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Executive summary

This report deals with the current political, economic, human rights and humanitarian situation in Pakistan. It is based on interviews conducted in Islamabad during a fact-finding mission carried out by the Country of Origin Information Unit (Unit 62G) of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) in cooperation with the German Embassy in Islamabad from 28 May 2023 to 2 June 2023. It focuses on the security situation (especially the impact of the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan in 2021 on Pakistani terrorist groups), the humanitarian situation after the floods in 2022, the situation of minorities (Ahmadis, Shiites, Afghan refugees, etc.) and the current political (removal of Imran Khan, parliamentary elections in 2024) and economic crisis.

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Introduction and methodology

This report is the result of a Fact Finding Mission (FFM), conducted by the Country of Origin Information Unit (Unit 62G) of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), to Islamabad, Pakistan, from 28 May to 2 June 2023. The aim of the FFM was the collection and evaluation of country of origin information (COI) and new findings on the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This report focuses in particular on the situation in Pakistan with regard to minorities, the security and political situation, the economy and the current humanitarian crises. Of particular interest in this context were:

- The humanitarian and economic consequences of the floods in summer and autumn 2022
- The influence of the Afghan Taliban on terrorist groups and the general security situation in Pakistan since their takeover in 2021
- The political crisis since the removal of former Prime Minister Imran Khan in 2022
- The situation of minorities (e.g. Ahmadis, LGBTIQ, Shiites, etc.)
- The economic crisis (e.g. the IMF loan granted in November 2023, the migration of large and medium-sized companies)
- Analysing the interactions between all these crises

Furthermore, relevant questions and topics from various BAMF departments were collected in order to fill gaps in the COI research on site. These included, for example, questions on the possession of weapons in Pakistan, the procedure for renting an apartment, detailed questions on the situation of Ahmadis (situation in the city of Rabwah/Chenab Nagar, which is predominantly inhabited by Ahmadis, differentiation of Ahmadis - women and men - from other Muslims based on external recognisable features), Shiites (areas of residence, Shiite ethnic groups, situation of the Hazara), LGBTIQ people (dealing with transgender people, homosexuals) or the susceptibility of documents to forgery.

To compile this report, the two-person delegation interviewed a wide variety of sources such as international and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), journalists, think tanks and lawyers. The interviews were conducted on site in Islamabad in English or Dari during the above-mentioned period. To supplement the statements of the interviewees, current reports, news and our own analysis of data from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)¹ on Pakistan (in the area of the security situation) were also incorporated into the report.

All sources consulted were selected by the Country Analysis Team in cooperation with the German Embassy in Islamabad on the basis of their expertise on the issues covered in this report. Prior to the interviews, all interviewees were fully informed of the purpose of the mission and the fact that their statements would be included in a publicly available COI-report. Interviewees were asked how they wished to be labelled and quoted, and all sources were presented and quoted according to their own wishes. Five sources preferred to remain anonymous.

The respective interview transcripts were submitted to the interview partners for approval in order to give them the opportunity to change, comment on or correct their statements and to ensure that the transcript reflects the information as accurately as possible. Most sources have released their statements (partially commented). The report is a synthesis of the interviewees' statements. Care has been taken to present the views of the interviewees as accurately and transparently as possible. The individual sources should therefore not be held responsible for the content of the report.

The processing of this report was completed on 8 December 2023.

¹ Before working with the data provided by ACLED, and also before reading ACLED-based analyses, it is essential to understand the methodology behind the collection and provision of data by ACLED (see the [ACLED Codebook](#)). ACLED generates its data from public sources and information provided by local partner institutions; therefore, despite ACLED's quality assurance, the dataset may contain erroneous information and a number of unreported cases. Fatalities, for example, are often (rough) estimates. The event type categories 'protests', 'riots' and 'strategic developments' have not been included as security incidents. The products based on ACLED data should therefore be seen as a trend.

Abbreviations

AI	Amnesty International
ANP	Awami National Party
BLA	Balochistan Liberation Army
BLF	Balochistan Liberation Front
BRAS	Baloch Raji Ajohi Sangar
COI	Country of Origin Information
CPEC	China Pakistan Economic Corridor
CNIC	Computerised National Identity Card
FFM	Fact Finding Mission
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
GB	Gilgit-Baltistan
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HRCP	Human Rights Commission Pakistan
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISSI	Institute for Strategic Studies Islamabad
ISKP	Islamic State Khorasan Province
ISPP	Islamic State Pakistan Province
JUI-F/S	Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazl-ur/Samiul)
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PICSS	Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies
PTI	Pakistan Tehreek-e Insaf
PPP	Pakistan Peoples Party
PML-N	Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz Sharif
PTM	Pashtun Tahafuz Movement
TTP	Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WFP	World Food Programme

1. Overview

Multiple crises - Pakistan at a turning point?

Almost all of the FFM dialogue partners agreed that Pakistan is currently suffering from multiple crises. Among other things, they spoke of the "four apocalyptic horsemen" (climate crisis, political crisis, economic crisis and security crisis affecting the situation of minorities) or that the country is facing some of the "greatest political, social and economic challenges in its history".² In spring 2023, the International Crisis Group also raised the question of whether the country was at a tipping point due to this multitude of crises.³

First came the precursors of the economic crisis, triggered among other things by the war in Ukraine (rising global food and fuel prices)⁴, then the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, followed by the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan in 2021, the devastating flood and political instability in 2022 (vote of no confidence in the then Prime Minister Imran Khan) and finally a sharp rise in terrorist attacks in 2023. The *Guardian* wrote at the end of September 2023: "The surge in homegrown terrorist activity, fuelled heavily by the takeover of the Taliban in Afghanistan, comes at a disastrous time for Pakistan. The country is already going through one of its worst economic crises on record and is highly politically unstable. A powerless caretaker government is running the country, its most popular political leader, Khan, is behind bars and the date of the general election has continually been pushed back."⁵

This parallel occurrence of severe crises is causing great unrest in Pakistani society. Unlike the so-called "aristocracy" (the 100 or so families that rule the country dynastically⁶), the middle class in particular has been hit hard by the economic crisis.⁷ Solidarity with Afghan refugees, for example, is dwindling, especially since it has been announced that half of the terrorist attacks in Pakistan in 2008 were committed by Afghans. Unable to control the activities of the Pakistani Taliban (Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, TTP) through the "disloyal" Afghan Taliban, the Pakistani government has responded by deporting and returning some 1.7 million illegally resident Afghans to Afghanistan since the end of 2023.⁸

Another consequence of the economic crisis and the increasing threat of terrorism is that many Pakistanis nationals are leaving the country.⁹ In 2022, 800,000 - mainly young - people emigrated, the highest number in six years. Immigration to Europe remains moderate, however, and countries in the Arab region are usually favoured (e.g. Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar).¹⁰ However, in a boat accident off the Greek coast on 14 June 2023 with numerous fatalities, around 300-350 of the more than 700 people on board were Pakistani nationals who had fled the economic crisis.¹¹ As a result of the circumstances described, the human rights situation is also deteriorating. Pakistani administrative and political leaders have complained about a rise in Islamism, which also serves as a social glue.¹²

The takeover of the Afghan Taliban has also led to increased persecution of transgender people, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians by religious extremists in the neighbouring regions of Pakistan, particularly in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) on the border with Afghanistan.

² Interview with high-ranking representatives of UNDP Pakistan at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023; Interview with a high-ranking representative of the WFP at the FFM, Islamabad, 1 June 2023; Interview with a local expert at the FFM in Islamabad, 28 May 2023; Interview with an analyst from a local NGO at the FFM, Islamabad, 30 May 2023

³ International Crisis Group CG: Pakistan: At the Tipping Point?, 12 May 2023; Brookings: Pakistan: Five major issues to watch in 2023, 13 January 2023

⁴ Ahmed, Khurshid: A year after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Pakistan's economy continues to bleed, in: Arab News, 25 February 2023

⁵ Ellis-Petersen, Hannah: Twin suicide attacks underline the depth of Pakistan's crisis, in: The Guardian, 29 September 2023

⁶ Interview with a local expert in Islamabad as part of the FFM, 28 May 2023

⁷ Interview with high-ranking representatives of UNDP Pakistan in Islamabad as part of the FFM, 31 May 2023

⁸ International Crisis Group: Pakistan's Mass Deportation of Afghans Poses Risks to Regional Stability, 13 November 2023; Qarar, Shakeel: Govt initiates nationwide operation to deport illegal foreign nationals, in: Dawn.com, 01 November 2023

⁹ Interview with a local expert at the FFM, Islamabad, 28 May 2023

¹⁰ Geo News: Fact-check: More than 800,000 migrated out of Pakistan in 2022, highest in six years, 14 January 2023;

Forini/Grant: Pakistani Nationals on the Move to Europe: New Pressures, Risks, Opportunities, 31 July 2023;

Bilal, Arsalan: Pakistan's People Are Fleeing Not Only Economic Crisis But Extremism, in: The Diplomat, 31 May 2023

¹¹ Janjua, Haroon: Flüchtlingsdrama: Warum riskieren Pakistaner ihr Leben?, in: Deutsche Welle, 29 June 2023 (german);

Hussain, Abid: 'Hopelessness': Why Pakistanis are leaving, losing lives at sea, in: Al Jazeera, 21 June 2023

¹² Interview with a local expert in Islamabad as part of the FFM, 28 May 2023

Public debate within civil society continues to be restricted and controlled by the military and intelligence services. Minorities are suffering more from the tense situation, as social cohesion is dwindling in the face of the economic crisis.¹³

Many of the FFM's dialogue partners considered political stability to be the top priority in order to make the country attractive for investment again.¹⁴ The military, as the "kingmaker" under General Munir, initiated the overthrow of Imran Khan and his *Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf* (PTI) party in 2022 through a no-confidence vote in parliament and is now backing former multiple prime minister Nawaz Sharif. Pakistan is caught between the interests of the US and China, trying to work with both to its advantage.¹⁵ The US may have pushed for Khan's removal (see Chapter 2.1). Little was said by the interlocutors about China's activities in Pakistan, but for China, the *China-Pakistan Economic Corridor* (CPEC) with the Gwadar deep-sea port in Balochistan is the "crown jewel" of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its involvement in the country is therefore high. Taliban-ruled Afghanistan is also to be included in the BRI (see 2.1).

The IMF has granted Pakistan a loan as a first step (possibly thanks to a US arms deal with Ukraine¹⁶) and other donors are now following suit. But these are not yet long-term solutions. Much will depend on the 2024 elections, a sensible plan for the consequences of climate change¹⁷, a new counter-terrorism campaign like the last one in 2014 (Garb-e Zarb), the nature of cooperation with the Afghan Taliban and, ultimately, whether the military can continue to assert itself as one of the central pillars of power. Whether such stabilisation succeeds will also determine whether increased migration from Pakistan to Europe can be expected in the future.¹⁸

¹³ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹⁴ Interview with a local expert at the FFM, Islamabad, 1 June 2023

¹⁵ Interview with a local expert at the FFM, Islamabad, 1 June 2023

¹⁶ Grim/Hussain: U.S. helped Pakistan get IMF bailout with secret arms deal for Ukraine, leaked documents reveal, in: *The Intercept*, 17 September 2023

¹⁷ Geo News: Pakistan requires \$340 billion to tackle climate change, says finance minister, 2 November 2023

¹⁸ Hussain, Abid: 'Hopelessness': Why Pakistanis are leaving, losing lives at sea, in: *Al Jazeera*, 21 June 2023

2. Political and economic situation

2.1 The political crisis since April 2022

In July 2018, Imran Khan and his PTI party won the parliamentary elections with the support of the military; in April 2022, the Khan government was dismissed in the first vote of no confidence in the country's history.¹⁹ For Khan and his middle-class Pakistani voter base, the resulting withdrawal of support from the military and the ouster came as a shock and the US is said to be responsible.²⁰ According to an article by *The Intercept*, which is said to be based on a leaked diplomatic dispatch, the US had set the condition that Khan should be removed, as he had been a state guest of President Putin on the day of the Russian attack on Ukraine and had generally taken a conspicuously neutral stance on the conflict.²¹ He had also tried to obtain oil from Russia following the Western embargo.²² Khan himself had repeatedly referred to the dispatch as the reason for his dismissal.²³

On 9 May 2023, Khan was arrested by the *National Accountability Bureau*, which is responsible for corruption offences, on allegations of corruption and unrest broke out among his supporters, which was also explicitly directed against the military.²⁴ The police in Islamabad had called in the military to help secure the so-called Red Zone of the capital (home to central government and military institutions). However, demonstrators who actually reached the Red Zone remained peaceful.²⁵ The FFM delegation travelled to Islamabad in May 2023 shortly after the unrest, where the situation quickly calmed down. For security reasons, however, the FFM delegation did not travel to other regions of the country. There was only an increased military presence in Islamabad on 31 May 2023, when Khan had to stand trial again.²⁶

According to a local expert in Islamabad, Khan has fallen out of favour with the military. Political instability is currently Pakistan's biggest problem because the issue of stability determines the granting of loans and Pakistan is caught between the interests of the USA and China.²⁷ For China, Pakistan is a natural ally, partly due to its historically tense relationship with India, especially as the CPEC project is the "crown jewel" of China's Belt and Road Initiative. By connecting the deep-sea port of Gwadar in the province of Balochistan via a road network across Pakistan to the Chinese province of Xinjiang, China could bypass the Strait of Malacca, drastically shorten the transport time and thus escape a possible "stranglehold" by the USA on its oil supply from the Middle East.²⁸ Overall, the Chinese activities in the country in connection with CPEC were barely mentioned by the dialogue partners. China had seen Imran Khan's dismissal as undesirable, as he had positioned himself against the West and sought proximity to Russia and China.²⁹

Another expert indicated that the PTI under Khan continues to enjoy great popularity among the population. In a free and fair election, the party would receive 80 % of the vote according to projections. It is precisely for this reason that Khan is likely to remain in prison for the next few years and it is currently unclear whether his party will be able to survive without him.³⁰ Since Khan was voted out of office, interim Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has taken over until new elections are likely to be held in early 2024.³¹ Meanwhile, the military is likely to continue trying to neutralise Khan and the PTI and establish economic stability.³²

¹⁹ Philip, Bruno: Pakistan's new prime minister revives tradition of political dynasties, in: *Le Monde*, 18 April 2022

²⁰ Mallick, Ayyaz: Pakistan's Crisis Is the Result of a Failed System With a Dysfunctional Ruling Class, in: *Jacobin*, 10 April 2023; International Crisis Group: Pakistan: At the Tipping Point?, 12 May 2023

²¹ Grim/Hussain: Secret Pakistan cable documents U.S. pressure to remove Imran Khan, in: *The Intercept*, 9 August 2023; Grim/Hussain: U.S. helped Pakistan get IMF bailout with secret arms deal for Ukraine, leaked documents reveal, in: *The Intercept*, 17 September 2023

²² *The Times of India*: Imran Khan: 'We wanted to get cheap Russian crude oil just like India', 10 April 2023

²³ Baloch, Shah Meer: Imran Khan claims US threatened him and wants him ousted as Pakistan PM, in: *The Guardian*, 31 March 2022

²⁴ International Crisis Group: Pakistan: At the Tipping Point?, 12 May 2023

²⁵ *Geo News*: PDM calls off anti-CJP sit-in outside Supreme Court, 15 May 2023

²⁶ Shahzad, Asif: Bail for Pakistan's Imran Khan extended until June 19, lawyer says, in: *Reuters*, 31 May 2023

²⁷ Interview with a local expert at the FFM, Islamabad, 1 June 2023

²⁸ Marshall, Tim: *The Power of Geography*, 2017, p. 226 (German edition); Masood, Usman: CPEC: China's Gift to Pakistan Is Becoming Too Hot to Handle, in: *Politics Today*, 23 October 2023

²⁹ Masood, Usman: CPEC: China's Gift to Pakistan Is Becoming Too Hot to Handle, in: *Politics Today*, 23 October 2023

³⁰ Interview with a high-ranking representative of WFP Pakistan at the FFM, Islamabad, 1 June 2023

³¹ Shahid/Bukhari: Pakistan appoints caretaker cabinet ahead of likely delayed elections, in: *Reuters*, 17 August 2023

³² Mallick, Ayyaz: Pakistan's Crisis Is the Result of a Failed System With a Dysfunctional Ruling Class, in: *Jacobin*, 10 April 2023

In the public perception, the military "in the role of kingmaker" is still one of the institutions that does not polarise but embodies a consolidated national consciousness. Even though its ranks are dominated by ethnic Punjabis, all ethnic groups living in Pakistan are sufficiently represented. If there is sympathy for Khan and the PTI among the ordinary soldiers, there are no signs of a mutiny in the army.³³ General Munir, who took over from General Bajwa in May 2023, was equally ill-disposed towards Khan and the PTI. Khan had tried to install a general who was well-disposed towards him as army chief, who was also said to have good connections with the Afghan Taliban and would have brought him to power in the next elections. According to a PTI member, the violent unrest following Khan's arrest on 9 May 2023 was possibly also aimed at toppling Munir.³⁴ When Khan was finally sentenced to three years in prison on 5 August 2023, there were no more riots. The electoral commission subsequently banned him from taking part in elections for five years. Parliament was dissolved on 9 August 2023 and new elections were called.³⁵

According to an FFM interviewee, Pakistan is a very unequal country with features of a feudal society, with around 100 influential families ruling the country. There is serfdom and large landowners regulate all the cash flows of their serfs, who pass on this financial dependency to their children.³⁶ It is a very class-orientated, unequal and discriminatory society.³⁷ Political dynasties in particular are widespread, as is generally the case in South Asia. The Bhutto family controls the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and belongs to the feudal aristocracy of the southern province of Sindh, the Sharif family controls the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), the Haq family controls the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan (S) (JUI-S) and so on.³⁸ The foreign minister and other big landowners protected their lands during the 2022 Sindh floods at the expense of the poor rural population living in the neighbourhood. They had refused to open up their land for water drainage.³⁹ The legal system was also said to be dilapidated, the judges inactive and the prisons overcrowded (see Chapter 5.6).⁴⁰

2.2 The economic crisis since 2022

Alongside the political crisis, Pakistan entered a severe and ongoing economic crisis in 2022. Inflation reached an all-time high of 38 % in May 2023 (slowing to 27.38 % in August 2023) and the prices of certain foodstuffs had doubled.⁴¹ At the same time, the average inflation rate in neighbouring countries was no more than 10 %. The reasons for the crisis include fuel price increases, higher energy and supply costs, the devaluation of the Pakistani rupee by up to 30 %, increased production costs and higher prices for imported food.⁴² Electricity prices have tripled.⁴³

Pakistan is dependent on energy imports and was an early adopter of liquefied natural gas (LNG), but the outbreak of war in Ukraine caused prices to rise tenfold in connection with the sanctions imposed on Russia. European countries such as Germany switched to LNG and outbid Pakistan.⁴⁴ Imran Khan, like India and Sri Lanka, recently tried to source oil from Russia in order to circumvent Western sanctions.⁴⁵ According to reports, the economic situation has had a negative impact on the middle class, some of whom are already withdrawing their money and considering emigration.⁴⁶

³³ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad on 31 May 2023; Willasey-Wilsey, Tim: The Paradox of the Pakistan Army, in: *Rusi*, 20 September 2023

³⁴ *Deccan Herald*: Imran Khan masterminded May 9 violence to remove Army chief Gen Munir, says close aide Usman Dar, 5 October 2023

³⁵ Ghauri, Amir: Polls, politicians and the people, in: *TNS*, 13 August 2023

³⁶ Interview with a local expert at the FFM in Islamabad, 28 May 2023; Younus, Uzair: The Dynastic Republic of Pakistan, in: *Pakistanomy*, 26 October 2020

³⁷ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCF at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

³⁸ Noorani, Tasneem: Dynastic politics, in: *Dawn.com*, 12 June 2022

³⁹ Interview with a local expert in Islamabad as part of the FFM, 28 May 2023; Philip, Bruno: Pakistan's new prime minister revives tradition of political dynasties, in: *Le Monde*, 18 April 2022

⁴⁰ Interview with analysts from a local NGO as part of the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

⁴¹ Mallick, Ayyaz: Pakistan's Crisis Is the Result of a Failed System With a Dysfunctional Ruling Class, in: *Jacobin*, 10 April 2023

⁴² WFP: Pakistan Market Monitor Report - September 2023

⁴³ Mohsin, Moni: Pakistanis are leaving our country in droves due to inflation and job losses - who can blame them?, in: *The Guardian*, 7 March 2023

⁴⁴ Rizvi, Waqar: The war in Ukraine: Impact on Pakistan's energy security, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 24 February 2023; Ayub, Imran: Pakistan losing LNG bidding war to Europe, in: *Dawn.com*, 26 June 2022

⁴⁵ *The Times of India*: Imran Khan: 'We wanted to get cheap Russian crude oil just like India', 10 April 2023

⁴⁶ Interview with high-ranking UNDP representatives, Islamabad 31 May 2023; Mohsin, Moni: Pakistanis are leaving our country in droves due to inflation and job losses - who can blame them?, in: *The Guardian*, 7 March 2023

The average monthly salary for unskilled workers is EUR 50-200, for people with a degree EUR 200-500. Even well-educated workers need several jobs to feed their families.⁴⁷ An anonymous source reported that larger companies were also exiting the Pakistani market⁴⁸, including the British Shell, Siemens, Procter & Gamble, Oracle, IBM, FedEx and the Marriot Hotel.⁴⁹

60 % of the population is under thirty years old, and the Pakistani economy has to create around 1.5 million jobs every year to employ the growing number of young people. There is high youth unemployment; even among young people with a university degree, 33 % are unemployed. Many of them leave the country.⁵⁰ The share of remittances from abroad in Pakistan's GDP has always been between 6 and 9 % annually.⁵¹ Emigration is often the only chance for social advancement and is also in the interests of the state.⁵² As it is mainly young men who emigrate, this can also counteract radicalisation.⁵³ There is also a rural exodus to the cities, as many no longer see a future in agriculture, although 62 % of Pakistan's economy is based on agriculture.⁵⁴

The country's foreign exchange reserves have now fallen to a low level of USD 4.3 billion, which is only enough to cover one month's imports, meaning there is a risk of default.⁵⁵ However, the country is heavily dependent on imports and has to import wheat, for example, which has increased even more since the flood disaster in 2022 - which destroyed 40 % of the wheat.⁵⁶ Foreign currency inflows from the US for counter-terrorism operations and from China for the Belt and Road Initiative have slowed.⁵⁷ According to *The Intercept*, Pakistan only received an urgently needed IMF loan due to an agreement with the USA, which is said to have been conditional on the removal of Khan and the supply of weapons to Ukraine.⁵⁸ The Pakistani interim government rejected this.⁵⁹ In November 2023, the second tranche of the loan amounting to USD 700 million was released by the IMF⁶⁰, but this will only be able to stabilise the economy in the short term. Political stability is seen as one of the basic prerequisites for the granting of loans.⁶¹

⁴⁷ Interview with a local expert in Islamabad as part of the FFM, 28 May 2023

⁴⁸ Interview with a local expert in Islamabad as part of the FFM, 28 May 2023; Interview with high-ranking representatives of UNDP as part of the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023

⁴⁹ Basu, Ajeyo: Multinational companies flee Pakistan due to 'hostile' govt attitude, in: Firstpost, 19 April 2023; Chitral today: Why is Shell leaving Pakistan?, 16 June 2023

⁵⁰ Interview with a local expert in Islamabad as part of the FFM, 28 May 2023; Interview with high-ranking representatives of UN Women as part of the FFM, Islamabad, 1 June 2023; Geo News: Fact-check: More than 800,000 migrated out of Pakistan in 2022, highest in six years, 14 January 2023

⁵¹ Statista: Pakistan: Anteil der Rücküberweisungen (inflow) am Bruttoinlandsprodukt (BIP) von 2012 bis 2022, June 2023 (german)

⁵² Interview with a local expert in Islamabad as part of the FFM, 28 May 2023

⁵³ Interview with a local expert at the FFM, Islamabad, 28 May 2023

⁵⁴ Interview with an analyst from a local NGO as part of the FFM, Islamabad, 30 May 2023

⁵⁵ Interview with high-ranking representatives of UNDP Pakistan at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023

⁵⁶ International Crisis Group: Pakistan: At the Tipping Point?, 12 May 2023

⁵⁷ Mallick, Ayyaz: Pakistan's Crisis Is the Result of a Failed System With a Dysfunctional Ruling Class, in: Jacobin, 10 April 2023

⁵⁸ Grim/Hussain: U.S. helped Pakistan get IMF bailout with secret arms deal for Ukraine, leaked documents reveal, in: The Intercept, 17 September 2023

⁵⁹ Zaman, Sarah: Pakistani PM Denies Arms Sales to Ukraine, VOA News, 17 November 2023

⁶⁰ Hussain, Abid: Pakistan and IMF reach deal for releasing \$700m from \$3bn bailout package, in: Al Jazeera, 16 November 2023

⁶¹ International Crisis Group: Pakistan: At the Tipping Point?, 12 May 2023

3. Security situation

3.1 Overview - Trends

What is dangerous for Pakistan's internal stability is that liberal and democratic structures are increasingly being called into question (in Pakistan due to the weakening economy, corruption and the political crisis), partly as a result of the global weakening of liberalism and the rise of authoritarian states⁶², while an authoritarian system such as the Islamic emirate of the Afghan Taliban in neighbouring Afghanistan is becoming more attractive to parts of the population. This development could be exploited by militant groups such as the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), who are well aware of this.⁶³

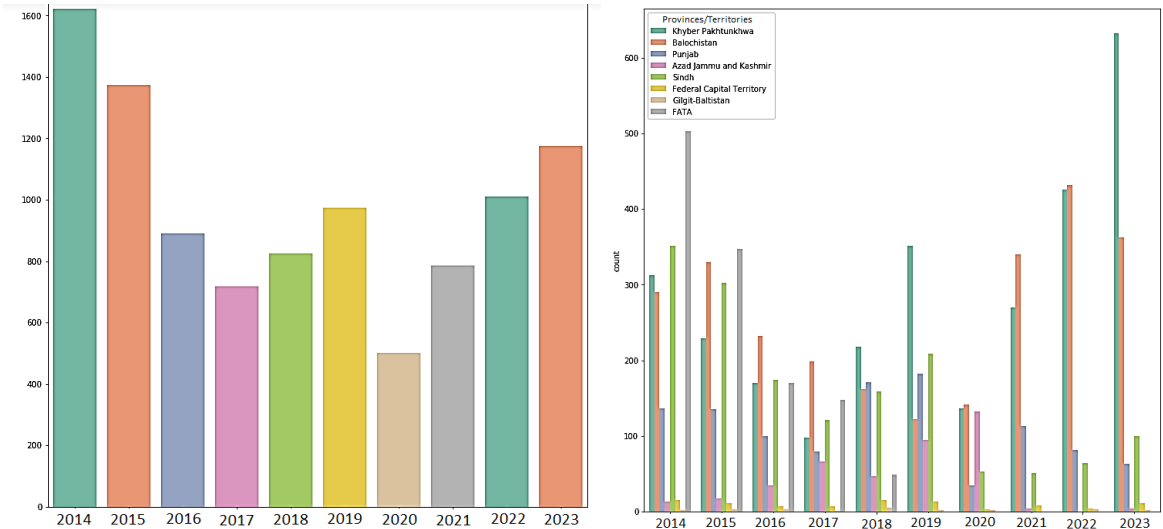


Fig. 1/2: In-house ACLED evaluation 01/2014 - 11/2023: Security incidents by year and province

The security situation in Pakistan has increasingly deteriorated in recent years - especially since the Taliban took power in 2021, but also from 2020 onwards. In August 2023, there were 99 attacks, the highest number of recorded militant attacks in a single month since November 2014.⁶⁴ According to the *Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies* (PICSS), the stabilisation of the security situation achieved by the army as part of Operation Zarb-e-Azb⁶⁵ in 2014 is being lost ever more rapidly.⁶⁶ According to a PICSS analyst, there was a steady decline in terrorist activities in Pakistan from 2014 to 2019. From 2020, they increased again because the TTP began to reform. Many smaller groups joined the TTP. Originally, the TTP was led by the Mehsud tribe, but in November 2013, a non-Mehsudi was elected leader for the first time. This was considered a weak leader, as a result of which many Mehsud fighters defected to the ISKP in 2014 and 2015, including the later head of the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP).

In 2018, this weak leader of the TTP was then killed by a US drone and a Mehsud (Noor Wali Mehsud) came to power again, who reunited the TTP and is now leading it to new strength.⁶⁷ The analysis of the ACLED data shows a similar picture compared to the PICSS data. However, there was another slight increase in incidents in 2018/2019. In 2019, there was a significant increase in attacks in KP and Balochistan following the merger of the *Federally Administered Tribal Areas* (FATA) with KP. It is interesting to note that incidents in KP have risen sharply since 2021 and that there were (slightly) more attacks in Balochistan than in KP for the first time in 2022.

⁶² Freedom House: The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule, 2022
⁶³ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad on 31 May 2023
⁶⁴ Junaidi, Ikram: Militant attacks in August 'highest in a month' since 2014, in: Dawn.com, 3 September 2023 ; PICSS Annual Report 2022: Anti-State Violence highest in five years, 7 January 2023; PICSS: Militant attacks surge in Pakistan, highest in any month since 2014, September 2023
⁶⁵ In 2014, the Pakistani army drove most of the militants to Afghanistan in a major military operation in Waziristan. This is how the ISKP in Nangarhar/Afghanistan was formed by former TTP members, among others.
⁶⁶ Sherazi, Zahir Shah: Zarb-e-Azb operation: 120 suspected militants killed in N Waziristan, 15 June 2014
⁶⁷ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023

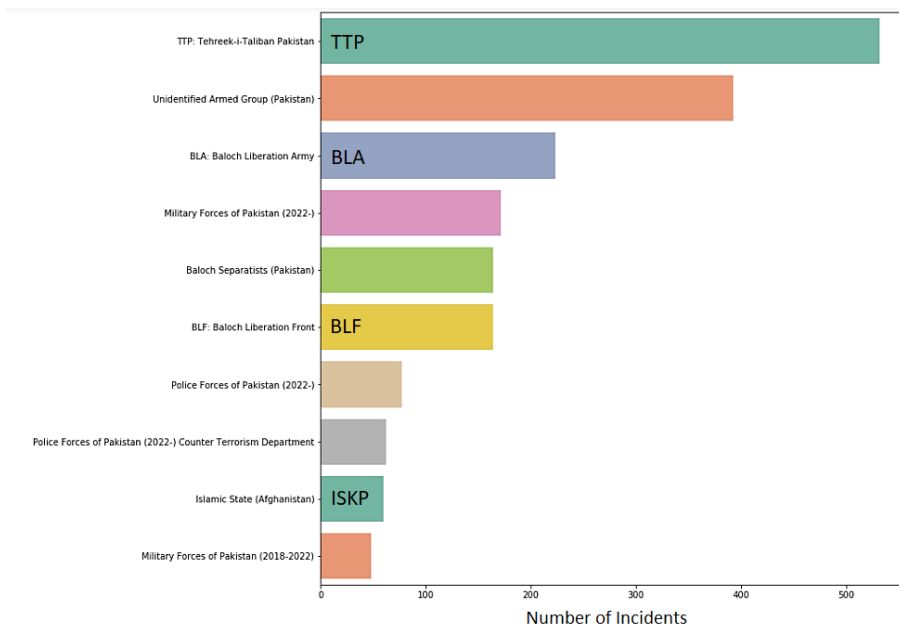


Fig. 3: In-house ACLED evaluation 01/2022 - 11/2023: Main actors

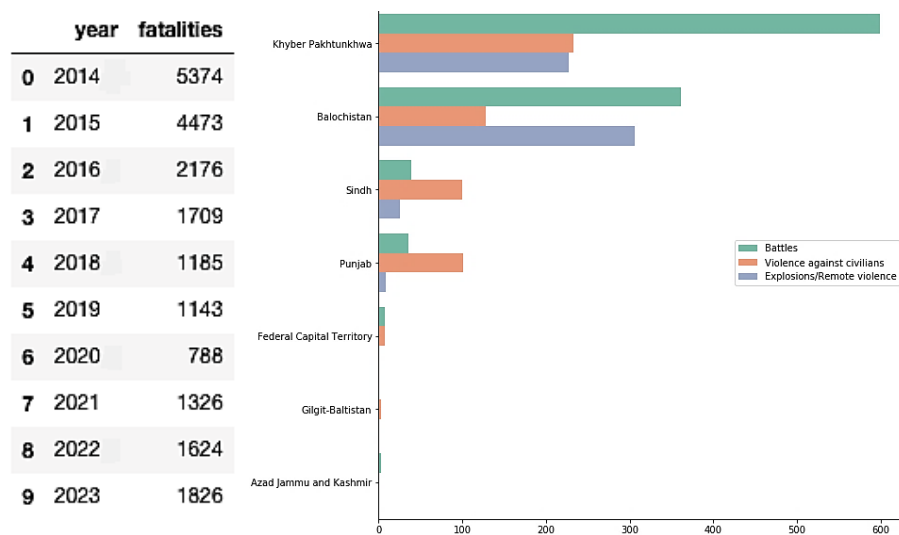


Fig. 4/5: In-house ACLED evaluation 01/2022 - 11/2023: Victims by year and security incidents by province and type of attack

However, the number of victims in 2023 is still far from that of 2014. According to PICSS, the main geographical areas affected in 2022 were KP (64 % of attacks), Balochistan (27 %) and Sindh (7 %). KP and Balochistan both border Afghanistan. The main actors are the Pakistani Taliban (TTP), increasingly Balochistan terrorist groups (BLA, BLF) and the offshoots of the Islamic State ISKP and ISPP (see Fig. 8).

This report analyses these three most important groups. In 2022, the BLA carried out more attacks than the TTP.⁶⁸ The victims are primarily police officers and security forces.⁶⁹ Originally, the TTP had also attacked civilians, but public opinion changed after an attack in 2014 on a military school in Peshawar, where, according to the TTP, future generals were taught.⁷⁰

Since then, attacks on civilians have been

avoided and the focus of attacks has been on the security forces and the police. The aim is to indirectly instil fear in the population because the state appears incapable of protecting them.⁷¹ According to the PICSS database, there were 22 suicide attacks in the first eight months of 2023, resulting in 227 deaths and 497 injuries.⁷² A total of 271 attacks with 389 deaths and 656 injuries were documented in the first half of 2023 - an increase of 80 % compared to the same period last year.⁷³

⁶⁸ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023

⁶⁹ PICSS Annual Report 2022: Anti-State Violence highest in five years, 7 January 2023, p. 4; Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS, Islamabad, 31 May 2023

⁷⁰ Sirajuddin: 'Eight years and still awaiting justice': Parents of APS martyrs march in Peshawar, 16 December 2022

⁷¹ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023

⁷² Junaidi, Ikram: Militant attacks in August 'highest in a month' since 2014, in: Dawn.com, 3 September 2023; PICSS Annual Report 2022: Anti-State Violence highest in five years, 7 January 2023; PICSS: Militant attacks surge in Pakistan, highest in any month since 2014, September 2023

⁷³ Junaidi, Ikram: Militant attacks claim 389 lives in six months, 3 July 2023

The largest attacks, which can also be seen in Figures 6 and 7, were a suicide attack by the TTP on a mosque in Peshawar in January 2023, in which 84 people (mainly police officers) were killed, and an attack by the ISKP on a JUI-F gathering in Bajaur in July 2023, in which 54 people were killed.⁷⁴

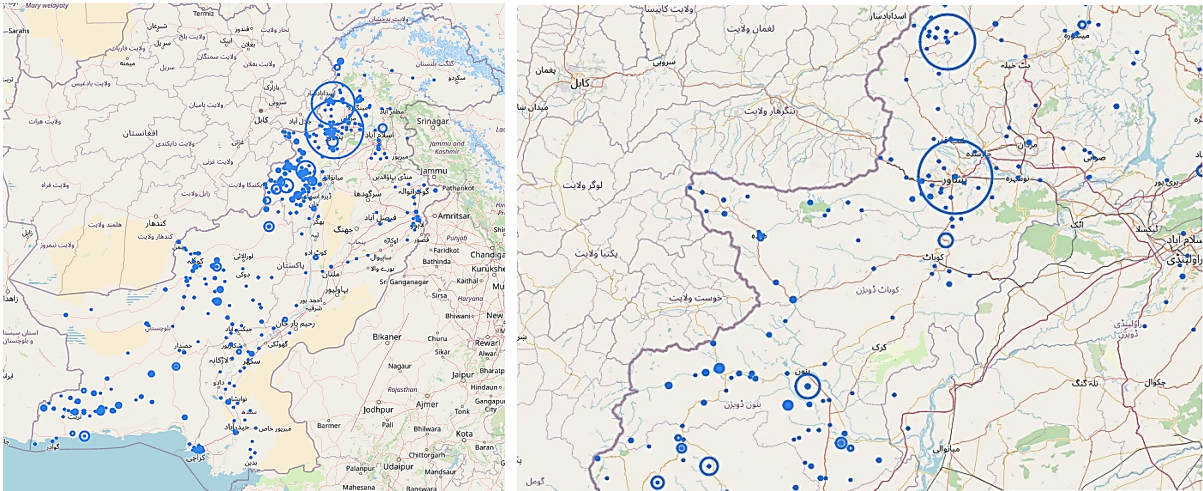


Fig. 6/7: In-house ACLED evaluation 01/2022 - 11/2023, left: Incidents by province/geographical location and radius by number of victims, right: Zoom on incidents in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)

TTP: Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan	532
Unidentified Armed Group (Pakistan)	393
BLA: Baloch Liberation Army	223
Military Forces of Pakistan (2022-)	172
BLF: Baloch Liberation Front	164
Baloch Separatists (Pakistan)	164
Police Forces of Pakistan (2022-)	77
Police Forces of Pakistan (2022-) Counter Terrorism Department	62
Islamic State (Afghanistan)	60
Military Forces of Pakistan (2018-2022)	48
Islamic State (Pakistan)	22

Fig. 8: In-house ACLED evaluation 01/2022 - 11/2023: Security incidents by actor

The rapidly deteriorating security situation and the Pakistani government's failed negotiations with the TTP - via the mediators of the Afghan Taliban - led to Pakistan beginning to expel or repatriate all illegally resident Afghans from 1 November 2023 onwards. At a press conference on 8 November 2023, Pakistan's interim Prime Minister Kakar said that Pakistan would not stop the action against illegal residents from Afghanistan. Since the Taliban took power in 2021, there has been a dramatic increase in terrorist attacks (primarily by the TTP) in Pakistan (see Chapter 4.4).⁷⁵

3.2 Impact of the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan

For the Pakistani government, which had initially welcomed the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in 2021, as Indian influence over the neighbouring country had disappeared with the republic, the tide now seems to be turning. The strategic depth⁷⁶ that it had hoped to gain vis-à-vis India has now been achieved by the TTP towards Pakistan.⁷⁷ Spurred on by the successful takeover of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the - contrary to reality - narrative of having driven out the Western occupiers, there is great sympathy for this model among the Pakistani population and terrorist groups active in Pakistan.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Hussain, Abid: Attacks in Pakistan buttressed by region's 'militant' landscape: Analysts, 02 August 2023; Saifi/Mogul: Death toll from blast in Pakistan mosque rises to at least 100 as country faces 'national security crisis', in: CNN.com, 31 January 2023
⁷⁵ Raza, Syed Irfan: Taliban regime 'enabler' of terror: Kakar, in: Dawn.com, 9 November 2023
⁷⁶ The Nation: The strategic depth concept, 16 October 2015
⁷⁷ Sayed/Hamming: The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan After the Taliban's Afghanistan Takeover, in: CTC Sentinel May 2023, Vol. 16 (5); Interview with Amina Khan (ISSI) at the FFM, Islamabad, 30 May 2023
⁷⁸ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023

In August 2023, for example, the TTP congratulated the Taliban on the second anniversary of the takeover in a statement on Telegram and called on the "oppressed people" of Pakistan to wage jihad against the government in order to establish an "Islamic system" there too.⁷⁹ Hundreds of TTP fighters were freed from prisons in Afghanistan after the Taliban took power in 2021 and shortly afterwards the TTP declared that it also wanted to establish an Islamic emirate based on Sharia law and abolish democracy in Pakistan.⁸⁰ The TTP compares its current struggle with that of the Afghan Taliban over the last 20 years.⁸¹ According to a report by the *United States Institute of Peace (USIP)* dated 14 February 2023, the Taliban are said to support the TTP (many TTP leaders operate from Afghanistan) and are in favour of its plans in Pakistan. In particular, the Taliban leader Emir Akhonzada, who rules Afghanistan, agrees with the TTP that the current Pakistani political system is "un-Islamic".⁸²

According to a PICSS analyst, the TTP is also receiving military support from the Afghan Taliban, as the TTP has assisted them in the fight.⁸³ According to PICSS, this is a new phenomenon, as Pakistani nationals originally went to Afghanistan to support the Afghan Taliban. According to PICSS, 50 Afghan Taliban fighters were arrested in Pakistan in the first three months of 2023. In addition, weapons and military equipment left behind by the US army worth USD 7 billion also found their way to Pakistan, significantly increasing the level of attacks by militants (see Chapter 3.6, Arms possession in Pakistan). Within a year of the takeover, attacks in Pakistan doubled (75 % of them in KP).⁸⁴

The Pakistani government reacted first with negotiations, then with attacks against the TTP on Afghan soil and finally, since autumn 2023, with the expulsion or repatriation of illegally resident Afghans, who it considers to be a possible fifth column of Afghanistan. On 22 February 2023, the Pakistani defence minister and the head of the Pakistani intelligence service ISI travelled to Kabul for talks. The reason for this was increased attacks by the TTP. It was hoped that the Afghan Taliban would be able to bring the TTP back to the negotiating table after the failed ceasefire in 2022.

Secondly, there are various reports of attacks by the Pakistani military on the TTP in Afghanistan.⁸⁵ According to a report by the Afghan exile press medium *Hasht-e Subh*, the Pakistani military carried out airstrikes on TTP positions in the Afghan province of Nangarhar on 5 January 2023; neither the Pakistani government nor the Taliban commented on this.⁸⁶ Two children were killed in a drone attack on a village in the Afghan province of Khost on 16 May 2023. Although there was no official statement on the attack, media reports suggested that it was a Pakistani attack against the TTP.⁸⁷ According to media reports from 19 August 2023, a high-ranking commander of the TTP, Dost Mohammad, was killed in an airstrike in Nangarhar province. It is not known who carried out the attack.⁸⁸ On 14 August 2023, there was an explosion in a hotel in Khost, killing at least three people. The background is unclear. Pakistani media reported that this could have been a drone attack by the Pakistani army on the TTP.⁸⁹ The Afghan Taliban initially tried to walk a tightrope so as not to offend either the Pakistani government or the TTP, as they would not have come to power without these two parties. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed that based on an agreement between the Taliban and the Pakistani government, TTP members are being relocated to Afghanistan, particularly to the north and north-east of the country. According to media reports from 19 June 2023, TTP fighters have been relocated by the Taliban to Takhar province.⁹⁰

⁷⁹ Noack, Rick: Celebration and anguish as Taliban marks second anniversary of takeover, in: *Washington Post*, 15 August 2023

⁸⁰ Sayed/Hamming: The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan After the Taliban's Afghanistan Takeover, in: *CTC Sentinel* May 2023, Vol. 16 (5); International Crisis Group: *Pakistan: At the Tipping Point?*, 12 May 2023

⁸¹ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023

⁸² Mir/Salikuddin: Is Pakistan Poised to Take on the TTP?, *USIP Report*, 14 February 2023

⁸³ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023

⁸⁴ International Crisis Group: *Pakistan: At the Tipping Point?*, 12 May 2023

⁸⁵ Spiegel Online: Pakistan sucht Hilfe von Taliban in Afghanistan, 22 February 2023; Horasanli, Ismet: Decoding Pakistan's High-Level Delegation's Visit to Kabul, in: *TAP*, 02 March 2023

⁸⁶ Khalid, Sakhi: Pakistan Launches Air Strikes on TTP Strongholds in Eastern Afghanistan's Nangarhar, in: *Hasht-e Subh*, 5 April 2023

⁸⁷ NTV: Zwei tote Kinder bei Explosion in Afghanistan, 16 May 2023 (german);

⁸⁸ AmuTV: Key TTP splinter group commander reportedly killed in Afghanistan, 18 August 2023

⁸⁹ Tolonews: 3 Dead, 7 Injured in Blast in Khost, 14 August 2023; Afghan Witness: Explosion in Khost reportedly targeting Pakistani Taliban members, 17 August 2023

⁹⁰ Rahmati, Fidel: Taliban, Pakistan Reach Settlement on TTP Members' Relocation to Northern Afghanistan, in: *Khaama Press*, 13 June 2023; Parsi, Mazdak: Relocating TTP to Northern Afghanistan: From Changing Ethnic Demography to the New Front of Proxy War, in: *Hasht-e Subh*, 19 June 2023

In November 2023, the Pakistani government called on the Taliban to choose between these two camps.⁹¹ The Pakistani government accuses the Afghan Taliban of doing too little against the TTP, whose attacks planned from Afghan soil have increased significantly since the takeover.⁹² On 3 October 2023, Pakistan's interim Interior Minister Bugti ordered that all illegally resident foreigners (mostly Afghans) must leave the country by 1 November 2023 and will otherwise be repatriated. According to the UN, around 400,000 illegal residents had already returned to Afghanistan by the end of November 2023, the majority of them voluntarily (see Chapter 4.4).⁹³

3.3 The Pakistani Taliban (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, TTP)

According to the 2022 PICSS annual report, the TTP was the most dangerous terrorist group in Pakistan.⁹⁴ As already mentioned, the TTP's main goal is to abolish Pakistan's current political system and instead - as in Afghanistan - establish an Islamic emirate. Like the Afghan Taliban, they have no transnational ambitions and are also categorised as Deobandis.⁹⁵ During the peace negotiations with the Pakistani government until November 2022, the TTP demanded that the unification of KP and FATA be reversed, the military be withdrawn from the tribal areas, the introduction of Sharia law in Malakand (KP) and the release of TTP inmates from prisons in Malakand. The TTP are mainly active in the tribal areas of KP, especially in the southern districts of North Waziristan, South Waziristan, Dera Ismail Khan, Tank and Lakki Marwat. There are now also sporadic TTP activities in Balochistan, Peshawar and other regions.⁹⁶ The TTP divides Pakistan into 12 wilayats (administrative districts): Wilayat Peshawar, Wilayat Gilgit-Baltistan etc. - a copy of the pattern practised by the Afghan Taliban as a shadow government before they came to power.⁹⁷ In January 2023, a new Wilayat Zhob - for the Pashtun areas in Balochistan - was established, underlining the TTP's focus on Balochistan province.

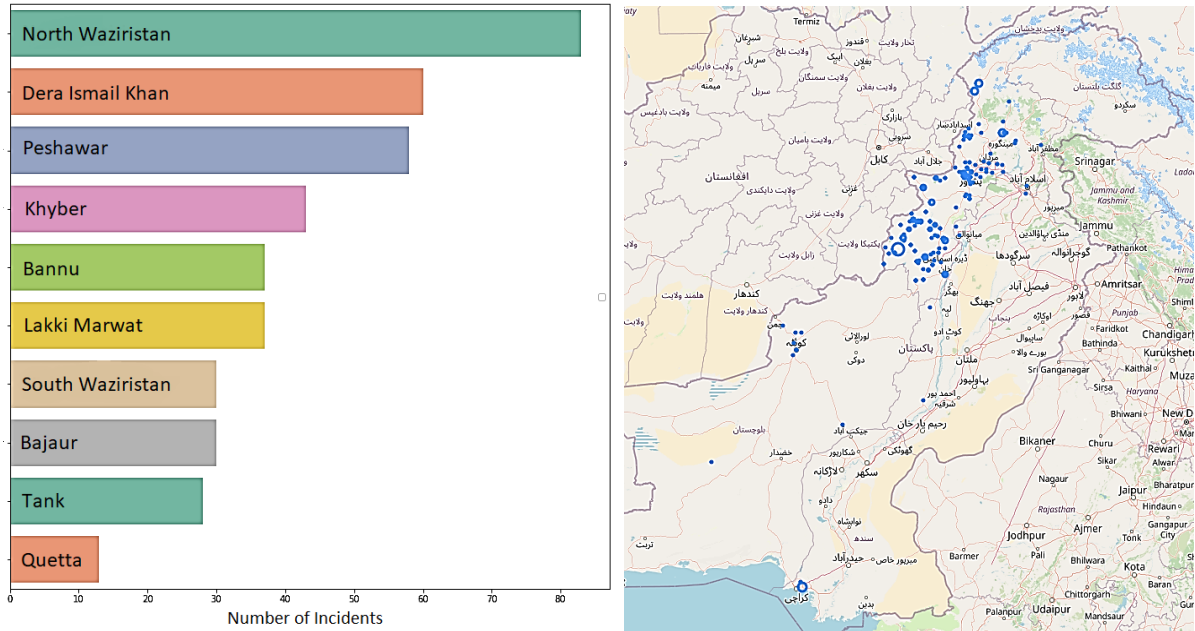


Fig. 9/10: In-house ACLED evaluation 01/2022 - 11/2023: TTP attacks by district (left) and geographical distribution (right, blue)

⁹¹ Raza, Syed Irfan: Taliban regime 'enabler' of terror: Kakar, in: Dawn.com, 9 November 2023
⁹² International Crisis Group: Pakistan: At the Tipping Point?, 12 May 2023
⁹³ Khaama.com: One million Afghan migrants to be deported by January next year: Pakistani official, 23 November 2023
⁹⁴ PICSS Annual Report 2022: Anti-State Violence highest in five years, 7 January 2023
⁹⁵ Frayer, Lauren: The Taliban's Ideology Has Surprising Roots In British-Ruled India, in: NPR, 8 September 2021. The Deobandi movement, or Deobandism, is a revivalist movement within Sunni Islam that adheres to the Hanafi school of law. It formed in the late 19th century around the Darul Uloom Madrassa in Deoband, India, from which the name is derived.
⁹⁶ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023; Basit, Abdul: Questions Surround Pakistani Taliban's Inroads into Balochistan: Organisational Expansion or Propaganda Stunt?, in: Terrorism Monitor/Jamestown Foundation, 11 July 2023
⁹⁷ Raja, Faisal Ali: New wilayas of TTP, in: The Express Tribune, 5 July 2023; Hijazi, Ajwa: Understanding TTP's Resurgence, CASS Report, 20 October 2023; Jackson, Ashley: Life under the Taliban shadow government, in: ODI, 20 June 2018

The TTP continues to maintain good links with al-Qaeda, e.g. much of the TTP literature is copied from al-Qaeda texts. Contrary to its purely national ambitions, the TTP also fought in Syria in 2013 alongside the al-Nusra Front and al-Qaeda against the Syrian government.⁹⁸ Under the leadership of Noor Wali Mehsud, the TTP has reunited ten splinter groups under its sovereignty since 2020.⁹⁹ The biggest attack by the TTP in 2023 was an attack on a mosque inside a police headquarter in Peshawar on 30 January.¹⁰⁰ Around 60 people died and 157 were injured. The KP police force is one of the main targets of the TTP; more than 300 police officers have died in militant attacks since September 2022. Most recently, there was an attack on a police convoy on 3 November 2023 in Dera Ismail Khan City (KP) that left five people dead and 20 injured.¹⁰¹

3.4 Baloch separatists

According to PICSS, Baloch terrorists were just as big a problem as the TTP in 2022; they even committed more attacks in 2022 than the TTP. Their tactical capabilities had improved. The two largest groups in Balochistan are the *Balochistan Liberation Army* (BLA) and the *Balochistan Liberation Front* (BLF). The members of the BLF mainly speak the Brahui language and are active in southern Balochistan, on the coast of Makran near the Iranian border. Furthermore, there is a new conglomerate that calls itself *Baloch Raji Ajohi Sangar* (BRAS).¹⁰² In addition to their improved military capabilities, the merger of several groups is another new phenomenon.

According to PICSS, it is also striking that these groups are mainly recruited from well-educated young people and that women are also increasingly being recruited. All of these innovations can be traced back to General Aslam Baloch (BLA, BRAS).¹⁰³ The favoured targets are Pakistani security forces and Chinese employees of the CPEC.¹⁰⁴ The ideology of BRAS is based on the establishment of a state of Balochistan independent of Pakistan and the prevention of the extraction of resources from the area by external powers, including China and Pakistan itself. Their nationalist separatism is influenced by a Marxist-leftist ideology.¹⁰⁵ According to PICSS, there are indications that the BLA is cooperating with India; Aslam Baloch went to India for medical treatment in 2018.¹⁰⁶

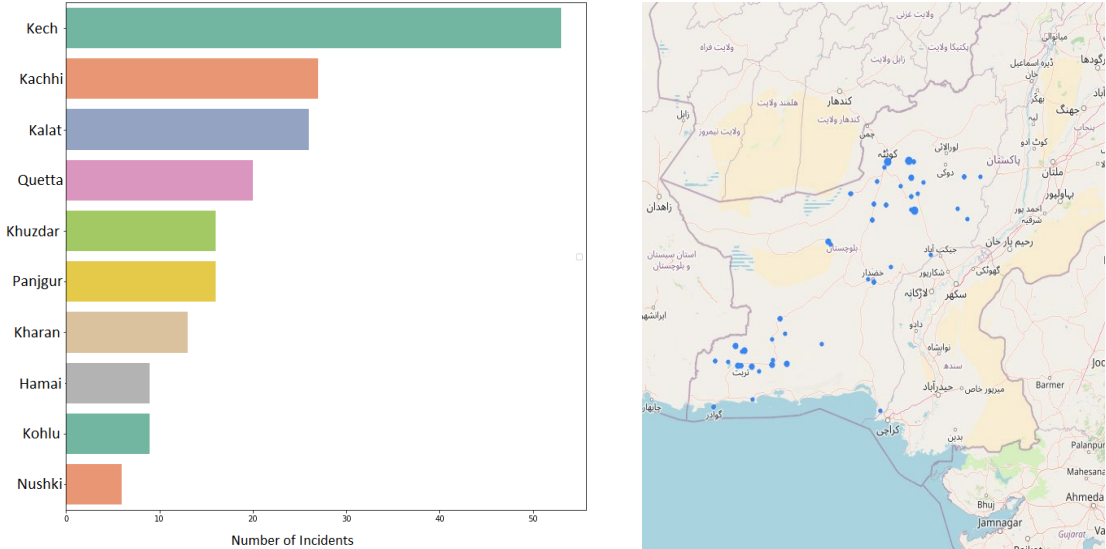


Fig. 11/12: In-house ACLED evaluation 01/2022 - 11/2023: BLA attacks in Balochistan by district (left) and geographical distribution (right, blue)

⁹⁸ Golovina/Ahmad: Pakistan Taliban set up camps in Syria, join anti-Assad war, in: Reuters, 14 July 2013
⁹⁹ Salafi-Jihadi Global Tracker: Islamic State Increases Attacks as Pakistani Taliban Negotiates, 22 November 2022
¹⁰⁰ BBC News: Pakistan mosque blast: Police targeted in suicide attack that kills 59, 30 January 2023
¹⁰¹ Dawn.com: Bomb blast near police patrol kills 5 in KP's Dera Ismail Khan: official, 3 November 2023
¹⁰² Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023; Zahid, Farhan: Baluch Raji Ajohi Sangar: Emergence of a New Baluch Separatist Alliance, in: Terrorism Monitor Vol: 17 Issue: 18, 20 September 2019
¹⁰³ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023
¹⁰⁴ Zahid, Farhan: Baluch Raji Ajohi Sangar: Emergence of a New Baluch Separatist Alliance, in: Terrorism Monitor Vol: 17 Issue: 18, 20 September 2019
¹⁰⁵ Ibid.
¹⁰⁶ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023

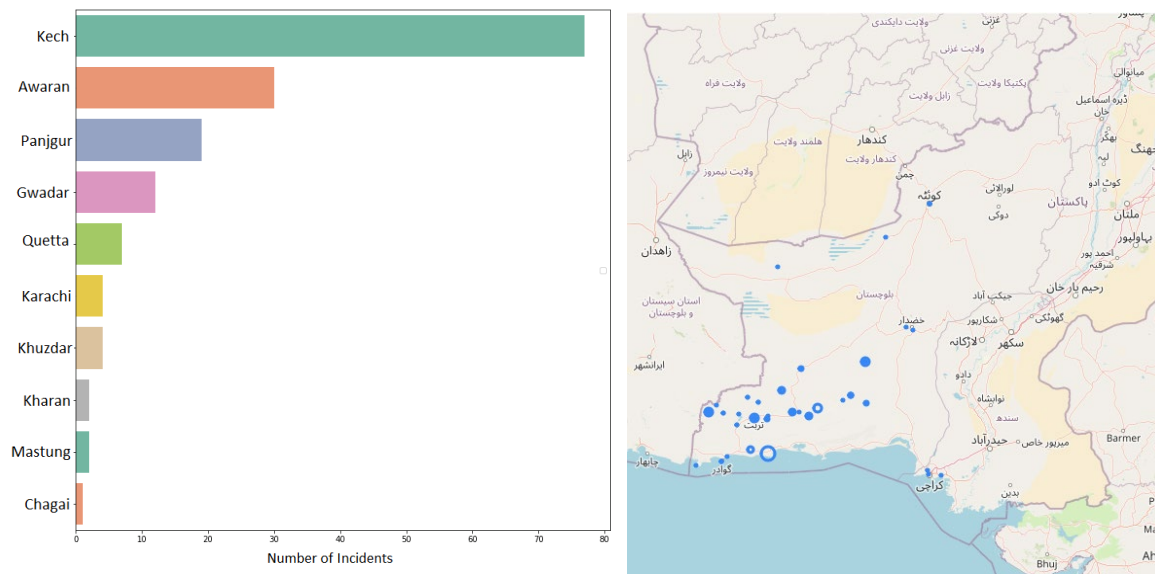


Fig. 13/14: In-house ACLED evaluation 01/2022 - 11/2023: BLF attacks in Balochistan by district (left) and geographical distribution (right, blue)

3.5 The Islamic State offshoots

In May 2019, the central IS leadership divided the areas of Khorasan and Pakistan into two groups. There are the *Islamic State Khorasan Province* (ISKP) and the *Islamic State Pakistan Province* (ISPP) with two different leaders. IS itself calls them *Wilayah Pakistan* and *Wilayah Khorasan*. ISKP is active in the region around Peshawar (attacks in and around Bajaur, Peshawar and South Waziristan), ISPP in Balochistan and the rest of Pakistan (attacks in and around Quetta, Lahore and Islamabad). However, there are many overlaps between the groups. Both carry out attacks against Pakistani security forces, police officers, Sufis, Christians and Shiites, among others.¹⁰⁷

Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP): According to a PICSS analyst, ISKP attacks in Afghanistan decreased in 2022 due to persecution by the Taliban, while they increased in Pakistan (especially in Peshawar, KP and Balochistan). Of all the terrorist groups in Pakistan, however, ISKP is the one with the fewest resources.¹⁰⁸ Geographically, ISKP in Pakistan is mainly active in Bajaur and Peshawar (see Fig. 15, left). They are recruited from Salafists, 90 % of whom reject the ISKP.

Nevertheless, the ISKP is capable of carrying out major attacks.¹⁰⁹ An attack in the district of Bajaur in July 2023 on a meeting of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) left 54 people dead and 100 injured.¹¹⁰ As a Deobandi group, the JUI-F is close to the Afghan Taliban and is therefore regarded as infidel by the ISKP.¹¹¹ On 4 February 2022, the ISKP carried out a major attack on a Shia mosque in Peshawar, killing 63 and injuring 196. The perpetrator was an Afghan who had been living in Pakistan for a long time. PICSS again attributed this attack to the ISPP.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023; Salafi-Jihadi Global Tracker: Islamic State Increases Attacks as Pakistani Taliban Negotiates, 22 November 2022
¹⁰⁸ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023
¹⁰⁹ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023
¹¹⁰ Saifi/Goodwin: Blast rips through political gathering in Pakistan, killing at least 54, in: CNN.com, 31 July 2023
¹¹¹ Palmer/Holtz: The Islamic State Threat in Pakistan: Trends and Scenarios, in: CSIS, 3 August 2023 ; Rehman, Zia Ur: Why is the militant ISKP attacking the JUI-F in Bajaur?, in: Dawn.com, 02 August 2023: "In April 2022, the ISKP issued a series of fatwas (Islamic rulings) allowing the assassinations of JUI-F religious scholars and activists. Following the Bajaur attack, the militant group also published a 92-page book about the JUI-F, explaining their reasons for targeting religio-political parties. [...] Primarily, the ISKP perceives the JUI-F as the political wing of the Afghan Taliban in Pakistan, believing them to be closely aligned. [...] When the Taliban established its government in Afghanistan after the fall of Kabul in August 2021, several religious scholars and individuals from Bajaur were appointed to important positions," said the IRCRA's Madani. "Some of these individuals were also associated with the JUI-F." "As the threat of ISKP grew in Afghanistan, the Taliban administration initiated a crackdown on the group in Kunar and other adjacent provinces. Consequently, leaders from Bajaur who held positions in the new administration also became involved in the operation against ISKP, Madani told Dawn.com."

Islamic State of Pakistan Province (ISPP): The ISPP claimed to have carried out 58 attacks in Pakistan in 2022. One analyst suspected that an attack on 29 September 2023 with 50 dead and 58 injured in the Mastung district could be attributed to the ISPP. As can be seen on the left in the ACLED evaluation, ISPP is mainly active in Mastung.¹¹² There had been an increase in ISPP attacks in September and October 2022, but these were mostly minor. However, an ISPP terrorist had previously carried out a suicide attack on Pakistani soldiers on 8 March 2022, killing five and injuring around 25.¹¹³ On 15 September 2023, the ISPP claimed responsibility for an attack on the JUI-F leader Hafiz Hamdullah in Mastung. There were 11 injured.¹¹⁴ ISPP published its first magazine in Urdu titled *Yalghar* (Invasion) in April 2021.¹¹⁵

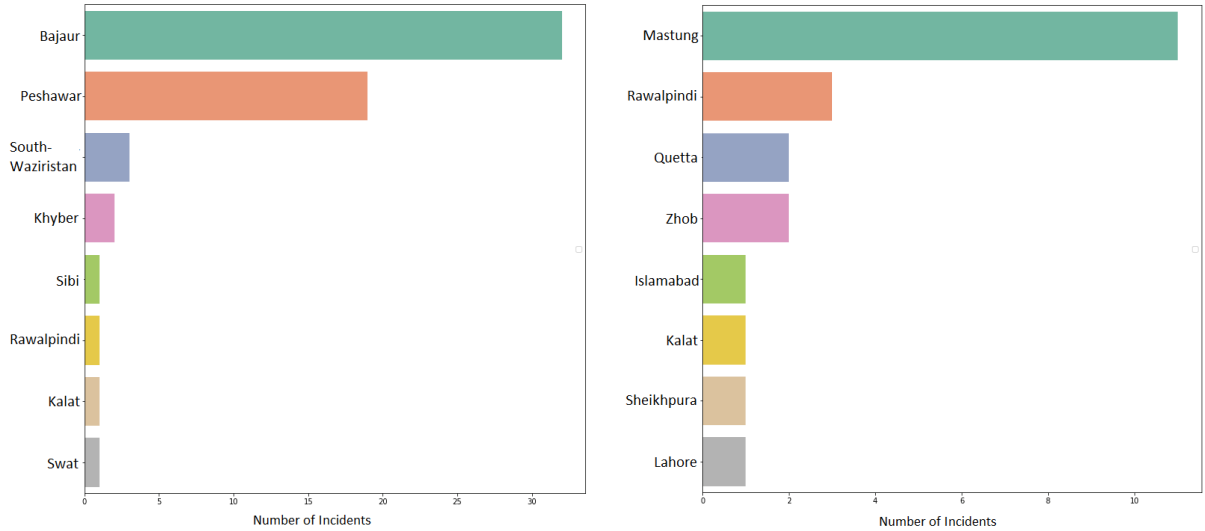


Figure 15/16: In-house ACLED evaluation 01/2022 - 11/2023: ISKP (left) ISPP (right) attacks by district

3.6 Arms possession in Pakistan

When asked how gun ownership is regulated in Pakistan, what laws there are and whether every citizen can buy a firearm, an analyst replied that a gun licence from the government is necessary. For automatic weapons like the AK-47 a special licence from the government is required. But not everyone follows the legal procedure. In principle, anyone can buy a weapon on the black market. However, doing so would be taking a huge risk.¹¹⁶ According to the Small Arms Survey, an estimated 44 million firearms were owned by the Pakistani population in 2017, of which only six million were registered.¹¹⁷ In the 1980s, the withdrawal of the Soviet army from Afghanistan left behind many weapons. Today, it is US weapons that will be on sale in the region for years to come.¹¹⁸ According to media reports, the US has left behind seven billion USD worth of weapons in Afghanistan, many of which have been smuggled to Pakistan.¹¹⁹ Both former soldiers of the Afghan Republic and Taliban would sell them out of economic necessity. There is a large open black market for weapons in Pakistan, particularly in the city of Dara Adam Khel near Peshawar in KP.¹²⁰

¹¹² Hussain, Abid: Dozens dead after Pakistan rocked by bombings in two provinces, in: Al Jazeera, 29 September 2023; Al Jazeera: Blast at Pakistan procession to mark prophet's birthday kills at least 52, 29 September 2023
¹¹³ PICSS Annual Report 2022: Anti-State Violence highest in five years, 7 January 2023, p. 12; Salafi-Jihadi Global Tracker: Islamic State Increases Attacks as Pakistani Taliban Negotiates, 22 November 2022
¹¹⁴ The Friday Times: Self-Declared ISPP Has Claimed Responsibility For Attack On JUI-F Leader Hamdullah: Nusrat Javed, 15 September 2023
¹¹⁵ Salafi-Jihadi Global Tracker: Islamic State Increases Attacks as Pakistani Taliban Negotiates, 22 November 2022
¹¹⁶ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023
¹¹⁷ Small Arms Survey: Civilian Firearms Holdings, 2017
¹¹⁸ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023
¹¹⁹ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023; Siddique, Abubakar: Pakistani Armed Groups Obtain U.S. Weapons Left Behind In Afghanistan, 29 March 2023; O'Donnel, Lynne: The Taliban Are Now Arms Dealers, in: Foreign Policy, 5 July 2023; Kaufman, Ellie: First on CNN: US left behind \$7 billion of military equipment in Afghanistan after 2021 withdrawal, Pentagon report says, 28 April 2022; Fleischer, Justine: Arms Smuggling Dynamics under Taliban Rule, Small Arms Survey, July 2023
¹²⁰ Hashim, Azad: Dara Adam Khel: Pakistan's dying gun bazaar, in: Al Jazeera, 4 February 2019

Electronics, clothing, US military equipment, night vision devices and laptops can also be purchased there. However, anyone entering the area of KP can now be pursued by the police. Since being incorporated into KP in 2018, the former FATA is no longer a legal vacuum and federal laws apply there. The black markets are therefore no longer as open as they used to be.

There are reports that US weapons have ended up in the hands of militants; they appear in videos of the BLA, BLF, TTP and possibly also Hamas in the Gaza Strip.¹²¹ Observers say that the influx of US weapons has significantly increased the military capabilities of terrorist groups in Pakistan and their lethality. Night vision devices in particular would give them an enormous advantage. This would have a devastating effect on the poorly equipped police and security forces of the Pakistani state.¹²² The Pakistani government is aware of the situation.¹²³

¹²¹ Interview with high-ranking representatives of PICSS Islamabad, 31 May 2023;

Siddique, Abubakar: Pakistani Armed Groups Obtain U.S. Weapons Left Behind In Afghanistan, 29 March 2023

¹²² Siddique, Abubakar: Pakistani Armed Groups Obtain U.S. Weapons Left Behind In Afghanistan, 29 March 2023

¹²³ Ahmed, Munir: Pakistani premier claims US military equipment left behind in Afghanistan is now in militant hands, in: AP News, 4 September 2023

4. Climate crisis and humanitarian situation

4.1 Overview

The biggest humanitarian problems affecting Pakistan in 2023 are the humanitarian consequences of the 2022 floods, especially in Sindh, followed by increasing food insecurity in the wake of the economic crisis, and the situation of Afghan refugees before and since the start of the "Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan".¹²⁴

4.2 The situation in the areas affected by the floods

Background: Between 14 June 2022 and October 2022, 1,739 people died in floods in Pakistan, causing damage of around PKR 3.2 trillion (USD 14.9 billion) and economic losses of PKR 3.3 trillion (USD 15.2 billion).¹²⁵ The immediate causes of the floods were heavier than usual monsoon rains and the melting of regional glaciers following a severe heatwave, both of which are linked to climate change. On 25 August 2022, a state of emergency was declared in Pakistan due to the floods. The floods were the world's deadliest floods since the 2020 South Asian floods and have been described as the worst in the country's history.¹²⁶ Pakistan was ranked the eighth most vulnerable country to climate change in the *Global Climate Risk Index Report*, posing a serious threat to food security.¹²⁷ Floods, extreme heat and droughts occur regularly.

The situation in June 2023: FFM interviewees were asked about the current situation in the flood-affected areas in May 2023. An expert from IOM said that the situation of the people in the areas affected by the floods was still catastrophic. The Sindh region was the worst affected, but there was no more standing water there. Most of the displaced people have returned to their hometowns. As a rule, they had not travelled far away, but had only fled to small local camps for displaced persons. Some of the humanitarian aid had already been provided, but by no means all the needs could be met. Despite the situation, there is no humanitarian response plan for Pakistan. In general, the funds for humanitarian aid are low and many people are still waiting for help. Even if one million households were reached, this would still be a small percentage of those affected.¹²⁸ The government has also provided aid, but the needs are too great to be met. The government has asked for international aid (including from Turkey, Qatar and Iran). However, due to the war-related situation in Ukraine, Western support funds are low. There is a five-year plan for the reconstruction of around two million homes, but people need new houses immediately and not in five years' time. The focus of the aid is on nutrition and health and less on housing. New floods are expected for the next rainy season. Floods occur every year and another major flood is not unlikely. The floods in KP are much smaller compared to Sindh.¹²⁹ An expert from UNDP said that even months after the water receded and people returned to their flooded homes, their misery continued.

One of the biggest challenges is the concept of reconstruction, which to some extent responds to "damage" but falls far short of addressing the "loss" in flood-affected areas. Reconstruction or compensation may respond to the damage of the disaster, but the resulting deprivation and recurring losses that impact the community are neither fully understood nor taken into account. The reconstruction process is often made more difficult by the fact that land titles in Pakistan are predominantly shared, as the land may belong to a tribe rather than an individual, for example. Furthermore, isolated and marginalised communities have little or no influence on the government's post-disaster management. Although the floods have led to large-scale internal displacement, there are still no accurate calculations. Some analyses have been conducted based on telecommunication data from mobile phone operators, but there is no general systematic analysis. Most IDPs live in the households of their relatives, which makes it complicated to estimate the number of IDPs.

¹²⁴ UNFPA: Pakistan Humanitarian Emergency, April 2022; ACAPS: Country analysis: Pakistan, January 2023

¹²⁵ UNDP: UN and Pakistani government invite you to the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan, 6 January 2023

¹²⁶ Interview with a high-ranking representative of an international NGO at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹²⁷ The Express Tribune: 'Pakistan 8th most vulnerable to climate change', 12 October 2023

¹²⁸ Interview with high-ranking representatives of IOM Pakistan at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹²⁹ Interview with high-ranking representatives of IOM Pakistan at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023;
Interview with an analyst from a local NGO as part of the FFM, Islamabad, 30 May 2023

People have recently returned to the districts where UNDP is active. Accommodation is still a challenge; some people are living with relatives, others in emergency shelters and still others have no accommodation at all (see Chapter 6.1). The difficult housing situation leads to tensions between Afghan refugees and the local population.¹³⁰

According to an expert from an international NGO, although the water has disappeared in the areas affected by the floods, the needs of the population are still very great. People are still living in emergency shelters, crops and livestock have been destroyed. In Sindh, people were already living below the poverty line, and now their situation is even worse.¹³¹ In addition to the consequences of the economic crisis (inflation, food price increases), it was also the floods of 2022 that contributed to increasing food insecurity. Women and girls in particular, who already do not have enough to eat, are among the hardest hit.¹³²

4.4 The situation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan

A total of around three to four million Afghan refugees live in Pakistan. After the Taliban took power in 2021 alone, 600,000 Afghan nationals fled to Pakistan.¹³³ Around 1.3 million of the refugees from Afghanistan have a *Proof of Registration card (PoR)* and 850,000 have the *Afghan Citizen Card (ACC)*, while around 1.7 million people have no identity documents at all.¹³⁴

Until the end of the FFM at the beginning of June 2023: Even before and during the FFM delegation's presence in Islamabad, a tougher government crackdown on illegal residents, especially Afghans, was already becoming apparent.¹³⁵ UNDP stated that despite the deteriorating economic and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, the Pakistani government had intensified its crackdown on Afghan refugees by introducing a network of new restrictions in addition to a wave of arrests and repatriations.

In March 2023, the government announced that Afghan nationals would have to register with the police when travelling between cities or provinces. People with a PoR card would not be allowed to set up businesses and people with an ACC card would not be allowed to carry out official financial transactions. ACC holders would not be able to buy train or bus tickets, but would have to find other ways to move around the country.¹³⁶ Pakistani journalists reported that there had been an increase in arrests in Islamabad in June 2023.¹³⁷ It was also reported that tensions had arisen between refugees and the local population, particularly in Sindh, in the wake of the humanitarian crisis following the floods.

In mid-July 2022, a young Sindhi man was killed in Hyderabad (Sindh) in an altercation with a local Pashtun hotel owner. The incident sparked local protests. The situation escalated further when the Afghan national cricket team lost a match against Pakistan in Dubai on 7 September 2022. Posts on social media had triggered violent protests by the Afghan communities in Sindh. The authorities became aware of the violence when Sindhi nationalists called for the deportation of illegal residents and undocumented travellers from Afghanistan, prompting law enforcement agencies to begin strict checks at all checkpoints at entry and exit points to Sindh province and within the province itself in August 2022. Undocumented Afghan nationals and those who could not produce proper documents were charged under the Aliens Act and subsequently deported. The number of arrests was particularly high in the months of September to November 2022, with a peak in October. A total of 960 Afghans were detained in Sindh, all of whom have since been deported.¹³⁸

¹³⁰ Interview with high-ranking representatives of UNDP Pakistan at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023

¹³¹ Interview with high-ranking representatives of an international NGO at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹³² Interview with a high-ranking representative of the WFP at the FFM, Islamabad, 1 June 2023;
International Crisis Group: Pakistan: At the Tipping Point?, 12 May 2023

¹³³ Interview with high-ranking representatives of IOM Pakistan at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹³⁴ Bahiss, Ibrahim: Pakistan's Mass Deportation of Afghans Poses Risks to Regional Stability, in: International Crisis Group, 13 Nov 2023

¹³⁵ Interview with high-ranking representatives of UNDP Pakistan at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023;
Interview with high-ranking representatives of IOM Pakistan at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹³⁶ Interview with high-ranking representatives of UNDP Pakistan at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023

¹³⁷ Interview with a local expert at the FFM, Islamabad, 1 June 2023

¹³⁸ Interview with high-ranking representatives of an international NGO at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023;
Interview with high-ranking representatives of UN Women at the FFM, Islamabad, 1 June 2023

According to UNDP Pakistan, Afghan refugees are living in very poor conditions in Pakistan. They are extremely vulnerable as they have never been officially registered as refugees by the Pakistani state and Pakistan has never signed the Geneva Convention on Refugees.¹³⁹ There are also no official statistics on their numbers. The Afghans who fled to Pakistan after the Taliban came to power in 2021 are no longer wanted due to the economic crisis and the desolate situation in Pakistan. The existing solidarity of the Pakistani population with the refugees has waned.¹⁴⁰ According to a survey by Gallup Pakistan, the majority of Pakistani citizens surveyed (84%) are in favour of the deportation of illegally resident Afghan refugees. 64 % hope that this will lead to a better security situation, more jobs and cheaper rents.¹⁴¹

From public sources after June 2023: On 3 October 2023, the interim government of Pakistan announced that it would carry out mass repatriations - known in national law as the *Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan*¹⁴² - and asked all those affected to leave the country before 01 November 2023. As mentioned above, these repatriations can be seen as a reaction to the unwillingness of the Afghan Taliban to take action against the activities of the TTP on their soil and thus make attacks in Pakistan possible.

As part of its repatriation plan, the Pakistani interim government intends to deport around one million Afghan refugees without identity documents (those without papers, those with forged Pakistani papers and those who have overstayed their visa) by January 2024, initially in the first phase. By the end of November 2023, around 400,000 of those affected have returned to Afghanistan.¹⁴³ ACC holders could also be affected in the second phase and even PoR holders in the third phase.¹⁴⁴ The government has set up a total of 49 so-called holding centres throughout the country (including in Landikotal and Chaman).¹⁴⁵ Officially, the plan refers to all illegal residents in the country, but in practice, according to current information, Afghan refugees are particularly affected. According to media reports, in November 2023, police and *National Database and Registration Authority* (NADRA) employees will go from house to house in Karachi's migrant settlements looking for undocumented refugees.¹⁴⁶ UNHCR condemns the repatriations in view of the approaching winter and the humanitarian situation in the refugee camps across the border near Torkham, where many refugees have no shelter and too little food and medical care.¹⁴⁷ According to the UNHCR and IOM, 374,588 refugees returned to Afghanistan between 15 September and 18 November 2023. Most of those who returned were undocumented (96 %), followed by ACC holders (2 %) and PoR holders (2 %). Fear of arrest (92%) was the most common reason for returning to Afghanistan. Those fleeing from Balochistan in Pakistan (35%) were most likely to return and intended to go to Kandahar (29%), Nangarhar (26%) and Kabul (17%) in Afghanistan.¹⁴⁸

¹³⁹ Interview with high-ranking representatives of UNDP Pakistan at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023

¹⁴⁰ Interview with analysts from a local NGO as part of the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹⁴¹ Al Jazeera: 'What's wrong?': The silence of Pakistanis on expulsion of Afghan refugees, 22 November 2023

¹⁴² Qarar, Shakeel: Govt initiates nationwide operation to deport illegal foreign nationals, in: Dawn.com, 1 November 2023

¹⁴³ Khaama.com: One million Afghan migrants to be deported by January next year: Pakistani official, 23 November 2023

¹⁴⁴ Bahiss, Ibrahim: Pakistan's Mass Deportation of Afghans Poses Risks to Regional Stability, in: International Crisis Group, 13 Nov 2023

¹⁴⁵ Kashif, Imran: Pakistan sets up 49 holding centres for undocumented migrants ahead of deportation, in: Arabnews, 1 November 2023

¹⁴⁶ AmuTV: Pakistan police conduct door-to-door searches for undocumented Afghans, 22 November 2023

¹⁴⁷ AmuTV: UNHCR urges Pakistan to halt deportations of Afghan refugees amidst harsh winter conditions, 23 November 2023

¹⁴⁸ UNHCR-IOM Pakistan Flash Update #6: Arrest and Detention/Flow Monitoring, 15 September - 18 November 2023

5. Human rights situation

5.1 Overview

This report does not cover the situation of all minorities, but only those for which information was explicitly obtained as part of the FFM. According to an HRCP analyst, members of the Ahmadiyya religious community (Ahmadis) are the most discriminated against and persecuted in Pakistan. They are followed by Christians, Hindus and Sikhs. Other key issues include freedom of religion and expression, the situation of transgender people and enforced disappearances. In general, the space for political dissent is shrinking, not only for supporters of the former ruling party PTI.¹⁴⁹

5.2 Ahmadis

The Ahmadiyya religious community (approx. 0.2 % of the population) is not legally recognised as Muslim in Pakistan, contrary to its self-image. This is also stated in Ordinance XX of 1984, which explicitly targets Ahmadis and adds Section 298-C to the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). According to Section 298-C of the PPC, it is forbidden for Ahmadis under threat of punishment (up to three years in prison) to identify themselves as Muslims or to behave as such.¹⁵⁰ According to an HRCP analyst, this is mainly for historical reasons.

History: In 1889, the founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, described himself as the last prophet of Islam (the *Mahdi*) and stated that only those who recognised this would continue to be Muslim. He also called himself the leader of the faithful (*Amir ul Momineen*) and the reincarnation of Jesus, Krishna and Buddha and wanted to unite all world religions in this way. The group split into two branches around 1900: the main branch Ahmadiya Muslim Jamaat (Qadiani group) and the Lahore Ahmadiya group (Lahore group). The latter do not believe that there will be another prophet after Muhammad (Khatm-e-Nabuwat) and did not refer to Ahmad as Mahdi. This is why the majority of Ahmadis no longer regard them as such, but Muslims in Pakistan do.¹⁵¹

According to the HRCP, the Ahmadis are generally very peaceful and rarely attack other people or groups with weapons. They have also historically rejected jihad from the outset and were favoured by the British colonial power for this reason, among others. However, this closeness to the British, as well as the founder's claim to be the last prophet, is still accused of heresy (deviation from religious doctrine) by the majority of Pakistan's population to this day. The Ahmadis are therefore rejected by both Sunnis and Shiites especially in Punjab and are often the victims of blasphemy accusations.

There had already been a lot of literature against the Ahmadis before the founding of Pakistan¹⁵², then especially during a parliamentary debate in 1974. On 30 June 1974, the opposition at the time, led by Maulana Mufti Mahmud (Deobandi, the father of Fazl-ur Rahman, who today heads the JUI-F and supports the Afghan Taliban) and, among others, Maulana Abdul Haq (founder of Deoband University Haqqania in Pakistan), introduced a bill in the Pakistani parliament demanding that the Ahmadis be made a non-Muslim minority. Maulana Abdul Haq, among others, introduced a bill in the Pakistani parliament calling for the Ahmadis to be declared a non-Muslim minority. It states that the Ahmadis recognise Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as the last prophet, although Mohammed was the last prophet (Khatm-e-Nabuwat), that they would abolish jihad, that they were brought into being by the British colonial power and that they represent a destructive movement against Islam.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹⁵⁰ Bhattacharya, Sanchita: Pakistan: Ahmadis Killed, Tortured, Hounded - Analysis, 24 May 2022

¹⁵¹ Panhwar, Sani H. (2017): Qadyaniat Defeated in the Parliament, detailed proceedings of National Assembly Sessions on the issue in 1974

¹⁵² Interview with high-level representatives of the HRCP at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023; Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Pakistan: Religious and ethnic groups in Rabwah, including population size and regional distribution; availability of employment and housing for Ahmadis; situation of Ahmadis, including social discrimination (2015-2016), 11 January 2017

¹⁵³ Panhwar, Sani H. (2017): Qadyaniat Defeated in the Parliament, detailed proceedings of National Assembly Sessions on the issue in 1974 "Whereas, it is a proven fact that Mirza Ghulam Ahmed of Qadiyan claimed to be a prophet after Khatam un Nabiyyeen (the last of the prophets), Hazrat Muhammad (SAW). And whereas, this false claim by him is tantamount to falsify the Quranic verses, nullify the Jihad and a revolt against major injunctions of Islam. And whereas, he was brought into being by the Imperialistic forces and his sole aim was to dismantle the unity of the Muslims and to falsify Islam. And whereas, in a conference of Muslim organisations of the world held in Makkah from 6 to 10 April 1974, and in which 140 organisations from all over the world participated, it was unanimously declared that Qadianiyyat is a destructive movement against Islam, which claims to be a sect of Islam."

The law was passed by parliament and a second amendment to Pakistan's constitution was subsequently passed in September 1974, declaring Ahmadis to be non-Muslims.¹⁵⁴ Nowadays, according to an HRCP analyst, the younger generations no longer know anything about the historical reasons for rejection. These arguments are no longer voiced publicly because Ahmadis in general are already heavily persecuted.¹⁵⁵

Social status: From the beginning, the majority of Ahmadis were wealthy landowners and government employees. The founder was an aristocrat. Moreover, there was a canal irrigation project in Sindh under the British colonial power from 1890 to 1920, where the Ahmadis were given newly irrigated lands for agriculture in Sindh by the British. They were resettled from Punjab to Sindh to develop land as landlords and were called "Punjabi Land Developers". This led to tensions in places like Mirpur Khas in eastern Sindh, close to the Indian border.¹⁵⁶ Ahmadis can also be killed there (murder of an Ahmadi doctor in 2014¹⁵⁷) or their mosques attacked. In May 2023, a mob of around 150 people destroyed the minarets of the Ahmadi mosque in Dholan Abad, Mirpur Khas.¹⁵⁸

Geographical: Originally, all Ahmadis lived in Qadian near Amritsar in present-day India. They were therefore also called Qadianis. After the partition of British India in 1947, they were all resettled to Rabwah (official name: Chenab Nagar), a small town in the Pakistani part of Punjab, which was founded by the community in 1948 and is now inhabited by around 95 % Ahmadis.¹⁵⁹ Until 1984, Rabwah was the centre of the Ahmadis, but this was then moved to London due to hostility. Most Ahmadis from other parts of Pakistan are also buried in Rabwah. The town is considered a place of refuge for Ahmadis, even though public hostility and, more rarely, serious acts of violence by religious extremists can occur there.¹⁶⁰ Most recently, an Ahmadi was killed in Rabwah by a TLP extremist on 12 August 2022 because of his religious affiliation.¹⁶¹ There are also regular anti-Ahmadi protests by opponents of the group in Rabwah, including the Aftab Nabuwat conference on 21 October 2022 in the Madrassah Usmania/Muslim Colony.¹⁶² Protest rallies against Ahmadis are often held on the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (12th of Rabi ul Awwal). These opponents often settle in the nearby village of Chiniot or in the Muslim Colony in Rabwah itself.¹⁶³

In addition to Rabwah, Ahmadis also live in Lahore, Karachi, Mirpur Khas and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). In GB, they are considered Muslims because the state constitution is partially invalid there. The clause stating that Ahmadis are not Muslims has not been extended to GB. However, they are also socially discriminated against there and many Sunni Pashtuns from the TTP have come to GB in the last two decades. According to the HRCP, the extent of extremism there has increased. The Shia Ismailis who live there, on the other hand, get on well with the Ahmadis.¹⁶⁴

Appearance: Ahmadi women cannot be visually distinguished from other Sunni Muslim women by their clothing. However, they live according to a much more conservative role model. From the HRCP's point of view, Ahmadi women are discriminated against by their own group. They are very close to the Salafists due to their jurisprudence and are very orthodox. Ahmadiya women live in very conservative households. Even if they are employed, most of them wear a full-body veil (burqa). Ahmadis cannot be recognised by their names, as is sometimes the case with Shiites.¹⁶⁵ Ahmadis generally try not to stand out, as they cannot be visually distinguished from other Muslims.

¹⁵⁴ Farooq, Umer: Politics of Exclusion: A case study of the 2nd constitutional Amendment, Pak Institute for Peace Studies

¹⁵⁵ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹⁵⁶ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹⁵⁷ Ahmadiyya.de: Brutaler Mord an Ahmadi-Arzt in Pakistan, 23 September 2014 (german)

¹⁵⁸ Dissent Today: Ahmadi Place Of Worship Vandalised By Mob In Mirpurkhas, 5 May 2023

¹⁵⁹ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹⁶⁰ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹⁶¹ The Friday Times: Ahmadi Man Stabbed To Death By Fanatic In Chenab Nagar, 12 August 2022

¹⁶² Ahmadiyya Muslim Foreign Missions Office: Persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan, Monthly Report, October 2022 p. 13

¹⁶³ Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Pakistan: Religious and ethnic groups in Rabwah, including population size and regional distribution; availability of employment and housing for Ahmadis; situation of Ahmadis, including social discrimination (2015-2016), 11 January 2017

¹⁶⁴ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹⁶⁵ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

Marriages: For a long time, there had been marriages between Ahmadis and Sunnis, but not with Shiites. This is no longer the case today.¹⁶⁶ Since July 2022, marriages between Muslims in the province of Punjab have required a declaration to be signed stating that Muhammad is the final prophet of Islam. This contradicts the beliefs of the Ahmadis, as they consider their founder to be the final prophet of Islam, making marriages impossible for them.¹⁶⁷ Other provinces are also considering introducing such a declaration.

Discrimination by the state: The need to sign a declaration of the finality of the Prophet Mohammed also exists when applying for identity documents such as passports and the Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC).¹⁶⁸ The Ahmadis do not recognise the anti-Ahmadi legislation of 1974 (Second Amendment) and do not want to be seen as a minority. That is why they do not participate in elections.¹⁶⁹

Discrimination by society: There are posters on shops that say you should not buy there because the shop is owned by an Ahmadi. This does not happen very often, but it can encourage others to do the same. This mainly happens in the provinces of Punjab and Sindh, where the Ahmadis have historically owned large tracts of land (see above). A TLP cleric had also called for attacks against pregnant Ahmadi women to prevent the birth of their child.¹⁷⁰ The police allegedly destroys the minarets of Ahmadi mosques for protection so that they are not attacked by a mob. They have done this in Gujranwala, Sindh and Sialkot.¹⁷¹ Ahmadi mosques are also not officially allowed to be called mosques, but merely "places of worship".¹⁷² Although Ahmadis make up only 0.2% of the population, 33% of them are victims of blasphemy charges.

20.
(FOR MUSLIM APPLICANTS)

I, _____ S/O, W/O, D/O _____ Age _____ Years

Adult Muslim, resident of _____

Declare that:-

- a) I am a Muslim and believe in the absolute and unqualified finality of the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the last of the prophets
- b) I do not recognize any person who claims to be a prophet in any sense of the word or of any description whatsoever after Muhammad (peace be upon him) or recognize such Claimant as a prophet or religious reformer as a Muslim
- c) I consider Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani to be an imposter nabi and also consider his followers whether belonging to the Lahori or Qadiani group to be a non Muslim

Signature of the Applicant: _____

Fig. 17: Extract from the current application form for a Pakistani passport, anti-Ahmadi clause (Source: Passport Application Form of the High Commission for Pakistan, London)

5.3 Shiites

There are many Shias in Pakistan (approx. 15-20 % of the population), but only a small proportion of them are Hazaras (96 % of whom are themselves Shias). Shias live mainly in Punjab and Sindh, partly also in KP (there Pashtun Shias like the Turi or Bangash in Hangu, Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan).¹⁷³ This is why not only Hazaras but also Pashtuns served in the *Liwa Zainebiyoun*, which fought for Iran in the Syrian war.¹⁷⁴ Shiites live mainly in large cities such as Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Peshawar, Multan and Quetta. They would not make up the majority in any region, only in Gilgit-Baltistan.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁶ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023
¹⁶⁷ Rizwan, Sheharyar: Punjab proposes declaration on finality of prophethood before marriage, in: Dawn.com, 02 March 2022
¹⁶⁸ Passport Application Form of the High Commission for Pakistan, London; UK Home Office: Country Policy and Information Note, Pakistan: Ahmadis, September 2021, p. 29, 73
¹⁶⁹ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023
¹⁷⁰ Jalil, Xari: Video Shows TLP Leader Inciting Violence Against Pregnant Ahmadi Women, Voicepk.net, 30 September 2022
¹⁷¹ Rabwah Times: Pakistan police demolish minarets of Ahmadi Mosque, 22 March 2021
¹⁷² Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023
¹⁷³ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023
¹⁷⁴ Al Majalla: A complete guide to Iranian-backed militias in Syria, 4 November 2023
¹⁷⁵ UK Home Office: Country Policy and Information Note: Pakistan: Shia, Muslims , Version 3.0, July 2021

Hazaras: Shia Hazaras are mainly persecuted in Afghanistan and it was only when many Taliban came to Quetta in Balochistan in 2001 that the Hazaras also increasingly became victims of attacks in Pakistan. Prior to this, many Hazaras had also fled from the Taliban to Quetta, and some had moved on to Rawalpindi and Karachi. In Karachi they live in Ancholi, Rizvia and Abbas Town; in Quetta in Hazara Town and Mariabad.¹⁷⁶ In contrast to the Ahmadis, the persecution of the Hazaras is a new phenomenon in Pakistan. Of all the Shias in Pakistan, however, the Hazaras are the most persecuted, as they can be easily identified by their Asian facial features.¹⁷⁷ Other Shiites cannot be distinguished from Sunnis by their outward appearance.¹⁷⁸ It is not only the well-known terrorist groups such as the ISKP that are persecuting the Hazaras, but also local Sunni extremists who are fighting against Baloch separatists, for example.¹⁷⁹

5.4 LGBTIQ

In general: LGBTIQ people in Pakistan cannot be identified if they do not identify themselves. Only transgender people have a problem because they are easily identifiable. In Karachi and Lahore, even in Islamabad, there are men who wear lipstick in public or women who dress differently. If you go to a party in a middle-class household in Islamabad, gays, lesbians or transgender people could also be present.¹⁸⁰

History: According to the HRCP, there have been transgender people and homosexuals in South Asia for a long time, who have traditionally been singers or cooks. Before the British arrived, there were no taboos in this regard. The British were the first to attempt to categorise and group the population of South Asia in order to understand them. The persecution of LGBTIQ people is a comparatively new phenomenon of recent decades. It was only the Islamisation from the Middle East in the course of the wars in Afghanistan from the 1980s onwards that led to this new persecution. Currently, parts of the Pakistani population are already so radicalised in this regard that even the Taliban's rise to power in 2021 has not particularly intensified this.¹⁸¹

Transgender: However, according to the HRCP, the persecution and killing of transgender people in KP and Peshawar in particular has increased significantly. In addition, KP strongly follows tribal traditions and there are honour killings. Transgender people generally have no family to avenge them and are therefore more easily killed. The police also do not pursue such cases because they do not consider transgender people to be worthy. The persecution of transgender people in KP only began around 15-20 years ago. Before that, they were part of society.

The film "Joyland" about transgender people was banned in Punjab (because the radical Barelvis of Therike-e Labbaik have some influence there¹⁸²), but it could be seen in Sindh and Islamabad.¹⁸³ According to the HRCP, the Jamat-e Islami is also strongly opposed to transgender people, believing that it is un-Islamic for someone to change their gender.¹⁸⁴ On 8 May 2018, the Pakistani National Assembly passed a very progressive law on the protection of the rights of transgender people (Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2018).

This provides for the legal recognition of transgender people and prohibits discrimination and harassment.¹⁸⁵ In 2023, the *Federal Sharia Court* (FSC) declared that certain sections of the Transgender Act - including those relating to gender identity and inheritance law - contradict Islamic law. The FSC is subordinate to the Constitutional Court and only has an advisory role. The transgender community then sent a petition to the Constitutional Court.¹⁸⁶

¹⁷⁶ UK Home Office: Country Policy and Information Note: Pakistan: Shia, Muslims, Version 3.0, July 2021

¹⁷⁷ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹⁷⁸ UK Home Office: Country Policy and Information Note: Pakistan: Shia, Muslims, Version 3.0, July 2021

¹⁷⁹ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹⁸⁰ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹⁸¹ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹⁸² Sushant Sareen, "Tehrik-E-Labbai Pakistan: The New Face of Barelvi Activism," ORF Occasional Paper No. 332, September 2021, Observer Research Foundation

¹⁸³ Hussain, Abid: Pakistan lifts ban on Joyland, film will be released nationally, in: Al Jazeera, 17 November 2022

¹⁸⁴ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹⁸⁵ South Asian Translaw Database: Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights), Act 2018

¹⁸⁶ Malik, Hasnaat: Trans community challenges Shariat court's decision in SC, in: the Express Tribune, 16 July 2023

5.5 Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM)

The *Pashtun Tahafuz Movement* (PTM, Movement for the Protection of Pashtuns) would undermine the idea of militant Pashtuns (as practised by the TTP, ISKP and the Afghan Taliban). However, the TTP is moving closer to the PTM by adopting the slogan "Pashtun Watan". However, the PTM is pursuing peaceful means in the spirit of the ideal of the "Frontier Ghandi" Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan¹⁸⁷, who, together with Mahatma Ghandi, peacefully resisted the British colonial rulers. He was a role model not only for the PTM, but for all peaceful Pashtuns, e.g. for the *Awami National Party* (ANP). The PTM was founded as a result of the Kharqamar massacre in KP in May 2019, when 13 PTM members were shot dead by the Pakistani army and around 25 others were injured.¹⁸⁸ Two members (Ali Wazir and Mohsin Dawar) of the PTM, who had been elected to the national parliament, were arrested.¹⁸⁹ In general, other Pashtun national parties such as the ANP and the Pakhtunkwa Party, as well as the Pakistani state itself, had not done enough for the Pashtuns in KP, especially in Waziristan. The leading members of the PTM had grown up as children in the anti-terror war in Waziristan. The PTM demands that no Taliban should be allowed to settle in KP and that the Pashtuns should be granted the same basic rights as all citizens of Pakistan. The PTM is a thorn in the side of the military, as they can no longer operate undisturbed in KP as before. However, many young people throughout Pakistan, not only Pashtuns, would support the PTM. The PTM is not against the state and believes in the constitution and the law.¹⁹⁰

5.6 Inmates in prisons

According to an FFM interviewee, prison conditions have never been a political priority in the country, even when high-ranking politicians have been imprisoned. In such cases, a complete barrack is made available to the person concerned and the prisoners housed there have to move to another barrack, which is then overcrowded. Overcrowding is the main problem. There is a capacity of around 37,000 places for prisoners in Pakistan's prisons in 2023, but a total of around 100,000 inmates. The numbers are constantly increasing. People were sleeping in the cells in shifts. The conviction rate in Pakistan is 4-5 per cent, with only 5 per cent of 100,000 prisoners being convicted. Everyone who is accused of a criminal offence is sent to prison. There are parole rules under which prisoners can be released, but these are not utilised. 150,000 cases are pending and there are no efficient judges and no monitoring of their work. Some judges have not passed judgements within four months. There are under 4,000 people on death row, mainly murderers, drug smugglers and very few convicted of blasphemy. No death sentences have been carried out since 2020.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ Britannica.com: Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Pashtun leader

¹⁸⁸ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹⁸⁹ Baio/Mojiz/Robin: A visual Investigation into the Kharqamar Incident, 26 May 2019

¹⁹⁰ Interview with high-ranking representatives of the HRCP, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹⁹¹ Interview with analysts from a local NGO, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

6. Other topics

6.1 Housing

A representative from IOM explained that the rental system depends on the region and the landlord. In rural areas, the landlords own the land they rent out. In some cases, landlords registered their tenants with the police. However, many landlords did not sign contracts in order to save on tax. In Islamabad, such procedures are more formalised than in other parts of the country.¹⁹² UNDP explained that housing contracts in the flood-hit areas are generally informal, which increases the risk of abuse and exploitation. In 46 of the 54 districts affected by the flood disaster, people were living in rented flats with informal contracts. The difficult housing situation has led to tensions between Afghan refugees and the local population. In some cases, Afghan refugees have been evicted from buildings because Pakistanis needed the space. As many men in Pakistan are employed abroad, their wives and children often live alone and are therefore more at risk of being harassed.¹⁹³

6.2 Document verification

The eGovernment in Pakistan is in part more developed than in Germany and official documents can be verified using QR codes. Nevertheless, the number of "genuine documents with false content" is very high, as the quality and prevention of corruption in the certifying bodies do not meet international standards. False information is often used to obtain a visa. Since 2005, for example, tens of thousands of Afghan nationals have acquired Pakistani identities. These were discovered, blocked and removed during NADRA data cleansing procedures. Once these people have left the country, Pakistan will not take them back as they are not citizens.¹⁹⁴ A cooperation lawyer from the German Embassy in Islamabad explained in a presentation that a Pakistani identity card (CNIC) can be verified domestically by sending an SMS to the Whatsapp number 7000.¹⁹⁵

6.3 Medical care

According to a local expert, medical care is very good in Pakistan. Medicines and generics are available cheaply. However, there are problems with shelf life, as medicine that is no longer used (e.g. medicine that has been in the sun) can be brought back to pharmacies and then resold.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² Interview with high-ranking representatives of IOM Pakistan at the FFM, Islamabad, 29 May 2023

¹⁹³ Interview with high-ranking representatives of UNDP Pakistan at the FFM, Islamabad, 31 May 2023

¹⁹⁴ Interview with a local expert at the FFM, Islamabad, 28 May 2023

¹⁹⁵ Lecture by a cooperation lawyer at the German Embassy as part of the FFM, Islamabad, 30 May 2023

¹⁹⁶ Interview with a local expert at the FFM, Islamabad, 28 May 2023

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8. Annex

Interview partner as part of the FFM in Islamabad from 28 May 2023 to 2 June 2023

Local expert, Islamabad on 28 May 2023

High-ranking representatives of the IOM, Islamabad on 29 May 2023

High-ranking representative of an international NGO, Islamabad on 29 May 2023

Secretary General Mr Khalique, Expert Mr Khan of HRCP, Islamabad on 29 May 2023

Analysts of a local NGO, Islamabad on 29 May 2023

Analyst of a local NGO, Islamabad on 30 May 2023

Cooperation lawyer of the German Embassy, Islamabad on 30 May 2023

Amina Khan, ISSI, Islamabad on 30 May 2023

High-level representatives of the UNDP, Islamabad on 31 May 2023

Mr Abdullah Khan and Mr Gul Dad, senior representatives of PICSS, Islamabad on 31 May 2023

Chris Kaye, World Food Programme, Islamabad on 1 June 2023

High-level representatives of UN Women, Islamabad on 1 June 2023

Local expert, Islamabad on 1 June 2023

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