

**Refugee Review Tribunal  
AUSTRALIA**

**RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE**

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**Questions**

- 1. Could you please provide me with general information regarding Mohajirs in Pakistan and whether they are ill-treated?**
- 2. Please provide any information regarding violence or civil war, between Pashtuns and Mohajirs in Karachi.**

**RESPONSE**

- 1. Could you please provide me with general information regarding Mohajirs in Pakistan and whether they are ill-treated?**

A UK Home Office report on Pakistan dated 16 April 2009 includes the following information on Mohajirs in Pakistan:

**MOHAJIRS**

**Background**

20.06 The Encarta Online Encyclopedia 2005 noted that:

“Mohajirs constitute about 8 percent of the population. They are Muslims who settled in Pakistan after the partition of British India in 1947. Unlike other cultural groups of Pakistan, they do not have a tribe-based cultural identity. They are the only people in the country for whom Urdu, the official language, is their native tongue. Mohajirs were the vanguard of the Pakistan Movement, which advocated the partition of British India in order to create the independent nation of Pakistan for Indian Muslims. After the partition, a large number of Muslims migrated from various urban centers of India to live in the new nation of Pakistan. These migrants later identified themselves

as mohajirs, meaning ‘refugees’ in both Urdu and Arabic. A large number of Mohajirs settled in the cities of Sind Province, particularly Karachi and Hyderābād. They were better educated than most indigenous Pakistanis and assumed positions of leadership in business, finance, and administration. Today they remain mostly urban.” [32a] (p2)

### **Formation of MQM**

20.07 Encarta also recorded that:

“Sindhis felt dispossessed by the preponderance of Mohajirs in the urban centers of Sind. With the emergence of a Sindhi middle class in the 1970s and adoption of Sindhi as a provincial language in 1972, tensions between Mohajirs and Sindhis began to mount. The 1973 constitution of Pakistan divided Sind into rural and urban districts, with the implication that the more numerous Sindhis would be better represented in government. Many Mohajirs felt that they were being denied opportunities and launched a movement to represent their interests. The movement, which evolved into the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) in the mid-1980s, called for official recognition of Mohajirs as a separate cultural group and advocated improved rights for Mohajirs. Although factional rivalries and violence within the MQM tarnished its image and shrunk its power base, the movement continues to be a potent force in urban centers of the province, particularly Karāchi. The MQM has contributed to a more defined Mohajir identity within the country.” [32a] (p2)

20.08 Europa World Online, accessed 12 February 2008, noted that the MQM was “Founded 1984 as Mohajir Qaumi Movement; name changed to Muttahida Qaumi Movement in 1997... represents the interests of Muslim, Urdu-speaking immigrants (from India) in Pakistan; seeks the designation of Mohajir as fifth nationality (after Sindhi, Punjabi, Pathan and Balochi); aims to abolish the prevailing feudal political system and to establish democracy.” [1] (Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM))

20.09 The SATP website section titled ‘Muttahida Quomi Mahaz, Terrorist Group of Pakistan’ undated, accessed 17 March 2008, noted:

“Originally formed as the Mohajir Quomi Movement (MQM), it is now split into two factions. The faction led by the founder Altaf Hussain was renamed Muttahida Quomi Mahaz and is commonly referred to as MQM (A). A breakaway faction, created in 1992, retains the original name Mohajir Quomi Movement - with the suffix Haqiqi which means real - and is commonly referred to as MQM (H). The two factions have been responsible for several incidents of urban terrorism even as the MQM (A) participates in Pakistan’s electoral process. After a series of strong measures taken by the State in 1998, the MQM (A) has largely reoriented itself into an exclusively political outfit.” [61d]

### **Recent events**

20.10 The USSD Report 2008 noted that:

“During the year, sources in the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) party, which has the strongest political influence in Karachi, accused Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) activists of killing 19 of its members, including a Karachi University student, in ongoing violence between the two parties over political control of the province. Fourteen of these MQM members died in ethnic violence on November 29 and 30. JI accused MQM of killing 13 JI activists.

“On April 9, rioting between MQM lawyers and other lawyers in Karachi left nine dead. Authorities found seven bodies in lawyers’ offices, and the mob torched 40 vehicles following attacks on former Minister Sher Afghan Niazi in Lahore the previous day.

“By year’s end, a trial in the Sindh High Court was in process for those arrested in connection with the deaths of more than 40 political activists from multiple parties during demonstrations planned to coincide with the May 2007 arrival of then suspended Chief Justice Chaudhry to Karachi. Many observers blamed the violence on the MQM party, a member of the ruling coalition that controlled the Sindh provincial government, since there were multiple reports that the government had ordered police not to deploy to demonstration areas. MQM officials denied responsibility for the violence, claiming 18 of the deaths were MQM members. Authorities later accused MQM of organizing demonstrations to disrupt the trial.” [2k] (Section 1a)

20.11 The USSD Report 2008 also recorded that:

“On some university campuses in Karachi, armed groups of students, most commonly associated with the All Pakistan Mutahidda Students Organization (affiliated with the MQM) and the Islami Jamiat Talaba (affiliated with the JI), clashed with and intimidated other students, instructors, and administrators over issues such as language, syllabus content, examination policies, grades, doctrines, and dress. These groups frequently facilitated cheating on examinations, interfered with the hiring of staff, influenced admissions to the universities, and sometimes influenced the use of institutional funds. Such influence generally was achieved through a combination of protest rallies, control of the campus media, and threats of mass violence. In response, university authorities banned political activity on many campuses, but with limited effect” (UK Home Office 2009, *Country of Origin Information Report: Pakistan*, 16 April, Paragraphs 20.06-20.11 – Attachment 1).

A Minority Rights Group International listing that identifies “those groups or peoples around the world most at risk of genocide, mass killing or other systematic violent repression” indicates that “minorities in Pakistan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Yemen are all assessed as under greater danger than a year ago, their governments’ involvement in regional conflicts compounding the risk of repression at home.” Mohhajirs were listed as one of the groups in Pakistan (Lattimer, M. 2009, ‘Peoples Under Threat 2009’, Minority Rights Group International, July <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,,PAK,,4a97ce992,0.html> – Accessed 18 September 2009 – Attachment 2).

A *Reuters News* article dated 8 June 2009 refers to at least 26 people being killed in violence in Karachi “between Karachi’s dominant political force, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), and a breakaway faction known as the Mohajir Qaumi Movement, or Haqiqi group, as they vie for influence” (Aziz, F. 2009, ‘Political killings rock Pakistan’s Karachi’, *Reuters News*, 8 June – Attachment 3).

An RRT research response dated 20 February 2008 provides background information on the Mohajir in Pakistan, including information on Mohajir identity and the development of the Mohajir Quami Mahaz (MQM), subsequently renamed the Muttahida Quami Mahaz (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response PAK32916*, 20 February, (Question 1) – Attachment 4). The research response refers to an earlier research response dated 18 March 1998 which also includes information on Mohajir identity in Pakistan (RRT Country Research 1998, *Research Response PAK12874*, 18 March, (Question 1) – Attachment 5).

An assessment for the Mohajirs in Pakistan current at 31 December 2006 on the Minorities at Risk website indicates that “Mohajirs risk for rebellion is moderate, as several risk factors are present. Mohajirs have a history of persistent protest, high levels of group cohesion and a history of repression by the government.” The report also indicates that:

Even though there were no acts of violent rebellion from 2001 to 2006, Mohajirs, as represented by MQM activists, are unlikely to completely abandon sporadic violence in the near future, although their concentration in urban areas with a high concentration of police somewhat militates against escalation of violence beyond a certain point. Mohajirs are highly mobilized, despite factionalization, in the Sindhi province’s urban center of Karachi.

... Yet, perhaps one of the greatest risks to Mohajir well-being is continued in-fighting among the different factions of MQM, though this has declined in recent years. Intracommunal violence has arguably cost more Mohajir lives than Mohajir-government or Mohajir-Sindhi clashes. While prior to 2001 inter-communal fighting between Mohajirs and Sindhis was a significant problem, these two ethnic groups have since been able to build a political alliance, reducing tension. However, clashes between Mohajirs and Islamists have been a problem in recent years. Overall, though, the lasting basis for mutual accommodation with the government, with other ethnic groups, or between Mohajir factions, lies in developing the country’s capacity to satisfy the claims and counterclaims of deprivation, both political and socio-economic. Pakistan’s continued democratization and economic growth seems to be the only possible long-term answer (Minorities at Risk Project 2006, ‘Assessment for Mohajirs in Pakistan’, Minorities at Risk website, 31 December <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=77007> – Accessed 18 September 2009 – Attachment 6).

A report on the Sindhis and Mohajirs in Pakistan by the Minority Rights Group International includes historical information and a profile of the Mohajirs in Pakistan (Minority Rights Group International (undated), ‘World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples – Pakistan – Sindhis and Mohajirs’, Minority Rights Group International website <http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=5619&tmpl=printpage> – Accessed 18 September 2009 – Attachment 7).

An RRT research response dated 17 November 2006 provides information on the situation of Mohajirs and for members of the MQM in Pakistan at that time (RRT Country Research 2006, *Research Response PAK30819*, 17 November – Attachment 8).

## **2. Please provide any information regarding violence or civil war, between Pashtuns and Mohajirs in Karachi.**

An article in a United Arab Emirates newspaper *The National* dated 24 August 2009 refers to the Pashtun community in Karachi having “been engaged in intermittent urban warfare in Karachi with Mohajir hardliners for almost 25 years.” According to the article:

Tensions between the two communities first flared in April 1985, after the death of a Mohajir college student, Bushra Zaidi, in a road accident involving a bus driven by a Pashtun.

About 400 people died in subsequent mob attacks, ambushes and bombings that plagued the city for the next two years, with the fledgling MQM rising from the ashes as the most potent of Karachi’s political parties.

In the years since, various federal administrations have tried and failed to bludgeon the MQM into submission. An estimated 18,000 activists and innocents were killed in an army clampdown between 1992 and 1996, prompting the MQM leader, Altaf Hussain, to flee into exile in the United Kingdom, where he still lives.

The Pashtun ethnicity of Naseerullah Baber, a retired army general who oversaw the most brutal phase of the operation as minister for the interior, was exploited by the MQM to paint the operation as a race-driven pogrom.

The sense of victimisation that followed the army operation convinced many Mohajir that the MQM was their only political recourse, and that unshakeable voter support has ensured the party enough parliamentary seats to make it an important player in any national government building exercise.

However, the experience of being a key partner in two successive ruling coalitions over the past seven years has failed to soften its position towards the Karachi Pashtun and the Awami National Party, the political party they tend to vote for.

Relations between MQM and ANP have deteriorated markedly since May 12, 2007, when armed gangs opened fire on anti-government protesters, sparking a day of carnage in which 56 people were killed.

Analysts said the large number of Pashtun killed that day had sparked a vengeful shift in the community's mood, snatching political leadership away from the gentle ageing left-wing ideologues of the ANP and placing it into the hands of local leaders involved in Karachi's transport and construction businesses, both notorious for their links to organised crime.

"The new leadership are toughs, not socialists committed to politics of non-violence, and that hardly augurs well for Karachi," said Amir Zia, the director of news at Samaa TV.

Although otherwise undesirable, characters like Shahi Syed, the new Sindh provincial chief of the ANP, have proven effective in Karachi's polarised politics by forming alliances with other Pashtun parties and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) of Asif Ali Zardari, the president, to secure two seats in the Sindh assembly in general elections in February 2008.

The PPP won an outright majority in the province but, sensing the growing angst between the Mohajir and Pashtun, Mr Zardari wooed the MQM and ANP into a coalition arrangement, in both the Sindh and federal governments.

Rather than acknowledge the symbiotic nature of the coalition, the break-up of which could see all three parties lose their grip on the national government, hardliners in the MQM and ANP have over the past nine months pushed tensions in Karachi dangerously close to a boiling point, with tit-for-tat killings that have claimed more than 150 lives ('In a city of ethnic friction, more tinder' 2009, *The National*, 24 August <http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090825/FOREIGN/708249931/1394> - Accessed 18 September 2009 – Attachment 9).

Question 4 of an RRT research response dated 17 July 2009, which looks at whether Pashtuns who have fled Khyber based militants have been tracked down in Karachi, indicates that sources differ over the amount of credence given to claims of an increasing Taliban presence in Karachi. Some sources refer to claims that the MQM party was attempting to gain political support from Karachi's Urdu speaking population, also known as Mohajirs, through a scare campaign against the city's Pashtun migrant population. The research response refers to reports that communal tensions in Karachi have increased with the influx of large numbers of

Pashtuns who have fled fighting in their home districts in the north-west of Pakistan, and to reports of recent outbreaks of communal violence in December 2008 and April 2009 (RRT Research & Information 2009, *Research Response PAK35109*, 17 July – Attachment 10). Articles referred to in the research response in relation to the violence in December 2008 include a *BBC News* article dated 28 December 2008, which indicates that:

Life in the southern Pakistani city of Karachi is returning to normal following three days of violence which killed at least 35 people, police say.

...The violence erupted after months of tension between the Awami National Party (ANP) and the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM).

The ANP mostly represents Pashtun migrants from the north-west and from Afghanistan, while the MQM represents Urdu-speaking people.

...Witnesses said that on Monday gunmen riding in cars or on motorbikes indiscriminately targeted motorists and pedestrians in different parts of the city.

In some areas, there were arson attacks in which houses and businesses belonging to rival communities were targeted.

Karachi, a city of over 15 million, contains a sizeable number of Urdu-speaking Muslim people who migrated to Pakistan after the partition of India in 1947.

It also has a large Pashtun population, which has grown further since last year when tens of thousands were displaced by the military operation in the country's north-western tribal areas and ended up in Karachi.

The MQM leadership has been publicly airing fears of Taleban infiltration of the growing community.

The Taleban in Afghanistan as well as Pakistan are predominantly Pashtun.

The ANP has criticised the MQM statements, calling them a conspiracy against Karachi's Pashtuns.

Over the last couple of weeks, dozens of tea stalls and timber shops owned by Pashtuns in MQM-dominated areas were forced to close down by activists believed to be MQM workers, police sources said.

...Attacks in different areas on public transport vehicles, mostly owned by Pashtuns, also added to the communal tension, they said.

The violence began on Saturday following the killing of a Pashtun tea-stall owner in an MQM-dominated neighbourhood in the north of the city, the police said.

The Pashtuns, mostly ANP supporters, shut down most of the overland entry and exit points to Karachi, which they control.

The three main parties – the MQM, the ANP and the Pakistan People's Party of President Asif Ali Zardari – have all joined together in a bid to reduce tension.

But their call has largely gone unheeded, officials and witnesses said ('Tense Karachi returns to normal' 2008, *BBC News*, 2 December [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/7759980.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7759980.stm) – Accessed 18 June 2009 – Attachment 11).

A transcript of a broadcast on the *ABC Radio Australia – Connect Asia* programme on 3 December 2008 refers to Karachi being “engulfed in riots in recent days, resulting in at least 35 deaths. Last night police arrested more than 20 people, mostly Afghan refugees, on suspicion of involvement in the violence.” The transcript includes the following information:

*Presenter: Sonia Randhawa*

*Dr Christopher Sneddon, Pakistan watcher from Australia’s Deakin University; Jamil Yusuf, founder of the Citizen Police Liason Committee for the restoration of law and order in Karachi; Senator Babar Khan Ghouri of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement*

...SONIA RANDHAWA: Pakistan’s largest city and financial capital Karachi descended into violent clashes at the weekend, with running battles between the city’s majority Urdu speakers and minority Pashtuns, a significant proportion of whom are from Afghanistan. Going back to Afghanistan’s war with the former Soviet Union, Karachi has attracted thousands of Afghan refugees. Many Pashtuns – both those born in Karachi and those from outside – work in the transport industry, and it’s believed the recent riots erupted after a lethal road altercation between Pashtun and Urdu speakers. But Pakistan analyst Dr Christopher Sneddon from Deakin University in Australia says there are deeper causes.

DR CHRISTOPHER SNEDDON: Karachi is the largest Pashtun speaking city in the world, even though the capital of the Pashtuns is really Oshawa. A lot of both Afghans and people from the frontier have moved to Karachi to work. And Karachi, in a sense, is a microcosm of Pakistan, it’s got large numbers of ethnic people from each of the four provinces, plus these Muhajirs, these refugees and their descendents from India, who came across in 1947 who speak Urdu. And the Pashtuns are significant because they control the transport, the Muhajirs are significant because they control a lot the politics and some of the finance, and there’s a bit of power struggle between them. The other issue is, that some of the people in Karachi are saying that the city is being “Talibanised” by these Pashtuns who bring in their religious ideology as well. And they feel that they need now to defend themselves against the Taliban.

SONIA RANDHAWA: Karachi is the capital of Sindh province, which is governed by the Muttahida Qaumi Movement. It represents Urdu speakers, and blames the violence of recent days on increasing crime by the Pashtun minority. According to local media, MQM officials have also claimed there are links between Pashtuns and the Taliban, and the instigators of the weekend riots came to Karachi from the Afghan border. Senator Babar Khan Ghauri of the MQM.

BABAR KHAN GHOURI: The forces that are involved in these attacks are those who are doing the similar attacks in Afghanistan, in the North West Frontier Province and in northern areas of the country. Now the same forces are active in Karachi. This peoples’ power would fight against them and will not be afraid of them. Pakistan will not be weakened, and we will not allow our city to be weakened either. I appeal to all people to keep an eye on miscreants.

SONIA RANDHAWA: But the Awami National Party, which represents Pashtuns, argues the MQM is ignoring growing repression and victimisation of Karachi’s Pashtun community. Jamil Yusuf is the founder of the Citizen Police Liaison Committee for the restoration of law and order in Karachi. He says the Urdu community might be looking to convince the provincial government to send all Karachi’s Pashtun speakers to Afghanistan but says it’s an untenable proposition.

JAMIL YUSUF: I'm not talking of repatriation of the Pashtuns. They have all the right to live in Karachi. They are the citizens of this country, they have a right. We need to straighten out the transport system, which ignites – you've got to go to the root cause of this thing. It does not take much for residents. Those coming later on from the northern areas, they go on opening encroachments. They open tea shops, they encroach on the properties of the residents or the locals, or the government land and all that.

SONIA RANDHAWA: Mr Yusuf says he wants the Sindh government to seek a viable local solution to the Pashtun-Urdu conflict.

JAMIL YUSUF: This situation concerns enough for the provincial government to handle. And I think the Chief Minister and MQM and AMP, which is a part of the coalition government, a strong group, and they've got some very important ministries, like the labour ministry, which all the industry – there are a lot of Pashtuns working in that. They need to do a really good civil, brainstorming thing and resolve this issue on a very local level ('Arrests in Pakistan following Karachi riots – Sonia Randhawa interviews Dr Christopher Sneddon, Jamil Yusuf, and Babar Khan Ghouri' 2008, *ABC Radio Australia – Connect Asia*, 3 December <http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/connectasia/stories/200812/s2436381.htm> – Accessed 18 June 2009 – Attachment 12).

In relation to the violence in April 2009, sources referred to in *Research Response PAK35109* include an article in *The Guardian* dated 30 April 2009. According to the article:

Paramilitary soldiers patrolled the tense streets of Karachi, Pakistan's largest city, this morning after 29 people were killed yesterday in a spate of gun attacks driven by ethnic tensions.

Schools were closed and political parties held crisis talks as authorities braced for possible further violence in the port city, which suffers sporadic outbreaks of unrest between ethnic mohajirs and Pashtuns. Worries focused on funerals in the city's sprawling, poverty-stricken northern suburbs.

... The Karachi violence is the latest manifestation of decades-old power politics in the city of over 16 million people, which has become a microcosm of Pakistan's ethnic, regional and social fissures.

It started yesterday when two supporters of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), which represents ethnic Mohajirs, were shot in a northern suburb. The killings triggered a slew of reprisal shootings of ethnic Pashtuns, mostly in teeming slum areas.

Mohajirs are the Urdu-speaking descendants of families that migrated from India at independence in 1947. They have a long history of rivalry with Pashtuns, mostly migrant workers from the north-west who work as labourers or control public bus networks.

By some estimates, 4 million Pashtuns live in Karachi – more than in Peshawar, the capital of the North West Frontier province.

A senior police official said the bloodshed was partly linked to tensions over the anniversary on 12 May of the riots and shootings that rocked the city in 2007, leaving dozens dead. The Awami National party, which represents Pashtuns, wants to mark the day with city-wide demonstrations. The MQM does not. "There is a lot of fear about the rallies," one officer said.

Another factor is the Taliban violence in the North West Frontier province. The MQM leader, Altaf Hussain, who lives in exile in London, has become a loud critic of the Taliban and warned of possible “Talibanisation” in Karachi. This stance has won the MQM praise from secularists but aggravated relations with Karachi’s Pashtun population, which considers the anti-Taliban campaign as an excuse to undermine them (Walsh, D. 2009, ‘Spate of shootings kill 29 in Karachi’, *The Guardian*, 30 April <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/apr/30/karachi-shootings-pakistan/print> – Accessed 18 June 2009 – Attachment 13).

A *BBC News* article dated 30 April 2009 refers to a Karachi police surgeon saying that 32 people had been listed as killed and 50 injured during the previous day’s violence in Karachi. It is stated in the article that:

About 25 people have been arrested in connection with Wednesday’s shootings.

...Karachi has a history of ethnic violence.

It is dominated by Urdu-speakers, but there is also a growing population of ethnic Pashtuns.

Officials said Wednesday’s fighting was between members of the two groups, and started after an unidentified man opened fire, killing three members of the Urdu-speaking Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM).

Most of the dead in the violence were Pashtuns.

Police said 16 cars, 20 shops and eight hotels were set on fire on Wednesday (‘Karachi tense after fatal clashes’ 2009, *BBC News*, 30 April [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/8026215.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8026215.stm) – Accessed 18 June 2009 – Attachment 14).

According to an article by Anatol Lieven, a professor in the War Studies Department of King’s College London, in *The Times* dated 5 May 2009:

The vast majority of Karachi’s Pashtuns support the Awami National Party (ANP), the moderate secular nationalist party now ruling in the North West Frontier Province. However, a small degree of Taleban infiltration has helped to reignite simmering tensions between the Pashtuns and the Mohajir majority, made up of people whose families migrated from India at the time of independence, who are represented by the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) party.

In clashes between the MQM and Pashtuns last week 32 people were killed - the great majority of them Pashtuns. The city fears that a return of inter-ethnic rivalry could cause great economic disruption and tie down yet more Pakistani soldiers who are desperately needed to fight the Taleban in the north (Lieven, A. 2009, ‘Mistrust of the West is stronger in Pakistan than fear of the Taleban’, *The Times*, 5 May [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest\\_contributors/article6221874.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest_contributors/article6221874.ece) – Accessed 18 June 2009 – Attachment 15).

Question 3 of an RRT research response dated 7 July 2009 looks at the situation of Karachi’s Pashtun community and includes information on the communal violence in Karachi in November 2008 and April 2009, and the tensions between the ANP and MQM in Karachi (RRT Research & Information 2009, *Research Response PAK34545*, 7 July – Attachment 16).

A further RRT research response dated 18 June 2009 sets out a record of conversation between the research service and Dr Aneela Babar, a Research Fellow at the Monash Asia Institute, which includes information on Pashtuns in Karachi. Dr Babar comments on the context of the violence in Karachi in November 2008 and April 2009 (RRT Research & Information 2009, *Research Response PAK35068*, 18 June – Attachment 17).

An article dated 30 April 2009 looks at the differing views on the reasons for the outbreak of violence between Mohajirs and Pashtuns in Karachi in April 2009 (Yusuf, H. 2009, 'The Karachi question: Ethnicity or extremism?', *Dawn News Group*, 30 April – Attachment 18).

The section on Pakistan in a Minority Rights Group International 2008 report on world minorities indicates that Pakistan's Human Rights Commission had "accused the government, the Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM) and provincial government" of being responsible for violence in Karachi in May 2007, in which "[m]uch of the fighting reportedly took place between the MQM, which the Commission accused of supporting the government, and ethnic Pashtuns." It is stated in the report that:

Ethnic tensions rose as political turmoil gripped the country through most of 2007. The sacking of the Chief Justice by President Musharraf led to weeks of violent street protests. The protests culminated in two days of carnage in the city of Karachi in May, when more than 30 people were killed and over 150 injured. Pakistan's Human Rights Commission (HRC), in a statement issued soon after the incident, accused the government, the Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM) and provincial government for being responsible for the violence. Much of the fighting reportedly took place between the MQM, which the Commission accused of supporting the government, and ethnic Pashtuns. 'The events in Karachi indicate that the government, in collusion with the MQM wants to return Karachi to a state of ethnic hostilities,' the HRC said in a statement (Minority Rights Group International 2008, *State of the World's Minorities 2008: Events of 2007*, February, p. 115 – Attachment 19).

A *BBC News* article dated 28 August 2007 refers to "[t]he independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan" saying that "[t]he authorities in the Pakistani province of Sindh incited political violence which killed 41 people in Karachi in May". The "ruling MQM party" in Sindh, which backed President Musharraf, denied "inciting violence to prevent the then suspended chief justice from visiting Karachi." Asma Jahangir, the head of the human rights commission, said the report did "not target any political party, and says the government is responsible" (Hasan, S.S. 2007, 'Party rejects Karachi riot report', *BBC News*, 28 August [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/6967556.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6967556.stm) - Accessed 18 September 2009 – Attachment 20).

An article in *The Observer* dated 20 May 2007 indicates that in the previous week, "47 died and hundreds were injured" in "political and inter-communal violence" in Karachi. According to the article:

The recent violence was sparked by the visit of Pakistan's chief justice to Karachi. The judge is a critic of Musharraf who, since being suspended in March for alleged abuse of privilege, has become the focus of an opposition campaign. The agitation is led by the legal profession...

Accused of starting the fighting last week are the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM), a controversial party with a reputation for violence that claims to speak for Karachi's majority Mohajir population and are said to have attacked supporters of the chief justice.

... This weekend the MQM launched a charm offensive to rebut charges that it provoked the fighting to crush the opposition movement and to prove its hold on Karachi. Haider Abbas Rizvi, an MQM MP, said its activists had been peacefully demonstrating when they were fired on by political opponents, the Pakistan People's party and the Pashtuns. 'I was there with my grandmother and child,' he said. 'The idea that we started shooting is ridiculous. Fifteen of our side were killed.'

Yet this version of events is, to say the least, contested. Benazir Bhutto said her PPP activists were 'ambushed with high-power weapons' and Shahi Syed, the Pashtuns' leader, said the MQM were 'terrorists. . . 99 per cent of Mohajirs in this city want peace, but 1 per cent do not at any cost...' (Burke, J. 2007, 'Pakistan bloodshed opens new fault lines: Religious and ethnic divisions, poverty, power cuts and typhoid: all this in a city of 14 million, enduring 40 degree heat', *The Observer*, 20 May – Attachment 21).

An earlier paper provides historical information on conflict between Mohajir and Pashtun communities in Karachi (Gayer, L. 2003, 'A divided city: "Ethnic" and "religious" conflicts in Karachi, Pakistan', Centre D'études et de Recherches Internationales website, May <http://www.ceri-sciencespo.com/archive/mai03/artlg.pdf> – Accessed 16 May 2007 – Attachment 22).

## List of Sources Consulted

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UK Home Office <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

US Department of State <http://www.state.gov/>

### United Nations (UN)

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Refworld

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/tehis/vtx/refworld/rwmain>

### Non-Government Organisations

Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/>

Amnesty International <http://www.amnesty.org>

Minorities at Risk <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/>

Minority Rights Group International <http://www.minorityrights.org/>

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### Region Specific Links

### Search Engines

Copernic <http://www.copernic.com/>

### Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIAC Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Research & Information database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

MRT-RRT Library Catalogue

## List of Attachments

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