthening counterterrorism agencies. In Pakistan, CT is a concurrent subject, wherein provinces operate their respective counterterrorism departments and are engaged in related operations and investigations. The Anti-Terrorism Act, however, is a federal law and a number of federal institutions are entrusted with countering terrorism and terrorism financing as well as coordination and intelligence-sharing functions.

Despite that, an operational federal CT apparatus remains a missing link. The jurisdiction of a federal CTD should be to take up investigation of CT cases with nationwide or transnational implications. With that view, the establishment of a federal CTD is inevitable. Following the principles of cooperative federalism will help realise NSP goals but it will need close collaboration among federal, provincial and local governments.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 3, 2022**

## Sepoy martyred in gun battle after terrorists attack military post in North Waziristan: ISPR

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Martyred Sepoy Hamid Ali.

**A** Pakistan Army soldier was martyred during an exchange of fire with terrorists who attacked a military post in the Datta Khel area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's North Waziristan district on the night between June 1 and June 2, the military's media affairs wing said.

According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) late Thursday night, Pakistan Army troops "initiated a prompt response and effectively engaged the terrorists location" after the attack on the military post.

During an "intense exchange of fire" with the terrorist, 28-year-old Sepoy Hamid Ali, a resident of Sargodha, embraced martyrdom after fighting "gallantly", the ISPR said.

It added that the sanitisation of the area was being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found there.

"[The] Pakistan Army is determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers will not go unpunished," the ISPR statement said.

The incident comes merely days after two security personnel and as many children were injured when a suicide bomber struck a vehicle of the security forces parked at a checkpoint in the Razmak subdivision of North Waziristan district on May 30.

According to officials, the suicide bomber riding a motorcycle had rammed his two-wheeler into the security forces' vehicle. As a result, two security personnel were injured and two children playing nearby had also suffered injuries.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 3, 2022**

# UNODC to assist institutions tackling illicit trafficking

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**I**N the third phase of the country programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), legal support will be provided to all institutions that are part of the chain of rule of law such as police on themes like anti-corruption, gender-based violence, prison management and money laundering.

The programme will focus on four areas including illicit trafficking and border management, legal reforms, countering terrorism and reduction in the demand of drugs, said a statement issued by the office as the third phase of the programme was launched on Friday.

UNODC Country Representative Dr Jeremy Milson, during launch of this phase, said the programme would be much more innovative and would better integrate and synergise all thematic areas at the national, regional and global level.

UNODC Executive Director Ghada Waly, in a video message, expressed her gratitude to all partners who have been supporting UNODC in Pakistan.

“The programme is a tailored implementation vehicle of the UNODC Strategy 2021-2025 in Pakistan: proposing integrated and sustainable solutions to address the multifaceted responses to all forms of crime, inclusive of gender-responsive programming for achieving rule of law while promoting human rights,” she said.

Speaking on the occasion, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan Julien Harneis said work of UNODC directly supported the efforts of member states towards achieving the sustainable development goal (SDG-16): Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and SDG-5: Gender Equality.

Acting secretary of the Ministry of Narcotics Control Sabino Sikandar Jalal said: “Given the complexity and international linkage of trafficking in illicit drugs, no country can win this war alone. Concerted efforts by the international community can help in addressing this menace more effectively.” Under the previous UNODC country programme (2016-2021), support was provided to departments concerned at the policy level with development, enactment and approval of bills and acts, and assistance at the technical and operational level with training of more than 40,000 law enforcement personnel through face-to-face as well as e-learning courses. In addition to this, the UNODC supported creation of important digital platforms such as the Prison Management Information System in 65 prisons of Sindh and Punjab and the Case Management Information System, to facilitate communication between investigation and prosecution.

**PUBLISHED IN DAWN, JUNE 4, 2022**

# Society: What ‘Gun Culture’ Research Tells Us

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PETER SQUIRES



The number of children killed by guns in the US is 36.5 times higher than in many high-income European countries

**I**N the wake of the most recent US mass school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, where 19 pupils and two teachers were killed by an 18-year-old armed with an assault rifle, a comparison considering how the US compares with other countries on children’s deaths caused by guns is compelling.

As the independent non-profit US organisation the Children’s Defense Fund has pointed out, gun violence is now the leading cause of American children’s deaths. It reported that there are nine fatal shootings of children per day – that’s one killing every two hours and 36 minutes. A minority of these killings involve school or mass shootings; the majority are killings of individual children and link to routine crime and gang violence, and overwhelmingly result in the deaths of African-American and minority children.

The US stands as an extreme outlier among high-income countries. The number of children killed by guns is 36.5 times higher in the US, compared to many other high-income countries including Austria, Australia, Sweden, England and Wales, according to analysis recently published by the New England Journal of Medicine. In recent years, international research has also proven conclusively that greater levels of gun ownership are closely associated with higher rates of gun violence.

An audit by the Democrat-leaning policy and research organisation the Centre for American Progress, of all 50 US states, found a close correlation between the states with the toughest gun laws and states with the lowest gun crime rates. Meanwhile, international research has compared national gun laws, rates of firearm ownership and gun violence rates. The results are striking as the graph, below, suggests.

### **International levels of gun crime**

Interestingly, European societies that come close to US rates of gun ownership, in terms of gun owners per 100 people, (but with hunting rifles and shotguns rather than handguns), such as Finland and Norway, are among the safest societies internationally with regards to gun violence.

Researchers talk about “civilised” and “de-civilising” gun cultures, cultures where gun ownership is associated with traditional values of respect and responsibility, and others where gun availability largely empowers the criminally minded and unstable, adding to the violence and chaos. High levels of social cohesion, low crime rates and internationally high levels of trust and confidence in police and social institutions do appear to reduce levels of gun homicide.

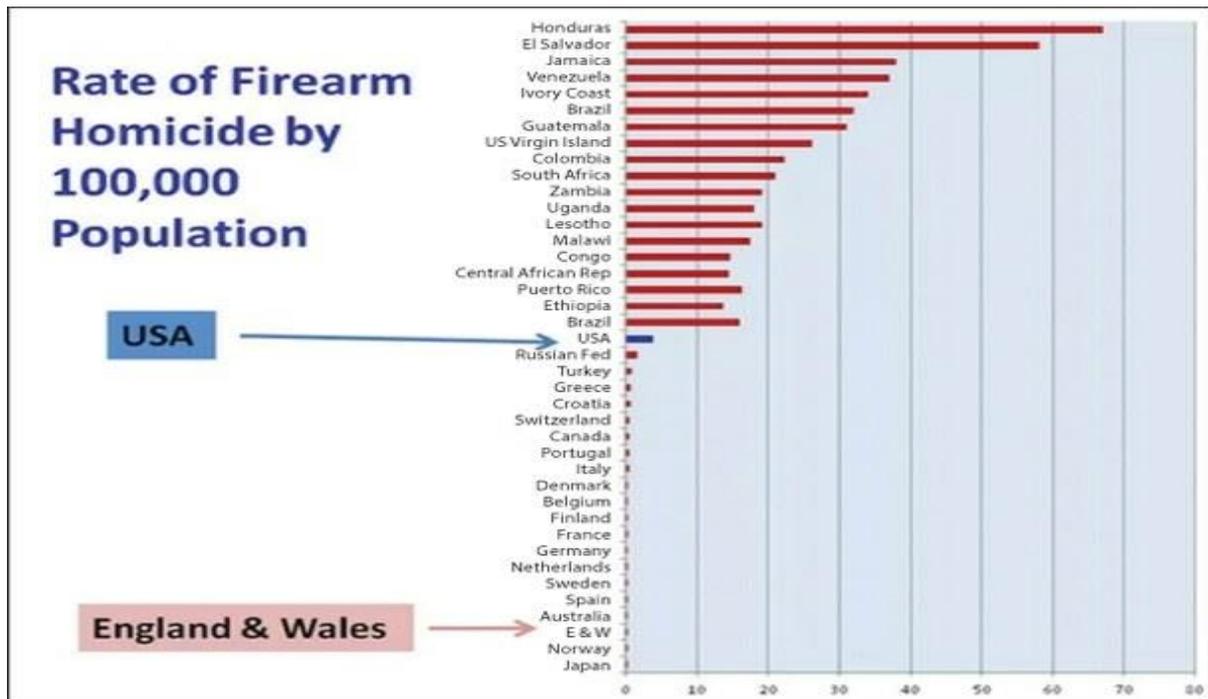
The flipside to this finding, however, is that high gun ownership in countries such as Finland, Sweden and Switzerland do have significantly higher rates of suicide using guns. The UK and Japan, with some of the toughest gun laws in the world, always record the lowest rates of gun homicide, chiefly by virtue of their virtual prohibition of handguns, the criminal weapon of choice.

By contrast, the death tolls in recent US mass shootings have been very much exacerbated by perpetrators using assault rifles, with their larger magazines and rapid fire capabilities.

### **Society as a factor**

As a result of the new international focus in gun control research (there was a time when the only academic research on firearms took place in the US, and a large part of it funded, directly and indirectly, by the influential US lobbying group the National Rifle Association) wider questions came under the spotlight.

Researchers started to focus less upon the gun as an independent variable and instead began to address contexts and the different cultures of gun use. They also began to acknowledge, as criminologists have always known, that introducing new laws seldom changes anything on its own – offenders break laws.



Gun researchers now focus increasingly upon wider “gun control regimes” which have a big part to play in increasing or reducing levels of gun violence. These regimes include policing and criminal justice systems, systems of political accountability, welfare safety nets, comprehensive education provision and cultures of trust and confidence. And, although the US is seen as the most exceptional gun culture among affluent democratic nations, in terms of death rates, it is dwarfed by many other poorer and more conflicted societies, such as South Africa, Jamaica and Honduras.

Attempts in the US in recent years to confront shootings, but without restricting gun ownership, include scaling up surveillance – especially in schools where pupils, parents and teachers form part of a network keeping a watchful eye on colleagues and pupils.

They look for signs of trouble and are able to sound the alarm. More ambitiously, the Violence Project has sought to compile evidence profiles, learning from what we already know about rampage killers and trying to predict where their behaviour, social media engagements and utterances might ring alarm bells.

However, the evidence is now indisputable that more guns in a given country translates directly into more gun violence.

It is significant that the immediate reaction to the Ulvade school massacre has tended to focus on narrow questions of school security and an apparent delay in police intervention, rather than the many underlying factors which make the US such a comparatively dangerous place for children.

**SOURCE: DAWN, EOS, JUNE 5, 2022**

## 7 terrorists killed in North Waziristan, Bannu IBOs

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**S**ECURITY forces killed seven terrorists in two intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in Bannu and North Waziristan District, the military's media affairs wing said in a statement.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), forces conducted IBOs in Jani Khel, Bannu District and Hassan Khel, North Waziristan District on the reported presence of terrorists in the area.

The statement said an intense exchange of fire ensued when the forces conducted operations in the areas. As a result, five terrorists were killed in Jani Khel and two were gunned down in the North Waziristan District.

Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the slain terrorists, the ISPR added.

The military said the terrorists killed during the operations were actively involved in terror activities against security forces.

"Locals of the area appreciated the operations and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the area," the ISPR statement added.

Two weeks ago, security forces had killed two "important and most wanted" terrorists of the outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in North Waziristan district's Boya area.

The slain terrorists were identified as commander Rasheed alias Jabir and Abdul Salam alias Chamtoo, the ISPR had said.

Also last month, three Pakistan Army soldiers and at least three children were martyred in a suicide blast in the vicinity of Miranshah, North Waziristan.

In a brief statement, the military had said the intelligence agencies were investigating to find out about [the] suicide bomber and his handlers/facilitators.

Later, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had also condemned the suicide attack and expressed grief over the lives lost.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 5, 2022**

# Shadow economy

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**T**HERE'S no right way of accurately measuring the undocumented part of an economy. Hence, the size of Pakistan's shadow economy is estimated to be in the range of 30pc to 50pc of the nation's total reported GDP by various studies using different methodologies. That is massive by any yardstick. The shadow or informal economy refers to economic activities taking place outside the tax and regulatory system, and may or may not have any backward or forward linkages with the organised sectors. Every country is grappling with the issue of parallel economy; Pakistan is not alone in this. The problem for Pakistan is that the size of the unreported economy has grown so big that it is now bearing down on formal sectors, penalising taxpayers, undermining tax collection, intensifying market distortions and creating an uneven field for organised businesses. The existence of unregulated economic activities across almost every segment of business underlines poor governance and law enforcement, weak tax administration, corruption, and the lack of political will to take action against participants of the shadow economy.

The size of the unregulated economy isn't the only problem Pakistan must deal with. The state's tolerance of the black economy means that smuggled and counterfeit products are now snatching a bigger market share from the organised sector, besides fostering further growth in illicit trade at the expense of consumers and industry. This is in addition to the government forfeiting large revenues through uncollected taxes that could have been used to build economic and social infrastructure to boost productivity, generate employment opportunities and create surplus for exports. It is, indeed, hard to document every unregulated sector. Nor is this required. Many informal micro and small businesses linked to organised sectors will always exist and continue to indirectly contribute to economic growth; therefore, they need not be regulated vigorously. It is the unchecked smuggling and illicit trade in counterfeit products that the authorities need to curb without further delay to protect the organised industry and consumers.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 7, 2022**

# Stem the rot

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TARIQ KHOSA

**R**ECENT developments in Pakistan can be summed up in three words: bizarre, shocking, depressing. We have not seen a more fractured polity, defined by an acrimonious debate for and against vested interests that are jockeying for power. Self-interest trumps the national interest, tainted by a corrosive narrative with certain buzzwords like ‘conspirators’, ‘traitors’ and ‘looters’ entering the political lexicon of the self-righteous ‘us-versus-them’ posturing. The consequences of recent follies are being reflected in reputational costs to all the major national institutions, including the sacred cows. Pakistan today faces daunting challenges: an economic meltdown, governance collapse, brazen corruption, violent extremism, virulent militancy and organised crime. Who is going to stem the rot and how? That is the question.

I was in public service for about half a century, starting my career in law enforcement in 1973. For about four decades, I was part of the state apparatus that was dealing with challenges such as sectarianism, religious extremism, terrorism, drug trafficking, migrant smuggling, human trafficking, money laundering and cybercrime. All these reflect the nefarious nexus between corruption and organised crime, weak rule of law and the involvement or collusion of the state. Lately, the horizon has darkened generally due to the nexus of organised criminal groups with corrupt and greedy stakeholders who wield influence and power in policy domains due to weakened institutional safeguards. We are living in ‘interesting times’ in a deeply divided society. Unfortunately, plutocratic pettiness prevails in our land of pure hypocrisy. According to a recent – and damning – UNDP report, elite privilege consumes \$17.4 billion of Pakistan’s economy wherein mafia-like corporate greed reigns supreme. However, ill-gotten wealth cannot buy admiration, respect and trust. But it can buy political power. We are seeing kleptocrats rising against principled stakeholders and those who espouse the rule of law and want to promote good governance. This is the dilemma we face today as oligarchy has replaced the democratic façade.

**The biggest challenges are corruption and the crisis of governance.**

The National Accountability Bureau has failed to deliver across-the-board accountability. A controversial chairman, with an extended tenure of four years and eight months, caused irreparable damage to the institution; the resultant loss of public faith has given rise to the demand that NAB be either disbanded or replaced with a truly independent accountability commission.

Institutions gain and maintain their credibility and public trust on the basis of two factors: a sound legislative framework and a head who leads with utmost integrity, fairness and impartiality. Successive chairmen of NAB have contributed to the erosion of trust in the accountability process.

The institution has been perceived as the veritable arm of our security establishment and has been misused for political engineering. Even strictures passed by the Supreme Court were completely disregarded. Above all, the ruling political elite made legal amendments in NAO 1999 that turned NAB into a defanged and toothless tool of person-specific accountability.

Both the politicians and the establishment are responsible for turning NAB into a coercive weapon of vendetta. This farce cannot be sustained. People have seen through the Machiavellian methods at play. Enough is enough.

The nexus between organised crime and corporate greed needs to be addressed. Most real estate tycoons, big banks and transnational corporations fill the coffers of political parties. State land is doled out to vested interests as a quid pro quo. Cases of funding of major political parties are pending before the Election Commission of Pakistan. Hopefully, some constructive results can be achieved. The crisis of governance relates to both the governments and the string-pullers who want pliant and weak political leaders to operate in a national security framework dictated by certain unelected but powerful heads of institutions that represent the state. The chief executives are propped up and brought down by powers that are the self-anointed guardians of our national interest. The irony is that, in our history, no prime minister has ever completed his or her constitutionally stipulated tenure. Civilian supremacy can only be established provided the political parties and their leaders are willing to sit together and carve out a new charter of governance that establishes a genuine social contract between state and society. Since retirement, now for more than a decade, I have had the opportunity to understand and deal with the challenges faced by civil society and the hapless victims of organised crime – manifest in the festering issue of the missing persons.

The chief justice of the Islamabad High Court has repeatedly highlighted this issue and has held the state responsible for enforced disappearances. The government has constituted a seven-member cabinet committee under the law minister to come up with policy recommendations.

Unless the missing law on enforced disappearances is placed for approval before parliament and a policy to deal with the issue is devised in consultation with the powers that be, as alluded to by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during his visit to Balochistan last month, the grievances of citizens will keep recurring against the backdrop of the state's follies.

I firmly believe that both state and society must foster a concerted strategy to combat the complexities posed by threats from within, including governance fault lines. For this, all constitutionally mandated institutions must sit together and hold a national dialogue to forge a new path to true democracy, good governance and the strengthening of civilian institutions.

Holding free and fair elections is important but more urgent is the need to address the decay that has permeated the system. The conspiracy of privilege and power needs to be defeated. We should move beyond the outrage towards real reform. Let us rise above our personal and institutional differences to carve out a future for a peaceful, democratic and prosperous nation as envisioned by our founding father. It is never too late.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 9, 2022**

# Repressive law

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**A** PARTICULARLY problematic clause in an overall controversial piece of legislation is to undergo further scrutiny, this time in the Supreme Court. Admitting a petition by singer Meesha Shafi, a two-judge bench on Wednesday stayed criminal proceedings against her in a defamation suit under Section 20 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, and signalled its intention to determine the constitutionality of what is colloquially known as Peca's 'criminal defamation' section. It is the latest development in Ms Shafi's high-profile sexual harassment case against another well-known singer, Ali Zafar. As Justice Qazi Faez Isa pointed out during the hearing this week, there are two contradictory rulings by the Islamabad and Lahore high courts on Section 20. On March 9, the Lahore High Court had held that the legislation was not ultra vires of Article 19 of the Constitution that protects freedom of speech and expression. The Islamabad High Court, however, on April 8 struck down the part of Section 20 that pertains to damage to reputation as being unconstitutional. That, and the court's simultaneous scrapping of the execrable Peca amendment ordinance which had vastly enhanced the scope and punishment for criminal defamation and made it cognisable and non-bailable was a significant victory for right to freedom of speech advocates.

Certainly, as the Supreme Court has noted, clarity is needed on the issue. What is crystal clear however, is that having criminal defamation on the statute books relegates us to a shrinking pool of countries with notoriously repressive regimes. At least two dozen journalists in Pakistan had been charged under Section 20 by the end of last year, and the inevitable chilling effect on dissenting voices is undoubtedly the objective that the PML-N government, and other state institutions, had in mind when Peca was enacted in 2016. Moreover, in Pakistan, the clause has been repeatedly used to silence women complaining of sexual harassment, and thereby has victimised them further. What makes it all the more ironic is that Section 20 was brought in on the pretext that it would protect women who were slandered online. Instead, it has become an instrument of repression, serving as an extension of the patriarchal attitude that cannot brook women articulating their experiences of abuse and violence instead of bearing their mistreatment in silence. A modern, forward-thinking state must remove defamation from the ambit of criminal law, and instead strengthen the civil law dealing with it.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 10, 2022**

# Soldier martyred during exchange of fire with terrorists in North Waziristan

**A** Pakistan Army soldier was martyred during an "intense exchange of fire" with terrorists in the Datta Khel area of North Waziristan tribal district, the military's media affairs wing said.

In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said the exchange of fire took place between terrorists and Pakistan Army troops during which the latter "fought bravely and effectively engaged the terrorists' location".

However, Sepoy Shahzaib Imtiaz embraced martyrdom after "having fought gallantly", the ISPR said, adding that he was 25-years-old and a resident of Kotli Sattian.

"Area clearance is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area," the statement concluded.

President Dr Arif Alvi expressed grief and sorrow over the soldier's martyrdom, paying tribute to his "great sacrifice".

Taking to Twitter, the president said the entire nation was united in the fight against terrorism. He added that the war against terrorism would continue until this scourge was completely eliminated.



Earlier this month, security forces killed four terrorists during operations in North Waziristan tribal district and Balochistan's Noshki district.

According to the ISPR, two terrorists were killed during an exchange of fire with the security forces in the Hassankhel area of Mirali tehsil in North Waziristan. Arms and ammunition were seized from the possession of the dead terrorists who, according to the ISPR statement, were involved in subversive activities.

Meanwhile, two more terrorists were killed during an operation in Parodh area of Noshki district. Sources said the terrorists tried to escape from their hideout and opened fire on security forces. During the exchange of fire, two terrorists allegedly belonging to the banned Baloch Republic Army were killed.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 12, 2022**

# The cost of peace talks

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MUHAMMAD AMIR RANA

**E**VEN if the government signs a peace accord with the banned TTP, it will provide only temporary or partial respite to the security institutions. For the latter, which have been fighting the terrorist group for the last one-and-a-half decade, making peace with the TTP may be linked to securing the border and accelerating the mainstreaming of former Fata, but any deal with the group will have implications for the whole country.

Talking with the TTP is not a popular idea among most experts, politicians, civil society activists, law-enforcement practitioners, and military commanders who fought against the group. Many assert that the state must not negotiate anything less than the surrender of the terrorists; the security institutions believe that the group is already defeated. The assumption that peace with the TTP will bring stability to the tribal region and help manage the borders with Afghanistan is also contested. For one, many disgruntled members and factions within the TTP could splinter to either form one or more new groups or join the Islamic State's Khorasan chapter (IS-K), which has already intensified its terrorist attacks inside Pakistan.

The institutions may have other geopolitical objectives, which have been narrated several times on these pages, including curtailing the TTP's ties with the intelligence agencies of hostile countries. Still, many observers believe that any agreement with the TTP will ultimately strengthen the Haqqanis in the turf war within Afghan Taliban ranks. If this is the case, it is not clear how the Haqqanis can protect the interests of Pakistan. The TTP has always had a very cordial relationship with the Haqqanis and the latter will never opt to act against it. A recent statement by the Afghan interior minister Sirajuddin Haqqani validates that argument; he not only acknowledged the 'sacrifices' made by the TTP for the Afghan Taliban but also insisted that they would not pressurise the TTP in the ongoing talks between the group and the Pakistani government. He categorically said that any solution should be based on mutual understanding and the principle of give and take.

In that context, the pursuit of making peace with the TTP looks like an illusionary idea. Significantly, the reversal of the Fata merger is critical, and TTP is not ready to compromise on this particular demand; in a recent statement, it has categorically said that the group would not accept any compromise on the pre-merger, 'independent' status of ex-Fata. The statement said that "if the Pakistan government and its security agencies want peace, they would have to restore its previous status".

The TTP's other demands, including the enforcement of the Sharia in Malakand and its extension to the tribal districts, is apparently acceptable for the Pakistani state. Though the Nizam-i-Adl Regulation, 2009, is still operational in Malakand division, the negotiators' apparent proclivity for accepting the demand reflects that the existence of parallel administrative structures does not bother them much. The state institutions engaged in talks

are seemingly also not concerned about the legal, political and social consequences of accepting the TTP's demands, which could later trigger more complex conflicts. This is the same mindset that did not deem it important to bring the issue to parliament; even the government has little clue about the peace process with the terrorists. Interestingly, the security institutions had demanded parliament's support before launching the operations against the terrorists in Swat, Khyber and Waziristan, and parliament had extended its full support to the country's armed forces.

However, the security institutions have engaged the tribal jirgas to give legitimacy to the peace process with the terrorists. One tribal jirga, or committee as the TTP called it in its media statement, comprised 32 Mehsud tribesmen, and the other jirga comprised 16 tribesmen representing different tribes from Malakand. Both jirgas met the TTP on May 13 and 14 in Afghanistan. Later, the media reported that a 57-member jirga comprising sitting and former parliamentarians and elders from the erstwhile tribal region had left for Kabul on June 1 for talks with the banned TTP. The KP government is represented in the jirga by Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Information Barrister Mohammad Ali Saif. However, the talks are still stuck on the core demands of reversal of the Fata merger, renaming the TTP, and withdrawing Pakistani forces from the tribal districts. What the state of Pakistan has achieved so far is the TTP's pledge to continue the ceasefire and talks without any cut-off date.

The ceasefire has resulted in a decline in terrorist attacks. The TTP has not claimed responsibility for any terrorist attack over the last few weeks, but the Gul Bahadar group has intensified terrorist attacks against the security forces during the ceasefire. The group is believed to have been involved in at least six terrorist attacks since the announcement of the ceasefire, which clearly indicates the displeasure of the Gul Bahadar group with the peace talks. The group thinks that the state must negotiate with them, as they have more presence on the ground in Waziristan and believe they can counter the TTP if allowed.

This is a delicate situation. If rising sub-nationalist tendencies in the tribal districts are brought into the picture, the case becomes more complex; it cannot be handled by jirgas alone, without any mandate or broader legitimacy or security institutions. The issue must be brought into the mainstream discussion in the media, parliament and other policy forums. An annual report of the UNSC-led 1988 Taliban sanctions committee monitoring team said the banned TTP had up to 4,000 fighters based in east and southeast areas along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and made up the largest group of foreign fighters based there. The number of TTP members will increase manifold if it wins a deal with Pakistan.

Pakistan's biggest counterterrorism achievement during the last two decades has been the elimination of terrorist networks from its soil and disconnecting them from their support bases. The support was present in mainstream media, thousands of madressahs across the country, religious groups, and policymaking circles. Peace with the TTP will erode the successes against a group responsible for thousands of deaths, enormous financial losses, a negative international image, and diplomatic crises.

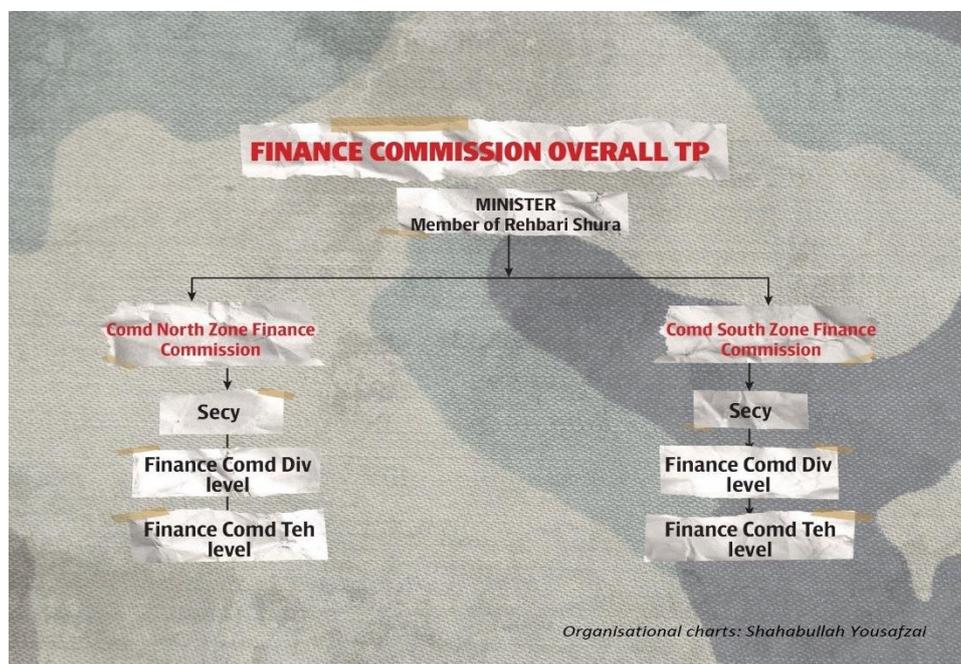
**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 12, 2022**

# TTP Talks: Lasting Peace May Still Be A Longshot

NAVEED HUSSAIN

**P**AKISTANI security strategists might have thought the exit of foreign forces and the return of the Taliban in Afghanistan would put an end to the bloody campaign of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, a group globally designated as terrorist. This, off the record they claimed, might take a couple of months to happen. They were dead wrong. On the contrary, the Taliban's swift victory rejuvenated the TTP as hundreds of its fighters returned to join the fight after their release from Afghan prisons. Senior TTP commanders also re-emerged from hiding to enjoy de facto political asylum under the Taliban rule. The group renewed allegiance to the Taliban spiritual leader Maulvi Hibatullah Akhundzada as it stepped up attacks in Pakistan. The fledgling Taliban theocracy, however, is non-committal about a crackdown fearing it might be seen as betrayal by the TTP and other "jihadi" groups.

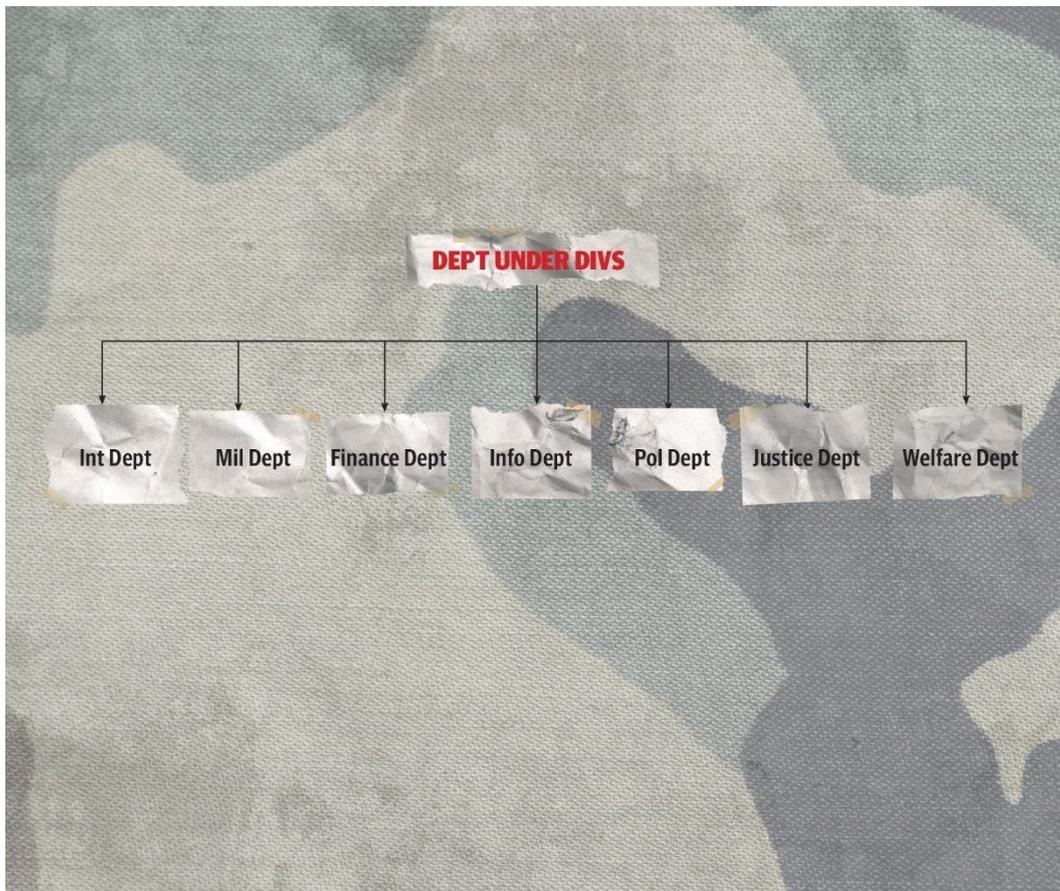
At the same time, the Taliban also know that they have greatly benefited from Pakistan's hospitality and largesse and that it is time to return the favour. Pakistani officials expect the Taliban to facilitate negotiations with the TTP, nudge the group to accept a deal, and then serve as guarantors of its success. The nascent process yielded a ceasefire late last year, which the TTP has since extended for an "indefinite period" as negotiators from both sides weigh each other's demands. The breakthrough, if this is what the negotiators would call it, was made last month when a representative jirga of tribal elders from all erstwhile tribal regions flew to Kabul to join Pakistani security officials in direct talks with the TTP leaders.



## THE GENESIS

The TTP was born in Dec 2007 when more than a dozen groups coalesced under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud mainly to join the Taliban “jihad” against the US-led coalition forces. The group lost its founding leader in 2009 when Baitullah was killed in a US drone strike in Waziristan. Hakimullah Mehsud, a young clansman of Baitullah, took up the mantle. Four years later, he was also killed in a US drone strike. This decapitation strategy of the US forces briefly worked. Mullah Fazlullah, nicknamed Mullah Radio of Swat valley, became the first non-Mehsud chief of the TTP. Not everyone was happy and some factions refuse to pledge allegiance. The group, which was weakened by centrifugal forces, suffered the devastating blow in June 2014 when it was routed by the Pakistani military in Operation Zarb-e-Azb.

Mullah Radio and his loyalists fled to Afghanistan to find safe havens there. The TTP cracks and splits deepened when Fazlullah was enlisted by the Afghan and Indian spy agencies for a “proxy war” in Pakistan. In June 2018, Fazlullah was killed, also in a US drone strike in Afghanistan.



## THE NOOR WALI EFFECT

Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud, an Islamic scholar, writer and jurist, was picked to succeed him. The TTP he inherited was in a precipitous decline. He took his time to work out a plan to reconfigure the group, and remedy internal divisions for a potential comeback. Wali now epitomises the group’s reorientation with a visible ‘lessons-learnt’ approach. It is evident from

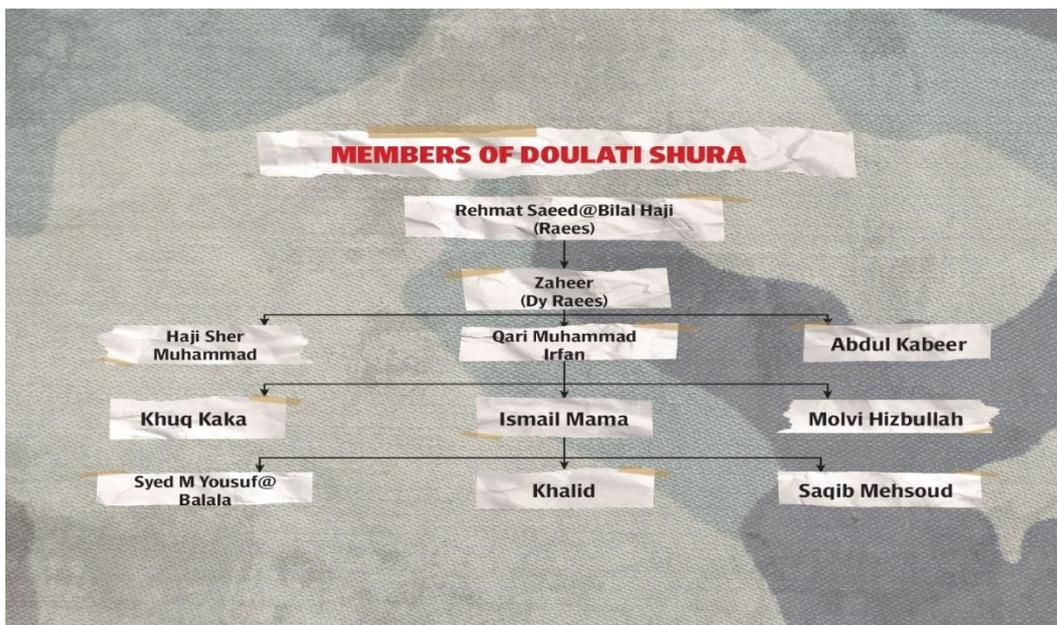
his book “Inquilab-e-Mehsud”, as well as the TTP’s revised code of conduct which lays emphasis on three points:

(a) Establishment of a centralised command and governance structure – for operations, imposition of Shariah, and governance. Modeled along the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) while cognizant of how splintering of the group into pro-IS-K, pro-Afghan Taliban, and pro-NDS groups had led to its decline and loss of focus on “jihad” in the past.

(b) Clearly laid out vision, history, identity, and targets list: The goal being modeling itself as an ideologically sound political, religious and ethnic resistance group as opposed to an international terror group (lessons learnt from al Qaeda and ISIS failures against the US).

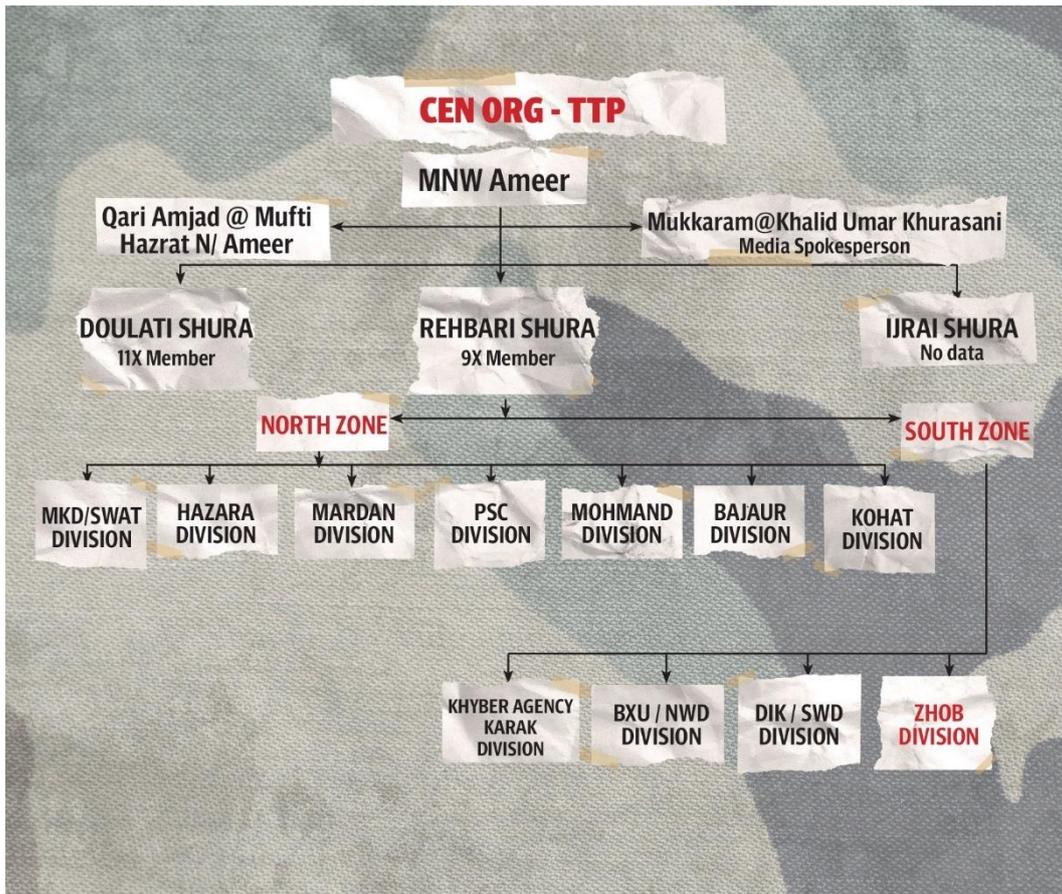
(c) Well managed external relations: Ensuring that the Pakistani state remains isolated by give up transnational Jihadism and prevent sucking other powers and actors in its fight against the state of Pakistan. The aim is to co-opt or maintain mutually beneficial arrangements with allies and rival factions, such as IS-K, IEA, and former splinter groups and tribes, via politico-strategic means.

(d) Project a finely-tuned brand image aimed at leveraging the maximum appeal for all potential recruits, by being violent enough to not alienate hardliners, and by being moderate enough to attract young educated religious-orientated youth from Tehreek-Labbaik Pakistan, Hizbul Tahrir, Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, etc, as well as from more ethnic yet diverse lines such as from Central Asia, Balochistan, and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.



Wali’s efforts to rebrand, reorient, and unify the TTP met success as he started garnering pledges of allegiances. “Within two years, the TTP was reorganized by embracing Jamaatul Ahrar, Hizbul Ahrar, Amjad Farooqi Group, a faction of the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi sectarian outfit, Moosa Shaheed Karwan Group, Mohmand and Bajaur Taliban, the Lal Masjid-famed Ghazi Brigade, and Punjabi Taliban. All of them do not have the same degree of hostility towards Pakistan and its forces,” says defence analyst Maj Gen (retd) Inamul Haque.

**WHY NOW?**



Noor Wali – who fought alongside the Taliban against the Northern Alliance in 2001 – maintains good relations with the Haqqani Network, known as the Taliban’s military strategists. It was Mufti’s closer links with the Haqqanis that might have motivated the Pakistani agencies to reengage the TTP in negotiations. Sirajuddin Haqqani, the Taliban acting interior minister, is said to be mediating the ongoing talks.

“The current negotiations began when the Taliban’s swift takeover of Afghanistan gave Pakistan an opportunity to enlist their assistance in dealing with the TTP. Pakistan sees the Taliban as a facilitator of discussions with the TTP, as an ally in persuading the TTP to negotiate, and as a guarantor of whatever agreement is reached,” says Brian Michael Jenkins, a senior adviser to the president of the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND Corporation.

The Afghan Taliban, however, also see a quid pro quo here. “Given the Taliban’s continuing diplomatic isolation and the country’s desperate economic situation, Pakistan can in return assist Afghanistan’s new rulers in gaining acceptance and aid. Kabul’s help in ending the long-running conflict could give the Taliban credibility as a responsible regime,” says Jenkins, who has authored numerous books, reports, and articles on terrorism-related topics.

**'SOLDIERS OF FORTUNES'**

TTP's top cadres are warlords who have earned respect within the group based on fighting and operational and leadership experience along with tribal affinity. The foot soldiers are likely young tribesmen, recruited along ethno-religious, tribal and masculine ideals to fight for their identity, way of life and ideology: a rejection of not only foreign imperialism, but also so-called modernity that is in conflict with their tribal customs and identity.

The TTP had one founding goal: to join the Taliban-led "jihad" against the US-led foreign "occupation" of Afghanistan. Enforcement of Shariah law throughout Pakistan, a separate homeland, and autonomy were not among their initial demands. But since the TTP is an assemblage of factions, its commanders may differ in their prioritization of the group's goals. "The Swat Taliban are only interested in enforcement of Shariah law in Malakand Division. The Wazir and Mehsood tribes of Waziristan are aggrieved because the government has violated their land by launching military operations in 2003-04. The Kurram and Orakzai Taliban are inspired by al Qaeda and their main objective is to have the upper hand in their fight against the Shias in Kurram. The Khyber Taliban are mostly soldiers of fortune," says Gen Inam.

Dr Michael Barak, a senior researcher at International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT), is convinced that the TTP is a coalition of small terror groups influenced by al Qaeda's ideology and its stance toward the near enemy. "Al Qaeda argues that Pakistan is an illegitimate state since it does not follow Sharia, collaborates with the West and oppresses its people, etc," he says.

According to Jenkins, foot soldiers in terrorist groups are driven by diverse motivations. "They are not conscripts yearning for the fighting to end so that they can go home, but self-

selecting volunteers who, often dissatisfied with their lives, seek the rewards that joining a terrorist group offers – assumed status as a “warrior,” participation in an epic struggle, an exciting life, an opportunity to pursue baser violent instincts, passage to paradise. For others in the ranks, warfare is a source of income,” he says.

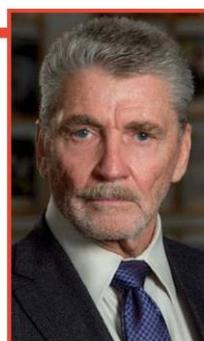
This is true of the TTP, says Gen Inam. Some of them might be motivated by an ideological cause, while others are lured by money and prospects of a higher social status. At the centre is the top hierarchy, driven by a politico-religious ideology, while the mass is gullible youth, he says. “The foot soldiers are the disenfranchised and mostly uneducated youth. Joining the TTP elevates their social status. They grow beard, carry assault rifles and inspire awe and respect in their villages. And in death, they get the coveted status of martyr while the TTP takes care of their families with regular stipends.”

### ‘SAFE HAVENS’

The 29th report of the UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team assesses “the number of TTP fighters at between 3,000 and 5,500 in Afghanistan”. The report identifies the provinces of Ghazni, Helmand, Kandahar, Nimruz, Paktika and Zabul as places where the group fought alongside the Taliban against the ousted Afghan government.



**Pakistan sees the Taliban as a facilitator of discussions with the TTP, as an ally in persuading the TTP to negotiate, and as a guarantor of whatever agreement is reached**



Brian Michael Jenkins

As per their tribal affinity and leadership under the Mehsud tribes, the likely stronghold and ethnic/on-ground legitimacy for their ‘movement’ stems from Waziristan and the bordering Afghan provinces of Khost and Paktika. The group is also based around the mountainous Nangarhar province, skirting around Kurram tribal district. Their fluid relations with the Khorasan chapter of Islamic State (IS-K) allow them to act not only as brokers but also as enforcers for helping secure the vital smuggling routes.

The IS-K’s stronghold is known to have been around the Spin Ghar mountains near Parachinar, which following the US withdrawal and Taliban pushback against the IS-K is likely to have led to TTP managing relations between the two. The same holds true for their expanding reach around Kunar, opposite Bajaur and Mohmand tribal districts of Pakistan.

Gen Inam says the “IEA” has concentrated the TTP fighters and their families in the provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar, Khost, and Paktika. “In April, Pakistan carried out precision airstrikes in the same area (border regions of Kunar and Khost) in which the group was badly hit,” he adds.

## FLOW OF FUNDS

The TTP organisational structure comprises local emirs and six-member Shura councils based according to regions that are answerable to a central emir and the grand Shura council. Each franchise is responsible for sustaining its own operations, according to the 2020 UN report. Kidnapping for ransom, mining of natural resources, smuggling of drugs and guns are their primary funding sources, while extortion: transit/toll taxes are secondary and donations from al Qaeda, IS-K, etc, are tertiary sources of funds.

“They have three main sources of funds: kidnapping for ransom, extortion (taxes) from the areas under their control, and narcotics trade,” says Gen Inam. The group also receives donations collected in mosques in the Middle Eastern and even in some European countries.

In the past, Afghanistan’s NDS and India’s RAW also bankrolled the TTP under alleged CIA patronage. “I’m privy to some of communication intercepts between TTP commanders in which they defended taking money from an ‘infidel’ country like India for their supposed pious cause,” recalls Gen Inam, who had served in Pakistan’s border regions during his military service.

## POSITION OF STRENGTH

Critics say negotiating with terrorists is akin to legitimising terrorism and incentivising violence. It becomes more perilous when you’re not sure if the group you’re negotiating with really wants to renounce violence or it is just buying time to reorganize and regroup. Dr Barak believes a group would only agree to negotiate if it has been considerably weakened. He cites the examples of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, Irish Republican Army, Gamma Islamiyya, Libyan Islamic Fighting Group and Palestine Liberation Organisation. “All these examples prove that most successful deals are achieved when the groups are found in a weak position,” he says. “It’s good to negotiate with the TTP, but at the same time, Pakistan must be very cautious about the group’s motivation.”

The TTP is not a monolith. It is a fragile coalition of smaller formations. Dr Barak believes it’s always difficult to negotiate with a fissiparous group because there is always a possibility that one of its factions will refuse to accept the deal. “But this should not discourage Pakistan from negotiating with the TTP. If there is a strong leadership in the TTP, it may force most of its members to respect the deal. Pakistan may see where the wind blows and calculate where negotiations are heading,” he adds.

## QUID PRO QUO

The Taliban regime has been mired in multiple challenges since August last year which include persistent diplomatic isolation, deepening economic chaos, and a worsening humanitarian crisis.

“In this situation, the Taliban are interested in sending signals to the international community, including Pakistan, that they don’t support terrorism in order to gain international recognition for the legitimacy of their rule in Afghanistan and to attract foreign investments,” says Dr Barak. A deal between the TTP and Pakistan government would strengthen this perception.

Jenkins agrees. "Given the Taliban's continuing diplomatic isolation and the country's desperate economic situation, Pakistan can in return assist Afghanistan's new rulers in gaining acceptance and aid. Kabul's help in ending the long-running conflict could give the Taliban credibility as a responsible regime," he says.

However, Dr Barak is not optimistic a peace deal may last long because, according to him, the TTP is not in a weak position. "That means the TTP is accepting the game's rules dictated by the Taliban: to halt terrorist actions against Pakistan – but only for a short term," he says.

Jenkins concurs. "The Taliban's victory in Afghanistan boosted the morale of jihadists everywhere who view the success as confirmation that God is on their side. If jihadist resistance fighters can defeat the Soviet Union and the United States, their thinking goes, a TTP victory over Pakistan seems inevitable," he says.

### **PROSPECTS OF DEAL**

A Pakistan-TTP deal shouldn't be out of question. The two sides have signed several agreements in the past, beginning with the Shakai accord in 2004, Sararogha accord in 2005, Waziristan accord in 2006, and the Nizam-e-Adl agreement in 2009. All of them didn't last long, though.

"The Taliban have benefited from Pakistan's generous hospitality for a long time and they know it's now their turn to return the favour. Therefore, the negotiations would not break down without achieving something tangible. The two sides might reach an interim deal in which they remove the irritants and agree to continue discussion on bigger issues," says Gen Inam.

Dr Barak, however, is not optimistic about the possibility of a lasting deal. "Even if there is a deal, it will not survive for long because the TTP does not have a strong motivation to end the conflict with Pakistan," he says. Jenkins is not optimistic either. "The political terrain is constantly shifting, requiring constant recalibration. Lasting peace may therefore always be a long shot."

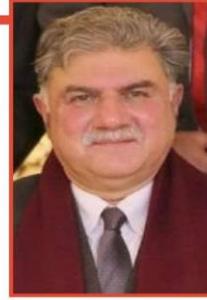
### **WHAT IF TTP DEFIES TALIBAN?**

It is believed that the Taliban have promised to take military action if the TTP remains obstinate – and that it was this promise that has led Pakistan to revive negotiations. But Jenkins thinks it would be difficult for the Taliban to live up to the promise of military action against the TTP, which could be seen as a betrayal. There are already reports of tension between pragmatists and hardliners within the Taliban. Action against the TTP could deepen these internal divisions.

"The Taliban may risk their reputation and legitimacy if they take military action against the TTP. And as a result, Afghanistan may descend into security instability because the Taliban will be perceived as a puppet of external state actors, such as Pakistan," adds Dr Barak. "The Khorasan chapter of Islamic State could also exploit the situation to demonise the Taliban and recruit TTP members."



**The Taliban have benefited from Pakistan’s generous hospitality for a long time and they know it’s now their turn to return the favour. Therefore, the negotiations would not break down without achieving something tangible**



Maj Gen (retd) Inamul Haque

Jenkins agrees that the IS-K now seeks to attract dissatisfied Taliban veterans demanding that the jihad continue as well as those who simply have few peacetime prospects. The Taliban’s abandonment of the TTP could prompt an exodus. “Fear of losing followers to the IS-K also constrains what the TTP can agree to with Pakistan. In the same way it can attract disgruntled Taliban veterans, IS-K could also attract TTP fighters convinced of eventual success and unwilling to accept any compromise. TTP dissidents have pledged allegiance to IS-K in the past, others could do so in the future,” he says.

**TTP Leadership**

<p><b>Baitullah Mehsud (2007-2009)</b></p>  <p>Baitullah Mehsud was the original leader of the TTP. Mehsud was killed in a US drone strike on August 5, 2009.</p>	<p><b>Hakimullah Mehsud (2009-2013)</b></p>  <p>Hakimullah Mehsud was the second leader of the TTP. He was killed in a US drone strike on November 1, 2013.</p>
<p><b>Mullah Fazlullah (2013-2018)</b></p>  <p>Mullah Fazlullah was the third leader of the TTP. Before his appointment, Fazlullah was known as a particularly influential and powerful figure in Swat Valley. He was killed by a US drone strike in June of 2018.</p>	<p><b>Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud (2018-Present)</b></p>  <p>Mufti Noor Wali was named as the new leader of the TTP a week after Fazlullah death. Under his leadership, Mehsud facilitated the merging of new factions into the TTP since its fragmentation under Fazlullah's leadership.</p>

Gen Inam agrees that the fear of losing TTP cadres to IS-K could be one of the reasons for the Taliban reluctance to take on the TTP. However, he lists three possible main reasons for the IEA’s reluctance to take on the TTP. “1.) The two have combat affinity as they have fought alongside each other against the US-led foreign forces; 2.) Some in the IEA cadres see fighting the “TTP mujahideen” as un-Islamic; 3.) The IEA lacks the capability to take on the TTP,

especially at a time when the Taliban are struggling to consolidate their rule in Afghanistan,” he says.

Dr Barak thinks the Taliban could also be trying to play a double game: selling a different perception to regional and international actors by peddling themselves as peace-brokers to international community while harbouring the terrorist groups. But Gen Inam doesn't buy this perception. “I don't think the IEA could use the TTP as a residual leverage. For them, relations with Pakistan are more important than the TTP,” he says.

### AVAILABLE OPTIONS

Pakistan has achieved a convincing victory against the TTP in the erstwhile tribal regions by decimating their command and control system. This victory was achieved at a heavy cost – both in men and treasure. Acquiescing to TTP's unreasonable demands, such as reversal of the FATA merger, a blanket amnesty for its fighters as well as allowing them to carry their weapons throughout the country, would be akin to unraveling the hard-earned gains. This would also undermine the trust in state power.

So, what options Pakistan will have, if talks fail? Dr Barak says Pakistan could a.) demand extradition of TTP's members from Afghanistan; b.) cease efforts to stabilise Afghan economy and win global legitimacy for the Taliban rule; and, c.) take military action against the TTP.



**Even if there is a deal, it will not survive for long because the TTP does not have a strong motivation to end the conflict with Pakistan**



Dr Michael Barak

Gen Inam says Pakistan could step up IBOs with on-ground military mobilisation. It could also extend more leverage and incentives to the IEA to wean its reliance on the TTP by amplifying formalised trade, border, immigration management with a view to public diplomacy, specifically via local outreach and context.

Pakistan may also go for cross-border surgical strikes, including covert decapitation attempts as well as the use of armed drones in an attempt to wean away malleable from hardline leaders. Pakistan could also attempt to divide the TTP through monetary and political inducements.

**SOURCE: THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE, JUNE 12, 2022**

# Will talks work?

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**KHADIM HUSSAIN**

**N**EW<sup>S</sup> from Kabul regarding peace talks facilitated by the Afghan Taliban between the outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and a state-backed jirga is of 'positive developments'. The perception that we may be moving towards the restoration of peace has been reinforced by the announcement of an 'indefinite' ceasefire by the TTP. The question is whether these talks will bear fruit in the form of a permanent cessation of terror attacks on Pakistani citizens, interests and installations.

Aside from the debate on how this jirga was formed, talks are always significant for implementing the classical paradigm of disarmament, reintegration and remobilisation of armed, non-state fighters. In addition, counter-extremism (CE) and counterterrorism (CT) strategies require a holistic approach based on narrative building, dialogue, blocking of recruitment and financial resources, and kinetic force.

After the Afghan Taliban took over Kabul in August 2021 and formed the 'Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan', they released several thousand fighters of the TTP and other terror outfits. As a result, against all expectations of the Pakistani government, which had been making every effort to facilitate the 'friendly' government in Kabul, attacks on military checkpoints, police personnel, activists and polio workers increased in Pakistan in general, and in the different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular.

This happened despite the large-scale fencing of the Durand Line. Some 40 attacks were recorded in the last six months, in which around 80, including security personnel, lost their lives. There was also an increase in extortion.

The worsening security situation prompted the powers that be to make another attempt at integrating the TTP into mainstream society. The dialogue was to be led by a jirga that consisted of parliamentarians and elders belonging to the newly merged districts. Though the jirga has no legal or constitutional approval and has allegedly been constituted under pressure, it has visited Kabul several times over the past months for confidence-building measures. Formal talks started during its most recent visit to Kabul.

It should be kept in mind the history of talks with religious extremist armed private militias is as old as terrorism. The last major attempt was made in 2014. Several agreements – like Shakai, Sararogha, Miranshah, Swat and Khyber – come to mind. The TTP emerged more potent after each, and after each deal broke, military operations were carried out. The National Action Plan was agreed to after the APS attack; later, Zarb-i-Azb and Raddul Fasaad were launched.

Some agreements resulted in the formation of armed 'aman (peace) committees', which exacerbated the situation as this was perceived as the formal handing over of state authority,

including law and order, to private militias. Several hundred TTP 'commanders' and foot soldiers even surrendered after receiving handsome incentives, but many of them could not be integrated into mainstream society.

Major problems seem to remain in the way of the success of the ongoing talks. As parliament has not yet been taken into confidence, the issue of who will take responsibility on behalf of the state for any agreement with the TTP as a result of this dialogue will pose a significant challenge. Secondly, the issue of who the guarantor of the talks will be might always hang in the balance. Who will compel the TTP to act upon its agreement, as it has usually been tempted to violate terms on the basis of its own interpretation of what the agreement is? How will splinter groups be dealt with, which typically emerge after any such deal?

Some of the reported conditions laid down by the TTP would also need constitutional amendments, for which the entire process of negotiating with the TTP will first need to be brought to parliament. One of the conditions said to have been put forward is the reversal of the merger of ex-Fata. The merger was concluded after the passage of the 25th Amendment. If true, this condition will be perceived as handing over the newly merged districts to the TTP, which may be seen as a recipe for regional disaster, especially after the installation of the Afghan Taliban in Kabul.

Another reported conditionality concerns blanket amnesty to TTP commanders, which will create unrest, especially among the heirs of victims of attacks owned by the TTP. Also, how can the Nizam-i-Adl Regulation be implemented in the presence of the 25th Amendment?

The narrative of CE and CT is yet to permeate the sociocultural veins of Pakistan fully. From the little work on the issue by the inactive National Counter Terrorism Authority to Paigham-i-Pakistan, and till the National Security Policy of 2022 – the CT and CE narrative has yet to be fully interwoven into textbooks, media, laws and policies; the same way extremism was once woven into these structures.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 14, 2022**

# Terror financing charges against NBP withdrawn

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**T**HE National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) has won a high-profile terror-financing case in New York's Federal Court, avoiding a potential bankruptcy.

Media reports and diplomatic sources said the plaintiff, Harold Brown Sr, withdrew the case, dropping all charges against the bank.

NBP officials in New York and Washington, however, were mysteriously silent on this major win.

There was no one in the NBP's main office in New York, except a receptionist, and the branch office in Washington had no information.

The bank would have faced the grim prospect of going into bankruptcy had the decision gone against it.

The case against NBP was being handled by the International Disputes Unit of the Attorney General's Office. Earlier this year, the US Federal Reserve Board had announced a \$20.4 million penalty against the NBP.

The New York Department of Financial Services also fined the bank \$35 million for repeated compliance failures, taking the combined penalties to \$55 million.

In his filing, the plaintiff alleged that NBP provided financial support and banking services to several notorious terrorist groups and terrorist fundraisers, among them, Al Qaeda.

The judge dismissed the complaint with leave to "replead" and directed the parties to appear for the initial case management conference on April 2, 2021.

It was apparently after this conference that the plaintiff agreed to withdraw the charges.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 15, 2022**

# There and back again: A timeline of Pakistan's unfortunate 'grey listing' by FATF

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**P**AKISTAN'S history with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) – the international watchdog against money laundering and financing of terrorism – is a long and storied one.

It can be traced back to 2008 when the country was first placed on its increased monitoring list – the so-called "grey list" – for allegedly failing to take adequate measures to curb terror financing and money laundering.

When FATF places a jurisdiction under increased monitoring, it means the country has committed to resolving swiftly the identified strategic deficiencies within the agreed timeframes and is subject to increased monitoring. This list is often externally referred to as the "grey list".

Since 2008, Pakistan has landed on the unwanted list twice more, in 2012 and 2018. Interestingly, each time Pakistan was placed on the grey list, the country was either headed towards elections or had recently completed a transition of power.

Here's a look back at all three of Pakistan's grey listings by the FATF and actions taken in recent years to exit it:

Feb 28, 2008 – Pakistan is placed on the FATF grey list after it failed to meet the international anti-money laundering (AML) and combating financing of terrorism (CFT) standards and is asked to work closely with the Asia Pacific Group to achieve targets.

June 2010 – Pakistan exits the FATF monitoring list after the country "demonstrated progress in improving its AML/CFT regime, including enacting a permanent anti-money laundering law".

Feb 16, 2012 – Pakistan is placed on the FATF's grey list again for not being fully compliant with the standards for effectively combating the twin menaces of money laundering and terrorist financing.

Feb 26, 2015 – FATF removes Pakistan from the grey list and the global watchdog welcomes Pakistan's "significant progress in improving its AML/CFT regime" noting that the country had established the legal and regulatory framework to meet the commitments in its action plan.

June 28, 2018 – Pakistan is placed on the grey list for the third time, with the FATF reasoning being that the country had failed to act against terror financing on its soil.

Aug 16, 2018 – The Asia Pacific Group finds deficiencies in Pakistan's FATF action plan after a 12-day inspection.

March 8, 2019 – Banned outfits labelled as high risk to meet FATF terms.

May 11, 2019 – Pakistan Customs introduces policy to curb terror financing.

July 25, 2019 – FATF cell set up at the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to deal with terror financing.

Aug 25, 2019 – PM sets up body to help meet FATF targets.

Oct 18, 2019 – The FATF retains Pakistan on the grey list, urging the country to swiftly complete its full action plan by February 2020.

Oct 29, 2019 – A FATF cell is established in interior ministry to ensure implementation on action plan.

Feb 21, 2020 – The FATF keeps Pakistan on its grey list until June, stressing the need for further actions for completing the action plan.

Feb 24, 2020 – The FBR announces it will watch real estate, jewellery trades for FATF compliance.

June 24, 2020 – The FATF's virtual plenary meeting does not take up Pakistan's case.

Aug 17, 2020 – The Senate adopts one of five FATF-related bills.

Aug 18, 2020 – The upper house of parliament passes two more FATF-related bills.

Sept 16, 2020 – A joint session of Parliament passes three FATF-related bills.

Oct 6, 2020 – The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has met all FATF conditions, says chairman.

Oct 23, 2020 – The FATF finds that Pakistan has successfully complied with 21 out of 27 points of action but decided to keep the country on its 'grey list' until February 2021 until the implementation on the plan to the core.

Nov 19, 2020 – Jamaatud Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed is convicted in another terror financing case, sentenced to 5 and a half years in prison.

Jan 8, 2021 – The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) amends AML regulations to comply with FATF demands.

Jan 8, 2021 – Lahore anti-terrorism court sentences proscribed organisation Lashkar-e-Taiba's (LeT) Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi to 5 years imprisonment for terror financing.

Feb 25, 2021 – Pakistan remains on the grey list as the watchdog claims the country failed to complete three out of 27 unmet action plan targets on anti-money laundering and combating financing terror.

March 25, 2021 – The government unilaterally registers all tax returns-filing real estate dealers as Designated Non-Financial Business and Professions (DNFBPs) and directed them to provide full details of their clients and property transactions after completing customer due diligence.

April 22, 2021 – Regulators tighten noose on money laundering.

May 19, 2021 – The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) sets up special squad to curb money laundering.

June 25, 2021 – A single unmet action plan keeps Pakistan on the grey list.

July 4, 2021 – The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) sets up a cell to counter terror financing, money laundering.

Aug 16, 2021 – Banks have started using 'politically exposed persons' database.

Oct 21, 2021 – FATF says Pakistan will continue to be on its increased monitoring list as it was yet to fully implement the action plan given by the watchdog.

March 4, 2022 – The FATF retains Pakistan on its terrorism financing grey list and asks the country to address the remaining deficiencies in its financial system.

April 8, 2022 – Hafiz Saeed is sentenced to 33 years in jail.

June 14-17, 2022 – The global watchdog holds a four-day plenary session in Berlin, Germany. In a statement issued after the session, the FATF said Pakistan has met all 34 items on its action plan and the watchdog will now schedule an on-site visit to verify the implementation and sustainability of the country's money laundering and counter-terrorism financing measures.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 17, 2022**

# Soldier martyred in exchange of fire with terrorists in North Waziristan

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**A** soldier was martyred during an "intense exchange of fire" between security forces and terrorists in North Waziristan district's Miranshah area, the military's media affairs wing said.

In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) identified the soldier as 32-year-old Naik Zahid Ahmed, a resident of Charsadda, who embraced martyrdom after "having fought gallantly".

During the exchange of fire, "one terrorist got killed", the statement said, identifying him as Ziaullah. It added that weapons and ammunition were recovered from the slain terrorist.

On June 12, a soldier was martyred during an exchange of fire with terrorists in the Datta Khel area of the district.

Sepoy Shahzaib Imtiaz embraced martyrdom after "having fought gallantly", the ISPR had said, adding that he was 25 years old and a resident of Kotli Sattian.

Earlier this month, security forces killed four terrorists during operations in North Waziristan and Balochistan's Noshki district.

According to the ISPR, two terrorists were killed during an exchange of fire with the security forces in the Hassankhel area of Mirali tehsil in North Waziristan. Arms and ammunition were seized from the possession of the dead terrorists who, according to the ISPR statement, were involved in subversive activities.

Meanwhile, two more terrorists were killed during an operation in Parodh area of Noshki. Sources said the terrorists tried to escape from their hideout and opened fire on security forces. During the exchange of fire, two terrorists allegedly belonging to the banned Baloch Republic Army were killed.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 18, 2022**

# Four social activists among six killed in North Waziristan

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**S**IX people, including four volunteers of a social organisation, were killed in two incidents in North Waziristan tribal district.

Police and residents said that unidentified men on two motorcycles opened fire on a moving car in the Haiderkhel area of Mirali tehsil.

Four activists of the Youth of Waziristan, a social organisation, were killed in the attack.

The deceased have been identified as Waqar Ahmad Dawar, Sunaid Ahmad Dawar, Aamad Dawar and Assadullah.

The bodies were shifted to a hospital in Mirali town.

The Youth Organisation was formed after the Zarb-i-Azb military operation. The organisation works for restoration of peace in the militancy-hit region. The organisation has also staged protest and sit-in against target killings.

About two years ago security agencies took action against a sit-in organised by the Youth of Waziristan and arrested its founding president, Noor Islam Dawar.

Meanwhile, bullet-riddled bodies of two people, who were kidnapped from a market in Mirali town, were found near the Tochi river, also called the Gambila River, on Sunday.

Residents said that unidentified gunmen had kidnapped the two people from Khadi market in Mirali town.

No group has so far claimed responsibility for the killing.

The deceased belonged to Lakki Marwat district.

In South Waziristan, two people were gunned down in separate incidents on Sunday.

One incident was reported from Khaisoor village where gunmen shot dead Abdur Rehman. The deceased owned a mobile phone shop in the village.

In another incident unidentified assailants killed a person in Shaktoi area of the district.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 20, 2022**

# On refugees

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**J**UNE 20, marked as World Refugee Day, has rolled around once again while the world is wracked by social and economic upheaval. Conflict ravages Ukraine, while Afghanistan sinks ever deeper in the mire under a totalitarian regime bent on imposing its socially restrictive worldview. It is an unfortunate reality that the vast majority of refugees live in miserable conditions and are often treated as lesser humans by their host countries. The coming year is likely to bring increased hardship for them. With an economic downturn setting in, donor agencies are likely to be resource-stressed as they make arrangements to accommodate refugees in different regions of the world. Host countries will also feel the economic burden of catering to refugee populations while also taking care of their own. It is times like these that often provide a fatal spark to simmering xenophobia and racism, and world leaders must be increasingly vigilant about protecting refugees from more hurt and harm than they already face.

The Ukraine conflict must also not be allowed to distract the world's obligation to all the other refugee groups that need support. The world should not need to be reminded that 6.7m refugees from Syria, 5.7m from Palestine, 2.6m Afghans, 4m Venezuelans, 2.2m Sudanese and nearly 1.1m Rohingya refugees also need attention and financial help. There has been a tendency for world powers to dump the human cost of war on developing nations, which, though they are often struggling with their own issues, play host to more than 86pc of the refugees displaced prior to the Ukraine crisis. As the economic crisis intensifies, the powers that have actively engaged in conflict over the past decades should take greater responsibility for refugees. It is not fair or humane of them to be quite eager to supply bombs and bullets that keep wars going, but curse and complain when asked to clean up the social mess they create in the pursuit of their foreign policy games.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 20, 2022**

# Right to fair trial

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**I**T is scarcely an understatement to say that in Pakistan, the fundamental right to a fair trial, as provided for under Article 10A of the Constitution, is honoured more in the breach than the observance. On Monday, the Supreme Court rightly observed that the burden is on the bench to ascertain from the “facts and circumstances of the case ... whether this indispensable right was afforded or not”. The two-judge bench had taken up a civil appeal by an official in the Frontier Constabulary against the Federal Services Tribunal over the rejection of his plea in November 2018 on grounds of limitation without considering the merits of the case. The plea had been filed by the appellant after repeated and unsuccessful attempts to seek relief through departmental appeals over punitive action taken against him on allegations of misconduct without any show-cause notice or hearing. The apex court ruled that “no decision which is affecting the right of any person should be taken without providing an opportunity of being heard” and that “mere technicalities” should not stand in the way of providing justice.

The right to fair trial is also part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It reads: “Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.” Yet, on several occasions, the state has itself sacrificed this principle at the altar of expediency. One of the more recent and most consequential instances of this was parliament’s action of amending the Army Act and the Constitution to greenlight the setting up of military courts for prosecuting terrorists. That chapter, distinguished by an utter lack of transparency regarding the judicial process, including the denial of right of counsel of choice to the accused, fortunately came to a close in 2019. On an unofficial level, however, the state continues to violate Article 10A – not to mention multiple other human rights – in every instance of enforced disappearance that takes place.

At the same time, there still exists on the statute books legislation that is intrinsically at odds with the right to fair trial. For instance, the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997, stipulates an unreasonably short time of seven days for the court to decide each case. Given that the law deals with the most heinous offences, the anti-terrorism courts, in an effort not to appear ‘soft’ on militancy, might possibly have condemned some innocent individuals to death because there was not sufficient time for the accused to mount a robust defence. On the other hand, the glacial speed of the ‘regular’ judicial process, resulting in a massive backlog of civil and criminal cases, also undercuts one of the fundamental prerequisites of fair trial – the right to be tried without undue delay.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 22, 2022**

# Murdered workers

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**T**HE murder of two workers hailing from Sindh in Balochistan's Hoshab area on Monday is the second incident this month in which labourers have been targeted in the province. The murdered men were working on a road project. Last week, three workers were killed in a labour camp in Harnai. In that attack, the assailants torched the labour camp after committing the crime. At the time of writing, no organisation had claimed responsibility for these attacks. Moreover, two policemen were also targeted in the Dera Allahyar area of the province on Sunday. This series of deadly attacks targeting ordinary workers trying to make a living in the province, as well as law enforcers, indicates that the problem of militancy in Balochistan is far from resolved, as the state – both its civilian and military arms – has been unable to establish permanent peace in the troubled province. According to figures compiled by the Pak Institute of Peace Studies, at least 12 non-Baloch settlers and workers were killed in militant attacks in the province last year. While the killing of any non-combatant is indefensible, the murder of poor workers trying to provide for their families is particularly reprehensible.

When it comes to bringing peace to Balochistan, we seem to be moving in circles. The combination of military operations, offers of amnesty to militants and promises to improve the socioeconomic situation of the province's people has failed to bring lasting stability, perhaps because there is little visible change on the ground. For example, while incidents of violence continue, the ruling party in Balochistan is embroiled in palace intrigues – a disturbing reflection of the priorities of the rulers for whom the security and welfare of the population rank much lower than their bid for power. The fact is that in the troubled province, militant violence, poverty, lack of opportunity and the involvement of hostile actors are all interlinked. To establish lasting peace in Balochistan, a holistic strategy is needed, which moves beyond rhetoric. While those involved in the murders of civilians and security men must be brought to justice to deal a lethal blow to militancy, the people's genuine grievances have to be addressed. The Baloch should have the first right to the province's mineral riches, and gain from CPEC developments. If the state can show the people it cares for them and give them jobs, security, healthcare and education, the separatist narrative can be countered in a more effective manner.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 22, 2022**

# Top LeT man Sajid Mir quietly held, jailed in terror financing case

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**A**S Pakistani officials ticked items off their to-do list for submission of report to Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on the implementation of the action plan for getting out of its 'grey-list', something that strengthened their case was the conviction and sentencing of top Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist Sajid Majeed Mir.

Mir, 44, who allegedly directed the 2008 Mumbai attacks, was sentenced by an anti-terrorism court in Lahore, in the first week of this month, to 15 and a half years in jail after convicting him in a terror financing case. He was also fined Rs420,000. He is currently serving sentence in Kot Lakhpat jail, according to a source.

It all happened so quietly that no one came to know about such an important court verdict in such a high-profile case, except for a very brief report in one of the newspapers, which too could not attract attention. His detention, which apparently took place in later part of April, was also kept away from media's prying eyes.

Pakistani authorities, it should be recalled, had in the past claimed he had died, but Western countries remained unconvinced and demanded proofs of his death. This issue rather became a major sticking point in FATF's assessment of Pakistan's progress on the action plan late last year. This was where things finally started moving in Mir's case leading to his 'arrest'.

His conviction and sentencing were, therefore, major achievements that Pakistani officials showcased in their progress report given to FATF on its action plan during the latest plenary.

It indeed helped in convincing FATF members that Pakistan had finished all the required tasks.

Weak prosecution and poor conviction rate of terrorists were major shortcomings that had all along hampered Pakistan's exit from the grey list.

According to FATF's June 2022 plenary outcomes, Pakistan had shown "an upward trend" in investigation and prosecution of money laundering cases, besides demonstrating that terror financing cases against senior leaders and commanders of UN-designated terrorist groups were being pursued seriously.

The watchdog finally concluded that Pakistan had "substantially completed" the two action plans, covering 34 items, and ordered an on-site visit by a technical team for verifying the implementation of anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing, and ensuring that they were being sustained and backed by necessary political commitment.

Who is Sajid Mir?

Lahore-born Mir is mostly known for his alleged role in planning and executing the Mumbai attacks that left 166, including 26 foreigners, dead and brought the two nuclear armed neighbours to the brink of war. He allegedly had directed the attackers from Lahore during the siege in Mumbai.

He is claimed to have spent two years carrying out reconnaissance and scouting targets in Mumbai. He reportedly did this with the help of David Coleman Headley – the American terrorist, who is currently serving a 35 years sentence in the US for his involvement in international terrorism.

Mir's association with LeT and Hafiz Saeed dates back to 1994, when he was just 16. He then rose in the terrorist outfit's ranks and became associated with its international operations wing.

Reports show that he remained the deputy chief of LeT's international operations, but others suggest that he even at some point led that unit. He is said to have enjoyed direct access to Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, who was the chief of all terrorism operations.

Experts say he also got linked up with Al-Qaeda while conducting international operations.

He had in 2005 secretly toured India, where he went as a cricket fan to watch a match between the cricket teams of the two countries. On that occasion he remained in India for about 15 days.

Mir's name started featuring on the international terrorism landscape as early as 2002, when he attempted to make large military equipment purchases from the US with the help of his Virginia-based accomplices. However, that project came to an end when the FBI arrested 11 people in what became to be known as 'Virginia Paintball Jihadi' case. Ten of them were jailed.

He later turned towards Australia. In 2003 he planned attacks in Australia with the help of a French national, Willie Brigitte, and an Australian, Faheem Khalid Lodhi, for Australian troops presence in Afghanistan.

Lodhi was convicted by an Australian court in June 2006 of planning acts of terrorism and handed down 20 years in prison, while Brigitte, who was deported to France in 2003, was convicted by a French court to nine years in jail.

He then started on Mumbai project. Later in 2009, Mir collaborated with Headley on an aborted plan to attack a newspaper office in Copenhagen, Denmark.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 25, 2022**

## DG FIA underscores urgent need to modernize national laws, enforcement

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**N**ATIONAL criminal laws and enforcement practices were needed to be modernized in line with global standards, said Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Director General (DG) Muhammad Tahir Rai while speaking at an FIA-organized ceremony at the Agency headquarters in Islamabad.

According to a press release issued here, the ceremony was organized to mark the 4th anniversary of the passage of Pakistan's two landmark internationally-recognized UN-compliant laws on human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

Former Additional Director General, Immigration, Tariq Nawaz Malik, who spearheaded the Agency's efforts in drafting and passage of these laws in the Parliament, also participated in the ceremony along with senior officials of the FIA.

DG Rai said Pakistan's experience with the Financial Action Task Force's "Grey List" and the US State Department's "Trafficking in Persons Watch List" were important reminders that our legal system could no longer operate in isolation from the global trends, and that we have to bring our domestic law enforcement at par with international police standards.

The DG commended Tariq Malik's past efforts that culminated in the passage of these critical legislations that helped save Pakistan from the US State Department sanctions, which appeared imminent in early 2018.

Tariq Malik echoed the remarks of DG FIA and stated that domestic law enforcement could benefit greatly by adopting international best practices and through greater international police cooperation made possible by organizations such as Interpol.

Referring to the respective laws on migrant smuggling and human trafficking, he said that they could not have been drafted without the technical support of UNODC Country Office, Pakistan.

Highlighting the role that Interpol could play in supporting Pakistan law enforcement agencies, he revealed that during the past few weeks Interpol was instrumental in catching around 10 Pakistani criminals who had fled abroad, including several fugitives who were arrested during Interpol's "Infra Zajil" operation which was organized at the Gulf Cooperation Council Police Headquarters in UAE last week.

At the end of the ceremony, the DG FIA presented a shield to Tariq Malik in acknowledgment of his services towards modernization of national laws.

**SOURCE: THE PAKISTAN TODAY, JUNE 24, 2022**

## Terrorism increased as provinces' role in NAP ignored

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Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs meeting on law and order.

**C**RITICISING the previous government for its alleged negligence in implementing the National Action Plan (NAP), Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif vowed to restore the role of provinces in the plan.

Chairing a meeting on law and order, the prime minister lamented that the role of the provinces in the implementation of NAP had been ignored during the last four years [when PTI was in power] which led to an increase in acts of terrorism in the country.

“This role of the provinces will be restored that remained missing during the last four years,” a statement quoted him as saying.

The 20-point NAP was dev-ised in the wake of December 2014 terrorist attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar.

When contacted by Dawn, a senior security official spelled out how provinces had not fulfilled their responsibilities that had been defined in NAP.

The official requesting anonymity said, "...provinces were to make legal, judicial, police and madrasah reforms, ban hate literature, [ensure] de-weaponisation and impart special training to the civil security agencies. But unfortunately, that has not happened at the provincial level".

Prime Minister Sharif stressed that ensuring law and order and a peaceful atmosphere in the country was a prerequisite for restoring national economy and development.

He said entire nation was united on the anti-terrorism narrative, standing behind the armed forces and law-enforcement agencies.

He said the fight against terrorism would continue till the elimination of the menace and pledged never to compromise on Pakistan's security and defence.

The meeting also reviewed the implementation of the steps to eliminate the sources of terror financing and relevant laws.

The prime minister appreciated the performance of the law-enforcement agencies regarding the fulfillment of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) action plan.

The Paris-based FATF recently announced that Pakistan had implemented the two action plans given to it and that a mission of the body would visit the country in October to verify the compliance before formally delisting it from the 'grey list'.

The FATF made up of 37 member countries, including the US, regional groups Gulf Cooperation Council and European Commission, had placed Pakistan on the grey list in June 2018.

Islamabad was handed over a list of 27 conditions required to be fulfilled to exit the grey list, which is composed of countries with a high risk of money laundering and what FATF considers terrorism financing. The IMF had included exit from the grey list as part of its conditions set for the \$6 billion bailout programme for Pakistan.

Being on the grey list means investors and creditors are scared away from the country, while its exports may also be hurt.

Expressing concern over the rising graph of street crimes in Punjab province, the prime minister directed the provincial government led by his son, Hamza Shehbaz, to take measures for protection of lives and properties of the people.

He said public opinion could only be turned in favour of the police and law-enforcement agencies when they would show performance.

During the meeting, the PM was briefed on the law and order situation in the province, terrorism threats as well as the measures being taken to curb the scourge.

The meeting was attended by Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, Deputy Speaker of the Punjab Assembly Dost Muhammad Mazari, and other senior officials. Syed Irfan Raza in Islamabad also contributed to this report

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 27, 2022**

# Soft on the TTP

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MUHAMMAD AMIR RANA

**A**FTER a mild outcry from the concerned citizenry as well as the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), the military leadership has reassured the political leadership that no extra-constitutional deal will be made with the proscribed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). A press statement issued after the National Security Committee meeting last week mentioned that an in-camera session of parliament will be called, in which the Leader of the House – ie, the prime minister – will take other leaders on board. The statement has given the impression that the issue of talks with the TTP has been resolved amicably with the political leadership. Whatever the case may be, it is worth noting that the political leadership has since long given up on security issues. It now blindly trusts the security establishment's insight on such affairs. It seems almost preposterous to even consider that they would ask the establishment under what constitutional or political framework talks with the terrorist group were even initiated. Which framework will be used to bring the erstwhile terrorists under the orbit of Pakistan's Constitution, which they do not recognise? The political leadership was not much bothered when the so-called Protection of Pakistan Ordinance 2014 was introduced in parliament, a clause of the Pakistan Army Act extended to civil legal jurisdictions, and terrorists declared 'enemy aliens'. The text of the Act on the website of the National Counter Terrorism Authority describes the "enemy alien" as a person who fails to establish their citizenship of Pakistan and is suspected to be involved in waging war or insurrection against Pakistan or depredation on its territory, by virtue of involvement in offences specified in the Schedule.

The Schedule includes an extended inventory of offences, most of them covered under Schedule 6 of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997, and further includes offences committed outside Pakistan against national interests, and cybercrimes to attack foreign interests in Pakistan.

The TTP had committed nearly all of the offences mentioned in the ordinance.

The ordinance is a reminder of how state institutions kept changing their approach to combating terrorism, and civilian leadership kept endorsing those changes without even pausing to give them a second thought. According to figures derived from the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies' digital database on conflict and security, the TTP alone, excluding breakaway factions and affiliated local groups, has carried out 3,280 terrorist attacks in Pakistan since its establishment in 2007. These include 301 suicide bombings, which claimed 7,488 lives and wounded 15,086 others.

Through these attacks, the group martyred 2,577 personnel of security and law-enforcement agencies (530 FC men, 992 policemen, 117 personnel of unspecified paramilitaries, 815 army soldiers, 83 Levies and 40 Rangers officials), and 4,559 civilians, which includes 107 government officials, 554 political leaders and workers, 519 pro-government tribal elders, and

14 workers of CPEC-related projects. As many as 352 militants were also killed in these attacks, who were either suicide bombers or were killed in retaliatory fire by security forces. Since 2007, about 1,200 personnel of the security forces also lost their lives in kinetic actions and armed clashes and encounters with militants, mainly of the TTP and affiliated groups. The picture gets even more complex if sectarian and communal attacks launched by the TTP and its former splinters, such as Hizbul Ahrar and Jamaatul Ahrar, are also counted.

Strangely, after reports first emerged of peace talks with the TTP, there was no major reaction. Only a few voices from the families of victims of the APS Peshawar attack, and those political parties which had suffered the worst of terrorist violence, such as the PPP and the Awami National Party (ANP), made any noise. The ANP's and PPP's reaction is understandable. The TTP has claimed killing their top leadership, including Benazir Bhutto. However, these two parties never mobilised the masses on this issue. Other major parties in the current government are less concerned. The JUI-F always supported the idea of talks with the TTP because of their ideological affinity, while the PML-N is more focused on preserving its political capital and the economy.

The compulsions and shortcomings of political parties notwithstanding, more surprising has been the lack of response from civil society. Yes, the economic crisis may have left people unable to think about much else, but even victims of terrorism have so far not mobilised to register their protest. It is important to understand why. A deconstruction of terms historically used to describe militancy and armed movements exposes structural issues pertaining to politics, nationalism, identity, religion and the balance of power within state institutions.

Not too long ago, citizens were not ready to accept that the Taliban or other religiously inspired militant groups could be involved in terrorism against Pakistan. Their actions outside the country had been depicted as acts of jihad. These militant groups had a history of serving the state and its institutions, and were frequently labelled 'saviours', 'patriots' and 'mujahideen' before they were ever declared militants or terrorists.

Instead, the pro-establishment media and opinion-makers frequently used the term 'treason' to refer to separatist movements in East Pakistan, Balochistan and ethnonationalist movements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. People would connect those terms to those specific contexts, and when the terms were used out of that context, it took time for them to be re-contextualised. For instance, when a religious leader was first called a traitor, it may have sounded unfamiliar to the ears of the layperson.

Public opinion in Pakistan therefore took time to adjust to the different meaning of terms such as 'traitor', 'miscreant' and 'enemy' when they were applied to religiously motivated militants after 9/11. Society was still digesting the new terminology and gradually accepting the TTP, Al Qaeda, IS-K, and LeJ as enemies of the state and society when state institutions seem to have suddenly upended that process. This has created more ambiguity within society, and its dynamics can be discussed at some other time in these pages. Till then, suffice it to say that the state seems to have greatly disillusioned its citizens.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 26, 2022**

# Outlawing torture

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**J**UNE 26 is observed worldwide as the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. Considered one of the cruellest crimes against humanity, torture is particularly reprehensible as it violates the personhood of victims and robs them of human dignity. It is often used as a means of coercion and dehumanisation – to violently assert the perpetrator’s power and dominance over their victims.

The United Nations notes that torture is absolutely prohibited and unjustifiable whatever the circumstances may be. Since this prohibition forms part of customary international law, it is, therefore, binding on all countries, including Pakistan.

June 26 had been marked as a day of support for victims of torture so that countries may be reminded of their obligations under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Pakistan is a signatory to that convention. Unfortunately, Pakistan’s own legislative efforts to put an end to torture – described as an ‘endemic’ problem by Amnesty International – have repeatedly stumbled.

The Senate had, in July last year, passed the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Bill with support from across the aisle. The PPP’s Sherry Rehman had introduced the bill, and she had been supported by the then minister for human rights, PTI’s Shireen Mazari. Considering it had bipartisan support, it was hoped that the bill would promptly sail through the National Assembly as well before being signed into law by the president. It is unfortunate that it has now been almost a year but we have yet to see it enacted as law. There is no question that the state needs to considerably tighten its regulation of legal and criminal procedures to put an end to torture perpetrated by individuals acting on behalf of the state. The extent of the rot in our system can be judged by the fact that physical or psychological torture is now considered almost a given in police and intelligence investigations. The disease has spread due to the state’s failure to ensure that individuals tasked with investigating crimes and collecting evidence do their jobs while remaining within the ambit of the law they are supposed to uphold.

Since torturers face little or no retribution, extracting forced ‘confessions’ is often the easiest way for them to close pending cases. At other times, the tactic is used to ‘teach a lesson’ to those marked as ‘undesirables’ by the state, such as journalists and dissidents. The anti-torture bill passed by the Senate last year sought to put an end to this culture of impunity. It clearly defines what constitutes torture and lays out strict punishments to both penalise and dissuade those who may seek to perpetrate it. If passed, it would give some protection to detainees, while also pushing police, intelligence and other security agencies to build their cases against suspected criminals through robust, lawfully conducted investigations.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 26, 2022**

## High-profile case

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**I**N a ‘breaking news’ culture, it is not often that such a significant development in a high-profile case can be kept so low key. However, news of the conviction earlier this month by an anti-terrorism court in Lahore of Sajid Majeed Mir, a top operative of the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba, in a case of terror financing has trickled out only just now.

The court sentenced Mir, more well known as the alleged handler in the horrific Mumbai attacks of November 2008, to 15 and a half years behind bars and a fine of Rs420,000. His name had come up fairly early in investigations by US and Indian counterterrorism authorities into the attacks which killed 166 people, including 26 foreigners, at several sites in Mumbai.

After forensically examining intercepted phone calls recorded during the course of the attacks, the officials came to believe it was his voice directing the gunmen and urging them to kill. For several years, however, Pakistani authorities continued to insist that Mir was dead, a claim that the West refused to believe.

Weak prosecution and a poor conviction rate in terrorism cases were the final hurdle that Pakistan had to cross in order to be taken off the FATF grey list where it was placed in 2018. The conviction and sentencing of a senior-level LeT operative such as Mir no doubt carried considerable weight in the latest progress report submitted by Pakistan to FATF.

Just a couple of months earlier, the Jamaatud Dawa chief Hafiz Mohammed Saeed was sentenced to 33 years behind bars in two cases of terror financing; he was already serving time for earlier convictions, also for terror financing. Taken together, the outcome of the prosecutions against Mir and Saeed was deemed, as indeed it should be, conclusive evidence of the country’s commitment to putting militant actors out of commission.

The watchdog body in its latest plenary concluded that the country had “substantially completed” the two action plans it was required to implement; all that remains for Pakistan to exit the grey list is an on-site visit by a technical team to verify the steps taken. The last four years have been a sobering journey. The perception that elements in Pakistan were turning a blind eye to militancy, or worse, has cost us dearly in terms of international goodwill and economic losses. Now that this country has been nudged towards a more rational path, it must continue to stay the course.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 26, 2022**

# A dangerous idea

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SANA FARRUKH

**I**N a recent wave of Pakistani drama serials depicting police investigations nestled between family discord and jilted lovers, audiences saw some uncomfortable, yet familiar tropes being played out. The ‘good cop’, sometimes even depicted as a strong female character, just like her traditional counterparts, is seen hanging people upside down, with orders to beat them until they cough up something useful for the case. Such is the enmeshment of torture as a concept in Pakistan – even the most noble heroes seem to use it to stop evil in its tracks.

The idea that torture works is unfounded and dangerous. Unfortunately, it is also a widely held belief. If one speaks to law-enforcement officers, let alone the general public, most will say torture reaps results, and therefore it is a part of protocol during investigations. The seriousness of the act also seems to go unappreciated.

At a roundtable on a proposed torture law many years ago, I recall a retired police officer rather unabashedly recounting the time an accused person died of fright before they even touched him – his team had merely put a sack over his head and were gearing up for the act. We spent some time politely debating physical torture and psychological torture. Despite the passage of many years and the congregation of countless panels, focus groups, roundtables and interested parties across political lines, there is no stand-alone, comprehensive law in Pakistan criminalising torture.

Under the right to dignity within Pakistan’s Constitution, the government is obligated to ensure that no person is subjected to torture for the purpose of extracting evidence. There also exist a myriad of provisions across various laws which can, in theory, be used to hold law enforcement accountable for perpetrating acts of torture. However, this piecemeal approach to an endemic practice has reaped few results.

Last year, while speaking to a client on death row who was a minor at the time of his offence, I asked for details of the police torture he had experienced just after arrest. He was beaten mercilessly and systematically. Produced in court at the time, he was brave enough to raise it with the judge, who did not order any sort of medical examination, as was his duty. Instead, he chastised the police playfully, asking: “What have you taught him?” It seems the chastising was not for beating a young boy within an inch of his life, but instead, for not doing it well enough to get a timely confession.

At any stage, if there is reason to believe that an accused person has suffered torture, there is a duty on the court to investigate this. A medical examination must be conducted, resulting in a medico-legal certificate. This seldom takes place. With no evidence to prove the torture, most accused persons are unable to seek safety or redress, and cannot show that their confession was made under duress. If a medico-legal certificate is given, little happens as a

result – perpetrators of torture are not punished, and victims are often returned to the law-enforcement personnel they made complaints against.

What does this mean for our justice system? The high rate of torture in Pakistan renders the confessions being used in our courts unreliable. This means our convictions are not sound. The punishments we give to convicted prisoners are at grave risk of being unlawful. This is a travesty for the victims of an offence as well as the accused persons. With all criminal justice matters, it is not just the parties involved, but entire communities that suffer as a result of crime and punishment.

The United Nations Convention Against Torture, which Pakistan ratified in 2010, requires that states criminalise torture using specific legislation. Between 2010 and now, we have seen many politicians speak out against torture and express interest in legislating against it. With cross-party support on this issue, and a public that deserves much better from law enforcement in Pakistan, it is a shame that Pakistan is unable to protect its citizens from this inhumane practice.

The United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture falls on June 26 ie today. The aim of this day is to both honour and support victims of torture. What could be more honourable or supportive than creating a system for prevention, accountability and remedy so that torture is no longer endemic in Pakistan?

Until Pakistan criminalises torture, citizens must continue to carry the burden of mitigation and challenge these practices in our own spheres. Lawyers should push hard to get medical examinations conducted at the right time, judges should intervene when there is sign of torture, and law enforcement should initiate reform within itself to root out the practice. Finally, and most importantly, the government must jump-start the long-overdue mission of making torture a crime.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 26, 2022**

# From a strong state to a vibrant nation with a shared destiny

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BÉNÉDICT DE CERJAT

**A**FTER completing two wonderful years in Pakistan, while about to retire from the Swiss Foreign Service, I feel inclined to share some of my observations and thoughts on your fascinating country. This is by no means a lecture by a foreigner – of which this country has had its fair share – but rather a well-meaning piece of advice, or rather an observation.

I am still puzzled by the enormous gap between the rich past and incredible cultural diversity of the Land of the Pure and the lack of common ground within the Nation about the vision for the future.

How is it possible that the country with the 5th largest population in the world, which is home to three of the world's oldest and most advanced civilisations of their time (9,000 years old Mehrgarh Civilisation; 5,500-7,000 years old Indus Valley Civilisation; and 2,600 years old Gandhara Civilisation), is not playing a more important role in world affairs?

Of course, this may also be said about Iraq and Egypt. But in the case of Pakistan, the elites – including the political, economic and religious leaders – often appear stuck in the management of the short term without providing for the political space to work for a long-term vision together with all parts of the society.

I would argue that a strong State, narrowly focused on its security as it has existed in Pakistan for many decades, is not enough to find the right answers for the future and stimulate the younger generation to get involved. It is true of course that good organisation and the respect of strict control – as we have seen in the past on the occasion of natural disasters and more recently in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic, during which Pakistan did quite well in comparison with other large countries in the region – have effectively prevented mismanagement and possible chaos.

Over the years, Pakistan has developed its hard power, which gives the country some assurances to counter potential destabilisation risks from inside and outside. Your State is strong. The separation of powers does not compare to the West but it works in its own ways and there is an understanding that this has to be nurtured. Civil liberties are certainly challenged but not fundamentally questioned. But is this enough?

A better knowledge, acceptance, dissemination and promotion of the rich history and culture along the Five Rivers, before the partition, which will obviously lead to a broader understanding of the value of diversity in the society, will allow every citizen of the country

to participate and flourish in the society. This softer kind of power does not detract from Pakistan's real challenges. And a shared identity is so much more than a mere intellectual concept – it is the very essence that keeps us anchored and guided in the years to come.

Switzerland owes its economic success to its openness and diversity. Lacking resources, we have built our economy from a poor agrarian country to one which thrives on innovation and is backed by strong institutions and hard work. And although our example cannot be a blueprint for Pakistan, it shows that Pakistan too can be an “Asian Tiger” with the right kind of mental framework. This certainly will take time but it can be done. Improving the quality of governance and increasing economic freedom will provide confidence in the country's future and will result in increasing its soft power.

As a Swiss citizen who belongs to a linguistic minority (the French speakers) in my country, I feel entirely part of our Nation because we are not only valued and encouraged to actively engage for the nation's destiny but often given a larger role in than we would numerically deserve. Interestingly, the Swiss national identity has not been defined along any linguistic or religious lines. Rather we have succeeded in creating our own identity based on our history but equally important, on myths which have shaped our perception of national unity. This has served us through the two world wars and has inspired our youth to identify and work for my country.

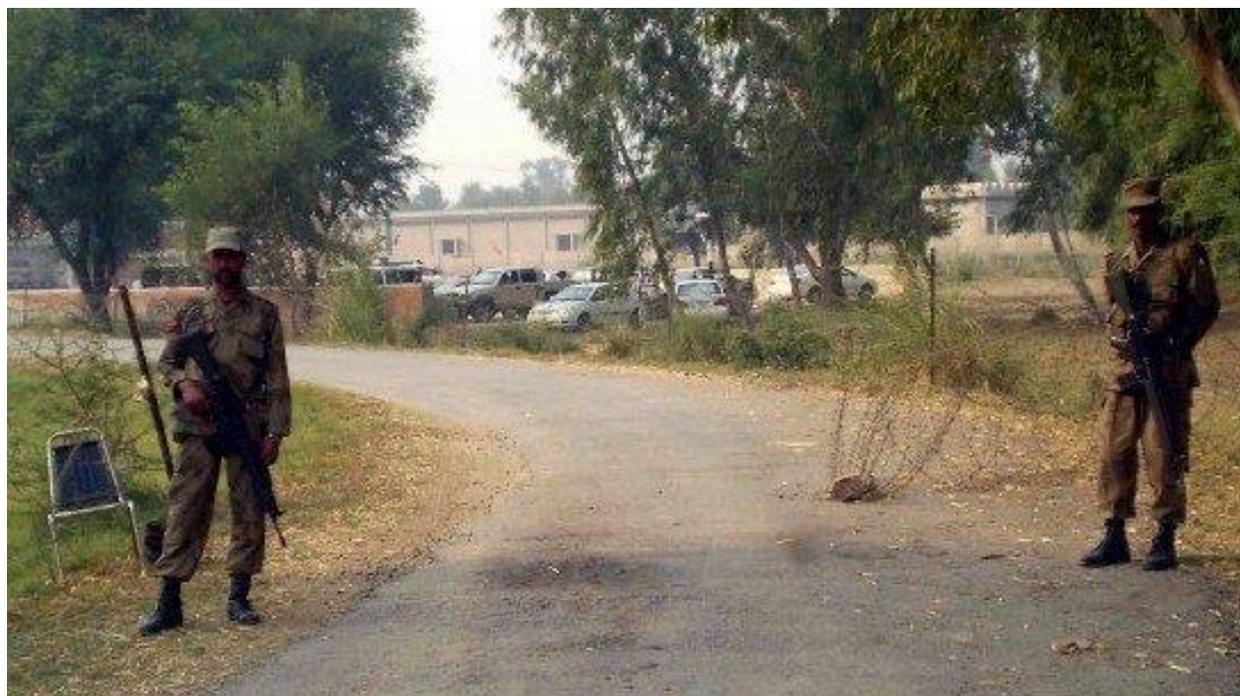
Following the guidance and the excellent precepts of the founding father Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan can take the bull by the horns and become one day the self-confident and vibrant nation that the world expects. The younger generation of Pakistan – the 2017 census recorded that 60% of the country's population was under the age of 25 – deserves a positive agenda they can support and be part of.

A positive agenda, based on Pakistan's immense soft power potential, would also help the country and the Nation to be regarded as what it is: the ancient and beautiful place where History began! And let us hope that Pakistan will no longer be an internationally relatively isolated and disengaged country. I wish Pakistan a great and bright future!

**SOURCE: THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE, JUNE 27, 2022.**

# Waziristan in shock over quadruple murder

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**O**N June 19, four active members of Youth of Waziristan, a local welfare organization, were gunned down in Mir Ali, North Waziristan tribal district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P). They were coming back from a dinner arranged by a common friend to celebrate his recent engagement.

The cold-blooded murder of four youngsters naturally stirred an outpouring of grief and anger. The tragedy sparked a feverish social media debate after which Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Chief Minister Mahmood Khan condemned the attack and promised that those responsible would be arrested soon.

Interestingly one group of local militants Ittehad Mujahideenul Ansar claimed responsibility for the sickening assault on social media and said that some people were involved in promoting 'secularism' in the area which is not acceptable.

The group claimed that two people were their target but two others were killed because they were all travelling in one car. TTP on the other hand denied its hand in the attack.

District Police Officer (DPO) Farhan Khan told The Express Tribune that these four youngsters wanted lasting peace in the district. He said that investigation was underway.

Local residents, however, don't believe that local police has the capacity to investigate the target killing incidents and reach the real culprits behind it.

Youth of Waziristan is an apolitical organization with a single point agenda – to promote peace in the region.

“These four were close friends and they were quick to reach the victims of any tragedy in Waziristan. They had their own separate political ideologies but under the banner of this organization all of them were united in this cause,” said a local social activist Irfan, adding that all of them were from four different villages and different backgrounds but still had perfect understanding.

“This was not acceptable to some elements so they were targeted and killed,” he said.

Their close friend Arif Khan said that all of these slain friends were highly educated and they naturally wanted a peaceful Waziristan where the lives and properties of everyone were protected.

“Sunid Ahmad Dawar was a resident of well-known Epi village. He left behind two daughters and a widow. He was a student of BS Physics at Lahore University and was very active socially. He always struggled for the rights of Pashtun and Baloch and especially tribal students,” he observed, adding that he was an active and ardent member of Youth of Waziristan and National Republican Movement.

“Amad Khan Dawar was a resident of Harmaz village and he got married just two months ago. He was 22. His mother is still unconscious. He worked at Rescue 1122 after getting a diploma in technical medicine,” he said. “For his mother it is difficult to believe that his son is no more. Just two months ago her house was buzzing with excitement and life as they were celebrating his marriage and all of a sudden her son is gone,” he added.

Waqar Khan was a resident of Harmaz and he left behind a widow and a child. He was the organisation's general secretary and a schoolteacher by profession. He held a master's degree. Waqar was an active member of Awami National Party (ANP) too.

Deceased Asadullah Dawar, 27, was a resident of Baro Khel. He left behind three girls and one widow.

“He was politically active from an early age and an engineer by profession. He contested the general elections. During his student life he was the amir of the Jamat-e-Islami's student wing in Abbotabad and Bannu. He was also a founding member of the Youth of Waziristan. Just a few months ago he got a job in K-P Health Department for which he was more than happy,” said Javed Khan, a JI leader in Waziristan.

**SOURCE: EXPRESS TRIBUNE, JUNE 27, 2022.**

## State apathy

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Federal Minister for Human Rights Riaz Pirzada during an exclusive interview with Dawn.

**A**N individual occupying a position of power which carries with it considerable social responsibility could not be expected to make such bizarre, irresponsible statements.

In a recent TV interview, the human rights minister, PML-N's Riaz Pirzada, made the claim that some missing persons had been "engaged" by hostile foreign elements, including the detained Indian spy, Kulbhushan Jadhav. In the same interview, he also seemingly defended security forces' heavy-handed tactics in counterterrorism operations while complaining that people had only started protesting and "raising the missing persons issue" after the state took action in the aftermath of terrorism incidents in Quetta.

Instead of using his office as a bulwark against inhumane practices, the minister seemed more keen that other agencies and ministries deal with outstanding human rights issues, ignoring the fact that elements within the security apparatus are the primary cause of problems like enforced disappearances.

It is a wonder why Mr Pirzada holds the human rights portfolio when his apathy on pressing concerns is so obvious. His callous remarks on missing persons are the latest example of the state victim-blaming rather than giving families of missing persons concrete answers about their whereabouts.

While it may be true that some individuals may have joined forces with inimical powers, it is up to the state to provide facts and information when it is aware of such cases rather than obfuscate an already contentious issue with what look like half-baked accusations. It is worth asking why such information isn't shared: is it simply because the actual numbers would weaken the state's position on the matter? The people have a right to know.

During the interview, the minister also kept insisting that his ministry was powerless and that there was nothing it could do to address major human rights concerns other than act as a post office between citizens and the state. We cannot take two steps back every time we take a step towards resolving our issues.

The Constitution on which our state stands provides protections to all citizens. No individual or organ of the state can arbitrarily decide to act in violation of its provisions. The minister would do well to revisit his stance before further damage is done to the fight for civil rights. Pandering to powerful entities and allowing them a free hand to perpetuate a culture of impunity is a great disservice to those fighting for a better future.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 28, 2022**

# Two policemen, polio worker shot dead during inoculation drive in North Waziristan

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**U**NIDENTIFIED assailants shot and killed two police officers assigned to polio vaccination teams and a polio worker in North Waziristan's Datta Khel area, the district's polio emergency response unit said. The victims were busy with polio vaccinations when they came under attack, an official said, adding that a child was also injured during the incident after he was shot in the leg. He has been moved to the Miran Shah District Headquarter Hospital.

The attackers, on the other hand, managed to escape from the area.

The official added that police and law enforcers immediately reached the spot and began a search operation to trace the attackers.

The second Sub-National Immunisation Days (SNIDs) campaign this year began on Monday aiming to vaccinate 12.6 million children in all four provinces. Under the campaign, covering 25 very high-risk districts for poliovirus, children under the age of five will be vaccinated. Over 100,000 trained health workers have been engaged in the drive to inoculate children at their doorstep.

Eleven cases of polio have so far been reported in the country this year compared to only one in 2021. All the 11 cases were reported from North Waziristan.

The emergency committee under the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR) on the international spread of poliovirus has recently expressed concern over the outbreak of Wild Polio Virus (WPV) in the North Waziristan district. It stated that risks to the rest of Pakistan escalated with the ongoing WPV circulation in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

“The key challenges that hampered progress in southern KP include the complex security situation, specifically in North and South Waziristan, which resulted in inadequate access, missed children and reduced quality of campaigns,” it said. Besides, it noted that community resistance with refusals to vaccination, lack of female frontline workers, and weak health infrastructure and service delivery all posed challenges.

“All WPV cases reported in 2022 are zero dose for routine immunisation, zero dose or under-immunised in supplementary immunisation activities (SIAs), and are from refusal families. Another challenge in South KP is the sub-optimal Routine Immunisation (RI) and progress on strengthening RI in South KP is slow,” it added.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 28, 2022**

# Albanian recipe

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MOHAMMAD ALI BABAKHEL

**A**LTHOUGH geographically Albania is a small country, its commitment to the fight against violent extremism and radicalisation carries significance for its neighbourhood.

Albania is the 18th smallest country in Europe, sharing borders with Montenegro, Greece, North Macedonia and Kosovo. Spread over 28,748 square kilometres, it is a little larger than erstwhile Fata. It is inhabited by Albanian (82 per cent), Greek, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Serb, Roma, Egyptian and Bosnian ethnic groups.

To keep Albania and its neighbourhood free of extremism and terrorism, the country has signed and ratified all United Nations anti-terrorism conventions and protocols relating to terrorism.

In 2014, Albania adopted a National Security Strategy which outlined constitutional obligations to guarantee national security and strengthen fundamental freedoms, human rights and the rule of law. Albania focused on improving its legislative framework to criminalise all forms of violent extremism as well as the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters. Building the capacity and expertise of law enforcement agencies was marked as another priority area.

The Albanian plan was based on the promotion of the engagement of state institutions with local communities, religious representatives and other stakeholders to identify vulnerable groups that are or may be targeted by violent extremism.

To counter radicalisation, a package of social, political, legal, educational and economic programmes was recommended. Many countries fail to define violent extremism (VE). Albania sought clarity by defining it as, “the use of violence to pursue political goals”.

In the age of globalisation, encouragement of critical thinking, civic participation and promotion of tolerance is not possible without education. In the Albanian plan, the school was described as a community centre. The initiative sought to encourage partnerships between schools, families and the community. The concept had the potential to respond to the threat of violent extremism by offering counselling services through schools, which would also act as focal points in designing preventive programmes and reaching hotspots. Teachers were made important front-line workers to serve as liaisons with communities and diagnose and react to signs of radicalisation.

The strength of the Albanian plan was its bottom-up approach, through which communities would serve as focal points for formulation and implementation of policies. To this end,

communities were empowered to develop partnerships with government departments, media, the business community and CSOs.

Building community resilience is not possible without community empowerment, and that is not possible without community policing. In 2007, Albania introduced a seven-year CP strategy based on a proactive and collaborative problem-solving approach.

Reducing the impact of propaganda and discouraging recruitment by extremists through social media was another priority area. In developing societies, communication barriers often affect the implementation of plans. Thus, the engagement of bureaucracy, academia, media, social media companies, civil society and the clergy is inevitable. The Albanian plan attached great importance to communication with the public.

The Albanian plan also identified the need for the promotion of local research, as extremism cannot be tackled in an effective manner without developing knowledge of and expertise on CVE. A combination of local research and international best practices may be an effective recipe.

Since extremism does not know geographical frontiers, countering VE requires partnerships at international and regional levels. The development of such partnerships is one of the top priorities of Albanian policy.

A few developing countries have developed plans to counter extremism, but evaluation of implementation and identification of gaps has usually been found to be missing. Albania intends to periodically evaluate CVE policies and apply and share lessons learnt.

In developing societies, financial constraints mar implementation of plans. Even engagement of volunteers requires funding. States which have CVE plans often ignore funding and, consequently, have found their relevant departments burdened further with responsibilities. The Albanian plan tried to address this issue and highlighted the need for exploring funding options, including the possibility of seeking help from international donors.

Kinetic measures may be effective in defeating terrorists, but countering extremism requires more inclusive approaches, including deradicalisation and reintegration. Extremism is a cancer which infects followers of different religions, cultures and ethnicities. However, it is a curable cancer. A living state which is protective and humane can act as a protective shield between extremists and innocent citizens.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 29, 2022**

# Attack on polio team

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**T**HE threat of deadly violence never seems to diminish for health workers and police officials involved in door-to-door polio vaccination campaigns in the country. On Tuesday, two policemen and a health worker were killed when unidentified gunmen opened fire on them in North Waziristan's Datakhel tehsil. The attack took place in the Tang Kali locality near the Pak-Afghan border. This is the second such attack since January this year when a policeman escorting a vaccination team was shot dead in Kohat. The attack in North Waziristan has come on the heels of an aggressive resurgence of the wild poliovirus in the area. Since only April this year, at least 11 cases of the wild poliovirus have been reported from a cluster of high-risk union councils. These cases had surfaced after a hiatus of 15 months that had given hope that Pakistan might be on the brink of eliminating the crippling disease from its territory. However, as the attack demonstrates, Pakistan still has a long way to go before achieving polio-free status. Moreover, refusals still remain high in North Waziristan. According to reports, silent refusals by parents and fake markings on children's fingers were one of the key reasons for the abnormally high number of cases.

Though the investigation is still ongoing, the latest attack on the polio team reflects the high mistrust of official authorities in this area. The issue of refusals is a long-standing one, and WHO and Unicef on many occasions have asked the Pakistani authorities to address the problem of missing and invisible children who remain outside the umbrella of immunisation campaigns. On the other hand, as the wild poliovirus remains endemic only in the Pak-Afghan region, cross-border coordination for its elimination is the need of the hour. Recent events have made it clear that aggressive campaigning for the administration of the polio vaccine is no longer enough, and that a wide-ranging, sensitive and strategic effort is required to address the public's suspicions regarding the government's anti-polio efforts.

**SOURCE: DAWN, JUNE 30, 2022**