

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	485
Land:	Pakistan
Kilde:	US Department of State
Titel:	Country Report on Terrorism 2018 - Chapter 1 - Pakistan
Udgivet:	1. november 2019
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	29. januar 2020

Country Report on Terrorism 2018 - Chapter 1 - Pakistan

Overview: Although the Pakistani government voiced support for political reconciliation between the Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban, it did not restrict the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani Network (HQN) from operating in Pakistan-based safe havens and threatening U.S. and Afghan forces in Afghanistan. The government failed to significantly limit Lashkar e-Tayyiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) from raising money, recruiting, and training in Pakistan – and allowed candidates overtly affiliated with LeT front organizations to contest the July general elections.

Pakistan experienced significant terrorist threats in 2018, although the number of attacks and casualties has continued to decrease from previous years. The major terrorist groups that focused on conducting attacks in Pakistan included Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JuA), Islamic State's Khorasan Province (ISIS-K), and the sectarian group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi al-Alami (LJA). ISIS-K claimed several major attacks against Pakistani targets, some of which may have been conducted in collaboration with other terrorist groups. Separatist militant groups conducted terrorist attacks against governmental, non-governmental, and diplomatic targets in Balochistan and Sindh provinces. Groups located in Pakistan, but focused on conducting attacks outside the country, included the Afghan Taliban, HQN, LeT and its affiliated front organizations, and JeM. Terrorists used a range of tactics to attack individuals, schools, markets, government institutions, and places of worship, including IEDs, VBIEDs, suicide bombings, targeted assassinations, and rocket-propelled grenades.

In 2018, Pakistan held general elections and conducted a peaceful transfer of power. The Pakistani government and military continued efforts to disrupt terrorist attacks and eliminate anti-state militants. In June, the FATF placed Pakistan on its "grey list" for deficiencies in its AML/CFT regimes, including the failure to implement UN sanctions related to designated entities.

2018 Terrorist Incidents: Pakistan experienced numerous terrorist attacks in 2018. Militant and terrorist groups targeted civilians, journalists, community leaders, security forces, law enforcement agents, and schools killing and injuring hundreds. Religious minorities faced significant threats from terrorist groups. The following examples include some of the more destructive and high-profile attacks and demonstrate a variety of methods, targets, and perpetrators:

- On March 14, a suicide bomber killed nine people and injured 35 others in Raiwind, near Lahore in Punjab province. TTP claimed responsibility for the attack.
- On July 13, a suicide bomber killed at least 149 people and injured at least 186 others at a pre-election campaign event in Mastung, Balochistan province. ISIS-K claimed responsibility for the attack.
- On November 23, a suicide bomber killed at least 33 people and injured at least 56 others in Hangu, Orakzai district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. ISIS-K claimed responsibility for the attack.
- Also on November 23, three individuals from the Balochistan Liberation Army armed with guns and suicide vests attacked the Chinese consulate in Karachi, Sindh province. They killed four consulate guards before being killed by law enforcement.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Government of Pakistan continued to implement the Antiterrorism Act of 1997, the National Counterterrorism Authority (NACTA) Act, the 2014 Investigation for Fair Trial Act, and 2014 amendments to the Antiterrorism Act, all of which allow enhanced law enforcement and prosecutorial powers for terrorism cases. The law allows for preventive detention, permits the death penalty for terrorism offenses, and creates special Anti-Terrorism Courts. In 2017, the government renewed a constitutional amendment allowing military courts to try civilians on terrorism charges for two additional years. However, critics have argued that the military courts are not transparent and are being used to silence civil society activists.

Military, paramilitary, and civilian security forces conducted counterterrorism operations throughout Pakistan. The Intelligence Bureau has nationwide jurisdiction and is empowered to coordinate with provincial counterterrorism departments. Pakistan's Ministry of Interior has more than 10 law enforcement-related entities under its administration. NACTA acts as a coordinating body. In November, the Minister of State for the Interior, Shehryar Afridi, announced that the Ministry of Interior would reorganize NACTA as part of its reforms to the National Action Plan on terrorism, which was still in progress at the end of the reporting period.

Pakistan collects biometric information at land crossings with its International Border Management Security System. Authorities had limited ability to detect smuggling by air travel. The Customs Service attempted to enforce anti-money laundering laws and foreign exchange regulations at all major airports, in coordination with other agencies. Customs managed the entry of dual-use chemicals for legitimate purposes through end-use verification, while also attempting to prevent their diversion for use in IEDs. In keeping with UNSCR 2178, returning FTFs may be prosecuted under Pakistani law. NACTA is responsible for compiling and verifying data on these individuals.

In early 2017, after Pakistan's military announced the nationwide Radd-ul-Fasaad or "Elimination of Strife" operation to prevent cross-border terrorist attacks and limit militants' access to explosives and weapons, government and military sources reported

scores of military and police operations to disarm, disrupt, kill, and apprehend terrorists. Military courts operated without transparency and sentenced at least 104 convicted terrorists to death in 2018, up from at least 15 in 2017.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: As a member of the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), a FATF-style regional body, Pakistan has agreed to implement international standards to combat money laundering, terrorism finance, and proliferation finance. Pakistan criminalizes terrorist financing through the Antiterrorism Act, but implementation remains uneven. In June 2018, the FATF placed Pakistan on its “grey list” for deficiencies across its AML/CFT regimes, specifically citing concerns over Pakistan’s failure to fully implement the UN Security Council ISIL (Da’esh) and al-Qa’ida sanctions regime. FATF noted that UN-listed entities, including LeT and its affiliates, were not effectively prohibited from raising funds in Pakistan, or being denied financial services. Although Pakistan’s laws technically comply with international AML/CFT standards, authorities failed to uniformly implement UN sanctions related to designated entities and individuals such as LeT and its affiliates, which continued to make use of economic resources and raise funds. Pakistan committed to addressing these concerns as part of an agreed FATF Action Plan.

Pakistan’s 2015 National Action Plan to combat terrorism includes efforts to prevent and counter terrorist financing, including by enhancing interagency coordination on countering the finance of terrorism. The law designates the use of unlicensed *hundi* and *hawala* systems as predicate offences to terrorism and requires banks to report suspicious transactions to Pakistan’s FIU, the State Bank’s Financial Monitoring Unit. These unlicensed money transfer systems persisted throughout the country and were open to abuse by terrorist financiers operating in the cross-border area.

For additional information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes* (<https://www.state.gov/2019-international-narcotics-control-strategy-report/>).

Countering Violent Extremism: In November, the Pakistani government announced that it would review and potentially revise NACTA’s composition and operations. Before the review, NACTA’s CVE work adhered to the National Narrative to Counter Violent Extremism, which was finalized in 2017. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the military’s public relations wing shaped media messages to build support for the military’s counterterrorism initiatives. The government operated five de-radicalization camps offering “corrective religious education,” vocational training, counseling, and therapy. A Pakistani NGO administered the Sabaoon Rehabilitation Center in Swat Valley, which was founded in partnership with the Pakistani military, and focused on juvenile terrorists.

There were continued reports that some madrassahs taught “extremist” doctrine. Increasing government supervision of madrassahs is a component of the National Action Plan, and there was evidence of continued government efforts to increase regulation of the sector. Security analysts and madrassah reform proponents observed, however, that many madrassahs failed to register with the government or to provide

documentation of their sources of funding, or to limit their acceptance to foreign students with valid visas, a background check, and the consent of their governments, as required by law.

The Pakistani cities of Nowshera, Peshawar, and Quetta are members of the Strong Cities Network.

International and Regional Cooperation: Pakistan participated in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation meetings on counterterrorism and in other multilateral fora where counterterrorism cooperation was discussed, including the GCTF, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (as an observer), the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum.

ecoi.net summary:

Annual report on terrorism (covering 2018)



Country:

Pakistan

Source:

USDOS – US Department of State [\(/en/source/11558.html\)](/en/source/11558.html)

Original link:

<https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2018/#Pakistan> (<https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2018/#Pakistan>)

Document type:

Periodical Report

Language:

English

Published:

1 November 2019

Document ID:

2019165

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ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

