

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	734
Land:	Pakistan
Kilde:	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF)
Titel:	Briefing Notes Summary. Pakistan – January to June 2024
Udgivet:	19. juli 2024
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	21. oktober 2024



Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Pakistan – January to June 2024

30 June 2024

08 January 2024

Ex-Prime Minister Imran Khan barred from National Assembly election

Pakistan's election commission has disqualified imprisoned ex-Prime Minister Imran Khan and most of the candidates of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party from the National Assembly elections. The politician has been embroiled in a series of political and legal disputes since he was ousted as Prime Minister in April 2022. In August 2023, he was initially arrested for, among other things, unlawfully selling state gifts during his term of office from 2018 to 2022 and was subsequently sentenced to three years in prison for corruption (cf. BN of 07.08.23). According to media reports, this sentence was suspended, but Khan remained in prison in connection with charges of leaking state secrets. In addition, the interim government took action against leading PTI members following Khan's arrest, triggering demonstrations (cf. BN of 18.09.23). On 22.12.23, the Supreme Court granted Khan bail on charges of leaking state secrets. It is still unclear whether he has been released from prison. On 07.01.24, access to well-known social media platforms was blocked in order to prevent a fundraising telethon organised by the PTI. Meanwhile, on 05.01.24, the Senate approved a resolution to further delay national elections, which for the moment is not binding. Elections were originally due to be held in November 2023 but were recently postponed until 08.02.24 due to the fresh demarcation of constituencies as part of a census.¹

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: girls' school torched; attack on barbers; bomb blast

On 30.12.23, unknown perpetrators set a girls' school on fire in the Bannu district. A note was allegedly left, threatening "significant harm" if the school was not closed down. No one has claimed responsibility. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has targeted girls' and women's institutions in the past.

On 02.01.24, unidentified perpetrators shot and killed six barbers in Mir Ali in the tribal district of North Waziristan, a former stronghold of the TTP near the border with Afghanistan.

On 08.01.24, five people were killed and more than 20 others injured in the Bajaur tribal district when a roadside bomb exploded, hitting a police vehicle.²

Activist for the rights of the Baluch ethnic group arrested

In mid-December 2023, a Baluch activist wrote on social media that she had been arrested during a protest march from the province of Balochistan to the capital, Islamabad. She said the protest had been violently dispersed by security forces, and other demonstrators had been injured and some had also been arrested. The demonstrators were predominantly women who were drawing attention to police violence and arbitrariness against the Baluch ethnic group in the province.³

Data on the security situation in 2023; in particular in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

According to data provided by the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), at least 645 militant attacks were carried out across the country in 2023 (2022: 380), in which 976 people were killed (2022: 539) and 1,354 injured (2022: 836). Conversely, the security forces also increased the number of operations against militant groups, in which 612 suspected militants were killed and at least 625 were arrested.

As in previous years, most security-related incidents in 2023 occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, although not predominantly in the tribal districts belonging to the province, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tribal Districts, but rather in the heartland of KP. PICSS counted 423 incidents in KP, in which 621 people were killed, including 307 members of the security forces, 222 civilians and 92 suspected militants. 980 people were injured, including 525 members of the security forces, 405 civilians and 50 suspected militants.⁴

15 January 2024

Supreme Court paves the way for Nawaz Sharif to run in the election

Pakistan's Supreme Court has lifted the lifetime ban on politicians with convictions contesting elections, paving the way for former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to run in the parliamentary elections, which are expected to take place on 08.02.24. Following the decision handed down on 08.01.24, the ban on convicted politicians standing for election will now apply for five years.⁵

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: attacks on security forces

On 09.01.24, five policemen were killed when their vehicle was caught in a roadside booby trap. The policemen were on their way to provide security to polio vaccination teams. Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has claimed responsibility for the attack.

On 10.01.24, a dozen armed fighters attacked a police checkpoint in the Kohat region. Three police officers and a civilian who was caught between the fronts were killed in the exchange of fire. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, and the perpetrators managed to escape.

On 10.01.24, two policemen were killed by TTP fighters in Bannu.⁶

22 January 2024

Elections 2024: backdrop; Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz launches election campaign in Punjab

The election campaign for the parliamentary elections scheduled for 08.02.24 is being overshadowed by allegations of manipulation due to the crackdown on the former ruling party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the imprisonment of former Prime Minister Imran Khan. The Supreme Court has banned the PTI from using its previous electoral symbol; party members are only allowed to run independently using their own symbols. In a country that has a literacy rate as low as 60%, electoral symbols are important since they enable voters to recognize the parties on the ballot paper.

On 15.01.24, the election campaign of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, led by former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who previously served several non-consecutive terms in office, was launched with a rally in the city of Okara in the province of Punjab which will decide the election. On 18.01.24, Sharif made his first public appearance at an election rally held at the stadium in Hafizabad. He said his party's declared aim is to boost the economy and end unemployment.⁷

Attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

On 19.01.24, a physician was killed by unknown perpetrators in the tribal district of Bajaur. The victim is said to have been the coordinator of the polio vaccination campaign in the region. Several security personnel who had been guarding a polio vaccination team had already been killed on 09.01.24 (cf. BN of 15.01.24).

On 19.01.24, unknown perpetrators in the North Waziristan tribal district shot dead five truck drivers who were not residents of the region, according to media reports.⁸

29 January 2024

Arrests at Pashtun Tahafuz Movement protest

According to media reports, security forces have arrested dozens of participants at a protest rally organised by the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement. They were demanding the release of the detained leader of the movement. The movement is critical of the Pakistani military and campaigns for the rights of the estimated 35 million ethnic Pashtuns in the country, most of whom live in the areas along the Afghan border.⁹

Arrests at Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf election rally in Karachi

According to agency reports, at least two dozen supporters of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party were arrested at an election rally in Karachi on 28.01.24. News agencies reported that around 2,000 supporters of former Prime Minister Imran Khan's party had gathered.¹⁰

Statement on the Pakistani nationals killed in Iran

On 28.01.24, the government condemned the killing of nine Pakistani nationals who are suspected to have been killed by militants in the neighbouring Iranian province of Sistan and Baluchestan on 27.01.24 and called for an immediate investigation by the Iranian authorities.¹¹

05 February 2024

ISIS attack in Balochistan

On 30.01.24, at least four people were killed and six injured in the city of Sawai in the province of Balochistan in an explosives attack claimed by the ISIS offshoot in the region shortly after a rally organised by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party.¹²

Fighting in Balochistan

At least four security personnel and six insurgents were killed in Balochistan province on the night of 30.01.24. According to an official spokesperson, Balochistan Liberation Army fighters attacked military installations in the city of Mach with guns and rockets.

A report issued by the broadcaster Geo News on 02.02.24 states that 24 militants were killed in three days of subsequent military operations, adding that four security personnel were also killed in the operations.¹³

Attack on police station in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

On the night of 05.02.24, dozens of armed militants attacked a police station in the Dera Ismail Khan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. According to the authorities, at least 10 police officers were killed and several were injured in a firefight that lasted several hours. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.¹⁴

12 February 2024

Balochistan: ISIS attacks near polling stations

In the run-up to the parliamentary elections held on 08.02.24, around 30 people were killed and dozens injured in two bomb attacks carried out near polling stations in the province of Balochistan on 07.02.24. The ISIS offshoot that is active in the region has claimed responsibility for both attacks.¹⁵

Balochistan: attacks by the Balochistan Liberation Army

Insurgents are said to have attacked several government facilities, including a prison, in Balochistan province in a series of well-coordinated attacks at the end of January 2024, according to independent news agencies. Although there were no casualties according to official reports, these sources report at least 50 people were killed as a result of an attack in which insurgents are said to have entered a military facility after an explosion. It was reported that the Balochistan Liberation Army had claimed responsibility for the attack. The insurgents had also taken control of some areas in the region.¹⁶

No governing majority after parliamentary elections; protests and arrests

According to the Election Commission, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party of imprisoned former prime minister Imran Khan won the most seats in the nationwide elections held on 08.02.24, together with the independent candidates running for them, which won 102 seats. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), which dominates Punjab and is led by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, won 73 seats, followed by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), which dominates Sindh, with 54 seats. The remaining seats were distributed among a number of smaller parties. For example, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, a regional party from Karachi that is open to a coalition with the PML-N, surprisingly managed to win 17 seats. The PML-N and the PPP led by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari issued a declaration of co-operation in order to bring about political stability. A simple majority of 169 seats is required to form a workable coalition. After the elections, several parties called for protests due to suspected vote rigging. Supporters of the PTI and the Jamaat-e-Islami party protested in Karachi on 10.02.24. After the elections, thousands more protesters took to the streets in several cities because the counting of votes was delayed, which was officially attributed to restrictions imposed on telecommunications on election day for security reasons. There were isolated reports of arrests on the fringes of the protests. The situation has since eased.¹⁷

19 February 2024

Talks between PML-N and PPP to form government; resignation due to election rigging

Following the nationwide elections held on 08.02.24, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) have agreed to form a coalition government. Shehbaz Sharif, the PML-N president, will be the sole candidate for the office of prime minister. At a press conference held last week, it was confirmed that Nawaz Sharif's younger brother, Shehbaz Sharif, who previously held the office of prime minister for 16 months between 2022 and 2023, will take over again. Asif Ali Zardari, co-chairman of the PPP, will be nominated for the office of president. At the same time, the PPP has announced that it will not take up any ministries in the coalition government. These will mainly be filled by members of the PML-N and smaller coalition parties. Zardari's son, Bilawal Bhutto, co-chairman of the PPP, wants to avoid too close an involvement of his party in the coalition government in view of the continuing broad popular support for former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, which formally won the most seats with independent candidates (cf. BN of 12.02.24).

On 17.02.24, a senior official in Rawalpindi, Liaquat Ali Chatha, admitted that the election results had been manipulated and resigned from office. According to his statement, the Chief Election Commissioner and a judge of the Supreme Court were also involved in rigging the elections. He said that he himself had falsified the results of independent candidates who would otherwise have been ahead by 70,000 to 80,000 votes.¹⁸

26 February 2024

Military operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

On 20.02.24, the Pakistani military announced that an armed militant had been killed in firefights during an operation in Dera Ismail Khan. A week earlier, nine militants and one soldier were killed in two military operations in Tank district and South Waziristan.¹⁹

04 March 2024

Reactions following the parliamentary elections

On 29.02.24, the newly elected lower house of Pakistan's National Assembly convened for its first session, during which the newly elected members of parliament were sworn in. The parliamentary elections were overshadowed by allegations of rigging (cf. BN of 19.02.24). As expected, former Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was re-elected head of government by the parliamentary majority on 03.03.24.

On 22.02.24, Pakistan's media regulatory authority blocked the social media platform X. The government had already cut off mobile phone and internet services in many parts of the country during election day on 08.02.24.

On 23.02.24, the religious fundamentalist party Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan organised a demonstration in Karachi (Sindh province) against the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Qazi Faez Isa.

On 24.02.24, dozens of protesters in Karachi, who had gathered outside the Sindh Provincial Assembly, were arrested. Several parties, including the Grand Democratic Alliance, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl, Jamaat-e-Islami, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and Muhajir Qaumi Movement, had called for the protests. The provincial government of Sindh then imposed a ban on gatherings.

On 28.02.24, several parties, including members of the Hazara Democratic Party, the Pashtunkhwa National Awami Party, the National Democratic Movement and the Awami National Party, demonstrated in Quetta, Balochistan province, against the outcome of the national parliamentary elections.²⁰

Continuous heavy rain claims dozens of lives

Since 29.02.24, at least 29 deaths have been reported in various regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on the border with Afghanistan as a result of continuous heavy rainfall. Houses have collapsed and landslides have blocked roads. According to a statement issued by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority on 03.03.24, many of the people killed were women and children. Gilgit-Baltistan and parts of Balochistan province were also affected by landslides as a result of persistent heavy rainfall.²¹

25 March 2024

Bomb blasts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan

On 10.03.24, two people were killed and another person was seriously injured when a motorcycle packed with explosives detonated in Peshawar.

According to the Pakistani military, seven soldiers were killed and 17 were injured in an attack that targeted an army post in North Waziristan near the Afghan border on 16.03.24. The army did not name the militant group behind the attack. However, a newly formed militant group, Jaish-e Fursan-e Muhammad, has claimed responsibility for the assault.

On 20.03.24, armed fighters attacked an administrative complex of the deep-water port of Gwadar on the Arabian Sea. According to the authorities, all eight militants were killed by security forces. In a subsequent statement, the separatist Balochistan Liberation Army claimed responsibility for the attack.

On 21.03.24, two soldiers were killed and 15 others were injured in a bomb explosion near a security convoy in the Dera Ismail Khan district. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack. According to media reports, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan is suspected of being behind the attack.²²

Airstrikes and clashes along the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan

On 18.03.24, Afghanistan's Taliban government reported that two airstrikes carried out by the Pakistani army on Afghan territory had claimed the lives of five women and three children. In retaliation, Pakistani security forces along the border were shot at with heavy weapons. In a statement it released, the Pakistani Foreign Ministry said that Pakistan had carried out counter-terrorism operations in the border regions with Afghanistan because attacks had previously been launched on Pakistani territory from Afghan soil. This account is disputed by the Afghan side.²³

08 April 2024

Arrest after "honour killing" in Punjab

According to police reports from 31.03.24, a man was arrested in Punjab province after committing a filmed "honour killing". The footage allegedly shows the 22-year-old victim being killed by her brother in the presence of her father. In large parts of Pakistani society, there is a strict "code of honour" holding women accountable to their male relatives when making decisions about education, career, and marriage.²⁴

Attacks and assaults in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkwa and Islamabad

On 25.03.24, an attack was carried out on a naval base in Turbat (Balochistan province) in which at least one soldier was killed. The authorities informed on 26.03.24 that all of the attackers were killed by security forces. The separatist Baloch Liberation Army has claimed responsibility for the attack.

On 31.03.24, two soldiers were killed and four more people injured in another attack claimed by the Baloch Liberation Army on workers of an oil company accompanied by security forces.

On 26.03.24, at least five Chinese workers and their Pakistani driver were killed in a suicide attack on a bus in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack. The Pakistani Taliban (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, TTP) have denied involvement. In addition to the TTP attacks, also the separatist Baloch Liberation Army has carried out attacks against Chinese citizens living in Pakistan.

On 05.04.24, three policemen were killed in two separate attacks on security forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In Lakki Marwat district, unidentified individuals shot at a police vehicle and killed two security personnel. In South Waziristan, unknown attackers shot dead the security escort of a polio vaccination team.

On 04.04.24, an Afghan journalist was injured by three armed attackers in Islamabad.²⁵

AI: Appeal to stop the repatriation of Afghan women and girls

The Pakistani government is planning to return hundreds of thousands more Afghan refugees in April 2024 if they do not leave voluntarily. Since October 2023, over 500,000 Afghan nationals without valid residence documents have already been expelled or returned. Amnesty International (AI) has called on the Pakistani government to stop the repatriation of Afghan women and girls to neighbouring Afghanistan. On 27.03.24, AI's South Asia office stated on social media that the forced return of Afghan refugees from Pakistan would be putting women and girls at unique risk, as it would seriously curtail their rights to education, work, and freedom of movement, and in many cases expose them to imminent risk of physical violence.²⁶

15 April 2024

Attacks in Balochistan

On 13.04.24, unidentified gunmen blocked the motorway from Quetta towards Iran near Nushki/Sultan Charai in Balochistan province and shot at vehicles. According to the authorities, eleven people were killed. Initially, a car that had not stopped at the blockade was shot at, leaving two people dead and five others injured. Then the assailants dragged nine workers from a bus and killed them. The resource-rich province of Balochistan borders Afghanistan and Iran and has repeatedly been the scene of attacks by Islamist groups and armed separatist organisations.²⁷

22 April 2024

Attack on customs officials in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Police reports say that on 18.04.24, unidentified individuals shot dead five customs officers in D. I. Khan district. Two civilians who happened to be present at the time of the attack were also killed in the incident.²⁸

Attempted attack on Japanese workers in Karachi

On 19.04.24, Japanese workers at an automobile factory in Karachi (Sindh province) survived an attempted assassination. The main perpetrator was killed when his explosive waistcoat detonated. A suspected accomplice was shot dead by security personnel. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

In the past, there have been repeated attacks on foreign nationals, particularly those of Chinese origin, who are working for projects financed by China.²⁹

29 April 2024

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Abduction of judge; security situation

Media reports of 28.04.24 say that a judge responsible for the South Waziristan district was kidnapped by more than a dozen armed men in the district of Tank, which is part of the administrative unit of Dera Ismail Khan. The court for South Waziristan is located there because of the continuing insecurity in the former tribal areas, especially those bordering Afghanistan.

For the time period January to March 2024, the regional police statistics of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province documented a total of 25 armed attacks in Dera Ismail Khan, 17 of them in Tank district alone.³⁰

06 May 2024

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Abducted judge released; security situation in Central Asia

The judge abducted on 28.04.24 in Tank district has been released (cf. BN of 29.04.24). No group has officially claimed responsibility for the offence. The abductee named the Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP) as responsible.

Pakistan ranks fourth on the Global Terrorism Index 2023, overtaking Afghanistan and Iraq after two decades of more terrorist attacks in the region.

Terrorism and extremism remain present in Central Asia. The Taliban's nearly three-year rule in Afghanistan has led to an increase in security-related incidents, particularly in neighbouring Central Asian countries. The Afghan Taliban's links to Islamist networks have continued, in particular to regional groups such as the TTP, the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and al-Qaeda. It is believed that places of retreat and training camps for these networks still exist in Afghanistan.³¹

Attack on journalists in Balochistan

On 02.05.24, a Pakistani journalist and chairman of the Khuzdar Press Club was killed along with two other people in an attack in Balochistan's Khuzdar district. Surveillance camera footage showed an assassin on a motorbike attaching an explosive device to the car of those killed, which then exploded. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack. Khuzdar was once listed by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) as one of the ten most dangerous places in the world for media professionals. On the RSF's Press Freedom Index 2024, Pakistan ranks 152 out of 180 countries analysed.³²

Dismantling of protest camp at Chaman-Spin Boldak border crossing

On 04.05.24, the spokesperson of a protest camp at the Chaman-Spin Boldak border crossing stated that the paramilitary Frontier Corps took advantage of the absence of the protesters who had been there since October 2023 to demolish the camp at the beginning of May 2024 and set fire to the makeshift tents. When the peaceful protesters returned, they were shot at; one individual was killed, and more than a dozen people were injured in the incident. The demonstrators, mainly traders, were demanding that the government abolish the new regulation requiring them to have valid documents to cross the border. In October 2023, the government had abolished the 19th century customary law of 'easement rights', which allowed members of some communities along the Durand Line to cross the border freely. This was heavily criticised by members of the Pashtun communities on both sides of the border due of the financial losses it caused.³³

13 May 2024

Security situation

On 09.05.24, unidentified gunmen shot dead seven hairdressers from neighbouring Punjab province near the port city of Gwadar in the province of Balochistan. Armed separatist groups in Balochistan have a history of killing people from Punjab. According to media reports, the local police do not believe the deadly attack on the hairdressers was related to their work. Meanwhile, the Balochistan Liberation Army has claimed responsibility for an incident in April 2024, in which nine workers from Punjab province were abducted from a bus and killed (cf. BN of 15.04.24).

According to reports from 07.05.24, the attack on 26.03.24 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where five Chinese engineers and a Pakistani driver were killed (cf. BN of 08.04.24), had been planned in Afghanistan. The Pakistani government presented evidence of this to the Afghan Taliban, but they have not responded.

According to reports from 12.05.24, a policeman was killed during a protest against rising costs for food and fuel in the Pakistani-controlled part of Kashmir.³⁴

27 May 2024

Punjab: Attack on Christian settlement following alleged Koran desecration

On 25.05.24, an angry crowd attacked a Christian settlement in Sargodha in Punjab province for alleged blasphemy. A member of the Christian community had reportedly desecrated the Koran. At least one house and a small shoe factory were set on fire. In addition, several members of the Christian community, including the accused himself,

were physically abused and security forces were pelted with stones. A large contingent of police then cordoned off the settlement and dispersed the crowd. Eleven police officers were reportedly injured, and more than two dozen people arrested. According to a Christian organisation, video footage shows that the police did not initially intervene. The police deny this. On 25.05.24, the authorities said that around a dozen members of the Christian community, including the accused, were rescued. Investigations are ongoing.³⁵

03 June 2024

Security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan

On 26.05.24, two soldiers were killed and six Pakistani Taliban fighters shot dead in a military operation near Peshawar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province. On 27.05.24, five Pakistani soldiers and seven Taliban fighters were killed in fighting in Khyber district. Also on 27.05.24, ten more Taliban fighters were killed during a military operation in South Waziristan district.

According to media reports on 30.05.24, Iranian border guards fired at a vehicle carrying Pakistani nationals near the border town of Mashkel in Balochistan province, leaving four people killed and two others injured. Neither Iran nor Pakistan have officially commented on the incident.

On 31.05.24, an improvised explosive device hit an army vehicle in Bannu district, near North Waziristan in KP killing four soldiers and injuring another three. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack.³⁶

10 June 2024

Attack on security forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

On 09.06.24, six Pakistani security forces were killed in an explosion and subsequent gun battle with armed militants at a security post near Sultan Khel in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. The government and the military are carrying out counter-terrorism operations in the region.³⁷

17 June 2024

Punjab: Two Ahmadis killed; hostilities against Ahmadis in Mandi Bahauddin

On 08.06.24, two Ahmadis were shot dead 20 minutes apart on the street for religious reasons in Saad Ullah Pur, Mandi Bahauddin district of Punjab province. Police arrested the suspected perpetrator, who is still underage and an orthodox Sunni Koran student of the Barelvi movement Ahle Sunnat. The madrassa (Islamic teaching centre) he attended apparently teaches content directed against Ahmadis. In this context, a spokesperson for the Ahmadiyya community has reported increasing hostility towards Ahmadis in Mandi Bahauddin. There is increasing incitement against Ahmadis in the community. Pregnant Ahmadi women have been directly threatened and there has been a smear campaign with death threats against the appointment of an Ahmadi as a policeman in Mandi Bahauddin.

In addition, two videos with anti-Ahmadi rhetoric have emerged in the city of Jhelum. In one of the videos, a person close to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Labbaik party calls for violence against Ahmadis. In the other, the speaker threatens to kill Ahmadis who perform the religious ritual of animal sacrifice.

A report published by the National Commission of Human Rights Pakistan in April 2024 shows that the Ahmadiyya community remains the minority group most affected by violence and discrimination.³⁸

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Suspected sectarian-motivated attack in Kurram

On 16.06.24, four people were killed and two others injured in a bomb explosion in the Kurram tribal district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack. Media reports suggest that it was an intra-confessional sectarian attack.³⁹

Pakistani government launches nationwide anti-terror campaign

According to media reports on 23.06.24, Pakistan's top civil and military leadership, led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, has decided to launch a new multi-pronged nationwide counter-terrorism campaign titled "Azm-e-Istehkam" (translated as "Determined for Stability") in view of the deteriorating security situation in the country. The announcement comes as Pakistan faces almost daily attacks on security personnel and increasing pressure from China to ensure the safety of its workers in the country. Last year saw the highest number of terrorist attacks in Pakistan in six years, with most of the attacks concentrated on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces, which border Afghanistan.⁴⁰

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Mob violence escalates after blasphemy allegations

On 20.06.24, a Pakistani tourist from Punjab province was beaten to death and his body set on fire by an angry crowd after being accused of blasphemy in the Swat Valley in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Local media report that the crowd had earlier stormed the police station where the victim had been taken. The rioters also burnt down three police cars and set the police station on fire. This followed an earlier previous dispute with several people who accused the victim of burning pages of the Koran.⁴¹

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Burial of slain Pashto-speaking journalist buried

On 19.06.24, a funeral was held for a journalist shot dead by unidentified assailants in Landi Kotal on the Khyber Pass, near the border crossing with Afghanistan in Torkham, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The journalist had worked for the Pashto-language broadcaster Khyber TV. More than 1,000 people attended the funeral in Landi Kotal. After the funeral, the chairman of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa journalists' association told reporters that the association would hold another rally on 21.06.24 at the Khyber Gate (Bab-e-Khyber) in Jamrud, west of the provincial capital Peshawar, to demand better security for journalists.⁴²

Quetta: Ten people from Punjab abducted by Balochistan Liberation Army

On 21.06.24, media reported that the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) in Quetta province abducted ten people from a popular tourist destination (Shaban) near the provincial capital. The group reportedly surrounded the area and then checked ID cards. People from Punjab province were targeted for abduction. A spokesman for the group said that the Fateh sub-unit of the BLA carried out the operation.⁴³

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Imprint

Published by

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge,
90461 Nürnberg

ISSN

2943-1557

Valid as of

06/2024

Printed by

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge

Design

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge

Reference source

Publikationsstelle Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge
www.bamf.de/publikationen

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