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Issue Paper PAKISTAN

THE MOHAJIR QAUMI MOVEMENT (MQM) IN KARACHI JANUARY 1995-APRIL 1996 November 1996

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Source: *Pakistan: A Country Study* 1984, p. xviii.

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GLOSSARY

bhatta

Protection money

CIA

Crime Investigation Agency

FIA

Federal Investigation Agency

FIR

First Information Report

FIT

Field Investigation Team

goonda

Party thug or muscleman

HRCP

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan

MNA

Member of National Assembly

MPA

Member of Provincial Assembly

MQM(A)

Mohajir Qaumi Movement (Altaf group)

MQM(H)

Mohajir Qaumi Movement (Haqiqi group)

PML

Pakistan Muslim League

PPP

Pakistan People's Party

Rangers

Paramilitary force

1. BACKGROUND [1]

The Mohajir Qaumi Movement (Mohajir National Movement, or MQM) was formed in 1984 to represent the interests of Sindh's Urdu-speaking mohajirs (*India Abroad* 6 Oct. 1995, 22; AI Feb. 1996, 3; *Asian Survey* Nov. 1995, 997; *ibid.* Oct. 1991, 947-48), who migrated to Pakistan from India in the years immediately following the creation of the Pakistani state in 1947 (*ibid.* Nov. 1995, 991; UNRISD June 1993, 6). The party won "landslide" victories in municipal elections in Karachi and Hyderabad in 1988, and repeated its successes in national elections in 1988 and 1990 (*Asian Survey* Nov. 1995, 990-91; AI Feb. 1996, 3); by 1991 the MQM had "established a virtual monopoly over representation of the Urdu-speaking community in urban Sindh," and was a "major player" on the national political scene (*Asian Survey* Nov. 1995, 990-91, 996; AI Feb. 1996, 3; UNRISD June 1993, 27, 29; *India Abroad* 6 Oct. 1995, 22).

The late 1980s and early 1990s were marked by rapidly escalating crime and ethnic and political violence in Sindh, to which successive national governments responded with mass arrests, sweeping clean-up operations and emergency legislative measures (*Asian Survey* Nov. 1995, 998-1000; AI Feb. 1996, 3; *The Far East and Australasia* 1996 1996, 857-58). In June 1992 the army launched "Operation Clean-up," deploying about 30,000 army and paramilitary personnel to Sindh to help the Muzaffer Hussain Shah-led coalition provincial government restore law and order (AI Feb. 1996, 4; *ibid.* June 1992, 2; *Human Rights in Developing Countries Yearbook* 1994 1994, 304; *Asian Survey* Nov. 1995, 1000; *ibid.* Feb. 1993, 131). Initially confined to rural Sindh, where it was relatively successful in combatting bandits and kidnappers (*The Herald* Dec. 1994a, 35; *Asian Survey* Nov. 1995, 1001), the focus of Operation Clean-up soon shifted to the urban areas, where the army claimed it sought to eliminate "criminals and terrorists" (AI Dec. 1993, 37; *ibid.* Feb. 1996, 4; *The Herald* May 1994a, 32).

The MQM alleged that it was being specifically targeted by the army operation (*Asian Survey* Feb. 1993, 131; AI Feb. 1996, 4; *The Far East and Australasia* 1996 1996, 858). Several sources indicate that the army and intelligence agencies had become increasingly alarmed at the MQM's growing strength in urban Sindh, where it had become a "virtual parallel government" and was "sounding an increasingly aggressive note" toward the government in Islamabad (UNRISD June 1993, 32; *Asian Survey* Nov. 1995, 1000; *The Economist* 1-7 July 1995, 30). On 19 June 1992, combined police and army forces raided MQM offices in Karachi with the assistance of the dissident MQM Haqiqi group (MQM(H) or "real" MQM), which was then installed

and sanctioned as the only faction acceptable to the government (*Asian Survey* Nov. 1995, 998, 1000; UNRISD June 1993, 32; AI Feb. 1996, 4; *ibid.* Dec. 1993, 38). Several sources indicate that support for the MQM(H) was part of an army strategy to weaken, if not crush, the main MQM(A) faction under Altaf Hussain (*The Herald* May 1994a, 32; *ibid.* Aug. 1995a, 26; *Asian Survey* Nov. 1995, 1000-01; AI Feb. 1996, 4). Efforts to discredit the Altaf faction as a "criminal organization" were aided by the army's allegations of having uncovered 23 MQM torture cells where "hundreds" of political opponents and party dissidents had been tortured and killed (AI Dec. 1993, 38-40; *ibid.* Feb. 1996, 4; *Asian Survey* Nov. 1995, 1001; *The Far East and Australasia* 1996 1996, 858).

Over the following months hundreds of MQM(A) activists in Karachi and Hyderabad were arrested and the party leadership driven underground (AI Dec. 1993, 38; *Asian Survey* Nov. 1995, 1001; UNRISD June 1993, 32). Most of the party's elected representatives to the provincial and national assemblies resigned their seats, and criminal charges were brought against many of them (AI Dec. 1993, 38; *ibid.* Feb. 1996, 4; UNRISD June 1993, 32). While Altaf Hussain and the top MQM leadership went into self-imposed exile in London (*Asian Survey* Nov. 1995, 1001; *The Herald* May 1994b, 42b), many who remained were reportedly pressured to join the Haqiqi faction (UNRISD June 1993, 32; *The Herald* Aug. 1995a, 26). As the police and army carried out raids, mass round-ups and siege-and-search operations in pursuit of MQM(A) leaders and militants over the next 30 months, thousands of ordinary MQM supporters and mohajirs were subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention, extrajudicial execution, beatings, torture, extortion and other ill-treatment (*The Herald* Nov. 1994b, 63-64; AI Dec. 1993; *ibid.* 5 Apr. 1994; *ibid.* 13 Dec. 1994; *ibid.* Jan. 1995; UNRISD June 1993, 32).

The violence escalated rapidly after the army withdrew from Sindh on 30 November 1994 (*Europa* 1995 1995, 2361; *Asian Survey* Feb. 1995, 144; *The Herald* Aug. 1995a, 26; *The Far East and Australasia* 1996 1996, 860), and by the end of the year the law enforcement agencies "appeared to be losing control of Karachi" (*Europa* 1995 1995, 2361). People were killed daily in clashes between armed ethnic, sectarian and criminal groups, and vendetta killings between the two MQM factions were commonplace (*ibid.*; *Asian Survey* Nov. 1995, 1001; *Country Reports* 1994 1995, 1246). Of the approximately 800 to 1,100 people killed in Karachi in 1994 (*Asian Survey* Feb. 1995, 144; *The Herald* Jan. 1996c), more than 100 were killed in the first two weeks of December (*The Far East and Australasia* 1996 1996, 860), and about 170 over the entire month (*Europa* 1995 1995, 2361).

Although the MQM was organizationally "in a shambles" by the end of Operation Clean-up (*The Herald* Jan. 1995b, 50), sources indicate that its mass support among mohajirs had "grown tremendously" (*ibid.*; *ibid.* Jan. 1995a, 47; *Asian Survey* Nov. 1995, 1004). According to analysts the army excesses committed during Operation Clean-up—the mass round-ups and human rights abuses, the propaganda war against the MQM and sponsorship of the Haqiqi faction—had alienated Karachiites, strengthened the hand of extremists on all sides, and precluded the possibility of a more moderate leadership emerging within the MQM (*Asian Survey* Nov. 1995, 1001; *India Today* 15 July 1995, 38-39; *The Herald* Jan. 1995b, 49; *The Far East and Australasia* 1996 1996, 861). According to an article in the January 1995 issue of *The Herald*, "even those mohajirs who never subscribed to violence as a means of achieving their political aims, now consider the MQM as a 'saviour'" (Jan. 1995b, 50).

NOTE

[1] For additional background information, please refer to the following sources: the June 1993 UNRISD report *Pakistan: Ethno-Politics and Contending Elites*; Farhat Haq, "Rise of the MQM in Pakistan: Politics of Ethnic Mobilization," *Asian*

Survey Nov. 1995; Charles H. Kennedy, "The Politics of Ethnicity in Sindh," *Asian Survey* Oct. 1991; the IRBDC's September 1990 *The Mohajirs of Pakistan: Issue Paper*; and the DIRB's September 1992 *Cultural Profile Pakistan: The Mohajirs*. [\[back\]](#)

2. THE SITUATION IN 1995-96

If Karachi had been plagued by spiralling violence and "near anarchic conditions" in 1994 (*Asian Survey* Feb. 1995, 140), the situation continued to deteriorate in 1995 (*The Herald* Aug. 1995a, 27; *The Far East and Australasia* 1996 1996, 860-61), with violent clashes between both MQM factions and government forces, and between various militant Shia and Sunni groups (*ibid.*; *AI* Feb. 1996, 22; *HRW* 1995, 166). The Bhutto government, attributing the violence to a "foreign hand" (*The Herald* Feb. 1995, 17; *ibid.* Mar. 1995a, 28) and "enemy agents" (*AI* 31 May 1995), maintained that the provincial government had the situation under control (*ibid.* 31 May 1995).

In March 1995, following an escalation in killings in February (*The Herald* Jan. 1996c; *ibid.* Mar. 1995a, 28; *The Far East and Australasia* 1996 1996, 860) and the killing of two American employees of the US consulate on 8 March 1995 (*AI* 15 Mar. 1995; *South Asia Bulletin* 1995, 124; *Freedom Review* Mar.-Apr 1996, 41), security forces began a crackdown and arrested hundreds of suspected militants (*AI* 15 Mar. 1995; *The Herald* Mar. 1995a, 29; *The Far East and Australasia* 1996 1996, 861; *The New York Times* 13 Mar. 1995). The number of killings fell to 21 in April (*The Far East and Australasia* 1996 1996, 861), but the respite was short-lived and in mid-May violence erupted again (*ibid.*; *AI* 31 May 1995). With the MQM "[holding] the advantage in what amounted to an insurgency until the end of June" (*The Far East and Australasia* 1996 1996, 861; *The Herald* July 1995a, 26), government control effectively collapsed in large sections of Karachi's Central, East and West districts (*The Far East and Australasia* 1996 1996, 861; *The Herald* July 1995a, 26).

Over the next few weeks rocket-propelled grenades were fired at government installations, including the television station and Liaquatabad police station, Rangers patrols were ambushed, vehicles bearing government licence plates came under fire and dozens of bullet-ridden and torture-marked bodies turned up in Karachi streets and ditches (*AI* 31 May 1995; *The Far East and Australasia* 1996 1996, 861; *The Herald* July 1995a, 26). About 300 to 320 people were killed in June (*ibid.*; *ibid.* Jan. 1996a, 51; *India Today* 15 July 1995, 35), including 60 police and Rangers personnel (*The Herald* July 1995a, 26). Many of these security forces personnel died in targeted retaliation killings rather than in shoot-outs with militants (*ibid.* Jan. 1996a, 55; *ibid.* Nov. 1994a, 61). Eighty people were killed and "hundreds" wounded in one three-day period in late June (*India Today* 15 July 1995, 35), while another 44 were killed in Karachi over the weekend of 30 June-2 July 1995, most in incidents connected to an MQM-led two-day general strike (Reuters 2 July 1995).

In late June 1995 the central government decided to intervene (*The Far East and Australasia* 1996 1996, 861; *The Herald* July 1995b, 33; *ibid.* Aug. 1995a, 27). Describing the move as an "action against terrorists" rather than an "operation" (*ibid.*, 25, 27), the government posted 10,000 to 12,000 paramilitary Rangers and about 1,500 Frontier Constabulary personnel to Karachi to beef up the city's 22,000-strong police force (Reuters 25 Sept. 1995; *The Herald* July 1995b, 32; *ibid.* Nov. 1995b, 50), which had been "virtually neutralised" by militants' attacks on police stations and targeted killings of police personnel (*ibid.* Nov. 1995b, 49; *ibid.* Nov. 1994a, 62; also see *FEER* 19 Oct. 1995b, 28). Heading up the exercise was the federal

interior minister, retired general Naseerullah Babar^[2] (ibid. July 1995b, 32).

Citing "highly placed" and "informed sources," *The Herald* described the "basic strategy" of the new operation as "totally different from the earlier action," with the government relying more on the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and its own intelligence agencies than on military intelligence (Aug. 1995a, 27). Intelligence had reportedly been the "weakest link" in Operation Clean-up (ibid. July 1995b, 33; ibid. Aug. 1995a, 27); not only had it "failed to penetrate the inner workings of the MQM" (ibid. July 1995b, 33), but rival intelligence agencies had backed different MQM factions (ibid. Aug. 1995a, 27; *Freedom Review* Mar.-Apr. 1996, 40; *The Far East and Australasia* 1996 1996, 860). Another reported difference was a decision to "go for 'target arrests' rather than the 'generalized arrests' that [had] been causing widespread resentment among Karachi residents" (IPS 18 Aug. 1995; *The Herald* Aug. 1995a, 27). According to *The Herald*,

a far more careful distinction is now being drawn between 'terrorists' and the general public. The old practice of sealing off entire localities for days on end and hauling away almost every young man in sight had proved counterproductive, for obvious reasons. This time round, there were no mass arrests of men and boys belonging to 'suspicious' age groups.... (ibid. July 1995b, 34).

However, in a later report *The Herald* noted that the new operation was "lopsided and uneven," with security forces "not targetting all criminals, but a particular group of political activists" (ibid. Aug. 1995a, 25). Despite General Babar's claim that security forces had adopted a new strategy of "target arrests" (IPS 18 Aug 1995; *The Herald* Aug. 1995a, 27), mass round-ups and military-style siege-and-search operations were still commonly used (see subsection 4.1) (AFP 20 Aug 1995; *The Herald* Aug. 1995b, 28-30; AI 17 Aug. 1995; *Country Reports 1995* 1996, 1338). There was growing evidence that the Rangers and police were involved in human rights abuses, including beatings, extortion, disappearances, torture and extrajudicial executions of suspected militants in faked encounter killings (see subsections 4.2 to 4.4) (IPS 18 Aug. 1995; AFP 29 Aug. 1995; AI 17 Aug. 1995; ibid. Feb 1996, 17-18; *The Herald* Aug. 1995b, 28-30; ibid. Nov. 1995a, 46-47; ibid. Nov. 1995c, 56-58).

Within weeks law enforcement officials claimed to have broken the "inner circle" of the MQM, recruited informers, tapped the MQM's telephones, killed or arrested key activists and obtained "a great deal of valuable information" (ibid Aug. 1995a, 25, 27; ibid. July 1995b, 33) through "interrogations carried out by special teams" (ibid.). In an effort to cut off the MQM's lines of communication, all pager and mobile phone services in Karachi were shut down (ibid. Aug. 1995a, 27; *The Herald* July 1995b, 34-35; FEER 19 Oct. 1995b, 28; DPA 31 Dec. 1995), a tactic one source believed would cut off MQM activists and workers from the leadership, leaving them vulnerable to a "campaign of psychological warfare" (*The Herald* Aug. 1995a, 27).

In an effort to win over public opinion, the government unleashed an anti-MQM propaganda campaign similar to the one used in 1992, alleging discoveries of MQM torture chambers, execution sites and arms caches (ibid., 31, 35). Sources indicate that by mid-August 1995 the violence had "declined significantly" (IPS 18 Aug. 1995; *The Herald* Aug. 1995a, 25), the MQM seemed to be "on the defensive" and a "semblance of normalcy" had returned to Karachi (ibid.; IPS 18 Aug. 1995). Interior Minister Babar reportedly claimed that all of the major MQM activists had been or soon would be apprehended, and that the flow of arms to Karachi had been halted (*The Herald* Aug. 1995a, 27). According to *The Herald*, however, the

MQM had made a "tactical withdrawal," much as it had gone underground during Operation Clean-up, and would reassert its strength at a later date (July 1995b, 34, 35).

The government and MQM entered into negotiations in Islamabad on 11 July 1995 (HRW 1995, 166; Reuters 3 July 1995; AFP 17 July 1995). Several sources indicate the army, apparently hoping to "wriggle out of the Karachi mess," had played a key role in bringing the government to the table (*The Herald* July 1995a, 27; VOA 5 July 1995; *The Herald* Nov. 1995b, 54; *Asiaweek* 28 July 1995, 20), although others suggest it may have adopted a harder line after MQM militants began targeting armed forces personnel in the early weeks of the operation (*India Today* 15 July 1995, 36-37; FEER 31 Aug. 1995, 23). The government presented a list of 21 points for discussion and the MQM 18 (ibid. 19 Oct. 1995a, 24; AI Feb. 1996, 5), but with "no common ground between the two parties upon which to base a settlement" (*The Herald* July 1995a, 26; VOA 5 July 1995), and "both sides bent on settling political scores," the talks "deadlock[ed] from the start" (HRW 1995, 166). Sources indicate that by refusing to compromise with the Altaf group (*India Today* 15 July 1995, 36; FEER 31 Aug. 1995, 23), while leaving open the possibility of "political accommodation with the rest of the MQM" (ibid.), the government may have been seeking to divide the MQM leadership (AFP 4 Aug. 1995; FEER 31 Aug. 1995, 23). After about a dozen rounds of talks, rounds of demands, counter-demands, MQM boycotts and failure to agree on even a single issue (ibid. 19 Oct. 1995a, 24; *The Herald* July 1995a, 26; Reuters 7 Oct. 1995), negotiations collapsed in late September and "show[ed] no signs of being revived" at year's end (AFP 21 Jan. 1996; Reuters 7 Oct. 1995; *Keesing's* 1996, R80). But by early 1996 "almost everything appeared to be going Benazir Bhutto's way," reported *The Herald*, with the "law and order situation in Karachi ... look[ing] better than at any time during the past two or three years" (Apr. 1996, 47).

NOTE

[2] According to *The Herald*, "not ready to give up on its agenda of purging Karachi of all 'terrorists,'" the army was not just playing an "active role in Karachi" (Nov. 1995b, 49), but "directing the Karachi operation day to day" (*The Herald* Nov. 1995b, 54). It argued that Operation Clean-up was "never officially called off," and thus the army was still empowered "to assist the civil government in the maintenance of law and order" (ibid., 50). It further notes that although the Rangers "technically come under the interior ministry, their entire officer cadre is drawn directly from the army" (ibid., 49), and that many Rangers officers had been "posted in Karachi and played an active role in the earlier army operation" (ibid., 50). With the army "directly controlling the [Rangers] command structure," its "officers are answerable to their superiors in the armed forces" (ibid., 49). Stated one police officer, "they may not be doing it overtly as they were earlier," but the army is "running the show through the rangers. ... if people think [the army] has detached itself from the on-going operation, they are grossly mistaken" (ibid., 50). [\[back\]](#)

3. HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY THE STATE

3.1 Arbitrary Arrest and Detention

Cordon-and-search or siege-and-search operations, in which entire neighbourhoods are surrounded while security forces personnel conduct house-to-house searches for arms and suspected militants, were frequent occurrences during the last few months of Operation Clean-up (AI Jan. 1995, 11; *The Herald* Nov. 1994b, 64). While government officials claim to have adopted a policy of targeted operations (ibid. Aug. 1995a, 27; IPS 18 Aug. 1995), sources indicate that siege-and-search operations continued in 1995 and 1996 (*The Herald* Aug. 1995a, 27; ibid. Aug. 1995b, 28-30; AFP 20 Aug. 1995; AI Feb. 1996, 8-9).

Generally lasting a few hours but in some cases as long as three days, cordon-and-search operations are conducted "without search warrants and without declaring curfew," and no one is allowed to enter or leave the perimeter (AI Jan. 1995, 11; ibid. Feb. 1996, 9; *The Herald* Nov.

1994b, 64). Authorities frequently take hundreds of people into custody, failing to observe legal requirements to file First Information Reports [3] (FIRs) and release detainees within 24 hours (*The Herald* Nov. 1994b, 64; AI Feb. 1996, 9). Many of those detained are women, "boys as young as 12 and old men" (*ibid.*, 10).

In one operation on 20 August 1995, police and Rangers cordoned off the neighbourhood of Pak Colony, a mostly poor area of 400,000 in Karachi's West district, and took away hundreds of people, mostly youths, some blindfolded (AFP 20 Aug. 1995). Many were reportedly released after "screening" (*ibid.*). The director-general of the Rangers in Sindh, General Mushtaq, has told representatives of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) that there is "no other way to arrest [militants] than to round up large numbers and screen them" (AI Feb. 1996, 9), and that blindfolding of suspects is necessary to protect the identities of informants and witnesses (*ibid.*, 10).

Sources indicate that although most detainees in cordon-and-search operations are released within a few hours (*ibid.*, 9; *The Herald* Aug. 1995b, 29), many are only released after the victim's family pays a sum of "ransom money" to police (AI 31 May 1995; *The Herald* Aug. 1995b, 29). The amount required can vary from Rs 5,000 to Rs 300,000 (Cdn \$213 to \$12,800), depending on the circumstances and status of the victim's family (*ibid.*). One resident of the Garden West area of Karachi recounted how police arrived one day, surrounded her apartment building, and arrested 100 to 150 youths between the ages of 15 and 20 years (*ibid.*). Neighbours later told her that none of the boys had been released without paying ransom to police, and that some were being held on criminal charges pending payment (*ibid.*). One Karachi resident, whose son was taken to hospital after being injured in crossfire between police and militants during one operation, reported that two days later two policemen arrived, claiming his son had been charged with murder and would be released once a "deal" had been struck with the "incharge" of the Korangi police station (*ibid.*, 30). Reports from Amnesty International and *The Herald* indicate that the Karachi police have a "well-known" reputation for corruption and brutality (AI Jan. 1995, 7; *The Herald* Oct. 1995b, 77; *ibid.* Jan. 1996b, 97), and many fear their family members will be tortured or even killed while in custody (*ibid.* Aug. 1995b, 29).

According to one source, the abuses committed during cordon-and-search operations are worse in low-income areas such as Orangi, Baldia and Korangi; while the procedures of arrest and extortion are the same, "the humiliation of residents there is of a higher degree than in relatively well-off areas" (*ibid.*). Residents of such areas report being blindfolded, beaten and kicked during searches and on the way to the police station, and of having their homes ransacked and valuables stolen (*ibid.*, 30; AI Feb. 1996, 10; *ibid.* Jan. 1995, 11). Sources indicate that many women have reported being harassed, threatened and abused during house-to-house searches in such areas (*The Herald* Aug. 1995b, 30; AI Feb. 1996, 9, 10), and Amnesty International indicates these numbers may be on the increase (Feb. 1996, 9). Several sources indicate that when wanted MQM activists cannot be found, friends, relatives and family members are sometimes arrested to pressure suspects to surrender (AI 1995, 32; *Country Reports 1995* 1996, 1337; AI 17 Aug. 1995; *ibid.* 5 Apr. 1994, 1; *ibid.* Feb. 1996, 8; *ibid.* 5 Apr. 1994, 1).

3.2 Disappearance/Incommunicado Detention

Sources indicate that several people either disappeared into custody or were held in incommunicado detention for prolonged periods in 1995 [4] (*ibid.* 17 Aug. 1995; *ibid.* Feb. 1996, 19-21; *Country Reports 1995* 1996, 1336, 1338; AFP 17 July 1995; *The Herald* July 1995b, 34). According to *Country Reports 1995*, "the authorities do not strictly observe the limits on

detention. The police are not required to notify anyone when an arrest is made and often hold detainees without charge until they are challenged by a court" (1996, 1338). Stated one human rights activist who has investigated dozens of such cases in Sindh, "undeclared detention is normal in Sindh" (AI Feb. 1996, 19).

One of the most publicized cases of disappearance involved MQM(A) member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) Qamar Mansoor Siddiqui and activist Rais Fatima, the sister of a close associate of Altaf Hussain, who on 4 June 1995 boarded a train in Karachi for Lahore, never to arrive (ibid. 17 Aug. 1995; ibid. Feb. 1996, 19-20; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1336). About a month after habeas corpus petitions were filed on behalf of both people the government admitted to having arrested Qamar on a charge of sedition, but claimed to know nothing of the whereabouts of Rais Fatima (AI 17 Aug. 1995; AI Feb. 1996, 19-20; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1336). For several months the government denied having taken Fatima into custody (AI Feb. 1996, 19-20; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1336; AFP 10 Sept. 1995), but in December allowed her father to visit her in Rawalpindi's Adiala jail (AI Feb. 1996, 20; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1336). Fatima claimed she had been in custody since 4 June (ibid.). A related case involved MQM activist Arshad Naeem, arrested in Lahore on 7 June, whose whereabouts remained unknown for over a month (AI Feb. 1996, 20). When Naeem's habeas corpus petition came up before the Lahore High Court, officials denied having taken him into custody, but two days later admitted that he had been arrested in the same sedition case as Qamar and was also being held in Adiala jail (ibid.).

Several arrested MQM members, both party workers and parliamentarians, were transferred from Karachi to other prison locations in Pakistan, often secretly (ibid., 21; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1338; *The Herald* July 1995b, 34; AFP 17 July 1995). For example, in mid-July about 25 MQM suspects were reportedly secretly flown to Islamabad (*The Herald* July 1995b, 34). One reason offered was that interrogation teams with "specific expertise in urban terrorism" had been set up in the capital (*The Herald* July 1995b, 34), but another source states that such transfers are intended to "discourage visits by family members, supporters and attorneys" (*Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1338). Amnesty International suggests that transferred suspects may be particularly vulnerable to torture and other abuses during prolonged periods of incommunicado detention, and notes that several MQM activists subjected to such treatment have appeared on television confessing to various acts of "terrorism" (17 Aug. 1995; ibid. Feb. 1996, 21).

3.3 Torture and Ill-Treatment

Sources indicate that Pakistani police and prison officials have long used beatings and torture to extract confessions and force detainees to incriminate others (*Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1336; AI Dec. 1993, 1). According to *Country Reports 1995* and Amnesty International, use of torture is so widespread that it is considered standard practice (1996, 1336; Dec. 1993, 1); according to one 1992 source, Pakistan's police force has "institutionalized torture as its primary method of crime detection" (*The Herald* Nov. 1992, qtd. in AI Dec. 1993, 1). During Operation Clean-up the army's Field Investigation Team (FIT) reportedly operated several interrogation cells in Karachi in which detainees were "subjected to severe torture" (*The Herald* Nov. 1994b, 64; ibid. Jan. 1995b, 50), and extortion (*Economic Review* July 1995). A senior officer with the Crime Investigation Agency (CIA), which helps the regular police investigate crime and has been linked to many human rights abuses (AI Jan. 1995, 7; *Human Rights in Developing Countries Yearbook 1994 1994*, 304), has stated that "without torture interrogation is impossible. ... You cannot extract the truth from the suspects unless you employ torture. This

happens all over the world" (*Newsline* Feb. 1994, qtd. in AI Jan. 1995, 8). Karachi police chief Shoaib Suddle has reportedly acknowledged that his officers sometimes torture prisoners, explaining that "torture is a problem but when your men are being ambushed every day, they react" (*Chicago Tribune* 8 Dec. 1995). In April 1995 the Terrorist Affected Areas Act of 1972 was amended to permit confessions or statements obtained during interrogations in "terrorist affected areas" to be used in court, a development human rights monitors and press sources believe encourages police use of torture to obtain evidence (*Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1336-37; AFP 13 Apr. 1995).

Many incidents of ill-treatment or torture of MQM activists or workers at the hands of law enforcement authorities were reported in 1995 and 1996. On 29 or 30 May 1995 several Pakistani newspapers carried reports and photos of four young MQM activists produced in court who were blindfolded and visibly wounded (*Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1336; AI Feb. 1996, 10). The men had what appeared to be cigarette burns on their arms and legs, and other injuries to legs and hips (*Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1336; AI Feb. 1996, 10). The men told reporters they had been kept naked and blindfolded for days together, were given little food and were subjected to torture to reveal the whereabouts of MQM leaders and workers (ibid.). While reports indicate the four men had been arrested from their homes on 6 May, police claimed the men were bandits and had been captured in an "encounter" three days earlier (*Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1336; AI Feb. 1996, 10). Government officials stated the men's wounds were self-inflicted, an attempt to implicate the government in human rights violations (ibid.). After the presiding judge ordered the four men remanded to judicial custody, police reportedly returned them to the police station (AI Feb. 1996, 11).

Amnesty International indicates that although incidents of torture and extortion involving political activists are reported frequently in Karachi, the number of such incidents involving MQM suspects and their families suggests police believe they can do so with impunity (ibid.). Some detainees have reportedly died from injuries inflicted while in police custody, even after the family has agreed to pay the required amount (ibid., 14).

In 1995 Amnesty International received "several dozen" reports of people dying from torture while in police custody (ibid., 11). Many of these incidents involve MQM or suspected MQM activists (ibid., 11-14). On 7 July 1995 former MQM councillor Aslam Sabzwari died in mysterious circumstances, 16 hours after being taken into custody by police in Liaquatabad, Central district (ibid., 11; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1335; Reuters 7 July 1995; *The News* 8 July 1995). Doctors who performed the post-mortem examination reportedly found marks of "severe torture" on the body (*The News* 8 July 1995; AI Feb. 1996, 11-12; *MQM News* 26 Sept. 1995), and attendants at the Edhi Foundation, where the body was taken for burial, found the left eye smashed and a bullet wound in the back of the head (AI Feb. 1996, 11-12; *MQM News* 26 Sept. 1995). Police initially claimed Sabzwari had been tortured by unidentified men, had been found injured and unconscious, and had died of a heart attack at Gulberg police station (AI Feb. 1996, 12; *The News* 8 July 1995; AFP 10 July 1995), but several days later produced a photograph of the body, purportedly taken before the post-mortem, that showed no signs of torture and both eyes intact (AI Feb. 1996, 12). No explanation was offered as to how the body could be injury-free at the time of post-mortem when, as police claimed, Sabzwari had been tortured prior to arrest (ibid.). Further, in later communications the government stated that "Altaf group terrorists like ... Aslam Sabzwari ... got killed" when they "engaged law enforcement personnel in shootouts," despite the initial claim that he died of a heart attack (ibid.). Observers in Karachi believe Sabzwari, who had over 30 charges pending against him and a Rs 1.5 million

(Cdn \$64,000) reward on his head (ibid.; Reuters 7 July 1995; *The News* 8 July 1995), may have been tortured by the MQM(H) and then picked up and killed by police who wanted to recover the reward (AI Feb. 1996, 12). Inquiries were ordered by both the Karachi police chief and the Sindh provincial government (*The News* 8 July 1995; AI Feb. 1996, 13), but it is not known whether any reports have been issued or police personnel held responsible (ibid.).

Sources indicate that torture resulting in deaths of MQM suspects in custody are sometimes covered up as faked encounter killings (ibid., 14; *The Herald* Feb. 1996, 74-75; AI Dec. 1993, 1). One incident involves the death in police custody of MQM activist Fahimur Rehman (alias Bhoora)^[5], who police claim jumped to his death from the second floor of a construction site to which police had taken him to help locate hidden weapons (*The Herald* Feb. 1996, 74). Police claim they fired shots after Fahim broke loose, but that none hit their target (ibid.). Not only was the police story nearly identical to one used several months earlier in the death of another MQM activist (AI Feb. 1996, 14-15; *The Herald* Feb. 1996, 74), but according to *The Herald*, it is unlikely police and Fahim were ever on the site (ibid., 74). No empty shell casings were found on the site, where police claim to have shot at Fahim, whereas "scores" were found outside, and the site was well-supervised and kept locked after hours, making it an unlikely place to store weapons (ibid., 75). Furthermore, a doctor at the Jinnah Hospital who saw the body reportedly stated that Fahim's injuries could not have occurred from a fall (ibid.). The paper speculated that Fahim was already dead when police arrived at the site, and after breaking the lock on the gate and firing a few shots to create an alibi, they had simply left his body behind and returned to the station (ibid., 74). A "senior police official" reportedly confirmed that Fahim had been subjected to severe torture during interrogation at the Women's Police Station in Karachi's South district, "had not eaten since his arrest almost a week earlier," and died of injuries that included several fractured ribs and a fractured skull (ibid., 75).

On 26 September 1995 Feroze Uddin and another MQM worker from North Karachi, who had been arrested on 19 September, appeared in a special court to face charges of assault on public servants (AI Feb. 1996, 14). The presiding judge reportedly commented on the numerous injuries visible on Feroze Uddin, included swelling of his face and chest and other marks of beating, and ordered him remanded to judicial custody (ibid.). On 28 or 29 September Feroze Uddin and two other MQM activists died of gunshot injuries sustained in an alleged "encounter" between police and militants (ibid.). Police claim Feroze Uddin and one other MQM worker had been taken to New Karachi to identify suspects and both men were killed when armed militants attacked (ibid.).

According to Amnesty International, police have reported other deaths in custody as being due to suicide, accidents or natural causes (ibid., 14-15).

3.4 Extrajudicial Executions

Extrajudicial executions, often in the form of staged "encounters" with militants in which police shoot and kill suspects, occur with "alarming frequency" in Karachi, and sources indicate the rate seems to be increasing (*The Herald* Nov. 1995a, 45-47; AI Feb. 1996, 17; *Country Reports 1995* 1996, 1335; Reuters 16 Feb. 1996; *The Herald* Feb. 1996, 74-75; ibid. Jan. 1996a, 53; AP 15 Feb. 1996). The precise numbers are difficult to determine, but the MQM has reportedly claimed that 130 to 150 of its activists were extrajudicially executed by security forces in 1995 (Reuters 16 Feb. 1996; *Current History* Apr. 1996, 161), and more than 50 in the first six weeks of 1996 (Reuters 16 Feb. 1996). These numbers correspond roughly with figures given by other observers, including the HRCP (AFP 28 Feb. 1996; *The Herald* Feb. 1996, 74;

ibid. Nov. 1995a, 46; ibid. Jan. 1996a, 51; AP 2 Apr. 1996; DPA 31 Dec. 1995).

In March 1995, following the killing of the US consulate personnel, Prime Minister Bhutto called upon security forces to use "ruthlessness" in dealing with "terrorists," and threatened provincial government officials with dismissal unless they quickly brought the escalating violence in Karachi under control (*The New York Times* 13 Mar. 1995; AI 15 Mar. 1995; ibid. Feb. 1996, 5). A number of sources, as well as statements from police and government officials, suggest security forces have been given tacit permission to use extrajudicial executions to eliminate militants (*The Herald* Feb. 1996, 74; ibid. Nov. 1995a, 46, 47; ibid. Jan. 1996a, 53; *India Abroad* 9 Feb. 1996, 10; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1335).

On 2 August 1995, Farooq Putney (alias Farooq Dada) and three other MQM workers were killed by police in an "encounter" near Karachi's airport (AI Feb. 1996, 17; ibid. 17 Aug. 1995; IPS 18 Aug. 1995; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1335). Police claimed the four men were killed when they failed to stop and opened fire on police (AI Feb. 1996, 17), and that a large quantity of weapons was recovered from their car (IPS 18 Aug. 1995). However, family members claim the men had earlier been arrested from their homes (AI Feb. 1996, 17; ibid. 17 Aug. 1995; IPS 18 Aug. 1995), and witnesses reportedly saw the four in shackles at the same time another MQM activist was arrested (AI Feb. 1996, 17). Putney, who faced "numerous and credible" charges of extortion and murder (*Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1335), including the killings of a number of security forces personnel, reportedly had a Rs 1 million (Cdn \$42,680) reward on his head (IPS 18 Aug. 1995).

On 10 October 1995, Fahim Farooqi (alias Fahim Commando) and three other MQM workers were killed in an alleged encounter in the residential Karachi neighbourhood of Nazimabad (AI Feb. 1996, 17; *The Herald* Nov. 1995a, 45; Reuters 10 Oct. 1995; AP 10 Oct. 1995; Radio Pakistan Overseas Service 10 Oct. 1995). According to police the four men, all of whom had been arrested earlier, were being taken to Nazimabad to identify an MQM "safe house" when MQM gunmen ambushed them from the rooftops (AI Feb. 1996, 17-18; *The Herald* Nov. 1995a, 45; Reuters 10 Oct. 1995; AP 10 Oct. 1995; Radio Pakistan Overseas Service 10 Oct. 1995). Officials stated that police personnel fled the ambushed vehicle, thus explaining why no law enforcement personnel were injured, but the four prisoners, handcuffed in the van, were killed (AI Feb. 1996, 18). According to one source, however, Nazimabad residents who tried to enter the street to see what had happened were blocked at their doorways by police personnel (*The Herald* Nov. 1995a, 45). Doctors who examined the bodies found that all four men had been shot at very close range (AI Feb. 1996, 18; Reuters 10 Oct. 1995). According to the HRCP, which investigated the incident and found that "the official version of an ambush or a shoot-out could not be given credence" (DPA 19 Oct. 1995), the four had been "handcuffed, fettered and chained together" when they were shot to death on a street blocked off by police (DPA 19 Oct. 1995; AI Feb. 1996, 18; *The Herald* Nov. 1995a, 45). Like Farooq Putney, Fahim Farooqi reportedly topped the government's "most wanted" list (*The Herald* Jan. 1996a, 53; AP 10 Oct. 1995). Several weeks after Fahim Farooqi's death, government and law enforcement officials claimed he had been "killed under MQM(A) high command's instructions by their terrorists so that he could not disclose secrets and pinpoint [MQM(A)] hideouts" (AI Feb. 1996, 18; *The Herald* Nov. 1995a, 46). According to one source, several MQM activists have been killed in alleged attacks by "MQM terrorists" while being transported to various areas during police investigations (ibid.).

Sources indicate that law enforcement officials sometimes describe victims of extrajudicial

killings as terrorists in order to justify their actions (AI Feb. 1996, 18; *The Herald* Feb. 1996, 75). According to *The Herald*, many of those killed in encounters and described by police as "terrorists" were "not even on the 'wanted list' of the law enforcement agencies":

Whenever anyone is killed in a so-called 'encounter', the police attaches his name to a number of crimes and scores of unsolved cases. ... Investigations show that more often than not, the deceased's names were only added to the police record after their murder. The boys who were killed along with Faheem Farooqui alias Commando, for example, were alleged to have committed dozens of crimes. All the original FIRs of the cases, however, put the accused as 'unknown'" (Feb. 1996, 75).

One MQM "terrorist" killed in an alleged armed encounter with police was Wafed Ali Safdar, a young MQM worker who had reportedly witnessed the custodial killings of two MQM activists in September 1995 and was prepared to give evidence (AI Feb. 1996, 18).

Sources indicate that some extrajudicial executions may be retaliatory or revenge killings (ibid., 24; *Country Reports* 1995 1996, 1335; *The Herald* Nov. 1995a, 46; ibid. Jan. 1996a, 55). On 9 December 1995, the torture-marked bodies of Nasir and Arif Hussain, Altaf Hussain's elder brother and nephew, were discovered in the isolated Gadap area of Karachi (AI Feb. 1996, 24, 25; *Country Reports* 1995 1996, 1335; Xinhua 10 Dec. 1995; *India Abroad* 15 Dec. 1995, 13). Several sources suggest the men were murdered in retaliation for the killing a few days earlier of Ehsan Ali Shah, the brother of Sindh Chief Minister Abdullah Shah (see subsection 5.3) (AI Feb. 1996, 24-25; *Country Reports* 1995 1996, 1335; *The Herald* Jan. 1996a, 55).

3.5 Treatment of the Press

On 29 June 1995 the Sindh provincial government invoked the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) ordinance of 1960 and instituted a 60-day ban on six Karachi-based Urdu-language dailies for "sensationalist" reporting of the Karachi violence and for "inciting people to violence against the government" (HRW 1995, 166-67; AI Feb. 1996, 15; *Country Reports* 1995 1996, 1341; *The Economist* 1-7 July 1995, 30). The move outraged the press community—one human rights monitor described it as the "harshest media crackdown since General Zia ul Haq's military dictatorship" (HRW 1995, 166)—and after protests by journalists' unions and newspaper owners associations the government was forced to lift the ban less than one week later (ibid., 167; AI Feb. 1996, 15; *Country Reports* 1995 1996, 1341; Radio Pakistan 5 July 1995). A similar ban was instituted in mid-December 1995 (AI Feb. 1996, 15; *Freedom Review* Mar.-Apr. 1996, 41; Reuters 13 Dec. 1995), and again lifted because of journalists' protests (AI Feb. 1996, 15).

On 16 August 1995, police raided the house of Razia Bhatti, editor of the highly respected independent monthly *Newsline*, and searched the paper's editorial offices twice the next day (IFEX 17 Aug. 1995; AI Feb. 1996, 15; IPS 30 Aug. 1995; IPS 17 Mar. 1996; HRW 1995, 167). Charges were brought and then dropped against Bhatti, the publisher of *Newsline* and journalist Mohammed Hanif, who had written an unflattering article about Kamaluddin Azfar, the newly appointed governor of Sindh (IFEX 17 Aug. 1995; AI Feb. 1996, 15; IPS 30 Aug. 1995; IPS 17 Mar. 1996; HRW 1995, 167). Bhatti was known to be an uncompromising critic of government handling of the Karachi situation (IPS 17 Mar. 1996; IPS 30 Aug. 1995). On 16 August police also raided the home of Zahid Qureshi, editor of the Urdu-language Karachi daily *Parcham*, which is considered the "official organ" of the MQM (IFEX 17 Aug. 1995; AI Feb. 1996, 15; IPS 30 Aug. 1995). When Qureshi could not be found, police reportedly arrested his younger brother and seized papers and photos of Qureshi with MQM leader Altaf Hussain (IFEX 17 Aug. 1995; IPS

30 Aug. 1995).

On 23 August 1995, gunmen driving a vehicle identified as government-owned reportedly threw bombs at the *Parcham* offices (AI Feb. 1996, 16). On 14 September 1995, *Parcham* correspondent Farhan Effendi was arrested in Hyderabad by plainclothes Rangers and "reportedly severely beaten, and kept in detention blindfolded with his hands tied behind his back" (HRW 1995, 167; IFEX 18 Sept. 1996; AI Feb. 1996, 15-16; *India Abroad* 19 Jan. 1996b). Journalists who saw Effendi reported that he had bruises on his face, chest and back (AI Feb. 1996, 16). At last report Effendi had been charged with illegal possession of a firearm and involvement in terrorist activities, and, denied bail, was in Hyderabad's Central Jail awaiting trial (ibid.; HRW 1995, 167; *India Abroad* 19 Jan. 1996b). Other journalists critical of the government have reportedly suffered fates similar to Effendi's (HRW 1995, 167; *India Abroad* 19 Jan. 1996b). Sources indicate that government actions against the press in 1995 "fostered a climate in which journalists became regular targets for violence and intimidation" (HRW 1995, 169; *India Abroad* 19 Jan. 1996b), and that there was an "alarming increase" in the number of attacks on journalists during the year (ibid.).

NOTES

[3] The First Information Report is the initial report filed by police prior to beginning an investigation. For additional information on FIRs, please refer to Responses to Information Requests PAK14236 of 21 May 1993 and PAK 18812.E of 19 October 1994 and their attachments. [\[back\]](#)

[4] Information on the situation in early 1996 was not available among the sources consulted. An extended Response to Information Request updating the situation of the MQM will be prepared in February 1997. [\[back\]](#)

[5] According to The Herald, police use of "absurd" and "ridiculous" nicknames to refer to wanted MQM activists is a "psychological" tactic that began after Interior Minister Babar took charge of the Karachi situation in June (Jan. 1996a, 55). The MQM apparently never refers to its members by these nicknames, some of which are "insulting," while others have "no discernible meaning" (ibid.). [\[back\]](#)

4. HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY THE MQM

Sources indicate that many political parties and groups in Karachi maintain armed militias (AI Feb. 1996, 22; *The Herald* Dec. 1994a, 34), and that "none of the militias reportedly hesitate to commit human rights abuses" to further political or criminal objectives (AI Feb. 1996, 22). While both MQM factions have repeatedly denied that their members are involved in human rights abuses in Karachi^[6] (IPS 8 Dec. 1995; AI Feb. 1996, 22; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1335; *Jang* 31 Jan. 1996, qtd. in *India Abroad* 9 Feb. 1996, 10), human rights monitors and knowledgeable observers in Karachi indicate that MQM members have used violence to further their political ends (AI Feb. 1996, 22; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1335; HRW 1995, 166; *The Herald* Oct. 1995a, 46; ibid. May 1994a, 30). According to *The Herald*, the MQM leadership is "well-informed about which of its members are involved in [criminal and] terrorist activities" (Oct. 1995a, 46; ibid. May 1994a, 30), but chooses not to expel them because such people are useful to achieving the party's short-term goals (ibid.; ibid. May 1994a, 30).

4.1 Violence Against Security Forces

Government, media and human rights sources indicate that about 225 to 250 Karachi police personnel were killed by militants in 1995 (*The Frontier Post* 16 Mar. 1996; AFP 28 Feb. 1996; *The Herald* Jan. 1996a, 51; AI Feb. 1996, 23), as were at least 13 Rangers and 11 military personnel (ibid.). *The Herald* reports that most of these law enforcement personnel died in targeted killings rather than in shoot-outs with militants (Jan. 1996a, 55; ibid. Nov. 1995b,

49). According to Amnesty International, many were off-duty, unarmed and not in uniform, and many were abducted and tortured before being killed (AI Feb. 1996, 23). Sources indicate that many of these were retaliatory or revenge killings (*ibid.*, 24; *The Herald* Jan. 1996a, 55). States *The Herald*: "Each time an MQM activist was killed [in 1995], the death of a law enforcement official invariably followed, after which more MQM men were gunned down. That these were vendetta killings is certain" (Jan. 1996a, 55).

On 18 July 1995, retired police official Raja Mohammad Ishaq "was abducted from a bus and tortured to death" (AI Feb. 1996, 23; Reuters 18 July 1995). His body was later found in a car in the Gulbahar area of Karachi (AI Feb. 1996, 23; Reuters 18 July 1995). In a separate incident on 18 July 1995, assistant subinspector Abdul Razzak was shot and killed in Gulbahar (AI Feb. 1996, 23; Reuters 18 July 1995). According to police he had been abducted, blindfolded and his hands and feet bound before being shot, after which his body was placed in a sack and dumped (AI Feb. 1996, 23; Reuters 18 July 1995). A note found on the body reportedly stated "anyone who confronts us will meet the same fate" (AI Feb. 1996, 23; Reuters 18 July 1995).

Other state personnel have also been targeted. On 30 September 1995, the bodies of two airmen from the Korangi airforce base were found on a deserted road in Korangi (FEER 19 Oct. 1995a, 24). The men had been abducted at gunpoint and then bound, gagged and shot in the head at point-blank range (*ibid.*). Colleagues of the slain men reportedly stated their regulation short haircuts had identified them as military personnel, and they were killed for this reason alone (*ibid.*). Military personnel have reportedly been instructed not to wear uniforms when off duty, and some officials have removed government-issue licence plates from their cars (*ibid.*).

Family members of police personnel and government officials have also been targeted. On 27 September 1995, two adult sons and the guard of Karachi police superintendent Kazi Abdul Rashid were killed when their car was ambushed outside their home in Central district (AI Feb. 1995, 24; FEER 19 Oct. 1995b, 28; AFP 27 Sept. 1995; AP 27 Sept. 1995). The driver and a second guard were seriously wounded in the attack (AFP 27 Sept. 1995; Reuters 27 Sept. 1995). On 15 October 1995, five family members of Karachi police deputy superintendent Khawaja Nisar were shot and killed by gunmen in their North Nazimabad home (AI Feb. 1995, 24; AFP 15 Oct. 1995; AP 15 Oct. 1995; Reuters 15 Oct. 1995). Nisar, who was not home at the time, had reportedly escaped an earlier rocket attack on his house (AFP 15 Oct. 1995). Police speculated this latest attack was in retaliation for the custodial deaths five days earlier of MQM activist Fahim Farooqi and his three colleagues (see subsection 4.4) (*ibid.*; AP 15 Oct. 1995). Also killed on 15 October 1995 were a Karachi police officer, the brother of a murdered Central district PPP official, and Ahmed Ali Soomro, a former advisor to the Sindh chief minister (AFP 15 Oct. 1995; AP 15 Oct. 1995; Reuters 15 Oct. 1995).

One person was killed and eight to ten people injured, most family members of police officers, in a 13 November 1995 mid-morning attack on a police station and adjacent housing compound in the Garden East area of South district (AFP 13 Nov. 1995; AP 13 Nov. 1995; DPA 13 Nov. 1995; Reuters 13 Nov. 1995; *Country Reports 1995* 1996, 1336). Militants hidden on the rooftops of adjacent buildings fired five to ten rocket-propelled grenades at the complex, followed by heavy automatic weapons fire, in a 20-minute gun battle in which one militant was killed (AFP 13 Nov. 1995; AP 13 Nov. 1995; DPA 13 Nov. 1995; Reuters 13 Nov. 1995). Police blamed the MQM for the attack (AFP 13 Nov. 1995; AP 13 Nov. 1995), which one official described as a "serious security breach" (Reuters 13 Nov. 1995). Rangers cordoned off the neighbourhood and conducted a house-to-house search for the remaining attackers (DPA 13

Nov. 1995); one source reports that "at least" 100 people were detained for questioning (Reuters 13 Nov. 1995).

On 23 November 1995, Ehsan Ali Shah, the apolitical younger brother of Sindh Chief Minister Abdullah Shah, and his friend and driver, were killed near his home in Karachi's Federal B Area (AI Feb. 1996, 24; *The Herald* Jan. 1996a, 55; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1336). Two days earlier the Urdu daily *Takbeer* had reportedly quoted an MQM source as stating that one of Shah's relatives would soon be killed (AI Feb. 1996, 24).

Many of the unidentified and mutilated bodies found in gunny sacks in Karachi in 1995 had notes attached declaring them to be police informants (ibid.; AP 27 Sept. 1995). On 14 August 1995, 14 people were killed in Karachi (*The Herald* Aug. 1995a, 27; *The New York Times* 15 Aug. 1995; *The Guardian* 15 Aug. 1995). The blindfolded and bullet-riddled bodies of six of the dead were found in the back of a minibus (*The New York Times* 15 Aug. 1995; JEN 15 Aug. 1995); one body was reportedly stuffed in a sack clutching a note stating "'a gift for Interior Minister Gen. Nasirullah Babar and the fate of an informer'" (AI Feb. 1996, 24; JEN 15 Aug. 1995). The mutilated body of another suspected police informant bearing a note with the message "a gift for Nasrullah Babaar" was found on 27 September 1995 (AP 27 Sept. 1995).

4.2 Violence Against Party Dissidents, Political Opponents and the Press

Sources indicate that members of both MQM factions abducted, tortured and killed members of the rival faction in 1995 (AI Feb. 1996, 26-28; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1337; *Asian Survey* Nov. 1995, 1003; AFP 21 Mar. 1995). After 30 months of official patronage the MQM(H) was "more or less dumped" when the military withdrew from Karachi on 30 November 1994 (*The Herald* Mar. 1995a, 31; ibid. Feb. 1995, 17), and the MQM(A) moved quickly to settle accounts and re-establish its authority in areas such as Nazimabad, Korangi, Pak Colony, Malir, Faisal Colony, Landhi and New Karachi (ibid. Jan. 1995b, 50; ibid. Feb. 1995, 17; *The Far East and Australasia 1996 1996*, 860-61). "What is usually described as 'indiscriminate firing' and 'sniping' is actually a kind of gang war," reported *The Herald* in early 1995, with the Haqiqis "gradually losing the battle" (Jan. 1995b, 50; ibid. Feb. 1995, 17; ibid. Mar. 1995a, 31). While the MQM(A) leadership has reportedly characterized its anti-MQM(H) campaign as a drive to "purge the party of terrorist elements" (*The Herald* Oct. 1995a, 46), one source notes that extortion is a "major source of revenue" for both factions, and the fighting is sometimes about "who gets a bigger piece of the pie" (AFP 21 Mar. 1995).

On 13 February 1995, five teenage MQM(H) activists were killed and three wounded in a drive-by shooting in front of party offices in Nazimabad (*The Herald* Mar. 1995b, 31; DPA 14 Feb. 1995; AFP 14 Feb. 1995). Within 24 hours three MQM(A) activists were reportedly killed, as were another two MQM Haqiqis (*The Herald* Mar. 1995b, 31; AFP 14 Feb. 1995). On 12 March 1995, 12 or 13 MQM(H) activists were killed in Pak Colony, in Karachi's West district (*The Herald* Mar. 1995a, 27; ibid. Mar. 1995b, 31; AI Feb. 1996, 27; AFP 21 Mar. 1995; AFP 18 Jan. 1996). Six or seven of the activists were killed in a "gunbattle" at an MQM(H) "command centre" (AI Feb. 1996, 27; *The Herald* Mar. 1995b, 31; *The New York Times* 13 Mar. 1995), which was subsequently searched and set afire (ibid.), and the remainder were reportedly located and killed after the gunmen conducted a house-to-house search in the area (*The Herald* Mar. 1995b, 31). MQM(H) offices in Landhi, in East district, were attacked with automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades on 17 January 1996, allegedly by MQM(A) militants (AI Feb. 1996, 27; AFP 18 Jan. 1996). The MQM(H) claims that 95 party workers were killed by MQM(A) militants in

1995 (AI Feb. 1996, 27). The MQM(H) was also responsible for attacks on MQM(A) activists; according to the HRCP, at least seven female MQM(A) workers were raped by MQM(H) activists in 1995 (*Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1337).

Mohajirs who join political parties other than the MQM have been subjected to violence (UNRISD June 1993, 25; AI Feb. 1996, 25-26), and according to Amnesty International, "seem to be particularly at risk" (ibid., 25). Amnesty International spoke to several mohajir PPP members who claim to have been harassed, threatened, beaten and had property destroyed by MQM activists in 1995 (Feb. 1996, 25-26). Government figures provided to Amnesty International indicate that 10 mohajir PPP members were killed in the four-month period 1 June 1995 to 30 September 1995 in West district alone (ibid., 26). Official statements, media reports and individual reports indicate that at least 32 PPP members were killed in Karachi in 1995 (ibid.).

Reports that the MQM uses torture cells against political opponents and party dissidents have been around for years (*Human Rights in Developing Countries Yearbook 1994 1994*, 305; AI Dec. 1993, 38-40; ibid. 5 Apr. 1994), and continued in 1995 (ibid. Feb. 1996, 26-27; *The Herald* July 1995b, 31-32, 35; Reuters 8 Jan. 1995; ibid. 8 June 1995). One alleged MQM-run torture cell was uncovered in a 22 July 1995 police and Rangers operation in Gulbahar, Central district (AI Feb. 1996, 26; *The Herald* July 1995b, 31; DPA 23 July 1995). Journalists taken to the site hours later reported seeing ropes, electric cables and blood-stained floors; area residents claimed the site had been occupied by militant youths ten days earlier and reported seeing blindfolded people being dragged inside (AI Feb. 1996, 25). Area residents reported the nearby Khajji Grounds, a football field, also had been used by MQM militants to ill-treat prisoners (ibid., 26; *The Herald* July 1995b, 35; DPA 23 July 1995). On 1 September 1995 Karachi police uncovered another alleged MQM(A)-run torture cell, this time in Korangi (Xinhua 3 Sept. 1995). As in the Gulbahar case journalists were given a tour of the cell, where they saw an axe, knives, a handgun, an iron chain and a rope, as well as the dried blood, clothes and jewellery of victims, some of whom police claimed had been tortured for ransom (ibid.). The cell had reportedly been in operation for six months, and was one of several uncovered in Korangi in the previous few weeks (Xinhua 3 Sept. 1995; *Moneyclips* 8 July 1995; AFP 6 July 1995).

Reporters, editors and publishers critical of the MQM have been threatened and attacked by MQM activists in recent years (*Human Rights in Developing Countries Yearbook 1994 1994*, 308; AI Feb. 1996, 22, 25; IPS 17 Mar. 1996). On 4 December 1994 Mohammad Salahuddin, editor of the Urdu weekly, *Takbeer*, was shot and killed outside his office in Karachi (AI 13 Dec. 1994; AI Jan. 1995, 32; AI Feb. 1996, 25; *Asian Survey* Feb. 1995, 144; *The Herald* Dec. 1994b, 38-39). Salahuddin had been highly critical of both the MQM (AI 13 Dec. 1994; AI Jan. 1995, 32; AI Feb. 1996, 25; *The Herald* Dec. 1994b, 39) and the PPP (ibid.), and in late 1991 had reportedly had his office ransacked and house set on fire by MQM activists (AI 13 Dec. 1994; ibid. Jan. 1995, 32; ibid. Feb. 1996, 25).

4.3 Alleged Violence Against Other Ethnic Groups

Sources indicate that members of certain ethnic groups in Karachi were deliberately targeted and killed in 1995 (ibid., 26; DPA 2 Nov. 1995), but determining responsibility for these killings is often "impossible" (AI Feb. 1996, 26, 28; AFP 21 Mar. 1995). According to Amnesty International, the killings may be intended to "create, maintain or spread a climate of fear" in Karachi (AI Feb. 1996, 23).

On 3 August 1995, the day after the killings of Farooq Putney and three other MQM workers in an alleged encounter with police near Karachi's airport (see subsection 4.4), 22 to 27 people were killed in what police described as MQM "revenge killings" (AI Feb. 1996, 24; AFP 4 Aug. 1995; *The Herald* Aug. 1995a, 27; AP 3 Aug. 1995a; DPA 3 Aug. 1995). Twelve of the dead were found in a minibus in Orangi, where they had been blindfolded, had their wrists tied and been killed with shots to the head and chest (AI Feb. 1996, 24; AFP 4 Aug. 1995; AP 3 Aug. 1995a; DPA 3 Aug. 1995). Police initially said the 12 victims appeared to have been chosen at random (AP 3 Aug. 1995a; *ibid.* 3 Aug. 1995b; AFP 4 Aug. 1995), but later claimed the dead were Punjabis and Sindhis killed by the MQM on suspicion of being police informants (AI Feb. 1996, 24). The MQM has denied responsibility for the 12 minibus killings, reportedly stating they were "the work of someone bent on fanning ethnic violence in Karachi" (*The Herald* Aug. 1995a, 28; DPA 3 Aug. 1995).

Another incident reportedly involving the MQM was the 2 November 1995 slaying of 15 Seraiki-speaking labourers from southern Punjab province in a house in Samanabad, Federal B Area (AI Feb. 1996, 26; DPA 2 Nov. 1995). The labourers were blindfolded, lined up against a wall and shot, and a note saying "a gift for Naseerullah Babar" left with the bodies (*ibid.*.). Hundreds of Sindhis reportedly fled Gulbahar in July 1995 after MQM militants took control of the area and began targeting them (AI Feb. 1996, 26). One source indicates that Pathans and Baluchis, fed up with having their property destroyed by MQM gunmen, sometimes abduct, torture and kill mohajirs who stray into their neighbourhoods (*The Ottawa Citizen* 4 July 1995).

4.4 Abuses Against Ordinary Citizens and Mohajirs

Most political parties and factions in Karachi collect *bhatta* (protection money) from businessmen, shopkeepers, traders and ordinary citizens (AI Feb. 1996, 22; *Freedom Review* Mar.-Apr. 1996, 40; *The Herald* Mar. 1995d, 40a-40c), which they use to arm and maintain their militias (AI Feb. 1996, 22). An "age-old" practice in Karachi and other parts of Pakistan, *bhatta* collection reportedly became "much more deadly and organized" in the late 1980s and early 1990s when "the MQM and some PPP activists [came to] the forefront of this practice" (*The Herald* Mar. 1995d, 40b; *Human Rights in Developing Countries Yearbook 1994* 1994, 303). The practice became especially prevalent in Central and East districts, where it was considered a "routine affair," with party *goondas* (musclemen) approaching people at their residences (*The Herald* Mar. 1995d, 40b). Money is extorted at gunpoint or with threats (AI Feb. 1996, 22; *The Herald* Mar. 1995d, 40b), and those who refuse to pay are beaten and their businesses or property damaged (*ibid.*.). While *bhatta* is collected by both MQM factions in Karachi (AFP 21 Mar. 1995; *The Herald* Mar. 1995d, 40a-40c; *Country Reports 1995* 1996, 1335; HRW 1995, 166), the Haqiqi faction has acquired "notoriety" in the practice (*The Herald* Mar. 1995d, 40c; HRW 1995, 166; also see subsection 6.1).

Sources indicate that MQM activists restricted Karachiites' freedom of movement in 1995 (AFP 4 July 1995; *The Herald* Nov. 1994a, 62). MQM militants erected barricades, blocked roads with burning vehicles and established checkpoints to prevent security forces personnel and activists of rival factions from entering MQM-controlled areas (AFP 4 July 1995; *The Herald* Nov. 1994a, 62). Residents reportedly could not pass without being spoken for by another resident (AFP 4 July 1995), and the checkpoints in some areas were impassable at night (*ibid.*; *The Herald* Nov. 1994a, 62). Large parts of predominantly mohajir areas such as Orangi township, a "rabbit warren of unplanned lanes and alleys, with only one road running through it" (AFP 18 Feb. 1996), and Korangi township (*The Herald* Nov. 1994a, 62), were "virtual no-go zone[s] for the rest of the city's residents," and off-limits even to heavily armed convoys of police and

Rangers, especially after dark (AFP 18 Feb. 1996; *The Herald* Nov. 1994a, 62; *The Ottawa Citizen* 4 July 1995). Parts of Karachi were reportedly "in a state of complete paralysis," with residents unable to return home after sundown because of heavy fighting between the MQM(A) and MQM(H), and between both factions and the police (*The Herald* Nov. 1994a, 62; AFP 18 Feb. 1996; Reuters 1 Oct. 1995).

The MQM called "at least" 25 strikes in Karachi in 1995 (ibid. 18 Apr. 1996; AFP 21 Jan. 1996; Reuters 4 Jan. 1996; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1336, 1345), and at least seven in the first four months of 1996 (Reuters 18 Apr. 1996), most to protest harassment, arrest, torture and extrajudicial executions of party activists (AFP 21 Jan. 1996; Reuters 7 July 1995; AFP 24 Aug. 1995; Reuters 17 Feb. 1996). Although compliance with MQM-sponsored strikes was ostensibly voluntary (Reuters 3 Sept. 1995), MQM activists enforced them with violence and the threat of violence (*Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1336, 1345; AFP 10 Sept. 1995; Reuters 14 Mar. 1996), attacking motorists, pedestrians and businesses that tried to remain open (*Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1345). Fear of MQM-sponsored violence often prevented many Karachiites "from leaving their homes to go to work, schools, and the market" (ibid.; Reuters 4 Jan. 1996).

NOTE

[6] According to Amnesty International, the "confused lines of conflict" enable Karachi's feuding ethnic, political and religious groupings and factions to hold others responsible for abuses (AI Feb. 1996, 28). According to *The Herald*, the situation in Karachi has "turned everyone ... into hypocrites" and "even premeditated and specifically targeted murders are attributed to 'unidentified gunmen'" (July 1995a, 30). "Most people know who is really responsible for the carnage in Karachi, but ... political expediency or fear prevents them from speaking the truth" (ibid.). [\[back\]](#)

5. STATE RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE IN KARACHI

5.1 State Protection

The government has set up a "human rights cell" to investigate reports of human rights violations (ibid. Jan. 1995, 4; Reuters 28 Jan. 1995). Established within the Ministry of Interior in December 1993, and transferred to the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs in August 1994, it reportedly has a "very broad mandate" and reports directly to the prime minister, but with "no means to enforce [its recommendations] or to initiate prosecution," it can do little to correct chronic abuses (AI Jan. 1995, 4; Reuters 28 Jan. 1995). As well, asked by Amnesty International to clarify an apparent contradiction in the details concerning an extrajudicial execution mentioned in its 1993 report, the organization stated that it "had not been able to inquire into the case but had been given this information by the local authorities" (AI Jan. 1995, 38-39).

Sources indicate that Senator Syed Iqbal Haider is responsible for human rights affairs for the PPP, but his statements to the media and Amnesty International suggest his role is primarily to defend government actions (Reuters 11 Mar. 1996; *The Frontier Post* 16 Mar. 1996; AI Feb. 1996, 37-38). In October 1995 the federal cabinet reportedly approved creation of a human rights ministry (PTV Television Network 2 Oct. 1995; *The Frontier Post* 16 Mar. 1996), but more detailed information was not available at the time of writing.

Human rights organizations indicate that the government "demonstrated a lack of resolve" in addressing the Karachi situation and enforcing the rule of law in 1995 (HRW 1995, 166; AI 15 Mar. 1995; ibid. Feb. 1996, 28-30). Although the government maintains that it is taking adequate measures to protect the citizens of Karachi (AI Feb. 1996, 40; *The Frontier Post* 16 Mar. 1996), Amnesty International has noted that the "consistently high number of daily deaths

in Karachi would appear to belie any such assertion" (AI Feb. 1996, 40-41). Human rights groups located in Karachi report that militants of various groups who are known to have committed serious offences move around Karachi virtually at will (*ibid.*, 29). The hide-outs of groups responsible for killings and abductions are reportedly well-known to local journalists, and long gun battles between rival groups for control of territory reveal their presence to the authorities; if the authorities do not act, states Amnesty International, "it cannot be for want of information" (*ibid.*).

According to Amnesty International, as was the case in 1994 (13 Dec. 1994), "few killings and attacks [were] adequately investigated and very few offenders ... charged and arrested" in 1995 (*ibid.* 15 Mar. 1995). The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights of Pakistan (LCHRP) estimates that by mid-August 1995 the government had made more than 12,000 arrests on terrorism-related charges—9,200 in Karachi alone (*Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1338)—but other sources note that while many militants remain in custody (AI Feb. 1996, 29; *The Frontier Post* 16 Mar. 1996), "very few ... have been tried and convicted" (AI Feb. 1996, 29).

Sources indicate that when the authorities do take action against militants, the courts are frequently compelled to dismiss the cases and release the suspects because security forces personnel have not followed proper procedure (*The Herald* Nov. 1994b, 64; *ibid.* Dec. 1994a, 34-35; *ibid.* Nov. 1995a, 47). One source indicates the conviction rate was only five per cent for suspects arrested in Operation Clean-up (*ibid.* Dec. 1994a, 34-35). The problem reportedly stems from a combination of failing to follow the guidelines—such as illegally obtaining a confession before a FIR has been lodged (*ibid.* Nov. 1994b, 64)—and an inability to prepare sound cases (*ibid.* Dec. 1994a, 34-35; *ibid.* Nov. 1995a, 47). According to a "senior police official" who spoke to *The Herald*, in several cases "poorly written FIRs [have] allowed known criminals to go free: 'We need ... to improve our methods of investigation, interrogation and prosecution. ... If the judge does not find reasonable grounds for keeping the accused in custody, he is morally and legally bound to grant them bail'" (Nov. 1995a, 47).

The case of Karachi textile manufacturer Farooq Sumar is one example of government failure to protect people who speak out about human rights abuses from threats and harassment (AI Feb. 1996, 16-17, 29; *ibid.* 17 Aug. 1995; *Freedom Review* Mar.-Apr. 1996, 39). In early May 1995, angry about extortion attempts, a payroll robbery and death threats against himself, his family and his employees, allegedly by the MQM(H), Sumar publicly accused the government of being in collusion with the MQM(H) (AI Feb. 1996, 16-17, 29; *ibid.* 17 Aug. 1995; *Freedom Review* Mar.-Apr. 1996, 39). Earlier appeals to the authorities for protection had gone unheeded (AI Feb. 1996, 16; *ibid.* 17 Aug. 1995). After taking Sumar's complaint the FIA ordered the arrest of MQM(H) leader Afaq Ahmed Khan, but the order was rescinded upon the personal intervention of the Sindh chief minister (*ibid.* Feb. 1996, 16-17; *ibid.* 17 Aug. 1995). The HRCP subsequently investigated Sumar's allegations and found that he and his family "face a serious threat to their lives and security," yet no protective steps have been taken (*ibid.* Feb. 1996, 16-17; *ibid.* 17 Aug. 1995), and Sumar's staff and family continue to be harassed, threatened and attacked (*ibid.* Feb. 1996, 17). Recent sources indicate that state support for the MQM(H) continued into 1996 (HRW 1995, 166; IPS 8 Dec. 1995).

Sources have commented on the difficulties facing people who wish to file complaints about human rights abuses with police (AI Jan. 1995, 33-36; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1337). Many people do not file complaints for fear of police retaliation (AI Jan. 1995, 1, 27, 33-34; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1336). Several sources indicate that Karachiites are so

alienated and the police so hated and feared that even common crimes are not reported (*Freedom Review* Mar.-Apr. 1996, 40; AI Jan. 1995, 33; *The Herald* Mar. 1995a, 33-34; *ibid.* Mar. 1995d, 40a; *ibid.* Mar. 1995c, 36e). According to Amnesty International, women face a particular difficulty in lodging complaints with police—fear of being raped (AI Jan. 1995, 33). Police frequently refuse to file complaints, and complainants have been threatened, punished and had false charges filed against them (*ibid.*, 1, 33-34). Police officers frequently shield colleagues and obstruct investigations, and in some cases investigating officers have deliberately conducted judicial inquiries improperly in order to protect an accused officer (*ibid.*, 37; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1336). Sources indicate that judges and doctors sometimes help cover up beatings, torture and deaths in custody by issuing investigation and medical reports that the injuries were self-inflicted or the victim died of natural causes (AI Jan. 1995, 35-36; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1336).

5.2 Judicial Recourse and Police Impunity

Sources indicate that the Pakistani judicial system is marked by a shortage of judges, lengthy court procedures, a heavy backlog of cases, bureaucratic infighting, inactivity and the overlapping and sometimes competing jurisdictions of different court systems (*Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1339; AI Feb. 1996, 6). Despite government promises to reform the judicial system and strengthen judicial independence (*Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1339; *The Frontier Post* 16 Mar. 1996; *Current History* Apr. 1996, 159), in 1995 it reportedly made no serious attempt to do so (*ibid.*; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1335; also see AI Jan. 1995, 5, 8). Politically motivated abuse of the courts was "common" in 1995 (HRW 1995, 167; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1338-39), and included selective use of preventive detention, criminal charges, denial of bail and spurious lawsuits to harass political opponents and promote the government's agenda (HRW 1995, 167; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1338).

Sources indicate that judicial and departmental inquiries have been ordered into allegations of police abuses (AI Feb. 1996, 28-29; AP 2 Apr. 1996; *The Frontier Post* 16 Mar. 1996; DPA 28 Feb. 1996; *Chicago Tribune* 8 Dec. 1995), but the results are rarely if ever made public (DPA 28 Feb. 1996). According to Amnesty International, not one inquiry appears to have concluded an investigation, published a report or resulted in members of any law enforcement agency being held accountable for human rights violations (AI Feb. 1996, 28-29). In some cases judges "known to have vigorously taken up human rights issues" have reportedly been "transferred to less influential posts" (*ibid.* Jan. 1995, 8).

While government officials have stated that "functionaries guilty of any rights violation will be prosecuted" (*The Frontier Post* 16 Mar. 1996; AI 23 May 1996), sources indicate that there was no "serious government effort to reform the police or ... prosecute those responsible for abuse" in 1995 or 1996 (*Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1335; AI Feb. 1996, 29; *ibid.* 23 May 1996; *The Herald* Nov. 1995a, 46; *Current History* Apr. 1996, 162). *Country Reports 1995* notes that while the authorities "sometimes transferred, arrested, or suspended offending officers," they "seldom prosecuted or punished them" (1996, 1337; also see AI 23 May 1996). Approximately 500 police personnel were suspended or fired for various misdeeds in 1995 and early 1996 (*ibid.*; AP 2 Apr. 1996; *The Frontier Post* 16 Mar. 1996), and 138 police officers were being "severely dealt with under [police] department rules" (*The Frontier Post* 16 Mar. 1996), but not a single member of the Karachi police or any other law enforcement agency is known to have been prosecuted for human rights abuses (AI Feb. 1996, 29; *ibid.* 23 May 1996; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1335; *Chicago Tribune* 8 Dec. 1995).

Several factors contribute to the impunity of law enforcement personnel (AI Jan. 1995, 42-43; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1334; *The Herald* Mar. 1995c, 36e). Amnesty International states that section 132 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CPC) essentially grants law enforcement personnel immunity from criminal prosecution for all acts done "in good faith" while carrying out their duties (AI Jan. 1995, 42-43). Another factor is that the police and security services are highly politicized (*Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1334; *The Herald* Mar. 1995c, 36e; *Current History* Apr. 1996, 159), and are used to "harass and arrest political opponents of the Government" (*Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1334; *The Herald* Mar. 1995c, 36e) and to settle personal scores (AI Jan. 1995, 7). According to one source, the police have functioned as "the strong arm of the party in power" for decades (*The Herald* Jan. 1996b, 97), and consequently are "no longer accountable to anyone" (ibid. Mar. 1995c, 36e). An article in the October 1994 issue of *Newsline* is instructive:

By politicizing the police, successive governments have created a situation whereby the police only functions as a security service for the powerful few; other than that they are free to play havoc with people's lives. It is an accepted fact that in Pakistan the law enforcement agencies function as the coercive apparatus of the state and those who have access to it. 'It is a system that serves the politicians,' says Muhammad Alam, a veteran police officer. 'In a state inching its way towards anarchy, a police force which provides them protection can get away with anything as long as it serves its masters'" (*Newsline* Oct. 1994, qtd. in AI Jan. 1995, 6).

Politicians reportedly have a direct hand in the recruitment of police personnel (*Current History* Apr. 1996, 159; *The Herald* Oct. 1995b, 77). According to a report in *The Herald*, "each MNA and senator can recommend five DSPs, 10 SIs, 15 ASIs and 20 constables," while MPAs "can nominate five ASIs and four SIs"^[7] (ibid.).

Statements from government officials have appeared to sanction extrajudicial execution as a strategy for eliminating "terrorism" (ibid. Nov. 1995a, 47; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1335; AI Feb. 1996, 29; FEER 19 Oct. 1995b, 28; *The Herald* Nov. 1994a, 62). Many senior government and police officials, including Prime Minister Bhutto, Interior Minister Naseerullah Babar and Sindh Chief Minister Syed Abdullah Shah, have stated that the courts are not doing enough to punish suspects (ibid. Nov. 1995a, 47; *Country Reports 1995 1996*, 1335; AI Feb. 1996, 29; FEER 19 Oct. 1995b, 28; *The Herald* Nov. 1994a, 62); "we arrest the culprits and then the courts release them on bail," stated one senior police official (ibid.; *The Herald* Nov. 1995a, 47). In response to allegations from MQM senators that law enforcement personnel were killing suspected militants in custody, Interior Minister Babar reportedly told the National Assembly: "the law-enforcing agencies have a right to enforce the law, and in encounters some killings do take place.... Let them dispense with the path of militancy and terrorism and there will be no more custodial killing" (*Jang* 29 Jan. 1996, qtd. in *India Abroad* 9 Feb. 1996, 10). Similarly, *The Herald* has quoted a "senior official" as stating that "if the MQM stops killing policemen, perhaps its own activists will also not be killed in these encounters" (Nov. 1995a, 46), while Sindh minister Zaffar Leghari has stated that "a killer has to be killed" (ibid. Jan. 1996a, 53). "Instead of being hauled up on charges of murder," states *The Herald*, law enforcement personnel who kill suspects "have been defended by their superiors and given a pat on the back" (Nov. 1995a, 46; *India Abroad* 9 Feb. 1996, 10). After recent high level meetings with government officials and ministers, Amnesty International reported that it found "few signs of any sincere political will" to address the problem of the impunity of human rights abusers (23 May 1996).

NOTE

[7] Sources indicate that subinspectors (SI), assistant subinspectors (ASI) and constables are the three lowest of the non-gazetted or subordinate ranks (Pakistan: A Country Study 1984, 296; World Encyclopedia of Police Forces and Penal Systems 1989, 298). The sources are not clear on the term DSP, but it likely represents the deputy superintendent, a non-gazetted position roughly equivalent to the assistant superintendent, which is the lowest of gazetted positions (ibid.). [\[back\]](#)

6. INTERNAL FLIGHT ALTERNATIVE

Information on the availability to Karachi residents of an internal flight alternative (IFA) is limited. *Country Reports 1995* states that while most citizens enjoy freedom of movement within the country, the government occasionally uses "externment orders" to control the movement of people whose presence it believes may threaten public order (1996, 1344-45). Evidence of any administrative or legal impediments to changing a place of residence or employment could not be found among the sources consulted.

Residents of Orangi, a predominantly poor mohajir area of Karachi's West district that was one of the worst affected by violence in 1995 (AFP 18 Feb. 1996; *The Herald* Jan. 1996a, 54; ibid. Jan. 1996c), were reportedly attempting to escape the violence by taking refuge with friends and relatives in other parts of the city (AFP 4 July 1995). While Orangi residents were fleeing to parts of Central district, residents of Central district were reportedly seeking refuge in Gulshan-e Iqbal in the east or Clifton in the south (ibid.). But while some areas of Karachi are relatively safer than others, sources indicate that "there is no such thing as absolute safety for the [Karachi] residents..." (ibid.; DPA 31 Dec. 1995). Even in South district, home to Karachi's political and business elite, between 125 and 184 killings were reported in 1995 (DPA 31 Dec. 1995; *The Herald* Jan. 1996c), while in the newly created Malir district on the city's outskirts, about 120 killings were reported (DPA 31 Dec. 1995; *The Herald* Jan. 1996c). Sources indicate that "relatively peaceful" areas like Clifton, already more expensive than neighbourhoods in East, West and Central districts (AFP 4 July 1995; *The Herald* Mar. 1995d, 40c; AFP 21 Mar. 1996), have seen real estate price increases of 20 to 40 per cent (AFP 4 July 1995).

One businessman who relocated three times in order to escape extortionists' demands for *bhatta* (protection money), stated his belief that people who wanted to escape Karachi could "leave the city and move to a safer, and cheaper, part of the country" (*The Herald* Mar. 1995d, 40c). According to Dr. Anwar Syeed of the Department of Political Science at University of Massachusetts, individuals concerned for their safety would be best to flee to another province rather than to outlying areas of Sindh province (CIC 18 Mar. 1996). Dr. Syeed states that many mohajirs have escaped the situation in Karachi by fleeing to northern Pakistan (ibid.). Another source indicates that ID card counterfeiting rackets flourish in Pakistan, and that people who obtain such cards, which can be purchased for Rs 500 to Rs 2000 (Cdn \$21 to \$85), can move to "various parts of the country under a new identity" (TFT 21-29 Sept. 1995). This information could not be corroborated at the time of writing.

7. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In 1993 one observer remarked that Karachi was "at the cutting edge of a more pervasive phenomenon—the problem of Pakistan's ungovernability," and argued that the country faced a "seminal crisis in its political system" (*Asian Survey* Feb. 1993, 131). More recent sources also have argued that the Karachi situation is "part of the larger crisis looming across the Pakistani horizon" (*The Herald* Sept. 1995, 64; ibid. Mar. 1995c, 37). Analysts have commented on

Pakistan's "politically alienated population" (ibid.; *Current History* Apr. 1996, 160), corrupt, ineffective and irrelevant political institutions (*The Herald* Sept. 1995, 64; ibid. Mar. 1995c, 37; *Current History* Apr. 1996, 159, 162) and general public disregard for the law (*Asian Survey* Feb. 1993, 131), and noted that a "Kalashnikov culture" of political violence is "spreading from Karachi throughout Pakistan's body politic" (*South Asia Bulletin* 1995, 124; UNRISD June 1993, 19; *Current History* Apr. 1996, 158).

Many analysts reportedly believe the PPP government must address mohajirs' sense of alienation if it wishes to solve the crisis in Karachi (*The Herald* July 1995c, 44). Proposed short-term measures include holding local body elections, special status for Karachi, a national census, electoral reform, redefining the quota system and a massive program of infrastructure development (*The Herald* July 1995c, 44; *The Economist* 1-7 July 1995, 30; *Current History* Apr. 1996, 162, 164), but one source suggests that any long-term solution will almost certainly require the government to work out a new power-sharing arrangement between native Sindhis and mohajirs (*The Herald* July 1995c, 44; ibid. Sept. 1995, 64). As of early 1996, however, neither the MQM nor the government seems ready to compromise or to enter a constructive political dialogue (AFP 21 Jan. 1996; *Current History* Apr. 1996, 162; DPA 31 Dec. 1995).

NOTES ON SELECTED SOURCES

***The Herald* [Karachi]:**

Founded in 1970 (*Europa 1995* 1996, 2375; *Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory 1993-94* 1993, 2501), *The Herald* is a Karachi-based monthly English-language general interest and political affairs magazine published by Pakistan Herald Publications Ltd., Haroon House, Pakistan's "largest newspaper group" (*The New York Times* 18 Mar. 1996; *Europa 1995* 1996, 2375; *Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory 1993-94* 1993, 2501; *The Herald* Mar. 1996, 9). *The Herald* is considered one of Pakistan's most respected and prestigious news magazines (*Los Angeles Times* 19 Oct. 1995; IPS 30 June 1995; *The New York Times* 12 Aug. 1990). Pakistan Herald Publications deputy chief executive Hameed Haroon (Reuters 12 Dec. 1991) is also secretary-general of the Pakistan Newspapers and Periodicals Association (IPS 30 Aug. 1995), and reportedly was responsible for convincing Sindh governor Kamaluddin Azfar to withdraw charges against *Newsline* editor Razia Bhatti in 1995 (ibid.).

The Herald has editorial offices in Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar, Multan, Quetta and Hyderabad (*The Herald* Mar. 1996, 9), and has a circulation of about 15,000 copies per issue (*Europa 1995* 1996, 2375). Like its liberal English-language rivals, the Karachi-based *Newsline* and the Lahore-based *Friday Times*, *The Herald*'s circulation figures are "minuscule compared to those of the mainstream vernacular papers" (*The Independent* 7 Dec. 1991), but all three publications are "read avidly by politicians, government officials, military officers and diplomats for their investigative reports and analysis" (ibid.).

In 1991 *Herald* editor Sherry Rehman was charged with criminal defamation after publishing a report alleging widespread human rights abuses by the Sindh government's Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) (Reuters 12 Dec. 1991; *The Independent* 7 Dec. 1991; IPS 1 Oct. 1992). Rehman refused to back down, however, and the charges were withdrawn when even more damaging allegations about CIA activities were brought forward (ibid.; Reuters 12 Dec. 1991).

***The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)*:**

"The most prominent [human rights and legal aid NGO in Pakistan] is the Human Rights

Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). Established in 1987, with its headquarters in Lahore and branch offices in each province, it has engaged in advocacy of human rights, undertaken fact-finding missions and inquiries and held a series of meetings and seminars on a wide range of human rights topics. The HRCP has published since 1990 its own annual report on the human rights situation in Pakistan, a quarterly newsletter, and it has published reports on specific topics since its establishment in 1987. It has generally been allowed to operate freely, [al]though in March 1993 federal security agents raided the Lahore main office" (*Human Rights in Developing Countries Yearbook 1994* 1994, 294-95).

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