

## In This Issue



- Minutes of the NIOC 42nd Advisory Board Meeting
- 4 soldiers martyred in terrorist attack along Pak-Iran border in Balochistan's Kech
- Militant attacks drop by 36pc in country as death toll stays same
- Security forces kill 2 terrorists in Waziristan operations
- 4 dead, 18 injured in blast near Qandhari Bazar on Quetta's Shahrah-i-Iqbal: police
- Unregulated weapons trade threat to peace, warns Pakistan
- 3 terrorists killed in intelligence-based operation in Bannu
- 2 policemen martyred in firing on under-construction checkpoints near Sindh's Kashmir
- Casualties from violence soar in year's first quarter
- Chinese national arrested in Pakistan's Dasu after labourers accuse him of blasphemy
- Fury of the mob
- Blast at Swat police station claims 12 lives
- Afghan Taliban ready to help US in countering IS
- Explosive arms killed over 700 civilians in 2022
- 2 soldiers martyred in exchange of fire with terrorists in KP's Khyber
- 6 Balochistan policemen martyred in Jacobabad during hostage rescue operation
- CTD official martyred in blast in Balochistan's Khuzdar
- US wants Pakistan to 'do more' for intellectual property enforcement
- HRCP report
- 7 terrorists killed as security forces repulse attacks in KP's Lakki Marwat

# NIOC's 42nd Advisory Board Meeting



NIOC Advisory Board 42nd Meeting was held on Thursday 27 April 2023 at 12 pm. The following participated: Advisory Board: Tariq Parvez, Zahid Hussain, Samina Ahmed, Manzoor Ahmed, Zubair Habib and Jawaid Akhtar. NIOC Directorate and Consultants: Tariq Khosa, Sarmad Saeed, Kaleem Imam, Azam Khan, Ammar Jaffri, Nawaz Nadeem and Hassan Sardar.

The following matters came under discussion:

- 1) CGR-NIOC will develop a proposal on Trafficking in Persons Threat Assessment (TIPTA) under the supervision of Mr Tariq Parvez.
- 2) A Presentation on Fast Parcels Study will be given to the BHC in mid-May 2023.
- 3) CGR-NIOC will participate online in the UNTOC Constructive Dialogues in Vienna during May 2023.
- 4) Consultant Kaleem Imam will write a Policy Brief on Good Governance in May 2023.
- 5) Consultant Azam Khan will write a Position Paper on TIP: Gaps and Challenges.

- 6) Nawaz Nadeem will assist Director FIA NCB Interpol in arranging the annual conference at the FIA HQ on Interpol-related issues.
- 7) NIOC Study on Countering Extremism (2021) will be disseminated to researchers and scholars by the US Library of Congress.
- 8) Director CGR Tariq Khosa and National Focal Person on UNTOC Ehsan Sadiq participated in an Intercontinental Civil Society Dialogue on 20 April 2023 on UNTOC and UNCAC. Many NGOs from Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Peru participated.
- 9) CGR-NIOC will identify Champions of Change in TOC and highlight their profiles for recognition at the national level.
- 10) An Index to measure OC will be developed by CGR-NIOC after the launch of GITOC OC Index 2023 in June this year.

## 4 soldiers martyred in terrorist attack along Pak-Iran border in Balochistan's Kech

---



The four soldiers who were martyred in a cross-border attack by terrorists in Balochistan's Kech district.

**Four soldiers were martyred on Saturday in a terrorist attack along the Pak-Iran border in the Jalgai sector of Balochistan's Kech district, according to the military's media wing.**

A press release from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said: "On April 1, 2023, a group of terrorists operating from Iranian side attacked a routine border patrol of Pakistani security forces operating along Pakistan-Iran Border in Jalgai Sector, District Kech.

"In the attack, unfortunately, four soldiers, including Naik Shair Ahmed, Lance Naik Muhammad Asghar, Sepoy Muhammad Irfan and Sepoy Abdur Rasheed, were critically injured and later embraced martyrdom."

The ISPR said that "necessary contact" with the Iranian side was being made for "effective action against terrorists" on their territory and to prevent such incidents in the future.

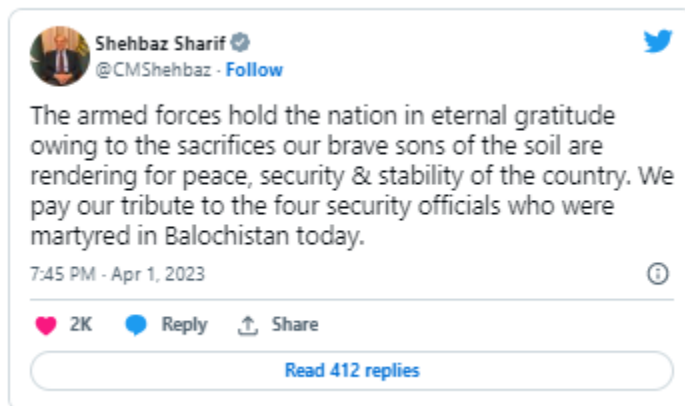
Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed grief over the incident, according to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office and paid tribute to the martyrs.

He also extended his condolences to their families and offered prayers for them.



“The sons of the soil are laying down their lives for the defence and protection of the country,” he said. PM Shehbaz maintained that ridding the country of terrorism was the national agenda.

“We will rest after defeating the menace of terrorism.”



Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah also condemned the attack and paid tribute to the martyrs.

“The sons of the country are laying down their lives to protect their land, the whole nation salutes them, the nation is united in the war against terrorism,” he tweeted, adding that “this scourge will be eradicated.”



In January, four security personnel were martyred during “terrorist activity” from across the Pakistan-Iran border in Balochistan’s Panjgur district.

The incident was roundly condemned by Pakistan’s senior officials and the Foreign Office had asked Iran to punish the culprits and ensure a thorough investigation.

SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 1, 2023

# Militant attacks drop by 36pc in country as death toll stays same

---

**Pakistan witnessed a rather peaceful March with the number of militant attacks declining as compared to February. However, the number of deaths remained almost the same, according to an Islamabad-based think tank.**

In its report, Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) stated that in March there was a 36 per cent decline in militant attacks as compared to February.

The number of attacks stood at 37 in which 57 people lost their lives and 72 others were injured. In February, 59 people were killed in 58 attacks while 134 were wounded.

The report also recorded a decline in suicide bombing in March, as only one such attack was reported, compared to three in February.

According to the province-wise data, Balochistan witnessed a 50pc decline in the number of militant attacks in March, but the death toll increased. The militants carried out 11 attacks in March, killing 28 people and injuring 35.

The lone suicide attack in March was also reported from the Bolan area of the province where 10 people lost their lives. The attack was separately claimed by the militant Islamic State group and a new outfit Tehreek-i-Jihad Pakistan.

The most significant improvement in the security situation was observed in KP's tribal districts. Six militant attacks were recorded in March against 16 in February, while the number of deaths declined from 16 to five.

Mainland KP witnessed a rise in militancy with 16 reported attacks in which 21 people were killed and 30 injured. In February, 13 attacks were recorded, killing six people and leaving eight wounded.

During March, no militant attack was reported in Punjab, while three people were killed in four attacks reported from Sindh. In February, 10 people were killed and 18 others injured in three attacks in Sindh.

No militant activity was reported from Punjab, Islamabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan in March.

## **Foiled bids**

Also in March, security forces conducted at least 25 operations and successfully foiled several attacks. In Chaman a huge cache of arms and ammunition including 10 suicide vests, 15 anti-tank mines, IEDs, was seized from a compound.

In another operation, security forces killed a facilitator of the Feb 11 suicide attack in North Waziristan. According to the report, the IBOs resulted in the arrest of 35 suspected militants, while 38 were shot dead.

**SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 3, 2023**

## Security forces kill 2 terrorists in Waziristan operations

---



A photo of Naik Fazal Janan who was martyred in a South Waziristan operation.

**Security forces have killed two terrorists in separate gun battles during operations in Waziristan, the military's media wing said.**

The press release from the Inter Services Public Relations said that a "fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists in general area Razmak, North Waziristan district. Own troops effectively engaged the terrorist's location. Resultantly, one terrorist was sent to hell."

It added that weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the slain terrorist.

The ISPR said that in another "fierce encounter" in South Waziristan district's general area of Karama, "own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location, killing one terrorist".

"However, during intense exchange of fire, Naik Fazal Janan (age 32 years, resident of Hangu district) having fought gallantly, embraced martyrdom."



The ISPR added that sanitisation of the area was being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area.

“Pakistan’s security forces are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve,” the press release reads.

Two terrorists killed, one arrested in Balochistan’s Mach

A separate press release said that from Friday onwards an intelligence-based operation was initiated to intercept a terrorist group operating in Balochistan’s general area of Mach, west of Sibi, which was linked with targeting civilians in the area besides harassing coal mine owners to extort money from them.

“Based on credible information, multiple ambushes have been laid along different routes in the area frequented by terrorists for last two days. Resultantly, a party of three terrorists has been intercepted while moving towards their hideout. On being blocked, they opened fire on the security forces.

“During ensuing exchange of fire, two terrorists were sent to hell while another has been apprehended; a cache of arms and ammunition has also been recovered,” the ISPR said.

It added that a clearance operation was under way in the area to nab their remaining accomplices.

“Pakistan Army, in step with the nation, remains determined to thwart attempts at sabotaging peace, stability and progress of Balochistan.”

**SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 9, 2023**

## 4 dead, 18 injured in blast near Qandhari Bazar on Quetta's Shahrah-i-Iqbal: police



Police officials surround a damaged automobile in Quetta following an explosion.

At least four people – including two police personnel – were killed and 18 others sustained injuries in a blast near a police vehicle parked next to Qandhari Bazar on Shahrah-i-Iqbal in Quetta, police and hospital officials said.

Quetta Civil Hospital spokesperson Dr Wasim Baig confirmed the number of victims to Dawn.com, saying that the deceased also included a minor girl.

According to Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Captain (retd) Zohaib Mohsin, the target of the blast was a police vehicle.

“The explosives were planted in a motorcycle,” he said, adding that the injured also included women and children.

“According to initial information, three to four kilos of explosives were used in the blast,” the police official said. “Due to the blast, two vehicles, including the police van, were damaged.”

TV footage showed a damaged police automobile surrounded by a number of personnel. Several ambulances were also seen leaving the site of the explosion.

Separately, the SSP said there was another attack on the police as Sariab Station House Officer Ehsanullah Marwat’s vehicle was targeted at Munir Mengal Road near Sariab Phatak.

He said two passers-by were injured in the blast from an improvised explosive device and were taken to Civil Hospital for treatment. The SSP added that the bomb disposal squad and a heavy police contingent reached the scene and were collecting evidence.

A day earlier, two cops were martyred and one was injured in an attack by unknown assailants in the Killi Spine area of the Kuchlak district.

The policemen, who belonged to the Eagle Squad, were patrolling on a motorcycle when the assailants opened indiscriminate fire, leaving three injured. Quetta DIG Ghulam Azfar Maheser had confirmed that the cops were targeted by terrorists.

#### Condemnations

According to the Associated Press of Pakistan, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned the incident and prayed for the deceased while extending his condolences to their families.

He directed officials to provide medical facilities to the injured and sought a report about the attack from the authorities.

The prime minister said the “nefarious designs” of the terrorists would be foiled.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo also strongly condemned the blast and expressed his grief over the loss of lives.

The chief minister sought a report from the inspector general of police on the incident and security measures in the city.

“Those who shed the blood of innocent people in the holy month of Ramazan do not deserve to be called human beings,” he said and directed the concerned department that action should be taken against terrorist elements and their patrons.

“The security measures in the city should be made more effective in order to ensure the protection of public lives and their properties,” he said.

The chief minister extended his condolences and sympathies to the families of the deceased.

Bizenjo directed that the best treatment facilities be provided to the injured by imposing an emergency in the hospitals.

Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar too directed the health department to provide medical facilities to the victims and instructed the law enforcement agencies to utilise all available resources to arrest the culprits involved.

He also prayed for the forgiveness of the deceased and for the speedy recovery of the injured.

**SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 10, 2023**

# Unregulated weapons trade threat to peace, warns Pakistan

---

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan warned the international community on Monday that unregulated sale of weapons and military equipment was a threat to world peace.

Speaking at a UN Security Council meeting on the need to regulate weapon sales, Pakistani representative Ambassador Aamir Khan said that ultra-nationalist and hegemonic policies of some states had further complicated the situation.

In a 2020 report to the Security Council, UN Under-Secretary-General Izumi Nakamits said the spread of almost one billion small arms and light weapons remained a major global threat. From 2010 to 2015, they contributed to some 200,000 deaths every year.

Ms Nakamits, who is also the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament, briefed the council on Monday as well.

In a similar report, Amnesty International highlighted another key issue: reckless production, and stockpiling of weapons. The report noted that 80 per cent of the world's weapons exports were from six countries – China, France, Germany, Russia, the UK and the United States.

“In most cases, peace and security is threatened by the ultra-nationalist and hegemonic policies of some states, particularly those that are turbocharged by the extremist ideologies,” Ambassador Khan said.

“These states seek to build up conventional and nuclear weapons capabilities ... to threaten neighbors, impose regional hegemony, and promote great power aspirations. They also indulge in behavior that seeks to oppress their minorities, and also crush requests for self-determination.”

Such states were emboldened by lack of global accountability and generous supply of advanced weapons and technologies from multiple sources, Ambassador Khan added.

The Pakistani envoy said that the causes of war were even more important to address than the instruments of war. “To deal with the growing and unacceptable human cost that these weapons inflict, particularly in situations of foreign occupation and suppression of the right to self-determination, a comprehensive and integrated approach is required,” he added.

Ambassador Khan identified illicit trade, brokering, diversion, lax regulations, and weak management of weapons stockpiles as the main factors for the easy availability of weapons.



“Every day, innocent people, including women and children, fall victim to the murderous designs of terrorists, criminals and insurgents using these weapons,” he said. “Peacekeepers, police, and security forces bear the brunt of this in the line of duty.”

Agreeing with the general spirit of the debate, the Pakistani envoy noted that these were major enablers of criminal violence and conflict. The nexus between organised crime, drug trafficking and the illegal arms trade adds a layer of complexity to a daunting challenge, he said.

The UN Programme of Action, the International Tracing Instrument and the Firearms Protocol provide a normative framework to address the use, regulation, and impact of these arms. All States need to intensify efforts to fully implement these mechanisms.

**SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 11, 2023**

## 3 terrorists killed in intelligence-based operation in Bannu

---

**Three terrorists were killed during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Nurur area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu district, the army's media affairs wing said.**

A press release issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that security forces conducted an IBO on the "reported presence of terrorists".

"During conduct of the operation, fierce fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists. Resultantly, all three terrorists were sent to hell," the statement said.

The ISPR said the militants were "actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces and killing of innocent citizens", adding that weapons and ammunition were also recovered from their possession.

"Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate menace of terrorism from the area," the ISPR said.

On Sunday, two alleged terrorists were killed and another was arrested by security forces during an IBO in Mach area of Bolan district. On April 8, security forces killed two terrorists in separate gun battles during operations in Waziristan.

**SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 11, 2023**

## 2 policemen martyred in firing on under-construction checkpoints near Sindh's Kashmore: police

---



An injured police official lies at a hospital bed after firing on a police checkpoint in Kashmore district in Sindh on April 15.

Two policemen were martyred and four injured after “dacoits” opened fire on under-construction checkpoints in the kutchha area of Ghailpur near Sindh’s Kashmore district, police said.

According to Kashmore-Kandhkot Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Irfan Ali Sammo, new police checkpoints were being set up in the area when “dacoits suddenly opened fire at police”.

He told Dawn.com that as a result, police officials Sabir Ali and Ahad Ali Domki embraced martyrdom while four others, including Bakhshapur Station House Officer (SHO) Gul Muhammad Mehr, were injured.

The injured were taken to a hospital in Rahim Yar Khan while the martyred officials’ bodies were shifted to Civil Hospital Kashmore, the SSP added.

He further said that following the incident, a large police contingent of police from the entire district was dispatched to the kutchra area, where an exchange of fire between police and dacoits was under way.

In a similar incident on April 3, outlaws had attacked a large police contingent that was conducting an operation in the Durrani-Mahar riverine area of Kandhkot district to free hostages.

An SHO was martyred and five others were injured in the incident.

**SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 15, 2023**

# Casualties from violence soar in year's first quarter: report

---

**ISLAMABAD:** At least 854 people were killed or wounded in militant attacks and counterterrorism operations in the first quarter of this year, a number that was half of what witnessed during the entire 2022, a report showed.

According to the report, prepared by the Centre for Research and Security Studies, the number of deaths was 358 and that of injuries was 496, which resulted from as many as 219 terrorist attacks and counterterrorism operations during the January-March period.

Most deaths – 245 (or 68 per cent) – were reported from KP, followed by Balochistan's 64 (18pc), and then in Sindh, Punjab and Islamabad.

The report said that 2023 started with the most fatal January for security forces in a decade, following a similar trend from the previous year, which ended with the decade's deadliest Dec for them.

With a death toll of 111, January recorded the second-highest number of fatalities of security personnel in a single month, second only to July 2014 with 118 fatalities.

However, violence-related fatalities of civilians dropped by more than half to 63 in the first quarter compared to 136 a year ago.

"Most concerningly, the fatalities of security and government officials almost doubled, from 88 in the first quarter of last year to 167 in the first quarter this year," the report said.

The terrorist attacks against security personnel, government officials, and civilians accounted for most incidents of violence and counter-violence that took place in the first quarter. The outlawed TTP carried out at least 22 attacks causing 107 fatalities.-

SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 16, 2023



# Chinese national arrested in Pakistan's Dasu after labourers accuse him of blasphemy

---



The photo shows the Dasu dam site.

**A Chinese national, working at the Dasu Hydropower Project in Upper Kohistan, was taken into police custody after he was accused of blasphemy by labourers at the site.**

Komila SHO Naseeruddin, while confirming the arrest, said that a first information report (FIR) has been registered against the accused.

The complaint, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, invokes Section 295-C [use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet (Peace be Upon Him)] of the Pakistan Penal Code. It was registered on the complaint of Gulistan and Yasir – both of whom are heavy vehicle drivers.

The complaint, lodged at the Komila police station, said that on Sunday night police official Jehanzeb was informed about a mob trying to break into a Chinese camp near Barseen.

It stated that locals had staged a protest and damaged the camp's site number 6.

"After receiving the information, a police party reached the site, took control of the area and safely shifted the accused to the Komila police station," the complaint said.

However, it stated that in the early hours of Monday, a large number of people reached Komila and once again blocked the Karakoram Highway. They also shouted slogans.

The protesters opened the Karakoram Highway for traffic after the police assured them of the registration of the FIR. Local religious leaders also urged the demonstrators to call off the protest.

89 killed over blasphemy allegations since 1947

In February 2022, a middle-aged man was stoned to death by a mob over the alleged desecration of the Holy Quran in a remote village of Khanewal district.

The killing had come on the heels of an identical incident in Sialkot, where a Sri Lan-kan engineer was lynched by factory workers on Dec 3, 2021, on blasphemy charges.

In January 2022, the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) in a report stated that as many as 89 citizens were killed in 1,415 accusations and cases of blasphemy in the country since independence. The report said that from 1947 to 2021, 18 women and 71 men were extra-judicially killed over blasphemy accusations. The allegations were made against 107 women and 1,308 men.

Out of the total, 1,287 citizens were accused of committing blasphemy from 2011- 21. "The actual number is believed to be higher because not all blasphemy cases get reported in the press," the report had said, adding more than 70 per cent of the accused were reported from Punjab.

The report had said misuse of blasphemy laws is often described by courts as an unlawful act. It had said the Islamabad High Court had previously suggested to the legislature to amend the existing laws to give equal punishment to those who level false blasphemy accusations.

The report had said the origin of the blasphemy laws dated back to the British era when these were promulgated in 1860.

Initially, four blasphemy laws – section 295, 296, 297 and 298 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) – were introduced and in 1927 section 295 was supplemented by 295-A after the case of Ilmuddin, a Muslim carpenter, who killed Mahashe Rajpal for publishing a blasphemous book.

**SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 17, 2023**

## Fury of the mob

---

**ANOTHER chapter in our history of religious violence was written on Sunday when a Chinese national working at the Dasu hydropower project came close to being lynched by a frenzied mob.**

Labourers at the site were reportedly enraged over his objections to “precious time” being lost on account of prayer breaks and accused him of committing blasphemy. They then went and incited others in nearby villages about what had taken place; a large crowd gathered and tried to storm the Chinese camp where the foreign national was present. Fortunately, the cops arrived and managed to whisk him away to the police station from where he was airlifted to Abbottabad.

On Monday, the man was charged with blasphemy by an ATC and sent on 14-day judicial remand. The only silver lining in this episode was that another horrific murder like that of the Sri Lankan national, Priyantha Kumara, was avoided. In December 2021, Mr Kumara, a factory manager in Sialkot, was set upon by a hundreds-strong mob after being accused of blasphemy. In a bestial orgy of violence, they beat him to death and set his body on fire.

Six years ago, Mashal Khan was lynched by a mob of fellow students on the same pretext. Videos of the gruesome act laid bare the ugly reality of what decades of a state-sponsored triumphalist view of religion – propagated through the pulpit and sections of the media – can do to a society. It later emerged that certain university officials were infuriated by Mashal’s courageous activism about corruption in the administration department, etc.

An allegation of blasphemy was all it took to bring this young man’s life to an end. That was all it took in 2014 for a raging mob to burn alive a Christian couple, both of them brick kiln workers, and leave their three young children orphaned. That is all it takes in today’s Pakistan to destroy lives, uproot families or entire minority communities from their homes. Even the mentally handicapped have not been spared the fury of the ‘righteous’.

Although in far too many instances, the perpetrators have been let off, in some more recent cases – notably the murders of Mashal and Kumara – severe punishments were handed down. And yet, the bloodletting in the name of faith has not stopped. Punishment has clearly not been a deterrent. Nor has the law against blasphemy prevented vigilante killings. According to a study, 84 people were extrajudicially killed on allegations of blasphemy by March 2021 and around 1,450 people accused of the crime. Turning back the tide will take a Herculean effort, one that requires the state to abjure the strategy of using religion for political ends. Recent signs are not encouraging. But unless it is done, this society will continue to devour its own.

SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 19, 2023

## Blast at Swat police station claims 12 lives



SWAT: Security personnel gather at the site after explosions occurred inside the Kabal police station, which also houses the office of the Counter Terrorism Department.

SWAT / LAKKI MARWAT: At least a dozen people, including police officials, lost their lives in a powerful explosion inside the Kabal police station.

According to hospital sources, at least 57 people – including three civilians – sustained injuries in the blast.

The explosion that rocked the police station, which reportedly occurred on the premises of the Counter Terrorism Department office, came hours after a raid by the CTD in Lakki Marwat resulted in the killing of three suspected militants.

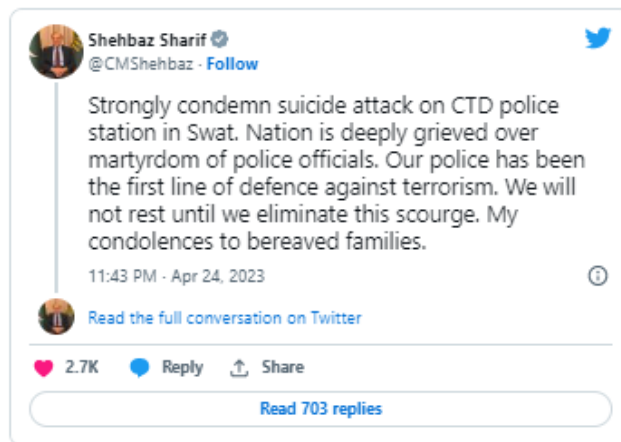
District Police Officer Swat Shaf-iullah stated that the blast took place at about 8:20pm inside the police station. However, the nature of the explosion could not be independently confirmed by the time this report went to press.

However, speaking to media persons later at night, DIG Malakand Nasir Mehmood Satti said the incident was not a result of any terrorist activity or suicide blast but “carelessness” as per the initial investigation. He said the explosion occurred at a weapon storage facility inside an old office of the Counter Terrorism Department on the premises of the police station.

The police officer, however, said a probe was still underway in light of emerging evidence.

### 20 trapped under rubble

The blast, which shattered the roof of the police station, the CTD office, and a mosque located inside the station, was also followed by a fire. According to senior police officials, at least 20 policemen were trapped under the roof, which collapsed due to the intensity of the explosion.



Imdad Khan, an injured policeman at Saidu Teaching Hospital (STH) said that he was inside the kitchen with other policemen when the powerful blast ripped through the building. “Portion of the kitchen building collapsed. A huge fire also erupted after the blast,” he told Dawn, adding that he heard multiple blasts.





In a comment on the number of blasts, the DIG said since the explosion occurred at the depot due to ammunition stored there, minor blasts also followed.

Emergency was declared in health facilities soon after the explosion and Rescue 1122 teams rushed to the spot. Security was put on high alert following the explosion and the area was cordoned off by law enforcement agencies.

Meanwhile, the Swat Olasi Pasoon announced a protest against the blast in Mingora today.

Three killed in Lakki

Among the three slain militants was the alleged killer of a retired military officer who was shot dead at his residence by armed men on Sunday.

“A total of three militants including Nouman, who had targeted retired colonel Muqarab Khan, were gunned down in an exchange of fire at the house of a militant commander Zubair of the Tipu Gul group in Paharkhel Tal area within jurisdiction of Lakki Marwat police station,” a senior CTD official disclosed.

The police said the ex-army officer, who had served in an intelligence agency, was receiving guests at his Hujra on the second day of Eidul Fitr when two unidentified armed men entered the Hujra and fired at him.

Col Khan was killed while the armed men who had held others in the Hujra hostage at gunpoint managed to escape from the scene, the officials said.

Law enforcement personnel attempted to chase the assailants but they sped away on a motorbike towards Darga, a riverine forest.

On Monday, the officials said, Bannu CTD personnel received information about a hideout of militants. As they reached the hideout, the militants opened fire on them, they said, adding that it seemed around 10 heavily armed militants were well prepared for the encounter.

“Three militants, including Nouman, were killed and another militant, Tehseenullah, sustained injuries,” a senior CTD official said.

However, he said, the CTD believed other militants had sustained injuries and could be present in the area terming it the reason why a search operation was launched in the area by police and the security forces.

The officials said Inspector Javed Iqbal and Constable Irfan of the CTD were seriously wounded and shifted to the Combined Military Hospital, Bannu, and Khalif Gulnawaz Hospital.

Senior CTD officials said that following the search operation, it was confirmed that an organised militant group was involved in the targeted killing of the retired military officer.

**SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 25, 2023**

# Afghan Taliban ready to help US in countering IS: report

---

**WASHINGTON:** The Afghan Taliban are ready to cooperate with the US in combating the militant group Islamic State (IS) as they see jihadists 'a threat to their own powerbase,' Washington Post reported.

The Afghan government has been battling IS since August 2021 when it seized power after a 20-year-long war with the US and its allies, the report said while quoting US defence officials.

A senior defence official told the Post that "the duelling groups of religious fanatics are openly warring," with the IS, attacking Afghan Taliban's targets with the latter retaliating by targeting the former's hideouts across Afghanistan.

"I would never want to say that we had mortgaged our counterterrorism to a group like the Taliban, but it's a fact that, operationally, they put pressure on ISIS-K," the official said. "In a strange world, we have mutually beneficial objectives there."

Some part of the Post's report was based on a leaked Pentagon assessment, claiming that the IS was once again using Afghanistan as a staging ground for plots against America, Europe and Asia.

The report portrayed the resurrected threat as a growing security concern.

When asked to comment, a US defence official acknowledged that "the [Afghan] Taliban has served as a check on ISIS" since 2021, when the group took over Kabul.

The Pentagon assessment cited specific plans to target churches, embassies, business centres and the World Cup soccer tournament. The report said that The White House declined to verify the assessment's authenticity, although it was labelled top-secret and bore the logo of the Defense Department's organisations.

The classified documents were posted online as part of a wider leak by Massachusetts Air National Guard member Jack Teixeira, who federal authorities said shared them with friends on a private Discord server.

Current and former US officials told the Post that the leaked reports support earlier warnings that terrorist cells could return to life in Afghanistan.

The Biden administration, however, defended its counter-terrorism policies in a statement to the newspaper.

The United States “maintains the ability to remove terrorists from the battlefield without permanent troop presence on the ground,” National Security Council Spokesperson Adrienne Watson told the Post.

Nathan Sales, the State Department’s coordinator for counterterrorism told the Post that IS “has the ambition to attack American interests in the region and ultimately the US homeland itself.”

He urged Washington to make an urgent plan to attack the group’s leadership and infrastructure.

The Afghan Taliban has rejected the US intelligence assessment as incorrect.

A spokesperson for the Taliban’s Political Office, Suhail Shaheen, said IS “has been suppressed” and the report “does not reflect ground realities in Afghanistan.”

“Such reports reflect personal desires” of their authors, he said, adding: “The fact is that the [IS] has no physical presence in Afghanistan as it had during the invasion.”

**SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 25, 2023**

# Explosive arms killed over 700 civilians in 2022: report

---

**Pakistan experienced the highest number of civilian casualties due to use of explosive weapons in 2022, says a report by Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), a London-based charity, recording 721 civilian casualties due to use of explosive weapons in 126 incidents in the country.**

This marked a 62 per cent increase from 445 civilian casualties recorded across 100 incidents in 2021, says the Explosive Violence Monitor 2022. Moreover, it means the rate of civilian harm per incident increased from 4.5 to 5.7, according to the report which was released on Monday.

Most notably, incidents of explosive weapon use by non-state actors rose by 31pc last year, from 71 to 93 incidents, and civilian casualties of such attacks rose by 47pc from 376 to 554.

According to the report, Pakistan appears ninth in the list of top ten countries that were most affected in 2022. Ukraine, Afghanistan and Syria topped the list, while India appears in 11th place and Gaza in 13th.

While the number of recorded incidents of state-perpetrated explosive violence remained the same as 2021, with three incidents recorded, the rate of harm from state attacks increased from 1 to 18.3, with three civilians harmed in such attacks in 2021 compared to 55 last year, the report says.

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) caused 71pc (515) of civilian casualties in Pakistan over the past year, while ground-launched weapons caused 194 civilian casualties, and mines caused 12 (a small drop from 15 in 2021).

The Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) are the predominant known perpetrators of explosive violence in the country, and in November 2022 the TTP called off a ceasefire with the Pakistani government, suggesting that non-state actors will continue to increase their activity in Pakistan, the London-based organization says.

The report reveals that explosive weapons were responsible for over 31,000 deaths and injuries across 4,322 incidents globally in 2022. Out of the total number of casualties, over 20,000 were civilians, accounting for 66pc.

The report highlights that explosive weapons used in populated areas were responsible for 90pc of civilian casualties, while other areas accounted for only 12pc. It recorded 19,632 civilians killed

and injured in populated areas globally, which represented 94pc of globally reported civilian deaths and injuries.

The report shows that civilian casualties from the use of explosive weapons soared by 83pc last year, predominantly because of the war in Ukraine, according to AOAV.

A significant proportion of explosive violence incidents recorded by AOAV in 2022 went unclaimed, and could not be attributed to a specific actor. In 8pc (341) of all incidents it was unclear from reporting whether a state or non-state actor was responsible.

The AOAV recorded 2,645 incidents attributed to state actors, which resulted in a total of 19,859 casualties. Of these 71pc (14,166) of were civilians.

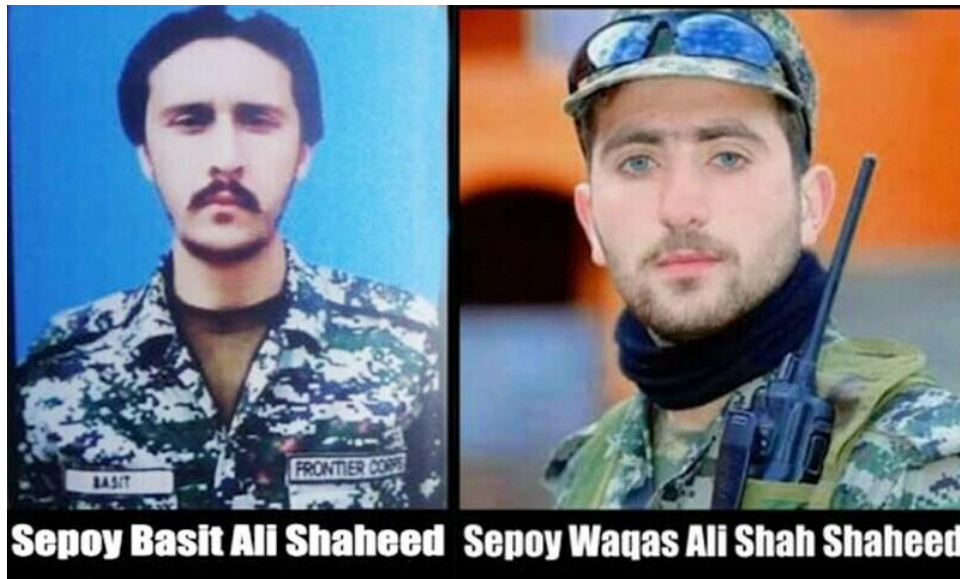
Russia was the predominant state perpetrator of civilian harm last year, causing 9,372 civilian casualties across 1,686 incidents. Civilians accounted for 93pc of all 10,083 recorded casualties from Russian explosive violence. Seventeen of those incidents took place in Syria, where Russian explosive weapons caused 82 civilian casualties, and the rest occurred in Ukraine.

The second highest state perpetrator of explosive violence was Myanmar, with 206 recorded incidents and 766 resulting civilian casualties. Other states identified as key perpetrators of civilian harm from explosive violence included Ukraine (600), Saudi Arabia (507 civilian casualties), Turkey (459), Ethiopia (436), and Syria (324).

**SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 25, 2023**



## 2 soldiers martyred in exchange of fire with terrorists in KP's Khyber



Sepoys Basit Ali and Waqas Ali were martyred in an exchange of fire with terrorists in KP's Khyber district.

Two Pakistan Army soldiers were martyred in the Tirah area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Khyber district during a gunfight with terrorists, the military's media affairs wing said.

The statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) identified the martyrs as 26-year-old Sepoy Waqas Ali Shah from Charsadda and 24-year-old Sepoy Basir Ali from Peshawar.

"On April 25, 2023, an exchange of fire took place between own troops and terrorists in general area Tirah, Khyber district. Own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location," the ISPR said.

"Resultantly, two terrorists were sent to hell and four terrorists were injured. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed terrorists," it stated, adding that sanitisation of the area was being carried out to eliminate other militants in the area.

"Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve," the military's media wing added.

The exchange of fire comes amid a surge in terrorist activities across the country, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, since the outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) ended its ceasefire with the government in November.

In his maiden press briefing a day earlier, ISPR Director General Maj Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry revealed that at least 293 people were martyred and 521 were injured in 436 terrorist incidents over the past year.

In KP, 192 people were martyred in 219 terror activities, while 80 people lost lives in 206 incidents in Balochistan, 14 people in five attacks in Punjab, and seven in six terrorism incidents across Sindh.

He said that the army and law enforcement agencies carried out 8,269 intelligence-based operations during the previous year in which 1,378 suspected terrorists were apprehended and 157 were killed.

The DG ISPR also said that overall 137 security personnel were martyred and 117 injured in anti-terror operations in the ongoing year.

**SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 26, 2023**

## 6 Balochistan policemen martyred in Jacobabad during hostage rescue operation



Bodies of martyred policemen are brought to a hospital in Jacobabad after 6 policemen were martyred in a dacoit attack on April 26.

**Six policemen were martyred on Wednesday while two were injured in an attack by dacoits near the area of Jageer in Sindh's Jacobabad district while on their way to rescue a hostage, police officials said.**

Jacobabad Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Dr Sumair Noor Channa confirmed the development to Dawn.com, adding that the slain police officials were from the Usta Muhammad police station located in Balochistan's Jaffarabad.

SSP Channa said that the martyred officials included Usta Muhammad station's sub-inspector Tayyab Umrani and constables Nisar Ahmed and Abdul Wahab.

Naseerabad division Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Munir Ahmed Sheikh said that the joint operation will continue till the hostage, Furqan Soomro, has been recovered.

The DIG added that Soomro – the son of Aslam Soomro, a rice mill owner in Usta Muhammad town – had been kidnapped at gunpoint a day ago from Jaffarabad.

He further told Dawn.com that the gangs of “Mittu Shah and Jakhrani” were involved in the kidnapping, adding that the Sindh government had already placed a bounty of Rs3 million on their heads.

DIG Sheikh said that the operation had been expanded with the cooperation of Sindh police and more personnel were on stand-by if needed.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo expressed his grief, saying that the “police inspector and three constables embraced martyrdom while performing their duties”.

He commended the martyred for “facing the enemy with bravery”, and prayed for their families to have patience.

Bizenjo further said he hoped that the Sindh government would soon bring to justice those responsible for the incident.

Earlier this month, a station house officer was martyred while five others, including a deputy superintendent of police, were injured after dacoits attacked a large police contingent in Sindh’s Kandhkot district to free hostages.

The Sindh and Punjab police have launched a grand joint operation against gangs of dacoits entrenched in the riverine areas of upper Sindh and southern Punjab. The Pakistan Army, Rangers and other security personnel are also aiding the police forces.

**SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 26, 2023**



## CTD official martyred in blast in Balochistan's Khuzdar



Aftermath of Counter Terrorism Department SHO Sharbat Khan Umrani's car after he was martyred in a blast in Khuzdar on April 27.

**The station house officer (SHO) of the Khuzdar Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) police station was martyred in an explosion targeting his vehicle.**

Khuzdar Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Fahad Khosa told Dawn.com that the incident took place near Jhalawan Medical College located on the National Highway.

The SSP said that the official, identified as Sharbat Khan Umrani, was on his way to work when the explosion took place. He said a bomb had been fitted in the CTD official's vehicle.

SSP Khosa said police and security forces promptly arrived at the location of the incident along with the bomb disposal squad which was assessing the scale of the blast.

He said that the martyred SHO's body had been shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital.

Meanwhile, Balochistan Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langove condemned the incident and expressed his grief at the CTD official's martyrdom.

He said that the country's fight against terrorism would continue until the last militant was taken care of, adding that Pakistan would overcome any challenge with the public's cooperation.

On April 11, four Quetta CTD personnel were martyred after an intense gun battle with terrorists in the Killi Spin area of Kuchlak town. One alleged terrorist was also killed during the operation.

.

**SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 27, 2023**

# US wants Pakistan to 'do more' for intellectual property enforcement

---

**Pakistan has made significant progress in improving intellectual property (IP) legislation, but a lot still needs to be done in the area of enforcement.**

This was stated in a new report by the United States Trade Representative which kept Pakistan on the 'watch list' for 2023 while acknowledging that the country "maintained a positive dialogue with the US on intellectual property matters and promoting IP protection and enforcement".

USTR released its 2023 special report on intellectual property protection and enforcement on Wednesday.

The report stated that Pakistan was amending its IP laws and encouraged the government to seek stakeholders' input on draft laws.

In February this year, the US-Pakistan Trade and Investment Framework (Tifa) Ministerial meeting deliberated improvements to Pakistan's IP laws and the progress on joining IP treaties.

The US also welcomed Pakistan's interest in joining international treaties, such as the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT) and WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT), collectively known as the WIPO Internet Treaties and the Patent Cooperation Treaty, the report said.

Pakistan's Intellectual Property Organisation (IPO) continued to make efforts to coordinate among various government bodies involved in IP.

Nonetheless, serious concerns remained, particularly in the area of counterfeiting and piracy was widespread in pharmaceuticals, IT, digital content and software sectors. Reports of numerous cable operators providing pirated content were also prevalent, the report noted.

Pakistan's establishment of IP Tribunals in three cities in 2016 was a welcome development, but plans to create new tribunals in other cities have not moved forward.

Moreover, litigants with experience in these tribunals have raised concerns over the lack of capacity, inconsistency of rulings, nominal fines, a general lack of expertise among tribunal judges, and confusion over standards by which courts review tribunal decisions, according to the report.

The US expressed concern over the proliferation of counterfeit pharmaceuticals manufactured, sold and distributed by numerous trading partners.



The report said Pakistan has not provided criminal enforcement authorities with the power to take action against counterfeit goods. While optical disc piracy continues in many countries, including China, India, Mexico, and Pakistan, online piracy is the most challenging copyright enforcement issue in many foreign markets.

A 2019 report, titled 'Impacts of Digital Video Piracy on the US Economy', estimated that global online video piracy costs the US economy at least \$29.2 billion and as much as \$71 billion in lost revenue each year.

Delays in obtaining registrations present a significant obstacle to protecting IP rights in foreign markets, with stakeholders identifying Iraq, Pakistan, and South Africa as countries with extreme delays in processing trademark applications.

**SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 28, 2023**

# HRCP report

---

IN its flagship annual report on the state of human rights in the country, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has painted a sorry picture of where the state actually stands – more than 75 years after independence – on civil liberties, religious freedoms and other fundamental human rights guaranteed by the Constitution. The report, which examines the rights situation in the country in 2022, is a blunt reminder of how the pillars of state – the legislature, judiciary and the executive – have failed in their duty to protect citizens from violence and political and economic exploitation. Particularly at risk are such vulnerable groups as religious minorities, women, sub-national groups, workers and children, while state institutions continue to violate each other's territory, undermining their institutional capability and credibility. The report specifies how the (ongoing) political and economic turmoil in the country has had a disastrous impact on the human rights situation, and points to the resurgence of terrorism that claimed 533 lives last year. The state's growing intolerance towards dissenting opinions, free speech and the freedom of assembly has resulted in a large number of enforced disappearances – mostly in Balochistan – as well as the arrest of journalists, social media influencers, political workers and politicians linked to the opposition. Many were subjected to custodial torture while some are facing sedition charges.

Likewise, the inability of the state and its different organs to rectify discriminatory legislation and implement the state's writ and laws to convict perpetrators has led to an escalation in threats to religious freedom and sexual violence against women and children. The scale of violence and discrimination against trans persons was aggravated by the backlash against the hard-won Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018. Incidents of mob lynching also appear to have risen, underscoring the fact that intolerance and a lack of respect for the laws of the land at the state level have now completely permeated our social and public life. HRCP has been highlighting these deep-rooted issues afflicting our state and society for decades. But successive governments have failed to address them because the protection of vulnerable segments of society and human rights doesn't figure on the agenda of political parties. It, therefore, isn't surprising that, as pointed out by HRCP chairperson Hina Jilani, the human rights community is losing the space which it had gained after a long struggle.

SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 28, 2023

## 7 terrorists killed as security forces repulse attacks in KP's Lakki Marwat

---

**Seven terrorists were killed as security forces repulsed three militant attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Lakki Marwat district, the military's media wing said, adding that three soldiers were also martyred during the exchange of fire.**

According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), security forces repulsed the attacks which took place at different locations within a short span of time.

In the first incident, the ISPR said that "a motorcycle-borne suicide bomber exploded himself near security forces post in Lakki Marwat followed by a fierce fire exchange between own troops and terrorists".

"Own troops effectively engaged the terrorists as a result of which four terrorists were sent to hell," the statement said.

The ISPR said that the remaining two incidents took place in the district's Amir Kalam and Tajbi Khel areas during which another three militants, including terrorist commander Musa Kha, were eliminated.

"Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the seven killed terrorists," the ISPR said. It said that three soldiers, identified as Naib Subedar Taj Mir, Havaldar Zakir Ahmed and Sepoy Abid Hussain, were martyred during the intense exchange of fire.

"Sanitisation of the areas is being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area. Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve," the statement said.

The attacks come amid a surge in terrorist activities across the country, especially in KP and Balochistan, since the outlawed militant group Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan ended its ceasefire with the government in November.

In his maiden press briefing on Tuesday, ISPR Director General Maj Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry revealed that at least 293 people were martyred and 521 were injured in 436 terrorist incidents over the past year.

In KP, 192 people were martyred in 219 terror activities, while 80 people lost lives in 206 incidents in Balochistan, 14 people in five attacks in Punjab, and seven in six terrorism incidents across Sindh.

He had said that the army and law enforcement agencies carried out 8,269 intelligence-based operations during the previous year in which 1,378 suspected terrorists were apprehended and 157 were killed.

The DG ISPR had also said that overall 137 security personnel were martyred and 117 injured in anti-terror operations in the ongoing year.

**SOURCE: DAWN, APRIL 28, 2023**