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National Crisis Cell

Introduction

One of the largest cities in the world, and the biggest one in Pakistan, Karachi has a multiethnic population of 17 million people. During the last couple of years, Karachi has seen recurrent outbreaks of violence which have claimed hundreds of lives. Data collected through different sources suggests, of all those 11,990 civilians that lost their lives due to bombings, suicide assaults, and other fatal attacks in the country during the last eight years, Karachi's share is nearly 50 percent. And thus whereby its business and employment opportunities lure people from all over the country to flock down to the city and try their luck, the growing crime rates of the city create an atmosphere and a culture of fear among its residents.

As many as 2,909 people, including women, children, suspects and law-enforcers, were killed in the city in

2014, said a report prepared and released by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

The HRCP report said that while the law enforcement agencies killed 594 suspects in the city during Jan-Dec 2014, some 142 law-enforcers were also killed in the

metropolis in the one-year period. The number of those lost to these heinous crimes is persistently on the rise, in the backdrop of heating up turf wars among land and drug mafias and criminal gangs. The picture looks no different when we look at the trend of other crimes. Be it car snatching and theft or abduction for ransom crimes, all show an

upward trend. How the law enforcement agencies are dealing with this recent upsurge in crimes and what steps they are taking to curtail the violence, need further inquiry. The data compiled by the Police Department in Sindh is a good source to begin with; however, it offers no insight into the mechanisms and outcome of its interventions to curb violence in the city. But, there is another private sector organization called Citizens-Police Liaison Committee (CPLC) that keeps a good record of most of the crimes that are reported in Karachi and it also maintains a record of the cases that were resolved during any specific period.

Political parties

Almost every mainstream political party of the country has its followers and offices in Karachi. However, the leading political party of Karachi is Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and next comes Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf ; and Pakistan Muslim League(N), Pakistan Peoples Party , Awami National Party etc., also have palpable representation in the city. The ethnic divisions of the city have a greater role in determining party positions in Karachi. The MQM has the support of the leading ethnic community of Mohajirs, while ANP and PTI enjoys the support of the

second largest ethnic community of Pashtuns. During the 2013 elections, the MQM bagged most of the provincial assembly seats from Karachi. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has major followings among the Baloch and Sindhi population.

Jihadi And/Or Sectarian Militant Organizations

Karachi, the thriving urban center is also home to number of lethal jihadi/sectarian militant organizations. According to a report, the following militant organizations are operating in Karachi:

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi: The banned sectarian outfit is headquartered in Nagan Chowrangi (New Karachi)

Harkatul-Mujahideen (HuM) (also known as Harkatul Ansar): It is headquartered and has recruiting office in Karachi in Haroonabad, (SITE area) Mustafa Masjid near the factory of Altaf Shakoor of Pasban.

Jaish-e-Muhammad's (JeM): It is a religious militant organization and has its office in Hyderi, (Noth Nazimabad) Batha Masjid. It was founded by firebrand cleric Maulana Masood Azhar in late 1990s to fight against Indian forces in Kashmir, but in recent years, it has turned its guns on Pakistani security forces.

Lashkar-e-Taiba's (LeT): It is also a religious militant organization banned by the United Nations Security Council for its alleged role

in terrorism in India and the region.

Underworld Gangs

The most notorious underworld gangs of the region are also allegedly residing and operating from Karachi. Among these Dawood Ibrahim, Tiger Memon, Shoaib Khan, Khalid Shahenshah and Haji Ibraheem aka Bhulu are famous and notorious for their activities, and they are involved in running their rackets, illicit drug businesses, human trafficking and gangs in Karachi.

Criminal Gangs

Two organizations, Peoples Amn Committee (PAC) and Kutchi Rabita Committee (KRC) came to the limelight during 2012 when target killing incidents in Lyari, Shershah and Kharadar areas brought the civic life to standstill. PAC is supposedly enjoying support of the PPP and KRC has a backing of MQM and the killings in these areas are considered as a result of the turf war between PPP and MQM. The persons leading both of these organizations are:

PAC KRC

(Late) Rehman ‘Dakait’ Arshad Pappu

Baba Ladla Ghaffar Zikri

Zafar Baloch Akram Baloch Uzair Baloch Bilal Sheikh

Among these Rehman “Dakait” was killed in 2009 in an encounter with the police, while Arshad Pappu was arrested in 2006 but he was released on bail in February 2012 and acquitted in about 60 cases.

CRIME IN KARACHI

1. Target Killings

For over two decades, Karachi has been an epicenter of target killings for reasons ranging from ethno-political to sectarian disputes and from land mafia rivalries to personal vendetta. Since 1994, Karachi has lost 9,696 human lives and majority of them are victims of these conflicts and there appears to be no end to this human killing madness in the near future either. A good number of the victims are the activists belonging to different political or religious parties functioning in the city. The report issued by the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies for 2010 indicates that the political activists who became the victims of target killings during 2010 belonged to the political parties like PPP, MQM, and ANP but it doesn't identify as to how many activists from each party were affected. On 6 January 2011, the Dawn published the following data from HRCP report for 2009 which identified the names of the political and religious parties whose activists were targeted in Karachi: “A total of 748 people lost their lives to targeted killings in the city last year, up from the 272 victims in 2009: The report says that of the 215 victims who were killed reportedly due to their association with political, religious and nationalist parties, 64 belonged to the MQM, 44 to the ANP, 43 to the MQM(H), 32 to the PPP, four to the PPP(S), one each to the PML(N), PML(Q), PML(F) and Punjabi Front, eight to the ST, three to the JI, two to the JUI, 15 to the JAS [Jammat Ahl-e-Sunnat], seven to the PPI and two to the JSQM.”

Express Tribune

Another report that appeared in the Express Tribune on 12 December 2010 provided information about the victims of Karachi killings and the major

causes of these deaths were attributed to kidnapping, gang war in Lyari, sectarian conflicts, ethnic killings, political rivalry, police encounter, and many others. Express Tribune published another report in 2013 which said, "The year 2013 was the deadliest one for Karachi so far. As many as 3,251 people were killed or they died from the several incidents of violence in the city, according to a report by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). The city has seen a sharp increase in killings in the past few years with 1,981 people killed in 2010, 2,382 killed in 2011 and 3,105 killed in 2012. Of the killings and deaths in 2013, nearly 1,000 people who had

no affiliation with any political party also lost their lives in targeted attacks. The number of political workers targeted and killed was 268, and 108 people were killed due to their sectarian beliefs."

Although ethnic and political killings are shown as two different reasons in the table, the root causes of both of them are the same if we look at them from the on-going feud among the different political parties functioning in the city. MQM is considered as a representative of the Urdu speaking population while ANP has an overwhelming Pashtun representation. PPP represents Baloch and Sindhi population of Karachi. Any conflict that takes place among these political parties generates ethnic hatred and results in ethnic killings that go side by side with the killings of political activists.

2. Kidnapping for ransom

Kidnapping for ransom is a crime that keeps traumatised the victims and their whole family until the abducted person is released safely. It may go from weeks to months or even years.

Kidnappings are carried out for various purposes involving political rivalry, personal enmity, and economic issues. Kidnapping for ransom at least gives a hope to the victim and their family that there is a possibility of safe return of the victim once the demands of the perpetrators are met to their satisfaction or a miracle may take place. All other cases of kidnappings are more serious in nature because most of them end up in death of the victims.

Sindh Police data raise a question about the fate of several thousand people who were kidnapped from Karachi for various reasons and to this date their cases may be lying unattended somewhere as there is no information available on Sindh Police website about the recovery of these kidnapped persons. What worries further is the growing trend of kidnapping for ransom cases. The Taliban factor is suspected to have a major role in bolstering the kidnappings for ransom in the city. Since the Lal Masjid operation in July 2007, Pakistan Army carried out several operations against the Taliban in Tribal areas and Swat. Faced with an adverse situation and dwindling monetary support, the Taliban are reported to have resorted to other methods of fund raising and one of them is kidnapping for ransom. Karachi, being the commercial hub of the country and having a large population hailing from the Tribal areas and Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, has become the best spot for them as a place where they can find shelter from the on-going military operation and drone attacks besides carrying out their kidnapping-for-ransom.

3. KIDNAPPING FOR POLITICAL REASONS

While the newspapers were voicing their concerns on the upsurge of mysterious cases of "kidnapped and dumped" dead bodies in Balochistan, a wave of similar events occurred in Karachi last year and scared the Karachiites for their lives and security. The horrifying stories of kidnappings and dumping of dead bodies in Karachi became daily headlines of the newspapers while the law enforcement agencies appeared helpless in bringing the situation under control. The Express Tribune, on 24 August 2013, reported: "Two political workers, a private school principal and a suspected criminal were gunned down in separate acts of target killings in

Karachi on Friday. Moreover, bodies of five men were also found stuffed in gunny bags from different parts of the metropolis..’

Kidnappings and killings in Karachi were not exact replica of the similar cases in Balochistan. In Karachi, political parties were blamed for having their involvement in these cases while in Balochistan the accused were security agencies (FC and ISI). In Karachi, dead bodies of the abducted persons were found the very next day of the incident while such victims in Balochistan went missing for weeks or months before their dead bodies appeared at any remote place. In some cases, the missing people in Balochistan did come back home alive but in case of Karachi the kidnapping was like a death warrant. Once a person was picked up there was hardly any chance for him to reappear alive. However, one factor was the same in all these cases in Balochistan and Karachi; they were all triggered by the political issues.

4. Extortions

As Karachi is rapidly turning into a hub of crimes, the issue of extortion is also getting chronically endemic. It has emerged as an easy and effective tool of plundering money for the criminals linked, at some level, with the political parties in the

city. According to media reports, criminals throw the value of money written on paper (parchee) in front of the gate of a shop or an industry, demanding the business to comply at the earliest or face consequences.

The consequences include either the killing of that particular businessman or abduction of his family members. “It has become very violent. They are simply killing people who don’t pay up, we have had two deaths because of this recently,” said Mian Abrar Ahmad of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce. Recent reports also suggest that criminals are sending text messaging to the business community, asking them to pay money or face consequences.

The government has tried to take action against those involved in the crime, yet political expediency has always hindered progress. Meanwhile, political actors in the city continue to blame each other for collecting extortion money from businesses in the city. Mohajir Qaumi Movement Chairman Afaq Ahmed on March 21, 2012 accused Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) for introducing and collecting extortion in the city. He accused the MQM’s industries minister of collecting more than Rs50 million from the city’s industrial area alone, including an additional Rs2-3 million from the Builders Association. Meanwhile, MQM lawmaker in National Assembly Haider Abbas Rizvi underlined: “It seems [like] it is all by design and planned - as if the police in the areas where such incidents are rampant are deployed on the will of the extortionists. He specifically mentioned Karachi’s biggest flea market in Sher Shah where he said that more than 6,000 shops are stripped of Rs600, 000 every day.”

The government introduced some steps in the past to beef up security around the industrial areas and launched Anti- Extortion Cell (AEC) in the police department, but all these steps are failing; because, the number of extortion cases continues to swell. The Citizens-Police Liaison

Committee received 1,024 extortion complaints from traders in the first eight months of 2013 in comparison with 590 in 2012 almost double in number.

“There was a 100 percent increase in extortion complaints this year,” a CPLC official narrated to a newspaper.

“These figures are alarming considering that many traders and other citizens don’t lodge their complaints.”

The official said traders and businessmen had started staging rallies against extortionists and also complaining about the issues on TV, but most of them were reluctant to approach the police and the CPLC.

THE LYARI ISSUE

Lyari has a history of gang wars, clashes between drug pushers, and clashes between criminal groups. Today, one of the oldest areas of the city is facing a war of turf by the ruling party and its allies. Major political parties of the city and mafias eye Lyari as 75 percent of the total revenue the city is contributing to the national kitty is being generated from the areas surrounding Lyari. The recent conflict and clashes between the People Aman Committee (PAC) and other Karachi-based parties coming to be the biggest stakeholder of the city stem from such a huge potential of areas surrounding Lyari. These areas are considered hot cakes for political groups and mafias indulged in bhatta (extortion) collection. Every group tries to further and cement its influence over the areas and want to be the sole operator.

To understand the issue, we will have to know the history of Lyari. Lyari is one the oldest areas of the city overwhelmingly dominated by Baloch population and has been a stronghold of PPP since its inception. The history of Lyari’s criminal groups started with the emergence of two groups in the area in late 1970s. Initially, the

criminal groups, one headed by Shair Muhammad alias Sharo while the other by Daad Muhammad alias Daadal, were comprised mainly of unemployed youth and indulged in street crimes such as handbag snatching and other minor criminal activities.

Over time, these small-scale criminal activities have escalated in to the much renowned and feared turf wars and gang warfare, with many different parties to the conflict involved and leaving to opportunity forgone and no stone upturned in their search for supremacy in the district. All these groups were fighting with each other over drug business and were being

supported and patronized by influential political personalities of the area. The situation remained has remain unchanged since. A strong organisational structure has been set up in Lyari by various parties to generate funds through kidnapping for ransom which expanded its operation to Balochistan and other cities of Sindh.

The members of Balochistan Liberation Army have also made their way into Lyari and started their activities. During this period huge cache of weapons has been smuggled and dumped in the area. The criminal elements also started looting and have even attacked NATO containers in 2013. If anything, the situation shows no signs of improvement, rather quite the contrary.

These states of affairs of the country's most important city are very worrying for the current and future prospects of our country. It is keeping these in mind that delegates will be required to come up with viable and sustainable solutions to Karachi's issues.

KARACHI OPERATION

In 2013 an operation was commenced under the newly elected Federal Government of Pakistan Muslim League (N) after Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited Karachi and devised a strategy to curb violence. With the provincial government of PPP on board, the prime minister gave a go-ahead to Pakistan Rangers to conduct raids and arrest criminals. Explaining the decision to equip Rangers with the power of prosecution and investigation, the Interior minister Chaudry Nisar said Rangers had complained that people arrested for alleged involvement in crimes were freed after some time. Targeted operation began on September 7, 2013. With the Karachi police unable to effectively take on criminals across the metropolis, Rangers were given police powers and tasked to spearhead crackdowns against criminals. In 2014, a data was released by law enforcing in which police and Rangers claimed completing almost 9,229 targeted raids in which 13,906 suspected criminals were arrested. Additionally, 8,469 weapons were also recovered in these raids. Despite such extensive action, 2013 and 2014 saw incidents of heinous crimes such as killings, extortion, kidnappings, robberies, theft, terrorism, remain at all time highs, similar to trends seen in 2012. At present, while Rangers claim that crime had reduced drastically during these three years, MQM have expressed their reservations regarding ongoing Karachi operation. Leaders of MQM believe that in the guise of search operation innocent people are being arrested, which is the violation of human rights. MQM says the Karachi operation is being conducted against the MQM and not against the Taliban and other criminals. Altaf Hussain, in his statement, went on to say that Operation is being conducted against the MQM alone.

Questions the Resolution must answer :

1. What are the potential short term and long term solutions for targeted killings and sectarian violence?

2. Are there any third party elements involved in promoting sectarian violence? If yes then how can we identify them?
3. How can the law enforcement agencies inside Karachi be strengthened to curb the violence and lawlessness?
4. Role of Political parties and their association with crime in Karachi.
5. Dewatering? How, when and why?
6. Is military operation by Pakistan Armed forces the only possible solution at the current situation?
7. How to reform Sindh Police?
8. Accountability of those who are found doing this violence directly or indirectly?
9. Presence of Taliban and terrorists in the city.
10. Role of Foreign agencies, like CIA, Raw and other anti Pakistani elements.
11. What to do regarding Jihadi Organizations present deep within the roots of Karachi?
12. Does Karachi really need Governor Rule? Or is the military a better option?