



# TRUTH TRACKER

WATCHING OUT FOR PAKISTAN



**Pakistan likely to join Saudi-led military alliance amid concerns**  
**Presumed sectarian dimension of the IMA worries people inside Pakistan**

**Pg. 09**

**Pakistani tribal region merge with KP to arrest peace in region**

Pg. 08

Magazine By:





Truth Tracker offers an in-depth look at Pakistan's governance following the 2013 general elections.

The team has four goals:

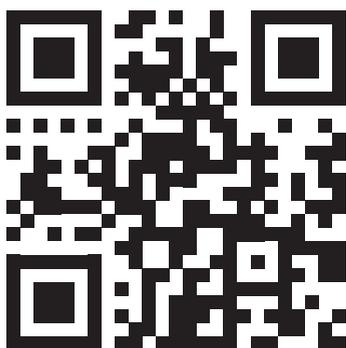
- 1.** We track the promises made by politicians and parties during the national election campaign of 2013, to hold them accountable on the fulfilment of these promises. See our explanation of the progress of promises.
- 2.** We fact-check statements made by and about public figures in politics and governance at all levels, to check the spread of rumours and falsehood and to give credit for truthful statements. See our explanation of the rulings.
- 3.** We give citizens a way to directly question the words and actions of their elected representatives, by providing a forum for requests, comments and queries. Comment on any post, or submit a question to us on the Contact page, via Twitter, or on Facebook.
- 4.** We offer a model of professional public service reporting to help improve the quality of Pakistani journalism.

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## **Editorial**

### **Gen Raheel: Where does parliament stand?**

An important question about the 39-country Islamic Military Alliance has been resolved - recently retired Pakistan Army Chief Raheel Sharif will lead it, at the request of Saudi Arabia.

Many other crucial questions about the alliance remain, however.

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif confirmed Gen Raheel's appointment in a recent TV interview, and said it was an understanding between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. This action itself is unprecedented - for a Pakistani general, just four months after his retirement, to lead a military alliance in another country.

The objectives of the alliance, announced by Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman in December 2015, are still obscure. Prince Salman made the announcement at a crucial time, when Saudi Arabia was trying to establish its hegemony in Yemen and Syria.

Questions abound that have never been answered by any country of the alliance. Who will provide soldiers for the alliance? Who will fund it? What will be the role of it? Where it will fight? Why did Saudi Arabia want a Pakistani General to lead the alliance?

If the Islamic Military Alliance is meant to be engaged in the War on Terror, what function will it serve? Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arab and several other Islamic countries' forces are already engaged in this war in their respective territories.

In the past, Pakistan Army participated in several peace missions on the UN's call. In November 1979, followers of an Arab hardliner cleric Sheikh Bin Baaz had occupied Holy Kaaba in Mecca, and a troop of Pakistan Special Services Group (SSG) was sent for the operation as non-Muslim forces cannot enter Mecca.

Sending a retired general to a foreign monarchy is something else entirely for the Pakistan Army.

This time, the decision has been made by a single person, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who has very close and strong ties with Saudi Royal Family. But, as head of a democratic state, he should have not made such decision.

He could have consulted the parliament before taking any step. He could have paved a reasonable way for Gen Raheel's departure for the alliance by getting an endorsement from parliament.

By taking this action unilaterally instead, Sharif proves Imran Khan's allegations that the prime minister is a king, and that he has turned the parliament into a rubber stamp. This time Sharif didn't even bother with the stamp.

International analysts believe that the Saudis' move aims at curtailing Iran's influence and role at an international level. The decision might be more dangerous for Pakistan where Saudi Arabia and Iran have been fighting proxy wars for the last four decades, and where the world's second largest Shia populations exists.

Pakistan's government is supposed to represent the interests of the entire nation. Sharif's acquiescence to this Saudi request does not bode well for our democracy.

*Mubasher Bukhari*

# **Contents**

**05.**

**Pakistani-American loses all legal battles for surrogacy**

**06.**

**WAPDA's extravagant indulgences**

**08.**

**Pakistani tribal region merge with KP to arrest peace in region**

**09**

**In KP, 20 cases of honour killing in first 45 days of 2017**

**11.**

**Media Tracker**

**17.**

**Defeating the Islamic State: A war mired in contradictions**

**19.**

**In Pakistan, laws fail to stop honour killing**

**20.**

**Progressive literature finds avid readership in disaffected Balochistan**

**21.**

**Sole church in the tribal region; a symbol of communal co-existence**

**Price: 100 Rupees**



## Editor's Note

### Social media wars

Recent days have seen a debate about the code of conduct for social media users in the country. Strict action has been demanded by leaders against blasphemous content and that threatening terror or the state. The ruling of Islamabad High Court's Judge Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui, the Punjab government directives and the interior minister, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan's emphasis for a joint strategic remedy for the OIC Arab League only reinforces the fears borne from the controversial cybercrime bill from August 2016 and endangers the space for tolerance in the society.

Such events disturb intellectuals, rights' and social media activists alike among thinking Pakistanis for several reasons. First, it is feared that such are cloaked attempts aimed at curtailing free speech and dissent in the country. Curtailing of free speech and dissent could breed a culture of fear like in dictatorial states where people even discontinue critical thinking for fear of being reported.

Second, Human rights activists should worry that while they had been actively advocating free expression and campaigning against persecution and or disappearances of media personnel and bloggers, some of whom are still missing, making a criminal offence punishable for criticism of the government, whistleblowing or offering a different mindset could seriously jeopardies the truth seekers from supporting and seeking justice for our citizens. A similar fate awaits the rights' activists who report crimes against the minorities in an effort to protect democracy.

Third, election year is around the corner and the campaigning has already begun on social and news media. This campaign is also unique in the history of Pakistan because while the last elections were famed for the online media trials, netizen are keeping tabs on the promises and delivery of the political individuals and parties for 2018. An attempt to criticise political dogmas in the past has earned individuals and parties labels of terrorism and even treason. There's no assurance that online election campaigning would provide a safe turf for well-meaning critics now.

Fourth, the right's movement to ensure free speech in the country has had a long and bloody history. We have witnessed strangulation of showbiz stars and murder of political leaders, to say the least, for speaking out their minds. Chaudhry Nisar expressed his wish to take the matter to UN, but before he does that he must listen to the stakeholders whose suggestions were conveniently kept out of the cybercrime bill. For a large population of social media users no definition of the state security and other blanket terms is offered. In the meantime Nawaz Sharif, his ilk and the weepy judge may be praiseworthy for some but a majority of patriotic Muslims need to know where their allegiances lie.

True, cases of media misconduct foster hate crimes. Pakistan government should also announce a policy to deactivate and punish the hatemongers adhering to banned religious organisations that acquire new web addresses and continually resurface indoctrinating and damaging younger generations with their propaganda.

*Ameerah Javeria*

## Contents

### Promise Tracking

#### 12.

**PML-N failed to fulfil promise of depoliticising sports**

#### 13.

**Khan's promise to end VIP culture in KP stands compromised**

#### 14.

**The shrinking fund allocations for the transgendered population of KP may put them in peril**

#### 15.

**PPP breaks promise to reduce infant mortality rate**

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## Security

# Pakistan likely to join Saudi-led military alliance amid concerns

**Presumed sectarian dimension of the IMA worries people inside Pakistan**



**Waqar Gillani**

**ISLAMABAD:** With the official announcement allowing its former army chief Raheel Sharif to head Saudi-led Islamic Military Alliance (IMA) and considering sending of its military troops to Saudi Arabia to defend its territory, Pakistan indicated its participation in a presumed sectarian (Sunni) states alliance in the Middle East amid peoples' concerns.

Pakistan's defence minister, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, last week, publicly confirmed the government consent to Saudi Arabia in writing, allowing its former army chief, Raheel Sharif, to lead the military coalition for three-years. "Saudi Arabia asked Pakistan for it and we have said yes. Only formality of procedures is to be completed now," he said, adding, "Also, we want to make this clear that neither this Saudi-alliance nor Pakistan will become part of any sectarian conflict or agenda that would harm other Muslim countries (Iran)." Asif said rather Pakistan would like to play a role of mediator between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Following the neighboring Yemen civil war and disposition of Yemeni administration, Saudi Arabia, along with its Gulf allies, announced the formation of the Islamic Military Alliance (IMA) in the end of 2015. The alliance, according official Saudi statement, aims "to fight against terrorism

led by Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and a joint operations center shall be established in the city of Riyadh to coordinate and support military operations to fight terrorism and to develop the necessary programs and mechanisms for supporting these efforts."

Though Pakistan, officially, still denies its participation in the alliance but in the Saudi official statement it is among the countries part of this alliance to fight terror. The coalition started from 34 countries now comprises of 41 Muslim states with expectations of further expansion. Shia majority Islamic states Iran, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq are still not part of the alliance raising concerns of people and analysts about the presumed sectarian dimension of the alliance with the possible focus on Yemen. These states presume that Riyadh-led alliance is not motivated by the desire to combat terrorism but sectarian and geopolitical rivalries. However, there are no official details of the role of this alliance yet.

Separately, Pakistan is also considering sending some military troops to Saudi Arabia to defend its territories against any threat on Saudi request.

"The agenda and structure of the IMA is still unclear as details are likely to be shared with Pakistan in May," federal defence minister said. "

"We have an agreement with Saudi Arabia since 1982 that we will send military aid to defend Saudi territory. It

is a bilateral agreement," he said, adding, "The considerations to send troops are underway under that agreement and even in this case Pakistani forces will be deployed within Saudi territory and will not become part of any external conflict."

"There are some serious objections to this alliance and Pakistani support to it," Dr Mohammad Waseem, professor of Political Science at Lahore University of Management Sciences, commented. He said, largely, this Saudi-led alliance is considered as sectarian, anti- Shia and anti-Iran, therefore, with Iran as our neighbor, such step of joining this alliance will be adventurous and could result in worsening relations between the two countries – Pakistan and Iran. Waseem argued that the main objection is that Pakistan is not identified with a sect even though it is predominantly a Sunni Muslim state. "We cannot lose the supra sectarian identity. We cannot identify our state with a sect and such steps will put Pakistan and its military in an embarrassing position," he contended.

"Secondly, there was the idea about the military help to Saudi Arabia earlier too. In 1991 Iraq war Pakistan sent its military troops in Saudi Arabia but they remained away from the border. Now, there is another situation, a couple of years ago Pakistan managed to convince Saudi Arabia that it cannot send its troops to fight in Yemen. At least, officially, they were not sent and now if we send the troops the question arises is there change of policy?" Waseem questioned. He

asserted that the presence of Pakistani troops in a combat position for Saudi Arabia would be highly embarrassing at this point.

Soon after the IMA was formed, Saudi top ministers visited Pakistan and talked about Pakistan's role in the alliance. Saudi foreign minister Adel Bin Ahmed al Jubeir and Saudi Defence Minister and Deputy Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al Saud, separately, visited Pakistan in January 2016 and also met the then army chief Raheel Sharif at General Headquarters (GHQ). A week later, Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and army chief Raheel Sharif together visited Saudi Arabia and Iran, respectively, as a peace mission to ease tension between the two countries, especially after the IMA formation. In March 2016, Pakistani PM and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) again together visited Saudi Arabia and also witnessed the joint military exercises of the IMA. Following the reports that Pakistan is becoming a part of Saudi coalition force, against the Houthi rebels in Yemen, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif publicly declared, "Any threat to Saudi Arabia's territorial integrity would evoke a strong response from Pakistan."

One of the main opposition parties of the

country, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, has also opposed the permission of former army chief, Raheel Sharif, to join the Saudi-led alliance. "The military alliance of Muslim states is apparently being formed against Iran and, therefore, the appointment of Pakistan's former Army chief as its commander would send a negative message that Pakistan is also against Iran," an official statement by the PTI said. PTI Member National Assembly and senior leader Dr Shireen Mizari said that the issue had already been discussed in parliament a year ago and it was collectively discussed that Pakistan would not become part of such controversial alliance that may increase conflict between the Muslim countries.

In April 2016, Pakistan's parliament debated reports that country is becoming part of Saudi alliance against Yemen and turned down the Saudi request. Members of the parliament opted instead for a neutral stance on the Yemen conflict to play the role of a mediator between two brotherly Muslim countries – Saudi Arabia and Iran.

At the moment, there is no plan to send military troops to Saudi Arabia. And if there is a need to send them, the matter will be discussed in the parliament before taking a

final decision because Pakistan should not become partisan in any conflict between the two Muslim countries," said the ruling Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz senator and former army general Abdul Qayum. He maintained there was agreement in 1982 but a foreign policy decision of such a magnitude could not be taken alone.

"Given the track record, Pakistan may send some troops to Saudi Arabia for the protection of Saudi kingdom, eventually, but still there are many question marks on the role of alliance, its proposed head and the country because it carries serious implications for Pakistan for opting this dangerous and complicated path," Imtiaz Gull, a prominent security analyst said. Gull argued that there is no Shia-Muslim majority country in the alliance till date and such steps by Pakistan are politically risky and the claimed role of mediation without consulting Iran before joining the coalition or sending any troops will be at the cost of annoying Iran. Therefore, until the IMA purpose and allies are defined further, big questions are looming on Pakistan and its former army chief's role in this issue.



## Accountability

### WAPDA's extravagant indulgences



Anwer Sumra

**LAHORE:** The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) management allegedly recruited 10 men in a dubious process only to accommodate some cronies by creating new posts, even on redundant slots, during the last six

month.

The recruitments were made on the wish of newly appointed Chairman Lieutenant General (Retd.) Muzammil Hussain since August 24, 2016. WAPDA management seems to be deviating from its mandate (construction of dams for electricity production) and is spending public money for provision of luxuries to its Chairman to maintain personal physical fitness.

According to a document obtained by Truth tracker, the recruitments were made on national pay scale 18 to 20 and out of 10 recruited men nine have a military background allegedly from the regiment of the chairman. All have been offered huge perks and privileges despite the facts they have no opportunity to contribute to the execution of mandate given to WAPDA by the government, as indicated by the document.

The brigade of recruits include Brig (Retd) Akhtar Abbas Janjua, (BPS 20) PSO to Chairman; Brig (Retd) Sohaib Taqi, (BPS 20) General Manager Land Acquisition; Najeeb Ahmed Turk (the lone civilian, BPS-20) Advisor on Procurement and Clearance; Lt. Col (R) Abdul Ghaffar Khan Babar Sarfraz, (BPS 19) Advisor to Authority on Dasu HPP Land acquisition; Lt. Col (Retd) Tahir Raja, (BPS 19) Advisor to Authority on Security of Tarbela Dam; Lt. Col (R) Mohsin Ali, (BPS 19) Director Sports Training; Lt. Col (R) Afzal Ahmad, (BPS 19) Director Transport; Major (R) Hassan Shakeel Khan, (BPS 18) Advisor to Authority on Social and Resettlement Works at Dasu; Major (R) Faisal Jawad, (BPS 18) Deputy Director Security and; Major (R) Ali Zaidi, (BPS 18) Deputy Director Security, the document with TT reveals.

Five of these posts, including three in BPS 20 and two in BSP 19, were filled without advertising the positions in any national press, showing a complete disregard for transparency and merit in the government hiring, as required by the decisions of the Supreme Court as well as contract employment policy of government. Remaining five recruitments were made after advertisement of their posts but the National Testing Service (NTS) exams requirement was relaxed for them, the documents adds.

The mala fides of the higher-ups is evident from the fact that Brig (R) Shoaib Taqi was hired for the post GM land acquisition which was not needed. He was, therefore, re-designated as GM Human Resource Development and given the portfolio of Managing Director Administration- a regular post on which a Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) BS-21 officer is already serving. The latter is asked to establish a 'Medical College', which is not the mandate of WAPDA from any side of designated task and Act, the document says. All the recruited men are drawing Rs.3.2 million as perks and privileges per month from WAPDA.

#### Waste of Public Funds

The federal government has announced adoption of austerity measures in all its public expenditures with the aim to promote good governance with wise utilization of public coffers. Whereas, this policy has no worth for WAPDA and its boss because the authority is establishing a fully furnished and well-equipped gymnasium with the latest gadgets at WAPDA house Lahore.

The authority has spent Rs.5.0 million for the purchase of exercising machinery and Rs.1.5 million for renovation, installation of LED screen and DJ system in the gym. The chairman is seldom in head office in Lahore, yet the authority has spent Rs.6.5 million of the public money on building a gymnasium at the head office for the exclusive use of the chairman to maintain fitness, the document with TT reveals. The establishment of high-tech gym is surprising since WAPDA has a sports

complex in Kot Lakhpat Lahore where gym facilities are available for its officials.

WAPDA was established through an Act of Parliament in 1958 as an autonomous and statutory body under the administrative control of the federal government. The Authority consists of a Chairman and three members (water, power and finance). The total manpower of authority was 1,75,000 when it was unbundled in 2007 and bifurcated into two distinct entities i.e., WAPDA and Pakistan Electric Power Company (PEPCO). After unbundling, WAPDA was given the mandate for development of water and hydropower resources.

Now its manpower is slashed to 17,000 only because rest went to PEPCO. PEPCO is vested with the responsibility of thermal power generation, transmission, distribution and billing. It is also responsible for the management of all the affairs of corporatized nine distribution companies (DISCOs), four generation companies (GENCOs) and a National Transmission Dispatch Company (NTDC). These companies are working under independent Board of Directors, the official web site says.

Despite its adherence to its mandate, the higher management started the exercise to establish a medical college with 100 student seats in Lahore on the strong wish of Chairman. A steering committee was set up to hire a project director for the establishment of medical college which is hired on a package of Rs.3,00,000 per month. Even a meeting was convened with the officials of Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) in which it advised a purpose-built state-of-the art campus sprawling over an area of 50,000 square feet and 500 bed hospital, legally required by PMDC for its registration, the official documents says.

The Chairman has since diverted 500 million from the WAPDA Foundation Fund (out of Rs.800 million) illegally to set up a Medical School, something to which he is not empowered under section 8 of the WAPDA Act. The project of establishing medical school is a sham (to help the cronies) and a waste of public funds negating its mandate, the official documents reveals.

The chairman also approved to vacate all offices from Sunny View site to convert it in to Medical College, which has an estimated area of 30,000 square feet. All WAPDA offices have been directed to relocate in rented buildings to enable for renovation/re-designing and construction of the steel structure at the site in the shortest span of time, which can't be justified from any quarters. Millions of rupees have been released for the renovation and alteration work of vicinity Sunny View. Presently WAPDA current hospital, with the bed capacity of 250 (occupancy is only 70 per cent), has been directed by chairman to add 250 beds

in the basement, which is not practically possible, an official confirms.

The prime minister terminated former chairman Zafar Mehmood (he claims he resigned) in August 2016 over slow pace of work, negligence, poor performance and delay in construction work at Neelum Jhelum, Dasu, Tarbela, and Katchi Canal projects. Lieutenant General (R) Muzammil Hussain was appointed chairman while giving him challenging task to execute all these projects with in stipulated time frame work to fulfill the promise of ending load-shedding before next general elections 2018, the documents with TT says.

The chairman, however, has changed his focus and found establishment of a medical college a more attractive business, contrary to the mandate of WAPDA. He is even housing himself in Islamabad to directly supervise the construction work and installation of machinery on all projects.

When contacted, WAPDA spokesperson stated that the recruitments have been made in accordance with the powers, which the authority possesses as an autonomous organization. WAPDA is setting an indoor exercise facility at WAPDA House to facilitate its officials who remain busy in discharging their duties beyond office hours most often.

WAPDA's projects are located across the country, mostly in the North. The incumbent Chairman makes whirlwind visits to the projects' sites; spending his time on meeting with the higher authorities and stakeholders. Rest of the time he remains at WAPDA House to discharge his duties not only during weekdays but also during the off days, said the spokesman.

The spokesperson added that WAPDA has developed a very good health care system across Pakistan for its employees and their families. It intends to serve the society in health sector as well under its corporate social responsibility and use its current facilities to establish a Medical College. It is important to note that WAPDA Foundation is a subsidiary of WAPDA, whose income is used for the welfare purpose.



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## Economic Development

# Pakistani tribal region merge with KP to arrest peace in region



**Rehmat Mehsud**

**Islamabad:** The government in March this year has announced merger of the restive Pakistani tribal region with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, ending its autonomous status and paving way for greater peace not only in FATA but also in Pakistan and the region, FATA Research Centre (FRC), a think tank, says.

Irfan U Din, senior researcher and security analyst for Pakistan and Afghanistan at FRC told Truth Tracker: “the merger of FATA region, bordering Afghanistan, with KP will help in drying up public support for militants.”

According to a study by FRC published in 2016, FATA is being administered by Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) introduced in 1901 as a part of a British strategy to establish their control over the tribal areas.

“A survey by FRC suggested 74 per cent people of the tribal region want a merger of Fata with KP,” Din recalled. Rehmat Khan, additional inspector general (AIG) police (R), said that Fata should not be turned into a laboratory to conduct experiments. “Merging of Fata with KP is a good step but the government is employing delaying tactics to implement its recommendations,” he added.

The FRC study stated even after Pakistan came into being in 1947, FCR was retained in its original form. The President of Pakistan through the Governor of KP

province exercises sole jurisdiction over Fata through the civil servants.

However, through a notification back in November 2015, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif tasked a committee to undertake reforms in Fata. Since then Fata Reforms Committee had held series of meetings with what the committee’s officials said all stakeholders.

Chaired by the prime minister, the federal cabinet on March 2 this year approved recommendations of Fata Reforms Committee, which envisages merger of Fata with KP province over the next five years.

“It is a historic decision and we must congratulate the whole country,” Sartaj Aziz, advisor to the prime minister on foreign affairs and convener of Fata Reforms Committee, told a crowded press conference on this occasion, March 2 this year.

Din recalled the Soviet-Afghan war in the 1980s further aggravated the power equation, since Jihad in Afghanistan raised the stature of local clergy or Mullah as another important actor in FATA.

Aziz announced a committee would be formed this April to prioritize preparation of a 10-year socio-economic development plan for FATA. Over a Rs. 110 billion development package, proposed by a six member FATA reforms committee, has been approved for FATA.

According to Fata Reforms Committee, the National Finance Commission (NFC) would be requested to allocate 3 per cent of the federal divisible pool on an annual basis

for implementation of Fata Development Plan (FDP).

In addition, about 30 per cent of the allocation in the FDP would be channeled through the local governments while Fata Development Authority (FDA) is reorganized for implementation of 10-year Socio-Economic Development Plan.

The cabinet has also decided to repeal the FCR to bring FATA at a par with other areas of the country through a 10-year development package.

Aziz said a provision would be made through a constitutional amendment enabling Fata people to elect their representatives to the KP Assembly in the looming 2018 ballots.

The FRC study stated that (governance) vacuum was adequately filled by militants in the post-September 2001 milieu. Since then, violence in FATA not only brought havoc to the tribal people but also jeopardized an already weak writ of the state over the region.

Post-9/11, the study finds, there is a worldwide consensus that if places like Fata remain ungoverned or beyond the state’s writ, they may pose security challenges of a global scale.

According to another report “Reform Process in the FATA and the Future of FCR: A Local Perspective,” conducted by Fozia Saeed Khan and Saeed Khan in 2016, a separate set of administrative system governs this region.

According to one of the clauses of the

FCR, principle of collective responsibility is enshrined in FCR, as the whole tribe is made responsible for the crime if the culprit is not traceable. However, Aziz declared, "Provisions relating to collective responsibility clause will be omitted to make an individual responsible for his own acts."

Situated along the porous Pak- Afghan border, the study stated that Fata has an area of 27,220 square kilometers with its population according to 1998 census is 3.8 million but observers believe its current population exceeds six million and some estimates put the figure between 7 to 10 million people.

According to the study, the socio-economic indicators of FATA reveal the backwardness of the region in stark terms. A 60 per cent of population lives below poverty line, literacy rate is 17 per cent for the males and 3 per cent for females

(as compared to 43% national coverage), infrastructure, educational facilities and health facilities are extremely poor.

Local government polls would be held in FATA soon after the 2018 ballots, Aziz said. Permit system for exports and imports in and from FATA would be abolished to eliminate large-scale corruption. Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) would ensure that all of the development funds in the tribal region are properly audited.

The jurisdiction of the Peshawar High Court and Supreme Court of Pakistan would be extended to FATA through an act of parliament. Frontier Corps (FC) would also undergo advanced capacity building and a new FC wing would be established for improved border management.

Without going into details, Aziz said connectivity of FATA with China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would be

ensured. The State Bank of Pakistan would find avenues to establish banks' branches in tribal region. He said the quota of FATA students in all educational and health institutions would be doubled and retained for 10 years after it is merged with the KP province.

Ali Wazir, a tribal elder, told Truth Tracker that reforms for FATA is nothing but a total mess and it would lead to administrative vacuum. "We support merger of Fata with KP but we are virtually pushed into a blind street because the policies will stay unchanged for another decade," Wazir rued.

"In order to deny space for militants to regroup in Fata in future, US and other countries should help Pakistan in the development work in a post- conflict FATA reconstruction phase," Din concluded.



## Human Rights

### In KP, 20 cases of honour killing in first 45 days of 2017



**Asad Khan**

**Peshawar:** 20 cases of honour killing have been reported in the first one and a half months of 2017 in different parts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, making it a woman murdered in the name of honour every second day on the average, shows data provided by Aurat Foundation, Pakistan's leading women rights organization.

Hina Shahnawaz, 27, was one of the women who was killed in the name of

honour. She was gunned down by her cousin on February 6, 2017, inside her home at Ustarzai Payan area of the Kohat district. According to the first information report (FIR) lodged in the Ustarzai Police Station, Hina's first cousin Mehboob Alam Khan was upset that she worked for a non-profit organisation. He considered it detrimental for the honour of his family.

Hina had an MPhil degree from the University of Peshawar in social sciences. She had been compelled to take up a job in an NGO in Kohat district to support her family. She was the sole bread-winner of her family after her father, Shahnawaz,

died of cancer recently and her elder brother was murdered in a fight the broke out in the village. Hina also supported her elder sister and her two children since her brother in law, who worked as labourer in Saudi Arabia, passed away due to cardiac arrest.

Another girl, Sadiqeen, 26, was allegedly shot dead by her brother Khalid Khan in the Shangla district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on February 9 in what news reports said was a suspected honour killing. And on February 10, police in Nowshehra Kalan recovered the dead body of a woman allegedly killed for

honour.

Of the nearly nine cases of honour killing in Swat, several cases were not registered with the local police but only reported in local newspapers.

“The number of honour killing cases has been growing by the day while the government stays a silence spectator to violence against women,” a social activist Taimur Kamal told News Lens.

According to the statistics provided by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), a total of 4398 cases of honour killing were reported from different parts of Pakistan from January 2011 to January 2017. Of these, 390 cases were reported from different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with Peshawar on top - 71 cases - and Mardan second with 55 cases. 345 of those killed in the name of honour were women whereas 45 men.

As for cases of violence against women, the Aurat Foundation’s annual report on women rights in 2016 says that 7852 cases were reported last year. The report said that 287 cases of violence against women were reported from KP in the first nine months of 2016, with the highest number of cases taking place in Peshawar (102). The top three crimes against women, according to the report, were kidnapping, rape and murder.

Saima Munir, a women rights activist who works for the Aurat Foundation, said: “Compared to 2015, there was a 70 percent increase in honour killings in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2016.”

“These do not include cases from the tribal and rural areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where honour killings are not reported but settled mutually by families or men and women who decide to name it a ‘suicide,’” said Munir.

Most of these cases, she said, were reported from Peshawar. “Peshawar remains on the top of the list while we don’t know about the rural districts where [honour killing] cases are not reported. There needs to greater awareness among the public about women rights to address this situation.”

The KP Social Welfare Department and the KP Women Commission drafted a Women Protection Bill, tabled by the provincial government in KP Assembly in March 2016. The bill was sent to the Islamic Ideological Council - a constitutional body that advises the legislature whether or not a certain law is repugnant to Islam, namely to the Qur’an and Sunna - for reviewed which in April 2016 rejected the bill saying most of its clauses were un-Islamic.

Khwendu Kor, a women rights group working in KP and tribal areas of FATA, says that lack of education, and an androcentric society and legislature were to blame as the main cause of honour killings.

“At one level, it is the society and on the other it is the non-existence or lack of implementation of laws,” said Khwendu Kor focal person Nazra Syed. “Due to lack of awareness and education, the Pashtun society’s men are conservative. They consider women their property. In our male dominated society, women are entirely dependent on men, illustrated by the fact that a girl cannot go to school or medical treatment without permission from her father or a brother.”

Syed said that when domestic issues escalate, they often culminate into a killing, with society giving it the name of honour. “This makes the family members proud of the act [instead of regretting it].”

“If common people know about these

cases,” she said, “why were the lawmakers, authorities and the judiciary silent?” “The government was not following up on the Women Protection Bill after the CII rejected it,” she said.

“In most honour killing cases, the accused are not arrested or released after the issue is resolved out of court because the families do not act with mutual conscience,” said Syed.

Khushnood Begum, a senior lawyer at the Peshawar High Court, said most cases of honour killing were resolved out of court. She said the police arrested the accused under section 324 or 302 which are compoundable. After some time, families enter a mutual settlement and the accused are released.

“In these cases [where the accused is free] the men go free whereas the women are held accused [for bringing dishonour to a family],” said Begum. “Increasingly though, family members kill the women and make it appear as if it was a suicide,” she added.

“Even though the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has a Provincial Commission on the Status of Women that according to its Chairperson Neleem Turo, is working to eradicate gender-based violence in the province, they are not very successful if the recent spike in honour killings and domestic violence is anything to go by,” said women workers.

“In Hina’s case,” said Turo, “the police had arrested the killers and they would be awarded exemplary punishment, but killers got away because the families chose to resolve the issue out of court. The honour killing got sanctioned in society, without fear or let up. We have taken this issue seriously and will have a solution in the shape of a law soon.”



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# Media Tracker



Media Tracker lists the challenges and achievements of the journalists and media organisations worldwide. Here's a list of journalism at risk stories in the recent month. We would like to thank international media protection organisation and news outlets for their content.

- In a violation of counterterrorism laws of the state, a netizen, [Meng Juntao](#), in [Xinjiang](#) was placed in administrative detention for 15 days, starting February 18, 2017, on charges of using a super VPN (virtual private network) to listen to [Radio Free Asia \(RFA\)](#) and other supposedly "anti-government" websites on his cell phone. Police allegedly told the RFA reporter that, "[the media have no right to ask questions.](#)" The international Federation of journalists (IFJ) strongly condemned the inappropriate laws that run contrary to the right of press freedom and that to access information enshrined in the constitution of China. (IFJ)
- At least 10 journalists have been arrested while covering protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock Indian Reservation in the [United States](#). Two of those journalists, [Christopher Schiano](#) and [Nicholas Georgiades](#), go on trial this week. Arresting reporters can have a damaging effect on Press Freedom. CPJ called on the Morton County State's Attorney's Office to drop charges against the journalists reporting on the protests. (CPJ)
- [Ahmad Bashir Attayee](#), a news reporter for [Ariana News TV](#), was assaulted by a police officer while he was covering Nowroz (Persian New Year) celebrations in Balkh province, Afghanistan, on March 22, 2017. Cameraman [Ahmad Waled Sediqi](#) was also beaten for recording the assault on the reporter and his camera was broken. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the Afghan Independent Journalist Association (AIJA) protested the assault. (IFJ)
- Two Brazilian journalists – [Record TV reporter Leandro Stoliar](#) and cameraman [Gilzon Souza de Oliveira](#) were deported last month while investigating a case of corruption involving the Brazilian conglomerate Odebrecht and state agencies in [Venezuela](#). They were arrested by the Venezuelan government's intelligence and counter-espionage agency, held for ten hours and subjected to several heavy-handed interrogation sessions; called "state terrorists" and were threatened with being imprisoned "forever."
- More than 20 journalists and media workers of at least nine different nationalities have been denied entry in [Venezuela](#) since last August. The official grounds have been violation of immigration regulations and other bureaucratic pretexts. [Reporter Sans Frontier, RSF](#), points out that back in December 2015, foreign reporters who wanted to cover that month's parliamentary elections had to sign a good conduct pledge to avoid the withdrawal of their accreditation. Venezuela is ranked 139th out of 180 countries in RSF's 2016 World Press Freedom Index.
- After 18 years in an [Uzbekistan](#) prison for his journalism, [Muhammad Bekjanov](#) is finally free. Along with his colleague [Yusuf Ruzimuradov](#), he was the joint-longest imprisoned journalist in the world-- and Ruzimuradov remains in jail. Bekjanov suffered torture and abuse as a result of his critical reporting, and his release was long overdue. Now, Uzbekistan must release all the journalists who remain imprisoned within its jails. (CPJ)

# Promise Tracking

## PML-N failed to fulfil promise of depoliticising sports



**Durdana Najam**

### The Promise

Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) had promised in its 2013 manifesto that when they will come to power, it will depoliticize sports.

### Background

Cricket and Hockey in Pakistan have been the most affected victims of politicization.

After 70 years, 28 Chairmen and a host of controversies, Pakistan is still struggling to run cricket in a country where millions follow it with a passion. We have seen Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif unseating Zaka Ashraf twice as the Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board. In his place, Sharif appointed Najam Sethi, a journalist, who was appointed as the chairman of the board of governance of the PCB after undying controversies and legal battles.

“It is entirely unethical to appoint a political person,” said Sirajul Islam Bukhari, a former president of the Karachi Cricket Association.

Ayub Khan, Pakistan’s first military ruler, initiated the trend of appointing the cricket chief chosen by the president of Pakistan. This led to a succession of military men, judges, businessmen, former players, diplomats and politicians in the top positions to become the president of Pakistan Cricket Board. A lieutenant general who was once made PCB chief was caught asking on record: “Why doesn’t the board give the ‘man of the match’ award to all the players?” This shows the miniscule level of insight that the presidents of PCB have brought to the board.

There have been demands for a fair election of the president without any political interference. Sethi has promised to, “... Restore the prestige of Pakistan cricket,” by forming the new constitution. Former Pakistani captain and the leader of a political party Imran Khan has decided Sethi’s assertion saying: “How can you have accountability for a person who is the president’s man?”

Although in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, the ruling party appoints the cricket board chief, in the main cricketing countries such as India, England and Australia, presidents for the cricket boards are elected by members of local associations. The International Cricket Council had thrice warned Pakistan of ‘outside actions’ over ‘government interference.’

After an attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore in March 2009, the ICC formed a task force to investigate issues with the cricket board in Pakistan. Among the suggestions, it was recommended that political appointments should be abolished, but the PCB rejected the advice, saying it was not ‘viable.’

The case is precisely the same with hockey, or any other sport, for that matter.

Pakistan won their last Olympic gold medal at Los Angeles in 1984, and their last Olympic bronze medal at Barcelona in 1992. It won its final hockey world cup in 1994. Pakistan’s hockey has seen times of greatness, winning three Olympics gold medals and four World Cup titles, which is still a record.

Experts say the decline in Pakistan’s hockey could be attributed to the advent of an artificial turf that gained traction in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It changed the dynamic of Asian hockey. The change not only affected the playing style of the Asian hockey players, it also cut their careers by half and demanded a greater physical fitness level than before.



Pakistan Hockey Federation has become politicized, nepotistic and corrupt, just like the PCB.

The younger generation in Pakistan considers cricket as their national game, not hockey.

### Tracking

When Truth Tacker contacted Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Committee, Riaz Pirzada, he talked about how the dearth of funds and the interference of religious organizations has affected the quality of sports in the country. The federal government has allocated 80 crore for sports which, Pirzada says, is divided amongst 38 sports federations. “ We have planned to make leagues for every game so that each sport generates its own earning,” said Pirzada.

Aftab Shaban Mirani, the member of IPC, stated that it is hard to separate politics from sports. However, he added that their committee was trying its best to do so. He blamed the political parties for using cricket boards and other sports federations as recruitment centers to curry favor. He said that although the government has been unable to do anything constructive in this regard, there is still hope.

### Independent Viewpoint

Shahid While talking to Truth Tracker, senior analyst on Pakistan sports, Khawaja Ali said, “If we want to improve the overall situation of sports in Pakistan, we need to follow the following principles in every sports federation.

1. Make Pakistan Sports Board and all other federations autonomous.
2. A powerful election commission within PCB should be established immediately, keeping in view the past manipulations.
3. An annual audit of the PCG by the Auditor General of Pakistan and the report should be submitted to Public Accounts Committee.
4. Annual General Body meeting before every election.
5. No political figure or people with a conflict of interest should be allowed to become part of the board.”

### Ruling

PML-N has failed to depoliticize sports, hence, their promise has been compromised.

# Promise Tracking

## Khan's promise to end VIP culture in KP stands compromised



Rehmat Mehsud

### The Promise

Multan: Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan had said his government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) would introduce measures to end the culture of halting of traffic for VIP protocol.

### Background

Addressing a public meeting in December 2015 after his party member Jahangir Khan Tareen declared his success in the NA-154 by-election Lodhran, Punjab province; Khan had said he would hold a meeting with KP chief minister to implement the decision.

Deploing the death of 10-month-old Bisma in Karachi because of protocol measures, put in place for PPP leader Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Sindh chief minister, Khan had said: "Now traffic will not be stopped for any VIP, including the prime minister."

### Tracking

Truth Tracker approached KP Health Minister Shahram Tarakai who said no doubt the VIP culture has been discouraged and even his chief minister was not getting any protocol but yes "he (chief minister) moves with some security."

"I personally think that ours is the first and lone chief minister in Pakistan who has very few vehicles in protocol to move with. I think he has only three vehicles traveling with him," Tarakai remarked.

"The long held culture of protocol and security layers is no more in the PTI government," he added. He revealed that he has no personal protocol at all and the PTI don't like this (VIP) culture and this should not be taken a sort of political statement.

He said that KP chief minister travels with his ministers in one vehicle and avoid the trend of VIP movement or extra protocol. "We are open minded people and don't like protocol because too much protocol will lead you to isolation," he said.

He recalled that once the KP chief minister, along with three provincial ministers, was stopped by police in Lahore who were demanding money because they were travelling like common people.

The Punjab police, he went on to say didn't believe that the chief minister was traveling without protocol. "This clearly depicts that we have a no-protocol culture," Tarakai noted.

Fakhar Azam Wazir, Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) from Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP), said the VVIP culture is still present in KP. "Pervez Khattak (chief minister), speaker, ministers and even the ordinary advisors roam in the city with VVIP protocol," he added.

He said he is a witness to long queues of vehicles amid sirens when Shah Muhammad Wazir, advisor to chief minister on transport, visits Bannu, his home constituency. "Tell me a single promise the PTI has materialized. Look, the VIP culture is doubled instead," Wazir rued.

Imran Khan, the PTI chairman, himself had promised he would control corruption but today the PTI lawmakers are themselves involved in the menace, he noted.

"It's just a matter of time when you'll observe split in PTI and its members joining other parties," Wazir predicted. He questioned



why Khan is using the KP helicopter at a time when he (Khan) is neither the chief minister nor member of the KP assembly.

When contacted, Mian Iftikhar Hussain, another stalwart and lawmaker from Awami National Party (ANP), said that VVIP culture continues to haunt citizen unabated. "VVIP protocol has surged and we have witnessed closed roads because of VIP movement," he observed.

Hussain said common people would believe VVIP culture has gone when they find the government officials moving without interfering the public movement. "Their (PTI) movement is not only VIP but VVIP because they use helicopters. It's really a mockery when they claim that they have ended the VIP culture," he added.

### Independent Viewpoint

Arif Yousafzai, a senior Peshawar based journalist and independent analyst, told Truth Tracker that the day the PTI assumed office in 2013 they (PTI) had claimed and promised to revive the system within 90 days.

In addition, Yousafzai recalled that PTI had promised to put an end to the VIP culture and turn the governor and chief minister houses into universities and educational institutions but unfortunately none of those promises are met.

"Today, Chief Minister Pervez Khattak is living in the same house to be used by his predecessors such as former chief ministers Amir Haider Hoti and Akram Khan Durrani," he deplored. Similarly, he said other ministers are living in the same facilities, which were supposed to be turned into educational institutions.

As to the extent of the VIP culture and protocol is concerned, Yousafzai said, "yes the protocol culture is comparatively less than former governments but still the VIP culture is there." When PTI Chairman Imran Khan visits Peshawar then formally traffic is halted and his motorcade moves like former governments officials, he noted.

Yousafzai observed that some reforms have been introduced and maintained, "The PTI government had started the tenure with double standard, which still persist after over four years in power now," he remarked.

### Ruling

Only recently the helicopter of Chief Minister KP, Pervez Khattak, was landed in Abbottabad's cricket ground halting the under-13

regional cricket trials. Later in the day, after much hype in the media, the CM apologized for the disruption and demanded an investigation from his administration.

In light of comments and views presented by the ruling,

opposition lawmakers and independent analyst, Truth Tracker rules that PTI's promise regarding an end to VIP culture in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stands compromised.



## Promise Tracking

### The shrinking fund allocations for the transgendered population of KP may put them in peril



Izhar Yusafzai

#### The Promise

Advisor to Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Mushtaq Ahmad Ghani after unveiling the budget details in June 2016 for the fiscal year 2016-17 pledged that the provincial government has earmarked Rs200 million for the welfare of transgendered community of the province.

#### Background

The transgendered community in Peshawar has faced discrimination and violence time and again particularly in the issue of transgender persons like Alisha, who was shot multiple times in Peshawar.

After moving to the hospital, he was allegedly denied medical aid in KP's largest tertiary care Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar. He later died in the hospital as reportedly the doctors were arguing that if the patient could be admitted in male or female ward.

The provincial government received flares of criticism from human rights activist after Alisha's death incident from across the world. Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf led provincial government has pledged that they will allocate funds for the welfare of transgender persons in the province.

#### The Plan

In wake of discriminatory attitude towards the transgendered individuals from the society, KP government has earmarked Rs200 million in the budget for fiscal year 2016-17 to construct Skill Development and Rehabilitation centers for the transgendered population.

The Social Welfare Department of the province was tasked by the government to collect relevant data of transgendered population residing in the province for the establishment of the skill development centre.

However, so far the government has completed its three quarters since the budget has been passed but not a single penny has been released for establishment of the center for transgendered.

#### Tracking

The rights activist expressed concerns over the delays in utilization and release of the budget allocated for welfare of transgendered community. Speaking to Truth Tracker Pakistan, Coordinator Blue Veins Organization and member Advisory Board Trans Action Alliance KP, Qamar Naseem said it was the failure of the social welfare department who, despite directives from the provincial government, are yet to formulate a strategy to establish the skill development centre for transgender.

He said he had meetings with government representatives and got to know that the budget has been decreased from Rs200



million to Rs50 million owing to lack of interest by social welfare department.

"Not a single penny has been spent so far in relation to establishment of skill development centre for transgender population while the financial year is nearing its end," Naseem added.

He lamented that the social welfare department was asked to collect data of transgender, but three-pages long form in English were handed over to the transgender population which they were unable to understand since most of them are illiterate.

Speaking to Truth Tracker Pakistan, KP Transgender Association said that for the last 10 months since the budget has been allocated, the government hasn't consulted the transgendered community for establishment of the projects.

He said that the transgender persons have been handed forms to fill it for collection of the data, of which few have been filled and submitted. "But many trans persons in various districts weren't able to fill them since they are illiterate."

He bemoaned the fact that government has time and again promised with the trans community for establishment of flats and centers for the last many years but the promises are yet to be fulfilled.

A letter issue by Provincial Social Welfare department, copy of which is available with Truth Tracker, directed the District Social Officers that the high officials are getting hard over delays in collection of data of the transgender population.

"You [District Officer Social Welfare] are requested to collect data of transgender in your respective districts according to given format/Performa for completion with bureau of statistics and Planning and Development department at the earliest," the letter read.

Naseem said that since social welfare department hasn't collected the data so no work has been initiated on the project for transgender while KP government in a meeting with Trans Action Alliance has pledged that there wouldn't be any issue of release of the funds but preparation of PC-1 (planning commission report) is necessary which is to be prepared by social welfare

department.

However, KP Director Social Welfare department Muhammad Naeem said that PC1 for establishment of the Skill Development Centre has been prepared and submitted to the department concern. "Working on the project will be started after its approval from Provincial Working Development Party (PWDP): a committee which approves PC1 of the projects.

When asked why not a penny has been released for the project, he told Truth Tracker that the funds will be released after the PC1 approval from the concern committee of the provincial government and working on data collection has been kicked off in districts. "Data collection process of the transgender will be completed in approximately 20 days and the whole project would be completed in the next financial year," claimed Naeem.

Talking about the challenges in establishment of the centre, he said that it's not an easy task but need efforts like signing Memorandum of Understanding with different stakeholders including health department, government technical skills board, and other trainers.

### Independent Viewpoint

After reviewing the opinions of independent experts, stakeholders and concern government officials, Truth Tracker has concluded that work on the promise is underway, however the process is too slow and experts fears the funds may lapse owing to the social welfare department dragging its feet.



## Promise Tracking

### PPP breaks promise to reduce infant mortality rate



**Durdana Najam**

#### The Promise

Pakistan People's Party has promised in its 2013 manifesto about bringing the infant mortality rate down to 60 per cent.

#### Background

According to the Sindh Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014, the infant mortality rate in Sindh was recorded at 82 deaths per 1,000 lives birth (8.2 per cent).

Sindh's infant mortality rate was 81 deaths per 1,000 lives in 1991 when the total infant mortality rate of Pakistan was 91 and of Punjab 104. Ironically, after 25 years the figure has increased, instead of going down. This was reported in "Dying Children of Sindh and Sustainable Development Goal," report prepared by the Sindh Bureau of Statistics. The question arises as to why the Sindh government has been unable to keep its children from dying at birth. Even the under-five mortality rate is at 104 per 1,000 live births while four out of 10 children under five are malnourished and severely underweight. It becomes pertinent to ask what the government of Sindh had delivered during its almost eight-year rule especially when more children are dying because of preventable deaths.

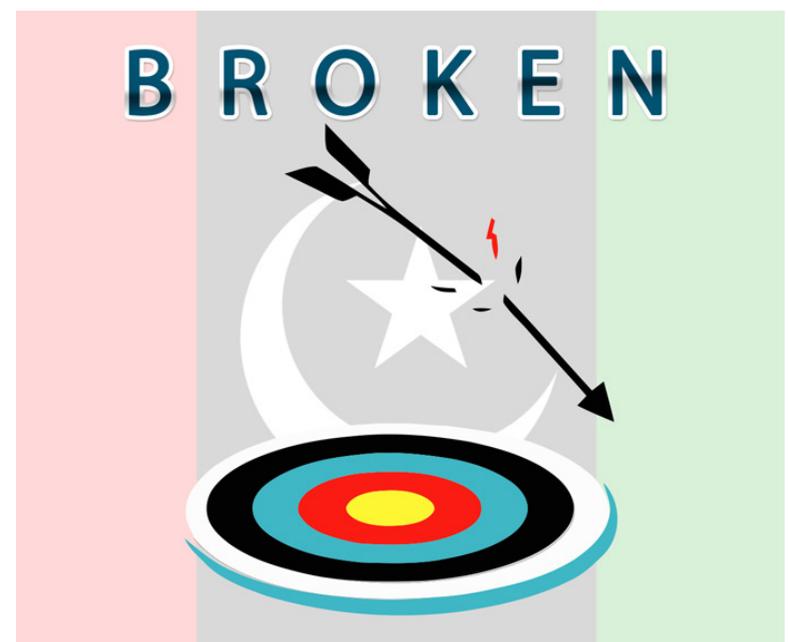
Billions or rupees are allocated every year in Sindh for the health care budget. If not spent on health than where does the entire fund go?

The report answers most of these questions. It informs that on any given day an average of 30 to 40 health care providers is absent from public sector hospitals and that there is a chronic shortage of female staff and specialists in rural districts.

Over 10 billion had been spent on the rehabilitation of taluka headquarters hospitals or district headquarters hospitals since 2007. Similarly, Rs 10 billion was devoted to the procurement of medicines.

Poverty is considered to be a significant contributing factor in keeping the infant mortality rate at the higher side. Rural Sindh is particularly exposed to poverty due to a persistent shortage of water, land degradation, constant floods and climate change. In recent past drought and floods have resulted in massive livestock death, crop failure and severe malnutrition in Sindh

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines the maternal health as the health of women during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period. Maternal health is crucial for a healthy



birth of a child. According to WHO findings almost three million neonatal deaths and stillbirths annually are directly related to a maternal health condition such as poor status, deprived living environment, and infectious diseases.

#### Tracking

Sharmila Farooqi, MPA from Pakistan Peoples Party in the Sindh Assembly candidly approved of Sindh government's inability to give its 100 per cent to improving infant mortality rate. However, she is hopeful that the Sindh government would correct its flaws and do something constructive in the next fiscal year. "We are concentrating on sectors like maternal, neonatal and child health with full vigour," Sharmila said.

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement MNA, Dr Nikhat Shakeel Khan, is, however, pessimist about PPP's resolve to do anything constructive in the health sector shortly. The Sindh government says Khan has been unable to build even a separate hospital for children in Karachi. "The of National Institute of Child Health," Khan says, "Requires upgradations but the Sindh government is not pushed. If only the government upgrades NICH many lives of the infants can be saved."

Talking about the health budget, she says since we do not see any development work-taking place in the health sector. Therefore, we can say that the budget is being misused. About solutions, she says, "If we could improve the conditions of the Basic Health Units and provide nutritious food to the mother things can become better." Pakistan is the signatory to the Millennium Development Goal, which is now renamed as Sustainable Development Goal according to which the country is liable to

improve the infant mortality rate and the health of a mother.

Dr Seema Zia, Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaaf's MPA in the Sindh Assembly says that 96 per cent of the budget of almost every sector is spent on non-development. With four per cent in hand, she argues, no sector can make progress. Merit is not taken into consideration says Zia during hiring, which she explains complicates things by affecting quality and service delivery. "The government is not serious about anything, and it does not even admit that it is at fault," says Zia.

Sindh health sector says Zia is at the disposal of Non-government Organization.

### Independent Viewpoint

Dr Iqbal Memon Paediatrician in Karachi lays the blame on the Sindh government for its inability to solve the issue of infant mortality rate. He said that environmental pollution and lack of nutritious food are the main causes behind the rise in infant mortality rate. He said mothers in rural areas, where a large proportion of infants die, are forced to drink contaminated water

and adulterated food. He said lack of proper sanitation also causes mothers and their children to suffer from diseases at an early age. At the government level, Memon says lack of proper hospitals, medical facilities and a dearth of doctors are a few reasons that cause infants to die at birth.

### Ruling

Pakistan People's Party has failed to keep its promise of reducing the infant mortality by 60 per cent. In fact, the death rate among the newborn has increased. proportion of infants die, are forced to drink contaminated water and adulterated food. He said lack of proper sanitation also causes mothers and their children to suffer from diseases at an early age. At the government level, Memon says lack of proper hospitals, medical facilities and a dearth of doctors are a few reasons that cause infants to die at birth.

### Ruling

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## Commentary

# Defeating the Islamic State: A war mired in contradictions



**Dr. James M. Dorsey**

US President Donald J. Trump's vow to defeat what he terms radical Islamic terrorism forces the United States to manoeuvre the Middle East and North Africa's murky world of ever shifting alliances and labyrinth of power struggles within power struggles.

The pitfalls are complex and multiple. They range from differences within the 68-member, anti-Islamic State (IS) alliance over what constitutes terrorism to diverging political priorities to varying degrees of willingness to tacitly employ jihadists to pursue geopolitical goals. The pitfalls are most evident in Yemen and Syria and involve two long-standing US allies, NATO ally Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

US Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson travels to Turkey this week as US and Russian troops create separate buffers in Syria to prevent a Turkish assault on the northern town of Manbij. Manbij, located 40 kilometres from the Turkish border, is controlled by Kurdish forces, viewed by the US as a key ground force in the fight with the Islamic State.

Until a series of devastating IS suicide bombings in Turkish cities, Turkish forces appeared to concentrate on weakening the Kurds rather than the jihadists in Syria. Stepped-up Turkish action against IS has not weakened Turkey's resolve to prevent Kurds from emerging as one of the victors in the Syrian conflict.

At the heart of US-Turkish differences over

the Kurds is the age-old-adage that one man's terrorist is another man's liberation fighter. The US has a long history of empathy towards Kurdish cultural and national rights and enabled the emergence of a Kurdish state in waiting in northern Iraq. The differences also go to an equally large elephant in the room: the question whether Syria, Yemen and Iraq will survive as nation states in a post-war era.

That may be the real issue at the core of US-Turkish differences. Many Turks hark back in their suspicion that foreign powers are bent on breaking up the Turkish state to the 1920 Treaty of Sevres that called for a referendum in which Kurds would determine their future.

Visionary Mustafa Kemal Atatürk carved modern Turkey out of the ruins of the Ottoman empire. He mandated a unified Turkish identity that superseded identities of a nation whose population was to a large degree made up of refugees from far flung parts of the former empire and ethnic and religious minorities.

Turkey charges that Syrian Kurdish fighters are aligned with the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), a Turkish Kurdish group that has been fighting for Kurdish rights for more than three decades and has been designated terrorist by Turkey, the United States and Europe.

US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Joseph Dunford, Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov and Turkey's Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar met in the southern Turkish city of Antalya in advance of Mr. Tillerson's visit to lower tensions that threaten planned efforts to capture Raqqa, the Islamic State's capital.

In many ways, the pitfalls are similar in Yemen, where Mr. Trump has stepped up support for Saudi Arabia's devastating intervention that this month entered its third year and has increased attacks on Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) viewed as one of Al Qaeda's most dangerous affiliates.

It took Al Qaeda attacks inside the kingdom in 2003-4 and jihadist operations since as well as growing international suggestions of an ideological affinity between Saudi Arabia's Sunni Muslim ultra-conservatism and jihadism for the kingdom to view Islamic militants on par with Iran, which Saudis see as an existential threat.

Nonetheless, Saudi Arabia, despite a litany of denials, has seen militant Islamists as useful tools in its proxy wars with Iran in Iraq, Syria and Yemen. Sunni ultra-conservatives are frequently at the forefront of Saudi-led efforts to dislodge the Yemeni Houthis from their strongholds.

Saudi Arabia's intervention in Yemen has in fact given AQAP a new lease on life. Prior to the war, AQAP had been driven to near irrelevance by the rise of IS and security crackdowns. In a report in February, the International Crisis Group (ICG) concluded that AQAP was "stronger than it has ever been."

The group "appears ever more embedded in the fabric of opposition to the Houthi/Saleh alliance ...that is fighting the internationally recognised, Saudi-backed interim government of President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi," the report said. It was referring to Iranian-backed Houthi

rebels who are aligned with former Yemeni leader Ali Abdullah Saleh.

AQAP's resurgence is as much a result of Saudi Arabia's single-minded focus on the Iranian threat posed in the kingdom's perception by the Houthis as it is potentially related to a murky web of indirect or tacit relationships with the group.

"In prosecuting the war, the Saudi-led coalition has relegated confronting AQAP and IS to a second-tier priority... Saudi-led coalition statements that fighting the group is a top priority and announcements of military victories against AQAP in the south are belied by events," the ICG said.

The kingdom's willingness to cooperate with Islamists such as Yemen's Islah party, a Muslim Brotherhood affiliate, and unclear attitude towards AQAP has sparked strains within the anti-Houthi coalition, particularly with the staunchly anti-Islamist UAE.

AQAP has been able to rearm itself through the indirect acquisition of

weapons from the Saudi-led coalition as well as raids on Yemeni military camps. AQAP is believed to have received advance notice and to have coordinated with the Saudis its withdrawal from the crucial port of Mukalla before an assault by UAE and Yemeni forces, according to the ICG.

Saudi Arabia was conspicuously low key when in January a US Navy Seal died in a raid on AQAP in which the US military seized information that this month prompted the Trump administration and Britain to ban carry-on electronics aboard U.S. and London-bound flights from select airports in North Africa and the Middle East, including two in Saudi Arabia.

Arab News, Saudi Arabia's leading English-language newspaper, this week quoted Saudi officials as saying that AQAP, widely believed to be well advanced in its ability to target aircraft with explosives smuggled on board, had lost its capability to operate overseas.

The officials said that Saudi Arabia, which has cozied up to the Trump administration

and endorsed the president's ban on travel to the US from six Muslim majority countries, was concerned about IS and Shiite militants rather than AQAP. "They (AQAP) don't have the power to export their activities," Arab news quoted Abdullah Al-Shehri, a senior Saudi interior ministry official, as saying.

The ministry's spokesman, Mansour Al-Turki, noted that "Qaeda actually has not been involved in any real kind of terrorism-related incident in Saudi Arabia for three years. Most of the incidents came from Daesh (the Arab acronym for IS) or militant groups related to Shiites in the eastern province."

The United States and some of its key allies, including Turkey and Saudi Arabia, may be able to paper over differences that allow for short-term advances against IS. But in the longer term, it could be the failure to address those differences head on that will create new breeding grounds for militancy. It's the kind of trade-off that in the past has produced short-term results only to create even greater problems down the road.

Dr. James M. Dorsey is a senior fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, co-director of the University of Würzburg's Institute for Fan Culture, and the author of The Turbulent World of Middle East Soccer blog, a book with the same title, Comparative Political Transitions between Southeast Asia and the Middle East and North Africa, co-authored with Dr. Teresita Cruz-Del Rosario and a forthcoming book, Shifting Sands, Essays on Sports and Politics in the Middle East and North Africa

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## Human Rights

### In Pakistan, laws fail to stop honour killing



**Maria Laraib**

**Lahore:** Honour killing remains an unsolved issue as the existing laws and their implementation have failed to stop this evil that still continues without any fear. A compromise have been recorded in 99.99 percent cases of honour killing till date due to which the culprits escape unpunished, say lawyers and human rights activists.

They say that lacunas in Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), enacted by Pakistan's judiciary allows legal edge to the perpetrators of the murders committed in the name of honour.

Since, a person, mostly woman are killed for bringing so called shame to the family/ society, thus people accept the loss of a life to save the family from further dishonour which the innocent victim brought.

Mumtaz Mughal, Resident Director of Aurat Foundation, told News Lens Pakistan, "So far 200 honour killings have been recorded this year, mainly from Punjab."

She said that only one case of survived victim in rural Punjab has preceded with 10 year imprisonment to the convict a month ago.

Other cases are mutually settled when the complainants, mostly relatives of the

victims, forgive the killer. If husband or in-laws are involved in honour killing of a woman, the case is settled on the basis of diyat (monetary compensation for murder under Islamic law), she added.

In this pretext, she revealed that more than 90 percent of women honour killings are committed by the victims' own families.

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) database 2015 recorded 987 honour crime cases. Mostly, firearms were used for killing and current/ former spouses were recorded as the prime suspects of those crimes. HRCP also recorded that the predominant marital status of the victims was either married or separated.

Alleged illicit relations, applying the choice of marriage by a woman and domestic disputes were major reasons behind these killings, says the HRCP report.

Statistics released by Ministry of Human Rights recorded 860 honour killings from January 2012 to September 2015. Aurat Foundation has recorded 178 honour killings in 2015.

Sidra Humayun, a Lahore based women rights activist, told News Lens Pakistan that Punjab records 75 % of the total recorded honour killings of the country.

News Lens Pakistan also spoke to a runaway couple i.e. Sur Fida and Haseena from Dera Allah Yaar, Balochistan who

narrowly escaped honour killing in 2008 after they contracted marriage in a local court.

Fida says, "My father, Ghaus Baksh was killed within 48 hours of our runaway marriage by my wife's relatives." State should act as a party in every 'honour crime' to avoid further loss of lives, he added.

Zain Qazi, a senior lawyer, remarked that presence of Jirga (informal justice mechanisms) in areas where tribal system is still prevalent has created an incomprehensible situation where impunity culture obstructs equitable enforcement of Pakistan's criminal justice laws within the State.

"Grave and sudden provocation'; a legal term which is used as a primary defence by the accused during mitigating circumstances in honour killing trials."

A research study by CAMP Project 2014 says that 73% Pakistanis view that discriminatory customary practices have contributed in honour crimes. These practices are the second biggest factor in honour killings, says the report.

Human rights activists and lawyers have been pointing out loop holes in the Pakistan's criminal justice system in the context of honour killings.

Section 304 of Pakistan Penal Code states, "The 'wali' i.e. guardian/preferably father of the deceased can accept apology of

the murderer in form of diyat that which literally means blood money instead of death sentence/ life imprisonment under section 302 of Criminal Law 2004.”

Humayun says, “In Pakistan’s patriarchal society, a woman’s life is taken for granted. That is why; families mostly choose to take blood money as murder compensation against their daughters’ lives instead of death penalty /life imprisonment.”

A research study ‘Impact of compromise in murder cases’ 2005’ conducted by Democratic Commission for Human Development in two districts of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa revealed harsh truth.

Author of this study, Tanveer Jahan,

Executive Director DCHD, told News Lens Pakistan, “We observed 100 % compromise on a woman’s life taken in the name of honour when wali (father/ guardian) pardons his son/ other relative under law of diyat.”

She said that blood money for a woman is half of a man’s murder which in 2015 was Rs 175000 (nearly 1740 USD). This simply means that one can honour kill a woman and can escape justice by just paying less than Rs 100000 to the victim’s family.

She said that the government is trying to make honour killing a ‘non compoundable offence’ to minimize this trend.

On July21, a joint parliamentary body unanimously approved honour crimes bill,

2016

Malik Hukam Khan, advisor to Ministry of law and justice, while talking to News Lens Pakistan on phone said that life imprisonment of twelve-and-a-half years have been declared mandatory for the offender proved guilty of killing in the name of honour.

However, the victim’s family still holds the option to waive capital punishment of the killer under the new law, he added.

He said that the bill would be produced before the Parliament for approval after which it would become a law.



## Human Rights

# Progressive literature finds avid readership in disaffected Balochistan



**Hizbullah Khan**

**Quetta:** As elsewhere in the country, the relics of Balochistan’s “progressive” or leftist politics and culture may have ceded space to globalization and the commercial and capitalist ethos it brings, albeit grudgingly.

Café and chai khanas – tea shops – that were once patronized by local politicians, activists, intellectuals and common people, resounding with political debate and left-leaning views on social issues, have turned into tiny temples to capitalism: banks, malls and shops. Revolution, as advocated by the left remains very much the stuff of literature however, available in bookshops in the form of translated texts.

“The culture of reading revolutionary literature has developed in Balochistan in response to widespread deprivation, tribalism, unfair distribution of resources, violation of fundamental rights and conflict,” Hameed Khan, who teaches Pashto language at the Degree College, Quetta, told News Lens Pakistan.

Khan said people gravitated towards literature of revolution and reformation because they aspired to emancipation of society from the stranglehold of capitalists and political elite who, they believed, were the cause of the problems they faced. “In parts of the provinces of Punjab and Sindh where people live in better conditions and face fewer problems, they don’t read revolutionary literature.”

Social scientists say that people of any society that suffers from severe setbacks have deeper political consciousness and



awareness of their state than those that live in developed societies facing fewer problems, says Khan.

“At this point in time, political consciousness among the people of Baluchistan is more widespread than any other part of the country,” said Khan.

Khan said that political powers that had monopoly over sources of information and resources in the province did not tolerate open debate on issues because political awareness among readers of revolutionary literature brought more than just social and political consciousness, it helps them comprehend how local politics and world affairs contribute to their problems.

“The political leadership achieved power through conventional politics of biradari and buying support; they don’t have time or patience for politics that delivers. They worry that if they allow social and political debate; it would question and threaten their power and status.”

Revolutionary books are not available in libraries of schools, colleges and universities but only in bookshops because, says Khan, books come to libraries with the permission of political parties in power. Books that would create problems for them or question their role, whether local, national or international, do not make it to libraries in education

institutions.

Far from being content with reading revolutionary literature, students of various universities in Balochistan are increasingly selecting revolutionary topics for their M. Phil and PhD research. On the other hand, socialists and leftists write books that reinterpret progressive literature and values for application in a modern world, says Khan. "Such luminaries and thinkers have their own dedicated magazines for which they write articles to educate people and reform the society."

Wali Nasar, secretary at the youth bureau of International Marxist Tendency, Balochistan, says only those classes of people who have been exploited by the political and industrialist elite read revolutionary books and such literature plays a vital role in eliminating exploitation of the oppressed because revolutionary ideologies provide "scientific solutions of problems to the people."

In a province like Balochistan, says Nasar, where nationalist politics is very much par for the course, the trend of reading revolutionary books is high among activists if nationalist political parties, progressive workers of student and socialist organisations. "The workers of these organisations arrange study circles in colleges, universities and their organisation's offices to discuss literature and find solutions to problems of the oppressed people."

A worker belonging to one of the nationalist political parties in Balochistan said overall, revolutionary literature had not benefited the nation in any way. "Nations change the thrust of their

literature according to their requirements and circumstances for the development of society," said the political worker who wished to stay anonymous because he was not authorized to speak to media.

He said the reason for failure of revolutionary literature to deliver in Pakistan was that societies where revolutions had happened had adopted such literature to their own situations, culture, traditions and conditions. "We have done nothing of the sort," he said. "Ideologies look great on paper but when it comes to their application in reality, it is nearly impossible because one has to contend with a lot of factors that may not be conducive to revolutionary change."

According to Zaeem Bukhari, a bookshop owner and a publisher based in Quetta, when the Saur Revolution came in Afghanistan, it led to a culture of reading revolutionary books. The trend died down eventually with the death of revolution in Afghanistan. Then, with conflict and insurgencies breaking out in Baluchistan, the culture was revived, only to die again. "The trend of reading translated revolutionary books depends on the political and social atmosphere. When it is quiet, the trend slows down but when there is turmoil, it is on the rise."

"In Balochistan, the trend of reading revolutionary books is far greater than Punjab but we have no good translators," he said.

Dr Shah Muhammad Marri, a local scholar, has translated Mao's Red Book in Balochi and other writers have translated Vladimir Lenin's books. Scholars and writers often

translate books in regional languages, not from the original text but from their Urdu translation done in Punjab, said Bukhari.

Yousuf Khan at Gosha e Adab, a leading bookshop in Quetta, said the sale of translated books was more than regular books because of the large readership that revolutionary literature enjoyed.

"We sell nearly six to seven hundred [translated] books a month," said Yousaf Khan. "A majority of readers that buy these books are students and activists of nationalist political parties."

One of the reasons why students prefer translated books is that they come from Urdu medium schools, with very few students fluent in English, says Attatur-Rehman, an M. Phil student and avid reader of translated books.

"The biggest advantage of translation books is that different ethnic groups can access knowledge in their own languages," says Rehman. "Linguistic experts advocate learning in mother tongue because pupils can assimilate maximum knowledge that way. Those who study in other language can only acquire a small percentage of that knowledge."

However, Aslam Tareen, a writer and sociologist, says revolutionary literature creates conflict with local psychology and culture. "We live in a religious society whereas revolutionary literature promotes secularism. Its propagation is dangerous because it leads people towards chaos and destruction."



## Human Rights

### Sole church in the tribal region; a symbol of communal co-existence



Rehmat Mehsud

**TANK:** There is a solitary church in the heart of South Waziristan Agency's embattled headquarters of Wana where members of the small Christian community – undeterred by years long militant-linked violence – regularly offer their Sunday prayers.

The foundation stone of the church was laid by Absar Ahmed Minhas, former colonel of the South Waziristan Scouts (SWS), in deference to demands from Christians living within the military compound. There is a huge military presence in the Wana scouts camp, which is built during the British rule at the strategic location to tame the fiercely independent tribesmen.



Standing in what is locally called the lower camp, the church has a seven-foot-high boundary wall, with a cross seen atop the single-storey building. The top roof is made of tin, enabling the building to withstand heavy snowfalls. A hall-like room inside the Minster is made of specially made tent blocks.

With two gates, its lawn areas are equipped with steel benches that offer a panoramic view of the mighty, jagged mountains known as Sheesha Heights. Barring a small residential quarter of the bishop, no buildings could be seen in the vicinity. However, the Jamia Masjid or the central mosque is situated at a close distance with the Church, which presents a rosy picture of communal co-existence.

Work on the church started on January 24, 2000, in the presence of political administration officials and Christians.

Nazeer Alam, former Bishop and father of the incumbent Pastor, while talking to News Lens Pakistan, recalled: "Before the construction of the church, Christians used to worship inside a small stuffy room. Hundreds of Christians here in Wana were in dire need to have a proper worship place. We collected funds for the establishment of the church. Indubitably, our community has made a generous contribution to the noble cause."

The house of worship is placed under the Gospel Pentecostal Church International (GPCI), according to the bishop Zeshan Alam, who received his religious education from the Theological School in Karachi.

A devout protestant with many qualities of heart and head, the soft-spoken cleric is an employee of the Frontier Constabulary – a paramilitary force with inadequate skills to fight the resurgent Taliban and terrorists plaguing the border region but the local community are known for respecting people of all faiths.

"We want religious freedom for all and sundry. We use to meet members of Christian community here and discuss with them their problems. They speak local language fluently. We demand the government to offer better education and other facilities to their kids to better serve the country," a tribal elder Ali Wazir told News Lens Pakistan.

He said that there was no visible threat to Christian community living here and they have better understanding with locals. But another member of the minority community wishing to go unnamed said: "The biggest problem we're facing this time is lack of land for our graveyard. We've put forward our demand to the local administration to allot us a land to bury our dead because our existing graveyard has no more space. Another problem, we're confronted with is that most of our young are jobless."

Alam, in his early 30s, told News Lens Pakistan that "We're peace loving people and local tribal have good behavior with us. We have no security issue or any problem here."

Earlier in September 2013, two suicide bombers equipped with hand grenades and pistols forced their way inside a Church in Peshawar, the provincial capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, leaving 81 persons dead and 131 others wounded.

Living in peaceful coexistence with the overwhelmingly Muslim population of the tribal area, hundreds of Protestants and Catholics can be seen performing their prayers in the church on Sundays, he added.

However, he complained that his community doesn't get the 5% jobs quota reserved for minority. Another big problem, he pointed out is that Christian community has a land for graveyard but he demands local administration to allocate more land for cemetery.

The rugged South Waziristan region has been in the throes of an insurgency spearheaded by Taliban and their tribal collaborators.

Among the local community, Alam is known as a gentle and respected man. "He is very kind man and known for his good behavior. He is economical in words and does not interfere in local affairs," said Hassan Khan, who owns a cloth store in the locality.

As a result of rebel attacks and military operations in the area – lying cheek by jowl with the Pak-Afghan border – thousands of people including fighters, civilians and security personnel have been killed. An even larger number of locals has been displaced and forced into migration to down districts who live under pathetically miserable conditions.

Alam said that there is no vacancy allocated for his community members in the newly built Shah Lam Hospital in Wana. He said that his community has tribal identity cards and domiciles. "After doing matric, our students have the benefit to get admission in country's educational institutions on Fata domicile, which is a source of consolation for his community," he remarked.

Another local tribesmen Muhammad Idrees says, "The presence of a Church is a matter of satisfaction and the minority should enjoy their rights. The presence of the church sends a good message of mutual tolerance but maybe there will be a specific group— an indirect reference to Taliban— with intolerance approach towards other religious community."

Majority of the tribesmen were proud to see minority performing their religious obligation quite freely.

"The locals have no problem with the Church here, we rather feel proud of its existence in the area. We want the authority to release more funds for the renovation of the sole church," said Ameer Nawaz, a student of 12th class.

A security official wishing anonymity told News Lens Pakistan that "there is no security problem being faced by the small Christian community since the Church is situated in a secured area."

Security analysts believe that the calm but tensed South Waziristan could be plunged into turmoil and mayhem again if fast-paced measures are not taken to develop the war-torn area and improve security situation.

Despite all these threats, a large number of Christian communities, working in the rugged area in various capacities, are never harmed by the militants. However, back in 2008, during the years long militancy that plagued the tribal region, five Christians were kidnapped briefly but they were released unharmed by their captors.

When asked how he feels about the existence of a Church in tribal area, Imran Maseeh 30, said, "I'm really surprised to know that there is a Church in Wana. Authorities should adopt all measures to protect minority there because they're serving the country in tough area."

A group of Christian sitting outside the Church said, "We never feel scared or confronted hurdles in discharging our religious rituals here. As we are residing within the military compound that's why we have neither problem with the Taliban nor they intimidate us."

However, another minority member said that his community members don't go outside Wana village because it is risky for them. "We spend a reserve life here," he added.

It is the sole and foremost responsibility of the local administration to safeguard the interests of the Christian community who serve the country in the volatile region.

Alam said that around 300 Christians are living in Wana. Minorities are working there in different capacity including South Waziristan Scouts (SWS), sanitary work and some are doing their own business, he concluded.



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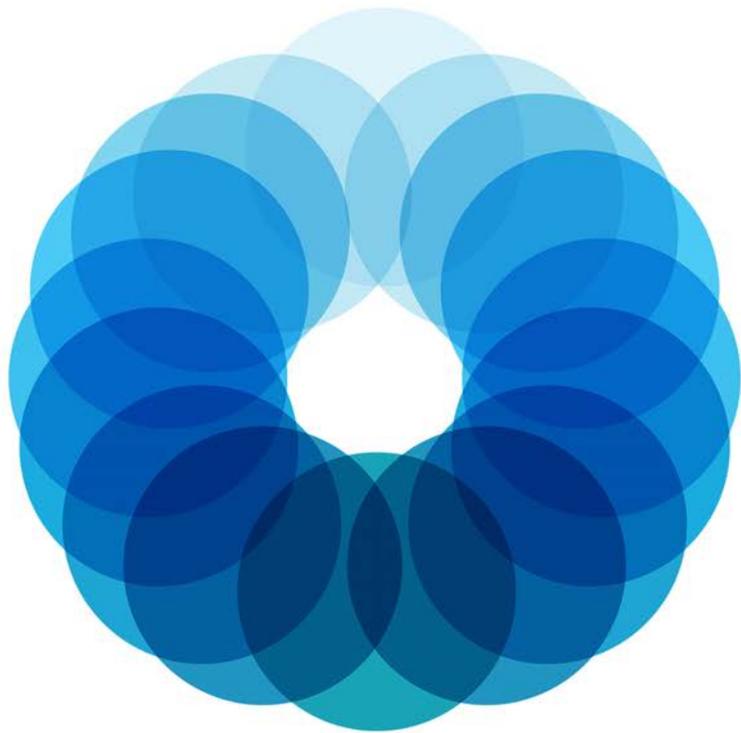
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