

# REPORT



## Islamabad Policy Institute

*Supporting Dialogue for Peace & Development*

# Security Report 2019

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# **Security Report 2019**

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## SUMMARY

The number and lethality of terrorist incidents decreased further during 2019 as Pakistan continued its march towards peace and stability. However, challenges to achieving sustainable peace persisted during the year. According to a study on the security situation in the country during 2019, a total of 230 terrorism incidents were reported from across the country in which 318 people lost their lives, while another 720 were wounded.

The statistics for 2019 show a decline in number of terrorist attacks by nearly 13% as compared to 2018 when 262 attacks took place. Similarly the fatalities and the number of wounded in terrorist attacks went down by 46% and 30% respectively over the previous year. A breakdown of the fatalities reveals that almost an equal number of civilians and security forces/LEAs personnel lost their lives to terrorist attacks – 160 civilians and 158 personnel of security forces/LEAs.

Only four suicide attacks occurred during the year –Loralai (January 29), Quetta (April 12), Lahore (May 8), and Dera Ismail Khan (July 21). Two of these attacks that took place in Loralai and DI Khan were claimed by the outlawed Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, while one each in Quetta and Lahore were claimed by ISIS/LeJ nexus and HizbulAhrar. Although terrorist groups still consider suicide bombing as the most lethal and effective weapon for causing intimidation, lesser frequency of attacks show that counter-terrorism operations have made it difficult for the terrorist groups to carry out large scale attacks. This is believed to be a major reason behind the 36% reduction in the overall casualty figure for terrorism incidents in a year including both dead and injured. Last year 11 suicide attacks were reported. Improvised Explosive Devices and firing with weapons was the most common mode of attack adopted by the terrorists in 2019.

Continuing with previous trends, most of the terrorism incidents occurred in Khyber-Pakhtoonkhwa and Balochistan provinces, which suffered 124 and 84 attacks respectively. Meanwhile, Sindh faced 15 attacks and Punjab 06. As per the trend recorded during the year, Balochistan saw a 26% decline in incidence of terrorist attacks as compared to the preceding year, whereas in KP and Punjab the prevalence remained almost the same with slight variation. Worryingly, Sindh witnessed a marginally increasing trend of terrorism incidence this year. Islamabad, meanwhile, remained the safest place with just one incident.

A total of 130 attacks perpetrated by religiously motivated groups Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), HizbulAhrar, JamatulAhrar, Local Taliban factions, ISIS and affiliated organizations made up 56% of the total incidents. Meanwhile, nationalist insurgent groups, including Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Bloch Republic Army (BRA), Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), Lashkar-e-Balochistan, Baloch RajiAajoiSangar (BRAS), and Sindhudesh Liberation Front Army (SDLF/SDLA) claimed 62 attacks accounting for 27 percent of total terrorist strikes. Sectarian related incidents made up for almost 6.4 % of the total attacks. Origin of twenty-six incidents was not known.

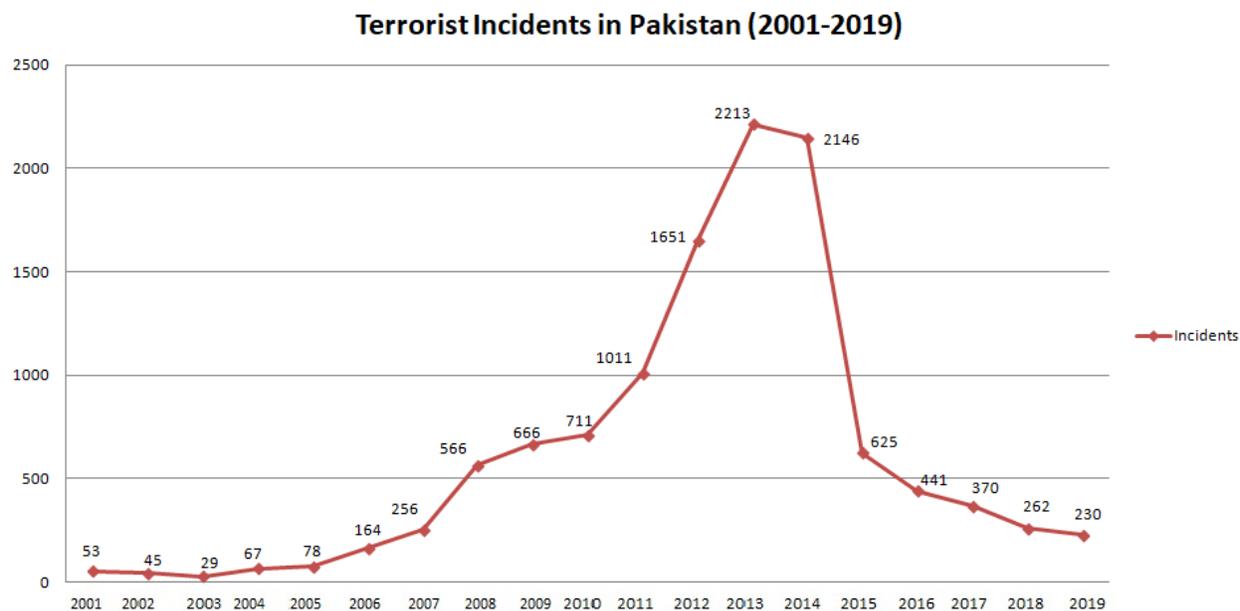
## 1. Terrorism Trends in 2019

Year 2019 witnessed a decrease of almost 13% in the number of terrorist attacks in Pakistan. A total of 230 terrorism related incidents were recorded between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2019, at a monthly average of almost 19 attacks per month. In comparison, the total number of terrorist attacks during 2018 was 262. Life losses, meanwhile, decreased at a greater rate by 46% as 318 people lost their lives in 2019. The number of injured, moreover, dropped by almost 30% in 2018 to 720 in the year 2019.

The geographical distribution of incidents indicates that most of the terrorist attacks occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan in 2019. A total of 124 terrorist attacks occurred in KP during 2019. The province had suffered 125 terrorist attacks in 2018. Balochistan with 84 strikes had the second-highest number of terrorist attacks, which was a 26% decrease as compared to 2018.

Terrorists and militants used various tactics in attacks against military personnel, civilians, and public, including Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), suicide bombing, firing, Hand Grenade, Gun and bombs and Rockets. IED and firing were more common modes of attacks used by the terrorists during the last 12 months.

The terrorist attacks in Pakistan suddenly increased in 2005 and kept growing until 2013 despite the various military operations launched during that period. The government then initiated military operation “Zarb-e-Azb” in 2013 against terrorist groups in North Waziristan accompanied by Intelligence Based and Combing Operations across the country to break the support and communication networks of terrorists. Following the culmination of Operation Zarb-e-Azb, Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad was launched in 2016 to consolidate the gains in the fight against terrorism and elimination of the “latent and residual” threat.



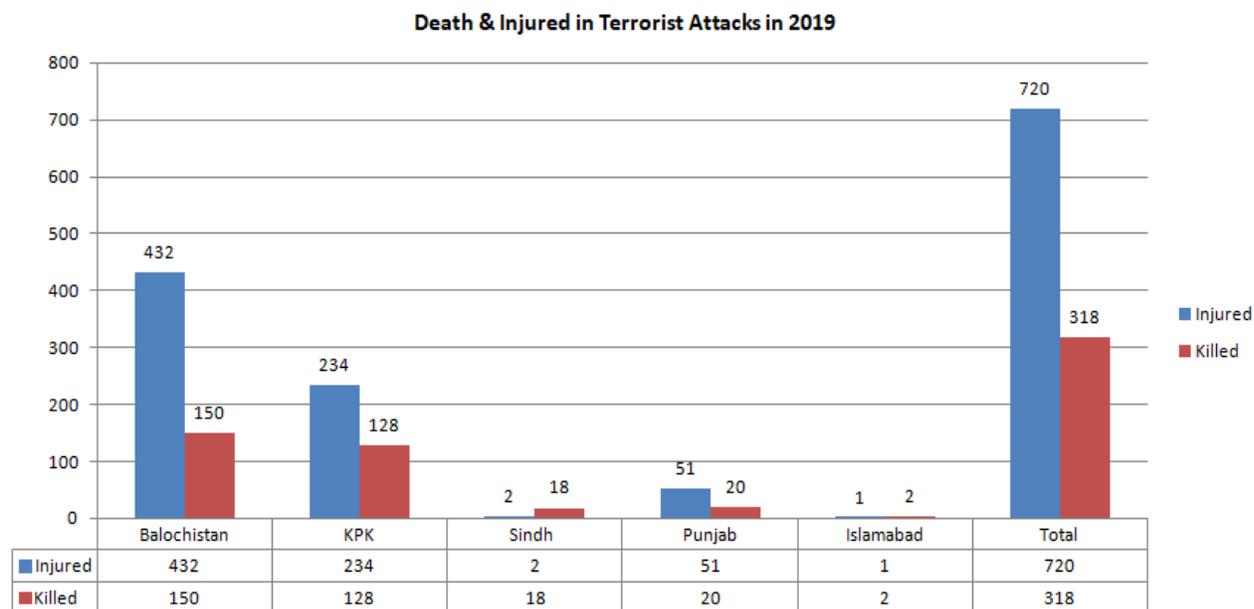
**Figure 1: Number of Terrorist Incidents in Pakistan (2001-2019)**

*Source: Global Terrorism Data Base*

Religiously motivated extremism, sectarianism, sub-nationalism, and sub-conventional warfare imposed by hostile neighbors are the major causes of terrorism in Pakistan. Prolonged instability in Afghanistan has also made Pakistan more exposed to turmoil. According to analysts, tribalism, feudalism, weak governance, corruption and poor socioeconomic conditions have also contributed to the worsening of the security situation in the country.

## 2. Casualties of Civilian and Military Personnel: January-December 2019

Terrorist attacks during 2019 resulted in 1038 casualties (both deaths and injuries). Most of the deaths and injuries occurred as a result of firing and IED attacks. The year recorded a 46% decrease in deaths in terrorist attacks, as 318 people lost their life, and almost 30% decrease in the number of those wounded with 720 people suffering varying degrees of injuries as compared to 2018 when 595 people lost their lives and 1030 were injured.



**Figure 2: Casualties in Terrorist attacks: January-December 2019**

Source: South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) & Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS)

In 2019, a total of 158 security personnel, including Frontier Corps (FC), Army, levies, police, paramilitary forces, and Rangers, were martyred in various incidents and another 201 were wounded. In 2018, 222 military personnel were martyred in terrorist attacks in the country. The fatality rate for security forces in terrorist attacks decreased by almost 29% in 2019 as compared to 2018.

The following summary describes these security forces casualties due to terrorism in 2019 in various regions of Pakistan:

- In Balochistan, 56 members of law enforcement agencies (military, levies, and policemen) were martyred and another 86 were injured in terrorist attacks by nationalist insurgents/ militants.
- From January to December 2019, the highest numbers of military fatalities were reported from KP including the merged erstwhile federally administered tribal areas. LEAs suffered 193 casualties in KP (85 deaths and 108 injured) in terrorist attacks by nationalist insurgents and militants.

<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>Military Casualties: January-December 2019</b>			
<b>Region</b>	<b>Killed</b>	<b>Injured</b>	<b>Total Casualties</b>
Balochistan	56	86	142
KP	85	108	193
Sindh	05	00	05
Punjab	10	06	16
Islamabad	02	01	03
<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>359</b>

Source: National & Local Newspapers, SATP, PIPS

- In Sindh, there were 05 fatalities resulting from sectarian clashes, and terrorist attacks by nationalist insurgents and militants.
- During the year 2019, 06 incidents of terrorism and militant attacks resulted in 16 LEAs casualties (10 deaths and 6 injured) in Punjab.
- Federal capital was the least affected region of the country in terms of terrorism-related casualties with deaths of 2 security personnel and 1 injury.

Meanwhile, 679 civilian casualties (160 deaths and 519 injured) were recorded in 2019. Civilian fatalities decreased by 56% in the countrywide statistics from 369 in 2018 to 160 in 2019.

*Summary of civilian's casualties caused by indiscriminate violence by terrorist/militants during 2019 in various regions of Pakistan is given below:*

- Balochistan remained the most affected region of violence in term of civilian casualties, which recorded 440 casualties (94 deaths and 346 injured).
- KP recorded the second-highest number of civilian casualties- 169 in total (43 deaths and 126 injured).
- Punjab experienced 55 civilian casualties (10 deaths and 45 injured) in 10 terrorist attacks by militants.
- In Sindh, civilian the casualty tally was 15 with 13 fatalities and 02 injuries.
- In Federal Capital Islamabad no civilian casualty was recorded from January to December 2019.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Killed</b>	<b>Injured</b>	<b>Total Casualties</b>
Balochistan	94	346	440
KP	43	126	169
Sindh	13	02	15
Punjab	10	45	55
Islamabad	00	00	00
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>679</b>

*Source: National & Local Newspapers, SATP, PIPS*

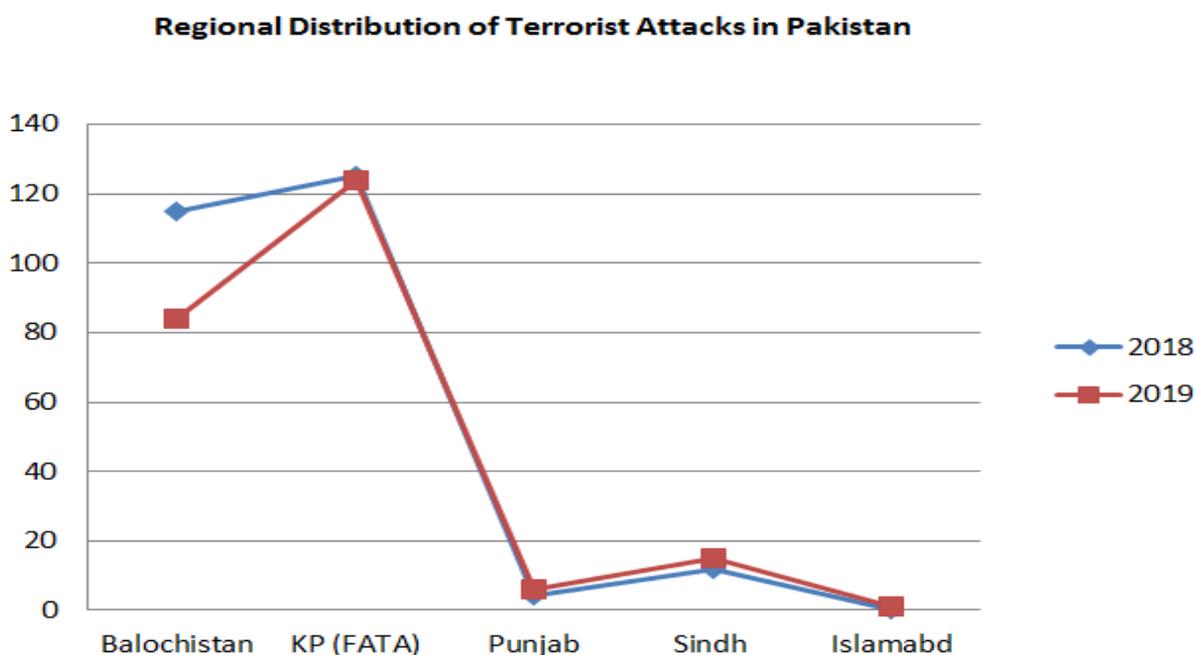
The casualty figures from terrorism incidents lead us to the following conclusions:

First, total casualties in 2019 have decreased by 46% as compared to 2018; second, KP and Balochistan remained the most affected regions; and thirdly, the militants targeted civilians for normative and strategic objectives.

### 3. Regional Division of Terrorist Attacks in Pakistan

Data for terrorist incidents in Pakistan from 2001 to 2019 shows that KP province has been the worst hit region suffering a total of 4107 incidents of violence in the past 19 years, with Balochistan at thesecondspot with 3097attacks. Sindh, meanwhile, suffered 1817 attacks. Compared to the other three provinces, Punjab has remained the least affected province where terrorists struck 434times. Therefore, time and geographical distribution of the overall terrorist attacks indicates that KP and Balochistan have remained the most affected regions of the country. According to the Global Terrorism index, militants and terrorist activities in various regions of Pakistan were below the 100 till 2005; later in 2006, terror incidents suddenly surged in KP and Balochistan. Between 2008 and 2013 all provinces suffered a high number of terrorist attacks.

Although the situation has significantly improved, but remains consistent with previous trends of terrorist attacks in terms of numbers, KP in 2019 suffered most with 124 incidents of terror, a figure almost similar to the 2018 tally (125 incidents) from the province. Balochistan, meanwhile, recorded 84 incidents, which marks a decreaseof 26% as compared to 2018.



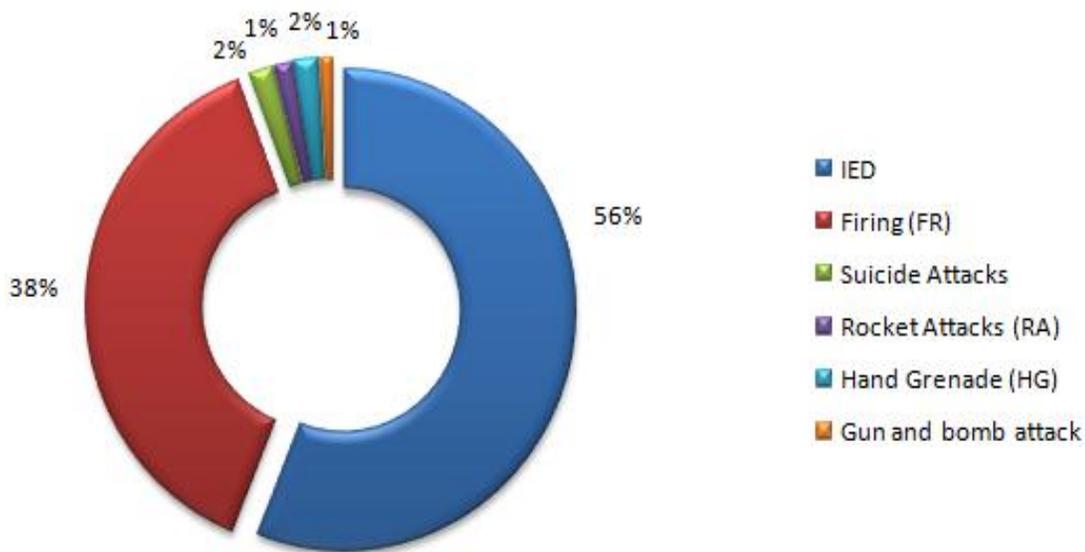
**Figure 3: Number of Incidents in Provinces (2018-2019)**

Source: National & Local Newspapers, SATP, PIPS

Quetta remained the flashpoint in the region and experienced 24 attacks by various militants, national insurgents, and sectarian groups. Punjab again remained the least affected province in 2019 with 06 incidents, but witnessed an upwards trend as compared to 2018, when only 04 incidents were reported from the province. During 2019, 15 attacks of terrorism were reported from Sindh, an increase of 20 percent when compared to the same period in 2018.

#### 4. Tactics & Nature of Terrorist attacks in 2019

There has been an 11 percent decrease in the number of terrorist attacks reported in 2019 as compared to 2018. A total of 318 civilians and security forces fatalities resulted from Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attacks, Suicide Attacks, Firing, Hand Grenade, Rocket Attacks and Gun and bomb attacks.



**Figure 4: Tactics & Methods used in Terrorist Attacks: January-December 2019**

Source: National & Local Newspapers SATP, PIPS

Data show that 58% of the terrorist attacks were carried out by militants, mainly Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and nationalist insurgents using Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) as the primary tactic to target civilians and security forces personnel. Firing remained the second leading tactic or method of terrorist attacks in 2019, accounting for 88 attacks, which makes 37% of all terrorism acts. It is significant to note that 04 suicide attacks occurred in 2019 as compared to 11 in the previous year. Other means used less frequently by militants to perpetrate violence included Rocket Attacks, Hand Grenade, and Gun and bomb attacks.

During 2019, 153 terrorist attacks were carried out by various religiously inspired terrorist organizations as compared to 171 in 2018. Meanwhile, the nationalist insurgents including Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Bloch Republic Army (BRA), Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), newly formed BRAS, Sindhudesh Liberation Front Army (SDLF/SDLA) and other local insurgents carried out 62 terrorist attacks. However, worryingly a 27% increase was witnessed in sectarian violence.

Nature Of Attacks	No of Attacks in 2019	No of Attacks in 2018
Terrorist attacks by nationalist insurgents	62	80
Terrorist attacks by religiously motivated militants	153	171
sectarian-related	15	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>262</b>

*Source: National & Local Newspapers, SATP, PIPS.*

## 5. Responsibility Attribution: Suspected Organization and Claiming Groups

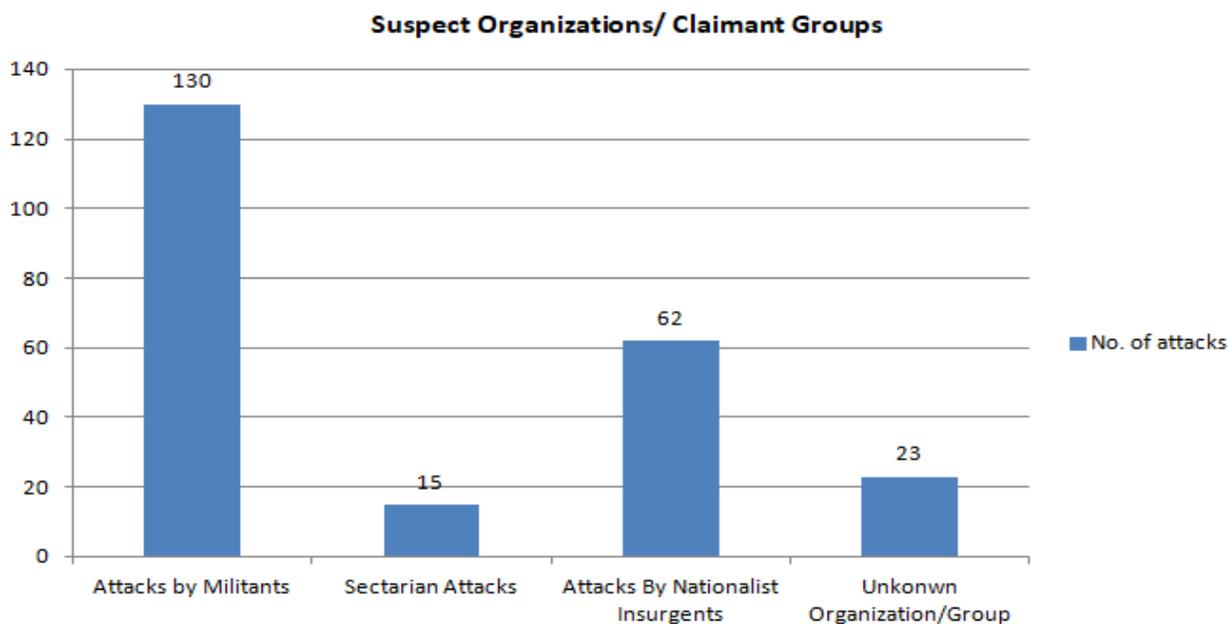
Pakistan is facing a decreasing but continuing threat from externally supported insurgents, terrorists, and radical groups. These militants, terrorist organizations, and sectarian groups seriously endanger the country's internal security, stability, and development. Financial support through money laundering, foreign funding, extortion, and kidnappings contributed toward terrorist activities.

<b>Table 4 Responsibility Attribution</b>		
<b>Nature of Attacks</b>	<b>Suspect Organization/ Claimant group</b>	<b>No of attacks</b>
Attacks by Militants	Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	82
	HizbulAhrar	14
	JamatulAhrar	01
	Local Taliban	32
	ISIS affiliated groups	01
Sectarian Attacks	Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ)	08
	Sipah-e-Muhammad Pakistan	02
	Rival sectarian group	03
	Lashkar-e-Islam	02
Attacks by Nationalist Groups	Nationalist insurgents	04
	Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)	29
	Bloch Republic Army (BRA)	06
	Baloch Raji Aajoi Sangar (BRAS)	03
	Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF)	11
	Sindhudesh Liberation Front Army (SDLF/SDLA)	03
	Lashkar-e-Balochistan	06
Unknown Organization/Group	Nil	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	

*Source: National & Local Newspapers, SATP, PIPS*

In 2019, a total of 230 attacks were reported, which were claimed by religiously inspired and sectarian motivated outfits including Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), HizbulAhrar, JamatulAhrar, ISIS and its affiliated groups, and other local Taliban factions. Moreover, the nationalist insurgents or separatist groups also claimed responsibility of a number of these attacks. These groups included Baloch Republic Army (BRA), Balochistan Liberation Army

(BLA), newly formed Baloch Raji Aajoi Sangar (BRAS), Lashkar-e-Balochistan, Sindhudesh Liberation Front Army (SDLF/SDLA) and Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF).



**Figure 5: Responsibility Attribution: Suspected Organization and Claiming Groups**

Source: National & Local Newspapers, SATP, PIPS

Breakdown of the terrorist attacks in Pakistan by suspected and claiming terrorist organizations are the following:

- Trends witnessed during 2019 reveal that 130 terrorist attacks, making up 56 percent of the total terrorist violence, were claimed by various militant organizations including Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), HizbulAhrar, JamatulAhrar, Local Taliban factions, ISIS and affiliated groups.
- National insurgents claimed the second highest number of terrorist attacks accounting for almost 27 percent of total attacks in Pakistan in 2019. Overall 62 attacks were perpetrated by nationalist insurgent groups, including Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Bloch Republic Army (BRA), Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), Sindhudesh Liberation Front Army (SDLF/SDLA) and Lashkar-e-Balochistan and BRAS.
- Between 1 January and 31 December 2019, 15 Sectarian related incidents occurred with an increase of 36 percent compared to 2018. Sectarian related incidents account for almost

6.4% of the total attacks, which were claimed by Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Sipah-e-Muhammad Pakistan, and Lashkar-e-Islam.

- Twenty-three terrorist incidents (10 percent of the 230attacks) were not claimed by any particular group.

## 6. Conclusion

The gradual progress towards elimination of terrorism, as witnessed over years is satisfactory, but the continued presence of religiously motivated, sectarian and nationalist terrorist groups in terms of organization and the fact that they have been able to retain significant operational capacity is worrisome. These groups are adapting to counter-terrorism actions and coming up with newer strategies to survive like formation of alliances and sharing of resources.

Lack of counter-terrorism cooperation with Afghanistan and border security issues with Iran have also contributed to complicating the effort to tackle terrorism. Focus on dealing with extremism remained inadequate. Policy makers and security agencies, moreover, need to urgently focus on the looming threat of cyber-terrorism.

### **About Author:**

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