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Contents

List of abbreviations	3
Introduction.....	6
1. Recent conflict history	9
2. Current conflict situation	11
3. Security situation per region.....	17
3.1. Geographical overview of the violence.....	17
3.1.1. Trends in regional violence	17
3.1.2. Regional comparison of violence-related casualties.....	17
3.2. Security trends per geographic subdivision	18
3.2.1. Punjab	19
3.2.2. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (including former FATA)	21
3.2.3. Balochistan.....	40
3.2.4. Sindh.....	49
3.2.5. Islamabad capital territory	53
3.2.6. Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.....	55
Summary	58
Bibliography.....	59

List of abbreviations

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
AK	Azad Kashmir
ASWJ	Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat
AI	Amnesty International
BLA	Baloch Liberation Army
BLF	Balochistan Liberation Front
BNA	Baloch Nationalist Army
BRA	Baloch Republican Army
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
CRSS	Center for Research and Security Studies
CTD	Counter-Terrorism Department
Daesh	See Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP)
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum (formerly: European Asylum Support Office, EASO)
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FC	Frontier Corps
GB	Gilgit-Baltistan
HM	Hizb-ul-Mujahideen
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IBO	Intelligence-Based Operation
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IPP	Istekham-i-Pakistan Party
IRB	Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
ISKP	Islamic State Khorasan Province, also called ISIS, ISIL, IS or <i>Daesh</i>

ISPP	Islamic State Pakistan Province
ISW	Institute for the Study of War
JeM	Jaish-e-Muhammad (Muhammad's Army)
JSQM-A	Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz-Aresar
JUI-F	Jamiat Uema-e-Islam Fazl
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
KPTDs	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa tribal districts
LeT	Lashkar-e Taiba
LoC	Line of Control
Malik	Tribal chieftain
NDM	National Democratic Movement
NWFP	North-West Frontier Province, the former name for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
OFPRA	Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides
PICCS	Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies
PIPS	Pak Institute for Peace Studies
PML-N	Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz
PPP	Pakistan People's Party
PTI	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf
PTM	Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement
RFE/RL	Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
SATP	South Asia Terrorism Portal
SDLA	Sindhudesh Liberation Army
SDRA	Sindhudesh Revolution Army
SIC	Sunni Ittehad Council
SRA	Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army
TNN	Tribal News Network
TJP	Tehreek-e Jihad Pakistan
TTP	Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (Pakistan Movement of Taliban)
UBA	United Baloch Army
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

USIP

United States Institute of Peace

VBMP

Voice for Baloch Missing Persons

Introduction

The purpose of this COI Focus is to assess the security situation in Pakistan. It is particularly focused on the period from 1 January 2023 to 30 April 2024. Events that took place during the drafting of this report in April and May 2024 are also included. This report is an update of the *COI Focus Pakistan. Security situation* (February 28, 2023).

The report comprises three parts. The first chapter offers a brief history of the security situation in Pakistan, focusing on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan provinces. In chapter two the current conflict situation and recent political developments in Pakistan are discussed. The final chapter sheds light on the security situation per region. It contains a geographical overview of the violence taking place in Pakistan and reviews the security trends in Pakistan's provinces in detail. Particular attention is given to the regions where a high number of security incidents are reported, for instance Peshawar district and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa tribal districts (KPTDs), formerly referred to as Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). This COI Focus does not contain a detailed description of the actors of violence in Pakistan. On this subject, this COI Focus refers to the European Union Agency for Asylum's October 2021 report *Pakistan - Security situation*,¹ the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs' September 2022 report *Algemeen Ambtsbericht Pakistan*,² and The Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies' *Pakistan Security Report 2022*.³

This COI Focus uses numerical data on security incidents from the database of the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), a US non-profit organisation that collects, analyses and maps information on conflicts. Experienced researchers collect the data using information from a wide range of local, regional and international news sources and organisations. For Pakistan, the following sources, among others, were used: Pakistan Press, Dawn, Pakistan Today, Express Tribune, Balochistan Times, Frontier Star, Nation and Pakistan Observer.⁴ Cedoca collaborated with Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides (OFPRA) for the analysis of the numerical data.

The database is publicly available on ACLED's website and is continually updated whenever new information becomes available (previously entered incidents are also updated when relevant).⁵ The ACLED figures used by Cedoca in this COI Focus were retrieved on 11 January 2024 and on 24 April 2024. ACLED's inventory shows the type of violent event, actors of violence, a description of the events, their location and number of fatalities.⁶ ACLED stresses that because its datasets reflect to some degree the reporting priorities of the media and organisations, the level of violence may be underestimated.⁷

In its Codebook, ACLED explains in detail the methodology applied for coding and the continuous checking of data.⁸ According to Cedoca, because of the methodology, coding and data entry constraints, ACLED's figures should only be considered as an estimate and indication of trends regarding violence in a given period.

¹ EUAA, 10/2021, [url](#)

² Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken - Nederlands, 09/2022, [url](#)

³ PIPS, 06/01/2023, pp. 69-85, [url](#)

⁴ ACLED, 24/05/2024, [url](#)

⁵ ACLED, 10/04/2019, [url](#)

⁶ ACLED, 10/04/2019, [url](#)

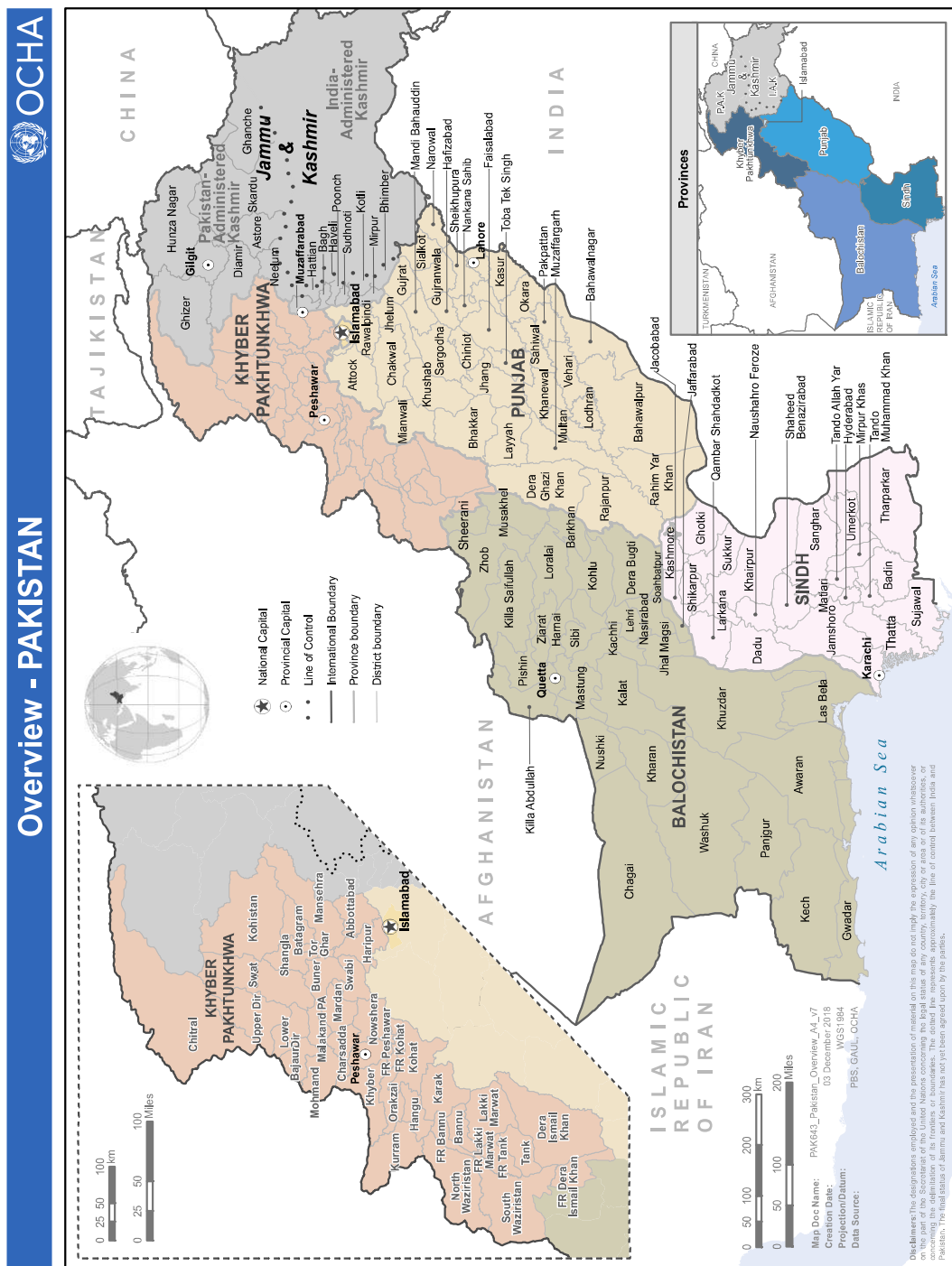
⁷ ACLED, 10/04/2019, [url](#)

⁸ ACLED, 10/04/2019, [url](#)

This report also relies on data on security incidents and casualties provided by different institutions, either published in reports available on their websites or was provided by email to Cedoca.⁹ Data on the security incidents provided by Pakistani institutes such as the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) and, to a lesser extent, the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), were used. Because of the use of a different methodology and terminology by each institution, the data on security incidents and casualties can differ between the institutions. For example, while PIPS records 'terrorist attacks', PICSS records 'militant attacks'.

Cedoca continuously monitors the security situation in Pakistan. In the event of fundamental changes or developments that significantly alter the situation on the ground, this COI Focus will be updated as quickly as possible.

⁹ PIPS provided a version of the Pakistan Security Report 2023 by email to Cedoca. Rana Amir M., security and political analyst at PIPS, email, 26/01/2024



Map 1: Pakistan-Overview © UNOCHA¹⁰

¹⁰ UNOCHA, 3/12/2018, [url](https://www.unocha.org/pakistan)

1. Recent conflict history

After the US invasion in Afghanistan in late 2001, thousands of Afghan Taliban and al-Qaeda militants crossed the border 'looking for safe havens' in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and in parts of the province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).¹¹ Under their influence, several Pakistani groups with a similar ideology collaborated to impose a strict application of conservative Islamic principles in the region. The resulting violence was at first instance directed against uncooperative local residents and later turned against the Pakistani authorities.¹² The Pakistan military's 2004 military operation in South Waziristan was the start of multiple military operations against these militants in the former FATA.¹³ By 2007, the Pakistani Taliban (also known as the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, TTP)¹⁴ emerged out of a decentralised network of the different militant groups operating in former FATA.¹⁵ Around this time, almost all of FATA and some areas of KP, including Swat, came under control of TTP militants and/or their allies.¹⁶ As TTP fighters intensified attacks against army and government targets,¹⁷ the Pakistani army carried out a number of major counter-offensives to regain control of terrain in Swat, Bajaur, South Waziristan, Orakzai, Kurram, Khyber, Mohmand and North Waziristan.¹⁸ Some of these military operations against militant networks were poorly targeted¹⁹ and aggravated the human rights and humanitarian crisis affecting FATA since 2004.²⁰ The heavy-handed, often indiscriminate and disproportionate modus operandi of the army seriously damaged the area's already weak civilian infrastructure and precipitated the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people.²¹ The December 2014 TTP attack on an army-run public school in Peshawar, in which 147 students and teachers were killed, gave the Pakistani military further impetus to break the power of the TTP and their affiliated organizations in KP.²² The ensuing counter-terrorism strategies against the TTP proved to be one of the main sources of insecurity in the north-west of Pakistan, further alienating the local population²³ and causing displacement.²⁴

In the long run, the army's counter-insurgency operations in North Waziristan, Khyber and other tribal districts forced militant groups to relocate much of their infrastructure across the border in Afghanistan²⁵ and contributed to a higher level of security in KP and FATA.²⁶ Whilst years of military campaigns in former FATA broke the TTP's hold over most of the tribal belt, the improvement of security in these areas remained fragile. Millions of residents were displaced, homes were destroyed

¹¹ USIP, 05/2021, p. 4, [url](#)

¹² Rashid A., pp. 265-270, 2008; AI, 10/06/2010, pp. 10-11, [url](#)

¹³ Semple M., 11/2014, p. 5, [url](#)

¹⁴ The largest militant group in Pakistan. The organisation was founded in 2007 and is an umbrella of most, but not all, Pakistani Taliban groups. TTP pledged allegiance in 2007 to Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban in Afghanistan. The main goal behind TTP's establishment was to unite the various factions of the Pakistan Taliban in order to organise synchronised attacks on NATO/ISAF forces in Afghanistan. The group also carries out 'defensive jihad' against Pakistani military forces conducting operations in former FATA (USIP, 05/2021, p. 4, [url](#))

¹⁵ USIP, 05/2021, p. 5, [url](#)

¹⁶ Center for Civilians in Conflict, 2010, p.16, [url](#)

¹⁷ Semple, M., 11/2014, p.5, [url](#)

¹⁸ Center for Civilians in Conflict, 2010, p. 16, [url](#) ; HRW, 10/07/2014, [url](#) ; Al Jazeera, 30/04/2019, [url](#)

¹⁹ ICG, 16/09/2010, p. 2, [url](#)

²⁰ AI, 10/06/2010, pp. 7-17, [url](#)

²¹ AI, 10/06/2010, p. 13, [url](#) ; ICG, 16/09/2010, p. 2, [url](#)

²² The New York Times, 31/04/2023, [url](#)

²³ ICG, 20/08/2018, p. 5, [url](#)

²⁴ ECHO, 31/03/2021, [url](#)

²⁵ PIPS, 06/01/2023, p.72, [url](#)

²⁶ EASO (Almeida C.), 02/2018, pp. 21, 46, [url](#) ; Brookings, 15/01/2021, [url](#)

and livelihoods ruined.²⁷ After the summer of 2020, reports emerged of the regrouping of the TTP²⁸ and of 'a silent comeback in the tribal districts bordering Afghanistan'.²⁹ During 2020, the Pakistani government conducted secret peace negotiations with the TTP, but the talks broke down in late December 2020 or early January 2021.³⁰

The Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021 led TTP to ramp up its attacks in Pakistan.³¹ Cross-border movements by militants from Afghanistan to Pakistan led to increasing numbers of attacks, especially on Pakistan security personnel.³² The resurgence of the TTP, local Taliban groups, and, to a lesser extent, Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) resulted in a significant increase of terrorist attacks in Pakistan in 2021.³³ Khyber Pakhtunkhwa witnessed the highest number of these attacks,³⁴ especially in North and South Waziristan districts.³⁵ TTP and affiliated local Taliban groups perpetrated most of these attacks, but ISKP also claimed a number of attacks in the province.³⁶ Security forces and law enforcement personnel were the main targets of the increasing number of terrorist attacks in KP in 2021.³⁷ In 2021, Mansur Khan Mahsud described the main targets of TTP in the KPDTs as follows: 'Army, police, pro-government tribal Maliks and elders and civil servants and the TTP militants which have surrendered to the army and are now working for the army are the main target of militant groups in the tribal districts of former FATA.'³⁸

In Balochistan province a separatist insurgency has been ongoing since 1948.³⁹ The conflict intensified in 2005 and escalated further after the death of nationalist leader Nawab Akbar Bugti in August 2006, prompting military intervention.⁴⁰ Historically, various Baloch insurgent groups carried out low-intensity attacks mainly targeting state infrastructure (such as power pylons and railways tracks), non-Baloch settlers and workers as well as security forces.⁴¹ In recent years, the Baloch insurgency has been marked by increasingly destructive attacks on the security forces.⁴² The development of the Gwadar port in collaboration with China is viewed by Baloch insurgents as an attempt by the Pakistani state to exploit Balochistan's resources.⁴³ The Chinese projects and Chinese workers have become targets of Baloch insurgents.⁴⁴

After years of sporadic fighting that caused civilian casualties and local displacement, the Pakistani and Indian armies agreed in February 2021 to restore the 2003 cease-fire across the Line of Control (LoC) separating both countries. The renewal of the cease-fire allowed for normalization of civilian life in the areas adjoining the LoC.⁴⁵

²⁷ ICG, 20/08/2018, p.2, [url](#)

²⁸ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 21/12/2021, [url](#); USIP, 05/2021, [url](#); TRT World, 21/08/2020, [url](#)

²⁹ New America, 31/08/2020, [url](#)

³⁰ The Diplomat, 03/04/2021, [url](#)

³¹ The Economist, 07/10/2021, [url](#); AFP, 15/11/2021, [url](#)

³² PIPS, 06/01/2023, p. 72, [url](#),

³³ PIPS, 2022, p.15, [url](#)

³⁴ PIPS, 2022, p.45, [url](#)

³⁵ PIPS, 2022, p.45, [url](#)

³⁶ PIPS, 2022, p.45, [url](#)

³⁷ PIPS, 2022, p.46, [url](#)

³⁸ Khan Mahsud M., email, 11/06/2021

³⁹ Hashmi, W., 21/08/2018, [url](#)

⁴⁰ The Jamestown Foundation (Aamir A.), 15/02/2019, [url](#)

⁴¹ PIPS, 06/01/2023, p. 30, [url](#)

⁴² PIPS, 06/01/2023, p. 30, [url](#)

⁴³ The Diplomat, 02/03/2022, [url](#); DW, 14/07/2021, [url](#); DW, 15/07/2020, [url](#)

⁴⁴ The New York Times, 05/05/2022, [url](#); DW, 14/07/2021, [url](#)

⁴⁵ FH, 24/02/2022, [url](#)

The following graph, based on data compiled by PIPS, illustrates the decreasing number of terrorist attacks in Pakistan from 2013 to 2020 and the increasing level of violence witnessed since 2021.⁴⁶

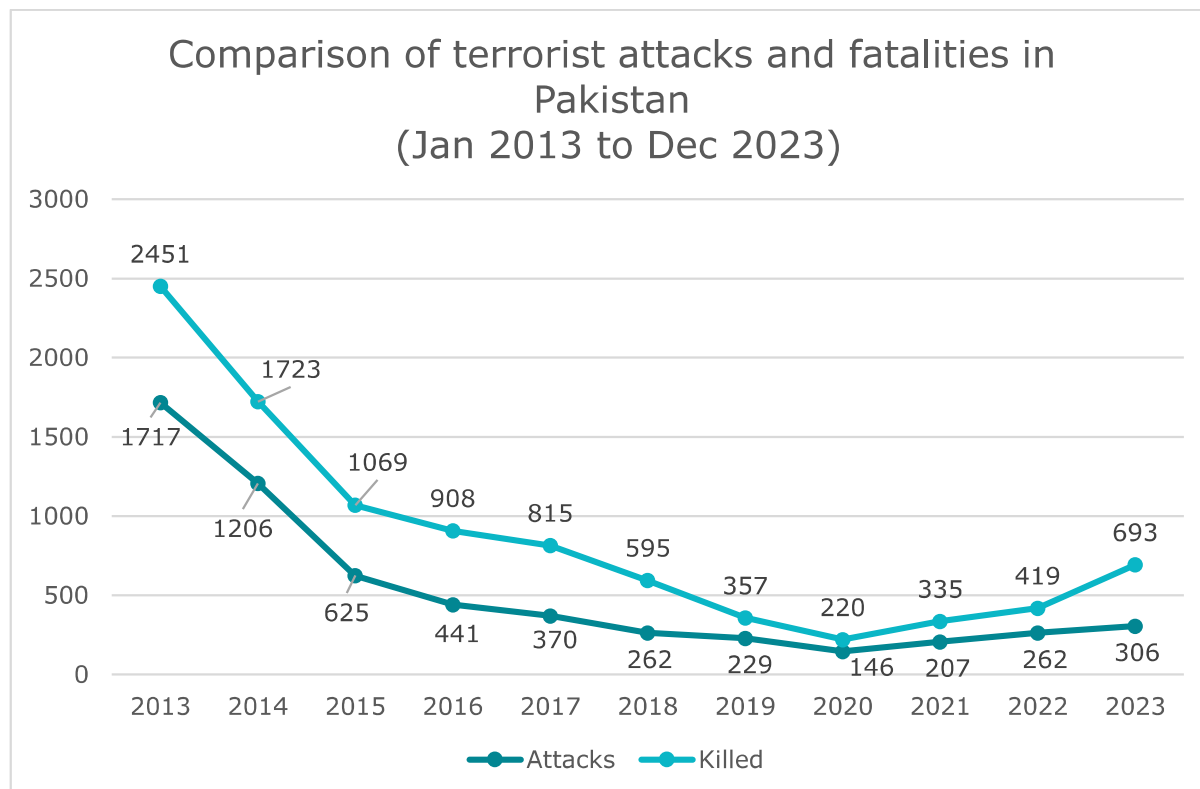


Figure 1: 'Terrorist attacks' in Pakistan – Jan 2013 – Dec 2023 (Data Source: PIPS)⁴⁷

2. Current conflict situation

In early 2023, TTP maintained a high-frequency of attacks, targeting security forces personnel in KP province.⁴⁸ On 30 January 2023, a bombing at a mosque used by security forces and government personnel in Peshawar city killed more than 100 and injured over 200 people.⁴⁹ TTP first claimed and then denied responsibility for this suicide attack.⁵⁰ The bombing raised fears among residents of a possible new counteroffensive against TTP in KP.⁵¹ In Balochistan attacks on security forces personnel continued as well. Reports indicated that local Baloch militant groups formed an alliance with TTP.⁵² On 22 February 2023, high-level Pakistani and Taliban officials in Kabul agreed to address terrorist threats.⁵³ In April 2023, Pakistan's National Security Council agreed to launch an 'all-out

⁴⁶ DFAT, 25/01/2022, p.14, [url](#); PIPS, 2022, [url](#); PIPS, 06/01/2023

⁴⁷ DFAT, 25/01/2022, p.14, [url](#); PIPS, 2022, [url](#); PIPS, 06/01/2023

⁴⁸ ICG, 02/2023, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

⁴⁹ BBC, 30/01/2023, [url](#); Reuters, 30/01/2023, [url](#)

⁵⁰ The New York Times, 31/01/2023, [url](#)

⁵¹ The New York Times, 31/01/2023, [url](#); Al Jazeera, 02/02/2023, [url](#)

⁵² ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

⁵³ Al Jazeera, 22/02/2023, [url](#) ; Al Jazeera, 23/02/2023, [url](#)

comprehensive operation against terrorism'.⁵⁴ In South Waziristan two military operations in April 2023 left 18 militants and 3 soldiers dead.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, ongoing cross-border militancy continued to strain Pakistan's relations with the Afghan Taliban.⁵⁶ On 30 July 2023, an ISKP suicide bomber detonated explosives at a political rally of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam in Bajaur district, KP. At least 54 people were killed, 200 were wounded.⁵⁷

On 12 July 2023, militants belonging to the newly established Tehreek-e Jihad Pakistan (TJP) assaulted a military base in Zhob district, Balochistan killing nine soldiers.⁵⁸ On 20 August 2023, at least 11 laborers were killed in an IED attack in North Waziristan. The victims were working at the construction of an army post.⁵⁹ On 6 September 2023, TTP launched an offensive on two checkpoints in Chitral district of KP. A dozen militants and four soldiers were killed. According to the Pakistani army the attack was coordinated from Afghan soil.⁶⁰ The same day Pakistani and Taliban forces exchanged fire at the Torkham border crossing,⁶¹ killing at least two Taliban militants and forcing the crossing's closure for nine days.⁶² On 29 September 2023, suicide bombers targeted an Islamic procession in the Mastung district of Balochistan and a mosque in Hangu city (KP). At least 57 people were killed and dozens were injured.⁶³ TTP denied responsibility for the attacks. The modus operandi pointed to ISKP or Islamic State Pakistan Province (ISPP) as probable culprits.⁶⁴ In October 2023, Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti set a deadline of 1 November for all illegal immigrants to leave Pakistan or face deportation, with clear signals this policy was aimed at Afghans.⁶⁵ Amnesty International warned that 1.4m Afghan refugees were at risk of being uprooted.⁶⁶ Later that month, a number of Pakistani soldiers were killed in counter-insurgency operations in Zhob district (Balochistan) and North and South Waziristan (KP).⁶⁷ From 24 to 31 October 2023, Shia-Sunni clashes involving heavy weaponry roiled Kurram district (KP). Between 9 and 30 people were killed before local clerics and tribal elders agreed on a ceasefire.⁶⁸

In November 2023, the Pakistani government forcibly deported hundreds of thousands of Afghan nationals to Afghanistan, citing security reasons.⁶⁹ Amnesty International (AI) reported continued detentions, deportations and widespread harassment of Afghan refugees. According to AI, their life and physical integrity were at risk upon return to Afghanistan.⁷⁰ On 3 November 2023, fourteen Pakistani soldiers were killed in an ambush by Baloch militants in Gwadar district.⁷¹ The same day, a bomb blast targeting a police patrol killed five civilians and soldiers in Dera Ismail city (KP).⁷² On 6 November 2023, militants killed four soldiers during a military operation in Khyber district (KP).⁷³

⁵⁴ Reuters, 07/04/2023, [url](#) ; Dawn, 15/04/2023, [url](#)

⁵⁵ ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

⁵⁶ ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

⁵⁷ The New York Times, 31/07/2023, [url](#) ; Al Jazeera, 31/07/2023, [url](#)

⁵⁸ Al Jazeera, 12/07/2023, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

⁵⁹ Al Jazeera, 20/08/2023, [url](#)

⁶⁰ Al Jazeera, 07/09/2023, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

⁶¹ Reuters, 07/09/2023, [url](#)

⁶² ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

⁶³ Reuters, 29/09/2023, [url](#)

⁶⁴ Al Jazeera, 29/09/2023, [url](#)

⁶⁵ ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

⁶⁶ ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

⁶⁷ ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

⁶⁸ Dawn, 31/10/2023, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

⁶⁹ ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

⁷⁰ AI, 10/11/2023, [url](#)

⁷¹ Reuters, 03/11/2023, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

⁷² Dawn 03/11/2023, [url](#)

⁷³ Dawn, 06/11/2023, [url](#)

On 12 December 2023, TJP militants conducted multiple suicide bombings after ramming an explosive-laden vehicle into the gate of a military compound in Dera Ismail Khan district (KP). At least 23 soldiers were killed, over 30 were wounded.⁷⁴ According to Reuters, TJP had not clarified whether it was part of the main TTP group, which is an umbrella of several Islamist and sectarian outfits.⁷⁵ According to Asfandiyar Mir, a senior analyst at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), a Washington-based think tank, "TJP is a front organization of the TTP, and the TTP takes direction from the Taliban regime in Kabul".⁷⁶

In January and February 2024, militants ramped up attacks in a bid to disrupt the national elections taking place on 8 February 2024.⁷⁷ Baloch militant groups and TTP conducted over 50 attacks in the run up to elections, targeting political rallies, election offices and homes of candidates in Balochistan and KP.⁷⁸ On 9 January 2024, TTP militants killed 6 police constables and injured 28 others in Bajaur district (KP).⁷⁹ In Balochistan, a bomb killed five soldiers in Kech district on 13 January 2024.⁸⁰ On 30 January 2024, Baloch militants killed four security personnel and two civilians in Mach city. The Majeed Brigade of the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) claimed the attack.⁸¹ On 16 January 2024, Iran fired missiles into western Pakistan, saying it was targeting Jaish al-Adl, a Sunni militant group. In response, Pakistan fired missiles at "terrorist hideouts" in eastern Iran. Later in January 2024, the countries' foreign ministers met in Islamabad and agreed to discontinue further aggression.⁸² On 5 February 2024, a militant attack on a police station in Dera Ismail Khan (KP) cost ten police officers their lives.⁸³ On 6 February 2024, bomb blasts outside election offices in Balochistan's Pishin and Qila Saifullah districts killed 28 and injured over 50.⁸⁴ On 16 March 2024, militants rammed an explosive-laden vehicle into a military checkpoint in North Waziristan (KP). Subsequent suicide bombings killed seven soldiers.⁸⁵ TTP Hafiz Gul Bahadur claimed responsibility.⁸⁶ Accusing the Taliban of hosting militants, the Pakistani army launched retaliatory airstrikes on Afghan soil on 18 March 2024. The claimed targets were TTP groups in Afghanistan's Paktika and Khost provinces. According to the Taliban, eight women and children were killed.⁸⁷ Taliban authorities retaliated by firing heavy weaponry into Pakistan's Kurram district, killing a Pakistani army captain.⁸⁸ In April 2024, militant attacks against security forces targets continued in KP. On 13 April 2024, two soldiers were killed in Buner, KP.⁸⁹ The same day, BLA gunmen killed nine Punjabi bus passengers on the Quetta-Taftan Highway N-40 near Noshki, Balochistan.⁹⁰ Between 17 and 22 April 2024, militants killed seven customs officials in Dera Ismail Khan(KP).⁹¹

⁷⁴ Al Jazeera, 12/12/2023, [url](#); Reuters, 12/12/2023, [url](#)

⁷⁵ Reuters, 12/12/2023, [url](#)

⁷⁶ The New York Times, 02/12/2023, [url](#)

⁷⁷ ACLED, 01/02/2024, [url](#)

⁷⁸ The Economist, 09/02/2024, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

⁷⁹ Reuters, 08/01/2024, [url](#)

⁸⁰ Dawn, 14/01/2024, [url](#)

⁸¹ Dawn, 30/01/2024, [url](#)

⁸² The Economist, 02/02/2024, [url](#)

⁸³ Dawn, 05/02/2024, [url](#)

⁸⁴ BBC, 07/02/2024, [url](#)

⁸⁵ The Economist, 27/03/2024, [url](#) ; Al Jazeera, 16/03/2024, [url](#)

⁸⁶ ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

⁸⁷ BBC, 18/03/2024, [url](#)

⁸⁸ Dawn, 18/03/2024, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

⁸⁹ Dawn, 14/04/2024, [url](#)

⁹⁰ Dawn, 13/04/2024, [url](#)

⁹¹ Dawn, 22/04/2024, [url](#)

Political developments in 2023 – May 2024

With general elections looming, political tensions between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's coalition government and former Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) mounted in 2023.⁹² In April 2022, opposition parties spearheaded by Shehbaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) had ousted Khan through a vote of no-confidence.⁹³ In January 2023, Khan dissolved the provincial assemblies of Punjab and KP in an effort to force early polls.⁹⁴ Sharif's coalition government, however, refused to hold a vote ahead of the scheduled October date, insisting that provincial and national elections be held simultaneously.⁹⁵ Whilst Chief Justice Ata Bandial ruled that elections in both provinces should be held within 90 days, the Sharif government refused to provide funds and security personnel required for polling stations.⁹⁶ On 6 and 13 March 2023, the police sought to arrest Khan at his residence in Lahore but were thwarted by his supporters.⁹⁷ On 27 April 2023, PM Sharif won a vote of confidence in the national assembly, strengthening the government's position.⁹⁸ On 6 May 2023, Khan announced mass protests and alleged that Major General Faisal Naseer, the Director of Counter Intelligence of the powerful spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI),⁹⁹ was responsible for two assassination attempts against him.¹⁰⁰ In a rare public statement, the army called Khan's allegations 'extremely unfortunate, deplorable and unacceptable'.¹⁰¹

On 9 May 2023, authorities arrested Khan on corruption charges. This prompted his supporters to take to the streets, attacking security personnel and institutions and targeting the homes of high-ranking military officers. In the ensuing violence nine persons were killed and almost 300 were injured.¹⁰² Warning against civil war the government and the military deployed troops in Islamabad, Punjab and KP and arrested most of the PTI leadership.¹⁰³ On 13 May 2023, the Supreme Court invalidated Khan's arrest and the former Prime Minister was granted bail. According to Khan, army chief Asim Munir was responsible for his arrest.¹⁰⁴ In June 2023, further arrests of PTI members took place and a number of journalists deemed sympathetic to PTI disappeared. As the crackdown against PTI intensified, considerable numbers of senior PTI staff exited the party.¹⁰⁵ The Pakistani military announced its intention to try civilians who participated in 'politically driven rebellion' in military courts.¹⁰⁶ On 8 June 2023, Khan's former close collaborator Jahangir Tareen launched a new political party, Istekham-i-Pakistan Party (IPP).¹⁰⁷ Almost 100 former PTI leaders joined IPP, threatening PTI's electoral chances.¹⁰⁸ On 10 July 2023, the Supreme Court Registrar rejected a petition to dissolve PTI because of its role in the 9 May unrest.¹⁰⁹ Whilst Khan's pre-arrest bail was

⁹² ICG, 12/05/2023, [url](#), p. 1

⁹³ The Economist, 16/04/2022, [url](#); The New York Times, 09/04/2022, [url](#)

⁹⁴ Al Jazeera, 26/01/2023, [url](#); ICG, 12/05/2023, p. 2, [url](#); Al Jazeera, 26/01/2023, [url](#)

⁹⁵ ICG, 12/05/2023, p. 2, [url](#)

⁹⁶ ICG, 12/05/2023, p. 2, [url](#)

⁹⁷ BBC, 15/03/2023, [url](#); ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

⁹⁸ The Express Tribune, 27/04/2023, [url](#)

⁹⁹ One of the intelligence agencies of Pakistan, generally regarded as one of the most powerful Pakistani state institutions.

¹⁰⁰ Dawn, 07/05/2023, [url](#); Dawn, 08/05/2023, [url](#); ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹⁰¹ The Economist, 09/05/2023, [url](#)

¹⁰² The New York Times, 09/05/2023, [url](#); ICG, 12/05/2023, p. 3, [url](#)

¹⁰³ Dawn, 10/05/2023, [url](#); ICG, 03/2024, [url](#); Reuters, 10/05/2023, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ Reuters, 13/05/2023, [url](#); ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵ Reuters, 06/06/2023, [url](#); ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶ ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷ Dawn, 06/10/2023, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸ The Express Tribune, 09/06/2023, [url](#); ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹ The Express Tribune, 10/07/2023, [url](#); ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

extended until 8 August 2023, further charges against the former Prime Minister were being considered.¹¹⁰

On 5 August 2023, Imran Khan was arrested on a court order sentencing him to three years of imprisonment for selling state gifts received in official capacity.¹¹¹ Three days later, on 8 August 2023, the election commission banned Khan from contesting elections for five years.¹¹² On 29 August 2023, the appeals court suspended Khan's three year sentence. However, Khan was ordered to remain in judicial custody, pending the investigation of a case concerning the misuse of a diplomatic cable at a public rally.¹¹³ On 9 August 2023, Pakistan's parliament was dissolved, senator Anwaar-ul-haq Kakar was appointed as caretaker PM.¹¹⁴ In September 2023, the need to conduct a new population census caused the Election Commission to delay the upcoming elections until January 2024.¹¹⁵ In October 2023, Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti set a deadline of 1 November for all illegal immigrants to leave Pakistan or face deportation, signaling explicitly that this policy was aimed at Afghans.¹¹⁶ On 21 October 2023, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif returned to Pakistan after four years of exile, hoping to become Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)'s frontrunner in the upcoming elections despite a number of criminal convictions disallowing his candidacy.¹¹⁷ As the election date was set on 8 February 2024, Khan remained in prison and PTI politicians faced a further crackdown by the authorities.¹¹⁸ In Punjab province, public gatherings by PTI party members were prohibited.¹¹⁹ On 12 December 2023, Imran Khan was indicted in the case of misusing diplomatic cables.¹²⁰ The same day, the Islamabad High Court overturned a corruption case against Nawaz Sharif.¹²¹

On 8 January 2024, the Supreme Court scrapped lifetime bans on contesting elections for people with criminal convictions, paving the way for Nawaz Sharif to run for prime minister.¹²² On 13 January 2024, the Supreme court upheld the Election Commission's ruling that denied PTI the use of its recognizable election symbol, a cricket bat. As a consequence, PTI politicians participating in the elections would do so as independent candidates.¹²³ On 30 January 2024, Khan was convicted to ten years imprisonment for unveiling state secrets by leaking diplomatic cables.¹²⁴ The next day, a sentence of fourteen years imprisonment for illegally selling state gifts was issued against Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi.¹²⁵

On 8 February 2024, elections took place under a government-imposed communication blackout for security reasons.¹²⁶ After some delay, the Election Commission announced independent candidates backed by Imran Khan won 93 seats, while PML-N came second with 75 seats and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won 54 seats.¹²⁷ PTI claimed electoral fraud deprived it from a majority (169 seats) in

¹¹⁰ ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹¹¹ The New York Times, 05/08/2023, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹¹² The Guardian, 08/08/2023, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹¹³ The New York Times, 29/08/2023, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁴ Reuters, 10/08/2023, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁵ Al Jazeera, 22/09/2023, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁶ Al Jazeera, 03/10/2023, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁷ The Economist, 26/10/2023, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁸ Al Jazeera, 02/11/2023, [url](#) ; ACLED, 01/02/2024, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁹ ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹²⁰ Dawn, 14/12/2023, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹²¹ Reuters, 12/12/2023, [url](#)

¹²² Reuters, 08/01/2024, [url](#)

¹²³ Reuters, 14/01/2024, [url](#)

¹²⁴ The Economist, 30/01/2024, [url](#) ; Al Jazeera, 30/01/2024, [url](#)

¹²⁵ The Guardian, 31/01/2024, [url](#) ; The Economist, 30/01/2024, [url](#) ; Reuters, 31/01/2024, [url](#)

¹²⁶ The Economist, 09/02/2024, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹²⁷ The Economist, 27/03/2024, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

federal and Punjab parliaments.¹²⁸ Amid protests over the conduct of the elections, PML-N and PPP struck an agreement on 21 February 2024 to form a coalition, nominating Shehbaz Sharif as Prime Minister.¹²⁹ On 3 March 2024, the national assembly elected Shehbaz Sharif as Prime Minister for a second term.¹³⁰ The same day, scores of PTI supporters were arrested whilst protesting against election rigging.¹³¹ On 4 March 2024, the Election Commission ruled that the newly-formed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) party – joined by PTI-backed independent parliamentarians in mid-February – was not eligible for dozens of reserved seats. After these seats were redistributed, PML-N obtained 123 seats, overtaking PTI as the largest party in parliament.¹³² PTI leaders vowed to seek redress in parliament, the courts and through peaceful street protests.¹³³ In April 2024, PTI launched countrywide protests against electoral fraud.¹³⁴

¹²⁸ The Economist, 09/02/2024, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹²⁹ The Economist, 14/03/2024, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹³⁰ BBC, 03/03/2024, [url](#)

¹³¹ Dawn, 03/03/2024, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹³² Dawn, 06/03/2024, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

¹³³ The Economist, 27/03/2024, [url](#)

¹³⁴ Dawn, 27/04/2024, [url](#) ; ICG, 05/2024, [url](#)

3. Security situation per region

3.1. Geographical overview of the violence

3.1.1. Trends in regional violence

ACLED provides a publicly available dataset to assess the geographical spread of violent incidents. The statistical graphic below is based on the ACLED dataset¹³⁵, which contains data about security-related incidents in Pakistan.

In 2023, most security incidents were coded by ACLED in the province of KP (754) and the province of Balochistan (416). The lowest number of security incidents were recorded the province of Punjab (70), in the Federal Capital of Islamabad (12) and in Gilgit-Baltistan (3).¹³⁶

According to ACLED, in 2023, the event type *battles* occurred most in the province of KP (422). Most *explosions/remote violence* occurred in the provinces KP (83) and Balochistan (64). *Violence against civilians* occurred the most in the provinces KP (182), Sindh (85) and Balochistan (82).¹³⁷

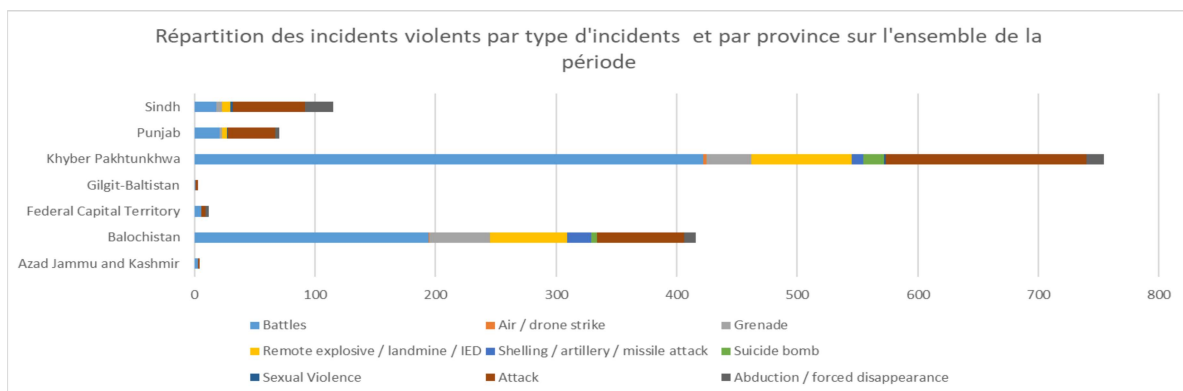


Figure 2: Violent incidents by type and by region - 2023, based on ACLED data¹³⁸

3.1.2. Regional comparison of violence-related casualties

Regional comparison of violence-related casualties in 2023

This section provides figures of fatalities and attacks at regional level according to the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICCS) and, to a lesser extent, the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS). It is impossible to present the figures in one comparative table, as the three main sources on the security situation use different parameters and definitions.

PIPS only gave regional details for 'terrorist attacks' in its annual report covering 2023. PIPS focused on the number of terrorist attacks (and consequent fatalities per province, and indicated percentage changes in 2023 compared to 2022 [see Figure 3]). Compared to 2022, PIPS observed an increase

¹³⁵ OFPRA, 11/01/2024, [url](#)

¹³⁶ OFPRA, 11/01/2024, [url](#)

¹³⁷ OFPRA, 11/01/2024, [url](#)

¹³⁸ OFPRA, 11/01/2024, [url](#)

in 'terrorist incidents' (17 % overall). The number of deaths increased by 65 % compared to 2022.¹³⁹ KP (including former FATA) and Balochistan were the provinces most affected by these attacks in 2023.¹⁴⁰

Region	No of terrorist incidents 2023	% change	Persons killed	% change	Persons injured	% change
Balochistan	110	+39%	229	+116%	282	+4 %
Karachi	14		16		26	
KP (including former FATA)	174	+3%	422	+43%	782	+99%
Punjab	6	+100%	16	+167%	8	-73%
Sindh (excl. Karachi)	1		0		0	
Gilgit-Baltistan	1		10	-	26	
Total	306	+17%	419	+65%	734	+53%

Figure 3: 'Terrorist attacks' by region - 2022 vs. 2023, based on PIPS data¹⁴¹

CRSS recorded the highest number of casualties from terrorism or from counter-terrorism operations in KP (including former FATA), followed by Balochistan and Sindh in 2023.¹⁴² According to CRSS, fatalities in KP went up from 633 in 2022 to 975 in 2023 – a 54% increase.¹⁴³ Balochistan recorded an increase of fatalities of nearly 63 % in 2023, rising from 254 to 413.¹⁴⁴ In Sindh the number of fatalities from terrorism and counter-terrorism went up to 73 in 2023. In Punjab the number of fatalities rose to 53.¹⁴⁵ In Gilgit-Baltistan 17 fatalities from terrorism or counter-terrorism operations were reported in 2023.¹⁴⁶

PICSS provides data for the overall incidents (terrorist and other violent incidents) per region. In 2023, 1016 violent incidents were reported. At least 1529 people were killed and 1442 others injured.¹⁴⁷ PICSS documented most of the casualties due to overall incidents in KP, former FATA and Balochistan.¹⁴⁸

3.2. Security trends per geographic subdivision

In the following section, security trends are explained in greater detail, per geographic subdivision. A general description of the province and the districts where most security incidents are reported provides information on the geography, the population and the background of the conflict, including the actors of violence in the province. The subsections describe recent trends in the security situation, including the nature of violence, frequency, targets, locations, and victims within a

¹³⁹ PIPS, 06/01/2023, pp. 15-18, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰ PIPS, 06/01/2023, pp. 15-18, [url](#)

¹⁴¹ PIPS, 01/2024, pp. 17-21, [url](#) , [url](#)

¹⁴² CRSS, 02/2023, p. 8, [url](#)

¹⁴³ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 8, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 8, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 8, [url](#)

¹⁴⁶ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 8, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷ PICSS, 01/2024, p.2, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸ PICSS, 01/2024, p.4, [url](#)

timeframe from 1 January 2023 until April 2024. A separate subsection is dedicated to displacement. Several incidents are described. These should be read as illustrations of trends in the security situation and not as an exhaustive list.

3.2.1. Punjab

General description of the province

Punjab province is located in the east of Pakistan. It borders the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir in the north-east, the Indian states of Punjab and Rajasthan in the east, the province of Sindh in the south, Balochistan and KP provinces in the west, Islamabad Federal Capital area and Azad Kashmir in the north.¹⁴⁹ The province of Punjab is divided into 9 divisions and 36 districts.¹⁵⁰ Punjab can be divided into three zones: central, north and south Punjab with Lahore being the provincial capital. The military headquarters are situated in Northern Punjab, and the Pakistani army maintains most of its forces in the province.¹⁵¹ The southern parts of Punjab are among the poorest areas in the country.¹⁵² Lahore is the second largest city of Pakistan, after Karachi in Sindh province.¹⁵³

Punjab is the most populated province of Pakistan and the second largest province by area.¹⁵⁴ According to the 2017 population census published by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the province of Punjab has a population of 109, 989, 655.¹⁵⁵ More than half of the population is living in rural areas, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) reports.¹⁵⁶

Background of the violence and actors in the Punjab

A 2016 report by International Crisis Group cited southern Punjab as a region where militant networks and extremists were present.¹⁵⁷ In the aftermath of the Pulwama attack in February 2019, in which Jaish-e Muhammed (JeM)¹⁵⁸ militants killed around 40 Indian soldiers, the Pakistani authorities made arrests and seized assets linked to militants in the south of the province.¹⁵⁹ As reported by Gandhara in November 2020, militants from Balochistan and militants linked to the TTP have hideouts in the district of Dera Ghazi Khan in the south of Punjab.¹⁶⁰ According to Associated Press, TTP is present in areas of Punjab province that border KP and in southern Punjab near southwestern Balochistan province.¹⁶¹ Media agencies reported in May and June 2021 that the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) carried out operations against militants in various areas of Punjab province.¹⁶² On 21 January 2022, a bomb blast at the Anarkali market in Lahore killed three people and injured 33 more. BNA claimed responsibility.¹⁶³ In a September 2022 report, International Crisis Group notes the presence of ISKP in several northern and western Punjab districts, including Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Faisalabad and Dera Ghazi Khan. Low-level sectarian

¹⁴⁹ UNOCHA, 03/12/2018, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰ Samaa TV, 12/06/2021, [url](#)

¹⁵¹ The McGill International Review, 04/04/2019, [url](#)

¹⁵² Dawn, 29/08/2017, [url](#); The McGill International Review, 04/04/2019, [url](#)

¹⁵³ World Population Review, 11/11/2022, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴ UNDP - Pakistan, 23/01/2021, p. 5, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵ Government of Pakistan, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 19/05/2021, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶ UNDP Pakistan, 23/01/2021, p. 5, [url](#)

¹⁵⁷ ICG, 30/05/2016, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸ Islamist armed insurgent group active in Kashmir.

¹⁵⁹ The Guardian, 08/03/2019, [url](#); AP, 08/03/2019, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰ Gandhara, 07/11/2020, [url](#)

¹⁶¹ AP, 11/04/2021, [url](#)

¹⁶² The News International, 30/05/2021, [url](#); Dawn, 20/06/2021, [url](#)

¹⁶³ Dawn, 21/01/2022, [url](#)

clashes occur regularly in these regions.¹⁶⁴ On 3 November 2022, former PM Imran Khan was shot in the leg when a gunman opened fire on his convoy in Wazirabad, eastern Punjab.¹⁶⁵ In January 2024, rumours circulated that TTP had formed a new wing intended to target Punjab police personnel specifically.¹⁶⁶

Recent security trends and impact on the civilian population

Security incidents

During 2023, 70 security incidents were recorded by ACLED in Punjab province, of which 21 were coded as *battles*, 6 as *explosions/remote violence* and 43 as incidents of *violence against civilians*.¹⁶⁷ Out of these 70 security incidents, most occurred in Rawalpindi, Lahore and Mianwali.¹⁶⁸ A total of 54 security incidents in Punjab were attributed to armed groups, 34 incidents were the result of security forces operations.¹⁶⁹ During the first trimester of 2024, fifteen security incidents were reported by ACLED in Punjab province.¹⁷⁰

In 2023, PIPS counted six 'terrorist attacks' in Punjab, compared to three in 2022. Three of these attacks occurred in Mianwali.¹⁷¹ PICSS observed 14 'militant attacks' in 2023, compared to three 'militant attacks' in the province in 2022.¹⁷²

Security trends in 2023

According to PIPS, the six terrorist attacks in Punjab in 2023 claimed 16 lives and injured 30 more people. Four of these attacks were perpetrated by the TTP and Tehhrik-e-Jihad Pakistan, including three in Mianwali and one in Khanewal which targeted law enforcement and intelligence officials. In November 2023, security forces repulsed an attack on the Mianwali Training Air Base of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF), killing nine assailants.¹⁷³ PICCS reported 14 militant attacks, resulting in 20 fatalities and 14 wounded.¹⁷⁴ Mianwali's proximity to the southern districts of KP explains why five of these attacks took place there. Two attacks took place in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Sialkot each.¹⁷⁵ Of the 14 militant attacks recorded by PICCS in Punjab in 2023, six were claimed by TTP, one by Tehhrik-e-Jihad Pakistan and one by BNA.¹⁷⁶

Illustrative incidents in 2023:

- On 4 January 2023, two officials of the intelligence agency ISI were killed by a source they met in Khanewal, Punjab. TTP and Lashkar-i-Khorasan claimed the attack.¹⁷⁷
- On 23 January 2023, TTP militants attacked a police checkpoint and killed two policemen in Taunsa, Punjab. Increased security measures were imposed in the province.¹⁷⁸

¹⁶⁴ ICG, 05/09/2022, p.7, [url](#)

¹⁶⁵ The Guardian, 03/11/2022, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶ Dawn, 29/01/2024, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷ OFPRA, 11/01/2024, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸ OFPRA, 11/01/2024, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹ OFPRA, 11/01/2024, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰ OFPRA, 24/04/2024, [url](#)

¹⁷¹ PIPS, 01/2024, p.64, [url](#)

¹⁷² PICSS, 01/2024, p.33, [url](#)

¹⁷³ PIPS, 01/2024, p.64, [url](#), [url](#)

¹⁷⁴ PICSS, 01/2024, p.33, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵ PICSS, 01/2024, p.33, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶ PICSS, 01/2024, p.33, [url](#)

¹⁷⁷ Dawn, 05/01/2023, [url](#); Al Jazeera, 04/01/2023, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸ ISW - CT, 18/01/2023, [url](#)

- On 31 January 2023, heavily armed TTP militants were repulsed whilst attacking a police station in Makarwal, Mianwali district.¹⁷⁹
- On 16 February 2023, one person was killed and nine were wounded after a bomb exploded on the Jaffar Express train near Chichawatni, Punjab. BNA claimed the attack.¹⁸⁰
- On 7 May 2023, unknown assailants killed a member of the Sikh community in a drive-by shooting in Lahore.¹⁸¹
- On 1 October 2023, at least a dozen TTP members attacked the Kundal police station in Mianwali. Two militants and a policeman were killed in the ensuing gun battle.¹⁸²
- On 4 November 2023, nine militants of TJP were killed during an attack on the Mianwali Training Air Base of the Pakistan Air Force.¹⁸³
- In November 2023, CTD personnel carried out search operations in several cities in Punjab, resulting in the arrest of seven terrorists, including one key commander.¹⁸⁴

Casualties

CRSS recorded a total of 53 fatalities from terror or counter-terror incidents in Punjab in 2023, compared to 28 fatalities in 2022.¹⁸⁵

Displacement

No information was found in the consulted sources about any conflict-induced displacement from areas in and to Punjab in 2023.¹⁸⁶

3.2.2. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (including former FATA)

General description of the province

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is situated in the north of Pakistan and borders Afghanistan in the west, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan in the east and north-east and Punjab province in the south-east.¹⁸⁷ The province, the third-largest province of Pakistan by area,¹⁸⁸ is divided into 7 divisions and 34 districts. Peshawar is the provincial capital.¹⁸⁹ The population speaks Pashtu, followed by the local languages Hindko and Urdu.¹⁹⁰ According to the 2017 population census published by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the population of KP province is 30, 508, 920 and that of former FATA is 4, 993, 044.¹⁹¹ According to UNDP, approximately 84 % of the population is living in rural areas.¹⁹²

¹⁷⁹ Dawn, 01/02/2023, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰ Dawn, 16/02/2023, [url](#)

¹⁸¹ Dawn, 07/05/2023, [url](#)

¹⁸² Dawn, 01/10/2023, [url](#)

¹⁸³ Reuters, 04/11/2023, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴ Pakistan Today, 20/11/2023, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 8, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶ Websites consulted: <https://www.unocha.org/pakistan> ; <https://response.reliefweb.int/pakistan> ; <https://reliefweb.int/country/pak>

¹⁸⁷ Government of Pakistan, Provincial Disaster Management Authority, 06/07/2019, pp. 4-7, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸ UNDP Pakistan, 23/01/2021, p. 5, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹ Samaa TV, 12/06/2021, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰ Daily Sabah, 09/03/2018, [url](#)

¹⁹¹ Government of Pakistan, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 19/05/2021, [url](#)

¹⁹² UNDP - Pakistan, 23/01/2021, p. 5, [url](#)

The FATA was a semi-autonomous tribal region in north-western Pakistan, consisting of seven tribal agencies (districts) and six frontier regions, until it was merged with KP on 31 May 2018.¹⁹³ The region of former FATA is referred to as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa tribal districts (KPTDs). The tribal agencies and frontier regions in former FATA have been re-designated as districts and subdivisions of KP.¹⁹⁴

Peshawar district and the KP tribal districts are described separately and in detail below.

Background of the conflict and actors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (including former FATA)

Since 2004, the Pakistani army has carried out a series of military operations against TTP and their affiliated organizations in KP, mostly in the tribal districts.¹⁹⁵ Although the military campaigns broke TTP's hold of the territory, human rights violations and the destruction of civilian infrastructure displaced hundreds of thousands of residents.¹⁹⁶ In the long run, however, the army's counter-insurgency contributed to a higher level of security in the province,¹⁹⁷ forcing militant groups to relocate across the border to Afghanistan.¹⁹⁸ In May 2019, it was reported that the Pakistani state was exercising control over Mingora city and peace had returned to the Swat valley.¹⁹⁹

In 2019, The New York Times reported that the army rather than civil law enforcement agencies maintained law and order in FATA. Despite the tribal areas' merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2018, FATA residents still did not enjoy the same constitutional rights as other Pakistanis.²⁰⁰ In Afghanistan and in Tank, Dera Ismael Khan and North Waziristan districts, networks of the TTP were still active.²⁰¹ In August 2019, Gandhara reported that members of the TTP had returned to Buner district and established checkpoints in the area. In response, the military and the police conducted search and strike operations in the district.²⁰² In Bajaur and Mohmand districts, TTP forced local businesses to pay protection money.²⁰³ In October 2020, Gandhara reported the TTP's return to some districts of Malakand Division.²⁰⁴ Local residents, cited by Gandhara in October 2020, mentioned that several locals received death threats from the Taliban.²⁰⁵

Although the number of terrorist incidents remained low in KP in 2020,²⁰⁶ PIPS noted in 2020 that there was no significant progress in the reform process in former FATA.²⁰⁷ North Waziristan remained a flashpoint of insecurity and militant violence in 2020 and was the scene of 31 terrorist attacks.²⁰⁸ According to AFP, TTP ramped up attacks in Pakistan since the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021. However, in an attempt to improve its image and distinguish itself from the ISKP's extremism, TTP attempted to spare civilians and focused its attacks on security and law enforcement officials, AFP reported in November 2021.²⁰⁹ The International News stated that between 2000 and

¹⁹³ The Asia Foundation, 24/10/2018, [url](#)

¹⁹⁴ The Express Tribune, 12/06/2018, [url](#) ; The Express Tribune, 20/07/2018, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵ Al Jazeera, 30/04/2019, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶ ICG, 20/08/2018, p. 2, [url](#) ; Dawn, 21/09/2014, [url](#)

¹⁹⁷ EASO (Almeida C.), 02/2018, pp. 21, 46, [url](#)

¹⁹⁸ PIPS, 06/01/2023, p.72, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹ AA, 23/05/2019, [url](#)

²⁰⁰ The New York Times, 11/06/2019, [url](#)

²⁰¹ ICG, 20/08/2018, pp. 3-4, [url](#) ; SATP (Mohanty Ranjan T.), 29/07/2019, [url](#)

²⁰² Gandhara, 23/08/2019, [url](#)

²⁰³ Gandhara, 26/10/2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁴ Gandhara, 26/10/2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁵ Gandhara, 26/10/2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁶ PIPS, 03/01/2021, p. 43, [url](#)

²⁰⁷ PIPS, 03/01/2021, p. 39, [url](#)

²⁰⁸ PIPS, 03/01/2021, p. 43, [url](#)

²⁰⁹ AFP, 15/11/2021, [url](#)

July 2021, 1,505 police officers were killed in the province.²¹⁰ PIPS reported that the number of terrorist attacks in KP rose by 40 % in 2021.²¹¹ North Waziristan, South Waziristan and Bajaur witnessed the highest number of terrorist attacks in KP.²¹² Over 71 % of the reported attacks in KP in 2021 targeted security forces and law enforcement personnel. Polio vaccination teams or their police escorts, pro-government tribal elders and political leaders were other prime targets.²¹³ In December 2021, local elections were held in 17 KP districts.²¹⁴ Ruling PTI candidates performed poorly and opposition party Pashtun Islamist Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam won the bulk of the seats.²¹⁵

In 2022, PIPS observed a shift in the militant landscape and terrorist activities in Pakistan since the Taliban takeover in Kabul in August 2021, resulting in increasing numbers of attacks on Pakistan security personnel.²¹⁶ According to PIPS, a majority of the 'terrorist attacks' in the province in 2022 targeted security/law enforcement agencies. Tribal elders and political leaders were the target of fifteen attacks, whilst seven attacks targeted civilians and six attacks were directed against health/polio workers and/or their security escorts.²¹⁷ Despite the rising level of violence in KP, direct attacks against civilians declined in 2022, PIPS reported. Fearful of the public wrath that results from attacks against the civilian population, militants preferred to target security forces, pro-government tribal elders and political leaders.²¹⁸ In August 2022, residents of Swat district protested against the return of TTP militants in the region. As a consequence, threats of violence and extortion demands surged in the region.²¹⁹ In a September 2022 report, ICG observed that ever since its post-2021 resurgence TTP 'has focused its attacks on security and law enforcement personnel in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa'.²²⁰ In comparison, notwithstanding its presence in tribal areas, ISKP is 'primarily an urban phenomenon seemingly comprised of de-centralised units that target Shia sites rather than directly challenging the state'.²²¹

The following figure, based on data compiled by South Asia Terrorism Portal, illustrates the evolution of the number of fatalities in terrorist incidents amongst civilians, security forces and insurgents in KP in the 2010-2023 period.²²²

²¹⁰ The News International, 27/07/2021, [url](#)

²¹¹ PIPS, 2022, p. 22, [url](#)

²¹² PIPS, 2022, p. 45, [url](#)

²¹³ PIPS, 2022, p. 46, [url](#)

²¹⁴ The News International, 23/12/2021, [url](#)

²¹⁵ ICG, 02/2023, [url](#)

²¹⁶ PIPS, 06/01/2023, p. 72, [url](#)

²¹⁷ PIPS, 06/01/2023, pp. 36-37, [url](#)

²¹⁸ PIPS, 06/01/2023, pp. 40-41, [url](#)

²¹⁹ The New York Times, 31/01/2023, [url](#)

²²⁰ ICG, 05/09/2022, p.7, [url](#)

²²¹ ICG, 05/09/2022, p.18, [url](#)

²²² SATP, 30/04/2024, [url](#)

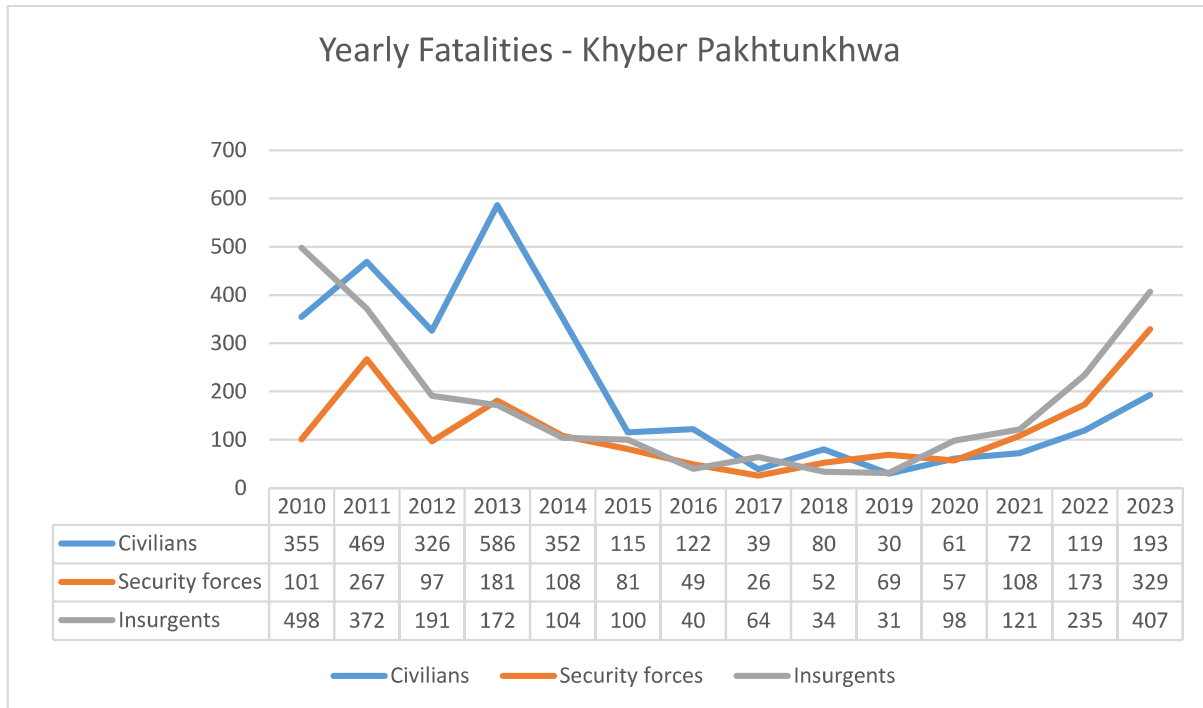


Figure 4: Fatalities in KP in terrorist incidents, 2010-2023, based on SATP data²²³

Recent security trends and impact on the civilian population in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (including former FATA)

Security incidents

ACLED collected data on 754 violent events in KP province²²⁴ from reports in open sources in the year 2023, 422 of which were coded as *battles*, 150 as *explosions/remote violence* and 182 as *violence against civilians*. North Waziristan stood out as the district where most incidents were reported with 105 violent events, followed by Dera Ismail Khan with 87 and Peshawar with 77 violent incidents.²²⁵

The following table shows in which KP districts most security incidents were reported in 2023 and indicates the involvement of security forces and/or militant organizations (TTP or ISKP) in these incidents.²²⁶

²²³ SATP, 30/04/2024, [url](#)

²²⁴ This number includes the FATA tribal districts.

²²⁵ OFPRA, 11/01/2024, [url](#)

²²⁶ OFPRA, 11/01/2024, [url](#)

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Nombre d'incident s violents	En % du total de la province	Total d'incident s violents liés aux Forces gouverne mentales	En % du total de la province	Total d'incident s violents liés aux TTP	En % du total de la province	Total d'incident s violents liés à Islamic State	En % du total de la province
Abbottabad	1	0%	0	0,0%	0	0%	0	0%
Bajaur	55	7%	17	2%	31	4%	16	2%
Bannu	51	7%	32	4%	45	6%	0	0%
Buner	3	0%	3	0%	3	0%	0	0%
Charsadda	7	1%	5	1%	7	1%	0	0%
Chitral	6	1%	6	1%	6	1%	0	0%
Dera Ismail Khan	87	12%	76	10%	81	11%	0	0%
Hangu	8	1%	5	1%	4	1%	1	0%
Haripur	2	0%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Karak	2	0%	2	0%	2	0%	0	0%
Khyber	73	10%	60	8%	61	8%	1	0%
Kohat	18	2%	8	1%	10	1%	0	0%
Kurram	48	6%	9	1%	9	1%	0	0%
Lakki Marwat	55	7%	39	5%	46	6%	0	0%
Lower Dir	4	1%	2	0,3%	3	0%	0	0%
Malakand PA	4	1%	1	0%	2	0%	0	0%
Mansehra	3	0%	1	0,1%	1	0%	0	0%
Mardan	13	2%	10	1%	9	1%	0	0%
Mohmand	4	1%	3	0,4%	3	0%	0	0%
North Waziristan	105	14%	70	9%	99	13%	0	0%
Nowshera	9	1%	5	1%	8	1%	0	0%
Orakzai	2	0%	0	0%	2	0%	0	0%
Peshawar	77	10%	53	7,0%	59	8%	5	1%
Shangla	2	0%	1	0,1%	1	0%	0	0%
South Waziristan	44	6%	31	4%	40	5%	0	0%
Swabi	13	2%	5	0,7%	9	1%	0	0%
Swat	13	2%	11	1,5%	9	1%	0	0%
Tank	43	6%	34	5%	41	5%	0	0%
Upper Dir	2	0%	1	0,1%	1	0%	0	0%
TOTAL	754	100%	491	65%	592	79%	23	3%

Figure 5: 'Security incidents' by region - KP - 2023, based on ACLED data²²⁷

²²⁷ OFPRA, 11/01/2024, [url](#)

ACLED reported 196 security incidents in KP during the first trimester of 2024. In the third and the fourth trimester of 2023 the level of violence was more elevated in the province, with respectively 221 and 235 security incidents.²²⁸

PIPS reports that in 2023, as in the previous year, KP, faced the highest number of attacks for any Pakistani region.²²⁹ A total of 174 terrorist attacks in KP claimed 422 lives and injured 782 others.²³⁰ Although the number of terrorist attacks increased only by 3 % compared to 2022, the number of people killed in these attacks rose by 43 %, indicating that militants resorted to more high-impact attacks in KP in 2023.²³¹ Over 57 % of the terrorist attacks in KP took place in the southern districts North Waziristan, South Waziristan, Bannu, Tank, Lakki Marwat and DI Khan. Another 25 % of the terrorist attacks in KP were situated in the provincial capital Peshawar and its neighbouring district Khyber.²³² Most of the violence in these districts is ascribed to TTP and local Taliban groups.²³³ Bajaur district, however, has become a flashpoint of terrorist violence that is mainly perpetrated by Islamic State- Khorasan (ISKP).²³⁴ Security forces carried out 97 operational attacks in KP in 2023, resulting in 314 fatalities and 47 injuries.²³⁵

The deteriorating security situation in KP was marked by a substantial increase in militant attacks in 2023, PICSS reports. Excluding the former FATA, 237 militant attacks²³⁶ and 119 security forces actions were reported in KP in 2023.²³⁷ PICSS observed 128 militant attacks in former FATA in 2023, a 60 % increase in militant attacks compared to the previous year.²³⁸ PICSS also reported 94 actions by security forces in former FATA in 2023.²³⁹

Security trends in 2023

PIPS explains that TTP and its allied groups are mainly located in Paktika, Khost, Kunar and Nangarhar regions inside Afghanistan, which explains the growing cross-border terrorist violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regions starting from southern Waziristan and adjacent districts to the Peshawar-Khyber region and further to the north to the districts Swat and Chitral.²⁴⁰

According to PIPS, about 75 % of the reported attacks in KP in 2023 targeted personnel of security and law enforcement agencies, mainly army and police.²⁴¹ Ten attacks in KP in 2023 targeted civilians, eight other attacks targeted polio vaccination teams and their police escorts. Four attacks were directed against tribal elders, three against political leaders or activists.²⁴² The marked increase in terrorism-related casualties in KP was a result of militants resorting to high-impact terrorist attacks more often than in 2022. In at least 16 attacks five or more lives were lost.²⁴³ At the same

²²⁸ OFPRA, 24/04/2024, [url](#)

²²⁹ PIPS, 01/2024, p.40, [url](#), [url](#)

²³⁰ PIPS, 01/2024, p.40, [url](#), [url](#)

²³¹ PIPS, 01/2024, p.40, [url](#), [url](#)

²³² PIPS, 01/2024, p.40, [url](#), [url](#)

²³³ PIPS, 01/2024, p.40, [url](#), [url](#)

²³⁴ PIPS, 01/2024, p.40, [url](#), [url](#)

²³⁵ PIPS, 01/2024, p.42, [url](#), [url](#)

²³⁶ PIPS, 01/2024, p.126, [url](#), [url](#)

²³⁷ PICSS, 01/2024, p.29, [url](#)

²³⁸ PICSS, 01/2024, p.23, [url](#)

²³⁹ PICSS, 01/2024, p.27, [url](#)

²⁴⁰ PIPS, 01/2024, p.72, [url](#), [url](#)

²⁴¹ PIPS, 01/2024, p.42, [url](#), [url](#)

²⁴² PIPS, 01/2024, p.42, [url](#), [url](#)

²⁴³ PIPS, 01/2024, p.41, [url](#), [url](#)

time, as much as 18 suicide attacks occurred in KP in 2023, claiming as much as 236 lives.²⁴⁴ Besides suicide attacks, militants used direct gunfire in 102 attacks, IED's in 32 attacks, hand grenades in eleven attacks and seven attacks in which gunfire and explosive ordinance were combined.²⁴⁵ Further acts of violence involved one rocket attack, one mortar shelling, one beheading and one act of sabotage or lynching.²⁴⁶

PIPS reported that attacks on security and law enforcement agencies in KP at times involve groups of 10-15 militants storming police stations and checkpoints, mainly in the southern districts of Bannu, Lakki Marwat and Dera Ismail Khan. Most of these attacks were repulsed or preempted, according to PIPS.²⁴⁷

In 2023, PIPS also registered sectarian conflict in Kurram, where during the last months of 2023 four armed sectarian clashes were reported.²⁴⁸ A controversial video on social media was at the origin of multiple clashes between rival sectarian tribal groups in late October 2023. Although both sides condemned the video, the ensuing violence cost sixteen people their lives.²⁴⁹ In May 2023, at least eight people died in Kurram in inter-tribal clashes.²⁵⁰

Also in 2023, three attacks on girl schools were reported in KP. On 23 May 2023, militants blew up two girl schools in North Waziristan. The attacks occurred at night and no victims were reported. Around 500 girls were enrolled in the two schools.²⁵¹ In December 2023, a secondary school for girls was torched in Bannu.²⁵²

In July 2023, ISKP carried out a suicide attack at a convention of the Islamic political party Jamiat Uema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) in Bajaur, killing at least 54 people.²⁵³ Commenting on this attack, the Jamestown Foundation noted that ISKP's attacks against religious parties were mounting because the terrorist organization aimed to deter right-wing Islamic parties from joining the political process. As ISKP seeks the establishment of a caliphate, it hopes to win over radical elements in Pakistani Islamic parties to its cause and to keep less radical, pro-establishment Islamists from participating in elections.²⁵⁴

The United States Department of State (USDOS) reports that TTP likely raises most of its funds through kidnapping-for-ransom payments, extortion, and other criminal activity.²⁵⁵

According to Reuters, outposts of Pakistani police forces in KP have become the focus of TTP militants' operations. Whilst the police lack resources and are underequipped, TTP militants have procured sophisticated weapons left by Western forces that exited Afghanistan in 2021.²⁵⁶

²⁴⁴ PIPS, 01/2024, p.41, [url](#), [url](#)

²⁴⁵ PIPS, 01/2024, p.41, [url](#), [url](#)

²⁴⁶ PIPS, 01/2024, p.41, [url](#), [url](#)

²⁴⁷ PIPS, 01/2024, p.43, [url](#), [url](#)

²⁴⁸ PIPS, 01/2024, p.45, [url](#), [url](#)

²⁴⁹ PIPS, 01/2024, pp.45-46, [url](#), [url](#)

²⁵⁰ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 46, [url](#), [url](#)

²⁵¹ Dawn, 23/05/2023, [url](#)

²⁵² Dawn, 30/12/2023, [url](#)

²⁵³ The New York Times, 31/07/2023, [url](#); Al Jazeera, 31/07/2023, [url](#)

²⁵⁴ The Jamestown Foundation, 15/09/2023, [url](#)

²⁵⁵ USDOS, 30/11/2023, [url](#)

²⁵⁶ Reuters, 27/02/2023, [url](#)

Illustrative incidents in January 2023 – April 2024:

- On 20 January 2023, TTP militants carried out a coordinated attack, which included hand grenades and a suicide bomber, at the Takhtabeg checkpoint on the main Peshawar-Torkham Highway, Khyber district. Two policemen and a civilian were killed.²⁵⁷
- On 21 March 2023, militants attacked a police check-post in Khutti, Dera Ismail Khan. The fleeing terrorist where later intercepted in Saggu. In the exchange of fire three soldiers were killed as well as three terrorists.²⁵⁸
- On 28 April 2023, three militant attacks in different locations in Lakki Marwat district caused the deaths of three soldiers and seven terrorists.²⁵⁹
- On 4 May 2023, six schoolteachers belonging to the Turi Bangash tribe and a staff member were killed in a shooting at a school in the Kurram district. The attack was a reprisal after the killing of a school teacher in Upper Kurram earlier that day.²⁶⁰
- On May 26 2023, a policeman accompanying a polio vaccination team was killed in an attack by suspected militants near Mirdarra bridge in Khyber district. Two other policemen were injured.²⁶¹
- On 2 September 2023, CTD agents killed three militants in the mountainous region of Shagai, Khyber district.²⁶²
- On 3 November 2023, an IED targeting a police convoy in Dera Ismail Khan killed five passers-by and injured 21 more.²⁶³
- On 6 November 2023, in an exchange of fire between security forces and militants in Tirah valley (Khyber district) four soldiers and three militants were killed.²⁶⁴
- On 7 November 2023, militants attacked the camp office of a private oil and gas company in Dera Ismail Khan, killing two policemen and injuring three more.²⁶⁵
- On 12 December 2023, an explosive-laden vehicle followed by a suicide attack killed 23 soldiers at an army base in the Daraban area of Dera Ismail Khan. Six militants were killed.²⁶⁶
- On election day, 9 February 2024, an IED explosion hit a police vehicle patrolling the Gara Aslam area of Kulachi, Dera Ismail Khan district. Hereupon militants opened fire on the vehicle. Five policemen were killed and two more sustained injuries.²⁶⁷
- On 26 March 2024, five Chinese nationals and a Pakistani driver were killed after a suicide attacker rammed his explosive-laden vehicle into their convoy near Besham city, Shangla district.²⁶⁸
- On 22 April 2024, armed assailants opened fire on a vehicle near Bannu Road in Dera Ismail Khan. Two customs officials and a civilian were killed.²⁶⁹

Casualties

According to PIPS, 422 people were killed and 782 were wounded in 174 terrorist attacks in KP in 2023.²⁷⁰ 296 policemen or soldiers were killed and 556 were injured in 130 attacks targeting

²⁵⁷ Dawn, 20/01/2023, [url](#)

²⁵⁸ The News International, 22/03/2023, [url](#)

²⁵⁹ Dawn, 28/04/2023, [url](#)

²⁶⁰ The Express Tribune, 04/05/2023, [url](#)

²⁶¹ Dawn, 29/05/2023, [url](#)

²⁶² Dawn, 03/09/2023, [url](#)

²⁶³ Al Jazeera, 11/2023, [url](#)

²⁶⁴ PIPS, 01/2024, p.102, [url](#), [url](#)

²⁶⁵ Dawn, 08/11/2023, [url](#)

²⁶⁶ BBC, 12/12/2023, [url](#)

²⁶⁷ Dawn, 09/02/2024, [url](#)

²⁶⁸ Al Jazeera, 26/03/2024, [url](#)

²⁶⁹ Dawn, 22/04/2024, [url](#)

²⁷⁰ PIPS, 01/2024, pp.40-41, [url](#), [url](#)

personnel of the security forces and law enforcement agencies.²⁷¹ Ten attacks against civilians in KP in 2023 left 19 dead and 24 injured.²⁷² Additionally, PIPS reported 97 operational attacks by security forces in KP in 2023 causing 314 fatalities and 47 reported injuries.²⁷³ North Waziristan was the site of 21 of these operational attacks, resulting in 67 fatalities and 14 injuries in 2023. In Dera Ismail Khan, 17 attacks by the security forces caused 44 fatalities and 5 injuries.²⁷⁴ PIPS also reported 21 direct clashes between militants and security forces in KP in 2023. These encounters caused 52 fatalities and 3 injuries. In South Waziristan, 13 fatalities were reported ; in North Waziristan, 12.²⁷⁵

In 2023, CRSS recorded 451 incidents of terrorism and counter-terrorism in KP, causing 975 fatalities and 871 injuries.²⁷⁶ CRSS further explains that 314 of these incidents in KP were perpetrated by terrorists and/or militants, leading to 585 fatalities and 778 injuries.²⁷⁷ Counter-terrorism and security operations in KP in 2023 accounted for 139 incidents, causing 392 fatalities and 93 injuries.²⁷⁸ CRSS reported the highest numbers of fatalities due to terrorism and counter-terrorism in KP in 2023 in North Waziristan (167), Peshawar (127), Dera Ismail Khan (104) and Bajaur (103).²⁷⁹

Displacement

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reports that the violence affecting Pakistan has for decades contributed to new and protracted displacement.²⁸⁰ Thousands of people have been living in internal displacement since 2014 as a result of military operations in FATA. Although the number of IDPs has fallen in recent years, at least 98,000 people were still unable to return or achieve other forms of durable solutions as of 2020, IDMC reported.²⁸¹ According to UNOCHA, 16,483 families remained displaced in the province as of August 2021.²⁸² The increasing violence in KP triggered 680 displacements in the Tirah valley (Khyber district) in September 2022, the only recorded figure for the country that year.²⁸³ A Radio Free Europe article from December 2022 reports on a number of inhabitants of North Waziristan expressing their fears of being displaced again because of the increasing number of clashes between TTP and security forces in the district.²⁸⁴ The New York Times reported that the January 2023 suicide attack on a mosque in Peshawar led to widespread talk of migrating to comparatively safer cities, such as Islamabad and Lahore.²⁸⁵

According to IDMC, conflict displacement is difficult to record in Pakistan because there is no centralized reporting system and media reporting tends to be politicised.²⁸⁶ In addition to recently displaced IDPs, more than 21,000 people have been living in internal displacement in the country since 2014 as a result of military operations in former FATA.²⁸⁷

²⁷¹ PIPS, 01/2024, p.42, [url](#), [url](#)

²⁷² PIPS, 01/2024, p.42, [url](#), [url](#)

²⁷³ PIPS, 01/2024, p.126, [url](#), [url](#)

²⁷⁴ PIPS, 01/2024, p.126, [url](#), [url](#)

²⁷⁵ PIPS, 01/2024, p.128, [url](#), [url](#)

²⁷⁶ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 24, [url](#)

²⁷⁷ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 18, [url](#)

²⁷⁸ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 18, [url](#)

²⁷⁹ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 36, [url](#)

²⁸⁰ IDMC, 24/05/2023, [url](#)

²⁸¹ IDMC, 19/05/2022, [url](#)

²⁸² UNOCHA - Pakistan, email, 04/08/2021

²⁸³ IDMC, 24/05/2023, [url](#)

²⁸⁴ RFE/RL, 31/12/2022, [url](#)

²⁸⁵ The New York Times, 31/01/2023, [url](#)

²⁸⁶ IDMC, 24/05/2023, [url](#)

²⁸⁷ IDMC, 24/05/2023, [url](#)

Large-scale population displacements began in 2008 because of militant activity and military operations in KP and the former FATA. Voluntary returns continued amid improved security conditions. The government and UN agencies such as UNHCR, UNICEF, and the UN World Food Program collaborated to assist and protect those affected by conflict, who generally resided with host families, in rented accommodations, or to a lesser extent, in camps. Several IDP populations settled in informal settlements outside of cities such as Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Peshawar, Lahore, and Karachi.²⁸⁸ According to the 2024 USDOS report, the Pakistani government has not adopted specific legislation to tackle internal displacement problems. The government continued to classify IDPs as Temporary Displaced Persons.²⁸⁹

No further data were found in the consulted sources concerning any additional conflict-induced displacement from areas in and to KP in 2023 or early 2024.²⁹⁰

Peshawar district

Situated in the centre of KP, Peshawar district is bordered by the districts Khyber in the west, Mohmand and Charsadda in the north, Nowshera in the north east and Kohat in the south.²⁹¹ According to the 2017 census, the population of Peshawar district is 4, 267, 198, of which 1, 969, 823 live in urban settings.²⁹² Most of the inhabitants of Peshawar are Pashtun,²⁹³ including sizeable numbers of Afghan refugees.²⁹⁴ Historically, Peshawar is considered 'the capital of the Afghan diaspora' in Pakistan.²⁹⁵ Peshawar city is also home to a significant numbers of Shia Muslims,²⁹⁶ (including Hazara)²⁹⁷ and small communities of Sikhs,²⁹⁸ Christians²⁹⁹ and Ahmadiyya Muslims.³⁰⁰

In 2023, PIPS reported a rising level of violence in Peshawar district compared to 2022.³⁰¹ Some 22 'terrorist attacks' were registered in the district in 2023, causing 100 fatalities and 256 injuries.³⁰² PIPS attributes most of these attacks to the TTP and other local Taliban groups.³⁰³ In 2023, security forces carried out 8 operational attacks against militants and insurgents in Peshawar district. As a result of these operational attacks 19 persons were killed and two were injured.³⁰⁴

A suicide attack on a Peshawar mosque on 30 January 2023 was the most lethal security incident in Pakistan in 2023. According to The New York Times, the explosive device employed killed more than one hundred people. As the mosque was situated in a heavily guarded neighbourhood near several important government and military buildings, many of the casualties were police officers and government employees.³⁰⁵ Later reporting from PIPS put the number of fatalities in the January

²⁸⁸ USDOS, 23/04/2024, p. 53, [url](#)

²⁸⁹ USDOS, 23/04/2024, pp. 54-55, [url](#)

²⁹⁰ Websites consulted: <https://www.unocha.org/pakistan> ; <https://response.reliefweb.int/pakistan> ; <https://reliefweb.int/country/pak>

²⁹¹ Government of Pakistan, Provincial Disaster Management Authority, 06/07/2019, pp. 4-7, [url](#)

²⁹² Government of Pakistan, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 19/05/2021, [url](#)

²⁹³ Britannica, 30/01/2023, [url](#); Minority Rights Group International, 06/ 2018, [url](#)

²⁹⁴ EUAA, 05/2022, [url](#)

²⁹⁵ The New York Times, 11/10/2001, [url](#)

²⁹⁶ IRB, 15/01/2020, [url](#)

²⁹⁷ Al Jazeera, 12/11/2011, [url](#)

²⁹⁸ Wire, 20/05/2022, [url](#)

²⁹⁹ Reuters, 31/01/2022, [url](#)

³⁰⁰ Dawn, 06/03/2022, [url](#)

³⁰¹ In 2022, PIPS registered 17 'terrorist attacks' in Peshawar district, causing 275 casualties (74 fatalities, 201 injuries).

³⁰² PIPS, 01/2024, p.41, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁰³ PIPS, 01/2024, p.40, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁰⁴ PIPS, 01/2024, p.97, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁰⁵ The New York Times, 31/01/2023, [url](#)

2023 Peshawar mosque suicide attack at 84, of which 81 were policemen.³⁰⁶ PIPS also reported a number of attacks by ISKP against members of minority communities and religious scholars in Peshawar in 2023.³⁰⁷ On 31 March 2023, unidentified gunmen killed a Sikh shopkeeper. According to the chairman for the Minority Rights Forum Pakistan, members of the Sikh community in Peshawar have been targeted in this fashion before.³⁰⁸ According to PIPS, ISKP was responsible for the killing of the Sikh shopkeeper in March 2023.³⁰⁹ On 1 April 2023, motorcyclists shot and killed a Christian sanitary worker from Academy Town, Peshawar.³¹⁰ ISKP claimed the attack.³¹¹ On 4 June 2023, unidentified motorcyclists killed a Sunni religious scholar in the Afridi Abad area, on the outskirts of Peshawar.³¹² Two days later, on 6 June 2023, another Sunni religious scholar was killed inside a mosque in the same area.³¹³ According to PIPS, ISKP was responsible for these killings.³¹⁴ In July 2023, the CTD arrested one suspect in these killings of clerics and members of minority communities. Another suspect was killed whilst resisting arrest.³¹⁵

On 18 July 2023, TJP targeted a truck carrying paramilitary troops in Peshawar,³¹⁶ killing one and wounding ten.³¹⁷ On 20 July 2023, two policemen were killed in an attack on a police checkpoint in Regi Model Town, Peshawar.³¹⁸ On 18 August 2023, TTP militants killed a policeman in Peshawar.³¹⁹ On 11 September 2023, an IED bomb blast on Peshawar's Warsak road killed a soldier and wounded three civilians.³²⁰ On 19 October 2023, a policeman was killed and a civilian was injured when TTP assailants opened fire on them on a road in the outskirts of Peshawar.³²¹

On 28 February 2024, unknown militants opened fire on policemen in the vicinity of the Phandu police station in Peshawar. One policeman was killed and one was injured.³²² On 11 March 2024, two militants were killed on Nasir Bagh Road, Peshawar when the suicide belt one of them was wearing exploded prematurely.³²³

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa tribal districts (KPTDs)

General

According to PIPS, the government's failure to speed up the process of introducing reforms in former FATA has left the people questioning the merger of the region with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.³²⁴ Local groups argue that the merger did not solve the region's difficulties – as demanded by TTP during its peace talks with the government – and should be reversed.³²⁵ In October 2023, various

³⁰⁶ PIPS, 01/2024, p.21, p. 43, p. 67, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁰⁷ PIPS, 01/2024, p.51, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁰⁸ The Express Tribune, 31/03/2023, [url](#)

³⁰⁹ PIPS, 01/2024, p.51, [url](#), [url](#)

³¹⁰ Dawn, 02/04/2023, [url](#)

³¹¹ PIPS, 01/2024, p.51, [url](#), [url](#)

³¹² Dawn, 04/06/2023, [url](#)

³¹³ Nation (The), 06/06/2023, [url](#)

³¹⁴ PIPS, 01/2024, p.51, [url](#), [url](#)

³¹⁵ Dawn, 11/07/2023, [url](#)

³¹⁶ Al Jazeera, 18/07/2023, [url](#)

³¹⁷ PIPS, 01/2024, p.109, [url](#)

³¹⁸ Dawn, 20/07/2023, [url](#)

³¹⁹ PIPS, 01/2024, p.117, [url](#), [url](#)

³²⁰ Dawn, 11/09/2023, [url](#)

³²¹ Dawn, 19/10/2023, [url](#)

³²² Dawn, 28/02/2024, [url](#)

³²³ Dawn, 11/03/2024, [url](#)

³²⁴ PIPS, 01/2024, p.34, [url](#), [url](#); PIPS, 06/01/2023, p. 31, [url](#)

³²⁵ PIPS, 01/2024, p.35, [url](#), [url](#)

groups from different tribal districts, including tribal elders and politicians, formed an alliance to reverse the 'forced' merger of former FATA with KP.³²⁶

The continuing attacks on police in the KPTDs is a reminder of the need to reform and build the capacities of the law enforcement structures of the tribal districts, PIPS observes. Although the establishment of police stations and training of law-enforcement agencies is underway, the pace needs to be stepped up.³²⁷ According to PIPS, the rehabilitation of IDP's and the development of educational, road and other infrastructure are further regional priorities.³²⁸

PICSS reports a considerable deterioration of the security situation in the KPTDs since 2019.³²⁹ While violence was witnessed in all tribal districts, North-Waziristan remained the most volatile with 64 militant attacks recorded in 2023.³³⁰ Most of the notable operations by security forces in the tribal districts took place in North-Waziristan.³³¹ However, the highest number of fatalities in the KPTDs in 2023 was reported in Bajaur district.³³²

Below are descriptions of security trends in each tribal district in 2023 and early 2024.

Bajaur tribal district

Bajaur is located in the north of the province of KP and shares a border with Afghanistan's eastern Kunar Province to the north-west, and Mohmand tribal district in the west.³³³ According to the 2017 census, the population of Bajaur tribal district is 1, 090, 987.³³⁴

PIPS counted 10 'terrorist attacks' in Bajaur district in 2023, killing 75 and injuring 141.³³⁵ According to PIPS, Bajaur district remained, as in 2022,³³⁶ a flashpoint of terrorist violence perpetrated by ISKP. This terrorist organization claimed most of the attacks that were reported in the district in 2023.³³⁷ PIPS identifies JUI-F leaders as the main targets of ISKP. The group also targets Ahle Hadith and Deobandi scholars and leaders, suspecting them of supporting TTP or the Afghan Taliban.³³⁸ Four operational attacks by security forces were carried out against militants or insurgents in Bajaur district in 2023, PIPS reports.³³⁹

On 6 January 2023, thousands of people attended a peace rally in Bajaur.³⁴⁰ On 23 June 2023, ISKP militants killed a cleric and his brother in Inayat Kallay, Bajaur district.³⁴¹ On 30 July 2023, at least 64 people³⁴² were killed and over 80 others injured after a suicide explosion at a political gathering organized by the Islamist party JUI-Fazl in Khar, Bajaur.³⁴³ ISKP claimed the attack,³⁴⁴ explaining in

³²⁶ Dawn, 02/10/2023, [url](#)

³²⁷ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 35, [url](#), [url](#)

³²⁸ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 35, [url](#), [url](#)

³²⁹ PICSS, 05/01 2023, pp.24-26, [url](#)

³³⁰ PICSS, 01/2024, p.28, [url](#)

³³¹ PICSS, 01/2024, p.28, [url](#)

³³² PICSS, 01/2024, p.28, [url](#)

³³³ CRSS, 12/07/2018, p. 22, [url](#)

³³⁴ Pakistan, 19/05/2021, [url](#)

³³⁵ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 40, [url](#), [url](#)

³³⁶ PIPS, 06/01/2023, p. 77, [url](#), [url](#)

³³⁷ PIPS, 01/2024, p.40, [url](#), [url](#)

³³⁸ PIPS, 01/2024, p.86, [url](#), [url](#)

³³⁹ PIPS, 01/2024, p.97, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁴⁰ Dawn, 06/01/2023, [url](#)

³⁴¹ Dawn, 23/06/2023, [url](#)

³⁴² PIPS, 01/2024, p. 47, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁴³ The New York Times, 31/07/2023, [url](#) ; Dawn, 01/08/2023, [url](#)

³⁴⁴ The New York Times, 31/07/2023, [url](#)

a propaganda booklet that JUI-F's intent to take part in elections was the reason for the attack.³⁴⁵ On 9 August 2023, a soldier was killed in a suicide attack by Tehrik-e-Jihad Pakistan in Bajaur.³⁴⁶ On 26 August 2023, an IED explosion near Larkholozo Hospital in Bajaur district injured two people.³⁴⁷ On 4 October 2023, a religious scholar and prayer leader at a local mosque in Bajaur's Shinkoot area was shot and killed.³⁴⁸ On 29 October 2023, a member of Ahle Hadith Jamaat, was shot dead by armed men in Bajaur in an attack later claimed by ISKP.³⁴⁹ On 9 November 2023, ISKP assailants killed a civilian in Bajaur district.³⁵⁰ On 22 November 2023, three people, including a family member of a local JUI-F leader, were killed in twin bombings in Bajaur district.³⁵¹ In December 2023, pamphlets were pasted on walls in Bajaur district warning JUI-F against participating in the upcoming elections.³⁵²

On 31 January 2024, unidentified gunmen shot and killed an independent candidate in the upcoming elections in the Siddiqabad area of Bajaur district.³⁵³ On 16 March 2024, a tribal elder was killed in a bomb explosion in Barang thesil, Bajaur district.³⁵⁴ On 6 April 2024, a bomb blast in Bajaur district's Barkholozo area killed two policemen.³⁵⁵

CRSS registered 33 incidents of terrorism and counter-terrorism in Bajaur district in 2023, leading to 103 fatalities and 138 injuries.³⁵⁶

Khyber tribal district

Khyber tribal district borders Afghanistan to the west, Orakzai tribal district to the south, Kurram tribal district to the south-west and Peshawar in the east. This district is divided into three sub-administrative units: Bara, Jamrud and Landi Kotal.³⁵⁷ According to the 2017 census, Khyber tribal district has a population of 984, 246.³⁵⁸ The Pakistani army announced in July 2017 that it had launched a new military operation in Khyber Agency's Rajgal Valley, "Khyber-IV". Hideouts and training camps of militants were destroyed in this offensive.³⁵⁹ The Pakistani army carried out in total four military operations in Khyber in 2017.³⁶⁰ In September 2022, The Express Tribune reported on the deteriorating law and order situation in Khyber district. The newspaper mentioned 'widespread reports' of armed men patrolling parts of Khyber after nightfall.³⁶¹

PIPS counted 21 'terrorist attacks' in Khyber district, killing 26 and injuring 41 in 2023.³⁶² According to PIPS, about 25 % of the total attacks in KP took place in the provincial capital Peshawar and the neighboring district Khyber.³⁶³ PIPS attributed most of the violence in these regions to TTP and local

³⁴⁵ PIPS, 01/2024, p.37, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁴⁶ PIPS, 01/2024, p.109, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁴⁷ Dawn, 26/08/2023, [url](#)

³⁴⁸ Dawn, 05/10/2023, [url](#)

³⁴⁹ PIPS, 01/2024, p.51, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁵⁰ PIPS, 01/2024, p.122, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁵¹ Dawn, 23/11/2023, [url](#)

³⁵² PIPS, 01/2024, p.37, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁵³ Dawn, 31/01/2024, [url](#)

³⁵⁴ Dawn, 16/03/2024, [url](#)

³⁵⁵ Dawn, 14/04/2024, [url](#)

³⁵⁶ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 36, [url](#)

³⁵⁷ CRSS, 12/07/2018, pp. 14-15, [url](#)

³⁵⁸ Government of Pakistan, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 19/05/2021, [url](#)

³⁵⁹ Dawn, 23/07/2017, [url](#)

³⁶⁰ PIPS, 07/01/2018, p. 122, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁶¹ The Express Tribune, 28/09/2022, [url](#)

³⁶² PIPS, 23/01/2024, p. 40, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁶³ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 40, [url](#), [url](#)

Taliban groups.³⁶⁴ In 2023, PIPS registered four suicide attacks in Khyber district, resulting in 12 fatalities. All four of these suicide attacks were attributed to TTP.³⁶⁵ PIPS also reports 9 operational attacks by security forces in Khyber district in 2023, resulting in 18 fatalities and 8 injuries.³⁶⁶

On 19 January 2023, two policemen, a soldier and a civilian were killed in a TTP suicide attack in Khyber district.³⁶⁷ On 26 April 2023, two Pakistani soldiers were killed when TTP militants attacked their army camp in the Tor Darra locality of Tirah, close to the Afghan border.³⁶⁸ On 8 May 2023, a soldier was killed in a terrorist attack by TTP militants in Khyber district.³⁶⁹ On 26 May 2023, a policeman accompanying a polio vaccination team was killed in an attack by suspected militants near Mirdarra bridge in Khyber. Two other policemen were injured.³⁷⁰ The same day, militants hit a military post in Tirrah valley with a mortar shell, killing one soldier.³⁷¹ On 20 July 2023, three policemen were killed and at least nine people were injured in a bomb blast at the office of local government officials in Bara, Khyber district.³⁷² On 25 July 2023, a soldier and a policeman were killed in a TTP suicide attack in Khyber district.³⁷³ On 2 September 2023, CTD killed three militants in an encounter in Shagai in Jamrud tehsil of Khyber district.³⁷⁴ On 25 October 2023, one soldier was killed and three were injured in a TTP suicide attack in Khyber district.³⁷⁵ On 18 December 2023, a terrorist attack by TTP killed two soldiers in Khyber district.³⁷⁶ TTP claimed that it carried out a number of joint attacks with Lashkar-e-Islam in Khyber district in December 2023. Before 2014, Lashkar-e-Islam was a leading terrorist group in Khyber district. The militants had relocated to Afghanistan after military operations in Khyber district.³⁷⁷

In March 2024, a “women’s desk” was established at the Bara police station in Khyber district with the aim to facilitate women’s access to police services.³⁷⁸

CRSS registered 51 incidents of terrorism and counter-terrorism in Khyber district in 2023, leading to 64 fatalities and 42 injuries.³⁷⁹

Kurram tribal district

Kurram shares a large section of its border with Afghanistan (Nangarhar and Paktia provinces). In the east this agency borders Orakzai and Khyber, and in the south, North Waziristan. It is divided into three administrative units: Lower Kurram, Upper Kurram and Central Kurram. Parachinar is the capital of Kurram.³⁸⁰ According to the census of 2017, Kurram tribal district has a population of 615,372.³⁸¹ The region has a history of sectarian violence between its Sunni and Shia population.³⁸²

³⁶⁴ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 40, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁶⁵ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 67, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁶⁶ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 126, [url](#)

³⁶⁷ RFE/RL, 19/001/2023, [url](#) ; PIPS, 01/2024, p. 108, [url](#)

³⁶⁸ Dawn, 27/04/2023, [url](#)

³⁶⁹ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 114, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁷⁰ Dawn, 26/05/2023, [url](#)

³⁷¹ Dawn, 26/05/2023, [url](#)

³⁷² Dawn, 20/07/2023, [url](#)

³⁷³ Dawn, 25/07/2023, [url](#); PIPS, 01/2024, p. 109, [url](#)

³⁷⁴ Dawn, 03/09/2023, [url](#)

³⁷⁵ The Express Tribune, 25/10/2023, [url](#); PIPS, 01/2024, p. 110, [url](#)

³⁷⁶ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 120, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁷⁷ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 82, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁷⁸ The Express Tribune, 25/03/2024, [url](#)

³⁷⁹ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 36, [url](#)

³⁸⁰ CRSS, 12/07/2018, pp. 16-17, [url](#)

³⁸¹ Government of Pakistan, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 19/05/2021, [url](#)

³⁸² IRB, 04/01/2024, [url](#) ; CRSS, 12/07/2018, pp. 16-17, [url](#)

Sunni Turi tribesmen are known to clash with members of the Shia Bangash tribe.³⁸³ Because of the sizeable Shia population in the tribal districts of Kurram, counter-terrorism and intelligence officials monitor the growing ISKP threat in the district, ICG reported in 2022.³⁸⁴

PIPS counted two 'terrorist attacks' in Kurram district in 2023, killing four and injuring eight persons.³⁸⁵ PIPS also registered five incidents of sectarian violence in Kurram in 2023.³⁸⁶ The security forces launched one operational attack in Kurram in 2023, causing one casualty.³⁸⁷

On 4 May 2023, six schoolteachers belonging to the Turi Bangash tribe and a staff member were killed in a shooting at a school in the Kurram district. The attack was a reprisal after the killing of a school teacher in Upper Kurram earlier that day.³⁸⁸ According to sources consulted by PIPS, these killings were probably linked to the sectarian conflict in Kurram.³⁸⁹ On 26 August 2023, two policemen were injured in a TTP attack in Kurram.³⁹⁰ In late October 2023, a controversial video on social media was at the origin of multiple clashes between rival sectarian tribal groups. Although both sides condemned the video, the ensuing violence cost sixteen people their lives.³⁹¹ From 24 to 31 October 2023, Shia-Sunni clashes involving heavy weaponry took place in Kurram district. Between 9 and 30 people were killed before local clerics and tribal concluded a ceasefire.³⁹² For example, on 26 October 2023, two vehicles escorted by the police came under attack on the road to Parachinar in the Charkhel area of Lower Kurram. Four persons were killed and six others injured.³⁹³ On 25 November 2023, three children were killed when a mortar shell exploded in Kurram tribal district. The shell had landed in the area during recent clashes between local tribes.³⁹⁴

On 8 January 2024, unknown gunmen opened fire on a passenger bus in Parachinar, Kurram district. At least four persons were killed.³⁹⁵ On 18 March 2024, Taliban authorities retaliated against Pakistani airstrikes on Afghan soil in Paktika and Khost provinces by firing heavy weaponry into Pakistan's Kurram district, killing a Pakistani army captain.³⁹⁶

CRSS registered 13 incidents of terrorism and counter-terrorism in Kurram district in 2023, leading to 40 fatalities and 25 injuries.³⁹⁷

Mohmand tribal district

Mohmand borders Bajaur in the north and Khyber in the south. In the east, it borders Malakand and Charsadda districts, and in the south-east, Peshawar district.³⁹⁸ According to the 2017 census,

³⁸³ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 9, [url](#)

³⁸⁴ ICG, 05/09/2022, p.7, [url](#)

³⁸⁵ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 41, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁸⁶ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 23, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁸⁷ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 97, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁸⁸ BBC News, 04/05/2023, [url](#) ; The Express Tribune, 04/05/2023, [url](#) ; PIPS, 01/2024, p. 46, [url](#)

³⁸⁹ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 46, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁹⁰ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 117, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁹¹ PIPS, 01/2024, pp.45-46, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁹² Dawn, 31/10/2023, [url](#); ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

³⁹³ Dawn, 27/10/2023, [url](#)

³⁹⁴ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 46, [url](#), [url](#)

³⁹⁵ Nation (The), 08/01/2024, [url](#)

³⁹⁶ Dawn, 18/03/2024, [url](#) ; ICG, 03/2024, [url](#)

³⁹⁷ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 36, [url](#)

³⁹⁸ CRSS, 12/07/2018, p. 22, [url](#)

Mohmand tribal district has a population of 474, 345.³⁹⁹ PIPS noted in its 2022 security report that ISKP is believed to be active in Mohmand.⁴⁰⁰

According to PIPS, two 'terrorist attacks' took place in Mohmand district in 2023, killing two people.⁴⁰¹ On 29 May 2023, local Taliban killed a policeman in Mohmand.⁴⁰² On 10 June 2023, TTP militants killed another policeman in Mohmand district.⁴⁰³

Orakzai tribal district

Orakzai shares its borders with Khyber tribal district in the north, Kohat in the east, the districts of Kohat and Hangu in the south, and Kurram tribal district in the west. Administratively, it is divided into Upper and Lower Orakzai.⁴⁰⁴ According to the 2017 census, the population stands at 254, 303.⁴⁰⁵ ICG reported in 2022 that police and courts in Orakzai tribal district had still not been fully set up after the incorporation of the tribal district in KP in 2018.⁴⁰⁶ The Shia population of Orakzai tribal district is a possible target of ISKP, ICG further noted.⁴⁰⁷

According to PIPS, no 'terrorist attacks' occurred in Orakzai district in 2023.⁴⁰⁸

CRSS registered one incident of terrorism and counter-terrorism in Orakzai district in 2023, leading to one fatality and one injury.⁴⁰⁹

North Waziristan tribal district

North Waziristan borders Kurram tribal district and Hangu in the north and Karak and Bannu districts in the east, South Waziristan tribal district in the south and Afghanistan in the west.⁴¹⁰ According to the 2017 census, North Waziristan has a population of 540, 546.⁴¹¹

Before 2014, North Waziristan was considered as a home base of al-Qaeda, Pakistani Taliban and the Haqqani-network.⁴¹² In June 2014, the military operation *Zarb-e Azb* was initiated in North Waziristan.⁴¹³ According to the Pakistani military, the district was eventually cleared of militants.⁴¹⁴ In the wake of multiple incidents against the security forces and to restore law and order, Section 144 was imposed for thirty days in the district in June 2019.⁴¹⁵ Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure empowers district administrations to issue orders in public interest that may place a ban on certain activities for a specific period of time.⁴¹⁶ In Miranshah, a pamphlet issued by the TTP in July 2019 warned citizens not to play music in public, not to allow women freedom of movement or vaccinate their children against polio.⁴¹⁷ Targeted killings increased in 2020 in North

³⁹⁹ Government of Pakistan, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 19/05/2021, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁰ PIPS, 06/01/2023, p. 7, p. 73, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴⁰¹ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 41, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴⁰² PIPS, 01/2024, p. 114, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴⁰³ PIPS, 01/2024, [url](#), p. 115

⁴⁰⁴ CRSS, 12/07/2018, pp. 22-23, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁵ Government of Pakistan, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 19/05/2021, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁶ ICG, 05/09/2022, p.20, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁷ ICG, 05/09/2022, p.7, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁸ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 69, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴⁰⁹ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 36, [url](#)

⁴¹⁰ CRSS, 12/07/018, p. 20, [url](#)

⁴¹¹ Government of Pakistan, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 19/05/2021, [url](#)

⁴¹² BBC News, 08/03/2017, [url](#)

⁴¹³ Jamestown Foundation, 10/07/2015, [url](#) ; BBC News, 08/03/2017, [url](#)

⁴¹⁴ Nation (The), 06/09/2016, [url](#); Dawn, 18/05/2017, [url](#)

⁴¹⁵ Dawn, 10/06/2019, [url](#)

⁴¹⁶ Code of Criminal Procedure, Act No. V, 01/07/1898, [url](#)

⁴¹⁷ Dawn, 01/08/2019, [url](#)

Waziristan. Tribal leaders, activists and government officials were cited as possible victims.⁴¹⁸ According to Gandhara, more than 50 people were killed due to targeted killings in 2020.⁴¹⁹ In the first half of 2021, more targeted killings were reported in North Waziristan.⁴²⁰ Reporting on 2021, PIPS described North Waziristan as 'a major flashpoint of insecurity and militant violence'.⁴²¹ In 2021, North Waziristan was the site of 37 'terrorist attacks'⁴²² and 22 anti-militant operational strikes by security forces and law enforcement agencies.⁴²³ In 2022, PIPS reported 30 'terrorist attacks' in North Waziristan,⁴²⁴ mostly targeting security and law enforcement personnel and carried out by TTP and, to a lesser extent, by local Taliban militants.⁴²⁵ PIPS further reported 24 operational attacks by security forces against militants and insurgents in North Waziristan in 2022.⁴²⁶

According to PIPS, 23 'terrorist attacks' took place in North Waziristan in 2023, causing 53 fatalities and 63 injuries.⁴²⁷ Four of these were suicide attacks perpetrated by TTP militants.⁴²⁸ PIPS also reported 21 operational attacks by security forces in North Waziristan in 2023, killing 67 people and injuring 14.⁴²⁹

On 21 January 2023, security forces freed four employees of a local petroleum company in the Mir Ali area of the North Waziristan district. Two militants who were involved in the kidnapping were killed.⁴³⁰ Later in January 2023, The Guardian reported that the Taliban's presence in Waziristan was being heavily felt again. Locals talked of an influx of TTP fighters from Afghanistan and declared that the main security checkpoints in Waziristan were controlled by TTP militants at night.⁴³¹ On 11 February 2023, TTP militants killed a soldier in North Waziristan. Nine other soldiers and five civilians were wounded.⁴³² Two soldiers were killed in an exchange of gunfire in Spinwam, North Waziristan on 26 February 2023. Two TTP militants were also killed, two others were arrested.⁴³³ On 4 May 2023, an exchange of fire with militants in the Dir Duni area of North Waziristan cost six Pakistani soldiers their lives. Three terrorists were killed and two others were injured.⁴³⁴ On 12 May 2023, security forces killed a TTP commander in a hotel in North Waziristan.⁴³⁵ On 23 May 2023, militants blew up two girl schools in North Waziristan. The attacks occurred at night, no victims were reported.⁴³⁶ The following day, a suicide bomber set off his explosive device in a vehicle in Datta Khel, North Waziristan, as he was being intercepted by security personnel. Two soldiers, a police constable and a civilian were killed.⁴³⁷ On 31 May 2023, a security official accompanying polio workers was attacked and killed in Spinwam, North Waziristan. His colleague sustained injuries.⁴³⁸ On 10 June 2023, about a dozen militants stormed a security check post in Ghulam Khan, North

⁴¹⁸ Gandhara, 16/09/2020, [url](#); Gandhara, 18/01/2021, [url](#)

⁴¹⁹ Gandhara, 18/01/2021, [url](#)

⁴²⁰ BBC, 27/02/2021, [url](#); The Express Tribune, 11/05/2021, [url](#)

⁴²¹ PIPS, 2022, p.17, [url](#)

⁴²² PIPS, 2022, p. 17, [url](#)

⁴²³ PIPS, 2022, pp. 23-24, [url](#)

⁴²⁴ PIPS, 06/01/2023, p. 35, [url](#)

⁴²⁵ PIPS, 06/01/2023, pp. 119-124, [url](#)

⁴²⁶ PIPS, 06/01/2023, p. 92, [url](#)

⁴²⁷ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 41, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴²⁸ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 21, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴²⁹ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 126, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴³⁰ RFE/RL, 21/01/2023, [url](#)

⁴³¹ The Guardian, 31/01/2023, [url](#)

⁴³² PIPS, 01/2024, p. 112, [url](#)

⁴³³ Dawn, 27/02/2023, [url](#)

⁴³⁴ Dawn, 04/05/2023, [url](#)

⁴³⁵ Dawn, 12/05/2023, [url](#)

⁴³⁶ Dawn, 23/05/2023, [url](#)

⁴³⁷ The News International, 25/05/2023, [url](#)

⁴³⁸ The News International, 01/06/2023, [url](#)

Waziristan. In the ensuing combat three security forces personnel were killed and eight were injured. Retaliatory fire killed four militants.⁴³⁹ On 20 June 2023, two soldiers were killed in an IED explosion in Spinwam, North Waziristan.⁴⁴⁰ On 5 July 2023, a vehicle-borne suicide attack killed at least three security personnel and a child at the Hameedullah Shaheed checkpoint at the Miranshah-Bannu highway in North Waziristan. About ten passers-by were injured.⁴⁴¹ On 7 August 2023, a TTP suicide attack in North Waziristan killed two civilians and one soldier.⁴⁴² On 20 August 2023, a vehicle carrying labourers hit a landmine in the Gull Meer Kor area of Shawal in North Waziristan. Eleven workers died and two others were wounded.⁴⁴³ On 22 August 2023, two persons who were known to supply water to the security forces were killed in the Miramshah area of North Waziristan.⁴⁴⁴ On 19 October 2023, Pakistani troops killed six suspected terrorists in Gharyoum, North Waziristan. Three soldiers were also killed in this military operation.⁴⁴⁵ On 20 October 2023, masked men killed a tribal elder in a private clinic in North Waziristan.⁴⁴⁶ TTP militants killed a soldier in North Waziristan on 21 November 2023.⁴⁴⁷ On 31 December 2023, a soldier was killed when TTP militants opened fire on a border post in the Spinwam area of North Waziristan. Three militants were killed by retaliatory fire.⁴⁴⁸

On 2 January 2024, unidentified gunmen killed six barbers in Mir Ali, North Waziristan. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the killings.⁴⁴⁹ On 10 January 2024, unknown assailants shot an independent politician and two more people in Miran Shah, North Waziristan.⁴⁵⁰ On 12 January 2024, two terrorists suspected of committing violence against civilians were killed in North Waziristan.⁴⁵¹ On 19 January 2024, unidentified assailants killed five non-local men who appeared to be truck drivers in North Waziristan. Nobody claimed responsibility for the killings and the police launched an investigation.⁴⁵² On 6 February 2024, two terrorists were killed in a security forces operation in North Waziristan.⁴⁵³ On 11 February 2024, police allegedly opened fire on a protest in Miramshah Cantonment, killing two workers for the National Democratic Movement (NDM) and injuring fifteen others, amongst which NDM chairman Mohsin Dawar. According to officials the protesters had fired at police personnel first.⁴⁵⁴ On 16 March 2024, seven Pakistani soldiers were killed and seventeen were wounded when militants attacked an army post in North Waziristan. An explosive-laden vehicle was rammed into the post, followed by multiple suicide-bombing attacks, leading to the collapse of a portion of the army building. All six assailants were killed.⁴⁵⁵ On 23 April 2024, an alleged militant was killed in North Waziristan and arms and ammunition in his possession were recovered.⁴⁵⁶

⁴³⁹ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 44, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴⁴⁰ The Express Tribune, 20/06/2023, [url](#)

⁴⁴¹ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 44, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴⁴² PIPS, 01/2024, p. 109, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴⁴³ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 47, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴⁴⁴ Dawn, 22/08/2023, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁵ The News International, 20/10/2023, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁶ Dawn, 21/10/2023, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁷ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 119, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴⁴⁸ Dawn, 31/12/2023, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁹ AP, 02/01/2024, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁰ Nation (The), 10/01/2024, [url](#)

⁴⁵¹ The Express Tribune, 12/01/2024, [url](#)

⁴⁵² Dawn, 21/01/2024, [url](#) ; RFE, 20/01/2024, [url](#)

⁴⁵³ The Express Tribune, 06/02/2024, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁴ Dawn, 11/02/2024, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁵ RFE/RL, 16/03/2024, [url](#) ; The Guardian, 16/03/2024, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁶ Dawn, 23/04/2024, [url](#)

CRSS registered 86 incidents of terrorism and counter-terrorism in North Waziristan district in 2023, leading to 167 fatalities and 84 injuries.⁴⁵⁷

South Waziristan tribal district

South Waziristan shares its border with North Waziristan in the north, with Bannu and Lakki Marwat districts in the north-east, with the tribal area adjoining Tank district and Dera Ismail Khan district in the east, with Zhob district of Balochistan province and Dera Ismail Khan district in the south, and Afghanistan in the west.⁴⁵⁸ According to the 2017 census, South Waziristan Agency has a population of 675, 215.⁴⁵⁹

In July 2018, RFE/RL reported that there was a noticeable 'renewed Taliban influence in Waziristan'. Locals call this armed group 'the Aman (Peace) Committee, which mostly operated as a government-backed militia'.⁴⁶⁰ Mona Kanwal Sheikh, an expert on militant movements in Pakistan, stated in 2018 that one 'lump' of the Pakistani Taliban remained active in South Waziristan. These (former) militants were organized in one of the peace committees in the district and were also called the "good Taliban", and were not targeted by the military. They were no longer part of the larger umbrella of TTP and were granted the right to control an area in South Waziristan.⁴⁶¹ According to Kanwal Sheikh, the Taliban in Wana, South Waziristan, were organised under four different commanders and set up 'their own police and public morality "corps" and their own justice system'. They also collected taxes from local businesses.⁴⁶² In April 2019, the Taliban in Wana warned the police through pamphlets to leave South Waziristan.⁴⁶³ At the end of May 2019, Section 144 was imposed for a month in South Waziristan following a clash between the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) and the army on 26 May 2019 in North Waziristan.⁴⁶⁴ In August 2020, journalist Ihsanullah Tipu Mahsud mentioned that 'surrendered' Taliban returning under a government amnesty scheme were causing an increase in attacks in North Waziristan and South Waziristan.⁴⁶⁵ After several attacks claimed by the TTP in February 2021, the security forces issued a curfew in Wana for four days.⁴⁶⁶ In 2022, PIPS reported 12 'terrorist attacks' in South Waziristan.⁴⁶⁷ As much as ten of these terrorist attacks targeted security and law enforcement personnel. Eight of these attacks in 2022 were attributed to TTP and one to ISKP.⁴⁶⁸

According to PIPS, six 'terrorist attacks' took place in South Waziristan in 2023, causing 8 fatalities and 15 injuries.⁴⁶⁹ No suicide attacks were reported in the district in 2023.⁴⁷⁰ PIPS observed two direct attacks on civilians in the district in 2023.⁴⁷¹ Security forces carried out 12 operational attacks in South Waziristan in 2023, resulting in 67 fatalities and 14 injuries.⁴⁷²

⁴⁵⁷ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 36, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁸ CRSS, 12/07/2018, [url](#), p. 17

⁴⁵⁹ Government of Pakistan, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 19/05/2021, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁰ RFE/RL, 24/07/2018, [url](#)

⁴⁶¹ DIIS (Kanwal Sheikh M.), 06/07/2018, [url](#)

⁴⁶² DIIS (Kanwal Sheikh M.), 06/07/2018, [url](#)

⁴⁶³ Dawn, 23/04/2019, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁴ Dawn, 28/05/2019, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁵ Arab News, 03/08/2020, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁶ Gandhara, 17/02/2021, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁷ PIPS, 06/01/2023, p.35, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁸ PIPS, 06/01/2023, pp. 119-124, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁹ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 41, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴⁷⁰ PIPS, 01/2024, pp. 108-110, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴⁷¹ PIPS, 01/2024, pp. 121-122, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴⁷² PIPS, 01/2024, p. 126, [url](#), [url](#)

On 5 January 2023, eleven suspected terrorists were killed in an intelligence-based security operation in Wana, South Waziristan. According to army sources, a high-profile terrorist plot was foiled.⁴⁷³ In March 2023, security forces launched an operation in the Zangara area of South Waziristan. Eight militants were killed in an exchange of fire, two children accidentally lost their lives in the crossfire and two soldiers were injured.⁴⁷⁴ On 21 March 2023, militants ambushed security personnel in Angoor Adda, South Waziristan. An army brigadier of the ISI was killed and seven soldiers were wounded.⁴⁷⁵ On 5 April 2023, eight militants, including a commander, were killed in a military operation in South Waziristan. One soldier was killed, four of his colleagues got injured.⁴⁷⁶ Ten days later, on 15 April 2023, another eight terrorists and two soldiers were killed in a military operation in the Zarmilan area of South Waziristan.⁴⁷⁷ On 5 June 2023, TTP militants killed two civilians and injured two more in South Waziristan.⁴⁷⁸ On 22 August 2023, six soldiers and four militants died in an exchange of fire in Asman Manza area of Upper South Waziristan district.⁴⁷⁹ On 22 November 2023, three persons, including a tribal elder, were killed in an IED explosion in South Waziristan.⁴⁸⁰ On 25 December 2023, a roadside IED killed a man in Azam Warsak, South Waziristan. The man was traveling with his brother, a tribal elder, who remained unharmed.⁴⁸¹

On 12 February 2024, a high profile militant suspected of involvement in violence committed against the Sikh community in Peshawar was killed in a gunfight in South Waziristan.⁴⁸² The same day, a bomb went off targeting the vehicle of a PTI-backed election candidate in South Waziristan. One person was killed, another was injured.⁴⁸³

On 18 February 2024, a military operation in South Waziristan led to an exchange of gunfire in which seven militants and one soldier were killed.⁴⁸⁴

CRSS registered 38 incidents of terrorism and counter-terrorism in South Waziristan district in 2023, leading to 96 fatalities and 30 injuries.⁴⁸⁵

3.2.3. Balochistan

General description of the province

Balochistan is located in the west of Pakistan. It borders Iran in the west, Afghanistan in the north-west, KP province in the north-east, Punjab province in the east, Sindh province in the south-east, and the Arabian Sea in the south.⁴⁸⁶ Quetta is the provincial capital.⁴⁸⁷ Balochistan consists of seven

⁴⁷³ The News International, 07/01/2023, [url](#) ; PIPS, 01/2024, p. 98, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴⁷⁴ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 99, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴⁷⁵ The News International, 22/03/2023, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁶ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 99, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴⁷⁷ The Express Tribune, 15/04/2023, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁸ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 122, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴⁷⁹ Dawn, 23/08/2023, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁰ Dawn, 23/11/2023, [url](#)

⁴⁸¹ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 48, [url](#), [url](#)

⁴⁸² Dawn, 12/02/2024, [url](#)

⁴⁸³ Dawn, 12/02/2024, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁴ Dawn, 18/02/2024, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁵ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 36, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁶ UNOCHA, 03/12/2018, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁷ UNOCHA, 03/12/2018, [url](#)

divisions and 33 districts.⁴⁸⁸ Despite various development initiatives, Balochistan remains the poorest province of Pakistan.⁴⁸⁹

Balochistan is the least populated province of Pakistan but the largest province by area.⁴⁹⁰ The majority of the provincial population are Baloch. The second largest group are Pashtun, who dominate the northern areas in the province.⁴⁹¹ In addition, more than half a million Hazaras live in Quetta.⁴⁹² According to the 2017 population census published by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the province of Balochistan has a population of 12, 335, 129.⁴⁹³ According to UNDP, more than 70 % of the population lives in rural areas.⁴⁹⁴

Background of the conflict and actors in Balochistan

Balochistan province faces numerous problems, including a separatist insurgency, Islamist militant attacks and sectarian violence.⁴⁹⁵ These nationalist and ethno-sectarian conflicts are further complicated by the involvement of several foreign states – such as the US, China, India and Iran – who have an economic or political stake in Balochistan.⁴⁹⁶

The separatist insurgency has been ongoing in Balochistan since 1948.⁴⁹⁷ Historical grievances of subjugation, the exploitation of natural resources and the military's harsh response to nationalist demands have fueled the conflict.⁴⁹⁸ The war in Afghanistan and the construction of the Gwadar mega-port have been additional drivers of the insurgency.⁴⁹⁹ Hostilities intensified in 2005 and escalated in August 2006 upon the death of nationalist leader and tribal chieftain Nawab Akbar Bugti. Ensuing military operations, the harsh tactics used by the security forces (including enforced disappearances)⁵⁰⁰ and the building of military cantonments in Balochistan further heightened tensions.⁵⁰¹

In April 2019, Gandhara reported that an extensive crackdown by Pakistani security forces relying on anti-nationalist militias, enforced disappearances, and other harsh tactics had weakened the Baloch insurgency, especially in the Makran area.⁵⁰² According to Kiyya Baloch, a journalist from Balochistan's Makran region, most of the attacks occurred in the remote regions of the province.⁵⁰³ However, Baloch armed groups were able to carry out a series of violent attacks on Chinese interests in the region in 2019.⁵⁰⁴ This was largely due to a change in leadership in Baloch armed groups and a shift of their operations from small towns to urban settings, including cities outside the province.⁵⁰⁵

⁴⁸⁸ Samaa TV, 12/06/2021, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁹ DW, 14/07/2021, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁰ UNICEF, 27/07/2020, p. 3, [url](#)

⁴⁹¹ The Diplomat, 25/04/2019, [url](#); The Diplomat, 11/02/2016, [url](#)

⁴⁹² BBC News, 13/04/2019, [url](#)

⁴⁹³ Government of Pakistan, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 19/05/2021, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁴ UNDP Pakistan, 23/01/2021, p. 5, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁵ DFAT, 25/01/2022, [url](#) ; PIPS (Amir Rana M.), 19/06/2020, p. 1, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁶ The Diplomat, 02/03/2022, [url](#); Middle East Institute (Kowalski P.), 21/10/2019, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁷ Small War Journal (Hashmi W.), 21/08/2018, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁸ The International Affairs Review, 16/05/2022, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁹ The International Affairs Review, 16/05/2022, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁰ The Economist, 07/04/2012, [url](#)

⁵⁰¹ The Jamestown Foundation (Aamir, A.), 15/02/2019, [url](#)

⁵⁰² Gandhara, 18/04/2019, [url](#)

⁵⁰³ Gandhara, 18/04/2019, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁴ Dawn, 16/08/2019, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁵ Dawn, 16/08/2019, [url](#)

The New York Times observed that by 2020, counterinsurgency operations, rifts among separatist groups, fatigue and government incentives for the militants to lay down their weapons had greatly weakened the Baloch insurgency.⁵⁰⁶ Around 2020, the insurgency had largely shifted to the south-west of Balochistan.⁵⁰⁷ According to PIPS security analyst Muhammad Amir Rana, a 'a new cadre of young nationalists emerged' due to the growth of the middle class and higher literacy rate in central and southern Balochistan.⁵⁰⁸ They gradually took over control of the insurgency in their region.⁵⁰⁸ In June 2020, clashes between the Pakistani military and Baloch insurgents intensified due to an increase of attacks perpetrated by Baloch groups.⁵⁰⁹ The same month, the Pakistan military carried out a military operation called Ground Zero Clearance Operation aimed at destroying the bases of Baloch militant groups in the border regions with Iran.⁵¹⁰

In February 2021, Baloch groups staged demonstrations across Pakistan accusing the government of enforced disappearances and violence.⁵¹¹ After a TTP attack on the Serena hotel in Quetta in April 2021, analysts suggested that TTP had 'joined the local fight against Chinese interests'.⁵¹² In July 2021, PM Imran Khan announced that he was willing to talk with the Baloch insurgent groups.⁵¹³ On 5 September 2021, several soldiers were killed in a suicide attack on a security checkpoint on the Quetta-Mastung Road, south of Quetta. TTP claimed responsibility for the attack.⁵¹⁴ In December 2021, protests lasting several weeks took place in the port town of Gwadar. Baloch communities in the region demanded clean drinking water, uninterrupted access to the sea for fishing and a ban on deep-sea trawling.⁵¹⁵

The New York Times⁵¹⁶ and PIPS noted a rising level of violence in Balochistan in 2021. Most of the terrorist attacks in the province were perpetrated by Baloch insurgents. The districts of Kech (19 attacks) and Quetta (18 attacks) saw the largest numbers of such incidents. Most attacks by Baloch insurgents targeted security forces and law enforcement personnel (47 attacks, or 66 %). Baloch insurgents also targeted civilians (seven attacks), government officials and institutions, state symbols and non-Baloch settlers and workers (five attacks).⁵¹⁷ Religiously inspired militant groups such as the TTP and ISKP and other unknown militants were reportedly involved in as many as ten attacks in Balochistan in 2021.⁵¹⁸ ACLED observed that 'the resurgence of Baloch separatist violence was preceded by greater unity among Baloch separatist groups, including the formation of trans-province alliances between separatist groups, as well as repression of Baloch civilians by the Pakistani army during security operations'.⁵¹⁹

In 2022 PIPS documented 79 'terrorist attacks' in Balochistan in 2022, a slight decrease compared to the previous year.⁵²⁰ The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF)

⁵⁰⁶ The New York Times, 05/05/2022, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁷ PIPS (Amir Rana M.), 19/06/2020, p. 2, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁸ PIPS (Amir Rana M.), 19/06/2020, p. 1, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁹ The Diplomat, 26/06/2020, [url](#)

⁵¹⁰ Arab News Pakistan, 06/06/2020, [url](#)

⁵¹¹ Reuters, 22/02/2021, [url](#) ; Al Jazeera, 09/03/2021, [url](#)

⁵¹² Gandhara, 18/05/2021, [url](#)

⁵¹³ The Diplomat, 16/07/2021, [url](#)

⁵¹⁴ Al Jazeera, 05/09/2021, [url](#)

⁵¹⁵ The Diplomat, 09/12/2021, [url](#)

⁵¹⁶ The New York Times, 05/05/2022, [url](#)

⁵¹⁷ PIPS, 2022, pp. 17-18, pp. 53-60, [url](#)

⁵¹⁸ PIPS, 2022, p. 18, pp. 53-60, [url](#)

⁵¹⁹ ACLED, 02/2021, p. 8, [url](#)

⁵²⁰ PIPS, 06/01/2023, p. 44, [url](#)

perpetrated the majority of these attacks.⁵²¹ Religiously inspired militant groups, mainly TTP and ISKP, perpetrated seven attacks – including two suicide attacks – in Balochistan in 2022.⁵²² The highest number of attacks for any one Baloch district was recorded in Quetta (16 attacks), followed by Kalat and Kech with six attacks each.⁵²³ According to PIPS, 42 of the reported 79 terrorist attacks in Balochistan in 2022 (over 53 %) targeted personnel, vehicles and premises of security forces and law enforcement agencies. Seven attacks apparently targeted civilians, four targeted alleged spies, and another six targeted tribal elders.⁵²⁴ In January 2022, the Baloch Republican Army (BRA) and United Baloch Army (UBA) announced their merger and formed the Baloch Nationalist Army (BNA).⁵²⁵ In May 2022, The New York Times noted the increasing use of suicide attacks by Baloch insurgents.⁵²⁶

An additional factor fueling the Baloch insurgency is the Chinese involvement in Pakistan's efforts to build the Gwadar Port.⁵²⁷ Baloch nationalists interpret Chinese involvement in the Gwadar port and other China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)-related projects as an attempt by the state to exploit Balochistan's resources while receiving little in return.⁵²⁸ The Chinese projects and Chinese workers are regularly targeted by Baloch insurgents.⁵²⁹ In January 2021, Gandhara stated that Pakistan increased security measures in the region to protect the CPEC-related projects.⁵³⁰ In August and December 2021, protests erupted in Gwadar over a severe shortage of water and electricity, threats to livelihoods and access to sea for local communities.⁵³¹

Sectarian violence is also present in Balochistan.⁵³² Members of the local Shia community, mostly members of the Hazara community in Quetta, have suffered violence, including targeted killings and suicide attacks.⁵³³

The following graph, based on data compiled by South Asia Terrorism Portal, illustrates the evolution of the number of fatalities in terrorist incidents amongst civilians, security forces and insurgents in Balochistan in the 2010-2023 period.⁵³⁴

⁵²¹ PIPS, 06/01/2023, p. 44, [url](#)

⁵²² PIPS, 06/01/2023, p. 50, [url](#)

⁵²³ PIPS, 06/01/2023, p. 44, [url](#)

⁵²⁴ PIPS, 06/01/2023, p. 45, [url](#)

⁵²⁵ The Balochistan Post, 16/01/2022, [url](#)

⁵²⁶ The New York Times, 05/05/2022, [url](#)

⁵²⁷ Dawn, 07/04/2019, [url](#)

⁵²⁸ The Economist, 02/01/2024, [url](#); The Diplomat, 02/03/2022, [url](#); DW, 14/07/2021, [url](#); DW, 15/07/2020, [url](#)

⁵²⁹ DW, 14/07/2021, [url](#)

⁵³⁰ Gandhara, 26/01/2021, [url](#)

⁵³¹ The Guardian, 20/08/2021, [url](#); The Diplomat, 09/12/2021, [url](#)

⁵³² Asia Times, 05/06/2021, [url](#)

⁵³³ DFAT, 25/01/2022, pp. 18-19, [url](#); The Guardian, 05/04/2021, [url](#)

⁵³⁴ SATP, 30/04/2024, [url](#)

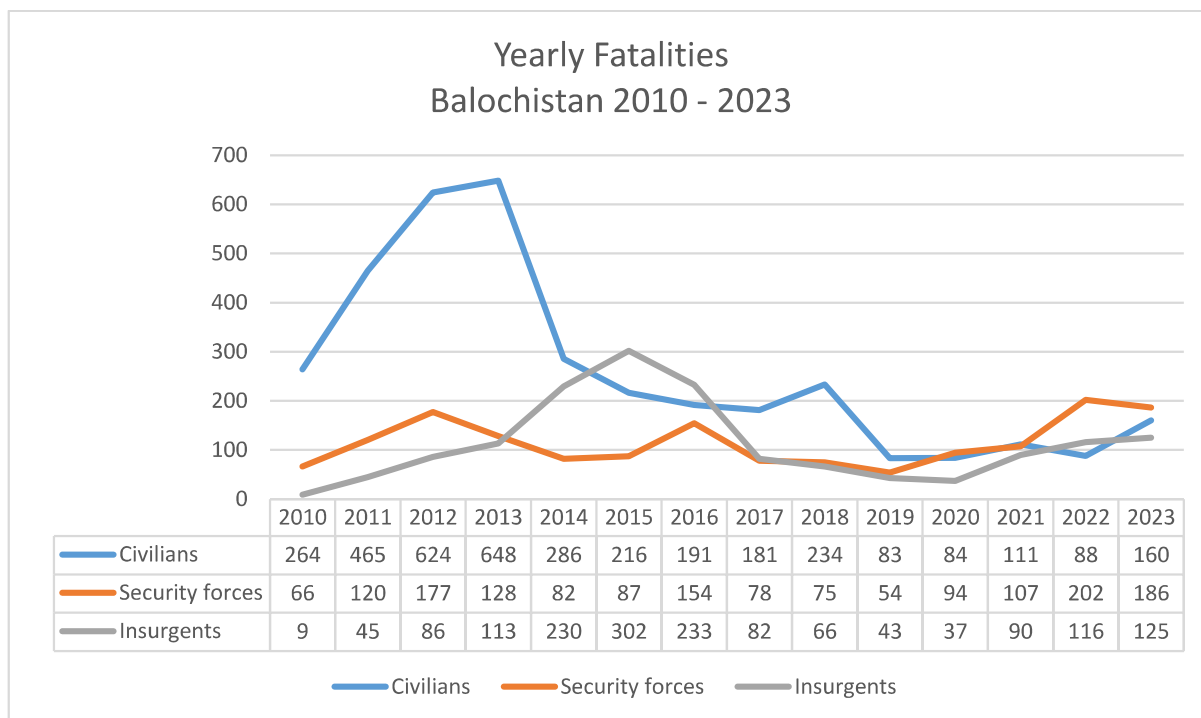


Figure 6: Fatalities in Balochistan in terrorist incidents, 2010-2023, based on SATP data⁵³⁵

Recent security trends and impact on the civilian population

Security incidents

During 2023, there were 416 security incidents recorded by ACLED in Balochistan province, of which 194 were coded as *battles*, 140 as *explosions/remote violence* and 82 as incidents of *violence against civilians* (including ten *abductions/forced disappearances*). Kech stood out as the district where most incidents were reported with 91 violent events, followed by Quetta with 51 violent events and Khuzdar with 41 violent events.⁵³⁶

The following table shows the districts of Balochistan where security incidents were reported in 2023 and indicates the involvement of security forces and/or militant organizations (TTP, ISKP or Baloch separatist groups) in these incidents.⁵³⁷

⁵³⁵ SATP, 30/04/2024, [url](#)

⁵³⁶ OFPRA, 11/01/2024, [url](#)

⁵³⁷ OFPRA, 11/01/2024, [url](#)

Balochistan	Nombre d'incidents violents	En % du total de la province	Total d'incidents violents liés aux Forces gouvernementales	En % du total de la province	Total d'incidents violents liés aux TTP	En % du total de la province	Total d'incidents violents liés à ISKP	En % du total de la province	Total d'incidents violents liés à Baloch Separatists	En % du total de la province
Awaran	21	5%	17	4,1%	0	0%	0	0%	18	4%
Barkhan	3	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	0%
Chagai	2	0%	2	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	0%
Dera Bugti	8	2%	3	1%	0	0%	0	0%	7	2%
Gwadar	15	4%	11	3%	0	0%	0	0%	15	4%
Harnai	7	2%	3	1%	0	0%	0	0%	7	2%
Jaffarabad	4	1%	2	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	1%
Jhal Magsi	2	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Kachhi	21	5%	11	3%	0	0%	1	0%	16	4%
Kalat	23	6%	14	3%	0	0%	1	0%	18	4%
Kech	91	22%	79	19%	0	0%	0	0%	87	21%
Kharan	5	1%	3	1%	0	0%	0	0%	4	1%
Khuzdar	41	10%	17	4%	0	0%	0	0%	23	6%
Killa Abdul	14	3%	10	2%	6	1%	0	0%	5	1%
Killa Saiful	2	0%	2	0,5%	0	0%	0	0%	2	0%
Kohlu	2	0%	2	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	0%
Las Bela	2	0%	0	0,0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	0%
Lehri	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Loralai	3	1%	1	0,2%	0	0%	0	0%	3	1%
Mastung	22	5%	15	4%	0	0%	8	2%	10	2%
Nasirabad	12	3%	5	1%	1	0%	0	0%	6	1%
Nushki	6	1%	5	1%	0	0%	0	0%	6	1%
Panjgur	22	5%	19	4,6%	0	0%	0	0%	21	5%
Pishin	7	2%	6	1,4%	4	1%	0	0%	2	0%
Quetta	51	12%	35	8%	11	3%	3	1%	32	8%
Sheerani	3	1%	3	0,7%	1	0%	0	0%	2	0%
Sibi	8	2%	3	0,7%	1	0%	0	0%	6	1%
Sohbatpur	2	0%	2	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	0%
Washuk	3	1%	2	0,5%	2	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Zhob	11	3%	9	2,2%	3	1%	2	0%	3	1%
Ziarat	2	0%	2	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	0%
TOTAL	416	100%	283	68%	29	7%	15	4%	310	75%

Figure 7: 'Security incidents' by region - Balochistan - 2023, based on ACLED data⁵³⁸

During the first trimester of 2024, 271 security incidents were reported by ACLED in Balochistan, a substantial increase compared to 2023 (416 security incidents). ACLED reported an especially high number of security incidents (151) during the election month of February 2024. In March 2024, the number of security incidents in Balochistan decreased to 46.⁵³⁹ ACLED reports that ISKP carried out two deadly suicide bombings outside political party offices in Balochistan on the eve of the elections, leading to dozens of fatalities. On election day, armed Baloch separatist groups who had called for

⁵³⁸ OFPRA, 11/01/2024, [url](#)

⁵³⁹ OFPRA, 24/04/2024, [url](#)

a boycott of the elections targeted multiple polling stations with grenades and explosives, disrupting the polling process.⁵⁴⁰

PIPS documented 110 'terrorist attacks' in Balochistan in 2023,⁵⁴¹ compared to 79 attacks in the province the previous year.⁵⁴² Different Baloch insurgent groups, mainly the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), perpetrated 78 of these attacks.⁵⁴³ Religiously inspired militant groups, mainly TTP, Tehrik-e-Jihad Pakistan, and ISKP, perpetrated 29 attacks, up from seven in 2022.⁵⁴⁴ TTP and affiliates perpetrated most of the attacks in the northern, largely Pashtun districts of the province. ISKP was found to be more active in Mastung, Bolan and Kalat districts.⁵⁴⁵ Most terrorist attacks took place in Quetta and Kech districts, with 23 and 12 terrorists incidents respectively.⁵⁴⁶

PICSS observed 170 'militant attacks' in Balochistan in 2023,⁵⁴⁷ compared to 103 in 2022.⁵⁴⁸ According to PICSS, Quetta district was the district most affected by militant violence, with 35 registered incidents.⁵⁴⁹

Security trends in 2023

According to PIPS, as many as 60 % of the terrorist attacks in Balochistan in 2023 targeted personnel, vehicles and facilities of security forces and law enforcement agencies. Nine attacks apparently targeted civilians, and another eight attacks targeted government officials, institutions and state symbols. Alleged spies or collaborators were targeted in six attacks and non-Baloch workers in five attacks.⁵⁵⁰

PIPS differentiated the 'terrorist attacks' carried out by Baloch insurgents groups (78 attacks)⁵⁵¹ from those carried out by religiously inspired groups (29 attacks).⁵⁵² Attacks by Baloch insurgents in 2023 mostly happened in Quetta and largely targeted security forces.⁵⁵³ Their tactics included 27 IED blasts, 24 shootings, 21 hand grenade blasts, two rocket attacks, two acts of sabotage and one suicide bombing.⁵⁵⁴ Besides attacking security forces and law enforcement personnel (42 attacks), Baloch insurgents also targeted non-Baloch settlers/workers (5 attacks) and alleged spies or collaborators (4 attacks).⁵⁵⁵ Government institutors, officials, and state symbols were also targeted in a number of low-scale attacks (7), as were railway tracks and gas pipelines (5 attacks).⁵⁵⁶ One attack involved BLA militants targeting a military convoy escorting Chinese workers near Gwadar.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁴⁰ ACLED, 14/02/2024, [url](#)

⁵⁴¹ PIPS, 01/2024, pp. 52-53, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁴² PIPS, 06/01/2024, p. 44, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁴³ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 52, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁴⁴ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 52, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁴⁵ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 52, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁴⁶ PIPS, 01/2024, pp. 52-53, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁴⁷ PICSS, 01/2024, p.24, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁸ PICSS, 05/01/2023, p.21, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁹ PICSS, 01/2024, p.25, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁰ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 53, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁵¹ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 54, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁵² PIPS, 01/2024, p. 52, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁵³ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 54, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁵⁴ PIPS, 01/2024, [url](#), p. 54, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁵⁵ PIPS, 01/2024, pp. 55-56, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁶ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 57, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁵⁷ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 57, [url](#), [url](#)

Most of the 29 attacks by religiously inspired groups in Balochistan in 2023 were committed by TTP (15 attacks), ISKP (7 attacks) and Tehrik-e-Jihad Pakistan (3 attacks).⁵⁵⁸ Whilst the attacks by the TTP and TJP in 2023 exclusively targeted security and law enforcement personnel, the ISKP hit varied targets, including security forces personnel, health/polio vaccinations teams, alleged spies or state collaborators, political leaders and activists, and a religious gathering.⁵⁵⁹ ISKP perpetrated five of its attacks in Mastung district. Bolan district was the location of ISKP's most lethal attack in Balochistan: on 6 March 2023, nine policemen and a passer-by died when a suicide bomber on a motorcycle targeted their truck.⁵⁶⁰ Furthermore, PIPS reports three sectarian-related attacks in Balochistan in 2023. These attacks resulted in four casualties, three of which were Hazara policemen.⁵⁶¹ PIPS also reports 28 operational attacks by security forces in Balochistan in 2023. Seven of these took place in Kech district, five in Quetta.⁵⁶²

PICCS reported 56 'guerilla attacks', 38 attacks involving IEDs, 37 targeted killings, 24 grenade attacks, seven kidnapping incidents, five suicide attacks and three rocket attacks in Balochistan in 2023.⁵⁶³ Thirty-five of these attacks took place in Quetta, 19 in Kech and 14 in Mastung district.⁵⁶⁴

USDOS reported that police, paramilitary, and army operations increased in ungoverned areas in Balochistan in 2023 in response to an increase in insurgent violence. According to USDOS such operations often aren't reported in the press.⁵⁶⁵ USDOS further cites the NGO Voice for Baloch Missing Persons's claim that 177 Baloch persons disappeared in the province between January and July 2023, and that an alleged 6,808 persons forcibly disappeared since 2000. The Human Rights Council of Balochistan claimed 351 individuals were forcibly disappeared (including 63 students).⁵⁶⁶

In August 2023, The Jamestown Foundation reported on alleged covert collaboration between the TTP and Baloch separatist groups. Although neither side has publicly admitted any connection, according to The Jamestown Foundation the Baloch separatists' silence over the TTP's expansion in Balochistan strengthens the assumption of their mutual support in the war against the security forces.⁵⁶⁷

Illustrative incidents in January 2023 – April 2024 :

- On 18 January 2024, militants believed to belong to BLF and allegedly operating from Iranian soil attacked an army convoy in Chukab, Panjgur district. Four soldiers were killed.⁵⁶⁸
- On 10 February 2023, a roadside bomb killed two soldiers and wounded three others in Kohlu. BLA claimed responsibility.⁵⁶⁹
- On 23 February 2023, militants killed two members of security forces in an attack on a checkpoint on Chaman Roghani road, Qilla Abdullah district. Tehrik-e-Jihad Pakistan claimed the attack.⁵⁷⁰
- On 27 February 2023, BLA militants shot dead four coal miners and injured three others in Harnai district. Before fleeing the scene the assailants set eleven coal mines on fire.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁵⁸ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 58, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁵⁹ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 58, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁶⁰ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 59, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁶¹ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 60, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁶² PIPS, 01/2024, p. 126, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁶³ PICSS, 01/2024, p.25, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁴ PICSS, 01/2024, p.25, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁵ USDOS, 23/04/2024, p. 27, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁶ USDOS, 23/04/2024, p. 6, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁷ The Jamestown Foundation, 21/08/2023, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁸ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 54, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁶⁹ AP, 10/02/2023, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁰ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 58, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁷¹ Dawn, 28/02/2023, [url](#)

- On 9 April 2023, unknown militants opened fire on a police patrol in the area of Kuchlak, near Quetta. Two policemen and a passerby were killed. Two other policemen were critically injured.⁵⁷²
- On 10 April 2023, an explosion in the vicinity of a police vehicle killed four people, including two policemen in the Sharah-e-Iqbal area of Quetta. BLA claimed the attack.⁵⁷³
- On 20 May 2023, three soldiers and one terrorist were killed in an attack on a security checkpoint in the Zarghoon area of Bolan.⁵⁷⁴
- On 1 June 2023, two soldiers were killed when terrorists opened fire on a checkpoint in Kech district.⁵⁷⁵
- On 29 September 2023, an ISKP suicide bomber targeted a religious procession in Mastung. The blast claimed 63 lives, including a police officer.⁵⁷⁶
- On 29 September 2023, TTP militants attacked security forces near Sambaza in Zhob district. At least four soldiers were killed, as well as three militants.⁵⁷⁷
- On 14 October 2024, armed militants killed at least six labourers in Turbat. BLA claimed the attack, stating the victims worked for security agencies.⁵⁷⁸
- On 31 October 2023, a group of militants stormed a police station in Turbat and killed four labourers sheltering there. One policeman was also killed in the attack.⁵⁷⁹
- On 3 November 2023, BLF militants ambushed two vehicles of the security forces between Pasni and Ormara in Gwadar. Fourteen soldiers were killed.⁵⁸⁰
- On 19 November 2023, three people who were reportedly affiliated with a pro-government group were killed by a roadside bomb in Hoshab, Kech district.⁵⁸¹
- On 7 February 2024, twin bomb explosions near offices of candidates in the upcoming elections in Pishin district and in Qila Saifullah district killed at least 28 people and wounded dozens. ISKP claimed both attacks.⁵⁸²
- On 13 April 2024, gunmen forced nine Punjabi passengers to disembark from a bus on the Quetta-Taftan Highway N-40 near Noshki and killed them.⁵⁸³

Casualties

PIPS reports 229 people were killed and 282 injured in 110 'terrorist attacks' in Balochistan in 2023.⁵⁸⁴ Most fatalities were reported in Mastung (69), Quetta (23), Zhob (22) and Kech (20).⁵⁸⁵ PIPS further notes that 66 of these attacks targeted security or law enforcement agencies personnel or infrastructure, resulting in 116 fatalities.⁵⁸⁶ Nine direct attacks against civilians were reported, causing 13 fatalities. One attack against a place of worship cost 64 people their lives.⁵⁸⁷ Terrorist attacks by Baloch insurgent groups (78) killed 86 people and wounded 137 others in Balochistan in

⁵⁷² PIPS, 01/2024, p. 55, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁷³ The News International, 11/04/2023, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁴ Dawn, 21/05/2023, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁵ Dawn, 02/06/2023, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁶ The New York Times, 09/09/2023, [url](#) ; PIPS, 01/2024, p. 27, p. 60, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁷ The Express Tribune, 29/09/2023, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁸ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 56, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁷⁹ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 56, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁸⁰ The News International, 04/11/2023, [url](#)

⁵⁸¹ Dawn, 20/11/2023, [url](#)

⁵⁸² The New York Times, 07/02/2024, [url](#) ; BBC, 07/02/2024, [url](#)

⁵⁸³ Dawn, 13/04/2024, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁴ PIPS, 01/2024, pp. 52-53, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁸⁵ PIPS, 01/2024, pp. 52-53, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁸⁶ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 53, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁸⁷ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 53, [url](#), [url](#)

2023. Religiously-inspired militant groups carried out 29 terrorist attacks in Balochistan in 2023, killing 139 people and wounding a further 144.⁵⁸⁸

PICCS reported 170 'militant attacks' in Balochistan in 2023, resulting in the loss of 286 lives and 298 injuries.⁵⁸⁹ Both the number of incidents and the number of casualties rose considerably compared to 2022, when 103 militant attacks caused 123 fatalities and 303 injuries in the province.⁵⁹⁰ Of the 286 individuals killed in Balochistan in 2023, 151 were civilians, 114 were security forces personnel, and 21 were militants carrying out the attacks. Among the 298 individuals injured, 195 were civilians, 99 were security forces personnel, and four were militants.⁵⁹¹ The provincial capital of Quetta was the primary target for militant activities in 2023, with 35 recorded attacks, resulting in 29 fatalities, including 13 security forces personnel, 10 civilians, and six attacking militants.⁵⁹² Kech district was the site of 19 attacks, resulting in the deaths of 48 individuals, including 31 civilians and 16 security forces personnel.⁵⁹³ Mastung district saw 14 attacks, leading to 48 fatalities, including 31 civilians and 16 security forces personnel.⁵⁹⁴ According to PICCS security forces 'neutralized' 104 suspected militants in Balochistan in 2023 and apprehended 11 suspects.⁵⁹⁵ Also noteworthy was the surrender of 70 militants of BNA, including its commander Sarfaraz Bangulzai.⁵⁹⁶

CRSS recorded a total of 413 fatalities in terrorism or counter-terrorism operations in Balochistan in 2023.⁵⁹⁷ Forty-four counter-terrorism or security operations resulted in 120 fatalities and four reported injuries⁵⁹⁸ and 127 incidents of terrorism, militancy and/or insurgency led to 212 fatalities and 285 injuries.⁵⁹⁹ CRSS situates most of these fatalities in Mastung (77), Kech (61), Quetta (44) and Zhob (43).⁶⁰⁰

Displacement

Among the consulted sources, no information was found about any conflict-induced displacement from areas in and to Balochistan in 2023 or early 2024.⁶⁰¹

3.2.4. Sindh

General description of the province

The province of Sindh is situated in the south-east of Pakistan. It borders the province of Balochistan in the north and in the west, the province of Punjab in the north-east and the Arabian Sea in the

⁵⁸⁸ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 52, [url](#), [url](#)

⁵⁸⁹ PICSS, 01/2024, p.24, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁰ PICSS, 05/01/2023, p.22, [url](#)

⁵⁹¹ PICSS, 01/2024, p.24, [url](#)

⁵⁹² PICSS, 01/2024, p.25, [url](#)

⁵⁹³ PICSS, 01/2024, p.25, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁴ PICSS, 01/2024, p.25, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁵ PICSS, 01/2024, p.27, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁶ PICSS, 01/2024, p.27, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁷ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 8, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁸ CRSS, 02/ 2023, p. 18, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁹ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 24, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁰ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 35, [url](#)

⁶⁰¹ Websites consulted: <https://www.unocha.org/pakistan> ; <https://response.reliefweb.int/pakistan> ; <https://reliefweb.int/country/pak>

south.⁶⁰² The province of Sindh consists of seven divisions and 29 districts.⁶⁰³ Karachi is the provincial capital and the largest city in Pakistan with an estimated 15 to 25 million inhabitants.⁶⁰⁴ The two largest ethnic communities living in Sindh are the Sindhis and Mohajirs^{605, 606}

According to the 2017 population census published by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the province of Sindh has a population of 47, 854, 510.⁶⁰⁷ According to UNDP, about 52 % of the population lives in urban areas.⁶⁰⁸

Background of the conflict and actors in Sindh

In 2017, DFAT reported that Sindh province was relatively free from major terrorist activity outside of Karachi. However, rural Sindh had a high incidence of crime. Kidnappings and a number of terrorist attacks had also occurred there.⁶⁰⁹ PIPS noted that in the same year terror attacks in rural Sindh mainly target Shia community and Sufi shrines. Taliban groups and sectarian outfits had found sanctuary in districts of northern Sindh sharing borders with Balochistan and South Punjab.⁶¹⁰ Regarding Karachi, DFAT explained that, historically, the city experienced high levels of violence because of rival ethnic, sectarian, political, business and criminal interests. The implementation of the National Action Plan against Terrorism (launched in 2014) and the highly visible presence of the Rangers – the federal paramilitary police force – contributed to a considerable decrease of the levels of violence in the city.⁶¹¹ The same year, ICG reported that ethno-political and sectarian interests and competition, intensified by internal migration, jihadist influx and unchecked movement of weapons, drugs and black money, had created an explosive mix in Karachi. The heavy-handed, politicised crackdown by paramilitary Rangers was described as aggravating the problems.⁶¹² In June 2018, CRSS reported that Karachi's security situation had improved dramatically since 2014. Targeted killings alone fell from 1,671 fatalities in 2013 to 84 in 2017. Terror incidents had also decreased drastically.⁶¹³

Reporting on the year 2020, PIPS noted sustained militancy by Sindhi nationalist groups in the province.⁶¹⁴ Of the 18 terrorist attacks reported in Sindh in 2020, 15 took place in Karachi and three in interior Sindh, resulting in 20 fatalities. Eleven of these attacks were perpetrated by nationalist insurgents, including ten attacks by Sindhi nationalist groups Sindhudesh Revolution Army (SDRA) and Sindhudesh Liberation Army (SDLA), and one was carried out by BLA. Four other attacks in Sindh in 2020 were perpetrated by TTP.⁶¹⁵ Half of the attacks reported in Sindh targeted security and law enforcement personnel.⁶¹⁶ In May 2020, the government banned the Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz-Aresar (JSQM-A), SDRA and SDLA.⁶¹⁷

⁶⁰² Minority Rights Group, 06/2018, [url](#)

⁶⁰³ Samaa TV, 12/06/2021, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁴ The Express Tribune, 11/07/2021, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁵ Mohajirs are Urdu-speaking Muslims who migrated from India to Pakistan during the partition in 1947. A considerable number settled in Sindh province.

⁶⁰⁶ Minority Rights Group, 06/2018, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁷ Government of Pakistan, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 19/05/2021, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁸ UNDP - Pakistan, 23/01/2021, p. 5, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁹ DFAT, 01/09/ 2017, p. 8, [url](#),

⁶¹⁰ PIPS, 07/01/2018, p. 190, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶¹¹ DFAT, 01/09/2017, p. 19, [url](#)

⁶¹² ICG, 15/02/2017, p. i, [url](#)

⁶¹³ CRSS, 14/06/2018, p. 74, [url](#)

⁶¹⁴ PIPS, 2021, p. 11, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶¹⁵ PIPS, 2021, p. 14, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶¹⁶ PIPS, 2021, p. 15, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶¹⁷ Dawn, 12/05/2020, [url](#)

In 2021, eight terrorist attacks took place in Sindh province, killing 13 people, according to PIPS. Five of these terrorist attacks took place in Karachi and three in interior Sindh.⁶¹⁸ Six of the reported attacks in Sindh in 2021 were perpetrated by Baloch and Sindhi nationalist insurgents – mainly BLA, BLF and Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army (SRA).⁶¹⁹ In Karachi, BLF carried out two attacks against Chinese nationals while BLA perpetrated one attack targeting Rangers. The Sindhi insurgent group SRA carried out three attacks, targeting security forces, a railways track, and political leaders.⁶²⁰ A March 2021 article by Samaa TV, citing a senior police official, stated that the TTP had 'sleeper cells' in Karachi.⁶²¹ Different media reported that the police and Rangers arrested or killed several suspected TTP militants in Karachi, Sukkur and other parts of Sindh in the first half of 2021.⁶²² In June 2021, a senior police officer remarked in an interview with the newspaper Dawn that the violence perpetrated by nationalist groups had overtaken the violence committed by religious and sectarian outfits in Sindh.⁶²³ DFAT pointed out that ethno-nationalist groups in Sindh carried out attacks against the Pakistani military and government, often causing civilian casualties. Independence or greater autonomy remains the goal of these groups.⁶²⁴ Criminal activities also posed a security challenge for law enforcement personnel in Sindh.⁶²⁵

PIPS documented eight terrorist attacks in Sindh province in 2022, six in Karachi and two in interior Sindh, resulting in eight casualties.⁶²⁶ Five of the eight terrorist attacks PIPS registered in Sindh in 2022 were perpetrated by Sindhi nationalist insurgents. The SRA and a newly formed group called Sindhudesh People's Army claimed most of these attacks.⁶²⁷ Baloch nationalist groups BLA and BNA perpetrated two attacks in Karachi. TTP perpetrated one attack in Karachi, injuring a policeman.⁶²⁸ PIPS also registered two 'operational attacks' by security forces in Karachi.⁶²⁹ In December 2022, the Jamestown Foundation reported on the developing collaboration between Baloch and Sindhi separatist groups. Baloch insurgent groups reportedly provided training to Sindhi separatist groups. In return, Sindhi separatists provided logistical support to Baloch separatists. This allowed Baloch separatists to expand their operational area to Karachi, where they carried out several attacks on Chinese targets.⁶³⁰

Recent security trends and impact on the civilian population

Security incidents

ACLED recorded 115 security incidents in Sindh province in 2023, of which 18 were coded as *battles*, twelve as *explosions/remote violence* and 85 as incidents of *violence against civilians* (including 60 attacks and 23 enforced disappearances). Karachi city stood out as the district where most incidents were reported with 56 violent events, followed by Kashmore with thirteen violent events and Sukkur with nine.⁶³¹ During the first trimester of 2024, ACLED recorded 35 security incidents in Sindh.⁶³²

⁶¹⁸ PIPS, 2022, p. 60, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶¹⁹ PIPS, 2022, p. 60, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶²⁰ PIPS, 2022, p. 61, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶²¹ Samaa TV, 17/03/2021, [url](#)

⁶²² Samaa TV, 17/03/2021, [url](#); Dawn, 03/05/2021, [url](#); Dawn, 12/03/2021, [url](#)

⁶²³ Dawn, 04/06/2021, [url](#)

⁶²⁴ DFAT, 25/01/2022, pp.15-16, [url](#)

⁶²⁵ The Express Tribune, 10/11/2022, [url](#); Dawn, 02/06/2021, [url](#); Dawn, 19/04/2021, [url](#)

⁶²⁶ PIPS, 06/01/2023, p. 51, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶²⁷ PIPS, 0/01/2023, p. 51, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶²⁸ PIPS, 06/01/2023, p. 51, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶²⁹ PIPS, 06/01/2023, pp. 128-129, [url](#)

⁶³⁰ The Jamestown Foundation, 02/12/2022, [url](#)

⁶³¹ OFPRA, 11/01/2024, [url](#)

⁶³² OFPRA, 24/04/2024, [url](#)

PIPS documented fifteen 'terrorist attacks' in Sindh province in 2023, fourteen of which occurred in Karachi and one in interior Sindh.⁶³³ PICSS observed 35 'militant attacks' in Sindh in 2023.⁶³⁴ The majority of these militant attacks (31 out of the 35 reported incidents) took place in the provincial capital Karachi.⁶³⁵

Security trends in 2023 and early 2024

According to PIPS, seven of the fifteen reported attacks in Sindh in 2023 were perpetrated by nationalist insurgent groups, including four attacks by Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army (SRA) in Karachi and Jamshoro, and three by Baloch insurgent groups BLA and BLF in Karachi.⁶³⁶ TTP also perpetrated a coordinated attack on the Karachi Police Office.⁶³⁷ As many as seven sectarian-related terrorist attacks also took place in Karachi in 2023.⁶³⁸ PIPS reported one operational attack by security forces in Karachi in 2023.⁶³⁹

According to Jamestown Foundation, TTP's February 2023 attack on a police compound in Karachi illustrates its strategy to force Pakistani military and paramilitary forces to engage TTP militants in cities. Such attacks receive more national and international media coverage and raise questions about the efficacy of Pakistan's counterterrorism policy.⁶⁴⁰

Reporting on 2023, USDOS notes that political, sectarian, criminal and ethnic violence in Karachi continued, although the incidence of violence and gang wars was in decline.⁶⁴¹

In April 2024, Dawn reported that street robberies were on the rise in Karachi and that this crime spree had cost sixty people their lives as of April 2024.⁶⁴²

Illustrative incidents in 2023 and early 2024:

- On 17 February 2023, the TTP struck the Karachi Police Office, situated in the heart of the city. Police commandos and paramilitary soldiers killed the assailants in an hours-long operation. Five policeman and one civilian were also killed.⁶⁴³
- On 26 February 2023, the deputy director of a private school was shot dead in Karachi. SRA claimed he was an agent of the security forces and demanded non-Sindhi settlers to leave the province.⁶⁴⁴
- On 25 March 2023, the BLA claimed the killing of an informer of the security forces in Karachi.⁶⁴⁵
- On 15 July 2023, a Shia Muslim was shot dead in what his family described as a sectarian targeted killing.⁶⁴⁶
- On 7 August 2023, two assailants opened fire on Rangers personnel at a checkpoint on Al-Falah Road in Chakiwara. One Rangers soldier died. BLF claimed the attack.⁶⁴⁷

⁶³³ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 61, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶³⁴ PICSS, 01/2024, p. 34, [url](#)

⁶³⁵ PICSS, 01/2024, p. 34, [url](#)

⁶³⁶ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 61, [url](#)

⁶³⁷ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 61, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶³⁸ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 61, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶³⁹ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 126, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶⁴⁰ The Jamestown Foundation, 14/04/2023, [url](#)

⁶⁴¹ USDOS, 23/04/2024, p. 28, [url](#)

⁶⁴² Dawn, 13/04/2024, [url](#)

⁶⁴³ ICG, 29/03/2023, [url](#); PIPS, 01/2024, p. 62, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁴ The News International, 27/02/2023, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁵ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 62, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶⁴⁶ Dawn, 16/07/2023, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁷ Dawn, 09/08/2023, [url](#)

- On 18 August 2023, a local Pakistan People's Party politician was shot dead by motorcyclists in Orangi Town, Karachi.⁶⁴⁸ Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claimed the attack indicating that of the motive was his sectarian, Shia identity.⁶⁴⁹
- On 26 December 2023, a store owner said to be associated with the outlawed Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat's (ASWJ) - former Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) - was shot dead in the Korangi area of Karachi.⁶⁵⁰ Earlier in 2023, two members of ASWJ had been killed in Karachi.⁶⁵¹

Casualties

According to PIPS, a total of 16 people were killed and 26 injured in fifteen 'terrorist attacks' in Sindh in 2023.⁶⁵² PICSS counted 74 casualties in 35 militant attacks in Sindh in 2023 (39 killed and 35 injured).⁶⁵³ Security forces in Sindh also conducted 33 notable operations in which two suspected militants were killed, and 49 suspects were arrested, PICSS reports. These security forces operations targeted militants affiliated with TTP, SRA, BLA, BLF, LeJ, Daesh and Al-Qaeda.⁶⁵⁴

In 2023, CRSS recorded 160 casualties (73 fatalities and 87 injuries) in 68 terrorism or counter-terrorism incidents in Sindh.⁶⁵⁵ Ten fatalities and nine injuries were registered in four counter-terrorism or security operations.⁶⁵⁶ In the 58 terrorist, insurgent or militant incidents in Sindh in 2023, CRSS registered 59 fatalities and 66 injuries.⁶⁵⁷

Displacement

Among the consulted sources, no information was found about any conflict-induced displacement from areas in and to Sindh in 2023 or early 2024.⁶⁵⁸

3.2.5. Islamabad capital territory

General description of the territory

Islamabad Capital Territory is situated in the north of Pakistan between the provinces of KP and Punjab, and includes the capital of Pakistan, Islamabad. The territory of the Islamabad Capital Territory is not demarcated and separated from adjoining areas, its administrative status is unspecified.⁶⁵⁹ The total area of Islamabad Capital Territory is around 900 square kilometres.⁶⁶⁰ Islamabad is an ethnically diverse city. It has an eclectic mix of Punjabi, Pakhtun, Seriaki, Sindhi, Kashmiri and Baloch ethnicities. Islamabad has a relatively large proportion of religious minorities compared to other parts of the country, with 10 % of the inhabitants being non-

⁶⁴⁸ Dawn, 19/08/2023, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁹ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 63, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶⁵⁰ Dawn, 27/12/2023, [url](#)

⁶⁵¹ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 63, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶⁵² PIPS, 01/2024, p. 61, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶⁵³ PICSS, 01/2024, p. 34, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁴ PICSS, 01/2024, p. 35, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁵ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 8, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁶ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 18, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁷ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 24, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁸ Websites consulted: <https://www.unocha.org/pakistan> ; <https://response.reliefweb.int/pakistan> ; <https://reliefweb.int/country/pak>

⁶⁵⁹ The New International, 30/06/2019, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁰ UNDP - Pakistan, 23/01/2021, p. 5, [url](#)

Muslims.⁶⁶¹ These include 3, 000 Hindus living in the capital.⁶⁶² Islamabad Capital Territory hosts Islamabad International Airport, served by international and domestic scheduled passenger flights.⁶⁶³ According to the 2017 population census published by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Islamabad Capital Territory has a population of 2, 003, 368.⁶⁶⁴ According to UNDP, half of the population lives in urban areas.⁶⁶⁵

Background of the conflict and actors in Islamabad Capital Territory

USDOS' Bureau of Consular affairs reports in 2023 that more important security resources and infrastructure are available in the major cities, particularly Islamabad. Security forces in these areas may be more readily able to respond to an emergency compared to other areas of the country. While threats still exist, terrorist attacks occur less frequently in major urban areas than other parts of Pakistan.⁶⁶⁶ According to a report by Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) published in 2020, the capital remains an attractive target for militants due to the prevalence of government institutions, foreign missions and administration officials.⁶⁶⁷ The capital Islamabad is regularly the scene of mass protests.⁶⁶⁸

Recent security trends and impact on the civilian population

Security incidents

ACLED collected data on twelve violent events in Islamabad Capital territory from reports in open sources in the year 2023, six of which were coded as a *battles*, three as *attacks* and three as *attacks abductions/forced disappearances*.⁶⁶⁹ In the first trimester of 2024 ACLED recorded one security incident in Islamabad.⁶⁷⁰ In 2023, PIPS recorded no 'terrorist attacks' in Islamabad Capital Territory.⁶⁷¹ PICSS documented one 'militant attack' in Islamabad Capital Territory in 2023.⁶⁷²

Security trends in 2023 and early 2024

According to PICSS, the security situation in Islamabad capital territory remained stable in 2023.⁶⁷³ An attack on the Sri Nagar Highway resulted in an injury to a policeman. The security forces also conducted two notable actions. In one operation, two suspects allegedly associated with TTP were arrested. In another incident, a bag containing three hand grenades, a pistol, and a threatening letter targeting judges and generals was recovered.⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁶¹ The Friday Times, 22/06/2018, [url](#)

⁶⁶² Al Jazeera, 29/10/2020, [url](#)

⁶⁶³ Gulf News, 01/05/2018, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁴ Government of Pakistan, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 19/05/2021, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁵ UNDP - Pakistan, 23/01/2021, p. 5, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁶ USDOS - Bureau of Consular affairs, 23/06/2023, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁷ OSAC, 17/04/2020, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁸ Al Jazeera, 03/05/ 2024, [url](#) ; BBC, 21/12/2023, [url](#) ; The Express Tribune, 09/11/2022, [url](#); The Express Tribune, 19/09/2020, [url](#); Dawn, 22/02/2021, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁹ OFPRA, 11/01/2024, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁰ OFPRA, 24/04/2024, [url](#)

⁶⁷¹ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 67, [url](#), [url](#)

⁶⁷² PICSS, 01/2024, p. 35, [url](#)

⁶⁷³ PICSS, 01/2024, p. 35, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁴ PICSS, 01/2024, p. 36, [url](#)

After the February 2024 elections, the Islamabad police warned against illegal gatherings around the Election Commission and other government offices. Legal actions against organizers or participants of such assemblies would be undertaken.⁶⁷⁵

Casualties

In 2023, the CRSS annual security report recorded no fatalities and one injury from counter-terrorism or security operations in Islamabad Capital Territory.⁶⁷⁶ A single militant event caused one injury.⁶⁷⁷

Displacement

Among the consulted sources, no information was found about any conflict-induced displacement from areas in and to Islamabad Capital territory in 2023 or early 2024.⁶⁷⁸

3.2.6. Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan

General description of the region

The Pakistan-controlled territory of Kashmir consists of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK or commonly called Azad Kashmir, AK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB).⁶⁷⁹ AK has an estimated population of 3 – 4,5 million, the majority of which are Muslims.⁶⁸⁰ GB has an estimated population of about two million people.⁶⁸¹ GB's population is roughly 40 % Shia.⁶⁸² GB is governed by a legislative assembly but has few legal powers and the region remains largely governed directly by the federal government.⁶⁸³ Neither GB nor AK have representation in the national parliament.⁶⁸⁴ India claims both AJK and GB as part of its territory.⁶⁸⁵

Background of the conflict and actors in Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan

The territory of Kashmir is a disputed area divided between India, Pakistan and China but claimed in its entirety by Pakistan and India.⁶⁸⁶ The Pakistan-India relationship has been historically tense for decades.⁶⁸⁷ The Line of Control (LoC) is an approximately 724 km-long border separating India-administered Kashmir from Pakistan-administered Kashmir, managed by their respective armies on each side.⁶⁸⁸ It is known as one of the most heavily militarised borders in the world.⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁷⁵ Al Jazeera, 12/02/2024, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁶ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 18, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁷ CRSS, 02/2023, p. 24, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁸ IDMC, 05/2022, [url](#); Websites consulted: <https://www.unocha.org/pakistan> ; <https://response.reliefweb.int/pakistan> ; <https://reliefweb.int/country/pak>

⁶⁷⁹ Reuters, 15/02/2019, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁰ Reuters, 15/02/2019, [url](#)

⁶⁸¹ Al Jazeera, 02/11/2020, [url](#)

⁶⁸² The Economic Times, 12/11/2020, [url](#)

⁶⁸³ Al Jazeera, 02/11/2020, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁴ USDOS, 12/04/2022, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁵ The Diplomat, 01/02/2024, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁶ Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 11/2020, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁷ RFE/RL, 15/02/2019, [url](#); DW, 07/08/2019, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁸ CFR, nidi, [url](#) ; SAV (Kulkarni T.), 20/08/2020, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁹ SAV (Kulkarni T.), 20/08/2020, [url](#) ; BBC, 30/01/2018, [url](#)

India accuses Pakistan of supporting militant groups like Jaish-e Muhammed (JeM), Lashkar-e Taiba (LeT)⁶⁹⁰ and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM). Their operational bases are in the Pakistan and Indian-administrated Kashmir region.⁶⁹¹ HM is a militant group operating in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. It is led by Syed Salahuddin who is based in Pakistan.⁶⁹² HM has conducted numerous attacks in India-administered Kashmir.⁶⁹³ JeM has attacked high profile Indian targets, including the Indian parliament in New Delhi and the legislative assembly in Indian-administered Kashmir.⁶⁹⁴ In February 2019, the group claimed the Pulwama attack, killing some 40 Indian soldiers.⁶⁹⁵ A month after the Pulwama attack Pakistan started 'a crackdown' on groups it claims are linked to banned organisations.⁶⁹⁶ In February 2021, the Pakistani and Indian armies agreed to restore the 2003 cease-fire across the LoC. The renewal of the cease-fire allowed for significant normalization of civilian life in the areas adjoining the LoC.⁶⁹⁷ Throughout 2022 the cease-fire along the Line of Control (LoC) between Pakistani and Indian forces held, but there were isolated incidents of sectarian violence and militancy in GB.⁶⁹⁸

Recent security trends and impact on the civilian population

Security incidents

ACLED registered four violent events in Azad Kashmir from open source reports in the year 2023. Three incidents were coded as *battles*, one as an *attack*.⁶⁹⁹ In the first trimester of 2024, ACLED did not register any violent incidents in Azad Kashmir.⁷⁰⁰ PIPS did not register any 'terrorist attacks' in Azad Kashmir in 2023.⁷⁰¹ PICSS reported one militant attack in Azad Kashmir in 2023.⁷⁰²

ACLED collected data on three violent events in Gilgit-Baltistan from reports in open sources in the year 2023, one coded as a *battle*, two as *attacks*.⁷⁰³ In the first trimester of 2024 ACLED did not register any violent incidents in Gilgit-Baltistan.⁷⁰⁴ PIPS recorded one 'terrorist attack' in GB in 2023.⁷⁰⁵ PICSS registered one militant attack in Gilgit-Baltistan in 2023.⁷⁰⁶

Security trends in 2023 and early 2024

In January 2023, PM Shahbaz Sharif stated he was eager to hold talks with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi on the status of Kashmir.⁷⁰⁷ The United States Institute for Peace (USIP) reported in 2024 that the ceasefire between Pakistan and India has had a stabilizing effect on the region but remains fragile. Since 2021, there have only been a few isolated incidents of firing between Indian

⁶⁹⁰ A Sunni militant group, formed in 1990 and initially trained in the Kunar Province of Afghanistan. LeT fights for the unification of the Kashmir region and its integration into Pakistani territory and also attacks civilian targets in Afghanistan (Stanford University, last updated: 06/2018, [url](#))

⁶⁹¹ Al Jazeera, 03/03/2019, [url](#)

⁶⁹² Al Jazeera, 03/03/2019, [url](#)

⁶⁹³ Al Jazeera, 03/03/2019, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁴ Al Jazeera, 03/03/2019, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁵ Al Jazeera, 03/03/2019, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁶ Al Jazeera, 10/03/2019, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁷ FH, 24/02/2022, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁸ FH, 2023, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁹ OFPRA, 11/01/2024, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁰ OFPRA, 24/04/2024, [url](#)

⁷⁰¹ PIPS, 01/2024, pp. 66-67, [url](#), [url](#)

⁷⁰² PICSS, 01/2024, p. 36, [url](#)

⁷⁰³ OFPRA, 11/01/2024, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁴ OFPRA, 24/04/2024, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁵ PIPS, 01/2024, p. 17, [url](#), [url](#)

⁷⁰⁶ PICSS, 01/2024, p. 35, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁷ DW, 23/01/2023, [url](#)

and Pakistani border security forces borders in Kashmir. However, USIP notes that adherence to the ceasefire has been slacking since late 2023. In the September 2023 - February 2024 period, at least four episodes of small arms or mortar fire along the boundary that separates Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir from Pakistan's Punjab state were reported.⁷⁰⁸

On 2 December 2023, militants opened fire on a passenger bus on Karakorum Highway near Chillas, GB.⁷⁰⁹ Ten people, including two soldiers, were killed; 26 others were injured. According to a media source, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claimed the attack, stating their militants targeted Shia Muslims and soldiers.⁷¹⁰ PICCS, however, reports no group claimed responsibility. TTP distanced itself from the incident.⁷¹¹

Casualties

In 2023, CRSS reported one militant attack in AK, resulting in one casualty. In GB, CRSS reported six militant attacks in 2023, resulting in 42 casualties (17 fatalities and 25 injuries).⁷¹²

Displacement

Among the consulted sources, no information was found about any conflict-induced displacement from areas in and to GB or AK in 2023.⁷¹³

⁷⁰⁸ USIP, 21/02/2024, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁹ Al Jazeera, 02/12/2023, [url](#)

⁷¹⁰ PIPS, 01/2024, pp. 65-67, [url](#), [url](#)

⁷¹¹ PICCS, 01/2024, pp. 35-36, [url](#)

⁷¹² CRSS, 02/2023, p. 24, [url](#)

⁷¹³ Websites consulted: <https://www.unocha.org/pakistan> ; <https://response.reliefweb.int/pakistan> ; <https://reliefweb.int/country/pak>

Summary

The security situation deteriorated in Pakistan in 2023 and early 2024. Compared to 2022, the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) reported a 17 % rise of 'terrorist incidents'. ACLED coded most security incidents in Pakistan in 2023 in the provinces Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) (754) and Balochistan (416). In the first trimester of 2024, ACLED registered 196 security incidents in KP and 271 security incidents in Balochistan. Especially in February 2024, when general elections took place, violence mounted in Balochistan. Independent candidates backed by Imran Khan won 93 seats in these elections, while PML-N came second with 75 seats and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won 54 seats. PML-N and PPP formed a coalition government, nominating Shehbaz Sharif as Prime Minister.

In KP, a significant increase of violence resulted from the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021. Cross-border movements by Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants from Afghanistan to Pakistan led to increasing numbers of attacks. According to PIPS, a total of 174 'terrorist incidents' were registered in KP in 2023, a rise of 3 % compared to 2022. ACLED collected data on 754 violent events in KP province in 2023 and 196 in the first trimester of 2024. Analysis of these data shows that the security incidents in 2023 were mainly situated in the districts of North Waziristan, Dera Ismail Khan, Peshawar, Khyber and Bajaur districts. The TTP appears as the main actor of anti-state violence in KP, with North Waziristan and Dera Ismail Khan standing out as the districts where TTP is most active. ISKP is also present in KP, deploying its terrorist tactics mainly in the districts Bajaur and Peshawar. According to several sources, TTP attempts to distinguish itself from ISKP's extremism by focusing its attacks on security and law enforcement officials and attempting to spare civilian lives. ISKP is primarily an urban phenomenon and is comprised of de-centralised units that target Shia sites rather than directly challenging the state. ISKP's July 2023 suicide attack in Bajaur, which killed 54 people, proved its capability to perpetrate mass-casualty attacks. As of May 2024, no large-scale conflict-induced displacement from areas in and to KP has been reported. The Pakistani army has refrained from major new counteroffensives against TTP in KP.

In recent years, the insurgency by nationalist militants in Balochistan has been marked by destructive attacks on Pakistan security forces personnel and infrastructure. According to PIPS, a total of 110 'terrorist incidents' were registered in Balochistan in 2023, an increase of 39 % compared to 2022. According to PIPS, the majority of these terror acts targeted personnel, vehicles and premises of security forces and law enforcement agencies. ACLED collected data on 416 security incidents in Balochistan in 2023. In February 2024, ACLED registered 151 security incidents in Balochistan, while in March 2024 the number decreased to 74. Analysis of the data from 2023 shows violence was mainly situated in the districts Kech, Quetta, Khuzdar and Kalat. Further analysis indicates that Baloch nationalist groups are the main actor of violence in the province. Besides security forces personnel and infrastructure, Baloch insurgent groups target Chinese projects and Chinese workers related to the development of the Gwadar Port in Balochistan. TTP and ISKP carried out a limited number of attacks in Balochistan. Sectarian violence is also still present in Balochistan, with the Hazara community of Quetta the target of a limited number of attacks in 2023.

The number of 'terrorist incidents' reported by PIPS in the provinces Punjab, Sindh, Islamabad, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan in 2023 is limited compared to the levels of violence witnessed in KP and Balochistan. Although TTP, Baloch Nationalist Groups and ISKP commit violence outside of KP and Balochistan, ACLED reported considerably lower numbers of security incidents in 2023 in the provinces of Sindh (115), Punjab (70), in the Federal Capital of Islamabad (12), in Azad Kashmir (4) and in Gilgit-Baltistan (3). In Sindh, a number of terrorist attacks were committed by Sindhi nationalist groups.

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