

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF ACTIVE MILITANT GROUPS IN 2022

# BRIEF PROFILES OF TERRORIST ORGANISATIONS IN PAKISTAN

*THIS REPORT PROVIDES A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF DIFFERENT TERRORIST AND INSURGENT GROUPS ACTIVE IN PAKISTAN IN 2022. INCLUDING THE GROUPS' ORIGIN, TARGETS, MODUS OPERANDI, MEDIA CELLS, LEADERSHIP, IDEOLOGY, FUNDING, AND SAFE HAVENS.*



**CENTRE for GOVERNANCE RESEARCH**  
PAKISTAN

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## Introduction

1. The purpose of these Organizational Profiles is to compile essential information on terrorist organizations operating in Pakistan during the years 2022 and 2023. The profiles serve as a knowledge base for reference and analysis.
2. To comprehend the diverse forms of terrorism in Pakistan, it is appropriate to broadly classify them into two categories: MITNOR (Militancy In The Name Of Religion) and SNM (Sub Nationalist Militancy). Nearly all of the primary terrorist groups operating in Pakistan fall under these two categories.
3. As per NACTA, a specific number of organizations have been designated as proscribed. However, this paper discusses the ten most active terrorist organizations (four MITNOR and six SNMGs) that were active during 2022/23.
4. It is worth noting that these profiles will be periodically updated to reflect the latest terrorist activities of these groups in Pakistan.

## Militancy Trends in 2022

A significant increase of 27% in terrorist attacks has been observed in Pakistan in the year 2022 as stated in the annual security report of Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS). Due to various underlying factors that contributed to the rise of terrorism, Pakistan witnessed the revival of several previously inactive militant organizations, as well as the emergence of new ones. One of the most significant contributing factors to this trend was the ideological affinity shared among different jihadist militant groups, which facilitated their merger with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Subsequently, TTP carried out a majority of the attacks in Pakistan. In contrast, the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP) also formed new alliances and perpetrated a considerable number of attacks. Moreover, Ethno-nationalist subgroups capitalized on the security dynamics in the aftermath of the TTP revival and the US troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan. It is safe to say that 2022 provided a conducive environment for the resurgence of a majority of the terrorist and insurgent groups in light of the political and economic turmoil that the country has endured.

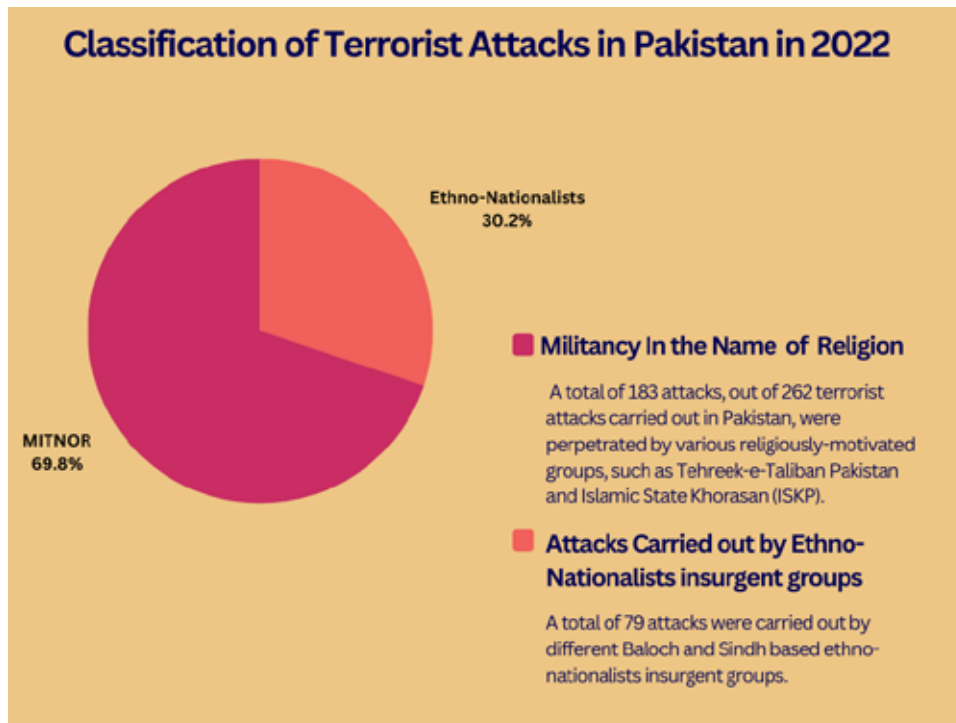


Figure 1. (Classification of terrorist attacks in Pakistan in 2022)

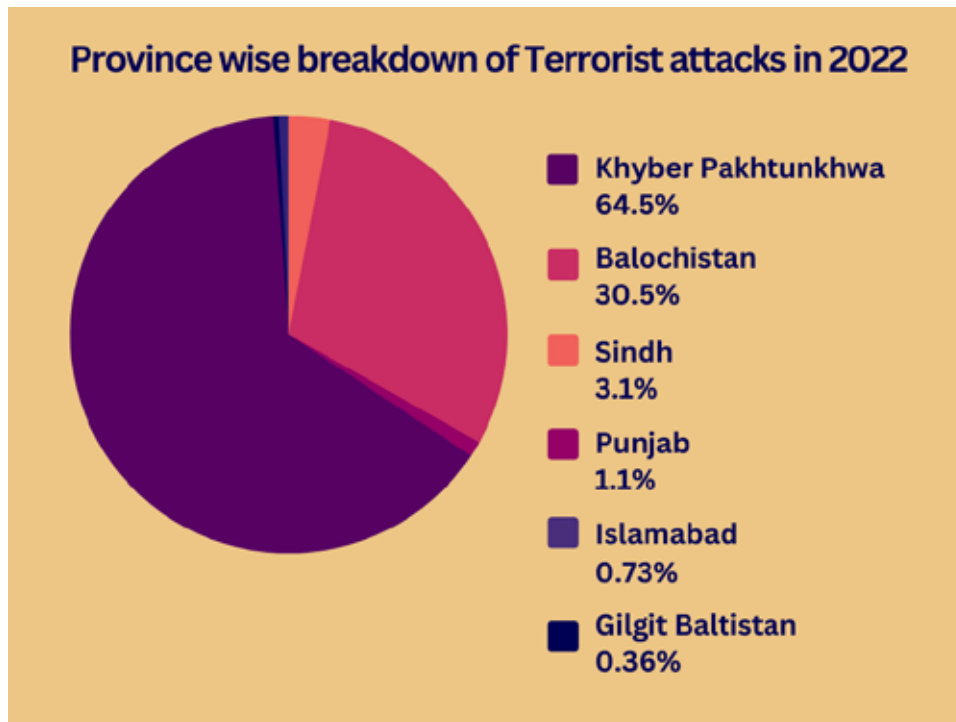


Figure 2. (Province wise breakdown of terrorist attacks in 2022)

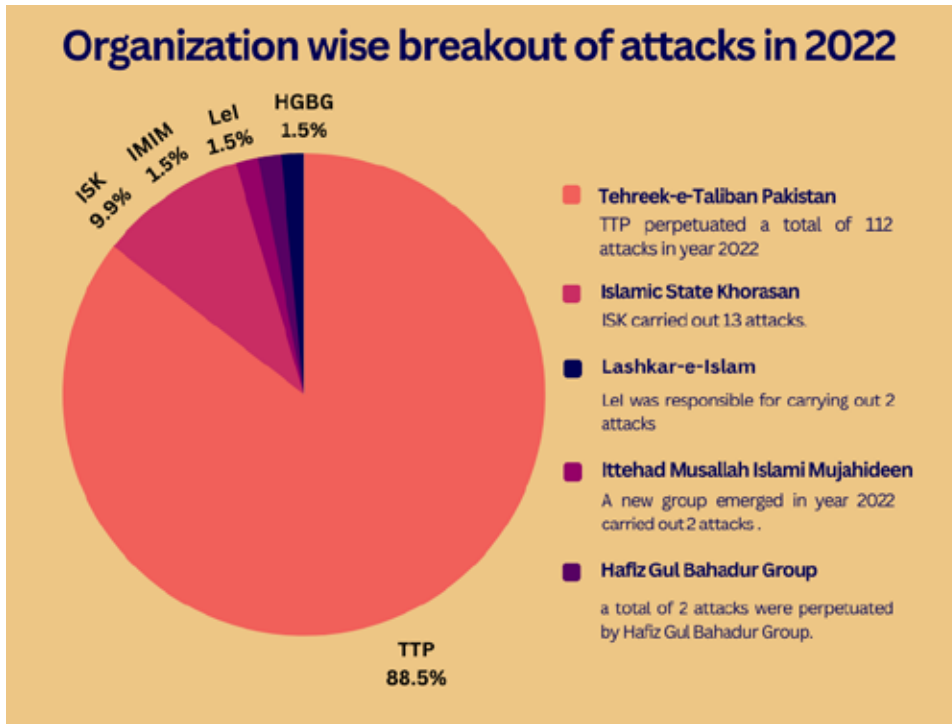


Figure 3. (Organization wise breakout of terrorist attacks in 2022)

# 1. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

## Origin

Tehreek-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was formed in the year 2007, as a result of amalgamation of approximately 40 religiously motivated, tribal militant groups, (a fall out of the Afghan jihad), belonging to the seven agencies of the ex-FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas, which bordered Afghanistan) and some districts of KP province. The organization, thus, is almost entirely Pashtun in composition.<sup>1</sup> TTP was banned by Pakistan government in August 2008.<sup>2</sup>

## Ideology

The proclaimed ideology of TTP is to fight for implementation of the Islamic system of sharia in Pakistan. According to the terrorist outfit, Pakistan's constitution is un-Islamic, and as such, fighting against the state is justified in their pursuit of establishing their interpretation of sharia. In their recent negotiations with the government of Pakistan in 2022, the TTP is reported to have put across three demands to have a truce. First, the earlier semi-autonomous status of what was called the Federally Administered Areas (FATA) be restored. It may be pertinent to mention that FATA was merged with the province of KP in May 2018. The second demand is that the military move out of the former FATA areas. Three, some of their members imprisoned for their involvement in cases of terrorism be released. While there are reports of some members of TTP involved in minor offences being released, but on the other two demands, the Pakistan government rejected these outrightly. According to some, the present leadership of TTP is inspired by and are dependent on the AlQaeda AQ, both in terms of ideological orientation and funding.<sup>3</sup> TTP, however, remains a Pakistan centric terrorist organization. In addition to this, the group also stated its operational interests are only to gain legitimacy in the tribal areas of Pakistan.<sup>4</sup> TTP sees Afghan Taliban as its role model in its war against the State of Pakistan.<sup>5</sup>

## Leadership 2007 till 2022

### ■ 1. Baitullah Mehsud (2007-2009)

Baitullah Mehsud was the first Ameer of TTP. It is alleged that he orchestrated the assassination of Pakistan's former Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto in 2007. In 2009, Mehsud was killed when a drone strike targeted his vehicle with four missiles in the north-western region of South Waziristan. <sup>6</sup> To avenge his death, TTP carried out a suicide attack on a US-Afghan base, near Pakistan Afghanistan border, resulting

1 Hassan Abbas, "A profile of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan," Military Academy West Point NY Combating Terrorism Center, 2008.

2 "Proscribed Organisations," NACTA.

3 Giustozzi, Antonio, "The Resurgence of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan," RUSI, August 2021.

4 Amira Jadoon, Abdul Syed, "The Pakistani Taliban Is Reinventing Itself," South Asian Voices. November 15, 2021.

5 Abdul Sayed, "The Evolution and Future of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 2021.

6 "Hakimullah Mehsud killed by drone, Pakistan Taliban say," BBC, November 2013

in the loss of seven lives.<sup>7</sup> During two years of his leadership, TTP became a force to be reckoned with.

#### ■ 2. Hakimullah Mehsud (2009-2013)

Hakimullah Mehsud succeeded Baitullah Mehsud as the second Emir of TTP in 2009. He rose to prominence in 2007 for masterminding the capture of 300 Pakistan army soldiers.<sup>8</sup> Under his leadership, TTP formed alliances with other transnational militant organizations and gained significant strength. It was during his leadership that the military operation was started in Swat and some areas of FATA, in 2009, forcing TTP ranks to shift to Afghanistan in large numbers. He was killed by a US drone attack on November 1, 2013.<sup>9</sup>

#### ■ 3. Maulana Fazlullah (2013-2018)

Maulana Fazlullah, commonly known as 'Radio Mullah',<sup>10</sup> (for radicalizing people of his native Swat, through a radio program), assumed charge as the third Emir TTP in 2013, following the death of his predecessor. Fazlullah was Recognized for his passionate oratory, his sermons were characterized by incendiary rhetoric aimed at the United States, Pakistan's leadership, polio vaccination, and women's education.<sup>11</sup> Fazlullah was responsible for a variety of attacks, most notably, the attack on Malala Yousafzai in 2012, and the Army Public School attack of 2014. He played an important role in radicalizing his native district Swat and planned the literal takeover of the district by the TTP in 2007-08. The TTP was thrown out of the district only after a military operation restored the writ of the civilian government in 2009/10. As the first non-tribal leader of TTP, his leadership was resented by some circles within the TTP, who wanted a Mehsud to become the Ameer. Also, during his tenure, TTP became weak due to some factions leaving it. Most of the TTP leadership shifted its headquarters to Afghanistan during his leadership. He was killed in a US drone attack in Kunar province, Afghanistan in June 2018.<sup>12</sup>

#### ■ 4. Noor Wali Mehsud (2018 to date)

After the killing of Mullah Fazlullah, TTP appointed Noor Wali Mehsud as its fourth Emir in 2018. Thus, the Mehsud tribe took over the leadership of TTP, once again. Wali, a Madrassah teacher, famously known as the nom de guerre of Ghar Starga (Hill's Eye)<sup>13</sup> had conducted numerous operations since 2004. He was designated as a global terrorist by the UN in 2020. He has also authored a book on Mehsud tribe titled "Mehsud Revolution, South Waziristan. From British Raj to American Imperialism". He has pledged allegiance to Afghan Taliban and has expressed his resolve to follow the Afghan Taliban model to achieve TTP's goals in Pakistan. During his tenure, TTP has become stronger because he brought back all the factions into the TTP which had left earlier. Not only that, but he has also been successful in winning over support of likeminded religious leaders from Balochistan like Mullah Aslam Baloch from Noshki and Mazar Baloch from Mekran. Thus, he extended his footprints to Balochistan also, expanding the TTP area of activity to another province, where TTP's presence was nominal. In the year 2022, under his leadership,

7 Yusufzai, Rahimullah, "A who's who of the insurgency in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province: Part two—FATA excluding North and South Waziristan," *Terrorism Monitor* 7, no. 4: 1-4, (2009)

8 "Profile: Hakimullah Mehsud," Dawn, 2013.

9 Zahir Shah Sherazi, "Pakistani Taliban chief Hakimullah Mehsud killed in drone attack," Dawn, November 2013.

10 Abubakar Siddique, "Radio Mullah' -- the Pakistani Taliban's New Leader," Radio Free Europe, November 2013

11 Asad Hashim, "The iron fist of Mullah Fazlullah," Aljazeera, November 2013.

12 "Pakistan Taliban Chief Mullah Fazlullah 'killed in Drone Attack,'" Aljazeera, June 2018.

13 Zahid Farhan, "Profile of New TTP Chief Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud: Challenges and Implications," PIPS, 2019.



TTP has unleashed a new wave of terrorist attacks in Pakistan, mostly in the Pakhtun province of KP.

## Organizational Structure

Under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud, a central shura was formed to act as the supreme policymaking body. This prompted the formation of a centralized form of leadership with the creation of administrative zones and the assigning of different duties to leaders.<sup>14</sup> However, following a military operation conducted by the State of Pakistan and internal rifts, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) began to lack a central authority due to its loosely bounded coalition and splinter groups. In 2014, the TTP underwent an organizational change, whereby the leadership decided to opt for the Afghan Taliban's bureaucratic system rather than the quasi-tribal model<sup>15</sup>. Similarly, the TTP announced an organizational restructuring by adopting the Afghan Taliban structure, appointing 'Shadow Governors' in the North and South Zones. Each governor was assisted by deputy governors to govern a commission of six members, in 2021<sup>16</sup>. According to Giustozzi, Noor Wali Mehsud, was able to win back the different splinters into the TTP, by following a policy of granting more autonomy to the local chapters, under the respective sub leaders.<sup>17</sup>

## Numerical Strength

A UN report estimated 4000 to 6500 fighters affiliated with TTP were present in Afghanistan.<sup>18</sup> With the takeover of the government in Kabul by the Afghan Taliban, this figure might have increased. It is also reasonable to presume that their sympathizers in Pakistan may also have increased. A new factor, however, that can inhibit the TTP from getting new volunteers, is the strong public resentment shown by the people of the respective areas in Pakistan, when some TTP members tried to return to their homes. Swat, for instance, witnessed thousands of people demonstrating against the appearance of TTP members in Swat, forcing most of them to go back to Afghanistan.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, huge demonstrations were held in some districts of ex FATA, which used to be a stronghold of TTP, some years back.

## Targets

TTP's fight against the non-Islamic democratic system makes the state of Pakistan as its prime target. The group has been responsible, not only, for a number of attacks on civilians, but also targeting state installations as well as security personnel.<sup>20</sup> While in the past, the group has targeted Pakistani civilian infrastructure, such as schools, health care facilities, and transportation networks. TTP targets Chinese also. In 2021, TTP killed nine Chinese engineers in Dasu.<sup>21</sup> There are recent reports that the TTP has

14 Qandeel Siddique, "Tehrik-e-taliban pakistan an attempt to deconstruct," Danish institute for international studies, 2010:12.

15 Abdul Sayed, "Evolution and Future of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan."

16 Talha Ahmed, Twitter Post, Jun 14, 2021, 5:50 PM, <https://twitter.com/talhaahmad967/status/1404421050427977734>

17 Antonio Giustozzi, "The Resurgence of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan."

18 Ayaz Gul, "Pakistan: World Running Out of Patience with Afghan Taliban," Voice of America, November 2022.

19 Zofeen T. Ebrahim, "Swat won't be 'deceived' by TTP this time," The Dawn, October 22, 2022

20 "Pakistan Security report 2021," PIPS, 2022

21 Jibrán Ahmad and Yew Lun Tian, "Pakistan bus blast kills 13 including Chinese; Beijing blames bomb," Reuters, July 2021.

decided under advice of AQ, that they should not target civilians.<sup>22</sup>

## Modus operandi

TTP has a wide range of modus operandi ranging from committing crimes like hostage taking, kidnapping for ransom, extortion, arms trafficking to more lethal and complex ways like coordinated attacks of assault, human borne IED (HBIED), and vehicle borne IED (VBIED), jail breaks, takeover of police/army installations like police stations, ambushing convoys of military/police.

## Safe havens

Most of the manpower of TTP belong to the former FATA districts (the seven tribal agencies) specifically, and KP province generally. Thus naturally, to begin with, their safe havens were also in these areas. However, once the military operations against TTP started in 2009 and later stepped up in 2014 (operation zarb-e-azb), As a result of these operations, the majority of TTP's leadership and members crossed the border into Afghanistan in search of refuge. During the period, US and its allies were in Afghanistan, TTP had to hide in the strongholds of Afghan Taliban, particularly in eastern and southeastern Afghanistan bordering Pakistan. After the US withdrawal, the TTP has a much safer and more congenial environment in Afghanistan. Presently, they are reported to be concentrated in southeastern Afghanistan, the stronghold of the Haqqani network, with which they have a very close relationship. There are also reports of TTP activity in Pakistan's Balochistan province, particularly in the districts of Chagai, Quetta and Gwadar.<sup>23</sup>

## Financing and funding

For years, TTP funding was primarily based on three sources. One, donations from their supporters both within the country and abroad. Two, from criminal activities like kidnapping for ransom,<sup>24</sup> extortion, protection money, target killings and the smuggling of arms,<sup>25</sup> in different areas of KPK, former FATA and Sindh. Recently, the resurgence of TTP in Swat in year 2021, was accompanied by an increase in the number of extortion cases.<sup>26</sup> Three, in addition to this, TTP is also reported to be funded by hostile foreign intelligence agencies. AQ and Afghan Taliban, have also been reported to be providing them funds as claimed by a former spokesperson of TTP breakaway faction, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar.<sup>27</sup>

## Media outlet/ magazine

TTP utilizes various platforms to spread their ideology, such as their official media channel, Umar Media, which was established in 2012. Through this channel, TTP attempts to portray Pakistan as supporting

22 Antonio Giustozzi, "The Resurgence of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan,"

23 "Balochistan violence," Dawn, 2022

24 "TTP extortion rackets return to Swat valley after a decade," Dawn, November 2022.

25 Farhan Zahid, "Crime-Terror Nexus in Pakistan." Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses 10, no. 9 (2018): 18-23.

26 Umer Bin Ajmal, "Fear and despair grip Pakistan's Swat as TTP foothold increases," TRT World, August 2022.

27 Syed Raza Hassan, "India, Afghanistan gave help to Pakistani Taliban, says group's ex-spokesman," Reuters, April 2017.

the West, and the Taliban as the protectors of Islam, and advocates for the uniting of people as a single, powerful Ummah.<sup>28</sup>

## Trends in 2022

US state department designated the top commander of TTP as global terrorists in December 2022.

### ■ *Afghanistan Factor*

Kabul takeover by Afghan Taliban paved path for TTP in regrouping and restructuring. TTP holds close ideological and cultural affiliation with Afghan Taliban and has assisted in their war against the US.<sup>29</sup> This interrelation worked in releasing TTP prisoners by Afghan Taliban right after coming in power; in addition to this, Afghan Taliban provided TTP with safe havens in Afghanistan. TTP, however, used as a bargaining tool by the Afghan Taliban against Pakistan.<sup>30</sup> Bringing the state of Pakistan and TTP to sign a ceasefire which resulted in a failure after a month.<sup>31</sup> Afghan Taliban further mediated which extended a truce between Pakistan and TTP, which expired on May 30, 2022. In June 2022, Afghan Taliban pulled out another cease fire, but it also ended in a stalemate.<sup>32</sup>

### ■ *A come back*

Some TTP elements return Swat this year, thus opening an extortion racket after a decade<sup>33</sup>; nevertheless, Swat overseen massive public resentment and resistance, forcing these elements to go back to Afghanistan.<sup>34</sup> This strong and determined popular public resentment against the TTP, and not to allow them back, is a new element in resistance to the TTP, and likely not only to delay their return but also not let them have new volunteers, funds, refuge places, in these places.

### ■ *Rise in Terrorist activities in 2021 and 2022*

According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), the number of terror activities in Afghanistan has increased significantly since the Taliban took control in 2021. As of December 11, 2021, the total number of terror activities stands at 593, which is an increase of 51.5% from the 424 activities recorded in the same period last year. Additionally, the number of fatalities associated with these incidents have also seen a 47% increase, with the death toll rising from 294 to 433.<sup>35</sup> Whereas; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, situated on the Afghan border, has seen the most serious terrorist activity from the TTP.<sup>36</sup>

28 Saif Ur Rehman Tahir, "A study of tehreek-e-taliban Pakistan (TTP) social media communication: major trends, key themes and propaganda appeals," NACTA, VOL II, ISSUE I (2019)

29 Anwar Iqbal, "TTP maintains ties with Afghan Taliban, says report," Dawn, July 2021.

30 Fahd Humayun, "The Afghan Taliban aren't likely to give up the TTP. Here's why," Atlantic Council, January 2022.

31 Ismail Khan, "TTP declares end to ceasefire," Dawn, December 2021.

32 "Pakistan Taliban extends ceasefire in talks brokered by Kabul," Aljazeera, May 2022.

33 "TTP extortion rackets return to Swat valley after a decade," Dawn, November 2022.

34 Zofeen T. Ebrahim, "Swat won't be 'deceived' by TTP this time," Dawn, October 2022.

35 "Pakistan Against TTP: Another Jolt to the Country's Already Derailed Economy," News 18, December 2022.

36 Ayaz Gul, "Pakistan: Growing Militant Attacks."

## 2. Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP)

### Origin

On January 26, 2015, Daesh announced the formation of its official branch in the Khorasan region, encompassing Afghanistan, Pakistan and other nearby regions. Prior to the official announcement, six of the most prominent leaders of TTP publicly declared their allegiance to al-Baghdadi of the Islamic State (IS) in a video message.<sup>37</sup> Former leader of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Hafiz Saeed Khan, was appointed as the Wali (governor) of the new branch. A twelve-member shura (committee) consisting of nine Pakistanis, two Afghans, and one person of unknown origin was formed which elected Hafiz Saeed Khan as the first Emir of the Daesh affiliated group. The former militants joined the new group out of disillusionment with leaders of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Afghan Taliban, the loss of territorial control in the Federally Administered Tribal Agencies (FATA) which forced its leadership to migrate to Afghanistan, and the attraction of the ideology and successes of Daesh, or its ability to pay more than other groups, led to the militants' decision to join Daesh.<sup>38</sup>

### Ideology

The Islamic State strives to build a worldwide caliphate that follows Islamic principles and is regulated by Islamic jurisprudence. The group's motto, "baqiya wa tatamaddad" (remaining and expanding), calls on other Muslims to migrate to the caliphate in order to create a "pure Islamic State".<sup>39</sup> ISKP views the Afghan Taliban as an ideological and strategic rival, as their objectives conflict with ISKP's goal of establishing a global caliphate.<sup>40</sup>

### Leadership

#### ■ 1. Hafiz Saeed Khan (2015-2016)

Hafiz Saeed Khan, who formerly served as the commander of Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), was appointed by the ISIL core as the governor of Wilayat Khurasan (Khorasan Province) in 2015, and later as the group's Emir. During his tenure, Hafiz managed to unify various other militant factions under the banner of the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP), including the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and former TTP militants. In addition, Hafiz was able to take control of certain areas in the Nangarhar Province and Farah Province of Afghanistan.<sup>41</sup> After a year of taking the leadership of ISKP, Hafiz was killed in the Kot district of Afghanistan's Nangarhar province in a joint US drone attack on July 26, 2016.<sup>42</sup>

37 Don, Rassler, "Situating the Emergence of the Islamic State of Khorasan," CTC Sentinel 8, no. 3 (2015): 7-11.

38 Tariq Parvez, "The Islamic State in Pakistan," (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, January 2016), <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PB213-The-Islamic-State-In-Pakistan.pdf>.

39 Catrina Doxsee and Jared Thompson, "Examining Extremism: Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP)," CSIS, September 2021.

40 "Global Terrorism Index 2022," Institute for Economics & Peace, 2022

41 International Criminal Court, "Structure and organisation of the Islamic State operating in Afghanistan – 2014-2017", 2018

42 Jibrán Ahmad, Yeganeh Torbat, "U.S. drone kills Islamic State leader for Afghanistan, Pakistan: officials," Reuters, August 2016

■ *2. Abdul Haseeb Logari (2016 – April 2017)*

Abdul Haseeb Logari, former Afghan Taliban commander, replaced Hafiz Saeed Khan as the second Emir of ISKP. Under his leadership ISKP managed to target civilians in Pakistan<sup>43</sup> and Afghanistan,<sup>44</sup> although the group underwent turmoil due to defection of core members from the ISKP just before Abdul took over the group. In Afghanistan, Abdul managed to bring Salafi ideology to the ISKP thus helping in attracting people to join the group.<sup>45</sup> In April 2017, Abdul Haseeb was killed in a joint operation conducted by Afghan and American special forces.<sup>46</sup>

■ *3. Abu Sayed Bajauri (2017)*

Famously known as Abdul Rahman Galib, Abu Sayed Bajauri a former militant of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), became the third Emir of the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP) in April 2017. However, Galib's tenure was short-lived, as he was killed by a US drone strike in Kunar Province, Afghanistan, approximately three weeks later.<sup>47</sup>

■ *4. Abu Saad Orakzai (2017-2018)*

In August 2018, the fourth emir of the Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) organization, Abu Saad Orakzai (also known as Abu Saad Erhabi), who was originally from Orakzai Agency, was killed in a United States drone strike in Nangarhar.<sup>48</sup>

■ *5. Shahab al-Muhajir (2020 till today)*

Also known as Sanaullah Ghafari, Shahab got appointed as the head of the ISKP in 2020.<sup>49</sup> Shahab became the first non-Afghan Emir of the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP),<sup>50</sup> also, designated as a global terrorist by the US.<sup>51</sup>

## Organizational structure

ISKP is headed by an emir and comprises a hierarchical leadership structure consisting of a Shura Advisory Council, provincial-level commanders and leaders responsible for various functional elements of its bureaucracy, such as intelligence and logistics.<sup>52</sup>

## Strength

Since the Taliban regained power in Afghanistan in 2021, the United Nations has reported that the Islamic State has expanded its presence and influence on all the country's provinces. Consequently, the

43 "Quetta attack: ISIL and Taliban claim suicide bombing," Aljazeera, August 2016

44 Michael D. Regan, "Dozens dead after suicide bombers target Afghan minority group," PBS NewsHour, July 2016.

45 Amira Jadoon, and Andrew Mines. "Taking Aim: Islamic State Khorasan's Leadership Losses." CTC Sentinel 12, no. 8 (2019): 1-16.

46 "34 Daesh Killed In Air Force Operation In Nangarhar," Tolo News, May 2017

47 "Statement by Chief Pentagon Spokesperson Dana W. White on death of ISIS-K leader in Afghanistan," U.S Department of Defense, July 2017

48 Bill Roggio, "U.S. Confirms Death of Emir of Islamic State Khorasan." Long War Journal, 2018

49 "US offers \$10m reward for information on ISKP leader," Aljazeera, February 2022

50 Abdul Syed, "Who Is the New Leader of Islamic State-Khorasan Province?," Lawfare, September 2020.

51 "Information on ISKP leader," Aljazeera

52 Catrina Doxsee, "Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP)"

number of IS militants in the region has increased from 2000 to 3500.<sup>53</sup> Whereas, at the time of their formation in 2015, the group had a relatively small number of members, approximately 2000.

## Targets

ISKP has specifically targeted convoys, vehicles, checkpoints, and personnel associated with security, former government figures, media workers, civil society advocates, community leaders, and members of the Salafi community who oppose the organization.<sup>54</sup> In Pakistan as well as in Afghanistan the group conducted attacks against the Shia community.<sup>55</sup> The group has been implicated in perpetrating cross-border attacks against the neighboring countries of Afghanistan.<sup>56</sup>

## Modus Operandi

Their modus operandi is very similar to ISIL in Iraq and Syria.<sup>57</sup> ISKP Uses remote explosive and suicide bomb attacks against civilian targets and security and militant forces.<sup>58</sup> The militants of the ISKP are also skilled in guerilla warfare.<sup>59</sup>

## Funding and Financing

ISKP is primarily funded through donations from countries such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia, as well as from local sympathizers from Pakistan and Afghanistan, typically transferred through hawala networks. Additionally, Daesh raises funds through criminal activities, such as bank robberies.<sup>60</sup> The group has reportedly exploited local mineral, lumber, and talc black markets, in addition to extortion and kidnapping for ransom.<sup>61</sup> An alleged militant of the ISKP claimed to be getting funds from three European countries, including Germany, Spain and Ukraine.<sup>62</sup>

## Media cell

Al-Milat Media, is the media cell of the ISKP.<sup>63</sup>

53 Guillermo Calderón López, "History of ISIS in Afghanistan and Pakistan," La Ventana al Mundo, January 2023.

54 Pakistan Security Report 2021, PIPS, January 2021

55 "Afghanistan: Surge in Islamic State Attacks on Shia," Human Rights Watch, August 2021

56 Abdul Syed, "Why Islamic State Khorasan Poses an Indigenous Threat to the Afghan Taliban," GW Program on Extremism, May 2022.

57 "What we know about Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISIS-K)," Aljazeera, August 2021.

58 Dante Schulz, "ISKP's Propaganda Threatens Asia's Security Apparatus," Stimpson, October 2022.

59 Roshni Kapur, "The Persistent ISKP Threat to Afghanistan: On China's Doorstep," Middle East Institute, January 2022.

60 Tariq Parvez, "Islamic State in Pakistan"

61 Amira Jadoon, "Islamic State Khorasan's Leadership Losses"

62 Akmal Dawi, "IS Ramps Up Attacks in Afghanistan, Taliban Claim Key Arrest," Voice of America, October 2022

63 Abdul Syed, "Who Is the New Leader of Islamic State-Khorasan Province?"

## 3. Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)

### Origin

Islamic State Khorasan Chapter established with the assistance of al-Qa'ida and shares the same anti-Western ideology. The then al-Qa'ida leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, officially announced the existence of AQIS on 3 September 2014, and identified Pakistan-based Asim Umar as its leader.<sup>64</sup>

### Ideology

Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) is an Al-Qaeda-affiliated militant organization founded in 2014 by leader Aymenn al-Zawahiri, with the goal of restoring the Islamic caliphate in South Asia. The group's efforts have largely been unsuccessful, as they have been unable to gain traction outside of Pakistan and have been unable to carry out the large-scale attacks promised by AQC leadership. India's democratic structure and ideological disconnect have further impeded AQIS's progress in the region. However, the group has released several violent messages encouraging attacks on individuals deemed "nonbelievers" of Islam and published a "Code of Conduct" in 2017, reiterating its goals and allegiance to Al-Qaeda Central and the Taliban's leader Omar Mullah.<sup>65</sup>

### Leadership

#### ■ *Sheikh Asim Umar (2014-2019)*

In 2019, Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of Al-Qaeda, appointed Asim Omar, a high-ranking media propagandist and head of the organization's Sharia committee for Pakistan, as the first Emir of Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). Umar had previously been associated with several jihadi groups, including Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islam (HUJI) and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM). He also had ties with the Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan and worked as a commander.<sup>66</sup> However, Umar was killed in a joint operation by the US and Afghan forces in Afghanistan later in 2019.<sup>67</sup>

### Targets

Targets of AQIS consists of popular secular figures in Pakistan and Bangladesh, including scholars, bloggers, social activists and authors, as well as attacks on Pakistani police.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>64</sup> "Al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)," Australian National Security, Last updated: November 2022.

<sup>65</sup> "Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent," Stanford University. Last modified July 2018. <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/al-qaeda-indian-subcontinent-aqis>

<sup>66</sup> Julia McQuaid et al, "Independent Assessment of U.S. Government Efforts against Al-Qaeda," CNA, (2017).

<sup>67</sup> "South Asia region Al Qaeda chief killed in Afghanistan: officials", Dawn, October 2019,

<sup>68</sup> McQuaid, "U.S. Government Efforts against Al-Qaeda,"

## Modus Operandi

In Pakistan, all other AQIS attacks have been much more limited in scope and have consisted of largely hit-and-run assassinations.<sup>69</sup>

## Funding

It is suspected that AQIS is funded directly from AQ Central, with evidence suggesting a financial pipeline from the latter to the former.<sup>70</sup>

## Media outlet

AQIS uses Nawa-e-Ghazwa-e-Hind, a magazine<sup>71</sup> published under their media branch Al-Sahad for the recruitment purposes.<sup>72</sup>

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69 Thomas Joscelyn, "Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent claims 2 attacks in Pakistan," Long War Journal, September 2014.

70 Pamela G. Faber and Alexander Powell, "Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)," CNA, (2017).

71 The Khorasan Diary, Twitter post, Jan 5, 2023, 1:02 AM, <https://twitter.com/khorasandiary/status/1610728503183278100>

72 "Al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)," Australian Government.



## 4.Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ)

### Origin

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi came into prominence as an offshoot of Deobandi Sunni organization Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) in 1996. LeJ was banned in Pakistan in 2001 and designated a terrorist group by the US in 2003

### Ideology

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi is a Sunni-Deobandi militant organization that holds strong anti-Shia sentiments. However, according to the 2016 security report issued by the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), the other faction of LeJ, known as LeJ Al-Alami, has broadened its ideological and strategic scope to align itself with global terrorist organizations, such as the Islamic State (IS).

### Leadership

#### ■ 1.Raiz Basra

In 1996, Basra formed Laskhar-e-Jhangvi after having previously been a member of Sipah-e-Shahaba Pakistan (SSP). In 2002, Basra was killed in a police-led encounter.<sup>73</sup>

#### ■ 2.Malik Ishaq

Malik Ishaq was a co-founder of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), alongside Aslam Lahore and Riaz Basra. In 2003, the United States government added the name of Ishaq to the most wanted global terrorist list.<sup>74</sup> In 2015, Ishaq was killed in an exchange of gunfire between police and LeJ militants.<sup>75</sup>

#### ■ 3.Asif Chotu

Following the demise of Malik Ishaq in 2015, Asif Chotu assumed leadership of the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ). Asif was implicated in a number of sectarian-based assaults in Pakistan. In 2017, he was killed in Shiekhupura due to a combined operation between the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) and the Intelligence Bureau (IB).<sup>76</sup>

### Targets

The LeJ targets Shias, Ahmadis, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, and other religious minorities. The group has

73 Rory McCarthy, "Death by design," The Guardian, May 2002.

74 "US adds Malik Ishaq's name to most wanted global terrorist list," Dawn, February 2014.

75 "Malik Ishaq: Pakistan Sunni militant chief killed by police", BBC, July 2015.

76 Rana Tanveer, "Sheikhupura raid: LeJ chief Asif Chotu, three aides killed in gunfight," Express Tribune, January 2017.

also directed their aggression toward American and other international targets within Pakistan including the Sri Lankan team attack of Lahore.<sup>77</sup> After seven years of inactivity the group has claimed an attack on an assistant commissioner in Mustang Balochistan, killing one person.<sup>78</sup>

## Modus Operandi

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi carry out assassinations, attacks using remote detonated improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and suicide IED attacks.

## Safe Havens

It was claimed in 2017 that LeJ Al Alami fighters were present in the Zabul province of Afghanistan.<sup>79</sup>

## Funding and Finance

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) gets funding from funders from Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia. The group has received training in the jihadi camps of Harkat-ul-Ansar in Afghanistan and financially supports the Taliban and jihad. Additionally, LeJ attains additional funding through criminal activities such as protection rackets and extortion.<sup>80</sup>

## Trends in 2023

In January 2023, the militant group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) resurfaced with a claim of responsibility for an attack on security personnel in Mustang Balochistan. Furthermore, The Khorasan Diary reported that there were a number of statements released by the group, wherein they condemned the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden. Additionally, LeJ praised attacks carried out by the Jamat Ul Ahrar (JuA), thus demonstrating the revival of various jihadist organizations.

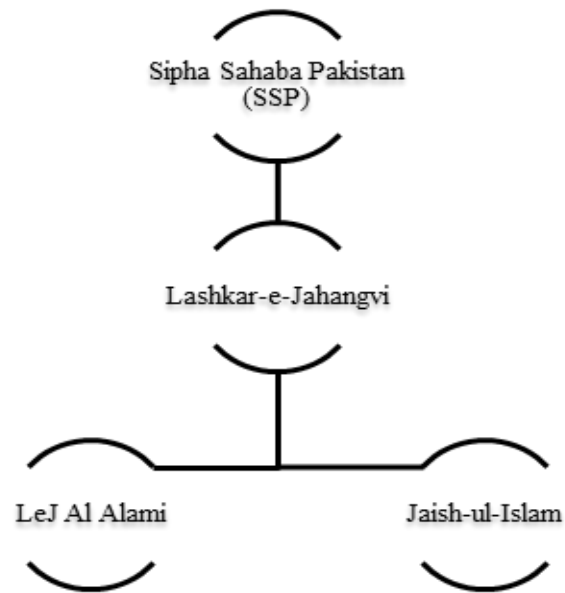
77 C. Christine Fair et al. "Relative Poverty, Perceived Violence, and Support for Militant Politics: Evidence from Pakistan." *Political Science Research and Methods* 6, no. 1 (2018): 57–81. doi:10.1017/psrm.2016.6.

78

79 Mustafa Sarwar, "Pakistani extremists carve a sanctuary in southern Afghanistan," *Gandhara*, January 2017.

80 Aarish Ullah Khan, "The terrorist threat and the policy response in Pakistan. Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2005.

Figure 3. ( LeJ family tree)



## 5. Balochistan Liberation Army

### Origin

Baloch Liberation Army founded in 2000 by Baloch leaders of Marri, Bugti tribes. The BLA traces its origins to the Baloch nationalist uprising of the 1970s, which sought to establish an independent Balochistan through an armed struggle against the Pakistan's government.<sup>81</sup> In 2006, Pakistan and the United Kingdom both proscribed the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) as a terrorist outfit. The group has been designated as a global terrorist outfit by the United States in 2019,<sup>82</sup> citing the group's alleged involvement in a series of terrorist attacks in Balochistan and other parts of Pakistan.

### Ideology

Baloch Liberation Army is an ethno-national militant outfit. The group seeks to create an independent Balochistan that will be a "secular and democratic" state. Drawing its narrative from the third wave of Baloch insurgency, the group seeks the creation Greater Balochistan comprising areas of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>83</sup> The BLA demands greater investment from the Pakistani government in the region, as well as an end to foreign exploitation and intervention.<sup>84</sup>

### Leadership

Since 2000, tribal leaders have traditionally held leadership within the Baloch Liberation Army; however, with the emergence of educated, marginalized youth and the middle class of Balochistan, this influence has become increasingly weakened. This has led to two key differences: the absence of inter-tribal clashes, and a shift of the movement from rural areas to urban and from the northeast to the southwest.<sup>85</sup>

#### ■ 2000-2022

Hyrbyair Marri was the first leader of the BLA and was instrumental in establishing the group as a significant force in the Balochistan independence movement. He was succeeded by Balach Marri, who took over the reins in 2004 and led the group until his death in 2007. After Marri's death, Dr Allah Nazar Baloch took over as the leader of the BLA and led the group until his arrest in 2010. He was succeeded by Dr. Allah Nazar Baloch's brother, Aslam Baloch, who was the leader of the BLA until his death in 2018, in Kandahar province of Afghanistan<sup>86</sup>. Since 2018, Bashir Zeb Baloch has assumed command of the

81 Michael Brown et al. "Balochistan Case Study." CFP Conflict Report, 2012.

82 U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism, *Baloch Liberation Army*. 13 July 2019, [www.state.gov/baloch-liberation-army/](http://www.state.gov/baloch-liberation-army/).

83 Brown, "Balochistan Case Study"

84 "All 4 terrorists killed in attempt to storm Pakistan Stock Exchange compound in Karachi: Rangers," Dawn, June 29, 2020

85 Tiffany, Tanner. "Explaining the Resilience of the Balochistan Insurgency Explaining the Resilience of the Balochistan Insurgency," (Honor's thesis, University of Maine, 2019), <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1541&context=honors>

86 Saleem Shahid, "Banned BLA leader killed in Kandahar suicide attack", Dawn, December 27, 2018

Baloch Liberation Army, resulting in a surge of attacks specifically against the Chinese.<sup>87</sup>

## Internal rifts

In 2017, the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) experienced internal administrative differences, resulting in the leadership of the organisation being passed from the Sardar family to an ordinary Baloch commander, Aslam Baloch. This caused a split within the BLA, resulting in two factions: one led by Aslam Baloch and another loyal to Hyrbyair Marri.<sup>88</sup>

## Majeed Brigade of Baloch Liberation Army

The Majeed Brigade, also known as the Fidayeen, is a special suicide squad responsible for carrying out suicide attacks on behalf of the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA). The Brigade was formed in 2008 and is named after Baloch rebel leader, Majeed Baloch.<sup>89</sup> Recently, the group has also been known to employ female combatants for suicide bombings; for example, the attack on the Chinese in Karachi University, conducted by Shari Baloch.<sup>90</sup>

## Targets

The primary target of the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) is the Pakistan's military and security forces operating in the Balochistan region of Pakistan.<sup>91</sup> The BLA has also been known to target Chinese economic interests in the region, as well as other economic interests that it perceives to be furthering the government's agenda in Balochistan.<sup>92</sup> Over the years, the BLA has become increasingly known as an active antagonist of Chinese interests in Balochistan, largely due to its opposition to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a series of infrastructure projects traversing Pakistan. The BLA has targeted projects such as mining and infrastructure that are backed by Chinese investors, as well as the security forces assigned to protect the civilian assets, in its efforts to oppose CPEC's exploitation of Baloch resources.<sup>93</sup>

## Modus operandi

The group uses guerrilla tactics, such as ambushes, bombings, and use of improvised explosive devices (IEDS).<sup>94</sup> The organization has also been accused of kidnapping and killing people for ransom and other political purposes.<sup>95</sup> The militant group has also used female militant to carry out suicide bombing at-

87 Ghalib Nihad, "Who are the perpetrators of the recent attack on Chinese citizens?", Dawn, April 28, 2022

88 Abdullah Khan, "Understanding the Baloch Liberation Army", Narratives, June 18, 2022

89 Abdul Basit, "The Majeed Brigade: The Baluch Liberation Army's Suicide Squad," The Jamestown Foundation 20, no. 13 (July 1, 2022), <https://jamestown.org/program/the-majeed-brigade-the-baluch-liberation-armys-suicide-squad/>.

90 Muhammad Humayun Khalid, Rashid Ahmed, Muhammad Bashir Khan, "Exploring the Role of Female Combatants in Non-State Armed Groups: A Case Study of Baloch Liberation Army," Central European Management Journal 30, no. 3 (2022): 55-66.

91 "5 army personnel martyred in IED blast in Balochistan's Kahan: ISPR," Dawn, December 25, 2022

92 Nihad, "Who are the perpetrators"

93 Max Taylor, "The Balochistan Liberation Army and insurgency in Pakistan's Balochistan Province," Intelligence Fusion, 18th September 2020

94 "2022 ends with deadliest month for security forces after decade: report", Dawn, January 1, 2023

95 Kiyah Baloch, "Baloch Liberation Army Kidnapping Fails to Lead to Negotiations With Islamabad," The Jamestown Foundation 20, no. 24

tack.<sup>96</sup> The BLA fighters also engage in small battles with security personnel.<sup>97</sup>

### Safe Havens

The group seeks refuge in the bordering countries of Pakistan i.e. Iran and Afghanistan. since the Taliban regime has taken control of Afghanistan in recent years, militants in Afghanistan are thereby, loosing support.<sup>98</sup>

### Numerical Strength

The estimated numerical strength of the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) when it was founded in 2000 was approximately 6,000 fighters. The Majeed Brigade cell is estimated to have comprised approximately 100-150 Fedayeen, whereas the BLA consists of 1,000-1,500 fighters as reported in the Stanford Database.<sup>99</sup> However, recent estimates have revealed that the number of fighters has decreased to a mere 600.<sup>100</sup>

### Financing and Funding

The group has been receiving funds from a variety of sources, including “private sympathizers” and “foreign sources”. The group receives funding from numerous Baloch diaspora in Europe, the Middle East and North America also from extortion, kidnapping for ransom, and smuggling activities. BLA also reportedly receives covert funding from Indian intelligence agencies.<sup>101</sup>

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(2022)

96 “Pakistan attack: Chinese tutors killed in Karachi university bombing,” BBC , April 2022

97 Muhammad Amir Rana, “Militant Landscape of Balochistan,” Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies, June 2020

98 Abubakar Siddique, “Pakistan’s Baluch Separatists Losing Their Afghan Sanctuary,” Radio Free Europe, February 2022.

99 Basit, “The Majeed Brigade”

100 “Balochistan Liberation Army and Insurgency in Pakistan,” Intelligence Fusion, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://www.intelligencefusion.co.uk/insights/resources/intelligence-reports/balochistan-liberation-army-and-insurgency-in-pakistan/>.

101 Khan, “Understanding the Baloch Liberation Army.”

## 6. Balochistan Republican Army

### Origin

The Baloch Republican Army (BRA) also referred as, 'Bugti Militia', is a Baloch militant group that traces its roots back to the political party Balochistan Republican Party, governed by Brahamdagh Bugti.<sup>102</sup>

### Ideology

The Baloch Republican Army (BRA) is a separatist militant organization that operates in Balochistan, Pakistan. The organization aims to gain independence from Pakistan and establish an independent Baloch state.<sup>103</sup>

### Leadership

#### ■ *Brahamdagh Bugti*

Brahamdagh Bugti is the alleged leader of the Baloch Republican Army. Following the death of Nawab Akbar Bugti in 2006, he was forced to take refuge in Afghanistan due to a militant operation. In 2016, he applied for asylum in Switzerland and India. In 2016, he sought asylum in Switzerland and applied for asylum in India in the same year.<sup>104</sup> Some former commanders of the Balochistan Republican Army (BRA) surrendered in 2016, have accused Brahamdagh Bugti of misleading them in the name of a separatist movement for Balochistan.<sup>105</sup> Currently residing in Switzerland, Bugti is accused of several terrorist attacks in Pakistan.

#### ■ *Gulzar Imam alias Shambay*

Gulzar Imam worked as a chief in the BRA. Earlier 2022 Imam joined the Baloch Nationalist Army (BNA) after merging the Balochistan Republican Army (BRA) and the United Baloch Army (UBA)<sup>106</sup> however, the BRA leadership condemned the Lahore blast claimed by the UBA, thus cutting ties with the BRA-Gulzar faction.<sup>107</sup> Gulzar detained by Turkey and handed over to Pakistan.<sup>108</sup> The Baloch Liberation Army abducted two officers in a militant attack in Harnai, Balochistan,<sup>109</sup> to which the spokesperson of BLA, Jeeyand Baloch hinted to exchange for, 'political prisoner', hinting towards the release of Gulzar Imam.

102 Karlos Zurutuza, "Understanding Pakistan's Baloch Insurgency", *The Diplomat*, June 24, 2015

103 Frederic Grare, "Balochistan the State Versus the nation", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, April 2013.

104 "Brahamdagh Bugti to seek asylum in India," *Dawn*, September 20, 2016

105 Saleem Shahid, "Ex-members of BRA accuse Brahamdagh of betrayal", *Dawn*, October 23, 2016

106 Abdul Basit, "Why Separatist Leader Gulzar Imam's Arrest Will Not Weaken Baloch Insurgency," *The Diplomat*, October 28, 2022

107 Muhammad Amir Rana. "An insurgency restructured," *Dawn*, March 20, 2022

108 Basit, "Gulzar Imam"

109 The Balochistan Post – English, Twitter post, Sep 26, 2022, 1:30 PM, <https://twitter.com/tbpenglish/status/1574315421163036672?s=61&t=3COZCK-MwXfPKMau9kNXcG>

## Targets

The data collected by the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) in 2021 indicated that the Baloch insurgents had increased their attacks on a wide range of targets, including security forces, non-Baloch workers, shops/stalls selling Pakistani flags, government personnel, ordinary citizens, as well as Chinese engineers and laborers.<sup>110</sup>

## Modus operandi

The Baloch Republican Army (BRA) utilized low scale improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to conduct landmine blasts.<sup>111</sup> The group has been implicated in perpetrating hit-and-run tactics, as well as deploying grenades as weapons.<sup>112</sup>

## Safe Havens

Some analysts believe that the militants find sanctuaries in the border area of the Afghan-Pakistan region of Balochistan.

## Financing and Funding

In 2016, Barahamdadh Bugti claimed in an interview of getting assistance from India.<sup>113</sup>

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110 Safdar Sial, "Militant Landscape of Pakistan in 2021", PIPS, 2021

111 Ghalib Nihad, "Blast in Balochistan's Sui area claims 4 lives, injures 10," Dawn, January 28, 2022

112 Behram Baloch, "Five found shot dead in Panjgur," Dawn, December 9, 2021

113 Syed Ali Shah, "Brahamdagh Bugti willing to negotiate with govt: BBC," Dawn, August 27, 2015



## 7. Balochistan Liberation Front

### Origin

In the 1964, the Baloch Liberation Front (BLF) was formed by Juma Khan Mari. Till 2004 the group remained dormant until revived by Dr Allah Nazar Baloch when he took over the leadership in 2003. The BLF operates primarily in the southern coastal Makran region of Balochistan,<sup>114</sup> as well as Awaran and Khuzdar.<sup>115</sup>

### Ideology

The BLF is an ethno-national insurgent group working for an independent Balochistan. In an interview, Dr Allah Nazar characterised the group movement as a quest for autonomy as opposed to a separatist agenda.<sup>116</sup>

### Leadership

#### ■ *Juma Khan Mari*

In 1964, under the of the Marxist-Leninist ideology, Juma Khan formed the Baloch Liberation Front (BLF) in Damascus, Syria. During the Iranian Baloch Revolt of 1973, the BLF, led by Mari, played a prominent role and was supported by Iraq in terms of obtaining weapons. Subsequently, Juma Khan organized an Independent Baloch Movement during the third Baloch insurgency in Pakistan, which took place between 1973 and 1977.<sup>117</sup>

#### ■ *Dr. Allah Nazar Baloch*

Dr. Allah Nazar Baloch formed the Baloch Student Organization-Azad (BSO-Azad) faction in 2002 through which Nazar managed to take over the Baloch Liberation Front leadership in year 2003. considered to be the middle-class entry point into the nationalist movement, Nazar changed the insurgent landscape with more involvement of the educated middleclass youth in militancy.<sup>118</sup> Nazar went into exile in Afghanistan following reports of the security forces operation against the BLF in Balochistan.<sup>119</sup>

114 Syed Shoaib Hasan, "The Game Players," *Dawn*, June 16, 2012.

115 "Special Report 2016," PIPS, 2017.

116 Abhinandan Mishra, "Baloch armed resistance has stopped CPEC from becoming operational," *The Sunday Guardian*, September 2022.

117 "Mapping Militant Organizations," Stanford.

118 Frederic Grare, "BALOCHISTAN: The State Versus the Nation." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12749>.

119 Abbas Nasir, "Balochistan conundrum," July 12, 2021

## Targets

The BLF targets security forces personnel, CPEC/Chinese and other foreign country workers<sup>120</sup>, non-Baloch settlers,<sup>121</sup> civilians, and former insurgents.

### ■ *Modus operandi*

The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) has used guerrilla warfare tactics, hit and run attacks,<sup>122</sup> ambushes,<sup>123</sup> sabotage, use of small scale IEDs, rockets<sup>124</sup> and Bombs.<sup>125</sup> Recently, the BLF was involved in a suicide bombing attack in Karachi.<sup>126</sup>

## Safe Havens

BLF largely concentrated in southern districts of the province including in Kech, Panjgur, Lasbela, Gwadar, and Khuzdar districts.<sup>127</sup> Along with Balochistan, the BLF also conducted multiple attacks in Karachi, Sindh.

## Finance and Funding

Claims have been made by Pakistan that Indian intelligence agency, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), sponsored the Baloch Liberation Front (BLF). Furthermore, it has been alleged that Dr Allah Nazar Baloch, the leader of the BLF, had contact with Indian security agencies. Pakistani security analysts see India as a sponsor behind Baloch militancy.<sup>128</sup>

## Media outlet/ Magazine

The leaders of the Baloch Liberation Front (BLF) movement have been seen utilizing social media sites such as Twitter, however, their accounts have since been suspended.<sup>129</sup> However, "AASHOB" is the latest media cell of the BLF.

120 Kiyya Baloch, "Baluch Militancy's Newest and Most Lethal Phase in Pakistan," The Jamestown Foundation, Volume: 20 Issue: 18, September 2022.

121 Fraaz, "BLF kills seven labourers in Kechh," Pakistan Today, February 2015.

122 "Gunmen kill three including PAF guards in Pasni: officials," Dawn, January 28, 2013.

123 Saleem Shahid, "20 labourers gunned down in Turbat," Dawn, April 2015

124 Syed Ali Shah, "Seven killed in attack on Coast Guards check post near Gwadar," July 2013.

125 "Pakistan: Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) claims responsibility for Aug. 7 bomb attack targeting security forces in Gwadar," Crisis 24, August 2022.

126 "KU bombing planned by two banned groups, suspect in custody trained in 'neighbouring country': Sharjeel," Dawn, July 2022.

127 "Pakistan security report 2021," PIPS, 2022.

128 "Dr. Allah Nazar Baloch is a terrorist, not a missing person, confirms DG ISPR," Global Village Space, November 2020.

129 "Twitter suspends accounts of Baloch nationalists," Pakistan Today, August 2018

## 8. Baloch Raji Ajohi Sangar (BRAS)

### Origin

In November 2018, a tripartite coalition known as Baloch Raaji Ajoji Sangar (BRAS) emerged in Balochistan, Pakistan. The coalition comprises the splinter faction of Baloch Liberation Army, headed by Afghanistan-based Bashirzeb Baloch, the Balochistan Liberation Front, and the Baloch Republican Guards. In October 2017, the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) splinter faction, then led by Aslam Baloch, and the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) formed a coalition, with the Baloch Republican Guards (BRG) joining in April 2018. Formally announced on 10th November 2018.<sup>130</sup> The coalition of Baloch insurgent groups is a result of a shift in leadership from tribal to the middle class educated Baloch leaders, leading to a “non-sardarisation” of the insurgency.<sup>131</sup>

### Ideology

The ideology of the Balochistan Republican Army (BRAS) is centered upon the establishment of separatist ideology of creating an independent Balochistan, and the resistance against the foreign investments such as of China’s. This nationalist-separatist stance is influenced by Marxist-leftist thought.<sup>132</sup>

### Targets

BRAS primarily targeting Chinese workers and infrastructure related to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Balochistan. Additionally, BRA has been engaging in attacks on military and paramilitary security forces operating in the area near the Makran coast and Gwadar.<sup>133</sup>

### Modus Operandi

BRAS has the similar tactics as of its coalition groups (BLA, BLF, BRA, BRG) such as ambushes and hit-and-run raids.<sup>134</sup>

### Safe Havens

The Balochistan Republican Army (BRAS) has established safe havens in the Kacha, DG Khan, and Koh Suleman areas of Balochistan. Furthermore, reports suggest that some militants of the group are mainly located in Iran’s Mekran division of the province, while Nazar Baloch is reported to operate from Veish,

130 Fahad Nabeel, “Identity as a Pretext of Terror: Brief Backgrounder of Baloch Raaji Aajoi Sangar,” CSCR, April, 2019

131 Tariq Parvez, “Baloch militancy trends,” Dawn, 25 July 2020, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1570993>

132 Farhan Zahid, “Baluch Raji Ajohi Sangar: Emergence of a New Baluch Separatist Alliance,” The Jamestown Foundation 17, no. 18 (September 2019).

133 Rana, “Militant Landscape”

134 Asad Hashim and Saadullah Akhtar, “Convoy attack kills 14 in southwestern Pakistan,” Aljazeera, October 2020.

along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and Kandahar city of Afghanistan.<sup>135</sup> Additionally, BRAS presence is also reported in Pasni, Ormara, and Lesbela regions.<sup>136</sup>

## Media

Initially, BRAS maintained a presence on Twitter; however, the accounts have since been suspended.<sup>137</sup>

## Finance and funding

The coalition groups of BRAS are obligated to provide logistical and human resources for carrying out military operations.<sup>138</sup>

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135 Zahid, "Baluch Raji Ajohi Sangar"

136 Muhammad Amir Rana, "Militant Landscape of Balochistan," PIPS, July 2020.

137 Nabeel, "Identity as a Pretext of Terror."

138 Rana, "Militant Landscape."

## 9. Sindhudesh Liberation Army (SLA)

### Origin

The Sindhudesh Liberation Army (SLA) rose to prominence in 2010 following several attacks on the railway tracks in different areas of Sindh.<sup>139</sup> In 2020, the Government of Pakistan implemented a ban on the SLA along with other Sindh based militant outfits.<sup>140</sup>

### Ideology

The Sindhudesh Liberation Army (SLA) draws its ideological motives from the Sindhudesh movement initiated by GM Syed in 1960 that seeks to establish an independent state for the Sindhi people. The group also draws its ideological inspiration from the Balochistan Liberation Army.<sup>141</sup>

### Leadership

The self-exiled Shafi Muhammad Barfat, leader of the defunct Jeay Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSMM), is believed to be the head of the Sindhudesh Liberation Army (SLA). Barfat is currently living in Germany.<sup>142</sup>

### Targets

The Sindhi insurgent group, SLA, targets security forces, railways tracks, and political leaders.<sup>143</sup> The group also targets the Rangers and an office of the Ehsaas programme.<sup>144</sup> The militant group is also responsible for carrying out attack against Chinese.<sup>145</sup>

### Funding

Intelligence agencies believe that the militant group achieves political support by the JSQM-A.<sup>146</sup> The capacity of Sindh-based militant groups such as the Sindh Desh Liberation Army (SLA) and the Sindh Resistance Army (SRA) is growing, in part due to their reported alliance with Baloch separatist groups such as the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA). This alliance is supposedly based on a mutual exchange of resources, with the BLA providing training to militants of the SLA in return for logistical support for its operations in Karachi.<sup>147</sup> Police claims the group to be funded and trained by the Indian intelligence agency, RAW.<sup>148</sup>

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## 10. Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army (SRA)

### Origin

The Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army (SRA), a militant group, was formed following a schism within the Barfat-led SLA. Under the leadership of Asghar Shah, the SRA was thus established as a separate entity.<sup>149</sup>

### Ideology

The group draws its ideology from the same source as that of its parent group, the Sindhudesh Liberation Army.

### Leadership

The group is currently headed by Asghar Shah, although his family has publicly declared that they have no relation with him and accused him of misguiding the youth.<sup>150</sup>

### Targets

The Sindhudesh Republican Army (SRA) targets Politicians, targeting the Rangers and an office of the Ehsaas programme. The group has intensified its attacks on people of other provinces in various parts of Sindh, with a warning "all settlers to leave Sindh".<sup>151</sup>

### Modus Operandi

The SRA utilizes Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and bombs in their attacks, similar to other ethno-nationalist insurgent groups.<sup>152</sup> The SRA has adopted a past strategy of the Baloch Liberation Army, says Zia Ur Rehman.

### Safe Havens

Pakistan has claimed the presence of SRA leader, Asghar Shah, in Iran. Additionally, Pakistan's Counter-Terrorism Department has alleged that the perpetrator of a Saddar attack in Karachi was trained in Iran;<sup>153</sup> however, Iran has refuted these claims.<sup>154</sup>

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