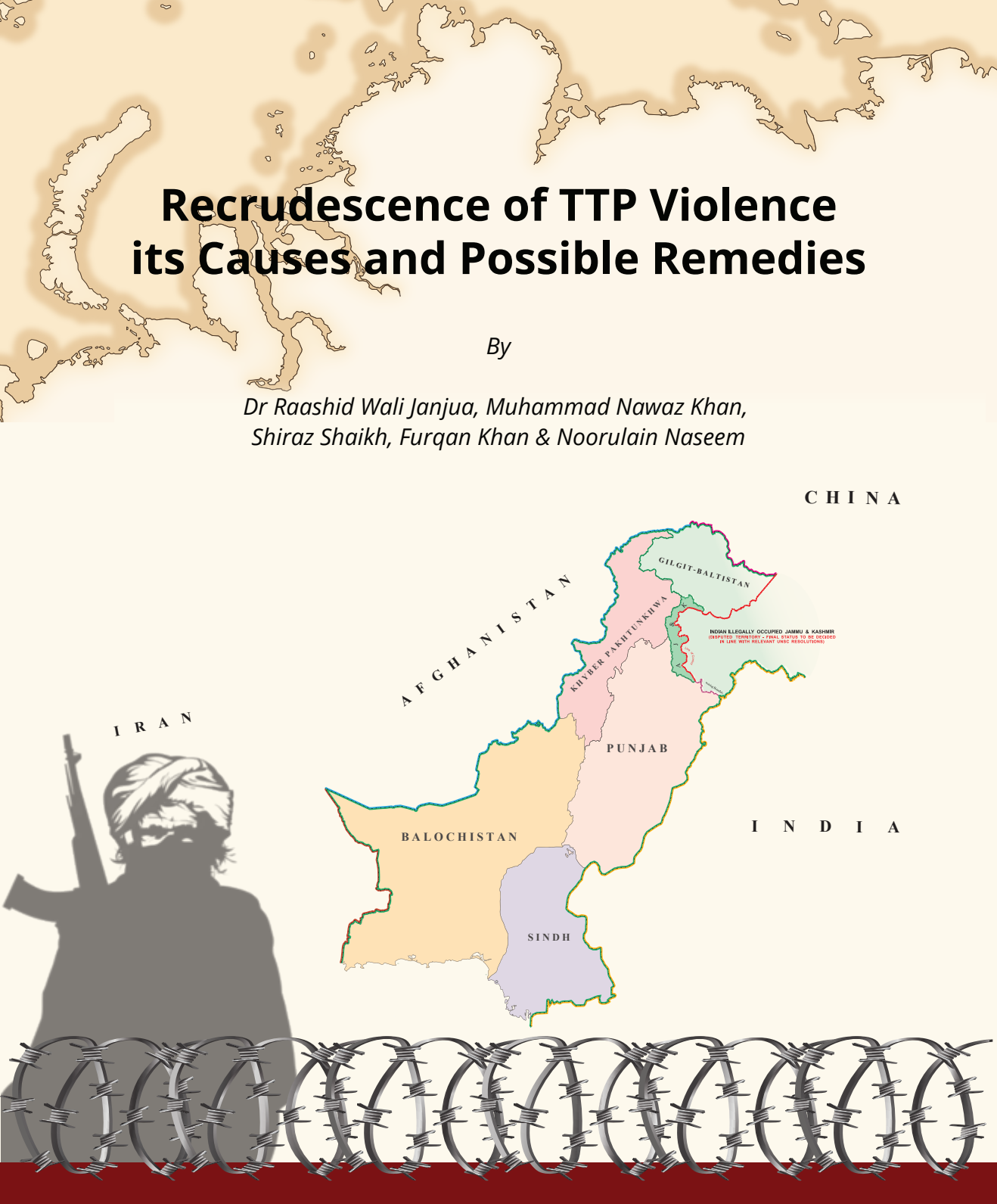


# Recrudescence of TTP Violence its Causes and Possible Remedies

By

*Dr Raashid Wali Janjua, Muhammad Nawaz Khan,  
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## Acronyms

<b>ADR</b>	Alternative Dispute Resolution
<b>AIG</b>	Afghan Interim Government
<b>AIP</b>	Accelerated Implementation Plan
<b>AOR</b>	Area of Responsibility
<b>BLA</b>	Baloch Liberation Army
<b>BLF</b>	Baloch Liberation Front
<b>BNA</b>	Baloch Nationalist Army
<b>BRA</b>	Baloch Republican Army
<b>COAS</b>	Chief of the Army Staff
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil Society Organisations
<b>CTD</b>	Counter Terrorism Department
<b>CVE</b>	Countering Violent Extremism
<b>DREPs</b>	Deradicalisation and Emancipation Programmes
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agricultural Organisation
<b>FATA</b>	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
<b>FCR</b>	Frontier Crimes Regulation
<b>FIA</b>	Federal Investigation Agency
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>IBOs</b>	Intelligence-based Operations
<b>IDPs</b>	Internally Displaced Persons
<b>IEDs</b>	Improvised Explosive Devices
<b>IFRP</b>	Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan
<b>IG</b>	Inspector General of Police
<b>ISAF</b>	International Security Assistance Force
<b>ISIL</b>	Islamic State in Iraq and Levant
<b>ISKP</b>	Islamic State Khorasan Province
<b>ISPR</b>	Inter-Services Public Relations
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>JI</b>	Jamaat-e-Islami
<b>JICA</b>	Japan International Cooperation Agency



<b>JuA</b>	Jamaat-ul-Ahrar
<b>JUI-F</b>	Jamiat-Ullema-e-Islam – Fazl
<b>KP</b>	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
<b>KPEC</b>	Khyber Pass Economic Corridor
<b>LEAs</b>	Law Enforcement Agencies
<b>MAGP</b>	Merged Areas Governance Project
<b>NACTA</b>	National Counter Terrorism Authority
<b>NAP</b>	National Action Plan
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
<b>NCP</b>	Non Custom Paid
<b>NFC</b>	National Finance Commission
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>PAS</b>	Pakistan Administrative Services
<b>PECA</b>	Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act
<b>PICSS</b>	Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies
<b>PIPS</b>	Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies
<b>PM</b>	Prime Minister
<b>PTI</b>	Pakistan Tehrik e Insaf
<b>PTM</b>	Pashtun Tahafuz Movement
<b>PTP2</b>	Pakistan Terrorism Prevention Programme
<b>RAW</b>	Research and Analysis Wing
<b>SWAT</b>	Special Weapons and Tactics Team
<b>TDS</b>	Tribal Decade Strategy
<b>TJP</b>	Tehrik-e-Jihad Pakistan
<b>TNSM</b>	Tehrik-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi
<b>TTA</b>	Tehrik-e-Taliban Afghanistan
<b>TTP</b>	Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>VNSAs</b>	Violent Non State Actors
<b>WASA</b>	Water and Sanitation Agency
<b>WoT</b>	War on Terror

# **Chapter 1**

## **Historical Evolution of Insurgency in Ex-FATA**

### **Introduction**

Ever since the Afghan Taliban assumed power in Kabul, there has been a continual increase in Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan's (TTP) violence in Pakistan. The number of terrorist attacks by the TTP in Pakistan have increased by 60 per cent since the departure of US troops and assumption of power in Kabul by Tehrik-e-Taliban Afghanistan (TTA).<sup>1</sup> The TTP militants are responsible for increased terrorist violence across the ex-FATA region (now called Merged Districts) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (KP). The TTP is operating across the Pakistan-Afghanistan frontier with secure sanctuaries on the Afghan soil. The Afghan Interim Government (AIG) run by former TTA, the ideological kinsmen of TTP, appears neither to have the will nor the risk appetite, to rein in the TTP depredations on the Pak-Afghan border. The TTP violence is emerging as a serious security threat for Pakistan, and unless urgent steps are taken to counter it, the terrorist violence might spread to the rest of the country as well.

Terrorism has returned to the country at a time when Pakistan is navigating politico-economic challenges that complicate the issues related to terrorism, governance, and socio-economic development of the Merged Districts. Furthermore, there has been palpable negligence in managing the ex-FATA's merger with KP. A lack of political will, insufficient efforts towards ex-FATA's mainstreaming, sole focus on tactical rather than a strategic approach, and inadequate attention to address the root causes of militancy have all created an environment conducive to terrorist operations. Additionally, the collaboration between terrorists and organised criminal gangs has also exacerbated the security challenges.

The bleak security situation of the ex-FATA region necessitates a holistic study of the underlying causes for the resurgence of the TTP violence in order to

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<sup>1</sup> "TTP attacks in Pakistan increased by 60pc in two years: envoy Asif Durrani," *Dawn*, May 11, 2024.

crystallise suitable policy recommendations. The study employs a mixed-method approach based on both quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative data has been gathered through interviews of subject matter experts and Focus Group Discussions (FGD), including both the government officials as well as non-official experts. Among the government officials, interviews have been conducted with both in-service and retired experts from the bureaucracy, military, and other Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) serving in the region, while unofficial experts include academicians and journalists. The quantitative data is based on the two field surveys from the locals of the merged districts (ex-FATA).

### **Evolution of Insurgency in Merged Districts (Ex-FATA)**

The seeds of militant insurgency in the ex-FATA region were sown during the Soviet-Afghan war (1979-89). Pakistan's decision to support anti-Soviet jihadist groups, with the backing of the United States (US) and Saudi Arabia, allowed the jihadist ideologies to penetrate within its borders. Nonetheless, the US War on Terror (WoT) in 2001 and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan brought the war to Pakistan's backyard, allowing the jihadist groups and elements like Al-Qaeda to take refuge in the largely ungoverned tribal areas of ex-FATA region. Facing the brunt of terrorism within its borders, Pakistan launched a military campaign to root out Al-Qaeda and foreign fighters from the ex-FATA. The country's support for the WoT and its subsequent military campaign in the region alienated the local tribes who considered such campaigns to be an attack on tribal honour and Islamic mores. This resulted in the creation of militant groups opposing both Pakistan as well as the US forces in Afghanistan. These seminal developments occurred at a time when many small militant groups operating independently in the ex-FATA region started networking with one another, while Pakistani forces spent most of their resources finding "foreigners" in the area linked to Al-Qaeda (roughly in the 2002-2004 period).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Hassan Abbas, "A Profile of Tehrik i Taliban Pakistan," *CTC Sentinel*, vol. 1, issue 2, January 2008, accessed February 3, 2024, <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Vol1Iss2-Art1.pdf>.

The US drone attacks further inflamed the simmering discontent over the military operations, including the much-publicised October 2006 strike on a *madrassa* (religious seminaries) in Bajaur Agency that was run by an extremist Sunni militant group, i.e., the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM).<sup>3</sup> This environment led to the emergence of the TTP in 2007, where several militant factions joined hands under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud (killed in August 2009). The immediate catalyst, however, which gave birth to the TTP as an organised terrorist group, was the 2007 military operation *Rah-e-Haq* (the right path) conducted by the Pakistan Army.

By pledging allegiance to the *Amir-ul-Momineen*, Mullah Mohammed Omar (founder of the Afghan Taliban), the TTP fought with a two-pronged strategy. The TTP was in alliance with the Afghan Taliban in Afghanistan fighting against the US-led North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) forces and, therefore, started targeting Pakistan being a US ally.<sup>4</sup> Since 2007, the TTP justified its operations against the Pakistani state by labelling it as a ‘defensive war’ against Pakistan’s military operations, which commenced before 2007 and had been ongoing since then.<sup>5</sup> Under Baitullah Mehsud’s command, the TTP insurgency was characterised by an intensification of suicide campaigns against the Pakistani state and civilians.

The year 2014 witnessed the TTP’s dreadful attacks on civilian targets, including the Peshawar school massacre.<sup>6</sup> The group also resorted to the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), targeted killings, and suicide bombings as operational techniques. However, the Pakistan Army conducted Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* (sharp

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<sup>3</sup> C. Christine Fair, “The Militant Challenge in Pakistan,” *Asia Policy*, no. 11 (January 2011): 105–37.

<sup>4</sup> Tahir Khan, “Pakistani Taliban only loyal to Mullah Omar, says TTP spokesperson,” *Express Tribune*, October 5, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Abdul Sayed, “The Evolution and Future of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 21, 2021, accessed December 3, 2023, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/12/21/evolution-and-future-of-tehrik-e-taliban-pakistan-pub-86051>.

<sup>6</sup> Billy Briggs, “Remembering the Peshawar school massacre,” *Al Jazeera*, December 16, 2015, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2015/12/16/remembering-the-peshawar-school-massacre>.

and cutting strike) in 2014 to dismantle the TTP infrastructure in Pakistan leading to a flight of its leadership and fighting cadres along with their families to Afghanistan. The group, after getting refuge in Afghanistan, underwent an extensive transformation amidst a difficult situation because of three factors. First, the group's network had been destroyed in the region of its origin. Secondly, the group had lost its appeal because of indiscriminate attacks against civilians in the country. Third, the group was facing an internal dispute over the question of leadership after the killing of Hakimullah Mehsud, which led to the creation of marginalised militant groups like Tehrik-e-Khliafat Wal Jihad, Jundallah, Shahidullah Group and Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JuA).<sup>7</sup> The TTP had not only lost the capacity to resurface as a stronger religio-militant movement in Pakistan but it had also lost the organisational capability to govern the territory of the ex-FATA.

The death of Mullah Fazlullah in a US drone attack in 2018 became a turning point for the organisation as his deputy, Noor Wali Mehsud succeeded in uniting warring factions under his leadership.<sup>8</sup> After brazenly claiming responsibility for the 2007 attack on former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, Noor Wali capitalised on the military successes of the Afghan Taliban against the US forces in 2019, and rejuvenated his organisation.<sup>9</sup> By 2019, the TTP had 3,000 to 5,000 members under his leadership in Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Saima Ghazanfar, "Operation Zarb-e-Azb: Two years of success," *The Nation*, September 6, 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Rupam Jain and Jibran Ahmed, "Pakistani Taliban leader killed in air strike in Afghanistan near border," *Reuters*, June 15, 2018, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-afghanistan-usa-militant-idUKKBN1JB0Y6>.

<sup>9</sup> "Noor Wali Mehsud: TTP terrorist who wrote book claiming Benazir Bhutto murder, made top commander of TTP," *Times of Islamabad*, February 12, 2018, <https://timesofislamabad.com/12-Feb-2018/noor-wali-mehsud-ttp-terrorist-who-wrote-book-claiming-benazir-bhutto-murder-made-top-commander-of-ttp>.

<sup>10</sup> Hassan Farooq Mirza, "Renaissance of terrorism and confronting TTP," *Express Tribune*, January 21, 2023.

The year 2020 witnessed all differences being shelved and entities like the JuA once again merging with the TTP.<sup>11</sup> The pivotal moment of the group's resurgence, however, came in 2021. The seizure of power by the Afghan Taliban in the same year in Kabul after ousting the civilian government of President Ashraf Ghani, opened up avenues for the TTP to recalibrate and launch attacks within Pakistan. The TTP also used the 2021 Taliban takeover of Kabul for capacity-building and gaining moral and ideological inspiration.

### ***Ideology of the TTP***

The TTP subscribes to a strictly puritanical *Deobandi-Salafist* school of thought incorporating local tribal Pashtun customs (*Pashtunwali*).<sup>12</sup> *Salafi-jihadists* argue that Islam is currently in a state of ignorance or *Jahiliyyah*. They attribute this to the perceived secular nature of Islam, which they believe has led to the corruption of true Islamic principles. According to this perspective, the removal of *Jahiliyyah* requires eliminating secularism, and blaming jurisprudence for distorting genuine Islam.<sup>13</sup> The foundation of Sharia lies in the interpretations of the Holy Qur'an and Hadith, a process known as *Ijtihad*. However, Salafi-jihadists reject *Ijtihad* from traditional schools of *Fiqh*, preferring their version.<sup>14</sup>

The TTP's movement is guided by both religiosity and ethno-nationalism to establish an Islamic political system within ex-FATA. The political vision of the TTP has been to implement *Sharia* (Islamic laws) based on its own interpretations as evident in the aspiration of Baitullah Mehsud to establish the

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<sup>11</sup> Zeeshan Ahmed, "TTP regroups with JUA, HuA in Afghanistan," *Express Tribune*, August 19, 2020.

<sup>12</sup> *Pashtunwali* is a code of honour for the Pashtun people in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, and among its main principles are seeking justice and revenge against a perceived 'wrongdoer.' See; Iqbal Singh Sevea, "Developing an Ideology: Evolution of the Pakistani Taliban," Institute of South Asian Studies, February, 7 2023, accessed December 18, 2023, <https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/papers/developing-an-ideology-evolution-of-the-pakistani-taliban/> and Yasmeen Aftab Ali, "Understanding Pashtunwali," *The Nation*, August 6, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Abbas, "A Profile of Tehrik i Taliban Pakistan."

<sup>14</sup> Ayesha Siddiqi, "Pakistan's counterterrorism strategy: Separating friends from enemies," *The Washington Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (2011): 149-162.

Islamic Emirate of Waziristan in the tribal areas of Pakistan.<sup>15</sup> Under the current leadership of Noor Wali Mehsud, the same vision and ideology is being followed.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the TTP has not denied that the Afghan Taliban's *Amir-ul-Momineen* will rule the so-called Emirate. Rather, the TTP operates separately from the Afghan Taliban, though it is loosely aligned with the latter claiming to remain loyal to *Amir-ul-Momineen*.<sup>17</sup>

Founding goals of the TTP alongside its aim of imposing a strict interpretation of *Sharia* law in Pakistan entail the reversal of the ex-FATA merger, opposition to female education, replacing the Constitution of Pakistan deeming it un-Islamic, the expulsion of the Pakistan's armed forces from ex-FATA, and waging a war against the state of Pakistan.<sup>18</sup>

### ***Current Organisational Structure/Hierarchy of the TTP***

At the time of its creation, the TTP consisted of nine militant groups followed by 30 groups of different ethnicities and varying capabilities since 2020.<sup>19</sup> The new TTP organisational structure, announced by the group in 2023 (as shown in Figure – 1), is mostly an emulated version of the hierarchical leadership structure of Afghan Taliban.<sup>20</sup> It includes shadow provinces (*Wilayas*) and central units, which are at the helm of their specific portfolios.<sup>21</sup> There are a total of sixteen

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<sup>15</sup> Muhammad Nawaz Khan, "South Asia's 4 Competing Jihads," *The Diplomat*, November 10, 2017, accessed February 6, 2024, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/11/south-asias-4-competing-jihads>.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Law Enforcement Agency (LEA), Kohat, November 10, 2023.

<sup>17</sup> Nawaz, "South Asia's 4 Competing Jihads."

<sup>18</sup> "*Tehrik-i-Taliban* Pakistan," Center for International Security and Cooperation, accessed December 27, <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/tehrik-i-taliban-pakistan>.

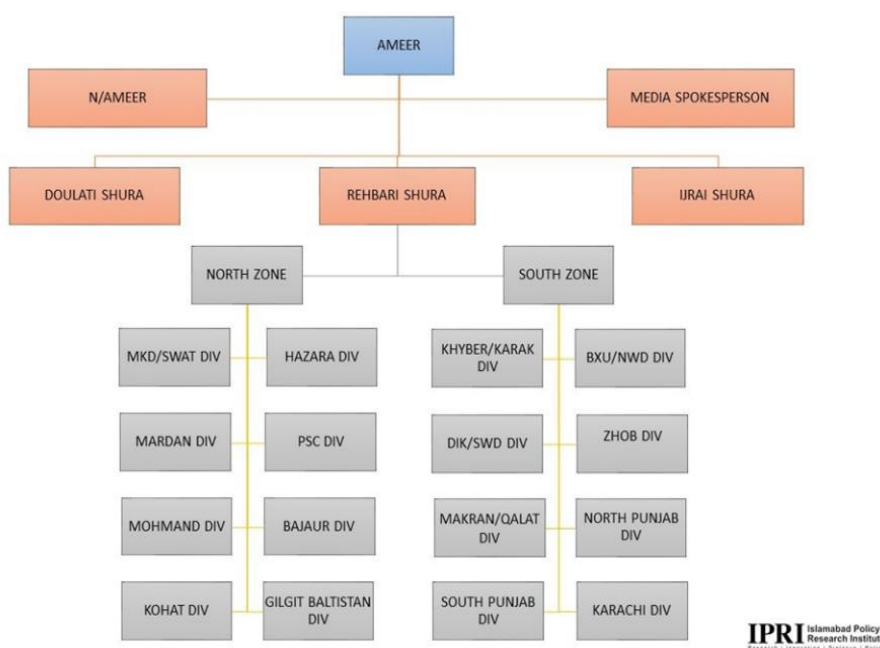
<sup>19</sup> Iftikhar Firdous, Riccardo Valle, and Ihsanullah Tipu Mehsood, "The resurrection of the TTP," *Dawn*, July 10, 2023.

<sup>20</sup> Abdul Sayed and Tore Hamming, "The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan After the Taliban's Afghanistan Takeover," *CTCSENTINEL*, vol. 16, no. 5 (May 2023): 1-12.

<sup>21</sup> For details about the evolution of the Afghan Taliban shadow structure, see Abdul Sayed, "Analysis: How Are the Taliban Organized?" *Voice of America*, September 5, 2021, accessed February 4, 2024, [https://www.voanews.com/a/us-afghanistan-troop-withdrawal\\_analysis-how-are-taliban-organized/6219266.html](https://www.voanews.com/a/us-afghanistan-troop-withdrawal_analysis-how-are-taliban-organized/6219266.html).

TTP-designated *Wilayas*.<sup>22</sup> These include ten divisions in KP, two divisions in Balochistan (Zhob and Makran-Qalat divisions), one in Gilgit-Baltistan, two divisions (North and South) in Punjab, and a newly announced division in Karachi.<sup>23</sup> In this structure, the number of appointed officials increased from 34 in 2022 to 139 in 2023.<sup>24</sup> The new set-up included seven additional ministries, a suicide brigade, a training camp, an intelligence directorate, a three-layered court system, a housing department, and an institute of Islamic jurisprudence.<sup>25</sup>

**Figure 1**  
**Organisational Structure of the TTP**



<sup>22</sup> The concept of the shadow provinces was used first by the Afghan Taliban when they were fighting the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2002-2003. This indicated their intentions of regrouping and reestablishment in the country. The role of shadow ministers/governors was theoretical and ad hoc in nature. Authorities in the shadow provinces were tasked to monitor the ground situation before announcing a parallel structure in the provinces, which they did in different provinces one by one, before taking over the entire country in August 2021. See; Faisal Ali Raja, “New wilayas of TTP,” *Express Tribune*, July 5, 2023.

<sup>23</sup> “The resurrection of the TTP,” *Dawn*.

<sup>24</sup> Sayed and Hamming, “The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan...”

<sup>25</sup> Sayed and Hamming, “The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan...”



The Leadership Council is the highest authority in the TTP which, after consulting with the Amir, is responsible for appointing shadow ministers. Only members of the Leadership Council are eligible to become ministers. The ministries of the TTP include information and broadcasting, education, welfare, political affairs, defense, accountability, and a special General Directorate of Intelligence.<sup>26</sup> Each ministry has a Minister and a Deputy Minister (attached as Annex – A). The Defense Ministry is the largest and most important unit of the TTP, which comprises two military commissions i.e., North-zone and South-zone. All these military commissions are run by a body of six to seven TTP members, including a Director and a Deputy Director, overseeing shadow provinces.<sup>27</sup> The TTP representatives in the shadow provinces are appointed with recommendations from the members of the military commissions. The Leadership Council also appoints governors after consultation with the TTP Amir. However, the Defense Ministry and a report from the TTP's Accountability Commission also play a vital role in the appointment.<sup>28</sup>

Apart from this, the TTP uses the so-called *Dalgay* system as the lower unit of its organisational structure, to carry out its operations across the country.<sup>29</sup> *Dalgay* is a Pashto word, meaning a group; however, the TTP uses this term to mean a 'military unit,' comprising five members in urban areas and 12-25 members in the tribal areas.<sup>30</sup> According to Mufti Muzahim, the so-called Defense Minister of the TTP, the group maintains a strong 400 *Dalgay* units across Pakistan.<sup>31</sup>

### ***Operational Linkages of the TTP with Other Militant Groups***

With over a decade of militant insurgency, the TTP has developed strong operational linkages with a range of actors, including the Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaeda. The TTP subordinated themselves to the Afghan Taliban as they pledged

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<sup>26</sup> Sayed and Hamming, "The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan..."

<sup>27</sup> Sayed and Hamming, "The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan..."

<sup>28</sup> Sayed and Hamming, "The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan..."

<sup>29</sup> Sayed and Hamming, "The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan..."

<sup>30</sup> Sayed and Hamming, "The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan..."

<sup>31</sup> Sayed and Hamming, "The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan..."

*Bait* (allegiance) to the Taliban chief, making their alignment stronger. The TTP and the TTA are the veritable ideological twins with both having a history of mutual support while implementing the jihadist project, seeking a Sharia-compliant political order.<sup>32</sup> In the nascent stage, many of the TTP fighters supported the Afghan Taliban in the latter's fight against the US in Afghanistan, including the provision of lethal suicide bombers. In the face of the mounting American challenge, Mullah Umar sent emissaries asking the TTP to reduce their activities in Pakistan and join forces against the Americans.<sup>33</sup> It brought some timely respite for Pakistan as the twin Taliban forces focused on fighting the US. After the Kabul takeover by the TTA in 2021, the TTP and the Afghan Taliban have become increasingly close. The TTA has provided financial and logistical support to the TTP, while also allowing space for the group to reorganise itself in Afghanistan. The TTP for example has been openly resorting to fundraising in Kabul for '*Jihad-e-Pakistan*' after the TTA takeover.<sup>34</sup>

The TTP and the TTA also share Al-Qaeda as an ally. According to the 33<sup>rd</sup> report submitted to the United Nations Security Council by the ISIL and Al-Qaeda/Taliban Monitoring Team, both Al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban support (with both arms/equipment and ground support) the TTP militant insurgency in Pakistan.<sup>35</sup> The support has strengthened and emboldened the TTP to increase their attacks in Pakistan. The report states that Al-Qaeda also provides ideological guidance, training, vehicles, and even armed fighters to the TTP, boosting their operational capabilities. Moreover, the Tehrik-e-Jihad Pakistan (TJP), a newly-emerged terrorist organisation also maintains strong linkages with

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<sup>32</sup> Asfandiyar Mir, "Pakistan's Twin Taliban Problem," United State Institute for Peace, May 4, 2022, accessed February 3, 2024, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/05/pakistans-twin-taliban-problem>.

<sup>33</sup> Carlotta Gall, "Pakistan and Afghan Taliban Close Ranks," *New York Times*, March 26, 2009, accessed February 7, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/27/world/asia/27taliban.html>.

<sup>34</sup> Conference Proceedings, (Chatham House), Islamabad, September 25, 2023.

<sup>35</sup> Ayaz Gul, "UN: Al-Qaida, Afghan Taliban Assist TTP With Attacks in Pakistan," *Voice of America*, February 1, 2024, <https://www.voanews.com/a/un-al-qaida-afghan-taliban-assist-ttp-with-attacks-in-pakistan-/7466250.html>.

the TTP in its operations, providing it with the “plausible deniability to alleviate the pressure from Pakistan on the Taliban government.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ayaz Gul, “UN: Al-Qaida, Afghan...”

## Chapter 2

### Evolution of Social Environment of Ex-FATA

Treated as a buffer zone between the British and Russian empires, the ex-FATA region was ruled under harsh Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) laws. These laws created a unique political landscape, security environment and social fabric, which later proved for germination of the problems faced by the ex-FATA region. Even after the Independence in 1947, the ex-FATA region continued to be ruled by the colonial legacy of FCR till its merger with the KP in 2018. This mode of governance did suit the British colonial interests but not the imperatives of development and integration of the region with the rest of the country.<sup>37</sup> From 1947 to 1979, there was an ‘Order in Disorder’ in the ex-FATA while it remained peaceful and disconnected with the rest of the country.<sup>38</sup> The tribal culture of the society played a key role in keeping the region disconnected from the rest of the country. The regional culture is based on unique customs and religious ethos integral to the daily lives of the locals. For instance, the intensity of religious observance is quite palpable with the words of the local *mullah* (religious cleric) considered the gospel truth by the locals. Such an environment was an ideal breeding ground for religious extremism and sectarianism in ex-FATA region.<sup>39</sup>

Regional geopolitics and Afghan irredentism further aggravated the political landscape of the region. The successive Afghan governments have laid irredentist claims over the ex-FATA region as well as other parts of KP province affording an opportunity to the pro-Afghan local *Maliks* (tribal elders) to employ the Pashtunistan card as a tool to exploit local sentiments against Pakistan. Ultimately, such *Maliks* always became inhibitors to any development efforts within the ex-FATA.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Raid Khan and Sajjad Hussain, “Post-Frontier-Crimes-Regulation-FATA,” *Pakistan Journal of Criminology* 12, no. 2 (April 2020): 69-83.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with LEA, Peshawar, November 9, 2023.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with KP Civil Administration, Peshawar, November 11, 2023.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with KP Civil Administration, Peshawar, November 11, 2023; Also see, Sabina Khan, “FATA’s Political Status: What are the Consequences and Options for Pakistan?” *Strategic Insights* 10, no. 2 (2011), 35-46, 41.

From 1979 to 1989, the ex-FATA witnessed a ‘Transformation of Society’ due to the Afghan Jihad resulting in a ‘Disorder’.<sup>41</sup> The region got global prominence during the same period while serving as the main base for jihadist networks operating against the Soviet forces in Afghanistan sowing the seeds of militancy in the region.<sup>42</sup> The onset of Afghan resistance and the presence militants through full support of the international community enhanced the weaponisation and militarisation of the tribal society manifold.

The WoT created ‘Disorder in Disorder’ during 2001-08 bringing the conflict to the tribal region.<sup>43</sup> The period from 2008 to 2016 witnessed the state’s response and the militants’ resistance who were in control of 62 per cent of the ex-FATA.<sup>44</sup> Major military operations were commenced to eradicate terrorists’ strongholds. It led to the ‘Order Transformation’ period from 2016 to 2018, culminating in the rebuilding of society.<sup>45</sup> Forces of disorder were, however, still at play. Terrorist capability was reduced, yet they continued to exert presence. Nevertheless, under the current environment (2022-23), the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan created political and security uncertainties, including a reappraisal of the TTP threat.<sup>46</sup>

The conflict in ex-FATA became a reason for the collapse of societal order exposing weaknesses of the traditional *Malik* system that led to the establishment of terrorist strongholds. Corruption, nepotism, and self-interest of local *Maliks* created a sense of deprivation and frustration among the locals, especially the youth. This led to a new sociological structure in the ex-FATA and a decline of the century’s old system of customs, traditions, norms, and values, collectively

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<sup>41</sup> Interview with LEA, Peshawar, November 9, 2023.

<sup>42</sup> Asif Iqbal Dawar, “Development Conundrum: Horizontal Inequalities and Unending Conflict on the Pashtun Borderland,” in 8th and 9th Annual International Conference (The Dynamics of Change in the Pakistan-Afghanistan Region: Politics, (Dis) integration and Reformation in the Borderland (Peshawar: University of Peshawar, 2019), 5–20.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

called as *Rivaaj*. This is evident in the growing disconnect between the aspirations of the local youth and the *Rivaaj* system. Besides, the system of *Niqat* – giving weightage and importance to a tribe and accordingly compensating the *Maliks* – is also a thing of the past now.<sup>47</sup> The outdated system finds itself outpaced by the progressive visions of today's youth, unable to align with the fast-changing landscape of their thoughts and aspirations. Ultimately, the digitally connected and mentally transformed new generation is gradually replacing the old *Malik* system. Despite such transformation, any generational change is an incremental process to fully negotiate the complex issues of the society.<sup>48</sup> The new generation in the merged districts is facing problem in negotiating the emerging realities in the region which is undergoing a process of transformation.<sup>49</sup> The disturbed political and security landscape of the ex-FATA in the throes of a change provided an advantage to the TTP leadership to exploit the fault-lines and further their nefarious designs through acts of violence.

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<sup>47</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

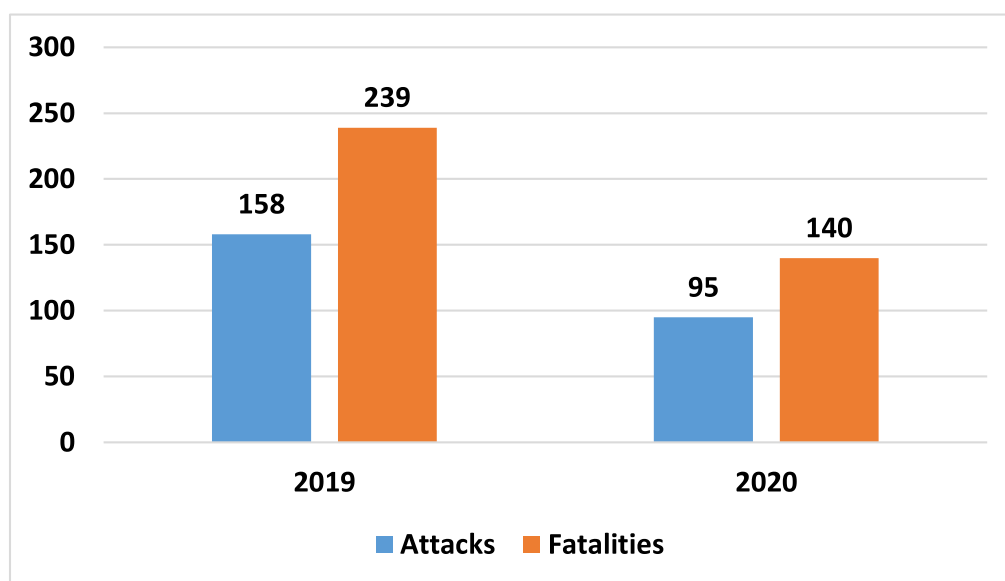
<sup>48</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with LEA, November 10, 2023.

## **Uptick in Terrorist Violence in Ex-FATA**

The frequent terrorist attacks, especially in the ex-FATA indicate the resurgence of terrorism. According to the Pakistan Security Report produced annually (as shown in Graph – 1) by the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (PIPS), the signs of this resurgence began in 2019 when militant groups like TTP, Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), and other factions carried out 158 attacks resulting in the death of 239 and injuring 489 people.<sup>50</sup> The year 2020 saw a decline of 38 per cent in overall terrorist and sectarian-related incidents. The militant groups carried out 95 attacks as compared to 158 in 2019, leading to the death of 140 people and injuring 344.<sup>51</sup>

**Graph - 1**  
**Year-wise Attacks and Fatalities**

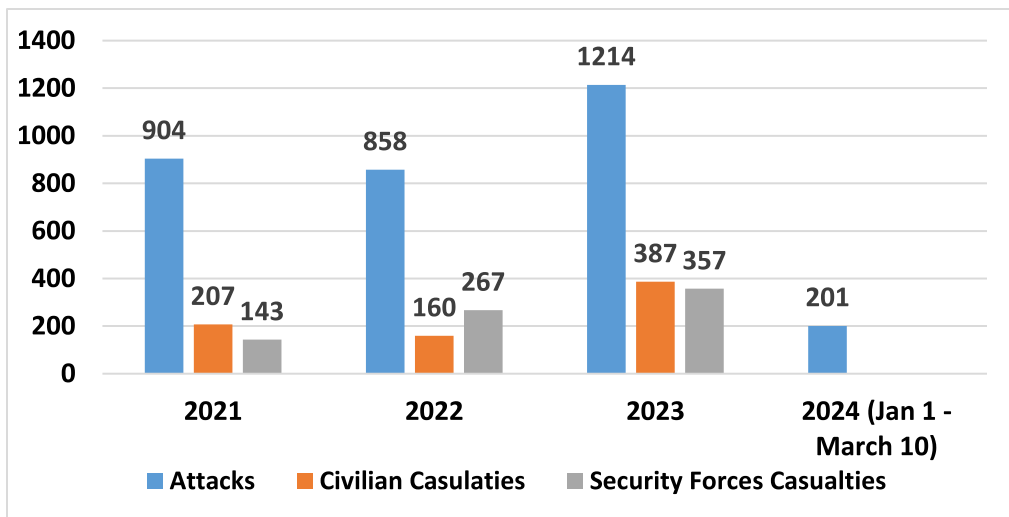


<sup>50</sup> “Pakistan Security Report 2019”, Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, January 2020, accessed December 6, 2023, <https://www.pakpips.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/SR2019-Full.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> “Pakistan Security Report 2020”, Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, January 2021, accessed December 6, 2023, <https://www.pakpips.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Final-Report-2020.pdf>.

The terrorism data obtained from the LEAs for the years 2021-2024, for the entire KP (Graph – 2) shows that in the year 2023, a total of 1214 incidents were recorded resulting in the martyrdom of 357 security forces personnel (Army, FC and Police) and 387 civilians.<sup>52</sup> The incidents in 2023 were higher compared to the year 2022, which had 858 incidents and the year 2021 that featured 904 incidents.<sup>53</sup> The data for the current year (2024) from January 1 to March 10, shows a total of 201 incidents. According to latest information, the casualties of the Army alone includes 92 martyred and 267 injured from January till June 30, 2024.<sup>54</sup> Thus, the data shows that terrorism-related incidents have increased with every passing year.

**Graph - 2**  
**Year-wise Terrorism Incidents and Casualties**



<sup>52</sup> Data obtained from LEA, Peshawar, March 16, 2024.

<sup>53</sup> Data obtained from LEA, March 16.

<sup>54</sup> Data obtained from LEA, March 16 & July 3, 2024.



The terrorism data compiled by the Pakistan Institute of Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) for the year 2023, particularly focusing on the merged districts highlights the deteriorating security landscape of the region. According to the PICSS Annual Security Report, ex-FATA witnessed a total of 186 militant attacks resulting in the death of 164 civilians and 94 security forces personnel. Table – 1 and Graph – 3 highlight the district-wise attacks carried out by the militants in the region. North Waziristan remained the epicenter of the attacks with 64 attacks in 2023. Districts Khyber and Bajaur remained the second and third most affected districts in terms of the number of attacks, respectively. Bajaur with 90 civilian casualties was followed by North Waziristan with 42 during the same period. Meanwhile, District Mohmand, Kurram and Orakzai remained relatively peaceful in 2023 with 2, 9 and 2 militant attacks, respectively.

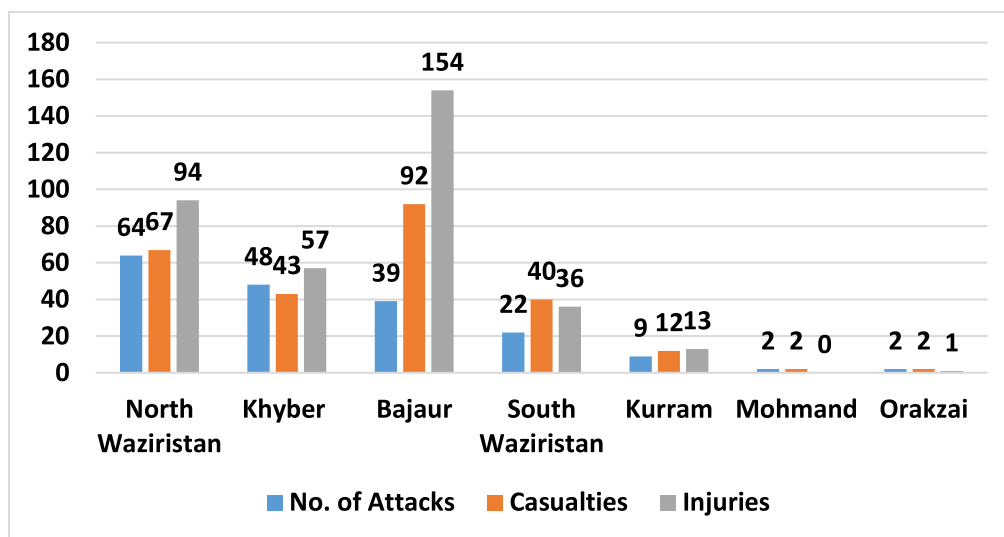
**Table - 1**  
**Militant Attacks in Ex-FATA\***

District	Nos	Killed					Injured					Arst	Kdnp
		SFP	RZ	M	C	Total	SFP	RZ	M	C	Total		
North Waziristan	64	25	0	19	42	86	57	0	0	37	94	3	4
Khyber	48	36	0	12	7	55	51	0	5	6	62	1	2
Bajaur	39	2	0	2	90	94	9	0	0	145	154	0	0
South Waziristan	22	24	0	4	16	44	22	0	2	14	38	0	0
Kurram	9	5	0	0	7	12	3	0	0	10	13	0	0
Mohmand	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Orakzai	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Total	186	94	0	37	164	295	142	0	7	213	362	4	6

**Source:** “Pakistan’s Comprehensive Annual Security Profile 2023,” PICSS, 2024.

**\*SFP:** Security Forces Personnel; **RZ:** *Razakaar* (Pro-government Militias); **M:** Militants; **C:** Civilians

**Graph - 3**  
**Militant Attacks in Ex-FATA**



**Source:** “Pakistan’s Comprehensive Annual Security Profile 2023,” PICSS, 2024.

Table – 2 and Graph – 4 show the types of attacks carried out by the militants. IEDs and targeted killings remain rampant. The regular militant assaults continue to stay highest with a total of 70 attacks resulting in the martyrdom of 48 security forces personnel and 14 civilians. IED attacks persist to be the second most lethal type of attacks in terms of casualties resulting in martyrdom of 19 security forces’ personnel and 30 civilians. Through suicide attacks, a total of 73 security forces personnel and civilians were martyred.

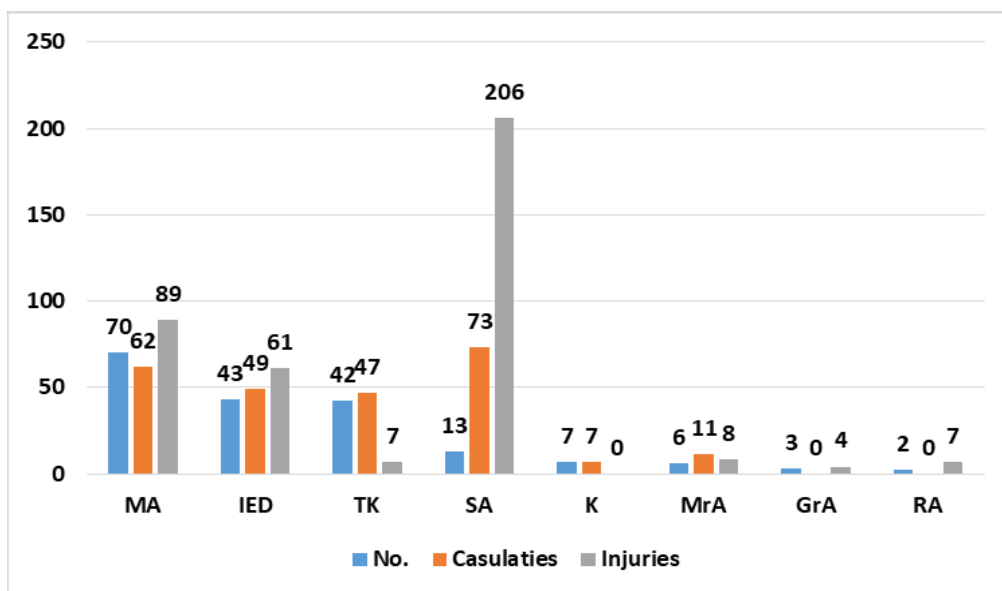
**Table – 2**  
**Types of Attacks in Ex-FATA\*\***

Type	Nos	Killed					Injured				
		SFP	RZ	M	C	Total	SFP	RZ	M	C	Total
MA	70	48	0	23	14	85	59	0	7	30	96
IED	43	19	0	1	30	50	36	0	0	25	61
TK	42	10	0	0	37	47	0	0	0	7	7
SA	13	14	0	12	59	85	43	0	0	163	206
K	7	2	0	0	5	7	0	0	0	0	0
MrA	6	1	0	0	10	11	0	0	0	8	8
GrA	3	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
RA	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	7
Total	186	94	0	36	155	285	142	0	7	240	389

**Source:** “Pakistan’s Comprehensive Annual Security Profile 2023,” PICSS, 2024.

**\*\*MA:** Militant Assault; **IED:** Improvised Explosive Devices; **TK:** Targeted Killings; **SA:** Suicide Attacks; **K:** Kidnappings; **MrA:** Mortar Attacks; **GrA:** Grenade Attacks; **RA:** Rocket Attacks

**Graph - 4**  
**Types of Attacks**



**Source:** “Pakistan’s Comprehensive Annual Security Profile 2023,” PICSS, 2024.

### **District-wise Threat Perception of Ex-FATA**

Map – 1 indicates the district-wise hotspots, which continue to be under increased threat of terrorist activities.<sup>55</sup> District Khyber has an arduous geography and faces an optimal threat level in areas like Tirah Valley. The District Upper South Waziristan is the next most vulnerable zone. The District comprises Mehsud belt, which is widely infiltrated by Afghan fighters and is suffering a greater degree of under-development and economic deprivation.

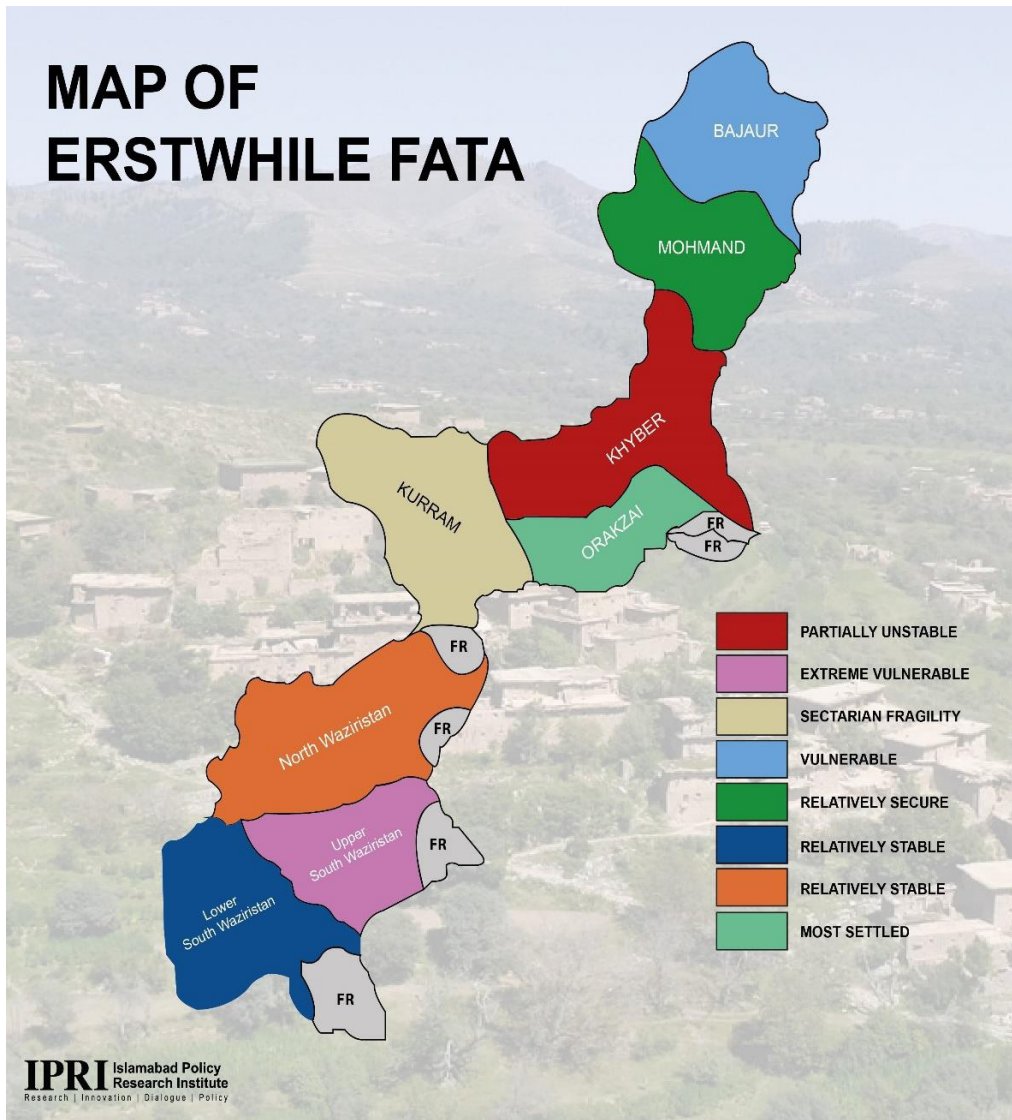
District Kurram has sectarianism and smuggling issues, primarily because of weaker border control. The District shares a border with the Afghan provinces of Paktika and Khost and has emerged as a safe haven for terrorists and criminals involved in trans-border criminal activities. District Bajaur is also vulnerable due to border geography and criminal-terrorist nexus. District Mohmand, North Waziristan, Lower South Waziristan, and Orakzai are relatively stable. Other than above, the TTP threats have started emanating from Afghanistan's Kunar region against Chitral, which so far has withstood the ingress attempts but needs continual surveillance. The areas like Frontier Regions (FR) Tank, D.I Khan and Lakki Marwat are emerging as the most disturbed zones, where the focus of TTP activity has increased. The reasons are extreme poverty, under-development and low state presence due to which the TTP is finding it easy to recruit vulnerable segments amongst the youth to its cause.

Terrorism trend over the past two years indicates that terrorist activity will continue to target security forces, particularly the army and police. The merged districts would continue to be the target of the TTP, which may extend their terrorist activities to the settled districts of the country, if not checked effectively.

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<sup>55</sup> Data obtained from LEA, November 9.

**Map – 1**  
**District Wise Threat Perception**



**Source:** Data obtained from Field Formations, Peshawar, November 9, 2023.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Causes of Resurgence of the TTP Violence**

Multiple causes can be ascribed to the resurgence of TTP in the merged districts. The most immediate cause is the return of TTA to power in Kabul after which the TTP violence has continually increased. Other contributing factors include inconsistent government policy, capacity deficit of LEAs, administrative vacuum and socio-economic deprivation in the merged districts.

#### **Afghan Taliban's Takeover of Kabul**

The Afghan Taliban's takeover of Kabul has been one of the main factors for the current resurgence and re-energised efforts of the TTP against Pakistan. The Afghan Taliban's return to the helm of affairs in Kabul has added to Pakistan's terrorism problem. It has emboldened the TTP in, at least, four different aspects. First, the victory of TTA in Afghanistan has provided a sort of legitimacy to the TTP in its fight against Pakistan. Their victory has provided the TTP with an ideological boost, infusing renewed enthusiasm and vigour within its rank and file. The TTP militants, as well as the ex-TTA militants (who joined TTP), think that they can replicate the feat of defeating the US in Afghanistan against Pakistan. Other than giving an ideological boost, LEAs of Pakistan believe that "the TTA's acting Interior Minister, Sirajuddin Haqqani, also motivated militants like Tipu Gul in Lakki Marwat to join the TTP."<sup>56</sup> The free hand given to the TTP militants by the AIG is evident from the fact that on an average, there are 6-7 daily border infiltrations from Afghanistan into the ex-FATA. These infiltrations are in the form of *Tashkeels* (groups) comprising groups of varying strength.<sup>57</sup> Unlike the international practice of border control being a bilateral responsibility, the prime responsibility to maintain order across the Pakistan-Afghanistan border has been left to the Pakistani forces. There are around 1100 small check posts on the Pakistani side, against only 250 check posts on the Afghanistan's side making bilateral management of traffic across the border

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with LEA, November 10, 2023.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with KP Civil Administration, November 11, 2023.



more challenging.<sup>58</sup> Currently, there are 13 notified crossing points for the movement across the Pakistan-Afghan border in KP, out of which four crossing points are operational i.e., Torkham, Ghulam Khan, Kharlachi, and Angoor Adda.<sup>59</sup>

Secondly, the AIG has also provided the sanctuaries to TTP all along the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border, which were previously held by the TTA, during their armed resistance against the US-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).<sup>60</sup> Most of the TTP training camps are in areas like Khost, Paktika, Nangarhar and Paktia.<sup>61</sup> Thirdly, the recovery of the NATO weapons from the TTP militants during several military operations establishes that the caches of weapons, left behind by the NATO forces, have been made available to the TTP cadres.<sup>62</sup> It was also observed that many of these technologically advanced weapons were provided to the TTP by the Afghan Taliban.<sup>63</sup> Lastly, many of the current TTP militants have already been battle-hardened due to the extensive training and battlefield experience provided to them by the TTA during the Afghan insurgency against NATO and the US forces. The TTP uses the narrative that “we were with you (Afghan Taliban) when Pakistan betrayed you,” and the AIG is sympathetic to that narrative, hence not openly countering TTP’s cross-border terrorist activities.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, the TTP militants’ families are also receiving aid packages from the AIG, which shows the continued support being given to the TTP cadres.

### **Unclear Government Policy**

Unclear government policy to deal with terrorist outfits and extremist organisations has been identified as another key factor in the rising tide of TTP terrorism. Policymaking without long-term assessment and clarity of vision has

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<sup>58</sup> Interview with KP Civil Administration, November 11, 2023.

<sup>59</sup> Briefing by LEA, Rawalpindi, March 26, 2024.

<sup>60</sup> Muhammad Amir Rana, interview by IPRI, Islamabad, July 27, 2023.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with LEA, Islamabad, January 20, 2024.

<sup>62</sup> Nasir Mahmood Aslam, “NATO Weapons Used in Terrorism,” *ARY NEWS*, September 9, 2023, accessed December 6, 2023, <https://arynews.tv/nato-weapons-taliban-pakistan-blog/>.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with LEA, Peshawar, November 11, 2023.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with LEA, January 20, 2024.

cost Pakistan dearly at various critical junctures in the country's history.<sup>65</sup> Policymaking has often been unclear on the underlying root-causes of the militancy in ex-FATA. Instead of countering the militant networks ideologically, the national response has remained focused on kinetic dimension.<sup>66</sup> This focus on kinetic response exacerbated the animosity between local tribal people and the state.

The government of Pakistan adopted a binary approach of either peace talks or coercive military action, which could not pay any dividends.<sup>67</sup> Talks with the TTP are a case in point. The decision from a section of the government in Pakistan to engage the TTP in talks has proven to be counterproductive. The unclear policy objectives of the state encouraged the TTP to exploit the situation in its favour. Despite the huge loss of lives and numerous military operations to root out militancy from the ex-FATA, lack of policy permanence, the unproductive policy of engaging militants, and negotiations with the TTP, are some of the underlying factors contributing to the opaque policy vis-à-vis terrorism.

### ***Lack of Policy Permanence***

Inconsistent security policy has been the primary cause of the inability of the state to counter militant groups. In his interview, Imtiaz Gul, Director Center for Research and Security Studies, recounted insights from his recent visit to Afghanistan, noting that even the senior Afghan Taliban officials highlighted Pakistan's lack of policy clarity and permanence over the TTP issue. He quoted the Afghan Foreign Minister, saying that "the PM, Defence Minister, Foreign Minister, and Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) of Pakistan have expressed differing stances on the issue of TTP."<sup>68</sup> The difference of opinion between the military and civilian leadership could also be witnessed from the fact that "Pakistan's military went on to negotiate with the TTP despite lack of political

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<sup>65</sup> Conference Proceedings, (Chatham House), Islamabad, September 27, 2023.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with KP Civil Administration, November 11, 2023.

<sup>67</sup> Abdullah Khan, interview by IPRI, Islamabad, September 21, 2023.

<sup>68</sup> Imtiaz Gul, interview by IPRI, Islamabad, July 24, 2023.

will of the civilian leadership to be part of the talks.”<sup>69</sup> The interviews with the army representatives, however, revealed that the process of talks with the TTP was a joint civil-military decision with the government fully on board. Political leaders like Akhundzada Chatan were also part of several peace conclaves of this process.<sup>70</sup> Unless policy goals and processes are followed consistently, the confusion about how to tackle the terrorist threat will persist.

### ***Discord in Institutional Coordination***

The absence of synergy in institutional responses contributes to an inconsistent approach to counterterrorism. This was indicated by a government official arguing that “there is a lack of synergy in institutional coordination while dealing with terrorism-related problems. Many of the departments that deal with different aspects of terrorism are working in silos, and despite varying efforts in the past, there is still a need for improvement in this sphere.”<sup>71</sup>

### ***Lack of Political Will***

There is a dearth of coordinated national political efforts to curb terrorism within the country. Despite creating a road map to counter extremism and terrorism under the National Action Plan (NAP) the lack of political will to implement the NAP in letter and spirit has also acted as a major factor in allowing space to the terrorist entities like TTP. The discord between the federal and provincial governments and lack of political ownership for countering violent extremism has been a major factor for strengthening of terrorist outfits.

### ***Unproductive Policy of Engaging Militants***

For almost the entirety of the WoT, Pakistan had been accused of engaging militant entities in an attempt to neutralise them through the exploitation of differences between them. According to an expert, the state previously supported Commander Hafiz Gul Bahadur in its fight against the TTP,<sup>72</sup> who now is

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<sup>69</sup> Imtiaz Gul, interview by IPRI, Islamabad.

<sup>70</sup> Interview with LEA, November 10, 2023.

<sup>71</sup> Conference Proceedings, (Chatham House), Islamabad, August 24, 2023.

<sup>72</sup> Iftikhar Shirazi, “Funeral prayers held for 2 army officers martyred in North Waziristan,” *Dawn*, March 17, 2024.

involved in heinous terrorist activities against the state itself. According to Amir Rana, Executive Director PIPS, “the ambiguous stance towards certain elements of the Taliban creates challenges for the LEAs in effectively countering the terrorism threat.”<sup>73</sup> Similarly, in a FGD with the locals belonging to the ex-FATA, the policy of engaging militant individuals was highlighted as a cause of confusion amongst the local population contributing to the rising incidents of violence in ex-FATA.<sup>74</sup> Ultimately, such confusion led to a reduced number of actionable leads for Intelligence-based Operations (IBOs), as the confidence of people in the LEAs was shattered.<sup>75</sup>

### ***Negotiations with the TTP***

Having previously failed on several occasions, the policy of engaging the TTP in peace talks did not yield the desired results. Rather than taking proactive measures to mitigate the potential threats of the militant group, Pakistan relied on peace negotiations thinking that the conciliatory policy might succeed. The motivation behind the latest round of negotiation during the Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaaf’s (PTI) government stemmed from the fears that the TTA and the TTP might join hands if the calls for mediation by the AIG between Pakistan and the TTP were rejected.<sup>76</sup> However, according to certain civilian experts, the local population was not taken into confidence while the political leadership was also reluctant to take ownership of the dialogue.<sup>77</sup> This left the LEAs to take the lead in peace talks with the TTP.

In a Consultation Report by PIPS titled “Afghan Peace and Reconciliation,” a former member of the National Assembly, Mohsin Dawar stated that talks with the TTP would not result in positive outcomes.<sup>78</sup> The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement

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<sup>73</sup> Rana, Interview by IPRI.

<sup>74</sup> Focus Group Discussion with locals from ex-FATA, “Causes of TTP Resurgence,” Islamabad Policy Research Institute, September 15, 2023.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with KP Civil Administration, November 11, 2023.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with LEA, November 10, 2023.

<sup>77</sup> Rana, interview by IPRI; Gul, interview by IPRI; and Focus Group Discussion.

<sup>78</sup> Osama Ahmad and Imran Mukhtar, “Afghan Peace and Reconciliation: Pakistan’s Interest and Policy Options,” 9<sup>th</sup> Consultation Report, Pak Institute for Peace Studies, August 10, 2023.

(PTM) leader, Manzoor Pashteen too voiced his displeasure over the resettlement talks of the TTP in KP.<sup>79</sup> A lack of clarity in engagement policy causes frustration among the tribal people, providing a space to the narrative of sub-nationalist elements like the PTM.

There have been six peace negotiations with the TTP since 2007.<sup>80</sup> Despite the failure of first five negotiations, and the return to violence; the latest negotiations in 2021-22 were held in the hope of making a breakthrough. The TTP used the negotiations to make ingress in the merged districts and reinvigorate its support network creating a climate of fear amongst the local population that had supported LEAs against the TTP.<sup>81</sup> The peace overtures have given a wrong impression to the militants, especially the TTP, that the Pakistani state lacks the resolve for a sustained fight against terrorism.<sup>82</sup> This was evident during the peace negotiations between Pakistan and the TTP where militants like Gul Muhammad and Faqir Muhammad, who were part of the Nangarhar jailbreak, made statements such as, “We will not cooperate, but will continue relations.”<sup>83</sup>

### **Lack of LEAs’ Capacity to Counter the TTP Threat**

The inability of the civilian LEAs remained a continuous subject of discussion while identifying the challenges emanating from the TTP threat during the survey for the study. The lack of resources, manpower strength and infrastructure are a few factors due to which the LEAs like police have been unable to deal with the emergent threat of the TTP in ex-FATA. According to a former senior police official from KP, “civilian LEAs cannot effectively deal with militancy in the province owing to the capacity issues.”<sup>84</sup> Another expert talking on the

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<sup>79</sup> Ahmad & Mukhtar, “Afghan Peace and Reconciliation...”

<sup>80</sup> “On again, off again: A timeline of govt-TTP talks,” *Dawn*, December 10, 2021.

<sup>81</sup> Syed Akhtar Ali Shah, “Implications of the peace agreement with TTP,” *Express Tribune*, June 8, 2022.

<sup>82</sup> Husain Haqqani, “The Deep Roots of Pakistan’s Terrorism Crisis,” *Foreign Policy*, March 3, 2023, accessed December 21, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/03/03/pakistan-terrorism-crisis-inconsistent-policy-military-economy/>.

<sup>83</sup> Interview with LEA, November 10, 2023.

<sup>84</sup> Conference Proceedings, “KP Security Seminar,” (Chatham House), Peshawar, July 19, 2023.

ineffectiveness of the civilian LEAs opined that “the lack of policy clarity and institutional gaps have contributed greatly towards it.”<sup>85</sup> However, the LEAs believe that handing over the administrative and policing powers to the civilian agencies would perforce develop the capacity to deal with emergent threats.<sup>86</sup>

The police and other civilian LEAs face several capacity issues highlighted below. The total strength of police in ex-FATA is around 30,300 out of which almost 10,000 are underqualified.<sup>87</sup> The police according to a former IG Police KP has become more like a union, frequently going on strikes, while the military's role is stretched beyond its original mandate to handle local policing.<sup>88</sup> However, despite all these issues, it is the police which bears most of the brunt of terrorism in KP. Police personnel are the most vulnerable as they remain exposed in public spaces becoming an easy target of the terrorists.<sup>89</sup> The administrative and financial support to the KP police is not at par with the Federal or Punjab Police. In the case of the merged districts (ex-FATA), the absence of civil administrative facilities such as the availability of holding cells, forensic laboratories and judicial machinery have also contributed to the lack of LEAs control of the territory.<sup>90</sup> The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) is overburdened in KP as compared to the CTD departments of any other province.<sup>91</sup> For instance in 2023 in Punjab, there were only 4-5 incidents of terrorism, while in KP during the same time-frame there were 479 incidents, including 102 only in the District North Waziristan. In terms of enhancing financial capability, not even one per cent of the needed terrorism funds have been released to the LEAs.<sup>92</sup> Hence, in such circumstances, it is difficult for the local police to counter the growing threat of terrorism.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Abdullah, Interview by IPRI.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with LEA, November 10, 2023.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with LEA, November 11, 2023.

<sup>88</sup> Conference Proceedings, “KP Security Seminar.”

<sup>89</sup> Interview with LEA, November 11, 2023.

<sup>90</sup> Roundtable Proceedings, “Security Situation in Afghanistan,” (Chatham House), Islamabad Policy Research Institute, September 25, 2023.

<sup>91</sup> Interview with LEA, November 11, 2023.

<sup>92</sup> Interview with KP Civil Administration, November 11, 2023.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

## **Leadership Consolidation**

Under the leadership of Mufti Noor Wali, the TTP consolidated its factions benefiting from his leadership qualities. The group attained far more ideological clarity building a forceful terrorist network and gaining tactical prowess to attack the security forces of Pakistan after Noor Wali Mehsud's ascension to power. He has been able to capitalise on the socio-economic grievances of the locals. Drawing upon the weak spots, loopholes, and gaps in Pakistan's counterterrorism policies, Noor Wali Mehsud has crafted a political narrative, making him a charismatic ideologue and an influential figure amongst the tribesmen.<sup>94</sup> He has exhibited adaptability and suppleness of tactics while running his terror campaign. The group has started operations from Afghanistan and the transnational nature of the TTP is not restricted to its ability to hit-and-run across the ex-FATA border terrain, but also to gather financing and intelligence from hostile agencies/states like RAW.<sup>95</sup> Pakistan's Special Representative on Afghanistan, Ambassador Asif Durrani has stated that "Islamabad has evidence that the banned TTP is getting money from India through Afghan proxies."<sup>96</sup> India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) was found involved in building a consortium of terrorists, including the TTP and Baloch militant groups (BLF, BLA, and BRA). RAW also played a facilitative role in the unification of the TTP's splinter groups, including JuA and Hizb-ul-Ahrar<sup>97</sup> enhancing the offensive capability of the TTP against Pakistan's security forces, especially the police force. Under Noor Wali Mehsud's new strategy, the TTP is desisting from targeting civilians, as in the past that lowered public support in the aftermath of the APS attack in 2014. Presently it is targeting mostly the security forces, foreigners, and government installations.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Roundtable Proceedings, "Security Situation in Afghanistan..."

<sup>95</sup> Abdullah, interview by IPRI.

<sup>96</sup> Iftikhar A. Khan, "India funding TTP through Afghan proxies, says envoy," *Dawn*, March 17, 2024.

<sup>97</sup> Baqir Sajjad Syed, "Specific proof of Indian terrorism in Pakistan unveiled," *Dawn*, November 15, 2020.

<sup>98</sup> Interview with KP Civil Administration, November 11, 2023.

### ***TTP's Nexus with Criminal and Anti-State Organisations***

Policymakers and security establishment are aware of the rising insecurity in the country due to the the nexus between the TTP, Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), Baloch Nationalist Army (BNA), and other criminal networks. The nexus between the TTP and likeminded anti-state organisations poses a significant threat, primarily fueled by illicit activities, which generate an ecosystem of illegal threat spectrum through sale/purchase of non-custom paid (NCP) vehicles, narcotics smuggling, extortion, cyberspace misuse, *hundi*, and *hawala*.<sup>99</sup> The illegal spectrum has provided a conducive environment for the TTP and criminals to cooperate in their illegal and criminal acts. This is evident from the fact that terrorists now operate within a cellular structure, where one cell is responsible for procuring weapons and leaving them at a spot, while the other is tasked with receiving the weapons from the spot without ever interacting with each other.<sup>100</sup> Their tactic of maintaining secrecy is facilitated by the TTP's strategic use of vacant areas where criminals once sought refuge. Likewise, criminal networks have been exploiting the TTP hideouts for their benefit. This common physical space has generated a criminal-terrorist nexus, which allows TTP to hire criminals for its terrorist activities in the country. For instance, Pahar Khel and Lakki Marwat have become criminal hotspots, with numerous paid killers working for the group for economic incentives.<sup>101</sup> They are also generating finances through extortion, bank robberies, and kidnappings for ransom. The Baloch militant organisations also contribute to the problem by guiding the TTP to targets, as evidenced by attacks in Zhob and Muslim Bagh.<sup>102</sup> However, recently some differences have emerged between the two at operational level. Foreign intelligence agencies like RAW are actively supporting a nexus between the TTP and Baloch militant organisations.

Other than the nexus between the TTP and anti-state elements, the political entities like PTM has also inadvertently facilitated the TTP activities by crafting

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<sup>99</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023 & Interview with KP Civil Administration, November 11, 2023.

<sup>100</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

<sup>101</sup> Interview with LEA, November 10, 2023.

<sup>102</sup> Interview with LEA, Islamabad, November 21, 2023.



an anti-military narrative exploiting Pashtun reservations about socio-economic deprivations. Furthermore, the involvement of Afghan illegal migrants adds a layer to the issue. According to Center for Global Development Report 90 per cent of terrorist activities in 2011 could be traced back to the Afghan refugee camps.<sup>103</sup> IG KP Akhter Hayat Khan is also on record having stated that “75 per cent of the suicide bombings in Pakistan in 2023 were conducted by Afghan nationals.”<sup>104</sup> This situation compelled state authorities to formulate an “Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan (IFRP)” that applied to all illegal foreigners residing in the country.<sup>105</sup> The multifaceted connections between illegal activities, terrorism, and various groups underscore the complexity of the security situation in the merged districts.

### ***Madrassas as Support Base for the TTP***

The NAP outlined religious extremism as one of the top consequences of terrorism within the country. To counter religious extremism, especially injected through the curricula of religious seminaries, supervision and registration of *madrassas* by the state had been suggested in the NAP. The rationale behind it was based on concrete information about linkages of some *madrassas* with terrorist organisations providing terrorist training to the students. Those *madrassas* have been providing education to the students according to their restricted and rudimentary curriculum running contrary to the national curricula. However, despite the outlined policy, *madrassas* are still treated as holy cows. The state does not have complete data base about the *madrassas* across the country including their ownership, funding sources, and curricula. There is a consensus among terrorism experts and LEAs that various *madrassas* host

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<sup>103</sup> Denielle Amparado, Helen Dempster and Imran Khan Laghari, “With US Withdrawal, Rights of Afghan Refugees in Pakistan Hang in the Balance,” August 25, 2021, accessed January 15, 2024, <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/us-withdrawal-rights-afghan-refugees-pakistan-hang-balance>.

<sup>104</sup> “Afghans involved in 75 percent suicide bombings in Pakistan this year – provincial police chief,” *Arab News*, October 5, 2023, accessed June 25, 2024, <https://www.arabnews.pk/node/2385691/pakistan>

<sup>105</sup> “Cabinet allocates Rs4.5b for repatriation of illegal aliens,” *Express Tribune*, November 1, 2023.

jihadists and militants who are fighting against state institutions.<sup>106</sup> Another issue regarding the registration of *madrassas* is the administration and owners' non-compliance. Whenever the government takes up any measures to mainstream the *madrassas*, the owners and the administration prop up conspiracy theories that the US or West are conspiring to undermine the Islamic values among the population.<sup>107</sup> The state-level registration and supervision of all *madrassas* however has become indispensable to curb extremist ideology being injected in the young minds.

### **Socio-economic Deprivations Resulting in Favourable Environment for the TTP Resurgence**

The economic factor plays a pivotal role in creating fertile recruiting grounds for terrorist networks and extremist organisations. Socio-economic deprivation and, political marginalisation have been used as pretexts to promote terrorism and extremism by the TTP in Pakistan.<sup>108</sup> The group uses such deprivations as a tool to create a space within the society for its divisive narrative. The socio-economic underdevelopment often works as a push factor for terrorist recruitment fanning an anti-state narrative.<sup>109</sup> This is evident in the fact that 72 per cent of the terrorists killed were below 30 years of age with 65 per cent being illiterate or primary level qualified, and 66 per cent jobless. Only 10 per cent were found with a criminal background.<sup>110</sup> Despite the TTP's frequent exploitation of socio-economic deprivation to project its cause against the state, there has been a clear contrast of opinion between the LEAs, civil administration and experts over the linkages of socio-economic marginalisation and terrorism. Some experts do not even consider local underdevelopment as one of the variables that has contributed to the rise of the TTP. According to an expert, the LEAs have a clear mandate of eradicating terrorist hideouts, and use of the pretext of socio-economic deprivation for continual rise of militancy is a misrepresentation of the reality of

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<sup>106</sup> Rana, Interview by IPRI, July 27, 2023, & Imtiaz, Interview by IPRI, July 24, 2023.

<sup>107</sup> Conference Proceedings, (Chatham House), Islamabad, September 27, 2023.

<sup>108</sup> Imtiaz, Interview by IPRI, July 24, 2023.

<sup>109</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

<sup>110</sup> Interview with LEA, November 10, 2023.

crime and terrorism in merged districts.<sup>111</sup> The focus according to such experts needs to be shifted on dismantling the TTP's support base rather than finding a correlation between low economic indicators and the rise in terrorism.<sup>112</sup>

However, the LEAs and civil administration of KP consider weak economic indicators responsible for the rise of extremism and terrorism in the ex-FATA.<sup>113</sup> In the absence of livelihoods the poverty compels the poor to fall prey to the economic inducements of terrorists. The lack of political ownership for the development projects and socio-economic uplift of the region has left the security forces to take the lead role in development which is not a sustainable development model in the long term.

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<sup>111</sup> Rana, Interview by IPRI.

<sup>112</sup> Rana, Interview by IPRI.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023, & Interview with KP Civil Administration, November 11, 2023.

## Chapter 4

### Understanding FATA Merger

#### Constitutional Amendments and Motivations

The centuries-old socio-economic and political landscape of ex-FATA has been the prime factor in making the region an epicenter of terrorism. In 2014, after the deadly APS attack, the NAP prioritised development in the region with equal rights and opportunities to be granted to the people, bringing them at par with the rest of the country. In 2015, a cabinet-level committee was constituted, headed by the then National Security and Foreign Advisor to the Prime Minister i.e Sartaj Aziz. The aim was to consult with relevant stakeholders on the security, development, and governance challenges of ex-FATA to come up with recommendations for the government. The findings of the committee were presented to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 2016.<sup>114</sup> Major observations of the report highlighted that the majority of respondents were in favour of abolishing FCR and integration of ex-FATA with KP.<sup>115</sup> Tribal leaders however wanted to retain their identity demanding recognition of *Rivaaj* and the *Jirga* under the new system.<sup>116</sup> The report of the Committee on ex-FATA Reforms 2016, enabled the subsequent constitutional amendment that merged ex-FATA with KP.

In April 2018, ex-FATA was brought under the judicial umbrella of the Supreme and High Courts of Pakistan through the “Extension of Jurisdiction to Federally Administered Tribal Areas Act.”<sup>117</sup> On May 31, 2018, the President of Pakistan signed the 25<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment after it was approved by a majority vote in the Parliament. This allowed ex-FATA, comprising seven agencies and six Frontier Regions to be merged with KP, dissolving the previous semi-autonomous status of the region. Major implications of this are the abolition of the FCR, and ex-FATA becoming a subject of KP provincial assembly as

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<sup>114</sup> Ghulam, “Fata Merger,” *Global Political Review*.

<sup>115</sup> Ghulam, “Fata Merger,” *Global Political...*

<sup>116</sup> “Government of Pakistan Report of the Committee on FATA Reforms,” Ministry of SAFFRON, 2016, accessed October 21, 2023, <https://safron.gov.pk/SiteImage/Downloads/Report%20of%20%20Committee%20on%20FATA%20Reforms%202016.pdf>.

<sup>117</sup> Naazir Mahmood, “The 24th and 25th Amendments,” *News International*, April 17, 2023.

opposed to being a federal subject in the past. In 2019, through the 26<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment, the number of seats for representatives from ex-FATA in the National Assembly was increased from 6 to 12, and in the KP assembly from 16 to 24.<sup>118</sup> One of the major motivations for locals of ex-FATA to accept a merger with KP was the improved administrative and legal mechanism, which would have enabled the de-militarisation of the region. Strong civil administration, strengthening of the local system, and security sector reforms were to be the main enablers of the promised package.

### **Government Policy Goals of Development in Ex-FATA**

The FATA reforms committee as per the 2016 report, proposed a five-year transition period for the reforms/goals that included:

- Restoration of durable peace in all parts of FATA, rehabilitation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and reconstruction of infrastructure, houses, and shops.
- Initiating a major programme of socio-economic development.
- Establishing elected local bodies in FATA before the end of 2017 that would address the alienation of the tribes, enhancing their faith in the state.
- Introduction of judicial reforms to extend the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and the High Court while retaining the *Jirga* system.
- Capacity building of LEAs, especially Levies to enable them to perform normal policing functions.
- Carrying out Land Settlement and preparing Geographic Information Systems-based computerised land records.<sup>119</sup>

While the goals outlined by the FATA reforms committee were clear, however, the locals had reservations about whether or not the goals would be realised.

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<sup>118</sup> Mahmood, "The 24th and 25th Amendments," *News International*.

<sup>119</sup> "Report of the Committee on FATA Reforms 2016," Ministry of States & Frontier Regions, August 2016, accessed December 30, 2023, <https://safron.gov.pk/SiteImage/Downloads/Report%20of%20%20Committee%20on%20FATA%20Reforms%202016.pdf>.

## **Developments after FATA Merger**

Despite being a part of Pakistan, the ex-FATA's indigenous community lacks equal political, legal and social rights at par with the rest of the KP. As per the survey report of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics titled "Key Findings Report, Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey 2019-2020," the ex-FATA lags behind the rest of the KP in terms of education, health, living standards, and access to information, communication and technology.<sup>120</sup> This reflects lack of federal and provincial-level commitment to administrative and development reforms in ex-FATA.

Ever since the population of five million was merged with KP, the province's otherwise improving health, education, and income indices per capita started to decline. It seems that the ex-FATA suffers from relative deprivation, where individual data sources from Bara<sup>121</sup> (as per "Key Findings Report," Pakistan Bureau of Statistics) in ex-FATA reported the dependence on Peshawar for even minor surgeries and higher education.<sup>122</sup> The collateral damage from military operations on civilian infrastructure has also contributed to the loss of livelihoods, businesses, family assets, and mass displacements.<sup>123</sup> On this economic aspect, the KP civil administration highlighted that Pakistan Army has established around 100 shops at Miran Shah in North Waziristan where earlier 600 shops operated, reducing the rate of economic activity.<sup>124</sup> This economic downturn was further compounded by the border fencing and the anti-smuggling

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<sup>120</sup> "Key Findings Report Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) Survey District Level 2019-20," Pakistan Bureau of Statistics & Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives, accessed December 21, 2023, [https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/pslm/publications/pslm\\_district\\_2019-20/Key\\_Finding\\_Report\\_of\\_PSLM\\_District\\_Level\\_Survey\\_2019-20.pdf](https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/pslm/publications/pslm_district_2019-20/Key_Finding_Report_of_PSLM_District_Level_Survey_2019-20.pdf).

<sup>121</sup> "Pakistan National Human Development Report, The three Ps of inequality: Power, People, and Policy," UNDP, 2020, accessed December 3, 2023, <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/pk/NHDR-Inequality-2020---Overview-Low-Res.pdf>.

<sup>122</sup> "Key Findings Report," Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

<sup>123</sup> "Civilian Harm and Conflict in Northwest Pakistan," Center for Civilians in Armed Conflict, 2020, accessed October 13, 2023, [https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Pakistan\\_Report\\_2010\\_2013.pdf](https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Pakistan_Report_2010_2013.pdf).

<sup>124</sup> Interview with KP Civil Administration, November 11, 2023.

efforts of the government. Providing their views on economic integration, the KP civil administration highlighted that the anti-smuggling campaign had limited the livelihood options of the locals.<sup>125</sup> As per the findings, the resentment of locals will continue unless the government focuses on the economic integration of the ex-FATA with the rest of the country. Thus, there cannot be a meaningful development without economic integration and implementation of FATA reforms in letter and spirit.<sup>126</sup> As a remedial measure, realising the slow implementation of FATA merger reforms, the government constituted a national implementation committee on ex-FATA. This Apex Committee, whose function is to push FATA merger reforms' implementation process, has been holding its meetings since November 2023.<sup>127</sup>

### ***Political Reforms***

The political reforms emanating from the constitutional amendments led to bye-elections on the additional seats given to merged districts (ex-FATA) in 2019, followed by the first-ever local bodies' elections in 2021. After the Local Government election in the ex-FATA, the residents were very optimistic about the development at the Union Council level. However, with the amendment to the sections 30 and 53 of the Local Government Act of 2013, the KP government in 2019 reduced the powers of the local bodies, making it hard for the local bodies' representatives to utilise the development funds.<sup>128</sup>

### ***Administrative Reforms***

In order to bolster administrative governance, in 2017, the federal government allocated Rs 87 billion for civil administration and LEAs' capacity building. By far, 80 projects worth Rs 3.68 billion have been completed in the ex-FATA to improve police infrastructure.<sup>129</sup> An amount of Rs400 million was given by the Peshawar Corps for capacity building of police and CTD, including the Special

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<sup>125</sup> Interview with KP Civil Administration, November 11, 2023.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with KP Civil Administration, November 11, 2023.

<sup>127</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

<sup>128</sup> Wisal Yousafzai, "Ineffective governance: LGs rue lack of access to funding," *Express Tribune*, August 28, 2023.

<sup>129</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT).<sup>130</sup> Despite this, the dearth of a proper policing system after merging the Levies and *Khasadars* in the police department of the KP remains a huge hurdle to internal security in the merged districts (ex-FATA). Lack of training and capacity issues curtail the capability of police to deal with militancy in the ex-FATA.

Other than the police, the reach of judiciary was also extended to the ex-FATA districts. The courts for the merged districts included “Khyber at Federal Judicial Complex in Hayatabad, Bajaur at Timergara in Lower Dir, Kurram at Thall in Hangu district, South Waziristan at Tank, Orakzai at Hangu, Mohmand at Shabqadar and Charsadda and North Waziristan at Bannu”.<sup>131</sup> In all, 28 judicial officers, including seven district and session judges, seven senior civil judges, and 14 additional session and district judges have been posted to seven merged tribal districts as members of the district judiciary. Public prosecutors have also been appointed on an immediate basis.<sup>132</sup> In 2020, the KP government introduced the KP Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Act, 2020, which introduced a system comprising *Salis* and *Saliseen* (mediators) to provide speedy and inexpensive justice.<sup>133</sup> One limitation of ADR is that it cannot address land reforms due to the persistent popularity of the *Sharia* system in the ex-FATA.<sup>134</sup> The mindset and bureaucratic bottlenecks remain unchanged over time. The ADR system has not been implemented due to the apprehensions of the people about the efficacy of the system and lack of proper patronage by the higher judiciary. Approximately 90 per cent of the land in KP is disputed, and if *Jirgas* are not used to resolve land disputes, criminal activity is likely to increase.<sup>135</sup>

To overcome the issues and challenges of education in the ex-FATA region, the Pakistan Army has established an APS in Miranshah, a Cadet College in

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<sup>130</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

<sup>131</sup> Mureeb Mohmand, “Civil courts functional in erstwhile Fata,” *Express Tribune*, March 11, 2019.

<sup>132</sup> Mureeb, “Civil courts functional in erstwhile Fata.”

<sup>133</sup> Irshad Ahmed, “From FCR to ADR,” *News International*, June 18, 2021.

<sup>134</sup> Many of the locals still favour TTP-held *jirgas* as they were managing law and order situation in the ex-FATA for a long time and arbitrating disputes among the locals. See; Interview with KP Civil Administration, November 11, 2023.

<sup>135</sup> Interview with LEA, November 10, 2023.



Mohmand District, the Wana Institute of Technical Training Centre, and a Women Vocational Training Centre in Miranshah, among others.<sup>136</sup> However, people in the merged districts (ex-FATA) still face issues with access to quality education. Lack of school buildings, staff, water, power, boundary walls, and toilets are some of the factors adversely affecting education in the region. At a higher level, only the FATA University is functioning with 10 classrooms. There are no medical colleges in the entire region.<sup>137</sup>

### ***Economic Reforms***

In 2018, the government announced Rs1 trillion economic package spanning over 10 years for the economic uplift of the ex-FATA.<sup>138</sup> The goal was to develop infrastructure, raise human development standards, and women's socio-economic status, and encourage regional growth and private sector investment. A three per cent share under the National Finance Commission (NFC), in addition to the existing public sector development allocation, was also proposed by the government for ex-FATA as it remained excluded from the national mechanism of financial distribution through the NFC.

To revive the ex-FATA reforms and economic development, a substantial investment of around Rs383.2 billion has been made by the government for socio-economic uplift of the region. These funds have been spent on projects (as shown in Figure - 2) related to health infrastructure, roads, mosques, police infrastructure, education, Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA), and other initiatives for the economic uplift of the ex-FATA.<sup>139</sup> This is against the overall amount of Rs 600 billion with approximately Rs216.8 billion still pending with the government. Under the 10-year plan, the government initiated the

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<sup>136</sup> Mateen Haider, "Pak Army stirred socio-economic uplift in 2023," *Nation*, December 30, 2023.

<sup>137</sup> Asma Sajid, "FATA University Forgotten By Authorities in KP," *ProPakistani*, May 3, 2023, accessed December 30, 2023, [https://propakistani.pk/2023/05/03/fata-university-forgotten-by-authorities-in-kp/#google\\_vignette](https://propakistani.pk/2023/05/03/fata-university-forgotten-by-authorities-in-kp/#google_vignette).

<sup>138</sup> Amir Shah, "Pakistan to spend Rs 1 trillion on infrastructure in semi-autonomous tribal region," *Arab News*, May 4, 2018, accessed June 24, 2024, <https://www.arabnews.pk/node/1296131/pakistan>.

<sup>139</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

Accelerated Implementation Plan (AIP) worth Rs400 billion for the ex-FATA; however, only Rs75.5 billion has been received over the past four years.<sup>140</sup>

**Figure 2**  
**Completed Development Projects in Ex-FATA**



**Source:** Data obtained from Law Enforcement Agencies, November 9, 2023.

<sup>140</sup> Mubarak Zeb Khan, “Analysis: KP faces financial meltdown,” *Dawn*, November 26, 2023.

In the infrastructure sector, the government has approved the Khyber Pass Economic Corridor (KPEC), a 47.5 km four-lane highway that connects Pakistan with Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics. The federal government will provide US\$ 385.6 million along with a KP government share of US\$ 75 million and the project will be completed by 2025.<sup>141</sup>

To enhance local services, the KP government's health sector successfully leased 17 healthcare facilities, investing substantial funds in medical equipment and ensuring the availability of emergency medicine.<sup>142</sup> Notably, seed farms covering 33,000 acres, fruit plantations spanning 30,000 acres, and fruit nurseries covering 28,000 acres were established in the merged districts.<sup>143</sup>

In a concerted effort to promote healthy sports activities an amount of over Rs 5 billion was allocated to renovate sporting venues.<sup>144</sup> Additionally, the irrigation sector witnessed significant development, including the construction of more than 65,000 meters of flood protection walls, 16 small dams, 38 check dams, and 148 irrigation tube wells.<sup>145</sup>

Parallel initiatives were also undertaken in various fields, such as the disbursement of Rs3.5 billion in scholarships for both male and female students hailing from the merged districts.<sup>146</sup> The recruitment of 10,000 new teachers, the creation of 2,485 playgrounds, and the refurbishment of 1,439 school boundary walls and 1,585 classrooms were pivotal in advancing education. Furthermore, 317 science and Information Technology (IT) laboratories were established, 300 mosques were solarised, and extensive road infrastructure was developed, encompassing the construction of 441 km of new roads, the rehabilitation of 612 km of existing roads, and the erection of 11 bridges.<sup>147</sup> In a bid to support small

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<sup>141</sup> Fakhar Alam, "Development projects put merged areas of KP on road to progress," APP, July 27, 2022.

<sup>142</sup> "Efforts under way to mainstream tribal districts," *Express Tribune*, December 11, 2022.

<sup>143</sup> "Efforts under way to mainstream tribal districts."

<sup>144</sup> "Efforts under way to mainstream tribal districts."

<sup>145</sup> "Efforts under way to mainstream tribal districts."

<sup>146</sup> "Efforts under way to mainstream tribal districts."

<sup>147</sup> "Efforts under way to mainstream tribal districts."

and medium-sized businesses, Rs1.1 billion was allocated to economic stimulus in the merged districts.<sup>148</sup> Despite these endeavours toward economic development, the then caretaker government (2022-2024) asserted that the ex-FATA remains underfunded. Muhammad Ayaz, the Finance Secretary of KP, underscored the importance of a constitutionally compliant and equitable budgetary allocation for the merged territories in the NFC Award. Expressing concern, he highlighted the diminishing fund flows to the federal government's AIP. This shows that despite the constitutional merger of ex-FATA with KP the financial merger has not materialised so far.<sup>149</sup>

After the merger of the tribal region with KP, the federal government is hesitant to increase the KP's portion of the divisible pool from 14.62 per cent to 19.64 per cent (with the addition of a five million population of ex-FATA to KP) in the post-25<sup>th</sup> constitutional revision.<sup>150</sup> Before the merger, KP held 14.62 per cent of the NFC Award, while ex-FATA held 5.02 per cent.<sup>151</sup> The federal government has committed to covering the current and development budgets of the ex-FATA in the absence of a new NFC award. However, the transfer of funds has still been inconsistent ever since the merger. From the years 2019-20 to 2022-23, there was a financing shortfall of Rs144.4 billion between the federal government's committed allocations for the current and the development budgets.<sup>152</sup> Even salaries promised by the federal government are being paid by the KP exchequer to the residents of the merged districts.

Soon after the merger, the KP government passed a bill declaring all the mines and minerals of the ex-FATA region as government property. The locals protested that the government was depriving the locals of their natural

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<sup>148</sup> "Efforts under way to mainstream tribal districts."

<sup>149</sup> The government has been unable to fully resettle the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Rs 8.79 billion is needed for the rehabilitation of houses as compensation after operations. See; Interview with Law Enforcement Agency, November 10, 2023.

<sup>150</sup> Mubarak, "Analysis: KP faces financial meltdown..."

<sup>151</sup> Mubarak, "Analysis: KP faces financial meltdown..."

<sup>152</sup> Mubarak, "Analysis: KP faces financial meltdown..."

resources.<sup>153</sup> However, there are example like Darra Adam Khel, Orakzai and Kurram where coal mines under local ownership have significantly reduced the crime due to generation of economic activity.<sup>154</sup> The merged districts' overall gas potential is estimated to be 5-10 Trillion cubic feet.<sup>155</sup> Only recently, some high-impact oil and gas discoveries were made in the ex-FATA, estimating gas potential to be around 125 million cubic feet per day, and oil to be around 5000 barrels per day.<sup>156</sup> Apart from natural resources, the merged districts also have a tourism potential which can significantly contribute to the KP's financial health, raising the revenue from Rs289 million to Rs1.5 billion.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Zulfiqar Ali, "Bill passed to declare all ex-Fata mines and minerals govt property," *Dawn*, November 14, 2019.

<sup>154</sup> Interview with LEA, November 10, 2023.

<sup>155</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

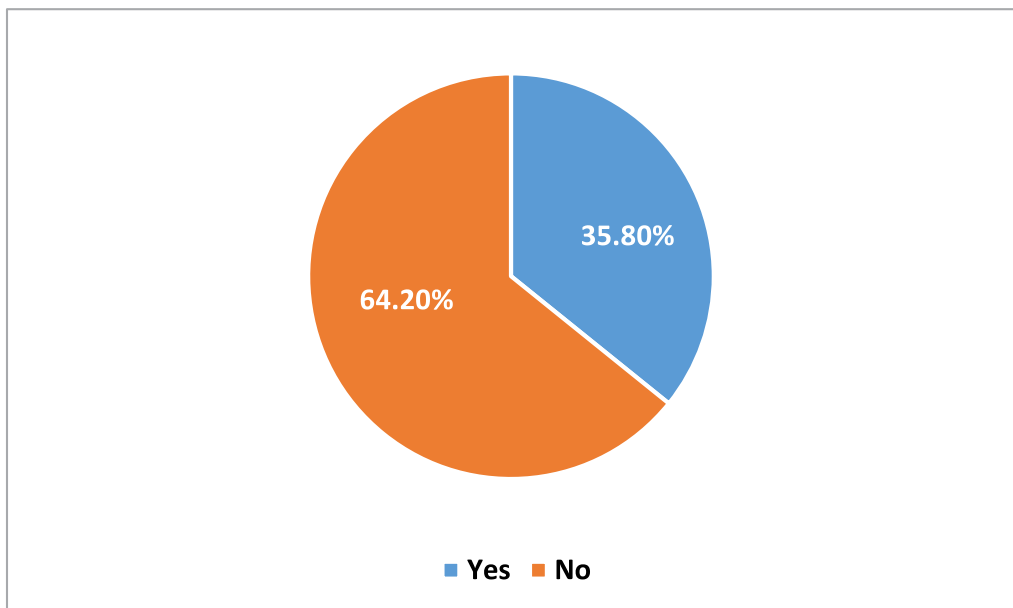
<sup>156</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

<sup>157</sup> Interview with KP Civil Administration, November 11, 2023.

### **Reaction to FATA Merger and Reforms**

During the FGD, participants from North and South Waziristan revealed their frustration about the merger with KP.<sup>158</sup> According to them, the merger ended up brushing ex-FATA's essential governance and development needs under the rug.<sup>159</sup> When asked about the ex-FATA's merger with KP, 64.2 per cent of the Survey-I, respondents opposed the merger while 35.8 per cent favoured it, as shown in Graph - 5.

**Graph – 5**  
**Do you support the Ex-FATA Merger with KP?**



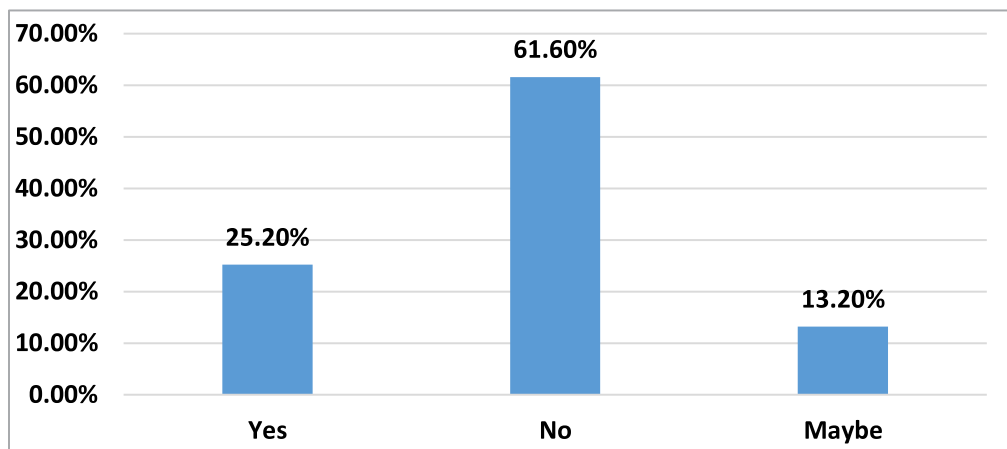
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<sup>158</sup> Focus Group Discussion, “Causes of TTP Resurgence...”

<sup>159</sup> Focus Group Discussion, “Causes of TTP Resurgence...”

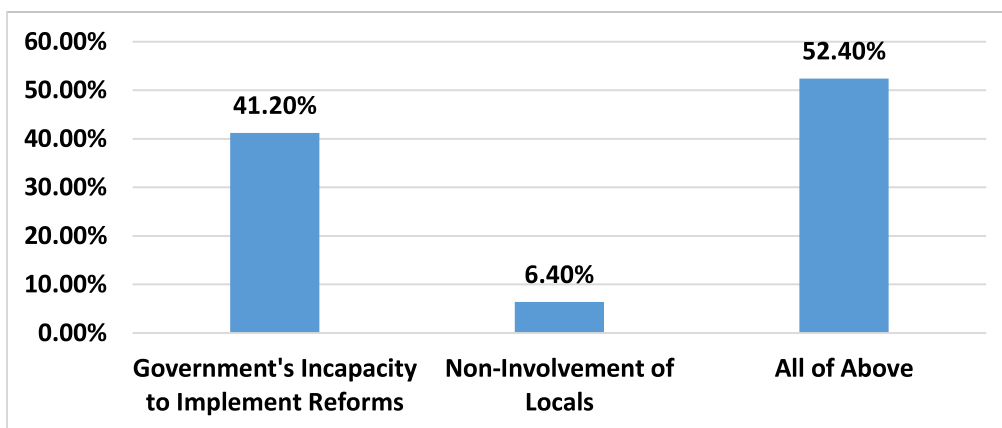
When asked whether the merger has resulted in any reforms at all, 61 per cent of the respondents (Survey-II) thought that the merger has not resulted in reforms for the ex-FATA, as shown in Graph - 6.

**Graph - 6**  
**Local Response to Merger's Ability to Introduce Reforms**



On reasons for disapproval of the merger of the ex-FATA with KP, 52.4 per cent of the respondents (Survey-I) expressed lack of local involvement in the decision-making process along with the inability of the government to fulfill the promises in the post-merger era as the main reasons for disapproval. See Graph - 7.

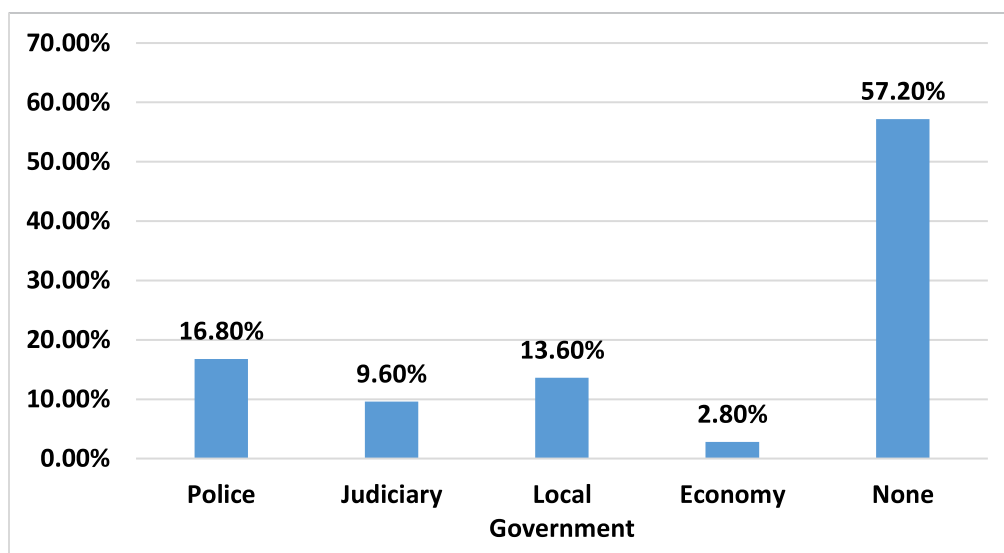
**Graph - 7**  
**Reasons for Public Disapproval of ex-FATA Merger and Reform**





Based on Survey-II (as shown in Graph – 8), a question on which areas have improved since the ex-FATA reforms, 57 per cent of the respondents believed that none of the areas (police, judiciary, local government, and economy) identified under the reforms committee report has experienced improvement. Among other options, 16.8 per cent of the respondents indicated policing to have improved since the merger, 9.6 per cent of the respondents were of the view that the judiciary improved while 13.6 per cent of the respondents thought that local government systems have improved since the merger.

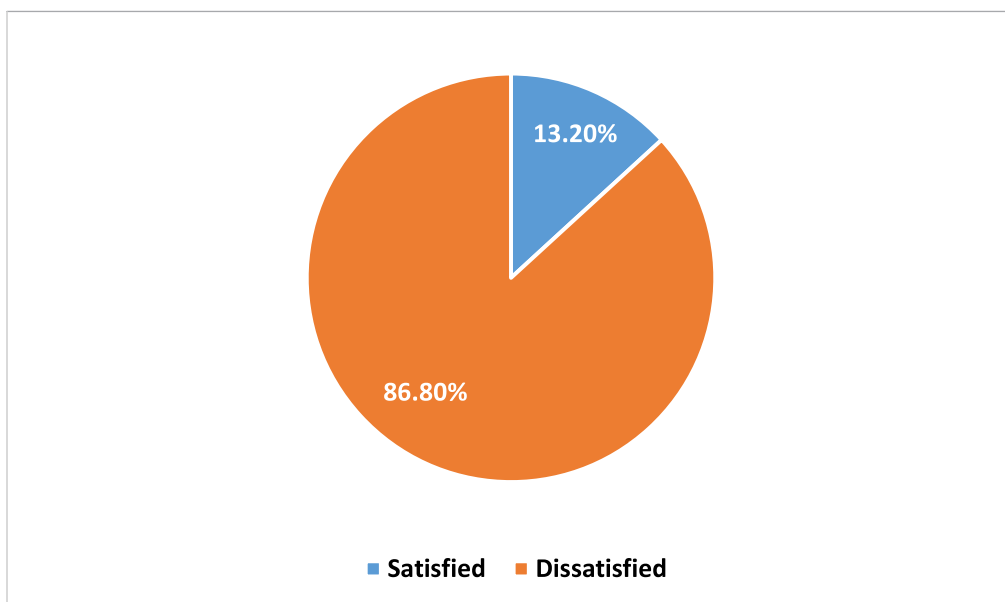
**Graph - 8**  
**Local Perception over Areas Experiencing Reforms**



***Administrative***

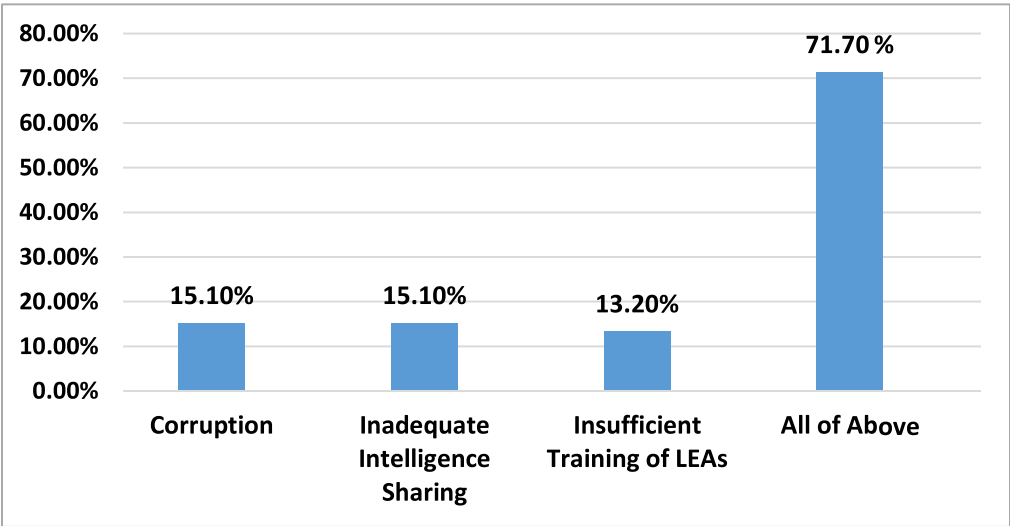
In Survey-I, when asked about their level of satisfaction with police performance, 86.8 per cent of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with police performance, as depicted in Graph - 9.

**Graph - 9**  
**Local Satisfaction with Police Performance**



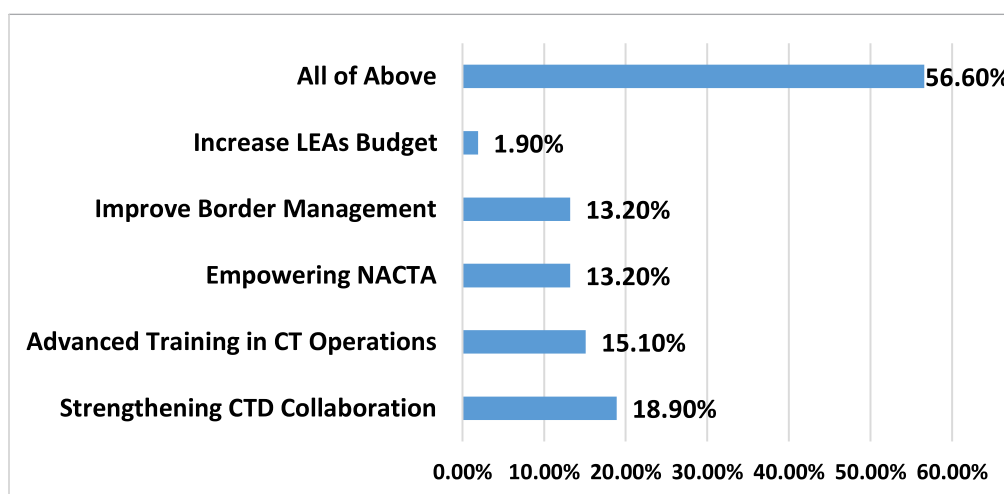
The respondents (Survey-1) were further asked about what significant shortcomings are faced by the police in countering the TTP. As illustrated in Graph - 10, 71.7 per cent of the respondents identified that corruption, lack of training or latest weapons, and poor intelligence exchange between provincial police departments are major bottlenecks that hinder the capacity of police to counter growing terrorism in the region.

**Graph - 10**  
**Significant Shortcomings of Police in Countering TTP**



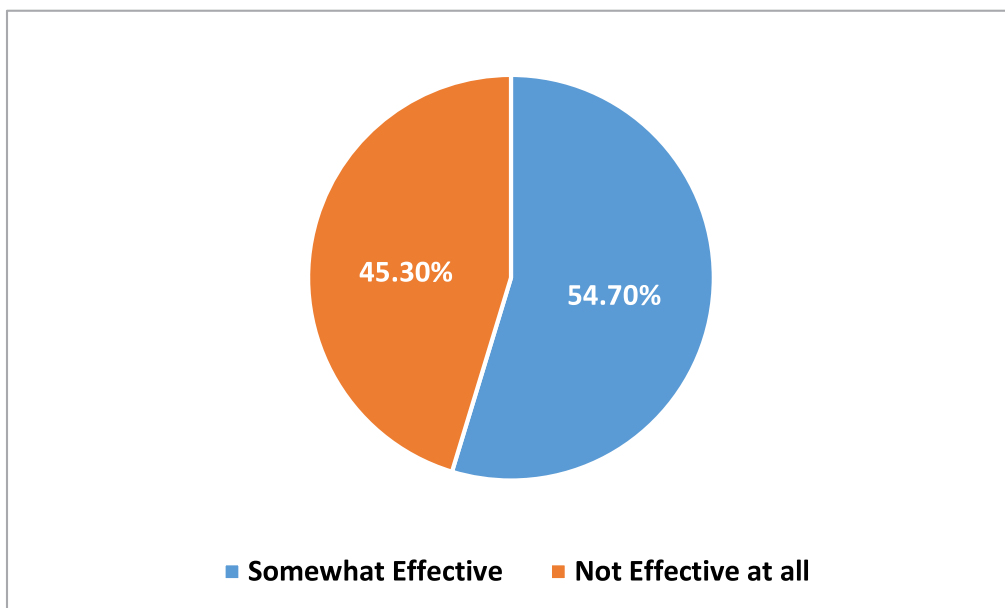
When enquired about what should be the focus of security sector reform, 56 per cent of the respondents (Survey-I) agreed that increased budget, training, better intelligence sharing between provincial police departments, efficient border management, and consistent application of counterterrorism policy at federal and provincial levels, can help curtail the TTP in the long haul. From the given options, 19 per cent of the respondents found better intelligence exchanges while 13 per cent of the respondents saw border management and consistency in policy implementation to be vital for the capacity building of the LEAs, as shown in Graph - 11.

**Graph - 11**  
**Suggested Improvements in Law Enforcement Agencies' Capacity to Counter the TTP**



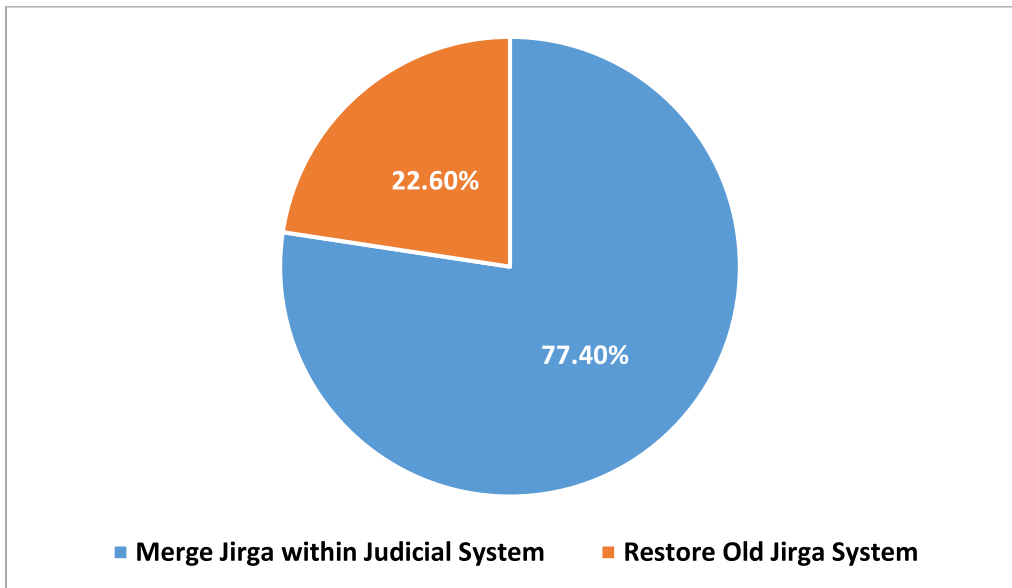
On the effectiveness of the judicial system, 45.3 per cent of the respondents (Survey-I) revealed that the newly established courts are not effective at all, while 54.7 per cent said that courts are somewhat effective, as shown in Graph - 12.

**Graph - 12**  
**Local Courts' Functioning and Efficiency**



When asked about the option for improving the judicial system, 77.4 per cent of the respondents (Survey-I) believed that *Jirga* should be merged with courts to make the latter more effective, while 22.6 per cent of the respondents were of the view that the previous *Jirga* system should be restored, as shown in Graph - 13.

**Graph - 13**  
**Locals' Suggestions to Improve Justice System**



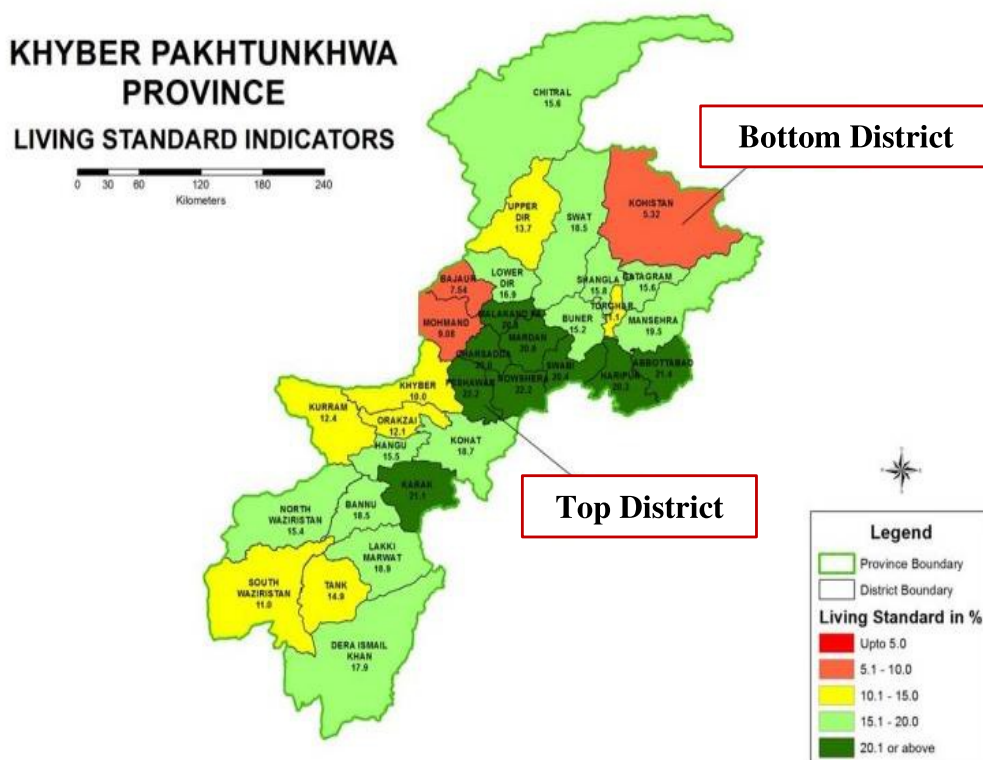
While the effectiveness of the courts was under public scrutiny for not being effective, similar views were echoed by the LEAs. Interactions with the LEAs revealed that courts are not convicting the TTP operatives, despite voluminous evidence. According to the interviewees, judges typically offer little guidance to investigating officers, and prosecutors often refrain from bringing cases to court knowingly.<sup>160</sup> Disappointed by the poor performance of the local courts, the people have started to rely on the TTP-led *Jirgas* for social justice.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Interview with LEA, November 11, 2023.

<sup>161</sup> Interview with KP Civil Administration, November 11, 2023.

Map – 2



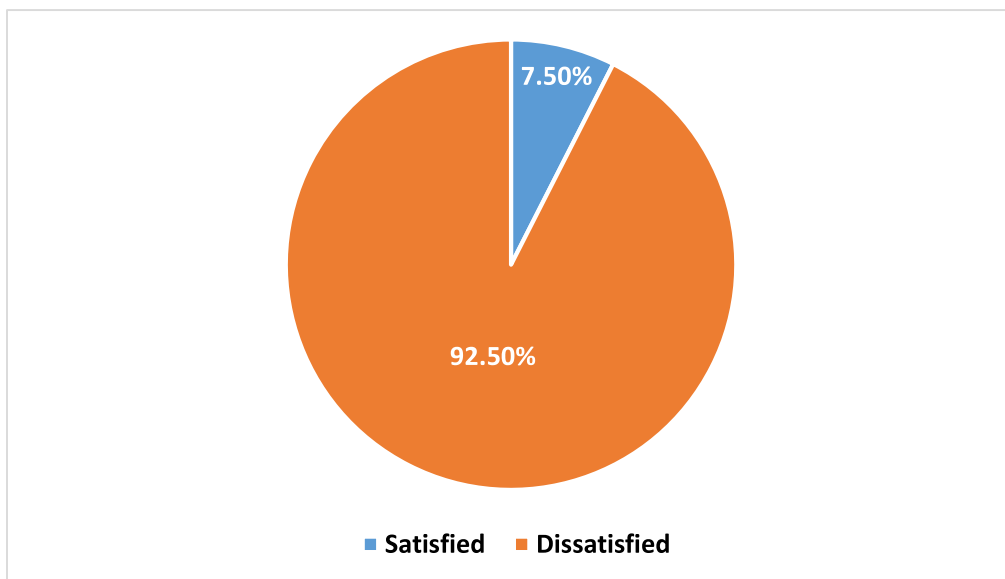
Score	Grade	Colour	Districts
20.1 or Above	A	Dark Green	9
15.1-20.0	B	Light Green	13
10.1-15.0	C	Yellow	7
5.1-10.0	D	Pink	3
upto 5	E	Red	0
Total Districts			32

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	
Average	16.25
Total Districts	32
Above Average	16
Below Average	16

**Source:** “Key Findings Report Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) Survey District Level 2019-20,” Pakistan Bureau of Statistics & Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives.

When inquired about their satisfaction with the development progress in the ex-FATA, nearly 92.5 per cent of the respondents (Survey-I) reported their dissatisfaction with development reforms in the region, as given in Graph – 14.

**Graph - 14**  
**Level of Pubic Satisfaction on Development Progress in Ex-FATA**







## Chapter 5

### Pakistan's Strategy to Neutralise the TTP

In response to the magnitude of the threat posed by the TTP, Pakistan has adopted a comprehensive strategy to neutralise the terrorist group; adopting both the kinetic as well as non-kinetic options.

#### **Military Operations**

To tackle the threat of terrorism, the Government of Pakistan has relied on numerous military operations in the country, beginning with Operation *Al-Mizan*. It was the first military campaign in North Waziristan that lasted from 2002 to 2006.<sup>164</sup> Pakistan Army deployed 70,000 to 80,000 troops which targeted notable Al-Qaeda leaders, who were taking refuge in the ex-FATA region following the American invasion of Afghanistan.<sup>165</sup> This was also the first time Pakistan sent its forces into the largely ungoverned region since independence. The operation dislodged the militants from tribal areas who then desperately tried to consolidate their position in the Swat District of KP, leading to Operation *Rah-e-Haq*, also known as the First Battle of Swat, in 2007. After Operation *Rah-e-Haq* was ended by a peace agreement, clashes erupted between the security forces and terrorists, which led to the commencement of Operation *Rah-e-Raast*, or the Second Battle of Swat in May 2009. Simultaneously in June 2009, Pakistan launched Operation *Rah-e-Nijat* (path to salvation) to eliminate the leadership of the TTP and its affiliates in South Waziristan. The operation achieved its major objectives as the military took control of South Waziristan with extensive casualties to the TTP.

After the TTP claimed responsibility for the attack on Jinnah International Airport in Karachi, the Pakistani military launched its Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* on June 15, 2014. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the *Zarb-e-Azb* operation achieved massive successes against terrorism. It resulted in the killings of 3500 terrorists and reclamation of an area of 3600 sq. km in North

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<sup>164</sup> Seth G. Jones, C. Christine Fair, "Pakistani Operations Against Militants," *In Counterinsurgency in Pakistan* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2010), 33–84.

<sup>165</sup> Jones & Christine Fair, "Pakistani Operations Against Militants..."

Waziristan (the then stronghold of terrorists along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border) by 2016.<sup>166</sup> While the operation largely destroyed the TTP's command and control infrastructure, reducing their ability to wage violence inside Pakistan, sporadic attacks continued. In 2017, Operation *Rad-ul-Fasaad* was launched which was a combined nationwide military campaign (involving military and LEAs) that was aimed to eliminate the sleeper cells of terrorist organisations, including the TTP across the country.<sup>167</sup> This military campaign was largely based on IBOs. Another kinetic measure was the raising of a SWAT force under the KP Police, which claimed to have faced 70 per cent of the total terrorist attacks in the KP province by mid of 2023.<sup>168</sup> The force is specially trained to operate in 'high-risk situations' and conduct targeted operations against high-profile terrorists.<sup>169</sup>

### **Reconciliation Measures**

Apart from a kinetic military response, the government has tried to negotiate a peaceful settlement with the TTP and accommodate their constitutional demands. The first such attempt was made in May 2007, when a nine-point peace deal was reached between the government and Mullah Fazlullah, who later became chief of the TTP.<sup>170</sup> In the first quarter of 2008, the KP government released Moulana Sufi Muhammad, Chief of the TNSM, which followed another agreement that denounced militancy and condemned attacks on the state institutions.<sup>171</sup> Similar efforts were made the same year in South Waziristan (with Baitullah Mehsud, the then Chief of TTP), Darra Adam Khel, and Swat; however, none of the agreements lasted into the following year.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> "490 soldiers, 3,500 militants killed in Operation Zarb-e-Azb so far: DG ISPR," *Express Tribune*, June 15, 2016.

<sup>167</sup> "Pakistan Army launches 'Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad' across the country," *Dawn*, February 22, 2017.

<sup>168</sup> "Police form special teams to fight militancy," *Dawn*, August 25, 2023.

<sup>169</sup> "Police form special teams to fight militancy."

<sup>170</sup> "On again, off again: A timeline of govt-TTP talks," *Dawn*, December 10, 2021.

<sup>171</sup> "Swat Taliban 'renounce militancy': Peace pact signed with Fazlullah's men," *Dawn*, May 22, 2008.

<sup>172</sup> "On again, off again," *Dawn*.

In 2013, then PM Nawaz Sharif tasked Maulana Sami ul Haq, Chief of Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam, to create a conducive environment for dialogue with the TTP.<sup>173</sup> However, no serious progress was made in this direction. After indirect talks with the TTP in February 2014, the government held its first direct talks with the TTP leadership in March at an undisclosed location in the northwest of the country.<sup>174</sup> However, the talks collapsed in June 2014,<sup>175</sup> when the TTP claimed responsibility for the attack on Karachi airport resulting in launch of military operation in North Waziristan.<sup>176</sup>

The latest attempt for peace with the TTP came during the tenure of PTI's government in 2021. The two sides reached a tentative understanding for broader peace, beginning with a truce from November 9 to December 9.<sup>177</sup> However, the talks, meant to facilitate a broader peace agreement to end the nearly two-decade-long militancy, failed to make progress as the TTP refused to extend the ceasefire.<sup>178</sup>

### **Preventive Measures**

As part of its preventive measures, the Pakistani military is undertaking a comprehensive border management measure that include installation of a fence along the 2,611 km porous western border.<sup>179</sup> The fencing consists of two sets of chain-link fences separated by a 2-meter space filled with concertina wire coils.

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<sup>173</sup> "PM tasks Samiul Haq to revive conditions for Taliban talks," *Dawn*, December 31, 2013.

<sup>174</sup> "Pakistan holds peace talks with Taliban: 5 things you need to know," *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 26, 2014, accessed December 30, 2023, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2014/0326/Pakistan-holds-peace-talks-with-Taliban-5-things-you-need-to-know>.

<sup>175</sup> "Country Reports on Terrorism 2017," US Department of State, accessed December 25, 2023, [https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/crt\\_2017.pdf](https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/crt_2017.pdf).

<sup>176</sup> "TTP claims attack on Karachi airport," *Dawn*, June 8, 2014.

<sup>177</sup> Ayaz Gul, "Pakistan, TTP Militants Agree on 'Complete Cease-Fire'," *Voice of America*, November 8, 2021, accessed December 15, 2023. <https://www.voanews.com/a/pakistan-ttp-militants-agree-on-complete-cease-fire-/6304928.html>.

<sup>178</sup> "TTP declares end to ceasefire," *Dawn*, December 10, 2021.

<sup>179</sup> Muhammad Yousaf, "Pakistan army completes 90% of fence along Afghan border," *Associated Press*, August 4, 2021.

As of now, the military has completed installing a fence covering 802 kilometers along the Afghan border with KP.<sup>180</sup>

Apart from the fence, the military has also established 443 forts (one at a distance of every three kilometers), 317 anti-infiltration posts (16 feet high each), and tracks of 1457 kilometers.<sup>181</sup> By October 2023, 11 per cent of the border fence in XI Corps' Area of Responsibility (AOR) was equipped with night surveillance capabilities to ensure effective oversight of the cross border movements.<sup>182</sup>

### **Administrative Measures**

Responding to the APS massacre in December 2014, the Pakistani government announced its twenty-point NAP to strengthen its law enforcement measures in support of the then-ongoing military efforts against terrorism. As part of the NAP, Pakistan implemented reform in *madrassas* which were acting as seed beds for extremist ideology. In 2021, the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) revised two main aspects of the NAP. These included "Taking Action against Spread of Terrorism through Media (Electronic, Print & Social Media) Communication & Cyber networks" as well as "Taking Effective Measures against Religious/Sectarian Persecution & Terrorism."<sup>183</sup> In 2020, the Ministry of Interior launched its Pakistan Terrorism Prevention Programme (PTP2), a four-year technical assistance framework, which was focused on "strengthening the criminal justice system's response to counter and prevent terrorism."<sup>184</sup>

### **Military Courts to Expedite Terrorist Prosecution**

Under the NAP in 2014, Pakistan established special military courts to expedite the prosecution of terrorists. Pakistan lifted the moratorium on executions and

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<sup>180</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

<sup>181</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

<sup>182</sup> Interview with LEA, November 9, 2023.

<sup>183</sup> "Revised National Action Plan – 2021," National Counter Terrorism Authority, accessed January 4, 2024, <https://nacta.gov.pk/revised-national-action-plan-2021/>.

<sup>184</sup> "Launch of Pakistan Terrorism Prevention Programme," United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, accessed December 21, 2023, <https://www.unodc.org/pakistan/en/launch-of-pakistanterrorism-prevention-programme.html#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Office%20on,in%20Pakistan%20for%20countering%20and.>

established military courts through the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment to the Constitution introduced in 2015, and was extended by the implementation of 23<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment for two years until January 6, 2019.<sup>185</sup> The need for taking this extraordinary step emerged in the backdrop of a situation where judges were openly threatened and lawyers were killed by the TTP for pursuing cases against them. The Interior Ministry referred a total of 717 cases to the military courts.<sup>186</sup> The courts were able to decide over 478 cases, and awarded death sentences to 284 convicts, while leaving 185 cases unattended as the tenure of the courts expired in January 2019.<sup>187</sup>

### **Anti-Terrorism Laws**

Pakistan has a robust system of anti-terrorism laws. Article 6 of the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997 criminalises incitement to hatred and contempt on religious, sectarian, or ethnic basis to stir up violence or cause internal disturbances.<sup>188</sup> Under Article 11-W, printing, publishing, or disseminating any material to incite hatred or projecting convicted terrorists or any proscribed organisation or an organisation placed under watch or anyone concerned with terrorism is also criminalised.<sup>189</sup> In addition, under Article 11-X(3), a person commits an offence if he addresses a meeting or gathering or delivers a sermon to a religious gathering by any means whether verbal, written, electronic, digital, or otherwise to ignite religious, sectarian or ethnic hatred and contempt, and shall, on conviction, be punishable.<sup>190</sup>

NACTA also publishes a list of the proscribed terrorist groups involved in terrorism. Organisations proscribed by the government are listed in the First

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<sup>185</sup> Huzaifah Sehgal, "Military Jurisdiction Into The Civilian Sphere: Challenging The Legitimacy Of Pakistan's Military Courts," International Law Blog, October 2, 2023, accessed January 3, 2024, <https://internationallaw.blog/2023/10/02/military-jurisdiction-into-the-civilian-sphere-challenging-the-legitimacy-of-pakistans-military-courts/>.

<sup>186</sup> "Military courts cease to function as tenure ends," *Dawn*, March 31, 2019.

<sup>187</sup> "Military courts cease," *Dawn*.

<sup>188</sup> "The Anti-Terrorism Act 1997 (XXVII of 1997)," National Counter Terrorism Authority, accessed December 21, 2023, <https://nacta.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Anti-Terrorism-Act-1997.pdf>.

<sup>189</sup> The Anti-Terrorism Act 1997, 22.

<sup>190</sup> The Anti-Terrorism Act 1997, 22.

Schedule under Section 11B of the Anti-terrorism Act 1997 by NACTA.<sup>191</sup> Moreover, the government has clearly described actions that constitute terrorism. For instance, following are some of the main articles in Pakistan's Anti-Terrorism Act 1997, which describe the action as an act of terrorism and support for the proscribed organisations:

- According to Article 11F of the Anti-terrorism Act 1997, it is an offence to belong or profess to belong to a proscribed terrorist organisation, as well as to solicit or invite support for a proscribed organisation, or to arrange, manage, or assist in managing, or address a meeting of a known proscribed organisation.<sup>192</sup>
- Article 21C of the Anti-terrorism Act 1997, criminalises provision or receipt of any instruction or training in acts of terrorism (paragraph 7), with special mention to providing (and receiving) such training to (as) a child.<sup>193</sup>
- Article 11V (b) of the Anti-terrorism Act 1997 criminalises abetment of terrorist activities, which includes the commission, preparation, or instigation of an act of terrorism, both from within the country and abroad.<sup>194</sup>

### **Rehabilitation and Reintegration Measures**

To deradicalise the insurgents and rehabilitate them, Pakistan has launched numerous programmes in high-risk areas, especially in the District Swat and merged districts (ex-FATA region). For instance in 2009, the 'Deradicalisation and Emancipation Programmes (DREPs)' were launched in the Swat valley to mainstream former militants.<sup>195</sup> For this purpose, *Sabaoon* (the first ray of dawn) Center for Rehabilitation was launched as the first programme that focused on

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<sup>191</sup> "Proscribed Organisation List," National Counter Terrorism Authority, accessed December 21, 2023, <https://nacta.gov.pk/proscribed-organizations-3/>

<sup>192</sup> The Anti-Terrorism Act 1997, 16.

<sup>193</sup> The Anti-Terrorism Act 1997, 29.

<sup>194</sup> The Anti-Terrorism Act 1997, 22.

<sup>195</sup> Saba Noor, "From Radicalization to De-Radicalization: The Case of Pakistan," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 5, no. 8 (2013): 16–19.

teenagers between the ages of 12 and 18 years.<sup>196</sup> The second programme was *Rastoon* (place of the Right Path) which rehabilitated young men between the ages of 19 and 25 years.<sup>197</sup> Project *Mishal* (light) and Project *Sparlay* (spring) were the third tiers that mainly focused on rehabilitating adults among the militants. Among these, the Project *Sparlay* was aimed specifically at convincing the families to persuade the militants to get into the reintegration and rehabilitation process.

The deradicalisation and rehabilitation programmes focus on four main components: 1) psychological rehabilitation, 2) religious counselling, 3) social and vocational training; and 4) social reintegration.<sup>198</sup> The programmes were originally launched by the Pakistani military. However, they are now run mostly by the civilian administration, including Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). These multidisciplinary programmes are set up in highly guarded facilities and cater to the needs of every individual by providing education, psychological care, religious correction, and recreation opportunities. Most importantly, the programmes benefit from numerous sources, including family members of the individuals to facilitate their rehabilitation. This also helps in monitoring the progress of the participants after leaving the rehabilitation facilities.

### **Development Initiatives**

Pakistan has launched certain developmental initiatives for the socio-economic uplift of the people of merged districts to wean them away from terrorist groups. For instance, to mainstream the merged districts, the provincial government of KP launched its Tribal Decade Strategy (TDS, 2020-2030).<sup>199</sup> The primary aim of the TDS is to redress the socio-economic imbalance between the merged districts and the rest of the settled areas of the country. The merged districts lag far behind the rest of Pakistan across a wide range of socio-economic indicators.

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<sup>196</sup> Noor, "From Radicalization to De-Radicalization: The Case of Pakistan..."

<sup>197</sup> Noor, "From Radicalization to De-Radicalization: The Case of Pakistan..."

<sup>198</sup> Noor, "From Radicalization to De-Radicalization: The Case of Pakistan..."

<sup>199</sup> "Tribal Decade Strategy (2020-2030)," Planning & Development Department KP, accessed December 21, 2023, <https://pndkp.gov.pk/2020/11/30/tribal-decade-strategy-2020-2030/>.



According to the USAID, the literacy rate in the ex-FATA is only 28 per cent (8 per cent among women) compared to 59.3 per cent in the rest of Pakistan.<sup>200</sup> The TDS is aimed at expanding the presence of government entities in the ex-FATA, providing basic services, and facilitating economic development in the region. Under this ten-year plan, a special three-year AIP as mentioned earlier was also launched to fund development projects in the merged districts.

The KP government, with funding from the USAID, launched the Merged Areas Governance Project (MAGP) in 2018 worth Rs 1.4 bn. The project aimed to create opportunities for transformative development.<sup>201</sup> The MAGP assisted the KP government in implementing its first land settlement process in the ex-FATA in 76 years, allowing the government to undertake similar reforms in the future. Under the KP Local Government (Amendment) Act, 2019, the ‘Safeer-e-Balidiyat Programme’ (Local Ambassador Programme) was launched in 2020.<sup>202</sup> The initiative trained 120 youth ambassadors (85 men, 35 women) to spread awareness among the youth of ex-FATA about the local body system and other civic education campaigns. The ambassadors also played a frontline role during COVID-19 and facilitated around 150,000 people across the ex-FATA.<sup>203</sup> “Project for the restoration of livelihoods in merged areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa” was launched between April 2018 and December 2021 and focused on providing support to households, especially in the agricultural sector.<sup>204</sup> The Project valued at US\$ 5 million, was funded by Japan International

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<sup>200</sup> “Provincial Fact Sheet- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Merged Districts,” *USAID*, October 19, 2022, accessed December 21, 2023, <https://www.usaid.gov/asia/fact-sheet/provincial-fact-sheet-khyber-pakhtunkhwa-and-merged-districts#:~:text=Access%20to%20quality%20education%20supports,only%20eight%20percent%20among%20women>.

<sup>201</sup> “KP govt launches Rs 1.4 billion project to boost merged areas youth employability,” *Tribal News Network*, February 24, 2022, accessed December 30, 2023, <https://tnnenglish.com/kp-govt-launches-rs-1-4-billion-project-to-boost-merged-areas-youth-employability/>.

<sup>202</sup> Shahid Hamid, “Awareness campaign launched on LG system,” *Express Tribune*, January 10, 2020.

<sup>203</sup> “Merged Areas Governance Project,” *UNDP*, accessed December 17, 2023, <https://www.undp.org/pakistan/projects/merged-areas-governance-project>.

<sup>204</sup> “Evaluation of the Project for restoration of livelihoods in the Merged Areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,” *Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations*, April, 2022, accessed December 21, 2023, <https://www.fao.org/3/cb9471en/cb9471en.pdf>.

Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) Pakistan. The FAO evaluation report finds that the project has achieved nearly all of its objectives, such as providing climate-resilient seeds to 2200 households, establishing vegetable nurseries, and high-efficiency irrigation systems, among many others.<sup>205</sup>

### **Narrative Shaping and *Paigham-e-Pakistan* (Message of Pakistan)**

Pakistan has realised the importance of employing a counter-narrative by introducing *Paigham-e-Pakistan* (Message of Pakistan). *Paigham-e-Pakistan* is a unanimous ‘*Fatwa*’ (religious edict)<sup>206</sup> which denounces the misinterpretation of religious concepts inspiring terrorist ideologies like the TTP to thrive. The *Fatwa* was given by a diverse group of religious scholars and covers a range of religious concepts, such as *Jihad*, *Takfir*, and *Haram* (forbidden deeds in Islam).<sup>207</sup> The purpose of launching *Paigham-e-Pakistan* is to counter extremist narratives with a moderate Islamic interpretation and to present a positive Pakistani image abroad. The details of *Paigham-e-Pakistan* are also published on the NACTA website.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> “Project for restoration of livelihoods in the Merged Areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,” Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations.

<sup>206</sup> Fatwa is an authoritative legal ruling by competent religious authorities as per Islamic Religious Jurisprudence.

<sup>207</sup> Anum Babur and Saba Noor, “Paigham-e-Pakistan as a Counter Extremism Narrative,” *Journal of Contemporary Studies* 12, no. 1 (2023): 69-87.

<sup>208</sup> “Pakistan’s National Narrative against Terrorism and Extremism,” NACTA, accessed June 3, 2024, <https://nacta.gov.pk/laws-policies/pakistans-national-narrative-against-terrorism-and-extremism/#:~:text=The%20Paigham%2Di%2DPakistan%20is,Al%20Azhar%20University%20o%20Cairo.>



## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **Conclusions**

##### **Policymaking and Political Ownership**

- There has been a lack of consistency and long-term vision in the policymaking about the merged districts (ex-FATA), both in kinetic as well as in non-kinetic domains. The policies about non-state actors and militant entities need to be politically owned so that the desired policy direction can be given to the LEAs and other institutions of the country.
- To bring about coherence and consistency in the policies, there is a need for organisations that could act as policy hubs at local, provincial, and national levels.
- Major policy decisions like peace agreements should be debated in the parliament and ownership across the political divide obtained before implementation.
- There is a lack of political ownership at the provincial, as well as national level, for the TTP and merged districts' governance issues. Though there is a Ministry for Tribal Affairs at the provincial level, political leadership at the provincial level is not showing the desired keenness and urgency in addressing the financial and administrative issues of merged districts, resulting in a lack of financial and administrative integration.
- The friction between the provincial and federal government is causing serious damage to the counter terrorism efforts of LEAs in KP province. The political polarization is adversely impacting the public support which is a prime pre-requisite of any counter terrorism campaign.
- In the absence of local governments in merged districts, the people are not becoming the real stakeholders in development which fuels alienation.
- Political fragmentation because of estranged political actors is creating problems for the state's unified response against entities like the TTP.

## **Governance**

- The administrative, policing, and judicial vacuum in the merged districts needs to be filled immediately; otherwise entities like the TTP would always occupy space ceded by the state.
- The civil administration should be restored with the same efficacy as in the pre-merger era of Political Agents' administration. The requisite funds should be released for the establishment of the administrative infrastructure to extend the writ of the government to the entire geographical range of merged districts.
- There is a need for high-quality officers from Pakistan Administrative Services (PAS) and Police to be posted to merged districts to improve governance and service delivery to locals.
- In the absence of legislation and reforms regarding land ownership, there are disputes between the tribes which are not being resolved due to the absence of a dispute resolution mechanism. Ninety per cent of the land in merged districts is disputed due to which the law and order problem gets compounded.

## **Capacity-Building of Police**

- Without the capacity building of police, the burden of law-enforcement would remain on the army putting a disproportionate burden on its over stretched resources. The former levies now being trained and converted into police force need to be properly resourced and provided the requisite building infrastructure and equipment to take on the law and order responsibilities in the restive merged districts facing the TTP depredations.
- The paramilitary organisations like Frontier Levies and Frontier Constabulary North that are supposed to be serving in merged districts are being employed on policing, crowd control, and VIP protection duties in settled districts putting additional pressure on law-enforcement apparatus.
- Frontier Constabulary North, which is a force meant for merged districts, comes under the Ministry of Interior and is presently deployed in penny packets in settled areas. Such a large force needs to be properly organised

with proper command articulation and employed for security duties in merged districts as per its original mandate.

- There is a need for immediate funding to build capacity of police in merged districts. According to police and civil administration sources, an amount of Rs19 billion is required for immediate capacity-building of police in the merged districts.

### **Capacity-Building of Civil Administration**

- Proper building infrastructure along with protection arrangements are required for civil administration to be effective in the merged districts. The army has to cede ground to civil administration to be effective.
- A proper legal regime is necessary to support civil administration in the merged districts. Assistant Commissioners and District Commissioners need to be empowered on the line of erstwhile Political Agents to be effective.
- Special career incentives should be offered to the PAS officers to perform efficaciously in merged districts.

### **Judiciary**

- There is a legal vacuum in the merged districts and the people who were used to *Rivaaj* and *Sharia/Muftiaan* system are not prepared to follow the existing system. Besides the above, there is a reluctance on the part of the judiciary to establish its presence in the merged districts. The resulting vacuum is being filled by the *jirgas*, non-state actors and criminals like the TTP leaving people at their mercy.
- The judiciary is neither establishing its presence in the merged districts nor helping the government to develop an ADR system that could be used to arbitrate between the tribes on extremely divisive issues such as land disputes. The absence of social justice encourages Talibanisation in the merged districts.

### **Livelihoods and Economic Integration**

- Input from all stakeholders confirms the need for livelihood opportunities for people in the merged districts, in the absence of which the anti-smuggling measures and border control are not likely to yield the desired results.
- The merged districts have remained economically isolated from Pakistan since long due to their historic economic links with Afghanistan. The economic stakes thus were built with Afghanistan instead of Pakistan. Infrastructural development and the provision of livelihood opportunities alone would not resolve the problem unless merged districts are economically integrated with the settled areas of Pakistan.
- Wherever the livelihoods and economic opportunities were made available, the people in the merged districts were found to have been effectively weaned off the militancy. The best antidote, therefore, to militancy and crime is the provision of livelihood opportunities to the people.

### **Elimination of Ecosystem of Illegal Activities and Organised Crime**

- The need for the elimination of a complete ecosystem of illegal activities and concomitant crime emerged as the most important factor in draining the support swamp of terrorist outfits like the TTP.
- Smuggling, narco-trafficking, human-trafficking, and gun-running have been tolerated by the state, engendering an ecosystem of illegality, with multiple sponsors and beneficiaries who have become stakeholders in the crime. Despite six federal agencies dealing with anti-smuggling, border crossing, and narco-trafficking, etc. the illegal ecosystem of organised crime continues to flourish.

### **Impact of Afghan Interim Government on the TTP**

- The return of the Afghan Taliban to the catbird seat in Kabul has given a new lease of life to the TTP. The militants incarcerated by the Ashraf Ghani government were released by the AIG who later joined anti-Pakistan activities of the TTP. Militants like Gul Muhammad and Faqir

Muhammad who were part of Ningarhar jailbreak rejoined the TTP and were even part of the negotiating team during the peace talks with Pakistan. There has been a spurt in the TTP activities inside Pakistan ever since the return of the Afghan Taliban to power in Afghanistan.

- The TTP has become more organised and lethal after the assumption of power by the Taliban in Kabul. Several militant groups like Hafiz Gul Bahadur faction have allied themselves with the main TTP faction led by Noor Wali Mehsud. Militants like Tipu Gul have been encouraged by their handlers in Afghanistan to join Noor Wali Mehsud.
- The TTP terrorist attacks against the LEAs in merged districts have progressively increased in frequency and intensity ever since the return of the Afghan Taliban to power. Around 1215 terrorist incidents in 2023 compared to 858 in 2022, and 903 in 2021, indicate the spike after the US withdrawal.<sup>209</sup> The areas most impacted include Khyber, South Waziristan, Lakki Marwat, and DI Khan districts. If left unchecked, these attacks have the potential to spread to the rest of the country.
- AIG is not reining in the TTP due to fears of alienating an ideological ally as well as fears of the TTP's alliance with other non-state actors like the ISKP on Afghan soil. The AIG might also be thinking in terms of using the TTP as a leverage over Pakistan.
- There are training camps of the TTP in Afghanistan in Kunar, Nangarhar, Paktia, Paktika and Khost that are being used for training and launching of the TTP militants inside Pakistan, with full knowledge of the AIG.

### **Abortive Talks with the TTP**

- The talks with the TTP that began under the PTI government were supported by the army leadership. There was a lot of criticism in the parliament as well as other stakeholders on the talks with the TTP. The army leadership had embarked upon the talks. Perhaps, due to fears of the TTP and the AIG's collusion against Pakistan.

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<sup>209</sup> Interview with Field Formation Peshawar. March 12, 2024.



- The TTP did not display any flexibility and made unacceptable demands like revocation of the merged districts, imposition of *Sharia* law, and blanket amnesty even for heinous crimes. The talks failed due to the irrationality of the TTP demands and the public criticism of the unreasonableness of those demands.
- The process of reconciliation with the TTP resulted in the lowering of the guard by the deployed army and FC troops, enabling the TTP militants to regroup and reoccupy the lost space.
- The local tribes loyal to the state and the LEAs got a negative message by the reentry of the TTP elements in merged districts, resulting in loss of faith in the LEA's ability to eliminate terrorism. The TTP thus reestablished itself in areas from which it was eliminated through army action.

### **TTP Aim, Resurgence and Consolidation**

- The TTP has different local flavours in different regions but has the same violent ideology. The overall objective of TTP is to wrest control of merged districts from the LEAs in order to establish their writ to gain economic and political advantages.
- The TTP splinter groups are consolidating. However, groups like the JuA and the TJP are keeping their independent identity to retain an element of plausible deniability by the TTP and the AIG. Maximum JuA strength was in Khyber, Kurram and Aurakzai; Dir was under clerical hold of JI while Bajaur had Jamiat Ullema-e-Islam – Fazl (JUI-F) and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI). Tribal affiliations are stronger in North and South Waziristan. In Hangu, terrorist activities are conducted by the TTP as well as the JuA.
- Violent Non-State Actors (VNSAs) like the ISKP are found in Bajaur but their presence is a consequence of the internecine conflict between the JUI and the ISKP.
- TTP has been making continual attempts to make ingress in Chitral but without much success so far. The LEAs however cannot lower their guard as the area is vulnerable to terrorists' ingress.

- Noor Wali Mehsud has emerged as a charismatic leader with appeal amongst the religious-minded as well as criminal-minded militants. His ability to organise, recruit and consolidate the TTP is more than his predecessors due to support from the AIG.
- The TTP is being joined by criminal gangs involved in extortion and smuggling without any ideological motivation.

### **IDPs Resettlement**

- The process of IDPs resettlement has not been completed so far. The infrastructure development for the resettlement of IDPs is still incomplete. This is contributing to the disorder in the merged districts.
- There are tribes like Madakhel that went to Afghanistan and are now in a camp near South Waziristan. They wish to return to their lands but cannot be permitted due to unstable security situation in North Waziristan. Their continued presence in a camp is breeding resentment.
- People in the merged districts have displayed dissatisfaction with the reconstruction and resettlement process. The 100 spacious shops constructed in Miran Shah in place of 600 small destroyed shops cater to less people which gives few people the cause to complain. A proper need assessment analysis is required along with a reassessment of the economic and business requirements to generate economic activity for local businesses.

### **Criminal Justice System**

- The present criminal justice system is not suitable to fight terrorism. The existing Anti-Terrorist courts are also ineffective due to slow conviction rates. The terrorist prosecution system also needs a lot of changes to enable the speedy and effective conviction of the terrorists by the courts.
- There is a need to study the Anti-Terrorist Courts' model of several countries that successfully defeated insurgencies and terrorism and to adopt the best features from those models. In countries like the United Kingdom (UK), the Birmingham rioters who attacked state property were punished promptly and effectively through video footage. (In the UK they

can detain terrorists for 14 days without remand). In Pakistan, antiquated evidence rules provide loopholes to criminals and terrorists.

### **Social Media Scrutiny for Counter-Terrorism**

- The TTP's propensity to use social media platforms, especially Facebook needs to be exploited as their Achilles's heel. The Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) laws for counter-terrorism need to be utilised to identify and bust terrorist cells.
- The social media monitoring teams for countering terrorism of the TTP need resources that presently are inadequate to keep one step ahead of terrorists.

### **Efficacy of CTD Police**

- The CTD of KP police is under-resourced and poorly-trained to bear the brunt of TTP terrorism, leaving most of the counter-terrorism operations to the army and its affiliated intelligence agencies especially in merged districts. The Peshawar Corps has been making special allocations to help KP police improve their CTD apparatus but more needs to be done by the government.
- CTD of KP needs to be strengthened on an emergency basis through special grants and be fully resourced and enabled to extend its reach to the merged districts beyond the settled districts of KP province.

### **Development as a Counter-Terrorism Tool**

- Development and livelihood opportunities can act as a bulwark against militancy and terrorist recruitment. The analysis of terrorists killed in action shows that 72 per cent of those killed were below 30 years of age, while 65 per cent were illiterate/primary stage qualified, and 66 per cent jobless.
- District South Waziristan, especially Upper South Waziristan is the worst off in livelihood opportunities. The area acts as a black hole attracting desperadoes to the cause of terrorist recruitment due to a lack of alternative livelihood opportunities. The condition of the unemployed

population, therefore, needs to be ameliorated for a sustainable solution to address crime and terrorism issues in the region.

- The livelihood opportunity provided by coal mining activity through 87 coal mines has reduced the Darra Adam Khel arms manufacturing business to 10 per cent of its earlier volume. Similarly, the mining-related livelihood opportunities through 40 coal mines have reduced militancy and crime in a most troublesome region known by the acronym ‘ZJL,’ located between Orakzai and Kurram.
- There is a need for similar development initiatives in the insurgency-racked areas of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region near Lakki Marwat and DI Khan to wean off the poor and jobless from the TTP recruitment initiatives.

### **Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Narrative**

- There is a need for a proper CVE narrative to debunk the TTP propaganda and exploitation of religious sentiment in the name of imposition of *Sharia*.
- Greater involvement of clerics to shape the CVE narrative is desired. The AIG should also be engaged to get a religious decree against the launch of terrorist attacks.
- The TTP and the JUI’s links through the *madrassa* network also pose problems for the LEAs. The TTP elements find refuge amongst the population and *madrassas* because of this linkage which needs to be severed in the interest of countering violent extremism.

### **Proxy Warfare**

- The external forces supporting the TTP need to be exposed and their support network, especially financial support, severed.

### ***Madrassa* Support Network**

- The support network of TTP from *madrassas* in the merged districts needs to be monitored and dismantled.



## **Recommendations**

### **Policymaking and Political Ownership**

- The governments both at federal and provincial levels should take ownership of the development and counter-terrorism issues in the merged districts with a special focus on eliminating crime and terrorism. There should be complete coordination between the federal and the provincial governments for countering the TTP terrorism and long-term policies for stabilisation and development of the merged districts.
- The public support for the counter terrorism operations by LEAs should be ensured by the federal as well as the provincial governments as no counter terrorism or counter insurgency campaign can succeed without public support.
- The Apex Coordination Committee at the federal level headed by the PM comprising civil and military officials should be utilised effectively as a policy implementation hub for the sustained development of the merged districts.
- At provincial level, a similar committee should be headed by the Governor KP, comprising civil and military officials.
- Parliament should be consulted prior to all major initiatives like reconciliation with the insurgents in the merged districts to foster greater political ownership of such decisions.

### **Governance**

- The administrative vacuum should be filled up immediately by according top priority to the capacity-building and establishment of civil administration in the merged districts. The desired funding should be provided at priority to the KP government to achieve the above purpose.
- The powers and prestige of the Deputy Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners should be restored on the line of erstwhile institution of Political Agents, by empowering them to take major administrative decisions.

- Best officers from PAS and Police to be posted to merged districts with their performance linked to their career advancement as a performance incentive.
- The process of merger should be incrementally implemented by retaining some elements of *Rivaaj* in deference to tribal sensitivities.
- The Land Reforms Act for the merged districts should be passed at priority to help resolve the property disputes between the tribes.
- ADR mechanism to be introduced to settle property disputes expeditiously. Judiciary to be sensitised to the need of ADR due to the nature of tribal customs and tribal psyche which are unaccustomed to the long drawn-out litigation of normal legal system.
- Local government system should be introduced in merged districts and suitably empowered to have meaningful role in the infrastructure development and civic issues.

### **Capacity-Building of Police**

- The capacity-building of police should be accorded top priority and the funds allocated accordingly to build their capacity for operating in the merged districts. The Frontier Constabulary North troops, pulled out from merged districts for duties in the settled districts, should be sent back to the merged districts to give strength to the army, FC and police.
- Frontier Constabulary North should be reorganised and revitalised as a potent security force capable of providing security in the merged districts. The force needs to be organised in platoons and battalions with proper command structure to be able to operate effectively in insurgency prone merged districts, even providing security to vulnerable oil and gas prospecting firms. The reorganisation should be approved through an Act of Parliament.
- Proper infrastructure for police in the merged districts should be created like police lines, police stations, and training facilities -- just like rest of the settled areas instead of borrowed buildings from civil administration.
- Best police officers to be posted to the merged districts with their tenures and performance linked to their career advancement. For financial

incentives, those posted to the merged districts should be given the same pay and allowance package as enjoyed by police in the shape of Balochistan Package.

- The erstwhile *Khasadars* who have been merged in police without proper qualifications (like in the settled areas) should be given a golden handshake and recruitments to be made amongst the locals of the merged districts on merit.
- A commission comprising representatives from the federal government (Interior and Finance Divisions) and the provincial governments (Police, Home and Finance Departments) be created under an Additional Inspector General of Police Headquarters in KP to ensure smooth flow of funds for policing in merged districts.
- The CTD of KP police should be strengthened and resourced at priority on the lines of Punjab CTD and tasked to be proactive in its operations, especially in the merged districts.

### **Establishment of Judiciary in Merged Districts**

- The judiciary should establish its presence in the merged districts and the funds for desired infrastructure and security arrangements be provided on priority.
- The judiciary should encourage ADR system instead of discouraging it.
- The normal legal system needs to retain some features of *Rivaaj* for making the new system more acceptable for the people of merged districts accustomed to speedy justice of tribal *jirgas*.
- The postings of judges to merged districts should be treated as special posting with special weightage accorded to their evaluation reports during the merged districts tenures.

### **Economic Integration and Livelihood Provision**

- The mining and resource extraction sector should be developed on priority and should offer employment to poor and jobless to disincentivise them from joining criminal gangs.



- The cottage industry with focus on agriculture and dairy farming should be introduced on small scale in the merged districts to enable the people to make use of their experience in these sectors for earning livelihood. Government should help establish the credit lines and market access for such small scale business ventures.
- Economic integration with the settled areas should be ensured through a supply chain system connecting merged districts with the settled districts of KP. The products made in cottage industry of the merged districts should be linked with markets in the settled areas to build stakes of the people in the integration with the rest of the country.

### **Elimination of Ecosystem of Organised Crime**

- The government should reduce taxes on trade and duties on imported items to disincentivise the smuggling that engenders an ecosystem of crime benefiting multiple stakeholders, including the terrorists.
- The surveillance of Pakistan-Afghanistan border should be improved through the employment of technological means like drone cameras, ground sensors and sophisticated radars.
- The anti-smuggling measures should be implemented resolutely and the authorised crossing points to be reduced in numbers.
- The single document (Visa) based cross border regime should be implemented resolutely with a clear deadline for the Afghan government to implement the regime.
- The number of federal agencies dealing with border crossing, immigration and anti-smuggling issues to be reduced and the main responsibilities assigned to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Police and FC, which should be properly monitored and held accountable for compliance of the border control laws.

### **Role of AIG in Reining in the TTP**

- Pakistan should keep engaging with the AIG to impress upon them the need to deny secure sanctuaries to the TTP, thus preventing them from mounting attack on Pakistan's LEAs from the Afghan soil.

- A proper *Fatwa* to be issued by Afghanistan's Supreme Leader Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada instead of a simple order (Amr) that he has already issued prohibiting the TTP from attacking Pakistan's LEAs and civilians.

### **Talks with the TTP**

- There should be no talks with the TTP except on the issue of unconditional surrender to the LEAs and acceptance of the law of the land (Constitution).
- Any future engagement with the TTP at the behest of the AIG should be subject to the approval of the parliament.

### **Prevention of the TTP's Resurgence**

- The state should win back the trust of the tribes that was shattered because of the abortive talks with the TTP through better governance, policing, and development.
- Differences between the factions of the TTP should be exploited and the plausible deniability sought by the splinter groups like the TJP and the JuA should be denied through intelligence operations and a superior communication strategy.

### **Prompt Internally Displaced Persons Resettlement**

- The funds required for the IDPs settlement in the merged districts should be released by the federal government as a priority. The process of resettlement of the IDPs should be completed under the supervision of the Apex Committee for the Development of the merged districts at the federal level.
- The construction of shops destroyed during the counter-insurgency operations should ensure that, at least, a similar number of shops should be constructed that were destroyed initially. Similarly, the schools and dispensaries/hospitals destroyed should not only be reconstructed but staffed and equipped to operate as fully functional entities.

### **Modification of Criminal Justice System**

- To improve the state's counter-terrorism response and to discourage terrorism there is an urgent need for reforms in the criminal justice system of the country, aimed at enhancing the percentage and speed of convictions.
- Special Anti-Terrorism courts should be constituted in place of existing dysfunctional Anti-Terrorism Courts.

### **Social Media Scrutiny for Counter-Terrorism**

- Since the TTP has been using social media platforms, especially Facebook for recruitment, the LEAs should be given more resources to identify and bust the terrorist support networks on social media.
- The CTDs and army formation social media monitoring teams should pool their resources to counter terrorist propaganda on social media.

### **Allocation of Development Funds**

- The merged districts should be allocated the promised development funds as per the NFC quota, and the percentage of funds to be enhanced to 19.6 per cent from the current 14.5 per cent.

### **CVE**

- The NAP should be implemented with dedication and resoluteness, especially the points about the modification of the criminal justice system, regulation of *madrassas*, regulation of hate speech on social media, and strengthening of the CTDs.
- The initiatives like *Paigham-e-Pakistan* should be replicated as well as disseminated more effectively to give traction to counter-extremism narratives through the full participation of clerics.
- The rehabilitation and deradicalisation centers should be strengthened and developed to wean the affected people away from militancy and extremism, besides equipping them with livelihood skills to be useful members of society.

### **Counter-Terrorism Capacity/Performance of Intelligence Agencies**

- The best intelligence operatives should be put in command assignments in KP and the merged districts with their career advancement linked to performance in the counter-terrorism campaign.
- The lead counter-terrorism agency at national level to coordinate the entire intelligence gathering and operations effort besides sharing a common operational picture with all civil and military intelligence agencies both at the national as well as the provincial levels.

### **Severance of the TTP-Madrassa Link**

- The *madrassas* in the merged districts, especially in the border regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan, should be strictly monitored and regulated to deny their use as a support network for the TTP militants.



**TTP *Tashkeelat***

# تَشْكِيْلَات

۱۴۴۵ھ مطابق ۲۰۲۴ء

**وزارت اطلاعات و نشریات**

محترم چوہدری منیب الرحمن صاحب

**اعلامی کمیشن**

محترم مفتی غفران صاحب

محترم قاری محمد شعیب صاحب

محترم شیخ عبد الرحمن حماد صاحب

محترم مولانا سلیم خانی صاحب

**وزارت اقتصاد**

محترم مولانا بدری محمود صاحب

**وزارت امور سیاسیه**

محترم مفتی طارق محمود صاحب

محترم مفتی بورخان سوہانی صاحب

**وزارت دفاع**

محترم مفتی مزاحم صاحب

**وزارت فلاح و بہبود**

محترم سرگف مہمند صاحب

**وزارت احتساب**

محترم استاذ خنیف فاروقی صاحب

**ریاست عمومی استخبارات**

محترم مفتی ابو منصور عاصم صاحب

محترم مولانا سلیم خانی صاحب

**وزارت معارف**

محترم مولانا ابو حماد باجوڑی صاحب

**رہنمائی نظامی کمیشن**

محترم مولانا شاہد عمر باجوڑی صاحب

**معاون :**

محترم عمر مکرم خراسانی صاحب

**اداری :**

مولانا ثاقب الاسلام جبروی صاحب

**دیگر اراکین نظامی کمیشن**

محترم مولانا قاری کاروان صاحب

محترم عثمانی صاحب

محترم حافظ اسد اللہ صاحب

**رہنمائی نظامی کمیشن**

محترم مولانا نور اللہ صاحب

**معاون :**

محترم مولانا انعام اللہ وزیر صاحب

**اداری :**

مولانا نعیم احمد خانی صاحب

**دیگر اراکین نظامی کمیشن**

محترم مولانا قاضی محمد امیر صاحب

محترم قاری عرفان آفریدی صاحب

محترم نصیب نواز صاحب

**مسئول اسپیشل اسٹنڈیڈ فورس**

محترم مولانا محسن صاحب

**مسئول مسٹر الفاروق شمالی زون**

محترم استاذ سمندر صاحب

**مسئول مسٹر الفاروق جنوبی زون**

محترم حمزہ سندھی صاحب

**ولایت پشاور**

والی صاحب: محترم مولانا سیف اللہ خانی صاحب

معاون والی: محترم خالد منصور آفریدی صاحب

اراکین ولایتی کمیشن: محترم ابرار مفتی صاحب

محترم حاجی کامران صاحب

محترم مولانا ناصر صاحب

محترم قاری کامران صاحب

محترم عبد الرحمن صاحب

رئیس استخبارات: محترم قاری معاویہ صاحب

رئیس اقتصاد: محترم انصاری استاذ صاحب

رئیس معارف: محترم مولانا حسین احمد صاحب

رئیس فلاح و بہبود: محترم قاری ہدایت اللہ صاحب

**ولایت مردان**

والی صاحب: محترم مبارز جبروی صاحب

معاون والی: محترم مفتی شایان ظفر صاحب

اراکین ولایتی کمیشن: قاری عاصم ظفر صاحب

مفتی ابو یوسف علی صاحب

محترم عادل صاحب

رئیس استخبارات: محترم مولانا قاری سعید صاحب

رئیس اقتصاد: محترم قاضی اسد اللہ صاحب

رئیس معارف: محترم مولانا احسان اللہ صاحب

رئیس فلاح و بہبود: محترم مجاہد باجا صاحب

**ولایت بنوں**

والی صاحب: محترم مولانا دو الغار وزیر صاحب

معاون والی: محترم حیدر صاحب

اراکین ولایتی کمیشن: محترم شوکت وزیر صاحب

محترم احمد داؤز

محترم احمد طوری خیل

محترم زبیر مروت صاحب

رئیس استخبارات: محترم آصف صاحب

رئیس اقتصاد: محترم حافظ احسان اللہ صاحب

رئیس معارف: مولانا محیب الرحمن صاحب

رئیس فلاح و بہبود: مولانا احمد شریعتی صاحب

**ولایت کوہاٹ**

والی صاحب: محترم اکرام اللہ صاحب

معاون والی: مولانا احمد کاظم صاحب

اراکین ولایتی کمیشن: مولانا درویش صاحب

محترم کاشف صاحب

محترم حافظ ابو یکر صاحب

رئیس استخبارات: محترم قاری اعجاز صاحب

رئیس اقتصاد: محترم بلال آفریدی صاحب

رئیس معارف: محترم حافظ خان حبیب صاحب

رئیس فلاح و بہبود: محترم حمزہ کوہاٹی صاحب

**ولایت مہکرن و قلات**

والی صاحب: محترم شاہین بلوچ صاحب

**ولایت ہزارہ**

والی صاحب: محترم فرمان صاحب

اقتصادی رئیس: محترم احسان استاذ صاحب

**ولایت ڈیرہ اسماعیل خان**

والی صاحب: محترم حاجی حسین صاحب

معاون والی: محترم ابو اسیر صاحب

اراکین ولایتی کمیشن: محترم مولانا مسرور صاحب

محترم مولانا داود بٹنی صاحب

محترم زاہد گڈاپور صاحب

محترم عبد اللہ شاہ صاحب

محترم مولانا ابو عثمان صاحب

رئیس استخبارات: محترم مولانا اخصار صاحب

رئیس اقتصاد: محترم عاجز صاحب

رئیس معارف: محترم مولانا ناصر صاحب

رئیس فلاح و بہبود: محترم قاری شاہ خالد صاحب

**ولایت خیبر پختونخوا**

والی صاحب: محترم سید عمر صاحب

اراکین ولایتی کمیشن: محترم مولانا خالد صاحب

شیرانی صاحب

رئیس استخبارات: محترم مولانا محمود صاحب

رئیس اقتصاد: مولانا صلاح الدین شیرانی صاحب

رئیس فلاح و بہبود: محترم مولانا خالد صاحب

**ولایت جنوبی پنجاب**

والی صاحب: محترم عمر معاویہ صاحب

**ولایت گلگت و بلتستان**

والی صاحب: محترم غزوان غازی صاحب

معاون والی: محترم اظہار صاحب

**مجموعۃ التفتیش شمالی زون**

محترم عبد الوہاب صاحب

**مجموعۃ التفتیش جنوبی زون**

محترم مولوی اخصار صاحب

تحریر طالبان پاکستان

EDITOR: TALIBAN PAKISTAN

*Recrudescence of TTP Violence, its Causes and Possible Remedies*

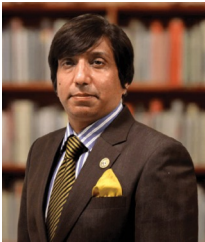
**Source:** FJ(@Natsecjeff), "The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) unveiled its organisational structure...", X, January 5, 2024. <https://twitter.com/Natsecjeff/status/1743049321862590605>.

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