| FLYGTNINGENÆVNET |

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	**504**
Land:	Pakistan
Kilde:	Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB)
Titel:	Pakistan: Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan [Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, Tehrik-e-Taliban, Pakistani Taliban, Tehreek-e-Taliban] (TTP), including leadership, structure, objectives, areas of operations, activities and targets; state response
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IRB – Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Pakistan: Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan [Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, Tehrik-e-Taliban, Pakistani Taliban, Tehreek-e-Taliban] (TTP), including leadership, structure, objectives, areas of operations, activities and targets; state response (2017-January 2020) [PAK106391.E]

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

1. Overview

According to sources, the TTP was formed in 2007 under Baitullah Mehsud (Mapping Militant Organizations 6 Aug. 2017; SATP [2017]; US 1 Nov. 2019, 328). Sources indicate the following actions taken by state governments:

- Pakistan banned the TTP on 25 August 2008 (*The Express Tribune* 24 Oct. 2012; SATP [2017]);

- the US designated the TTP as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) in 2010 (US 1 Sept. 2010);

- the UK proscribed the TTP as a terrorist organization in January 2011 (UK 1 Nov. 2019, 20);

- Canada listed the TTP as a terrorist entity in July 2011 (Canada 21 June 2019); and

- the United Arab Emirates (UAE) listed the TTP as a terrorist organization as part of a law issued in 2014 (*Gulf News* 16 Nov. 2014; WAM 16 Nov. 2014).

The Mapping Militants Organizations Project [1] describes the TTP as "ethnically diverse, comprised of Arab, Uzbek, Afghan, Chechen and Punjabi militants, in addition to its Pashtun majority" (Mapping Militant Organizations 6 Aug. 2017). According to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) *Country Information Report on Pakistan*, the TTP's support base is "primarily" Pashtun (Australia 20 Feb. 2019, para. 3.8).

Sources describe the TTP as "an alliance of ... militant groups" (UN 3 Feb. 2015) or as an "umbrella" organization (Australia 20 Feb. 2019, para. 2.84; Mapping Militant Organizations 6 Aug. 2017; *Political Handbook of the World* 2019) of "a dozen or more militant Islamic groups" (*Political Handbook of the World* 2019). According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), which "evaluat[es] terrorist and violent movements" in South Asia and is a project of the Institute for Conflict Management, a non-profit NGO based in New Delhi (SATP n.d.),

> [t]here is an overlap of membership between TTP and other sectarian terrorist outfits that operate across the country, each pursuing its own internal and external agendas. On November 23, 2008, the then TTP spokesman, Mullah Omer, had said, "The Taliban are present in Karachi and have links with the LeJ [Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Lashkar-i-Jhangvi], Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and other banned religious organisations." Apart from these sectarian groups, there are others with which the TTP has established linkages, primarily including Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM), HuM [Harkat-ul-Mujahideen] and Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami (HuJI). Media reports on January 5, 2011, indicated that five terrorist groups had joined the TTP and were working under its umbrella TTP. With common aims and enemies, LeJ, SSP, JeM, HuM and Harkat-ul-Ansar (HuA) had "merged" with TTP. TTP spokesman Azam Tariq declared, "We have not forced anyone to join TTP, and the leaders and activists of the banned religious organisations have united themselves under the umbrella of the TTP on their own choice." (SATP [2017])

In a December 2018 article, *Jane's Intelligence Review* reports that the TTP "experienced severe internal divisions, particularly following the death of its leader Hakimullah Mehsud in 2013" (*Jane's Intelligence Review* 24 Dec. 2018). According to sources, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar [Jamaat-e-Ahrar] is reportedly a faction or splinter group of the TTP (*Jane's Intelligence Review* 27 Sept. 2016; UN 5 Nov. 2019, 151). Sources indicate that the Islamic State [IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh] regional affiliate, Islamic State in the Khorasan [Khorosan] Province [ISKP, ISIS-K, ISIL Khorasan, Islamic State's Khorasan Province, ISIS Wilayat Khorasan, Wilayat Khorasan] includes former members of the TTP (Australia 20 Feb. 2019, para. 2.88; US 1 Nov. 2019, 293). In a September 2016 article, *Jane's Intelligence Review* reports that in 2014, "commanders split from the TTP to form the Tehrik-e-Khilafat (TeK)," and another splinter group called Khilafat Speen Ghar Bakhtuar Group was also formed; both were associated with the Islamic State in Wilayat Khorasan (*Jane's Intelligence Review* 27 Sept. 2016).

Sources indicate that the TTP is associated with the following groups:

- Al Qaeda [Al-Qa'ida] (Mapping Militant Organizations 6 Aug. 2017; UN 3 Feb. 2015; US 1 Nov. 2019, 317);

- the Haqqani Network (Australia 20 Feb. 2019, para. 2.95; UN 5 Nov. 2019, 148);

- the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) (UN 3 Feb. 2015; US 1 Nov. 2019, 289);

- LeJ (*Jane's Country Risk Daily Report* 25 Oct. 2016; US 1 Nov. 2019, 308);

- the Afghan Taliban (Mapping Militant Organizations 6 Aug. 2017), or is "ideologically aligned" with the Afghan Taliban (Australia 20 Feb. 2019, para. 2.84).

According to the US Department of State's *Country Reports on Terrorism 2018*, the

> TTP draws ideological guidance from [Al Qaeda], while elements of [Al Qaeda] rely in part on TTP for safe haven in the Pashtun areas along the Afghan-Pakistani border. This arrangement has given TTP access to both [Al Qaeda]'s global terrorist network and its members' operational experience. (US 1 Nov. 2019, 328)

The same source also states that the TTP "likely raises most of its funds through kidnapping-for–ransom payments, extortion, and other criminal activity" (US 1 Nov. 2019, 329). Further and corroborating information on the funding of the TTP could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2. Areas of Operation, Leadership, and Structure

The Mapping Militant Organizations Project indicates that the TTP is based in South Waziristan (Mapping Militant Organizations 6 Aug. 2017). According to the SATP,

> [h]eadquartered in the South Waziristan Agency of FATA [Federally Administered Tribal Areas], TTP has spread its networks into all of Pakistan's four provinces, establishing various "Chapters" and groups led by local "commanders" with common organisational goals. The TTP has also made its presence felt in neighbouring Afghanistan in recent times. (SATP [2017])

US *Country Reports on Terrorism 2018* also indicates that the TTP "operates in Pakistan and Afghanistan" and that the TTP "continued to use the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region as a safe haven" (US 1 Nov. 2019, 329, 223).

According to a March 2019 book by Naveed Elahi, a Pakistani academic and government official (Pakistan n.d.), without specifying a time period, the TTP

> had developed itself into a well-organised force, which had systems and procedures in place to run the organisation and its activities. It had a shura (consultative body), a seniority list of its leaders, a promotion policy, system of election of its Amir (Chief), media policy, code of discipline, [and] well-thought-out policies and strategies to carry out insurgency and terrorism. (Elahi 7 Mar. 2019, 77-78)

According to the SATP, Baitullah Mehsud was the founder and leader of the TTP until his death in August 2009, followed by Hakimullah Mehsud, deceased 1 November 2013, and was subsequently headed by Maulana Fazlullah (SATP [2017]). According to US *Country Reports on Terrorism 2018*, "Mullah Fazlullah headed the group until his death in June 2018. TTP then named Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud as the group's new leader" (US 1 Nov. 2019, 328). Sources indicate that Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud comes from the Mehsud tribe [like the earlier TTP leaders Baitullah and Hakimullah Mehsud (PIPS 15 Apr. 2019, 3)], is a religious scholar (*Dawn* with AFP and AP 23 June 2018; *The Indian Express* 18 Sept. 2019; PIPS 15 Apr. 2019, 3), and led the TTP in Karachi (*The Indian Express* 18 Sept. 2019; PIPS 15 Apr. 2019, 3) from June 2013 to May 2015 (PIPS 15. Apr. 2019, 3). In a May 2019 article in the Jamestown Foundation's *Terrorism Monitor* by Farhan Zahid, who conducts research on terrorism in Pakistan, the TTP is described as "revitalized" under Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud's leadership; the article states that

> Noor Wali's appointment appears to have unified the TTP factions under his command, which is essential to resurrecting the group. Recent terrorist attacks perpetrated by TTP in Pakistan are glaring evidence of its increased unity. ... He has close ties to al-Qaeda, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Chechen Islamist militants (Emirate-e-Kaukav), and Chinese militants under the Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement. Unlike Fazalullah, he is from the tribal areas of Pakistan and remained emir of TTP's Halqa-e-Mehsud (Mehsud tribe circle of TTP). He also still maintains a firm support base there and has clout among Islamist militants based in Karachi. (The Jamestown Foundation 18 May 2019, 4)

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources indicate that the number of operatives is estimated to be "between 30,000 and 35,000" (SATP [2017]; UN 3 Feb. 2015) or "several thousand" (US 1 Nov. 2019, 329).

Further information on the structure of the TTP could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3. Objectives

Sources indicate that the goals of the TTP are to establish or enforce Sharia law in Pakistan, combat the Pakistani military [and state (US 1 Nov. 2019, 328)] (Mapping Militant Organizations 6 Aug. 2017; SATP [2017]; US 1 Nov. 2019, 328), and combat [US-led coalition forces (Mapping Militant Organizations 6 Aug. 2017)] [or NATO forces (SATP [2017])] in Afghanistan (Mapping Militant Organizations 6 Aug. 2017; SATP [2017]). According to the Mapping Militant Organizations project, the group "seeks to overthrow the Pakistani government and establish an Islamic caliphate in Pakistan" (Mapping Militant Organizations 6 Aug. 2017).

A December 2018 article that was published in West Point's Combating Terrorism Center's (CTC) journal, the CTC Sentinel [2], indicates that an Urdu-language document called "The Code of Conduct: For the Mujahideen of Tehrik-i-Taliban," released in September 2018, outlines an overall strategy that the authors express as including three primary themes:

1. Reinforcing central control and structure to "circumvent further internal divisions";

2. Designating "legitimate targets" for attack; and

3. Advising members to avoid "ruthlessness and vigilante justice," and urging decisions on punishment to be "directed toward the shura council" (Jadoon and Mahmood Dec. 2018, 23-24).

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

4. Militant Activities and Targets

According to the article by Jadoon and Mahmood, the TTP's strategic document indicates that "legitimate targets for attacks" include state institutions such as the "military, police, judiciary, and civilian government," and "NGOs and institutions that promote 'obscenity'," as well as communities of "non-believers or *kafir*" who "are observed to be working in collaboration with the Pakistani state, or are guilty of insulting Islam"; however, the guidelines instruct the avoidance of "indiscriminate attacks," including against educational institutions and "religious seminaries, public gatherings, and markets … to prevent mass casualties and loss of civilian life" (Jadoon and Mahmood Dec. 2018, 23). According to the Australian DFAT report,

[u]p to 262 reported terrorist attacks, including 19 suicide and gun-and-suicide coordinated attacks, killing 595 and injuring 1030, occurred in 2018 (compared to up to 370 reported attacks in 2017). The [TTP], TTP splinter groups, and ISIL-affiliates conducted up to 171 of these attacks (compared to up to 213 attacks in 2017). (Australia 20 Feb. 2019, para. 2.68)

The same source also notes, without specifying a time period, that the TTP has engaged in sectarian violence, "[p]olitically motivated violence," attacks on polio workers, attacks on journalists, attacks on women and girls due to "ideological opposition to female education," and use of child suicide bombers (Australia 20 Feb. 2019, para. 3.99, 3.159, 3.183, 3.188, 3.214, and 3.244).

According to search results in the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) [3], searched on 17 December 2019 with the search term "TTP," 1,534 incidents [4] can be attributed, individually or in conjunction with other groups, to the TTP from 2007 to 2018 in Afghanistan and Pakistan, including 1,454 incidents in Pakistan (GTD n.d.a). Incidents have occurred in Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore, among other locations (GTD n.d.a). According to US *Country Reports on Terrorism 2018*,

TTP has carried out and claimed responsibility for numerous terrorist acts against Pakistani and U.S. interests, including a December 2009 suicide attack on a U.S. military base in Khost, Afghanistan, which killed seven U.S. citizens; and an April 2010 suicide bombing against the U.S. Consulate in Peshawar, Pakistan, which killed six Pakistani citizens. TTP is suspected of involvement in the 2007 assassination of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. TTP directed and facilitated Faisal Shahzad's failed attempt to detonate an explosive device in New York City's Times Square on May 1, 2010.

Between 2011 and 2018, TTP continued to carry out attacks against the Government of Pakistan and Pakistani civilian targets, and against U.S. targets in Pakistan. In 2012, TTP carried out attacks against a mosque, a police checkpoint, a Pakistani Air Force base, and a bus carrying Shia Muslims. In 2013, TTP attacked churches, the home of a government minister in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, and a Shia neighborhood in Karachi, Pakistan. TTP's attacks in 2013 killed and wounded hundreds of civilians and Pakistani government and law enforcement officials. In 2014, TTP targeted military and police convoys, bazaars, buses, and schools. The group carried out two consecutive attacks against Karachi's international airport and a siege on a primary school in Peshawar, Pakistan that killed 145 people, 132 of whom were children. Throughout 2015, TTP focused many of its small-scale attacks on Pakistani government and law enforcement officials by targeting convoys, government buildings, motorcades, and police checkpoints. The group also bombed a Shia mosque near Peshawar and conducted suicide bombings at two churches in Lahore. In 2016, the group continued carrying out attacks, claiming responsibility for a December attack that left the Deputy Superintendent of the police counterterrorism department dead and his son injured in an attack on their vehicle in Peshawar.

TTP attacks in 2017 included several suicide bombings, among them a February attack that targeted a protest in Lahore, a March attack on a mosque in northwestern Pakistan, and a July attack in Lahore that killed 26 people. In December 2017, TTP militants disguised as women stormed an agricultural training school in Peshawar, leaving nine dead including the attackers.

TTP's attacks continued in 2018. In February 2018, TTP claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing that resulted in the deaths of at least 11 Pakistani security personnel in Swat, Pakistan. TTP also claimed responsibility for a March 2018 suicide bombing that targeted a checkpoint on the outskirts of Lahore, resulting in the deaths of four police officers and two civilians. (US 1 Nov. 2019, 328-329)

Sources have reported the following incidents in 2019:

- The TTP claimed responsibility for an attack on 20 March on a security outpost that killed six paramilitary troops in Balochistan's Ziarat district (RFE/RL 20 Mar. 2019).

- The TTP claimed responsibility for ambushes on 6 May that killed four soldiers and wounded ten in North Waziristan, before fleeing towards the Afghan border (RFE/RL 7 May 2019);

- Hizbul Ahrar, "an offshoot of the Pakistani Taliban," claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing at a Sufi shrine in Lahore on 8 May that killed "at least" 10 people and wounded 20 others (AP 8 May 2019);

- On 14 May, in Quetta, Balochistan, "four police officers were killed and ten other people were wounded when an IED attached to a motorcycle was detonated outside the mosque they were guarding"; the TTP claimed responsibility for the attack (*Jane's Country Risk Daily Report* 15 May 2019);

- In Toba Tek Singh, Punjab province, on 13 June, "counter-terrorism police arrested two suspected [TTP] militants near a compound where Chinese engineers were temporarily staying. The militants were in possession of firearms, grenades and explosives" (*Jane's Country Risk Daily Report* 17 June 2019);

- The TTP claimed responsibility for a 26 June attack in Loralai, Balochistan, which killed one policeman and wounded two others, when three suicide bombers attacked a police compound (*Jane's Country Risk Daily Report* 1 July 2019);

- On 21 July, the TTP claimed responsibility for twin attacks involving a shooting at a police station and bombing of a hospital in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, killing eight people, including six police officers, and wounding thirty (RFE/RL 21 July 2019);

- On 27 July, the TTP claimed responsibility for killing six soldiers in North Waziristan, from shooting "across the Afghan border" (RFE/RL 28 July 2019);

- On 5 August, the TTP claimed responsibility for a roadside bombing in Bajaur district that killed two soldiers and wounded four soldiers (RFE/RL 6 Aug. 2019);

- On 5 December, a clash in North Waziristan saw the TTP claim three soldiers killed and three wounded, with two TTP militants killed, while Pakistani security stated that one soldier was killed and three wounded and that four suspected militants were killed (RFE/RL 5 Dec. 2019);

- According to an 18 December 2019 article by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's (RFE/RL) "Radio Mashaal" in Pakistan, TTP militants shot and killed two police officers who were protecting a polio vaccination team in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (RFE/RL 18 Dec. 2019). The same article also explains the following: "In the past decade, Taliban militants have killed scores of health workers and police guarding them because they believe anti-polio vaccination campaigns are intended to sterilize Pakistani children" (RFE/RL 18 Dec. 2019).

5. State Response

According to the US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2018*,

[Pakistani] military and paramilitary organizations conducted multiple counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations to eradicate militant safe havens. The military's Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad, launched in February 2017, continued throughout the year. Radd-ul-Fasaad is a nationwide counterterrorism campaign aimed at consolidating the gains of the 2014-2017 Operation Zarb-e-Azb, which countered foreign and domestic terrorists in the former FATA. Law enforcement agencies also acted to weaken terrorist groups, arresting suspected terrorists and gang members who allegedly provided logistical support to militants. In raids throughout the country, police confiscated caches of weapons, suicide vests, and planning materials. Police expanded their presence into formerly ungoverned areas, particularly in Balochistan. (US 13 Mar. 2019, 18)

According to the Australian DFAT report,

> [o]bservers credit Operation Zarb-e-Azb, its successor Radd-ul-Fasaad, and the NAP [National Action Plan] with a significant reduction in the number of violent and terrorism[-]related attacks in Pakistan. In 2018, up to 262 reported terrorist attacks killed 595 people. This is a significant decrease from 2013, when the terrorist death toll included 3,000 civilians and 676 security force personnel.
>
> ... In July 2017, the military launched operation Khyber-IV in the Rajgal Valley, targeting Lashkar-e-Islam, Jammatul Ahrar (JuA) and the TTP. Khyber-IV also targeted ISIL connections across the border with Afghanistan's Nangarhar province.
>
> ... Local observers, including officials, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also reported a trend of increased security, a reduction in reported killings, and reduced fear within the community in 2018. Residents of Peshawar reported an increased sense of security in the evenings due to the enhanced military presence. (Australia 20 Feb. 2019, para. 2.77-2.79)

An August 2018 briefing by International Crisis Group similarly indicates that TTP networks in FATA were disrupted by the military operations, but states that "the military has neither killed nor captured all major TTP leaders," with some relocating to Afghanistan, or other "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa districts, such as Tank and Dera Ismail Khan," and reviving their networks (International Crisis Group 20 Aug. 2018, 3). Citing local news articles and interviews conducted by International Crisis Group, the same source also notes that in the context of Pakistani military operations, "[r]ights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and custodial deaths continue, as does collective punishment" (International Crisis Group 20 Aug. 2018, 6). Further and corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

Notes

[1] The Mapping Militants Project is part of the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC) at Stanford University; it "traces the evolution of militant organizations and the interactions that develop among them over time" and includes profiles of individual groups and lists of their activities (Mapping Militant Organizations n.d.).

[2] The CTC Sentinel article was written by Amira Jadoon of West Point's CTC and Sara Mahmood of the International Center for Political Violence & Terrorism Research of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University in Singapore (Jadoon and Mahmood Dec. 2018, 21).

[3] The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) is "an open-source database including information on domestic and international terrorist attacks around the world from 1970 through 2018," managed by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland (GTD n.d.b).

[4] Incidents of terrorist attacks are defined by the GTD as "*the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation,*" where the incident is intentional, entails "some level of violence or immediate threat of violence," and perpetrators are sub-national actors (GTD Oct. 2019, 10-11, italics in original).

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