

# **THE BALOCH MILITANCY**

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Balochistan, with its abundance of natural resources, is the largest and the least populated province of Pakistan, with an estimated 70 percent of the population living in abject poor conditions. The authorities are immensely cautious when dealing with the Baloch activists. The ruthless terrorists have blended into the nationalist movements and used activists and civilians as human shields in Balochistan. The Baloch separatists have waged a bloody war for a separate state and control over the natural resources of the province. The Baloch terror groups' fearmongering is part of a plan to establish a free Balochistan.

In November 2017, free Balochistan and Save Baloch appeared on more than 100 Transport for London (TfL) buses and taxis in London. Reko Diq in the Chagai district, one of the largest undeveloped copper-gold projects in the world, Gwadar deep seaport, and the international airport are significant developments in recent years in Balochistan. Though the succeeding governments struggled to resolve the issues of the Baloch community, the decades-old root causes remained unresolved. The repressive regimes in Iran and Afghanistan and the political meltdown in Pakistan, Baloch warlords and their infightings, segregation, and unjust dispersal of the Balochistan resources are the flashpoints of the Baloch rebellion. The Baloch separatists have disillusioned with the province of Punjab and accuse Punjab of depriving Baloch of the resources of Balochistan. An estimated 44.7 percent of the total population, the Punjabis are the largest ethnic group in Pakistan.

The Baloch militants have killed hundreds of Pakistanis just because of them for being non-Baloch. In particular, they have killed more than 400 Punjabi workers after verifications of their identity over the years in Balochistan.

## **Pakistani Actions to Deal With the Baloch Militants**

The provincial government of Balochistan erected a fence around the 24 square kilometers of Gwadar city, with an estimated cost of \$ 60 billion, equipped with hundreds of surveillance cameras and foolproof security. The Reason behind fencing is to protect the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) from the Baloch separatists. The Baloch alleged the provincial government of Balochistan is not doing justice to locals in CPEC by not providing jobs in the projects, depriving them of their livelihoods of fishing, and displacing them from their ancestral lands. China is one of Pakistan's saviors from economic meltdowns, defaults, military needs, and hostile attacks. However, the Baloch separatists, supported by the big Baloch landlords and foreign elements, used suicide bombers to kill Chinese citizens and Pakistani forces in intermittent attacks. The terrorists have killed hundreds of Chinese citizens and professional and Pakistani force members on duty to protect the Chinese citizens.

In November 2023, Sarfraz Bugti, the Chief Minister of Balochistan, said families of those who quarrel with their wives also file a case of enforced disappearance. Bugti served as the Home and Tribal Affairs Minister in November 2023.

The subsequent governments have launched three major operations to fight the return of terrorism, regroupings of the religious Jihadi groups, and the insurgents like the BLA. In June 2024, Pakistan launched a new counterterrorism operation, Azm-e-Istehkam (pledge to solidify), after rampant militant attacks. Pakistan has conducted two major operations against terrorists in the past; on June 15, 2014, Operation Zarb-e-Azb was launched, a joint military offensive conducted by the Pakistan Armed Forces against various militant groups, including the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, al-Qaeda, Jundallah, and Lashkar-e-Islam. On February 23, 2017, Pakistani forces began Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad, which has not yet formally ended.

Many of the Baloch nationalists and activists have been listed on the Terror Watch List, commonly known as Pakistan's Fourth Schedule under Section 11 of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) 1997. The infamous Fourth Schedule List grants arbitrary powers to the authorities for surveillance, restrictions on freedom of movement, repeated security checks, suspicion of terrorism, and sedition.

The authorities and the nationalists of the other ethnicities have been accusing the Baloch activists of sedition and anti-state activities over the years and contradicted the numbers of the disappeared Baloch.

On October 11, 2024, a citizen filed a police report known as the First Information Report (FIR), 654/24, Serial Number 4418, and alleged [Mahrang Baloch](#) and associates for being in contact with an enemy nation that funded Mahrang-led sit-ins across the country, defaming institutions and the facilitators of the terrorist organizations, including the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA). She called the charges politically motivated and retaliatory for her activism.

November 2024: The Federal Government granted the request of the provincial Balochistan government for the deployment of additional units of the military and the Frontier Corps (FC) after a rapid increase in terrorism. The Federal Government agreed to the Balochistan request under Article 245 of the Constitution, Section 131-A of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) 1898, and Sections 4 & 5 of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), 1997.

## **Baloch Militancy**

Since 1947, the Baloch and the Islamic militants have killed thousands of people in Pakistan and the Iranian provinces of Sistan, and the bordering regions stretched among Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan. The Baloch warlords maintained private militias, enslaved their poor people, and controlled the mineral-rich tribal belt and Balochistan. The control of the warlords paralleled with the state in the pockets of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, and tribal belt with the Afghan border are no-go areas for the security forces, and Jirga (court including all men of power) substitutes the government justice system. Marri, Bugti, Magsi, and Mengal are among the powerful tribes with large militias and cache of weapons, including rockets and heavy artillery. In October 2024, sharply deteriorating law and order situation, the return of the Taliban, and continued killings of the members of the security forces, the KP provincial police authorities advised the police against traveling to the areas between Tank and Dera Ismail Khan in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (KP) province.

In 1972, the ethno-national National Awami Party (NAP) won the first Balochistan Assembly elections. But, President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto dismissed the NAP government and accused the NAP of conspiring against Pakistan with the enemy countries. The dismissal of the assembly met with a bloody consequence of deaths and destruction. Journalist Selig Seidenman Harrison, who specialized in South and East Asia, said that 5,300 Baloch militants and 3,300 members of the Pakistani security forces were killed during the next four years of the conflict.

In 2004, after decades of hiatus, the Baloch militants started attacks against high-profile targets and further escalated in 2006. The attacks ensued from the killing of a powerful Baloch warlord, Akbar Bugti, who was killed in a fight with the security forces. The unabated deadly attacks by the militants, detentions, and disappearance resulting from the militants and security forces confrontation have rapidly increased during recent years.

The return of the limited democracy led by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) President Zardari could not placate the Baloch insurgents in 2008. Out of 792 terrorist attacks that killed 386 people, Baloch militants were responsible for 92 percent of the attacks in 2009. In 2010, 600 people had been killed in 730 attacks.

The Baloch are skeptical of Pakistan, and several tribes strongly even oppose the existence of Pakistan on the pretext of unjust distribution of the provincial resources of Balochistan. However, a 2006 Wikileaks document revealed that all the Bloch tribes do not carry anti-state sentiments, and the limited security forces operations confirm the documents. Many of the leaders of Baloch militants now operate militias from outside Pakistan. Since 2011, the anti-Pakistan sentiments among Baloch youths grew rapidly when the alleged enforced disappearances of the Baloch emerged. The Baloch rights activists claimed over 10,000 disappearances and accused the authorities of that. The government claims otherwise and admits the disappearance of a few hundred Balochis. The tribal rivalries and infightings for controlling the provincial resources have added to the people's miseries. The powerful tribes of Balochistan engaged in fighting for centuries.

Founded in the early 2000s, to resist the reforms of the then President and the military chief, Pervez Musharraf, the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) is the leading militant group that has killed more people, members of the security forces and Chinese nationals than any other terrorist groups than any other Baloch militant group. The BLA has used women as suicide bombers, rockets, executions, mass murders, Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), explosions, targeting high-profile dignitaries, and direct attacks on the armed forces of Pakistan.

The coalition-led government of Pakistan has declared the militants as khawariji, or excluded from Islam, and granted arbitrary powers to eliminate terrorism.

### **Timeline of Some Brutal Attacks by the Baloch Terrorists Groups**

November 16, 2024: According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), seven members belonged to the Frontier Corps (FC) were martyred, and 18 others were wounded in an attack at the FC check post of Shah Mardan in the Johan area of Kalat, Balochistan. The security forces

killed six attackers. The banned Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for the terrorist attack.

November 14, 2024: Major Muhammad Haseeb and Havildar Noor Ahmed were martyred in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in the Harnai district of Balochistan. The Army intervened on the intelligence that the terrorists were planning another major attack on civilians. The forces killed three terrorists during ensued battle.

November 9, 2024: A powerful explosion killed 26 people and injured over 62, including women, at the Quetta Railway Station in Balochistan province. The suicide bomber blew himself up at the crowded railway station where the passengers were waiting to board the Peshawar-bound Jaffar Express at 9 a.m. Many of the soldiers, who had completed an infantry course, were among the passengers. The deputy commissioner (DC) Quetta said that the soldiers were the prime target of the terrorists. Many injured were in life-threatening condition.

Agence France-Presse (AFP) quoted Balochistan Inspector General of Police (IG) Moazzam Jah Ansari as saying fourteen soldiers and 12 civilians were killed.

The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) emailed the international media and claimed its suicide wing, Majeed Brigade, had sent a suicide bomber to target the soldiers. The BLA had identified the bomber as Muhammad Rafiq Bizanjo alias Washen. November 14, 2024: Pakistani security forces said they had killed 16 terrorists including a BLA ringleader, Sana alias Baru, in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

November 1, 2024: Five school-going girls and boys aged between 10 to 13 years old and two cops were killed, and at least 20 injured in a terrorist attack in the Mastung district of Balochistan. Later the number of fatalities rose to 9.

October 29, 2024: Unknown terrorists killed five construction workers and injured two in Panjgur's Paroom district of Balochistan.

October 11, 2024: The terrorists killed at least 21 and injured six coal miners at Junaid Coal Company in Duki, Balochistan. The police confirmed that four Afghan nationals and the rest of the victims belong to the Pashtu-speaking neighborhoods of Balochistan. Fearing for their lives and unabated deadly attacks, over 45,000 laborers went back to their native towns outside Balochistan.

October 6, 2024: Separatist terror group Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for a terrorist attack that killed three men, including two Chinese nationals, and injured a dozen people.

August 26, 2024: On the 18th anniversary of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, a former governor and chief minister of Balochistan, the terrorists carried out coordinated attacks in at least 11 districts of Balochistan and killed over 73 men of security agencies and civilians. The terrorists attempted to kill the people of non-Baloch ethnicity, Punjabis in particular. During the attacks, they brutally

slaughtered 23 bus riders in Musakhel, Balochistan, after determining them as Punjabis. The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for the carnage.

September 29, 2024: The terrorists killed seven Punjabi construction workers in the neighborhood of Muhalla Abdul Rehman in the Khuda-i-Abadan area of Panjgur, Balochistan. The owner of the under-construction building had brought them from Multan, the Punjab province, for construction. The terrorists killed the laborers out of ethnic hate. Same day, [The News](#), reported the abduction of more than 20 labourers 'Hours after the deadly attack, more than 20 labourers were "abducted" by armed men in Musakhel, police said on Sunday. As per the police, gunmen opened fire on the camp of the labourers working for a gas company, set ablaze eight bulldozers and took away over 20 labourers with them.'

June 2024: The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) kidnapped 10 picnickers from Shabaan, Balochistan. The kidnapper later released three kidnapped men after finding out they were not the Punjabis. They escaped with the seven kidnapped men whose identities were confirmed as the Punjabis.

May 09, 2024: The terrorists killed seven Punjabi barber shop workers in Gwadar Fish Harbour's Surbandar area, Balochistan – All the victims belonged to the district Khanewal in Punjab. Within two years, the terrorist groups have killed over 41 innocent and impoverished civilians from Southern Punjab in Balochistan. The abject poverty has forced the people in south Punjab to migrate to the other provinces to make ends meet.

April 19, 2024: A suicide bomber detonated an explosive when the van carrying five Japanese nationals slowed down in Karachi. The Japanese national remained unhurt, but two passers-by were killed while police shot dead another attacker.

March 2024: The terrorists killed five Chinese engineers and their driver in Besham; The Baloch Liberation Army suicide wing, Majeed Brigade, tried to attack Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) and Pakistan's second largest naval airbase, PNS Siddique, in Balochistan. The security forces thwarted both attacks. The terrorist attacks in Dasu, Tarbela, and several other places in Pakistan over the years have killed dozens of people.

April 2022: a suicide bomber killed three Chinese tutors and a Pakistani driver in a suicide bombing near Karachi University's Confucius Institute. The separatist Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed the attack.

### **Baloch Rights Groups and Activists**

Many Baloch rights activists are the family members of the alleged enforced disappearances and the victims of the extrajudicial killings.

Sammi Deen Baloch's father, Dr. Deen Muhammad Baloch, disappeared on June 28, 2009, when she was only 11 years old. Since then, she has been raising her voice for the recovery of her father and the other missing persons in Balochistan. Ms. Baloch, family, friends, and other activists against the enforced disappearances alleged the security forces for the disappearance of

Dr. Baloch. According to the eyewitnesses, law enforcement agencies (LEAs) raided his hospital, tortured, blindfolded, and threw him in the LEAs vehicle. That was the last time Dr. Baloch was seen. People remember him as an active member of the community and a well-respected person. Sammi Deen actively participated in the protests against the alleged enforced disappearances.

[Mahrang Baloch](#) started her activism after her father, Abdul Gaffar Langove, disappeared on December 12, 2009, and his mutilated body was found in 2011. Her brother disappeared in December 2017 and returned after three months. She has struggled to find her father's whereabouts and then for the justice of his murder since adolescence. She, her family, and rights activists allege authorities for the abduction of her father and brother. The evidence and disappearing circumstances of her father indicated the disappearance of her father, an enforced disappearance, and the killing, an extrajudicial murder. She is currently affiliated with the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC).

Mama Qadeer Baloch, leader of the Voice for the Baloch Missing Persons (VBMP), has traveled across the country and set up protest camps for over 14 years against the alleged enforced disappearances. He claims the over 68,000 enforced disappearances of the Baloch individuals since 2000. Authorities have placed his name on the Exit Control List (ECL).

## **Indian Involvement**

The nuclear-armed neighbors India and Pakistan have been trading allegations, planting stories, and supporting proxy wars to maintain supremacy in the region. Both countries are dangerously involved in the nuclear race. In the factual contrast, India is significantly larger in land, population, and economy than Pakistan. Nonetheless, enduring China and Pakistan's friendship vexed India to control the smaller countries in the region. Christine Fair, a Pakistan expert at Georgetown University, said to have the knowledge that India funneled money into Balochistan.

In December 2023, Commander Sarfraz Ahmed Bungulzai of the Baloch National Army (BNA) terror group surrendered and confessed to the Pakistani authorities that India and the Baloch separatists were conspiring against Pakistan. He admitted in a press conference in Quetta that he started the struggle for the Baloch community but later found out that India was behind the terrorism and conspiracies in Balochistan. He also said that a terrorist group, Baloch Raj Aajoi Sangar (BRAS), is behind the chopper crash that killed the members of the Pakistani forces in 2022.

In March 2016, Pakistani authorities arrested an Indian spy, Kulbhushan Yadav, in a counter-intelligence operation in Balochistan. Yadav was spying for the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), the Indian spy agency, and impersonating Hussein Mubarak Patel. India recognized him as a retired member of the Indian Naval forces.

Indian daily The Hindu revealed in an article published in July 2019 that the Baloch separatist commanders have been seeking medical treatments for extended periods in Indian healthcare facilities using fake names.



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