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PAKISTAN

“Their Future is at Stake”

Attacks on Teachers and Schools in Pakistan’s
Balochistan Province

HUMAN
RIGHTS
WATCH



“Their Future is at Stake”
Attacks on Teachers and Schools in
Pakistan’s Balochistan Province

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Human Rights Watch
350 Fifth Avenue, 34th floor
New York, NY 10118-3299 USA
Tel: +1 212 290 4700, Fax: +1 212 736 1300
hrwnyc@hrw.org

Poststraße 4-5
10178 Berlin, Germany
Tel: +49 30 2593 06-10, Fax: +49 30 2593 0629
berlin@hrw.org

Avenue des Gaulois, 7
1040 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: + 32 (2) 732 2009, Fax: + 32 (2) 732 0471
hrwbe@hrw.org

64-66 Rue de Lausanne
1202 Geneva, Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 738 0481, Fax: +41 22 738 1791
hrwgva@hrw.org

2-12 Pentonville Road, 2nd Floor
London N1 9HF, UK
Tel: +44 20 7713 1995, Fax: +44 20 7713 1800
hrwuk@hrw.org

27 Rue de Lisbonne
75008 Paris, France
Tel: +33 (1) 43 59 55 35, Fax: +33 (1) 43 59 55 22
paris@hrw.org

1630 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 500
Washington, DC 20009 USA
Tel: +1 202 612 4321, Fax: +1 202 612 4333
hrwdc@hrw.org

Web Site Address: <http://www.hrw.org>



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“Their Future is at Stake”

Attacks on Teachers and Schools in Pakistan’s Balochistan Province

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Map



I. Summary

A total of 10 teachers have left [the school] so far.... Six people from this [school] have been assassinated since 2006—most of them during the last 12 months.... My profile has all the required characteristics to be targeted: teacher, Shia, and a settler. It is better for me and my family that we leave as soon as possible.

—Teacher, location withheld, spring 2010

The most affected ethnic group currently is the Baloch because it is they who are losing teachers. It is their children whose education is affected, and it is their future that is at stake.... Of course the settlers, and Punjabis particularly, have [also] been directly affected.... It is their people being killed.

— Senior provincial government official, Quetta, spring 2010

Teachers, professors, and school administrators have found their lives increasingly under threat in Pakistan's western province of Balochistan. Between January 2008 and October 2010, suspected militant groups targeted and killed at least 22 teachers and other education personnel in the province. Militants have also threatened, bombed, or otherwise attacked schools, resulting in injuries, deaths, property damage, and curtailed education for Balochistan's children and youth. In 2009, government schools were open for only 120 days, compared with around 220 days in the rest of Pakistan.

Fearing for their safety, many teachers—particularly ethnic Punjabis and Shiite Muslims and other targeted minorities—have sought transfers, further burdening what is already the worst educational system in Pakistan. Since 2008, more than 200 teachers and professors have transferred from their schools to the relatively more secure capital Quetta, or have moved out of the province entirely. Nearly 200 others are in the process of making such transfers. New teachers are hard to find, and replacements often less qualified than predecessors. In Baloch areas of the province, schools are often under or poorly staffed, and many remaining teachers say they are so preoccupied with declining security their teaching has been adversely affected.

This report, based on interviews with teachers, government officials, journalists, nongovernmental organizations, and school children, describes attacks on Balochistan's educational facilities, teaching personnel, and students as part of broader political, religious,

and cultural divisions. It also considers the consequences of such attacks for education in the region, including pervasive fear, fewer school days, and hemorrhaging of qualified teachers.

Killing people of a certain ethnicity or religion who have dedicated their lives to teaching only undercuts opportunities and outcomes in a province already struggling to educate its populace and achieve greater development, making a bad situation even worse. There is no acceptable justification for targeted killings of teachers and other education personnel, or attacks on schools. Beyond the killings' simple unlawfulness, the militant groups that are responsible demonstrate disturbing willingness to make the education of the province's children a pawn of their armed agenda.

Education falls in the crosshairs of three distinct violent conflicts in Balochistan. The first is a nationalist conflict, in which militant Baloch groups such as the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and the Baloch Liberation United Front (BLUF) seeking separation or autonomy for Balochistan have targeted Punjabis and other minorities, particularly in the districts of Mastung, Kalat, Nushki, Gwadar, Khuzdar, and Quetta. While individuals from all professions have been the victims of such "targeted killings," teachers and students constitute a significant proportion of victims because militant groups view schools and educational personnel, particularly ethnic Punjabis, as representatives of the Pakistani state and symbols of perceived Punjabi military oppression of the province.

Often no group claims responsibility for attacks, and few perpetrators have been apprehended and prosecuted. Those that do claim responsibility for such violence often justify it as a response to perceived lack of Baloch control over resources, under-representation in the national government, and retaliation for abuses by state security forces against the Baloch community. For example, the recent surge in killings can be traced to the 2006 assassination of prominent Baloch tribal leader Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, and the murders of three prominent Baloch politicians in April 2009 by assailants believed to be linked to the Pakistan military. Apparent militant nationalist groups have threatened school officials, demanding that they stop teaching Pakistani history, flying the Pakistani flag, and having children sing the national anthem. The BLA claimed responsibility for the shooting death of Anwar Baig, a senior teacher killed in Kalat in June 2009 because he supposedly opposed recitation of the Baloch nationalist and hoisting the nationalist flag instead of the Pakistani flag. .

The second distinct conflict is a sectarian one, in which militant Sunni Muslim groups have attacked members of the Shia community, especially members of the Persian-speaking Hazara community. Such sectarian attacks appeared to increase in 2009, and occur mainly in Quetta and its neighboring districts.

The third conflict involves armed Islamist groups attacking those who act contrary to their interpretation of Islam. Armed Islamist militants have increasingly committed violence in opposition to the content and manner of local education, particularly that of girls and young women. There have also been several reported instances of demands that schools stop teaching girls and boys together, and that students and teachers adopt more local and conservative dress.

Human Rights Watch calls on armed groups in Balochistan to immediately cease all attacks against education personnel and other civilians, and schools; on the provincial government of Balochistan to bring to justice those responsible and to take measures to prevent such attacks and mitigate their impact; and on the federal government of Pakistan to support these efforts.

This is the first of two Human Rights Watch reports on the situation in Balochistan. The second report documents the pattern of involvement by Pakistan security forces in the enforced disappearances of ethnic Baloch in the province.

II. Recommendations

To Armed Groups in Balochistan

- Immediately cease all attacks and threats against teachers, professors, education personnel, and other civilians, and against schools.
- Immediately issue a public statement directing group members to respect the lives of teachers and to end attacks on schools.
- Take appropriate disciplinary action against group members who order or participate in such attacks.

To the Provincial Government of Balochistan

- Fully investigate threats or attacks on teachers and schools, and prosecute those responsible.
- Establish systems to compensate for lost school days, such as holding extra teaching periods for core subjects.
- Institute remedial training for under-qualified teachers.
- Establish mechanisms for temporary provision of education for schools that have a sudden shortage of teaching staff because of emergency transfers and other problems resulting from teacher insecurity.
- Promptly form an Inter-Departmental Working Group that includes representatives of the Departments of Education, Youth Affairs, Women Development, Public Safety Commission, and Social Welfare, and the Chief Minister Inspection Team. The Working Group should:
 - Visit each village or town having security problems, as evidenced for example by high numbers of teacher transfers, and meet separately with teachers, school principals, local education committees, students and parents, village council leaders, and local police to determine suitable steps to enhance teacher and school security.
 - Based on these consultations, publish a list of “lessons learned” with recommendations on appropriate government response.
 - Designate a senior official to oversee and implement high-level monitoring and tracking of each threat or attack against a teacher or school, in order to identify early-warning signs and suitable responses.

To the Federal Government of Pakistan

- Cooperate with authorities in Balochistan to create an advance rapid response system when there are attacks on schools, so that these facilities are quickly repaired or rebuilt, and destroyed educational material replaced so children can return to school as soon as possible. During reconstruction, students should be provided education through alternative means and, where appropriate, psychosocial support.
- Ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which prohibits as a war crime intentionally directing attacks against buildings dedicated to education— provided they are not military objectives—during international and internal armed conflicts.

To the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

- Establish a mechanism in cooperation with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other UN agencies to monitor attacks on education and other abuses committed against children in Balochistan.

III. Methodology

This report is based on research that Human Rights Watch conducted in April and May 2010 in Balochistan. Our researcher conducted interviews with 23 people, including three children ages 14 to 17. Human Rights Watch interviewed teachers from both government-run and private schools, students, victims' family members and friends, government officials, journalists, and representatives from local and international NGOs.

Interviews were conducted in Urdu individually and, in a few instances, in small groups at the preference of the interviewees. No one interviewed received compensation for providing information.

Pseudonyms have been used to protect the anonymity of interviewees who unanimously requested their real names not be used due to security considerations or because they were government employees. Pseudonyms may not match the ethnicity, tribe, or religion of the interviewee. The exact dates of interviews, the location of interviews, as well as additional identifying details have sometimes been withheld due to security concerns.

IV. Background

Children and youth in Balochistan have long endured the worst educational opportunities and outcomes of any of Pakistan's four provinces. This situation can be attributed to numerous factors, including Balochistan's extreme poverty, widespread corruption, poor governance, and gender-based discrimination, all of which have been exacerbated over several decades by the province's endemic violence. However, recent ethnic and sectarian violence, particularly attacks on teachers and schools, has made a poor educational system even worse.

Context

Balochistan, Pakistan's western-most province, borders eastern Iran and southern Afghanistan. It is the largest of the country's four provinces in terms of area (44 percent of the country's land area), but the smallest in terms of population (5 percent of the country's total). According to the last national census in 1998, over two-thirds of its population of nearly eight million people live in rural areas.¹ The population comprises those whose first language—an important marker of ethnic distinction in Pakistan—is Balochi (55 percent), Pashto (30 percent), Sindhi (5.6 percent), Seraki (2.6 percent), Punjabi (2.5 percent), and Urdu (1 percent).²

There are three distinct geographic regions of Balochistan. The belt comprising Hub, Lasbella, and Khizdar in the east is heavily influenced by the city of Karachi, Pakistan's sprawling economic center in Sindh province. The coastal belt comprising Makran is dominated by Gwadar port. Eastern Balochistan is the most remote part of the province. This sparsely populated region is home to the richest but largely untapped deposits of natural resources in Pakistan including oil, gas, copper, and gold. Significantly, it is the area where the struggle for power between the Pakistani state and local tribal elites has been most apparent.³

Balochistan is both economically and strategically important: not only does the province border Iran and Afghanistan, it hosts a particular ethnic mix of residents, and is allegedly

¹ Census of Pakistan 1998, Balochistan Provincial Report; and World Bank, *Balochistan Economic Report: From Periphery To Core*, Volume II, 2008.

² Census of Pakistan 1998, Balochistan Provincial Report.

³ Robert G. Wirsing, "Baloch Nationalism And The Geopolitics Of Energy Resources: The Changing Context Of Separatism In Pakistan," *Strategic Studies Institute*, United States Army War College, April 2008, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub853.pdf> (accessed November 22, 2010).

home to the so-called Quetta Shura of the Taliban in the provincial capital Quetta.⁴ The situation is further complicated by the large number of foreign states with an economic or political stake in the mineral-rich province, including the United States, China, Iran, India, and the United Arab Emirates.⁵

The province has historically had a tense relationship with Pakistan's government, in large part due to issues of provincial autonomy, control of mineral resources and exploration, and a consequent sense of deprivation. Under President Gen. Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's military ruler from 1999 until 2008, the situation deteriorated markedly.⁶ Two assassination attempts on Musharraf in 2005 and 2006 during visits to Balochistan resulted in a crackdown on Baloch nationalists by armed forces and Military Intelligence (MI), its lead intelligence agency in the province. These operations ultimately led to the killing in August 2006 of influential tribal chieftain Nawab Akbar Bugti and 35 of his close followers.

Since 2005, Pakistani human rights organizations have recorded numerous serious human rights violations by security forces, including extrajudicial executions, torture, enforced disappearances, forced displacement, and excessive use of force.⁷ According to the Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, violence in 2005 around Dera Bugti district alone displaced around 6,000 people and killed scores.⁸ The total number of people displaced from all districts remains unknown, with estimates ranging from tens to hundreds of thousands.⁹ After Musharraf's ouster in 2008, Pakistan's Interior Ministry estimated that 1,100 Baloch had "disappeared" during his rule.¹⁰ To date, the government has only uncovered the fate of a handful of these people.¹¹

⁴ Ibid. The Quetta Shura is a militant organization composed of top leadership of the Afghan Taliban. It formed after US-led forces attacked the Taliban in Afghanistan in November 2001 and its senior leadership escaped into Pakistan.

⁵ Ibid. See also Maha Atal "China's Pakistan Corridor," *Forbes Asia*, May 10, 2010, <http://www.forbes.com/global/2010/0510/companies-pakistan-oil-gas-balochistan-china-pak-corridor.html> (accessed November 22, 2010).

⁶ See Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos* (New York: Viking, 2008), pp. 283-287.

⁷ Human Rights Commission of Pakistan "Human Rights Violations: Conflict In Balochistan," August 2006, <http://hrqp-web.org/pdf/Conflict%20in%20balochistan--%20Complete.pdf> (accessed November 22, 2010).

⁸ "Pakistan: Tens of Thousands Displaced by Army Operations Against Insurgent Groups," *Internal Displacement Monitoring Center*, October 10, 2006, p. 7, [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/6CEF209F30020F37C1257203004E6189/\\$file/Pakistan%20-October%202006.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/6CEF209F30020F37C1257203004E6189/$file/Pakistan%20-October%202006.pdf) (accessed November 22, 2010).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2009* (New York: Human Rights Watch 2009), Pakistan chapter, <http://www.hrw.org/en/world-report/2009/pakistan>.

¹¹ Asian Human Rights Commission, "Pakistan: More than 168 children have disappeared from Balochistan, a war crime tribunal should be constituted," February 2, 2010, <http://www.ahrchk.net/statements/mainfile.php/2010statements/2395/> (accessed November 22, 2010).

Armed militant groups in Balochistan are responsible for targeted killings and destroying private property. In the past several years, they have increasingly targeted non-Baloch civilians and their businesses, as well as major gas installations and infrastructure.¹² They have also struck police and security forces and military bases throughout the province.¹³

Militancy in Balochistan has been fuelled by ethnic Baloch anger over the Pakistani government's efforts to harness local mineral and fossil fuel resources, maintain large numbers of troops in the province, and construct the Gwadar deep-sea port at the mouth of the Persian Gulf with non-Baloch workers.

The Pakistani military charges that Baloch militants receive arms and financial support from India.¹⁴ While India consistently denies these allegations, Pakistani officials say that India's role in stoking unrest in Balochistan is illustrated by the scale and sophistication of recent attacks on Pakistan interests, alleged confessions of captured militants, and past evidence of support by "foreign" powers for separatist elements.¹⁵

In December 2009 Pakistan's newly elected civilian government, in an effort to bring about political reconciliation in the province, passed the *Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan* ("Beginning of Rights in Balochistan") package of constitutional, political, administrative, and economic reforms. It noted the province's "sense of deprivation in the political and economic structures of the federation" and past failure to implement provisions of the 1973 Pakistan Constitution that sought to empower the provinces.¹⁶

The package aims, among other things, to delegate a range of federal areas of authority to the Balochistan government, and requires federal authorities to obtain provincial government consent with respect to major projects. It seeks to redress the province's socio-economic disparity compared to the rest of the country by increasing Baloch employment in the civil service, giving provincial and local government authorities a greater share of resource industry revenues, and compensating communities displaced by violence. It also

¹² "Pakistan Fails to Curb Violence in Balochistan," *Sify*, July 6, 2010, <http://sify.com/news/pakistan-fails-to-curb-violence-in-balochistan-news-international-khgqOpbaide.html> (accessed November 22, 2010).

¹³ Syed Talat Hussain, "Regime of Fear," *Newsline*, April 21, 2010, <http://www.newslinemagazine.com/2010/04/regime-of-fear> (accessed November 22, 2010).

¹⁴ Salman Masood, "Pakistan Spy Chief to Visit India," *New York Times*, November 28, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/29/world/asia/29pstan.html> (accessed November 22, 2010).

¹⁵ "What's the Problem with Pakistan?" *Foreign Affairs*, March 31, 2009, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/discussions/roundtables/whats-the-problem-with-pakistan> (accessed November 22, 2010).

¹⁶ Preamble, *Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan*, December 9, 2009.

calls for military cantonments under construction in the resource-rich Sui and Kohlu regions to be temporarily halted and for the military to be replaced there by the Frontier Corps, a paramilitary force that answers to the civilian Federal Ministry of the Interior. Under the package, the Balochistan chief minister is to have control over the Frontier Corps' law and order operations. The package also calls for an investigation of missing persons, and for all persons detained without charge to be released.¹⁷

As a result of the package, the Pakistan federal government in 2010 released Rs 12 billion (US\$140 million) to the Balochistan government in outstanding debts owed to it with respect to natural gas revenues and announced a Rs 152 billion (US\$1.77 billion) budget for the province, double that of 2009.¹⁸ The package also establishes a judicial inquiry into the killing of Nawab Akbar Bugti and other Baloch political leaders.¹⁹

Despite these attempted reforms, doubts persist within Baloch society about the Pakistan government's intentions. Significant Baloch nationalist parties and leaders have rejected the package, claiming it does not adequately address core grievances or genuinely enable greater provincial autonomy.²⁰ Many have continued to call for complete separation from Pakistan.²¹ However, Baloch nationalists are highly splintered and it is unclear how much influence Baloch political leaders now exert over militant groups.²²

Divisions among Baloch nationalists have exacerbated lawlessness and violence in the province. In 2010, militants escalated sectarian and ethnically motivated targeted killings, especially in Quetta.²³ In addition, they have continued to target gas pipelines, railway lines and electricity networks, and government buildings, including schools.²⁴

¹⁷ Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan, December 9, 2009.

¹⁸ Nasir Jamal and Saleem Shahid, "Rs152 billion budget for Balochistan," *Dawn*, June 22, 2010, <http://news.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/rs152-billion-budget-for-balochistan-260> (accessed November 30, 2010).

¹⁹ Raja Asghar, "Govt offers olive branch to Balochistan," *Dawn*, November 25, 2009, <http://news.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/o4-balochistanpackage-q5-10> (accessed November 30, 2010).

²⁰ Murtaza Ali Shah, "Baloch nationalists reject package," *The News International*, November 25, 2009.

²¹ Sajid Hussain, "18th Amendment Fails To Appease Most Of Baloch Nationalists," *The News On Sunday*, April 11, 2010; Syed Talat Hussain, "Regime of Fear," *Newsline*, April 21, 2010.

²² Syed Talat Hussain, "Regime of Fear," *Newsline*.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ "Pakistan Fails To Curb Violence In Balochistan," *Sify*, July 6, 2010.

Three distinct groups are responsible for violence against civilians in the province: militant Baloch nationalist groups seeking separation or autonomy for Balochistan that target Punjabis and other minorities; militant Sunni Muslim groups that attack members of the Shia community; and armed Islamist groups that have most recently attacked those who act contrary to their interpretation of Islam.²⁵

Militant nationalist groups such as the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and the Baloch Liberation United Front (BLUF) have claimed responsibility for most killings of non-Baloch civilians, including teachers and other education personnel. They attempt to justify these attacks as a nationalist Baloch response to grievances against the state, and retaliation against abuses that state security forces have committed against Baloch community members.

Amidst the violence, Balochistan's long-term problems of governance and the stand-off between the Pakistani military and Baloch militants have deepened a general perception in the province of neglect, discrimination, and denial of rights. These are exacerbated by the continuing tribal system and its archaic social structures, the influence of the tribal chief on the justice system and police, and the consequent denial of citizens' fundamental rights.

The poor and marginalized, particularly women, are adversely affected by traditional forms of dispute resolution and lack of access to other redress mechanisms. They lack assets and opportunities, have no social safety net, and are bound by practices that affect their welfare.²⁶ There are frequent reports of both state law enforcement agencies and local power-brokers committing abuses against marginalized populations. Labor conditions are abysmal, and there is no single system of justice despite a uniform civil and criminal code. The widespread use of tribal *jirgas* (councils) and other informal forums of justice increase the difficulty of seeking redress and obtaining justice, devaluing its quality.

²⁵ A large proportion of the population of urban dwellers comprises people who settled there in the 1930s or at the time of independence in 1947. Those committing the recent violence make no distinction between these "settlers" and more recent migrants to the province. Older urban areas (Quetta, Loralai, Zhob, Sibi) were largely inhabited by the settlers, Pathuns (and the Hazara community in Quetta), while the Baloch remained largely in the rural villages or small rural towns.

²⁶ Violence against women and girls, including rape, domestic violence, and forced marriage, remains a serious problem. In one case in 2008, five women were shot and buried alive by members of their own tribe after three of them refused to get married as their families had demanded. Israrullah Zehri, a senator from Balochistan province, publicly defended the killings as "tribal custom." Another legislator, Hazar Khan Bijrani, stands accused of presiding over a tribal *jirga* (council) that in 2006 ordered the handing-over of five girls, aged six and younger, as "compensation" in a dispute. Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2009* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2009), Pakistan chapter, <http://www.hrw.org/en/world-report/2009/pakistan>.

Finally, the violence has denuded the already thinly spread provision of public safety. Organized police services cover only a fraction of the province's territory (about 4 percent of the land area), while the rest is covered by tribal recruits forming levies.²⁷

As the violence in Balochistan intensifies, atrocities mount. While the Pakistani military and Baloch militants readily exploit the misery of civilians for their own political purposes, they have failed to address these grievances or to accept responsibility for them.

Balochistan's Educational System

Educational opportunities performance for the vast majority of children and youth in Balochistan are dire.

The province has the country's lowest net enrollment rates for all stages of schooling:

- primary school (ages 6 to 10): 58 percent of boys and 42 percent of girls;
- middle school (ages 11 to 13): 27 percent of boys and 17 percent of girls; and
- "matric" level (ages 14 to 15): 15 percent of boys and 8 percent of girls.²⁸

Approximately half of the province's 10- to 18-year-olds who have attended school dropped out before completing primary school. According to survey data collected by the Pakistan government, of 10- to 18-year-old girls who have never attended school, 42 percent have not done so because their parents objected, while 21 percent had to help at home.²⁹

Only 32 percent of Balochistan's population over age 10 has completed primary level education, the lowest proportion in the country, compared with a national average of 47 percent. Only 42 percent of the population older than 10 has ever attended school. In rural Balochistan a mere 8 percent of females over age 10 has completed primary school.³⁰

²⁷ Asian Development Bank, *Report and Recommendation to the President on the Pakistan - Balochistan Resource Management Program*, 2004. The Pakistani state recruits men from local communities into the Levies, a quasi-police force, the Frontier Constabulary and Frontier Corps. The Frontier Corps is a federal paramilitary force consisting almost entirely of ethnic Pashtuns from the province's northern regions. Although the force is part of the civilian federal Interior Ministry, its forces are commanded by officers of the Pakistan Army.

²⁸ Net enrollment rate = [Number of children aged 6 to 10 years attending primary level (classes 1-5) divided by number of children aged 6 to 10 years] multiplied by 100. Pakistan Federal Bureau of Statistics, "Pakistan Social & Living Standards Measurement Survey 2007-2008."

²⁹ Pakistan Federal Bureau of Statistics, "Pakistan Social & Living Standards Measurement Survey 2007-2008."

³⁰ Ibid.

Overall, only 46 percent of people in Balochistan over age 10 are literate enough to read a newspaper or write a simple letter; only 23 percent of females can do so. This is the lowest literacy rate in the country, and compares to a national average of 56 percent.³¹

Balochistan's education facilities are also the poorest in the country. The province has the highest percentage of primary school buildings rated as either needing "major repair" (36 percent compared to a national average of 11 percent), or "dangerous" (12 percent compared to a national average of 11 percent). Only 15 percent of primary schools were rated as "satisfactory" (compared to a national average of 36 percent).³²

Of Balochistan's primary schools, at least 4 percent do not have buildings, 81 percent lack electricity, 34 percent have no drinking water, 72 percent are without a toilet, and 66 percent are without a boundary wall.³³ These provisions have been shown to increase enrollment rates, keep children in school, and ensure their protection.

A senior provincial government official told Human Rights Watch: "Education at the institutional level is an orphan institution [and] therefore it is easy to attack. The [provincial] education department lacks leadership. It is mired in corruption and bad governance. It is even incapable of utilizing its annual budget."³⁴ For example in 2008, 214 million rupees (US\$2.5 million) of funding allocated to Balochistan for education sector reforms in 2007-2008—in particular for teacher training, furniture, and establishing and equipping science labs—lapsed due to the provincial government's failure to actually spend the resources provided. The lapsed funds accounted for 28 percent of the original allocation, which was determined based on requests by the district and provincial governments themselves.³⁵

A local education specialist summarized the problem:

Education was never a priority [here in Balochistan].... The lack of capacity of the education department to manage and provide education has been an old issue ... in addition to corruption and bad governance which have been

³¹ Ibid.

³² Calculated from Academy of Educational Planning and Management, "Pakistan Education Statistics 2007-08," 2009. In North West Frontier Province, 20 percent of primary school buildings were rated as "dangerous"; however, only 19 percent were rated as being in need of "major repair."

³³ Calculated from Academy of Educational Planning and Management, "Pakistan Education Statistics 2007-08," 2009.

³⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Iqbal K., senior provincial government official, Quetta, spring 2010.

³⁵ Shamim Bano, "Report Says Provincial Govts Fail to Utilize Education Reforms Funds," *The News* (Islamabad), April 14, 2008.

typically associated with the education department. The security problem in Balochistan just made it more difficult for everyone.

At the community level the demand for education is huge, and communities will respond positively if resources at the provincial and national level were directed toward education.... As I said, the demand at the community level is huge ... but the current system is incapable of responding to the community demand: the system is too weak, under-resourced, and outdated.... This will have long term negative effects.³⁶

As one senior civil servant working on education in the province explained, although ethnic Punjabis tend to be the usual targets for killings, it is “the locals, and especially the Baloch, who are affected in the long run because being locals, it is going to be their children whose education will suffer and that will have undesirable implications for the province.”³⁷

³⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with education specialist, Quetta, spring 2010.

³⁷ Human Rights Watch interview with Salim M.K., senior education civil servant, Quetta, spring 2010.

V. Killing of Teachers and Other Education Personnel

Between January 2008 and April 2010, approximately 160 non-Baloch individuals were killed in what the government believes were “targeted attacks”—that is, assailants specifically selected their targets rather than conducting indiscriminate or random attacks. At least 220 or more persons were also injured in such attacks during the same time period, according to the same provincial government statistics. In addition, alleged militants killed 124 police and 101 Frontier Corps members during the same period, according to a senior government official.³⁸

Baloch militants are believed to be behind the attacks on ethnic Punjabis, who constitute the majority of victims. Militant Sunni groups have been linked to sectarian killings of members of the Shia minority, including Shiite members of the Hazara ethnic community. Between January 2008 and April 2010, at least 76 individuals were killed and 62 injured in suspected sectarian attacks.³⁹

Among those targeted and killed by militants have been at least 22 teachers and other education personnel. The most prominent assassination was that of the provincial minister of education, Shafiq Ahmed, in October 2009, for which the Baloch Liberation United Front (BLUF) claimed responsibility. University professors and grade school teachers in Quetta and Baloch districts have also been attacked. According to government statistics, at least 11 of those who died in targeted killings between January 2008 and April 2010, and 4 of those wounded, were teachers. However, a survey of public press accounts conducted by Human Rights Watch, combined with our field investigation, identified at least 22 education personnel killed from January 2008 to October 2010.

Motives for Killings

Armed militants appear to target individuals for several reasons, and it is not always possible to separate the motives for each killing.

Ethnic Punjabis, Shia, teachers, and other education personnel have been at particular risk. In a refrain heard on several occasions, one teacher told Human Rights Watch: “Once a ‘settler,’ always a settler in Balochistan. No matter how long you are in the

³⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with Iqbal K., senior provincial government official, Quetta, spring 2010.

³⁹ Ibid.

province ... 10, 50, or 100 years, you will still not be considered a local.”⁴⁰ Expressing his personal fears of militant violence, another teacher told Human Rights Watch:

For us the issue is not only of ethnicity ... it is also sectarian ... as you know there has been an increasing Taliban kind of radicalism going on in Baloch areas for some time against the Shia community. Many Shia have been targeted during the last four or five years. My profile has all the required characteristics to be targeted: teacher, Shia, and a settler.⁴¹

Militant Baloch nationalist groups appear to be responsible for the vast majority of targeted killings of teachers. Bramdagh Bugti, the chief of the Baloch Republican Party (BRP) and guerrilla commander, justified the targeted killings of Punjabi teachers to a Pakistani journalist as a reaction to Pakistani army abuses:

As far as the target killing of teachers is concerned, I do not understand why the Pakistani authorities and the media shout only when one Punjabi teacher or barber is killed. Why not a single word is uttered when Baloch towns after towns are bombarded by the Pakistani authorities? I have said it many times: target killings are a justified reaction of the Baloch against the policies of the Punjabi [Pakistani] army.

I said before that target killings are the reaction to an action. If one Punjabi teacher is killed, one hundred more Balochs are also killed in response by the security forces. The government functionaries destroy all the livelihood of the poor Baloch tribesmen by bombarding their homes, goats and sheep with helicopters and jet airplanes. What are the other ways left for us? Why should we not react?⁴²

Education Personnel Killed January 2008 to October 2010

A survey of press accounts conducted by Human Rights Watch combined with our own field investigations indicate that at least 22 educational personnel were killed from January 2008

⁴⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with Akhtar A. P., teacher, Quetta, spring 2010.

⁴¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Mehboob K., teacher, location withheld, spring 2010.

⁴² Nawabzada Bramdagh Bugti, chief of Baloch Republican Party, quoted in Malik Siraj Akbar, “If I compromise on Baloch movement, my followers will kill, replace and forget me: Bramdagh Bugti,” September 11, 2009, <http://gmcmisssing.wordpress.com/2009/09/10/if-i-compromise-on-baloch-movement-my-followers-will-kill-replace-and-forget-me-says-bramdagh-bugti> (accessed August 7, 2010).

to October 2010. This survey included any education personnel killed even when it was unclear from the reporting who the perpetrator was, or what the motive was behind selection of the target. Whatever the ultimate motive for the killing, such attacks on teachers have a major impact on educators in the province, and thus on providing quality education to the province's children and youth.

The security situation in Balochistan severely impaired Human Rights Watch's ability to individually investigate each attack. However, when we were able to identify and interview family members, close acquaintances, or eyewitnesses in these cases, their accounts were consistent with the press reporting. To accommodate security concerns of interviewees, we are not able to indicate all cases that we verified with interviews.

The same security-related factors that limited Human Rights Watch's research may have also affected the ability of journalists to fully document the killings. As a result, the following list of teachers who have been killed is unlikely to be complete, especially in harder-to-reach cases outside urban areas. The cases below appear in reverse chronological order.

Abdul Jalil

On May 25, 2010, Abdul Jalil, a retired teacher, was shot by unidentified armed men riding on a motorcycle after he collected his pension from a bank in Mastung. An eight-year-old boy, believed to be a bystander, was also hit and died.⁴³

Chaudhary Ashfaq

On May 24, 2010, Chaudhary Ashfaq, vice-principal of the Technical Training Center, was on his way home when his car was intercepted on the Regional Cooperation for Development Highway (RCD Highway) in Hub town, Lasbela district. Unidentified assailants sprayed the car with bullets, killing Ashfaq.⁴⁴

⁴³ Bari Baloch, "Teacher killed in Mastung," *The Nation*, May 26, 2010; "Two, including a retired teacher, killed in Mastung," *Baloch Hal News*, May 25, 2010; "Teacher dies in Mastung target killing," *Daily Times Pakistan*, May 26, 2010. Local police stated that they believed that Jalili's killing was targeted.

⁴⁴ "TTC Vice Principal Shot dead in Hub," *Baloch Hal News*, May 24, 2010; "Another educationist gunned down in Hub," *The Nation*, May 25, 2010. Local police stated that they believed that it was a targeted killing.

Syed Wali

On May 8, 2010, Syed Wali, a lecturer at Quetta's Agriculture College, was found dead in his home in the city's Rahim Colony. Local police said he had been beaten and shot multiple times.⁴⁵

Abdul Qadir Muhammad Shahi

On May 5, 2010, teacher Abdul Qadir Muhammad Shahi was shot dead by unknown men on motorcycles in Mastung. Police sources told local media that the victim was Shia, and that it could be a sectarian killing.⁴⁶

Nazima Talib

On April 27, 2010, two masked men on a motorcycle gunned down Nazima Talib, an assistant professor at Balochistan University, when she was travelling from the university by auto rickshaw (motorcycle taxi) on Sariab road in Quetta. The university closed for a three-day mourning period.⁴⁷

Media reported the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it was retaliation for the killing of two Baloch women in Quetta and Pasni, and the torture of female political workers in Mand and Tump.⁴⁸

Nazir Ahmed

On April 27, 2010, schoolteacher Nazir Ahmed was shot by an unidentified person in the Mashkey area of Khuzdar district. He died instantly.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ "Lecturer Agriculture College Quetta killed," *Dawn*, May 8, 2010.

⁴⁶ "Schoolteacher shot dead," *The Nation*, May 6, 2010; "School teacher killed in Mastung firing," *Asia Pulse*, May 5, 2010 .

⁴⁷ Saleem Shahid, "BLA claims responsibility for killing professor in Quetta," *Dawn.com*, April 28, 2010; Mohammad Zafar, "Female university professor shot dead in Quetta," *Daily Times Pakistan*, April 28, 2010; "Pakistan university mourns murdered woman professor," *BBC News*, April 28, 2010. "Dead body of Nazima Talib flown to Karachi," *The Pakistan Newswire*, April 28, 2010, <http://news.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/metropolitan/o3-university-professor-killed-in-act-of-target-killing-ss-03> (accessed November 23, 2010).

⁴⁸ Saleem Shahid, "BLA claims responsibility for killing professor in Quetta," *Dawn.com*, April 28, 2010, <http://news.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/metropolitan/o3-university-professor-killed-in-act-of-target-killing-ss-03> (accessed November 23, 2010).

⁴⁹ "Schoolteacher shot dead in Khuzdar," *Daily Times*, April 27, 2010.

Fazal Bari

On March 22, 2010, Fazal Bari, principal of Tameer-e-Nau High school in Quetta, was traveling to school when gunmen on a motorcycle fired on his car, killing him and wounding his driver. The BLA claimed responsibility for the killing.⁵⁰

Bari's body was taken to the Civil Hospital in Quetta. Many students from his school congregated outside the hospital and began protesting their teacher's death and the government's failure to stop it. Police used tear gas to disperse the students and charged at them with batons. Media reported that the police detained three students.⁵¹

The school's administration closed the school for several days to protest and mourn his death, amidst demands from administration and staff that the government guarantee their security. A close friend of Bari's told Human Rights Watch that the teacher "loved teaching and for decades he remained associated with this profession. He wanted to stay in Quetta and continue teaching."⁵²

Khurshid Ansari

On November 5, 2009, Khurshid Akhtar Ansari, head of the library sciences department at the University of Balochistan, was shot dead by assailants on a motorcycle on Kassi Road in Quetta while on his way to mosque. The BLA claimed responsibility.⁵³

Munawar Maseh and Amjad Maseh

On October 30, 2009, Munawar Maseh and Amjad Maseh, a baker and a sweeper employed at the Cadet College in Mastung, were killed. A local police official quoted in a news report said the incident could be a targeted killing. Media reports said the men were Christian.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with Zahir W., friend of Bari's, and Mohsin H., family relation of Bari's, location withheld, spring 2010.

⁵¹ Saleem Shahid, "Educationist shot dead by the BLA in Quetta," *Dawn*, March 23, 2010, <http://news.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/provinces/03-gunmen-kill-college-principal-in-quetta-ss-03> (accessed November 23, 2010).

⁵² Human Rights Watch interview with Zahir W., location withheld, spring 2010.

⁵³ Muhammad Ejaz Khan, "Professor gunned down in Quetta," *The News*, November 6, 2009; Malik Siraj Akbar, "Balochistan University professor shot dead in Quetta," *Daily Times*, November 6, 2009.

⁵⁴ "Two gunned down in Mastung," *Daily Pak Banker*, September 1, 2009; "2 more fall victim to target killing," *The Pakistan Newswire*, October 31, 2009.

Shafiq Ahmed

On October 26, 2009, armed men on motorcycles shot and killed Balochistan's Education Minister, Shafiq Ahmed, a Quetta native, while he was outside his home. A relative was also injured in the attack. The BLUF claimed responsibility. Educational institutions in the province were closed for three days of mourning following the attack.⁵⁵

Javaid Maher

On July 6, 2009, Javaid Maher, principal of the Government Pilot Secondary High School in Mastung and Deputy District Officer for Education in Mastung district, was gunned down on Quetta Road while on his way home. He was referred to a hospital in Quetta for treatment, but died before arriving. Maher, an ethnic Pashtun, had served in the education department for 37 years. No one has claimed responsibility for the killing.⁵⁶

Anwar Baig

On June 13, 2009, Anwar Baig, a senior subject specialist teacher at the Model High School in Kalat, was shot nine times and killed by masked motorcyclists on his way to school. Baig was originally from Lahore. The BLA claimed responsibility for the killing. According to Azaad Baloch, a BLA spokesman, Baig was targeted because he opposed recitation of the Baloch nationalist anthem in school and because he did not want to hoist the nationalist flag. In 2008 unknown persons had hurled a hand grenade into Baig's residence.⁵⁷

Ghulam Sarwar

On July 24, 2009, Ghulam Sarwar, a chemistry professor at the Government Degree College in Quetta, was shot dead by assailants on a motorbike in front of his residence near Tariq Hospital on Sariab Road.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Saleem Shahid, "Balochistan education minister gunned down," *Dawn*, October 26, 2009, <http://news.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/provinces/06-balochistan-education-minister-shot-dead-rs-02> (accessed November 23, 2010).

⁵⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Pervaiz J., family member, location withheld, spring 2010; "Another principal falls victim to target killing in Balochistan," *Daily Pak Banker*, July 7, 2009. Maher's family received 500,000 rupees (US\$5,900) as official compensation fixed for government employees.

⁵⁷ "Pakistan: School teacher gunned down in Kalat," *Daily Pak Banker*, June 14, 2009; "School Teacher Shot Dead," *The Pakistan Newswire*, June 14, 2009; "Teacher Shot Dead," *The News*, June 14, 2009; "Two men shot dead in Quetta, Kalat and five vehicles set on fire in Turbat," *Balochvoice.com*, June 14, 2009, <http://www.balochvoice.com/bvoice/modules/news/article.php?storyid=6> (accessed November 23, 2010).

⁵⁸ "Chemistry Professor Ghulam Sarwar of Degree College Quetta shot dead," PPI, July 24, 2009; Bari Baloch, "Another Prof shot dead in Quetta," *The Nation*, July 25, 2009. Police described it as a targeted killing.

Mohammad Mohsin

On July 23, 2009, Mohammad Mohsin, principal of the Government High School in Sariab Mills, was going to school when armed men riding a motorcycle opened fire on Sariab Road, killing him on the spot.⁵⁹

Mirza Amant Ali Baig

On June 23, 2009, the principal of Commerce College Quetta, Mirza Amant Ali Baig, was shot dead by two motorcycle-riding assailants in Quetta while traveling to school. Originally from Punjab, Baig had lived in Balochistan for more than 15 years.⁶⁰

Khalid Mehmood Butt

On June 17, 2009, Khalid Mahmood Butt, vice principal of the Balochistan Residential College in Khuzdar, was killed when unidentified gunmen shot and killed him en route to the college.⁶¹

Alam Zehri

On March 29, 2009, Alam Zehri, the principal of Degree College in Surab, Kalat district, was shot dead along the RCD Highway while waiting for a bus.⁶²

Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah

On July 6, 2008, Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah, a retired government teacher, was gunned down by unknown assailants on Sariab Road, near Irrigation Colony in Quetta. Shah was also the district president of Tehrik-i-Jaharia Pakistan (TJP) for Nasirabad district. A bystander, a boy, was wounded.⁶³

Safdar Kayani

On April 22, 2008, Safdar Kayani, pro-vice Chancellor (provost) at the University of Balochistan, was killed when two gunmen on a motorbike opened fire as he came out of his home in Green Town on Sariab Road in Quetta for a routine evening walk. The BLA claimed responsibility. BLA spokesman Beebargh Baloch said that Kayani was targeted because he

⁵⁹ Bari Baloch, "Another Prof shot dead in Quetta," *The Nation*, July 25, 2009. Police described it as a targeted killing.

⁶⁰ "Unidentified gunmen on Tuesday shot dead the principal of a commerce college in Quetta," *Daily Times*, June 24, 2009.

⁶¹ "Teachers Demand Security of Life," *Business Recorder*, June 29, 2009; "VP BRC Shot Dead," *The Pakistan Newswire*, June 18, 2009.

⁶² "College Principal shot dead," *Pakistan Press International*, March 31, 2009.

⁶³ "TJP Leader Shot Dead in Quetta," *The News*, July 7, 2008.

worked for the intelligence agencies and that it had warned Kayani against involvement in student activities. Kayani had been at Balochistan University since 1979.⁶⁴

Naz Bibi

On March 3, 2008, Naz Bibi, a teacher at a school in the Usta Muhammad of Jaffarabad district, was shot by unidentified assailants outside her school. She died on the scene.⁶⁵

Ashiq Usman

On March 7, 2008, Ashiq Usman, the principal of Divisional Public College in Khuzdar district, was shot and killed while returning home by car near the Civil Colony area with his two sons after Friday prayers. Usman was from Punjab.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Saleem Shahid, "Top varsity official gunned down in Quetta," Dawn.com; "DUHS VC condoles demise of VC Balochistan varsity," *The Pakistan Newswire*, April 23, 2008; "Gunmen shoot dead Balochistan University pro vice chancellor," Dawn.com, April 22, 2008; "Pakistan TV show discusses peace pacts in tribal areas, EU official's visit," *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, April 24, 2008; "Pakistan: Top university official killed in southwest," ADN Kronos International, April 22, 2008; "University official killed in Pakistan," *The Press Trust of India*, April 22, 2008.

⁶⁵ "Teacher gunned down in Balochistan," *The Press Trust of India*, March 3, 2008.

⁶⁶ "Khuzdar college principal slain," *Daily Times*, March 8, 2009.

VI. Harm to Education

Attacks against education personnel have spurred several hundred teachers and professors to request transfers from mainly Baloch districts such as Khuzdar, Kalat, Mastung, Nushki, and the Sariab area of Quetta city, to elsewhere in Quetta, other non-Baloch districts in Balochistan, and Pakistan's three other provinces.

The high rate of teacher transfers invariably impacts students' educations adversely. Some schools, particularly in rural areas, are left understaffed because it is difficult to fill the vacancies. Students interviewed by Human Rights Watch expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of teachers who replaced those who transferred, although that may be explained by factors besides teacher effectiveness.

Even when teachers stay in their assigned towns, some do not report to work, while others admit to doing a less conscientious job due to anxiety and distractions caused by the deteriorating security situation.

Consequences when Teachers Transfer

According to government statistics, 176 education personnel transferred within Balochistan and 44 transferred out of Balochistan between January 2008 and April 2010. Almost another 200 education personnel have requested transfers, which were being processed at this writing.⁶⁷

A senior government official in the province told Human Rights Watch:

I don't think that all the teachers who request for transfers are at risk. Many are, but there are those who assume they are at risk. But that, too, is natural given the circumstances in a given village or neighborhood ... I think in many areas there have been no attacks against teachers but still teachers are requesting transfers.... For example, no teachers have been hit in Gwadar or Punjgor. Whatever the real motive behind the request for the transfer ... it is the government's responsibility to entertain a request based on a threat to one's life.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Human Rights Watch interview with Salim N., senior education civil servant, Quetta, spring 2010.

⁶⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with Iqbal K., senior provincial government official, Quetta, spring 2010.

Another senior civil servant within the local government told Human Rights Watch:

Many of these teachers were threatened, others were scared and the government can do little to encourage them to stay in these districts. When it comes to transfer requests on the basis of a threat to life, we don't have much excuse to decline their request.⁶⁹

No matter where they end up, transferred teachers are often perceived as a burden on the local job market. For example, the Education Department in Quetta does not have enough open teaching positions to accommodate all the transferred teachers. As a result, many have not been assigned to a specific school and therefore are not working as teachers.

Some teachers do not even wait for official permission to transfer. One said:

I left [the town where I was teaching] without obtaining a formal official transfer authorization from the Education Department ... because I knew the process would take months and I couldn't wait that long. Here in Quetta I applied for inter-provincial transfer [from Balochistan to Punjab] but that hasn't materialized because the process is too complicated and long.... For months I worked on my application of transfer to Quetta. It has been approved ... but still I am without a school.... My salary has been suspended a few times.... Now it has been almost four months that my salary has been withheld only because I am without a school.⁷⁰

While there is a teacher surplus in urban areas, schools in affected districts are left understaffed. Given the ratio of teachers to schools in the province in 2007-2008 was only two-to-one, the potential for disruption when even one teacher leaves a school is dramatic.⁷¹ A senior government official from a heavily affected district said:

The problem is not the transfers at this point; it is their replacement.... Schools whose teachers have been transferred to other districts are understaffed.... The problem is more complicated with the schools where the teaching staff was already small. Teachers are overburdened... they can't

⁶⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Salim N., senior education civil servant, Quetta, spring 2010.

⁷⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with Akhtar Q., teacher, Quetta, spring 2010.

⁷¹ Calculated from Academy of Educational Planning and Management, "Pakistan Education Statistics 2007-08", 2009.

teach all classes.... What they do is they monitor some classes and teach others. It is also important to note that a mathematics teacher will only teach mathematics. He won't be able to teach English as a class as a substitute for a teacher who has been transferred, because he has been only trained to teach mathematics.⁷²

A district-level education officer said:

Most of these [teachers] who have been transferred have no formal assignments to do ... I think most of them just sit and kill time. The schools that are understaffed due to teachers' transfers are struggling in some ways ... teachers in those schools teach some of the time and some of the time just supervise the class ... it is more like monitoring what the students are doing ... at times assigning some readings to the classes of teachers who have left.... No regular formal teaching takes place.⁷³

One teacher who transferred to Quetta explained the impact that his move had on his former school and students:

There were 21 teachers at the time I left [my school] but there was no subject specialist for English. I taught English ... and what I know is to this day the school has no subject specialist for English ... so definitely the school is suffering. There are many people ... locals of [district name withheld] ... sensible and responsible.... They are really worried about the education of their children as they see teachers leaving [district name withheld].⁷⁴

A teacher from a heavily affected district who was preparing to transfer, along with “almost all” of the ethnic Punjabi staff at his school, told us:

A total of 10 teachers have left so far. The replacement of teachers is going to be a disaster. I am afraid that this institution will collapse someday soon. It is a loss for the students, for this province, and for Pakistan. So far the [school] has been really struggling in terms of finding qualified experienced replacements. No one

⁷² Human Rights Watch interview with Salam A., government official, location withheld, spring 2010.

⁷³ Human Rights Watch interview with Saad N., a district level education official, location withheld, spring 2010.

⁷⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Akhtar Q., teacher, Quetta, spring 2010.

wants to come here and the provincial administration is interested in recruiting local staff so that they are not targeted. Some new local teaching staff has been hired but they are under-qualified and lack professionalism.⁷⁵

The security situation is also deterring new, qualified staff from coming to affected areas. A senior education civil servant said:

We used to hire lecturers from across Pakistan ... But now we are forced to hire from Balochistan because no one is coming from other provinces and there is also a political pressure to hire locally. This is a huge problem. Most of the locals we interviewed for the positions of English teachers could hardly pronounce an English word correctly. It is a huge compromise to make.... It is going to have serious repercussions for the future of Balochistan.⁷⁶

Zahid S., a 17-year-old student from an affected district outside of Quetta, told Human Rights Watch:

For me one of the biggest changes was seeing my teachers leave. During the last two years many of our teachers who taught here for years left due to security problems ... many of them have left. My favorite teacher who taught physics has long gone. He was great ... he was experienced and knew his subject. He left due to the attacks against teachers and non-locals.⁷⁷

A 16-year-old student, Zafar S., noted:

The new teachers are not nearly as good as the old ones. First of all they don't know as much as the others did...they are new and their teaching style and techniques are different ... it makes it more difficult for us ... we need to put in extra effort and still we don't learn as much as we used to do ... at times it is hard to understand what the new teachers are trying to teach us. The biggest loss we face due to the security situation is the loss of our teachers.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with Mehboob K., teacher, location withheld, spring 2010.

⁷⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Salim N., senior education civil servant, Quetta, spring 2010.

⁷⁷ Human Rights Watch interview with Zahid S., 17 years old, student, location withheld, spring 2010.

⁷⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with Zafar S., 16 years old, student, location withheld, spring 2010.

Consequences when Teachers Do Not Transfer

Even education personnel who remain in their villages may become less effective teachers if they feel threatened. According to Balochistan's education minister, Tahir Mehmood Khan (brother to Education Minister Shafiq Ahmad Khan who was assassinated in October 2009), it "is a bitter fact that several schools are non-operational because teachers have confined themselves to their homes for security concerns in the wake of target killings."⁷⁹

A senior government official from a heavily affected district told us, "It is primarily male teachers who are facing a security problem. Some are not coming [to school] at all, while others attend irregularly."⁸⁰

A teacher told Human Rights Watch:

[Teachers'] families [try] to pressure us to quit but ... we can't afford to resign from teaching. Most of us are working to contribute toward our household earning to make ends meet. Some of our colleagues are still pressured by their families to quit or get transferred to some other school. For most of us this job is not a luxury but a necessity.⁸¹

Another teacher spoke of the concerns of non-Baloch and non-Pashtun teachers: "We worry about the safety of our family members ... who drive us to and from school. We fear that some day they may be targeted on their way back home after dropping us at the school."⁸²

One teacher admitted, "I think most of us [teachers] don't have our hearts and minds in our work as much as we used to do."⁸³ Another teacher said, "I think it is hard to feel normal when nothing is as it used to be."⁸⁴

The manner in which the killing of one teacher has a ripple-effect that can strike fear into many other teachers was described to Human Rights Watch by a primary school teacher who had fled to Quetta:

⁷⁹ "Education, Balochistan's most neglected sector: minister," *The International News*, May 25, 2010.

⁸⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with Salam A., government official, location withheld, spring 2010.

⁸¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Raheem T., teacher, location withheld, spring 2010.

⁸² Human Rights Watch interview with Lal K., teacher, location withheld, spring 2010.

⁸³ Human Rights Watch interview with Nafees A., teacher, location withheld, spring 2010.

⁸⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Ibrahim A., teacher, location withheld, spring 2010.

I was not directly threatened.... I didn't receive a threat letter or a phone call, but I was worried given the overall security situation and the killing of the non-Baloch teachers. When [name of a school teacher withheld] was killed in [location withheld], that was it. I got really scared.... That was when I decided to move to Quetta. A friend called me ... [and] asked if I knew that [name of a school teacher withheld] had been shot ... I was horrified. I went home, put my essentials in a bag and left for Quetta without formally asking for an official transfer to Quetta. At the moment I couldn't think of anything else but my own safety ... I left the next day.⁸⁵

Loss of School Days

Another consequence of the deteriorating security situation is a severe reduction in the number of days that schools remain open.

A senior government official told Human Rights Watch that he estimated that in 2009 there were only 120 working days for government schools in the province,⁸⁶ compared to approximately 220 days in the rest of the country.

For the winter holiday, the provincial government decided to start vacations in private and government-run educational institutions on November 28, 2008, rather than December 15, as normal. The decision to move the start date forward was reportedly decided upon to minimize the risk of threats to educational institutions.⁸⁷ For the 2009 summer holidays, when government schools usually close for about 10 days in last two weeks of July, schools instead closed on July 21 and did not reopen until August 16 because the government feared attacks against educational institutions around August 14, when many of them traditionally celebrate Pakistan Independence Day.

In April 2009 many schools closed for a week when riots erupted in response to the killing of the three Baloch leaders. All public schools also closed for a week or more following the murder of the education minister in October 2009.

⁸⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with Akhtar N., teacher, Quetta, spring 2010.

⁸⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Iqbal K., senior government official, Quetta, spring 2010.

⁸⁷ "Early winter vacations for Balochistan," *Dawn*, November 15, 2009, <http://news.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/national/early-winter-vacations-for-balochistan-519> (accessed November 23, 2010).

VII. Attacks and Threats on Schools

Militants in Balochistan have threatened and carried out attacks on schools, including school buildings filled with students and teachers. The same militant nationalist and sectarian motives that underpin violence against teachers are evident in the attacks on schools. Whatever their motives, such assaults endanger the lives of children and others, and damage the right to access education in safety and security.

Attacks have included arson, and the use of grenades and bombs, and have occurred during the evening as well as the day, while teachers and students are present.

Following an attack on one school, a young teenage student told Human Rights Watch:

I was in the classroom when I heard the explosion. It was very loud ... it scared us ... I ran to the school yard as soon as we heard the explosion. The classroom windows were shattered. Many students were already in the yard. Many of us didn't know what had happened. I saw smoke ... I heard many children screaming. I think some of them got light injuries because of falling on the pieces of glass when they were running in chaos.... Several teachers were injured. I got really scared when I realized it was a bomb explosion....

My father came to pick me up from the school. I think I was in some kind of shock. I had little energy in my body ... when we were on our way to our home, I fainted in the car.

My father wasn't willing to send me back to school. He still doesn't feel good about this school [although I have returned]. I like this school. I love my teachers ... and I said many times to my father that I wasn't going to change my school. All my friends are still coming to the school. But I still feel scared sometimes. I think most children are still scared....

My education has been affected because mentally most of us have gone through a shock. I think everybody's education is affected.... I think some of the students did not take the final exams....

My family often discusses my safety at home... at times with our neighbor too. We used to talk about it more frequently ... but every time there is an incident at some school or an attack against a teacher or professor... it refreshes everyone's concerns at home ... we begin to feel scared. My parents worry about my safety when I am at school....

The truth is, I really want things to improve so we continue our studies without any fear. This incident has scared everyone. Our teachers are scared too. It was a terrible incident.⁸⁸

Teachers at one school complained that many months after an attack on their school, they still had not received any financial assistance from the government to help repair damage to the school's infrastructure.⁸⁹

Attacks on Schools

Human Rights Watch was unable to obtain data from local provincial government officials on the number of schools attacked in the province in past years. However, from interviews with eyewitnesses and a survey of public news reports, Human Rights Watch was able to collect basic details of attacks (listed below in reverse chronological order). Fearing further attacks, none of the teachers or students whom Human Rights Watch interviewed wanted it known that individuals from their school had talked with our researchers.

2010

- September 28 Unidentified men threw a hand grenade at the Government High School in Industrial Town Hub of Lasbela district, injuring three people.⁹⁰
- August 13 An explosive device was detonated at the Model High School in Khuzdar district.⁹¹
- June 1 A bomb exploded outside a school on Munawer Road in Quetta. No one was injured but the school's walls were damaged.⁹²

⁸⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with student, location withheld, spring 2010.

⁸⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with five teachers, location withheld, spring 2010.

⁹⁰ "Three people injured in hand grenade attack in Pakistan's Balochistan," *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, September 29, 2010.

⁹¹ "10 bus passengers, 6 labourers gunned down," *Frontier Post*, August 15, 2010; "Rocket attacks turn Balochistan tense," *Daily Times*, August 14, 2010.

⁹² "Explosion near school reported in southwest Pakistan," Kuwait News Agency, June 1, 2010.

June 1	Unidentified men threw a grenade at a primary school on Manojan Road in Quetta while 200 children were playing outside during recess. No one was injured. ⁹³
May 10	A bomb attached to the wall of Balochistan University of Engineering and Technology in Khuzdar district was remotely detonated, injuring at least two children who were playing nearby. ⁹⁴
April 19	An unknown assailant threw a grenade into a group of children at the Syed Educational School in Loralai. A teacher quickly picked up the device and threw it onto the roof where it exploded. Nobody was injured. ⁹⁵ Nine days later, another grenade was thrown into the school and exploded; no one was injured. ⁹⁶
April 6	A rocket exploded in the courtyard of a school in Kohlu district, partially damaging the building. ⁹⁷
March 18	A bomb detonated near a school in Dera Bugti district. Three people nearby were injured. ⁹⁸
March 3	Unknown attackers hurled three grenades into a Balochi cultural show at the University of Engineering and Technology in Khuzdar. ⁹⁹ According to press accounts, at least one student was killed and at least nine were wounded. ¹⁰⁰

⁹³ "Blast injures eight in Pakistan's Quetta," *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, June 2, 2010.

⁹⁴ "Pakistan: Three children injured in bomb blast in Khuzdar," *Right Vision News*, May 12, 2010; "Four injured in separate blasts," *The Nation*, May 10, 2010.

⁹⁵ "Hand grenade lobbed in school," *Baloch Hal News*, April 20, 2010.

⁹⁶ "Second explosion in Sir Syed School in a week," *Frontier Post*, April 28, 2010.

⁹⁷ "School rocketed in Kohlu," *The Nation*, April 7, 2010.

⁹⁸ "Several injured in blasts in SW Pakistan," Xinhua General News Service, March 18, 2010.

⁹⁹ "Pakistan: Tribunal to investigate varsity bomb blast," *Rights Vision News*, March 14, 2010.

¹⁰⁰ "Blast claims lives of two students in Khuzdar," *Dawn*, March 3, 2010, <http://news.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/19-blast-claims-lives-of-two-students-330-hh-02> (accessed November 23, 2010); "Militants attack school in Khyber," *Dawn.com*, March 3, 2010, <http://news.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/04-khuzdar-school-attacked-qs-06> (accessed November 23, 2010).

2009

- November 7 An unidentified assailant hurled a grenade at the Government Girls High School on Manojan Road, Quetta. The grenade blew a hole in the staff room roof and shrapnel wounded two teachers and at least one student.¹⁰¹
- July 18 Unknown attackers hurled a grenade near a private school in Arbab Town area, Quetta, damaging a wall.¹⁰²
- June 13 Unknown assailants threw a hand grenade at a private school in Shahbaz town in Quetta. The blast damaged the school's roof.¹⁰³
- March 2 A suicide bomber attacked a girls' madrassa (Islamic school) in Kali Karbala in Pishin district. Six people were reported killed and 12 others wounded. Capital City police officer for Quetta, Humayun Khan Jomezai, told media the suicide bomber was 14 or 15-years-old, although other news reports stated he was older. The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Islamic political party viewed the attack as an attempt on their leader, Maulana Abdul Wasay, a senior provincial minister who was visiting the school at the time.¹⁰⁴

2008

- October 19 Unknown men threw a bomb at a car parked outside a school in Quetta. The vehicle was damaged but there were no casualties.¹⁰⁵
- September 19 A bomb exploded at a madrassa north of Quetta run by the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam. At least five people died, and another 10 to 14 were wounded. Reports vary as to whether the incident was a suicide bombing, or whether the bomb was thrown or planted.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Amanullah Kasi, "2 teachers among 16 hurt in attacks," November 8, 2009; "Teachers, student hurt in Quetta grenade attack," *Daily Times*, November 8, 2009, http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\11\08\story_8-11-2009_pg1_6 (accessed November 23, 2010).

¹⁰² "Unknown Criminals Lob Hand Grenade at School in Quetta, Baluchistan," *The Nation Online*, July 18, 2009.

¹⁰³ "Two men shot dead in Quetta, Kalat and five vehicles set on fire in Turbat," *Balochvoice.com*, June 14, 2009, <http://www.balochvoice.com/bvoice/modules/news/article.php?storyid=6> (accessed November 30, 2010).

¹⁰⁴ "Probe Begins into Pakistan's Baluchistan suicide attack," *Geo TV*, March 3, 2009.

¹⁰⁵ "16 killed in roadside bomb attack in North West Pakistan," *The Press Trust of India*, October 9, 2008.

¹⁰⁶ "Bomb kills 5 at Pakistani religious school," *Associated Press online*, September 19, 2008, http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D939SB800&show_article=1 (accessed November 23, 2010); "Five dead in Pakistan school bomb blast," *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 19, 2008, <http://news.smh.com.au/world/five-dead-in-pakistan-school-bomb-blast-20080919-4kby.html> (accessed November 23, 2010); "5 killed in Pakistan's school blast," *Press TV*, September 19, 2008; "Six dead, 10 injured in explosion at Quetta seminary," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, September 20, 2008, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-185368807.html> (accessed November 23, 2010).

- August 3 Alleged militants set furniture, computers, and records ablaze at Babul Islam Model Public Girls School, a private school in a Ghilji colony in Quetta. Four rooms were destroyed.¹⁰⁷
- February 25 Unknown persons broke into a textbook warehouse on Sariab Road, Quetta, and set fire to the books. The warehouse supplied free textbooks to students throughout Balochistan. Five percent of the facility's books were reportedly destroyed.¹⁰⁸
- February During elections alleged militants attacked a number of schools that were intended to be used as polling stations. Several schools were bombing targets in the lead up to the elections, but reports are unclear as to whether they were intended to be used as polling stations: on February 15, a blast inside a school injured five students in Kohlu;¹⁰⁹ on February 16, a bomb exploded near a boys' school in Kalat.¹¹⁰ On February 17, the day before the election, a device exploded near a high school in the Graici area of Kholu; an unknown person threw a hand grenade at a government primary school in Killi Qambarani in Quetta; bombs exploded at the main gates of schools in Ismail Quetta and the Soorab area of Kalat, and at Killi Ismail High School; and rockets fired at government high schools in the Ronjan and Nokjo areas of Awaran district.¹¹¹ On polling day, February 18, a bomb exploded at Model High School in Khuzdar, another near the Girls School Kechi Baig, and rockets fired at Killi Tusp Government Girls High School in Panjgur district.¹¹²

Other Threats from Nationalist Groups

Militant Baloch nationalist groups have threatened teachers and school administrators in order to prevent standard school practices such as the teaching of Pakistani history, flying the Pakistani flag, and singing the national anthem. For example, on October 25, 2010, the

¹⁰⁷ Amanullah Kasi, "Girls school in Quetta attacked," *Dawn*, August 4, 2008.

¹⁰⁸ "Text books worth millions burnt," *The Pakistan Newswire*, February 26, 2008.

¹⁰⁹ "Three dead, eight injured in Balochistan blasts," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, February 15, 2008.

¹¹⁰ "Govt school buildings attacked with rockets, power pylons, railway track blown up," *The Balochistan Times*, February 18, 2008.

¹¹¹ Shahzada Zulfiqar, "4 soldiers among 6 dead in Balochistan violence," *The Nation*, February 18, 2008; "9 including 4 Policemen injured as explosions rock Balochistan," *The Pakistan Newswire*, February 17, 2008; "Six killed, nine injured in Pakistan's Baluchistan violence," *BBC Monitoring South Asia - Political*, February 19, 2009; "Govt school buildings attacked with rockets, power pylons, railway track blown up," *The Balochistan Times*, February 18, 2008.

¹¹² "Early morning disruption of voting across Pakistan - TV," *BBC Monitoring South Asia - Political*, February 18, 2008; "Blasts near polling stations in Pakistan's Quetta," *BBC Monitoring South Asia - Political*, February 18, 2008; "Bomb explosions, rocket firing in Balochistan on Polls day," *The Pakistan Newswire*, February 19, 2009.

Balochistan Liberation Front threw pamphlets into educational institutions in the province, warning teachers and staff not to sing Pakistan's national anthem or to hoist the national flag. The pamphlets warned that there would be serious consequences for noncompliance.¹¹³ An education official said:

I think one thing may directly affect children's work and that is schools in many Baloch areas are forced to stop teaching Pakistan Studies [Pakistan history and geography]. Even the local teachers ... even those who are Baloch hesitate to teach this subject because it could put their lives at risk.¹¹⁴

One teacher told Human Rights Watch: "We have not been hoisting the Pakistani flag.... You know, most schools out of fear of being attacked do not hoist Pakistani flags. Following other schools, we no longer have the national anthem in our morning assemblies."¹¹⁵

Another teacher told us: "The overall security situation has affected our school activities. For example we used to celebrate Pakistan Day on March 23 and the Independence Day on August 14 every year by holding activities in which students participate. But now we don't do any activities on either occasion."¹¹⁶

Such threats are not idle. Following the murder of Anwar Baig, a senior teacher in Kalat, on June 13, 2009, a BLA spokesperson explained Baig was targeted because he opposed the recitation of the Baloch nationalist anthem in school and did not want to hoist the nationalist flag instead of the Pakistani flag.¹¹⁷

Threats against Schools from Islamist Militants

Some schools have also received threats from what appear to be Islamic militant groups. For example, a private school in Gwadar district received a threatening letter demanding that the school stop allowing girls and boys to study together at the school.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ "Baloch separatists ban Pakistani national anthem, flag in district," *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, October 27, 2010.

¹¹⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Saad N., a district level education official, location withheld, spring 2010.

¹¹⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with Lal K., teacher, location withheld, spring 2010.

¹¹⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Ibrahim A., teacher, location withheld, spring 2010.

¹¹⁷ "Pakistan: School teacher gunned down in Kalat," *Daily Pak Banker*, June 14, 2009; "School Teacher Shot Dead," *The Pakistan Newswire*, June 14, 2009; "Teacher Shot Dead," *The News*, June 14, 2009; "Two men shot dead in Quetta, Kalat and five vehicles set on fire in Turbat," *Balochvoice.com*, June 14, 2009, <http://www.balochvoice.com/bvoice/modules/news/article.php?storyid=6> (accessed November 23, 2010).

¹¹⁸ Copy of letter on file with Human Rights Watch.

In May 2010, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, an Islamist militant group, threatened to attack all private schools in Mastung district of Balochistan if they did not replace the existing “Western-style” uniform with the local dress of *shalwar kameez* (loose-fitting pants combined with a long shirt). Female students were instructed to observe full Islamic hijab. The group distributed leaflets among private schools in the district, and included a two-day ultimatum for the schools to change their practice. The organization warned of “horrific consequences” if their directive was not obeyed.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ “Private schools threatened in Mastung against “western-style” uniform,” *Baloch Hall News*, May 15, 2010.

Acknowledgments

This report was written by Bede Sheppard, senior researcher in the Children's Rights Division of Human Rights Watch.

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HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH
350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10118-3299

www.hrw.org

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“Their Future is at Stake”

Attacks on Teachers and Schools in Pakistan’s Balochistan Province

Teachers, professors, and school administrators in Pakistan’s Balochistan province have found their lives increasingly under threat from three distinct violent conflicts. Militant Baloch nationalist groups seeking separation or autonomy for Balochistan target Punjabis and other minorities. Militant Sunni Muslim groups attack members of the Shia community. And Islamist armed groups have conducted attacks on those who act contrary to their interpretation of Islam.

Between January 2008 and July 2010, suspected militant groups targeted and killed at least 22 teachers and other education personnel in Pakistan’s western Balochistan province. Although these “targeted killings” have been directed at individuals from all professions, education establishments, personnel, and students—particularly ethnic Punjabis—have been disproportionately targeted because militants view them as representatives of the Pakistani state, and symbols of perceived Punjabi military oppression of Balochistan.

Militants have also attacked, threatened, or bombed schools, damaging property, killing and wounding students, and severely curtailing the education of Balochistan’s youth. Fearing for their safety, many teachers have sought transfers out of the province.

This report—based on interviews with teachers, students, victims’ families and friends, government officials, journalists, and local and international organizations in Balochistan—documents and describes these attacks and their consequences.

Killing people who have devoted their lives to teaching undercuts educational opportunities in a province that is already struggling to educate its populace and achieve greater development.

“*Their Future is at Stake*” calls on armed groups in Balochistan to immediately cease all attacks against education personnel, other civilians, and schools. It also calls on the provincial government of Balochistan to bring attackers to justice and to take measures to prevent attacks and mitigate their impact.

Pakistani students demonstrate against the killing of a school principal in Quetta, Balochistan’s capital, on March 22, 2010.

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