

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	466
Land:	Pakistan
Kilde:	Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland), Legal Aid Board (RDC)
Titel:	Information on the current security situation
Udgivet:	17. april 2019
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	25. juni 2019



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Pakistan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Wednesday 17 April 2019

Information on the current security situation

A report published in January 2019 by the *Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Study* notes that:

“2018 saw a remarkable reduction of 45 percent in the militant attacks in Pakistan” (Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Study (1 January 2019) *2018: Another Year of Decline in Anti-State Violence*).

This document also states that:

“Balochistan remained the most troubled province of the country where highest number of militant attacks (99), highest number of deaths (354) and highest number of injured (570) were recorded” (ibid).

In January 2019 the *Center for Research and Security Studies* state that:

“Pakistan saw an overall decline in the number of casualties from violence-related incidents in 2018...continuing a trend from 2015...” (Center for Research and Security Studies (1 January 2019) *Violence-related fatalities drop by 45% in Pakistan in 2018, CRSS Annual Security Report shows*).

In January 2019 the *Pak Institute for Peace Studies* states in a report that:

“Despite a decline in terrorist violence, Pakistani Taliban and Daesh remained potent threats to Pakistan's security...” (Pak Institute for Peace Studies (6 January 2019) *Despite a decline in terrorist violence, Pakistani Taliban and Daesh remained potent threats to Pakistan's security – PIPS "Pakistan Security Report 2018"*, p.1).

In February 2019 the *Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research* points out that:

“The conflict between the government of Pakistan and Islamist militant groups, which had de-escalated from war-level in 2017 for the first time in ten years, continued as a limited war [! Pakistan (Islamist militant groups)]” (Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (February 2019) *Conflict Barometer 2018*, p.15).

The *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia* in February 2019 points out that:

“The security situation in Pakistan is complex, volatile, and affected by domestic politics, politically motivated violence, ethnic conflicts, sectarian violence, and international disputes with India and Afghanistan...Overall, there was a 29 per cent decline in the number of reported terrorist attacks in 2018...marking a nine-year downward trend. Nevertheless, Pakistan continues to face security threats from insurgent, separatist and sectarian militant groups” (Department of Foreign Affairs

and Trade of Australia (20 February 2019) *DFAT Country Information Report: Pakistan*, p.15).

This document also states that:

“The security situation varies across the country, however, and militant attacks can occur anywhere. Balochistan faced the most significant security challenges in 2018, due to activity by both religious and nationalist non-state actors. While Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including the former FATA, reported the highest number of terrorist attacks (125 attacks, killing 196), Balochistan reported the second highest number of attacks (115), but claimed the highest death toll (354). Sindh ranked third (12 attacks, killing 19), Gilgit-Baltistan fourth (5 attacks, killing 5), Punjab ranked fifth (4 attacks, killing 20), and Azad Jammu and Kashmir ranked last (1 attack, killing 2). The highest decrease in attacks (compared to 2017) was reported in Punjab (71 per cent decrease), followed by AJK (67 percent), Karachi (62 percent), Sindh excluding Karachi (57 percent), Balochistan (30 per cent), and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (by 19 percent)” (ibid, p.16).

In March 2019 the *United States Department of State* issued a report commenting on events of the preceding year including stating that:

“Militant and terrorist activity continued, and there were suicide and bomb attacks in all four provinces, the former FATA, and Gilgit Baltistan. Militants and terrorist groups, including the Pakistani Taliban (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, and the Islamic State Khorasan Province targeted civilians, journalists, community leaders, security forces, law enforcement agents, and schools, killing and injuring hundreds with bombs, suicide attacks, and other forms of violence. Militant and terrorist groups often attacked religious minorities. A low-intensity separatist insurgency continued in Balochistan. Security forces reportedly committed extrajudicial killings in the fight against militant groups” (United States Department of State (13 March 2019) *2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Pakistan*, p.15).

A publication issued in March 2019 by the *Centre for Research and Security Studies* points out that:

“Across Pakistan, and across all metrics, violence-related casualties continued to decline in 2018, registering a 45% drop from the previous year, and 86% drop since 2013” (Centre for Research and Security Studies (March 2019) *CRSS Annual Security Report, 2013-2018*, p.7).

A report commenting on events of 2018 issued in April 2019 by the *Human Rights Commission of Pakistan* points out that:

“As in previous years, there has been a steady decline in conflict-related deaths, although the 2018 General Election saw a rise in violent deaths for the period between June and July” (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (15 April 2019) *State of Human Rights in 2018*, p.6).

In March 2019 the *Pak Institute for Peace Studies* points out that:

"In all, 21 terrorist attacks took place in Pakistan in February 2019, compared to 26 in the month before" (Pak Institute for Peace Studies (7 March 2019) *21 attacks claimed 22 lives in Pakistan in February 2019: PIPS monthly report*).

In March 2019 the *South Asia Terrorism Portal* states that:

"According to partial data compiled by the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), Pakistan has recorded at least 71 fatalities (25 civilians, 29 Security Force (SF) personnel and 17 militants) in 2019 (data till March 17, 2019). During the corresponding period of 2018, there were at least 134 fatalities (36 civilians, 49 SF personnel and 49 militants). Through 2018, Pakistan recorded a total of 691 terrorism-linked fatalities. There were 1,260 such fatalities in 2017; 1,803 in 2016; 3,682 in 2015; 5,496 in 2014 and 5,379 in 2013. A sharp fall in overall fatalities is evident since 2015" (South Asia Terrorism Portal (18 March 2019) *Pakistan: Ever-present Threat*, p.1).

This document also state that:

"A comparative analysis of the proportion of civilian fatalities in total fatalities registered in the country during this period, indicates that civilians are increasingly bearing the brunt of terrorist violence. Of 3,682 fatalities 2015, 940 were civilians, i.e. 25.52 per cent. This percentage increased to 33.94 in 2016 (612 civilians in a total of 1,803); 42.85 in 2017 (540 civilians in a total of 1,260), and 53.40 per cent in 2018 (369 civilians in a total of 691)" (ibid, p.2).

This report also notes that:

"While the decline in fatalities is indicative of sweeping gains across the country, deep concerns remain. In Balochistan, though levels of violence have been relatively low, a smoldering discontent continues to feed the fires of rebellion. In Sindh, the Pakistan Rangers' operations have marginalised terrorist and organized criminal gangs, but persistent street crime remains significant and retains the potential for resurgence once the operational deployment of the Rangers is withdrawn. In KP, while the fruits of successful SF operations are visible in terms of declining terrorism and related fatalities, irritants persists, with violence disrupting tranquility at regular intervals. People's grievances remain unaddressed in Gilgit Baltistan, where Islamabad has ensured 'peace' only with the help of draconian laws and brutal military repression, and is likely to use the provisions of the Gilgit Baltistan Order 2018 (with the Supreme Court's stamp of approval) to intensify the use of brute force, this time 'more legally'. In Punjab, radicalized forces continue to find fertile ground, support and a feeder line of recruits" (ibid, p.3).

In April 2019 the *United States Institute of Peace* notes that:

"Pakistan continues to face multiple sources of internal and external conflict. While incidences of domestic terrorism have reduced, in part due to measures taken by the Pakistani state, extremism and intolerance of diversity has grown" (United States Institute of Peace (1 April 2019) *The Current Situation in Pakistan*).

In April 2019 the *Centre for Research and Security Studies* states that:

"The first quarter of 2019 was quite volatile for Pakistan with an overall 12% increase in violence related fatalities, as compared to year 2018. Balochistan witnessed the highest number of violent activities; however, the tribal districts of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa – erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Area appeared as the least affected region, despite being the hub of militants at one point” (Centre for Research and Security Studies (16 April 2019) *First quarter of 2019 witnesses overall 12% increase in violence related fatalities, as compared to year 2018, reports CRSS in its Quarterly Security Report*, p.1).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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