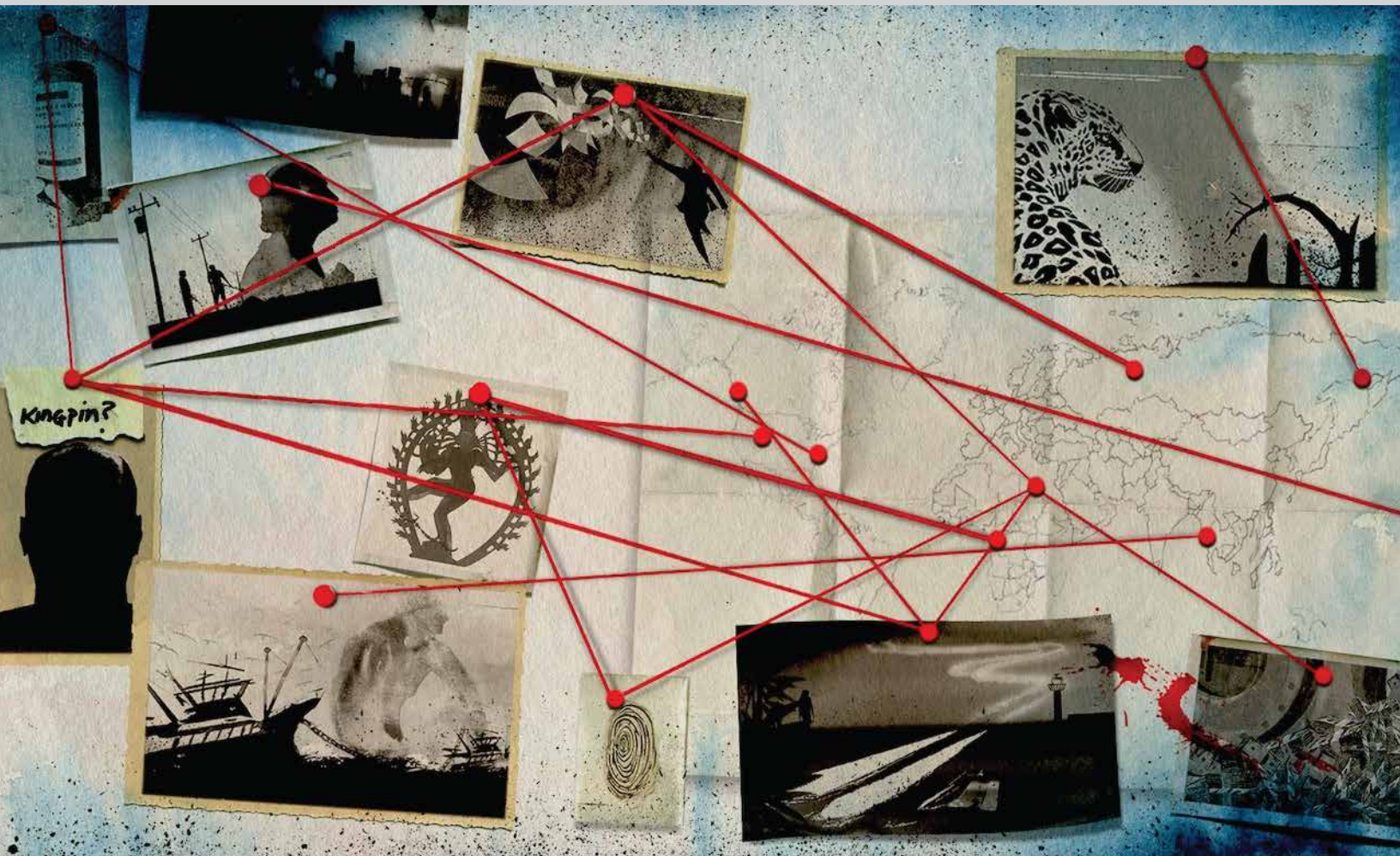


Organized Crime in Pakistan

‘A Jinn out of the Bottle’



ABOUT THE CENTRE FOR GOVERNANCE RESEARCH (CGR)

CGR is a forum for studies and debate on strategic and tactical issues related with good governance and the rule of law. It is a non-governmental civil society advocacy Centre dedicated to reforms in the justice and governance sectors.

As an independent think tank, CGR sets its own agenda, publishing and disseminating its findings regularly for national and global audience. Using an interdisciplinary approach, CGR brings together rule of law, justice and governance experts, researchers and internationally renowned professionals to animate its debate and research activities.

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CGR focuses on advocacy, research and studies in the following areas:

- Governance and Rule of Law
- Public Policy
- Policing and Justice Sectors
- Serious and Organized Crimes
- Counterterrorism and Counter Extremism (CT and CE)

Meanwhile, the National Initiative against Organized Crime (NIOC) continues as a flagship project from the platform of the Centre for Governance Research (CGR).

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Issue Paper

Organized Crime in Pakistan

'A Jinn out of the Bottle'

Introduction

Reading tales of the past for leisure one finds that in the subcontinent, the most dreaded were the journey undertaken individually or in caravans due to fear of attack by the gang of dacoits. Yet another agony was the abduction of girls for prostitution and young boys for beggary. Pakistan also inherited the same in its infantile days. However, as the lust for money and power crept in, the corruption started to strengthen its roots. The street boys turned into bands of criminals, the Law Enforcement Agencies protected them as their palms were greased and the worst came when the people in power-politicians sold their souls.

In the 70s there were few dacoits in Sindh. By 80s, the situation became alarming to the extent that an army action had to be taken against them. Famous among them was Nazroo Narejo whom people feared carried a head money of Rs. twenty million. He was killed in a police encounter the year 2015. (Ibrahim, 2015)

Till the late 70s, the overall moral standards were comparatively better. A corrupt official was seen with contempt and people avoided befriending them. However, gradually the culture of acceptance of bribery developed. Early 80s was the beginning of the tide. Soviet invasion in Afghanistan gave an opportunity to Gen Zia Ul Haq to legitimize his rule by agreeing to side with the US.

Though his regime perpetuated, with Soviet -

Afghan War came the Kalashnikov and heroin culture- the seeds of bigotry and radicalization were sown in Pakistan, both political parties and stakeholders-whoever wielded influence, scratched each other's back to get into the power and then came the plethora of organized crimes.

Scope and aim

Organized criminal mafia knows that through legitimate means they cannot gain enormous wealth, status, and authority easily. Hence, Organized Crime on ground has undergone fundamental changes visually and numerically in recent years. Numerous intricate settings have become possible due to changes in sociocultural standards and patterns. Overall society has failed to keep up with the varying conduct of individuals and groups. This issue paper study discusses causes, types, prevailing malice, and suggests a way forward.

Causes of the Spread of Organized Crime

Transnational links have been developed by organized crime offenders because of Globalization, Growth, and Mechanization. Today's technologies have enabled criminals to commit crimes more sophisticatedly and more complexly than ever before.

From individuals taking the law into their own hands to groups or factions of society organizing crime, there are many reasons behind these events in Pakistan:

i. Porous Borders

Pakistan has 2430 km border with Afghanistan, 523 km with China, 909 km with Iran, 2912 km with India and 1046 km coastal belt

(Geography, 2009).. Afghanistan's border largely consists of tribal belt, a difficult terrain to guard, thus making an easy route for arms trafficking. Iran is the main route for human smuggling. In addition, 70% of Afghan opiates are also transported via Iran and Pakistan each year. From other borders such as China and India, the element of smuggling cannot be ruled out, but it mostly remains limited to the general trade items of daily use.

ii. Inefficient criminal justice system

Pakistan justice system ranks 124 out of 139 countries in adherence of rule of law (PID, 2022). The legal process is tedious and tiring. A simple robbery case lingers for years. To pursue an organized crime, it requires continuous and vigorous follow up. On the other hand, winning over the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), the prosecution, the lawyer, and many times a judge, also encourages the organized crimes. Since Mr. Iftikhar Chaudhry's (Chief Justice of Pakistan 2005 – 2007; 2009-2013) times, the apex court had started taking Suo moto notices, particularly on the performance of the Executive, overhauling its own system never remained a priority.

iii. Support to Criminals by Police and Intelligentsia

The Police have been infamous since the times immemorial. Even its most honest officers and ranks are seen with suspicion. The fact remains that it does harbor the crimes for petty worldly gains. A common saying, "Crime cannot breed until the SHO connives" is true to a large extent. The intelligence agencies often come for the rescue of criminals on the pretext that they (criminals) act as their informers in the field.

iv. Ineffective Application of Laws

Despite the existence of laws for every crime, their implementation is inefficient and is often motivated by expediency. Thus, mafia remain confident that they will be protected by the system whenever they are arrested. Meanwhile, unjust laws and laws that violate international human rights standards, such as the Haddood and Sharia laws enacted under Gen Zia, undermine the paradigm of justice. While legislation to ban forced conversions of vulnerable minorities was rejected by the Senate Standing Committee on Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony (2021) as well as by the Council of Islamic Ideology (2021).

v. Unstable Political System and Poor Governance

The Establishment's interference in the political and other domain started since the era of Ayub Khan who after removing the civilian government occupied the President's seat in 1958. Successive military takeovers didn't let the country adopt a comprehensive policy and strategy to combat organized crime. Since the dichotomy of command existed, the results manifested in poor governance indirectly extending benefit to the organized crimes.

vi. Entry of Criminals in the Ranks of Political Parties

MQM was perhaps the first political party which covertly supported its criminals or converted their youth into felons to silence the opponents. These offenders remained scot free due to political backing. In only one case, the murderer received capital punishment, that is, the assassination of Mr. Shahid Hamid, MD KESC, and that too because his heirs remained resilient despite all the threats. Even in this case, the one who accomplished the assassination

plan (Saulat Mirza) was executed (Shah, 2015). The perpetrators remained untouched. In fact, their leadership remained in most of the governments and were never brought to justice. PPP also did not lag behind in this field and its implicit links supporting Aman Committee and Uzair Baloch testify their involvement (Ali, 2020). The other parties though did not support the criminals openly, they did form militant wings whose members did not hesitate to carry out illegal activities, when required.

vii. Decline in the Overall Morality Standard

Despite a mushroom growth of Islamic seminaries and people turning to join the 'religious' parties like Pakistan Awami Tehreek, Tehreek e Labbaik, Sunni Tehreek and Jamiat Ulema e Islam (F) and these parties also bagging considerable votes in the elections, the overall morality standard went down. Few of these are listed below:

- a. Desire for money to raise the standard or to live beyond the means
- b. Respect for known corrupt officials.
- c. Disregarding merit
- d. Intellectual dishonesty.
- e. Lack of respect for humans.

The Types of Organized Crimes.

i. According to a definition, "organized crime is a continuing criminal enterprise that rationally works to profit from illicit activities that are often in great public demand. Its continuing existence is maintained through corruption of public officials and the use of intimidation, threats, or force to protect its operations" (fromiti, 2018)

- ii. Organized crime activity varies across countries, regions, crime-types, and nature of its organization. Organized criminal groups are those with few or group of more persons, some level of structure and that exist for a period with the objective of committing at least one serious crime. Organized Criminal Groups also act in concert with the overall purpose of obtaining a financial or other material benefit. Organized groups very often find their primary profit-making centers in the provision of illicit goods and services in high public demand (fromiti, 2018)
- iii. In the ranking of Global Organized Crime Index (GOCI) 2021 Published by Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (GI- TOC), Pakistan does not hold a good position. It ranks 29 out of 193 UN member states, 10th out of 46 Asian countries and 2nd out of 8 Southern Asian countries. On the other side, on the resilience scale (the country's ability to withstand and disrupt organized criminal activities) its ranking is 133rd out of 193 countries, 29th out of 46 Asian countries and 5th out of 8 Southern Asian countries. In 'Criminality Market', its score is 6.30, whereas in 'Criminal Actors' its score is 6.25 out of total score of 10. On the contrary, its 'Resilience Score' is only 4.0. (Global Initiative, 2021)
- iv. 'The Godfather' by Mario Puzo probably introduced for the first time the extent of organized crimes and how dreadfully a Mafia operates. But Pakistanis generally remained ignorant having not seen or encountered such character. However, a linguistic political party morphing into an

extortionist mafia cleared the doubts.

As the Organized crimes varies across the countries, Pakistan is no exception to it:

a. Extortions

In late 80s Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) emerged on the screen of Southern Sindh as proponent of Urdu Speaking immigrants who had migrated from India after the partition in 1947. In 1990, after a landslide victory in the elections, they held established in urban areas of Sindh, especially in Karachi and Hyderabad but their leaders started to tread on the wrong path. Their own community, that is, the Urdu Speaking were the first victims. Anybody who disagreed, was eliminated. They introduced new technique of killing. The victim would be packed into a sack, its opening tied from outside and then multiple fires were shot at him. Thereafter the bori bund lash (the dead body in the sack) would be thrown on some garbage heap.

Almost one fourth of the city (ranked 3rd largest city in the world in population- (megambd, 2019) was forced to pay extortion money. Though the extortion money was collected in the name of eidi, protection, donation for the party or for some noble cause, people knew they had to pay. As the city had linguistic pockets, the Pathans, the Baloch and the Sindhis soon adopted the same model to extort the money.

Some religious parties such as Sunni Tehreek also towed the line. The MQM used to forcibly take away skins of sacrificial animal on Eid Ul Adha, hurting the sentiments of the Muslims performing the religious rites. The political strength of MQM has since been weakened considerably and its criminal elements dealt


strongly by the state, as of today, MQM workers dare not terrorize anybody as they did for almost a decade. Unfortunately, their leaders were never prosecuted under law for criminal acts.

The other extortionist organization which prevailed in the city was Aman Committee. It made Lyari, a Baloch and Kachi Memon community dominated area, a 'no go' place even for the police and Rangers. Beside extortions, the group was also involved in the drug trafficking and kidnapping for ransom. Following a gang war between the two rival groups, and the police and Rangers' action, the activities of the Aman Committee have also waned.

Aman Committee and the MQM both had patronage of their political governments in Sindh. If MQM had explicit support of President Gen Musharraf, the Aman Committee had implicit patronage of Pakistan People's Party.

In the recent past (Nov 2022), the kidnapping for ransom-mostly honey trapped has again been reported by the gangs of criminals operating in the Katcha area of Sindh. As per reports appeared in the national newspapers, the gang consisting of 100 dacoits killed a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Two Station House Officers (SHOs) and two constables, when they attacked their camp established at Ubauro Katcha area to deal with the kidnappers (DSP Killed, 2022).

In KP, with the surge of Tehreek e Taliban activities, the calls for extortion money have also been reported. Since the start of August 2022, the Swat police have registered four cases of extortion, naming the TTP as suspects in their reports. In one such case, the Swat official said, militants were paid Rs25 million



Give me money, or I'll...



(\$103,000) as protection money by a provincial lawmaker (Rise in Extortion - Taliban, 2022).

b. Corruption in Government Department

In the State Embedded Actors, Pakistan score is 7.0. Corruption at individual level was known and accepted being inevitable. Barring Police or Customs departments, the remaining sectors were generally considered adequate. However, at present there is hardly any department which can be termed entirely free from corruption as a department or in groups.

Among the provinces, Sindh ranks top though other provinces are also not lagging: The Excise and Tax Department, Karachi Water Board and Sewerage Board (KW&SB), Sindh Building and Control Authority (SBCA) and KMC are leading in corruption as organizations but other department such as Health and Education have also earned the reputation where a file does not move without money.

Apparently, the rules are followed, but the connivance of the official in awarding a contract is a common practice. After doling out the share of officials including Accounts offices,

little is left with the contractor to provide a quality product. Due to involvement of SBCA, high rise buildings as well as the houses are being constructed in Karachi disregarding the bye laws.

In Dec 2021, a 17 storey building Nasla Tower was demolished on the orders of Supreme Court (Nasla Tower, 2021). The builder had encroached a considerable piece of land where a drain was also passing and submitted the plan to SBCA for approval. After having their share in the illegality, the SBCA officials approved the plan. The building was constructed and occupied by the residents. The demolition caused loss of hard earned money to the owners of the apartment but no action has been taken against the officials. The fact remains, despite this harsh action, the illegal constructions are going on unabated with no check in sight.

Nasla Tower after Completion



Nasla Towers Being Demolished



c. Drug Trafficking

According to GOCI, in the Criminal Market, Pakistan's scoring in the heroin trade is 8.5, cocaine trade is 3.0, cannabis trade 7.0 and synthetic drug trade 6.5.

Pakistan Anti- Narcotics Policy 2019 comprehensively covers the drugs supply, its demand and cooperation with the international agencies. However, its application on the ground is ineffective. According to UNODC survey report 'Drug Use in Pakistan 2013', out of 6.7 million past-year users of any illicit substance, 4.25 million were considered to be drug dependent and required structured treatment for their drug use disorder.

The survey observed use of both plant-based drugs and medical prescription drugs, cannabis, prescription opioids (painkillers), tranquilizers and sedatives, and opiates (heroin and opium). Although Pakistan is a country with a large population of youth, drug use was more common among those between the ages of 25 to 39 than 15 to 24. Survey also detected a very high prevalence of HIV risk behaviors among

people who inject drugs (UNODC, 2013)

As Pakistan borders with Afghanistan which has remained one of the largest heroin producing country in the world, the effects transmitted in Pakistan as well. The ANF, Local Police, FC, Customs and Coast Guards remained ineffective. Since the application of law is weak, if the offenders are caught, they are out of jail for want of evidence, weak prosecution or due to apathy of the courts.

The worst victims of drug abuse are college and university students. The synthetic drug methamphetamine commonly known as 'Ice' is popular among the high class being expensive. The poor addicts use heroin and can be found lying on streets in miserable condition. Apparently, the claims of LEAs-ANF in combating crime effectively have no substantial proof as they failed to stop infiltration of Acetic Anhydride from western borders and coastal lines.

As a result of the 1999 Kingpin Act, Imam Bheel, a businessman from Balochistan, was designated an international narcotics "kingpin" in 2009, ranking him among drug lords from Venezuela, Colombia, and Mexico. We were unaware that our country was home to a suspected major player in an opiate industry worth \$68 billion that has killed far more people than al-Qaeda.

Haji Juma Khan, an Afghan national, considered as heroin biggest exporter was facilitated in his drug trafficking activities by Imam Bheel. When Juma Khan was arrested in Jakarta on the charges of funneling drug money to Taliban by US Drug Enforcement Administration, Bheel seized the opportunity to expand his trafficking business. ("Heroin Kingpin," 2012).

Similarly Ayub Afridi, a drug baron from Landi Kotal (tribal belt), famous for his palatial house 'Ayub Afridi Kalay', started his career as a bus driver but soon made huge fortune in the drug trafficking. He was one of the most wanted men on the US extradition list. He was accused of laundering tens of millions of dollars in illegal profits and smuggling 50 tons of hashish to US from Pakistan. He surrendered to US authorities voluntarily. He was also elected to Pakistan National Assembly in 1990 (Archives, 1995).



Poppy Cultivation in Afghansitan

d. Arms Trafficking

In COGI Pakistan's criminal marketing scoring in Arm Trafficking is 8.0. Darra Adam Khel in the tribal belt lying between Peshawar and Kohat was once considered to be largest private industry of the small arms. The Soviet Afghan war introduced the Kalashnikov and its trafficking into Pakistan increased. The people of tribal belt (ex FATA) take pride in carrying the weapons. The arms trafficking across the borders and from the tribal belt to the Urban areas has increased the street crime manifold.

The weapons from Darra Adam Khel are transported to cities in trucks carrying vegetables. Groups like Gul Bahar (Akhoral region), Shabbir (Shariff Khel region), Nawaz (Mattani vicinity) and Socha Baz (Tor Chhaper area) are manufacturing Repeater 12 Bore. And Nawaz (Zor Kally region), Islam (Sheraki region) and Noor Khan(Zakhel Hassan Khel FR Peshawar) are manufacturing SMGs as well as smuggling them.

A single pistol carries a transportation fee of Rs. 3,000 – 4,000, while it is 5,000 to 7,000 for a rifle (Smuggling of Arms, 2021) . As a rough estimate, there are about 400 incidents of snatching, theft and dacoity taking place daily in Karachi only. The mafia involved in extortion and drug trafficking also take full advantage of easily available weapons. Arms trafficking has also facilitated the insurgents operating in Balochistan and KP on the pretext of fight for rights, the groups are involved in criminal activities as well.

e. Human Trafficking and Smuggling

A few decades back, children aged 8 – 12 years

were being trafficked to the Middle East to be used for camel races. The practice has been stopped due to international ban on such a camel race.

The Human smuggling to China is continuing: The girls are lured into marriage contracts, parents paid a trivial payment and once they reach China, they come to know that they have been trafficked for bonded labor or for prostitution (AP, 2019). Similarly, many girls were trafficked to Middle East for employment as domestic maid but ended up in prostitution.

Another dimension is human smuggling to Europe. The youth desire to reach Europe for better living pay hefty amount to the smugglers who use sea route to transport them to Greece and Turkey and from there onward they move to Europe. In human trafficking, a per GOCI, Pakistan scoring is 8.0 whereas in human smuggling it is 7.0

f. Bonded Labor

The carpet weaving industry, agriculture and brick kiln industry has been using the bonded labor for years, the brick kiln being the most infamous. The modus operandi is cruel. A poor man gets the loan from the kiln owner. And to pay back the loan, his family works at the kiln. The loan could never be paid back as its interest keep piling up and the labors and his family keep working at the kiln almost as a slave on very meagre wages. The debt does not end even with the death of the worker. His or her son or daughter continues to remain in debt. Over 3 million people are estimated to be living in bonded labor in Pakistan (Anwaar, 2021).



A Victim of Bonded Labor

Iqbal Masih started to work at the age of five when his mother needed money for a critical operation. He soon escaped from the hands of his cruel masters and joined Bonded Labour Liberation Front and being its leading voice for abolishment of bonded labor and soon became a symbol of hope and strength of millions. For advocating a rightful cause, he was shot dead at the tender age of 12th on 16 April 1995 at Muridke near Lahore while he was cycling with his friends (Hero's Story | Thenews.Com.Pk, 2022).



Iqbal Masih joins a protest against bonded labor in Pakistan

g. Cybercrime

Any crime done with the help of computer and a network is known as Cybercrime. As almost everybody is using internet now so the cybercrime has also increased manifold. The online fraud -withdrawal of money from one bank account, hacking or fake profiles are not the only fears. The secret audio and video recording of the victim and then blackmailing either for financial gains or to get political benefit is also on the rise. FIA is the prime agency dealing with the cybercrime. In the year 2021, FIA received 102,356 complaints, out of these 15,932 passed the criteria of initiating enquiry and ultimately 1202 converted into registration of case and a total of 1300 suspected arrested by FIA (Khilji, 2022).

h. Wildlife Hunting and Trade

The illegal hunting of wildlife such as Ibex, Markhor and Blue Sheep had brought these animals near to extinction. However, the government's decision to increase the trophy license fee very high and giving a major share to the locals has been seen as positive effect in raising the number of the endangered animals. However, the smuggling of rare species of birds is still going on being a profitable business. The animals are sold on the internet, sometime getting the attention of the officials concerned and the offenders are apprehended and fined. The Wildlife Department Rawalpindi Division arrested 103 persons for the illegal hunting of birds and animals and imposed a fine on as many as 653 hunters in 2021 (Illegal Hunting, 2022).



A Man Hunting Houbara Bustard

i. Money Laundering

Pakistan being on number 133 in Resilience ranking, in anti-money laundering, its score is 4.0. Had it not been the sword of FATF hanging on the government to keep Pakistan on Grey list, the money laundering would have never ceased. The rich and the powerful kept on sending their black money easily abroad and if caught, the laws protected them. Recently, made amendments in the NAB laws making it further lenient for the offender, is likely to give impetus to money laundering. The plunderers of public money find safe spaces in the Western World. Ironically, for their own citizens, the laws about money laundering are very strict.

In Oct 2018, the Interpol arrested the Omni Group CFO Aslam Masood, in connection to a largest money laundering case in the history of Pakistan involving Rs.35 billion when he was boarding a flight from London to Jeddah. He was the mastermind behind money laundering for high profile and powerful politicians of the country (Interpol Arrests the Mastermind, 2018).

Recommendations

i. Political Stability and Continuity

There is a dire need for political stability and continuity of the governance system. Only a truly elected body can implement the existing laws. For this all the stakeholders are required to exhibit professionalism, maturity, sincerity, and capacity to overcome the difference among themselves. This is the right way to increase the Resilience factor to combat the Organized Crime.

ii. Overhauling of Criminal Justice System

The Judicial system and Detention Resilience score is only 3.0. The existing criminal justice system has failed to deliver, giving rise to organized crimes. There is a need to make the legal system transparent and expedient. Despite poor performance, the components of the Criminal justice system are never made answerable which makes them indifferent to the gravity of the situation. The offshoot of the legal system is Police and prosecution department. If the Justice system is set right, the effects will trigger down further to other departments.

iii. Dialogue and engagement are the only options.

KP and Balochistan have been infiltrated by criminals amid their insurgencies. Prudence demands that the National Internal Security Policy be implemented in letter and spirit while continuing to take stern intelligence-based actions against organized criminals and the mafia. Using a 'community policing' approach, which involves dialogue, engagement, and partnership with citizens, may be a priority to segregate youths and reintegrate redeemed

activists.

iv. Implementation of National policies

Numerous National policies like the National Action Plan, National Internal Security Policy and National Security Policy need to be implemented in letter and spirit. Its enforcement did make a difference, but political expediency and other priorities marred its importance. It is vital that LEAs capacity be built, funds-logistics be provided, and international best practices be part of national strategy. Besides, 'after action review' of every major incident be done for lessons learnt and better response in future.

v. Accountability of LEAs

Police, FIA, FC, PCG and ANF are primarily responsible for combating organized crimes. They should present a half-yearly progress report in the parliament and justify the expenditure being incurred on them for maintaining the Forces.

vi. Coordination with Other Countries

As the black money is parked in other countries, the need is to make agreements with the other countries, especially with UAE and western world to return the perpetrators with the money back to Pakistan; also taking action against known money launderers

Conclusion

Organized crimes are offshoot of apathy shown by the successive government, judiciary, and LEAs towards the rising crimes. If there are some external causes beyond control, the internal but easily manageable factors are ignored due to inefficiency, corruption, and lack of seriousness by all the stakeholders concerned.

The mafia involved in the organized crimes is making good money, have no fear of being caught or punished but the sufferers is a common man who is facing the brunt due to poor economy and lawlessness. It is time for the policy planners and those who are to implement it to understand the gravity of the situation and take concrete measures to implement the government's writ and set the house in order.

'It is about time law enforcement got as organized as organized crime' (Rudy Giuliani)

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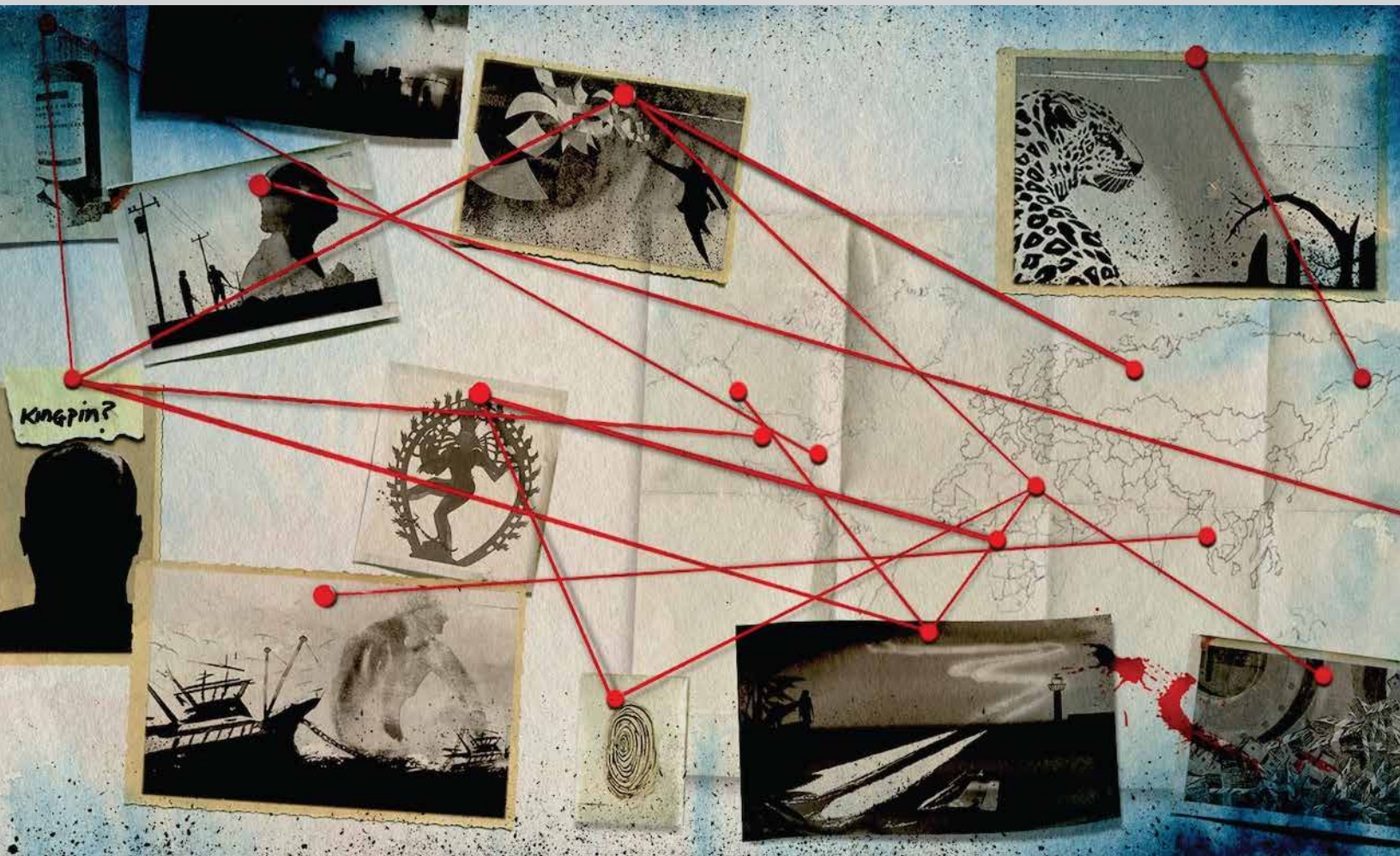
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