

Scenario 149

KARACHI OPERATION [2013]

MQM URGED TO CALL ARMY IN:

After general elections in Pakistan, a new wave of target killing in Karachi during the summer of 2013 inspired the new PML[N] government to formulate a strategy to address the ever deteriorating law and order situation in Karachi; it was a challenge for them.

An old debate continued brewing for years in Pakistan's *khaki* and political elite that how to deal with Karachi's powerful '*political militias & mafias*' and how to resurrect its weak, politicized police.

Sudden discussions cropped up about two arrests, linked to the Imran Farooq murder investigation, made a couple of years ago, by Pakistani security agencies; Imran Farooq was killed in London on 16th September 2010, and the two suspects linked to the assassination were picked up at Karachi airport, based on a British tip off.

Much orchestrated those days was another myth – that MQM had been shattered by Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf [PTI], as rigging, caught on tape, became an issue. Soon enough, a PTI leader, Zahra Shahid Hussein, was killed outside her house. Khan and his PTI led the charge against the MQM, blaming the hit as well as the rigging.

On 19th May 2013; the MQM went through what the intelligentsia assessed as an 'internal coup'; after a fiery speech by Altaf Hussain admonishing his commanders for failing him. MQM's Rabita [Coordination] Committee went through a 'cabinet reshuffle', with elected stalwarts beaten and locked up in their offices.

On 27th August 2013, Muttahida Qaumi Movement [MQM]'s Chief Altaf Hussain requested Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to hand over the administration of Karachi to the Pakistan Army. Commenting on the ongoing violence in the city, the Sindh government had completely failed to protect the residents of Karachi from criminal elements. The people of Karachi, particu-

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larly the traders, were hoping to be rescued by the armed forces as the police and Rangers had failed to do their job.

Violence in Karachi was on the rise again after a brief respite, with 12 people killed in the city on 25th August alone; 1740 people were killed by 'target killing' in the first six months of 2013 alone.

During the National Assembly session, Deputy Convener of MQM Dr Farooq Sattar repeated the demand made by his leader Altaf Hussain, and had also staged a 'walk out' followed by the members of the PTI and Awami Muslim League's Sheikh Rashid.

Opposition Leader Syed Khurshid Shah had opposed MQM's demand for military administration in Karachi. Shah further commented that a military administration in Karachi could consequently be a big mistake and MQM's demand could be a part of conspiracy; undermining the democracy.

Next day, PM Nawaz Sharif took notice of the deteriorating law and order situation in Karachi and MQM's demand that the army be deployed in Karachi to protect the life and property of the Kutchhi community in Lyari. The PM decided to hold a special cabinet meeting on 2-3rd September in Karachi to discuss the situation in the city and determine the way of action.

MQM's demand was apparently amusing. They had enjoyed good 10-12 years in power in Karachi during Gen Musharaf and Zardari regimes and did nothing for the poor law and order situation. Still, the governor was theirs. They were the ones who opposed this idea when it was initiated by other parties like ANP and JI. The solution to Karachi's situation was to give free hand to law enforcement agencies and the report should be made public.

After a day-long debate to call the armed forces in Karachi, MQM submitted a requisition in Sindh Assembly, requesting the speaker, Agha Siraj Durrani, to summon a session on this issue.

MQM parliamentary leader Syed Sardar Ahmed and MQM's deputy leader Khawaja Izharul Hassan moved an application containing the signature of 43 MPAs of their party. Syed Ahmed informed the media after submitting the application at the assembly's secretariat:

"Since police and Rangers have failed to maintain law and order in Karachi, we requested a Sindh Assembly session over the situation and demanded Karachi be handed over to the army,"

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The Speaker was bound to summon the session within two weeks. MQM's Sardar Ahmed maintained:

"If the session is not called on our request and the government tries to summon its own, we will move an adjournment motion requesting to suspend all proceedings in the session to discuss the law and order situation and the role of armed forces."

MQM's deputy parliamentary leader added that calling the armed forces for maintaining peace was not against the constitution and democratic values. he lamented that:

"In the past, the role of armed forces has been significant in civilian matters, especially during floods and earthquake. Those opposing the party's idea about the deployment of army should look at the crime rate, killings in Karachi and the government efforts to deal with the same in the last five years."

On 29th August 2013, the Supreme Court of Pakistan resumed hearing the Karachi law and order implementation case at its Karachi Registry. The case was heard by a five member bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice Iftikhar M Chaudhry.

During proceedings, Attorney General Munir A Malik submitted the federal government's report over the law and order situation in the city. It stated that amongst numerous dangers the city was facing was the rapid increase in the city's population. Terrorism, sectarianism, ethnic and political killings were some of the large impediments to law and order in the city.

According to the report, drugs, smuggling, extortion and possession of illegal weapons had become the norm in Karachi. There was a need to increase the deployment of Rangers and police to maintain law and order. The report called for action against members of the *Muhajir Republican Army* while an operation in Lyari could have been avoided – a ban on use of mobile phones was enough in Lyari; the whole court laughed over the simplicity of the PPP government.

Attorney General Malik informed the apex court that after passing the 18th amendment the role of the federal government was cautious. Malik added that there were governments of different political parties in the centre and Sindh. Chief Justice opined that the constitution was the same irrespective of which parties were in government.

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Appearing before the Supreme Court, DIG South Ameer Sheikh told that police officers and men who had taken part in the 1992 operation had been targeted and killed. *"If we capture members of the Sunni Tehreek, Katchhi, Baloch or Muttahida, unknown men set fire to Karachi."* The DIG added that help was required to capture criminals as those policemen who work on political agendas of various parties were transferred.

DIG Sheikh openly informed the apex court that under such conditions it was not possible to yield results. Chief Justice Chaudhry told the DIG South to work bravely and inform the court if there were any hurdles or transfers. *"Lyari is not the Temple of Somnath which cannot be conquered,"* the apex court held.

During proceedings, the apex court rejected the report presented by IG Police Sindh and Chief Secretary. Chief Justice Chaudhry remarked that if the report was accepted it would mean that there had been no killings in Karachi today. The chief justice added that drugs, smuggled goods and weapons were being supplied throughout Pakistan via Karachi port.

Addressing IG Police Sindh, Chief Justice Chaudhry said:

"If you cannot do anything let us know. We will tell the federation to appoint capable officers. We ourselves think that IG Sindh may be a victim of expediency and is giving a bad name to the system."

"Peace will not be restored until institutions are neutral. What intelligence agencies were doing if entire containers of weapons were disappearing from the Karachi port?"

The apex court also summoned a report regarding the transfer of weapons from the port. Addressing the Chief Secretary, CJ said that he did not write to the federation about preventing arms and weapons to enter through the Karachi Port.

Expressing dissatisfaction over the report, Chief Justice Iftikhar M Chaudhry remarked that they were admitting that no-go areas existed in Karachi. Had they been prevented in the beginning, the situation would have been much better later.

The Advocate General Sindh apprised the bench that CPLC was an effective institution to solve kidnapping for ransom cases under the able guidance of its chief Ahmed Chinoy while it works under Governor Sindh.

On the same day of 29th August 2013, ANP Malir District president Saeed Afghan, General Secretary Ahsan Khan and hundreds of other workers were arrested. The ANP alleged that the crackdown against ANP was launched on the instructions of Sindh government.

[In fact the federal government had prepared a blueprint of 'targeted operation' in Karachi as a special meeting of the Federal Cabinet had been convened to weigh options for restoring order in the violence-ridden mega-city.]

The federal government decided to take major political parties into confidence before launching a targeted operation to purge the city of criminals. Earlier, PM Nawaz Sharif had asked its cabinet members to devise a joint strategy to check the situation.

In that special cabinet meeting MQM's Farooq Sattar was especially invited to attend whereas Sindh Governor Dr Ishratul Ebad, Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah, Sindh IG Police, Rangers Director General and senior intelligence officials, including the Directors General of ISI and Intelligence Bureau [IB] were also made present.

The prime minister, in that meeting, approved the go-ahead for the operation after consulting major political parties as well as heads of civilian and military intelligence agencies. This development came a day after MQM's Altaf Hussain demanded that Karachi should be handed over to the Pakistan Army.

Chaudhry Nisar, however, opposed the full-scale military operation in the city as scores of target killers, extortionists and criminals had already been identified; adding that the paramilitary Rangers were ready to launch the operation.

The PML[N] government wanted to give a leading role to the provincial government on a non-partisan basis, thus in the proposed plan, CM Qaim Ali Shah was named to lead the operation with Rangers at his disposal. Intelligence agencies had identified scores of criminals who had direct political links but political victimization was to be avoided. The interior ministry had completed its groundwork, and was ready to place its proposed plan before the next cabinet meeting in early September 2013.

The federal government was to assist the provincial government when it comes to setting up the operation's modules. Consensus was developed among all the parliamentary parties to launch targeted operation under prescribed legal parameters.

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Next day, parliamentarians sitting on treasury and opposition benches in the National Assembly gave a go-ahead signal to the government to launch a targeted operation without any discrimination and demanded that culprits, regardless of their political, religious and ethnic affiliation, should be arrested and be dealt with according to law of the land. They also showed willingness to the government's proposal about the formation of a monitoring committee to supervise the targeted operation. The proposed committee was to consist of members of all political and religious parties including senior citizens and media persons.

For the success of the targeted operation, judiciary's support was essential as majority of criminals used to get bail from the court. Acknowledging proposal of the interior minister, all parliamentary parties - Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP), Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI), Jmaat-e-Islami (JI) Awami National Party (ANP) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) - supported the proposal of a targeted operation in the financial hub, Karachi.

TARGETED OPERATION APPROVED:

After approval of the 'targeted operation plan' the Karachi police and the Rangers launched their actions in an indiscriminate manner on the basis of the intelligence reports already available with them through various civil and military sources. After apprehending 104 criminals in first eight days, the Law Enforcement Agencies [LEAs] arrested another 100 offenders until 15th September 2013, less than half of them belonging to MQM. In some cases extortionists were arrested on the spot while delivering extortion-slips or receiving extortion money.

The persons arrested during that first week included mostly from known '*bhatta*' mafias, about half of them were either the MQM members or using MQM's name while looting the traders. Most of them were hauled up from Sector 13 and *Gulshan e Iqbal* areas but were operating all over Karachi. About 20 ammunition sellers were picked up from Goths and posh areas along with their stocks.

The news about so massive arrests and raids disturbed the MQM as a party because family members of picked up persons had approached the 90 HQ with true & false mix stories and of course they were MQM's voters. MQM launched daily press conferences crying that their workers were being targeted. In the meantime BBC released a documentary about MQM and New York Times published stories about them; both were not pleasant at all.

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Amidst these odd developments Altaf Hussain had gone exceptionally aggressive. An article appeared in 'New York Times' during the 3rd week of September 2013 pointed out that Altaf Hussain's grip on a Pakistani city faces a threat.

"A BBC documentary broadcast immediately after the elections in Pakistan in May 2013, portrayed Mr. Altaf Husain the leader of MQM, as a Mafia boss and MQM as a political party with a history of violence, which arguably made it the most feared political force in Pakistan. TV anchors, many political leaders in Pakistan, some UK Parliamentarians of Pakistan origin, routinely appeared on Pakistan talk shows and said openly that they would be scared for their lives if they uttered a word against MQM!

In the documentary, the Pakistanis talked persistently about the millions of US dollars recovered from the MQM offices, and £3-5 million worth of property that MQM owned in London, proving beyond a doubt that MQM were money launderers of the first order.

However, the people also pointed out \$4.5 million watch that Mr. Nawaz Sharif was reported to have worn to his inauguration which could pay for all of the MQM assets taken together."

The real solution for the problems of Governance in Sindh:

Surprisingly, the real problem of Sindh was not only the MQM or its alleged violent activities; there was a lot more than that.

The basic problem in Sindh is that it is the only province in Pakistan where a distinction has always been made between Urban and Rural areas. This has been done ostensibly as an affirmative action measure to level the playing field for the rural Sindhi population [less developed] against the more educated urban areas.

Consequently, the management of all of Sindh including Urban areas, like Karachi & Hyderabad, will always lie with the lords from the Rural areas, since the rural seats in electoral houses are more in numbers. The Rural masters thus keep no interest in addressing the needs of the urban areas, since their vote bank comes from the rural areas.

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Further as a result of the recruitment quotas [2% for the urban] the state bureaucrats who are responsible to implement the policies made by the rural politicians are also largely staffed from areas other than Urban Sindh. So the result is that Urban Sindh has little or no voice in either the formulation or the implementation of the policies that affect them directly.

Crux of the matter is that the governance system should have been modified much earlier so that the political representatives of the people are made responsible for all areas that affect the lives of the people living there and the resources are allocated to them proportionately.

The only option was left that responsibility and resources are devolved to a third tier of Government and implement a *strong local government system* where the local representatives are given extensive responsibility and the resources to manage all local affairs. It was done so during Gen Musharraf's time, then Karachi witnessed tremendous progress and the law and order situation was also better.

However, attempts to devolve responsibility and finances to the local Government have always been resisted by both the political governments of PPP & PML[N]. In mid 2013, the Sindh provincial assembly again forced through a bill that limited the scope of the Local Government and placed the responsibility with the bureaucrats instead of the political appointees. This was against all democratic principles and international practice regarding mega-polis administration.

If the Governments continued to play such games then the problems of Karachi would go un-addressed again & again, irrespective of who wins the Local government elections.

Coming back: as stated earlier; in the first week of September 2013, operations were conducted in Lyari after PM Nawaz Sharif visited Karachi. With the provincial government of PPP on board, the prime minister gave a go-ahead to Pakistan Rangers to conduct raids in coordination with Karachi Police to crack down the criminals and their dens.

On 7th September 2013; the targeted operation by Rangers and police started; more than a thousand suspects were arrested during the next 72 hours. The Interior Minister Ch Nisar Ali Khan declared the first phase of the operation a success as the Intelligence Bureau [IB] Karachi unit was made more responsible.

Just a month after, the frequency of violent crime came down; drug dealers too, not operating in public view as they were in the past. Local residents

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acknowledged that incidents of firing had decreased. The middle class media analysts, however, continued with their criticism in paper and electronic media. The Rangers denied all the allegations urging that:

"...our mandate is to break the backs of these criminal gangs; we carry out our operations without bias towards any particular gang."

Till mid 2015, the Rangers conducted more than 600 raids in Lyari and nabbed 153 gangsters and 246 extortionists. Only those criminals and suspects were killed in encounters that put up resistance and shot back at the raiding parties. The Rangers held:

"Everyone who died in encounter was a criminal; the rest are undergoing various stages of their trials in Anti-Terrorism Courts."

Zafar Baloch of LYARI Killed:

On 18th September 2013; while Rangers and police continued targeted operations in Karachi, including Lyari, a key figure of the banned *Peoples Amn Committee* [PAC] Zafar Baloch was shot dead by unknown assailants on motorcycles in Lyari. The police adopted strict security measures in and around Lyari to prevent any reaction to the violent incident in which a guard of the slain leader was also killed.

Police said that Zafar Baloch and his guard Muhammad Ali were targeted by assailants when he was returning from the Lyari General Hospital where bodies of three suspected gangsters killed in a shootout with Rangers were shifted. When his vehicle reached near Bizenjo Chowk, several gunmen riding motorcycles opened fire at it.

Zafar Baloch and his guard suffered multiple bullet wounds. They were taken to a private hospital where doctors declared them dead. The police suspected that a rival group of the PAC might have targeted Zafar Baloch.

[There are different groups operating in the area and initially our doubts go to one of the rival groups.]

Zafar Baloch had survived at least two attempts on his life in the past. This lethal attack was considered connected with the football match of 8th August 2013 that ended in carnage; revenge was in Lyari's air — once again.

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With Uzair Baloch having disappeared during the same days, the local police held that Baba Ladla had set out to bring the whole of Lyari under his control. This led to a fresh phase of the deadly gang war — encompassing the death of hundreds of young men over the last 18 months.

Zafar Baloch remained a local PPP leader but joined the PAC when it was formed in 2008. Later he became general secretary of district south chapter of the PPP, but resigned soon after developing differences with the party's lawmakers. He was the 2nd in command in the defunct PAC, later re-named as *Lyari Amn Committee*, after its chief Uzair Jan Baloch left Pakistan.

Much later; 'The Friday Times' dated 4th April 2014 described as:

"The Lyari area of Karachi resembles a war zone – an urban Waziristan where various militias fight each other every day to gain control of territory. And they survive despite a number of law-enforcement operations."

In 2013, the People's *Amn* Committee demanded political recognition, and in a settlement, the PPP gave out some political stakes to them. MPA Sania Baloch and MNA Shahjehan Baloch [later jailed for Arshad Papu's murder] were elected in general elections [2013]; but both were nominated by Uzair Baloch personally not the PPP. The PPP continued to keep its ties with the Committee secretly though it had been formally banned in October 2011.

The key question – 'why Lyari is and has been so important'? Simple answer was that:

'It is a big business. Lyari remains a drug distribution hub of the region along with countless gambling rings and later flourished as extortion centre of Karachi.'

Lyari's police stations are sold at around Rs:2.5 million to Rs:5 million for an SHO posting – but the game is played above IG's level, those poor officers have no role in it.'

A stern attempt by Pakistan Rangers to control crime in the area did not succeed till 2014 at least, apparently because the gangs had developed new allies in the police and political circles.

In an unprecedented Jirga in early 2014, MPA Sania Baloch and elders from Baba Ladla announced a ceasefire. The peacemaker was Ayaz Latif Palejo who held that:

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“Lyari is the most poor and underdeveloped area of Karachi marked by violence. As a citizen of Karachi, I thought it was my duty to make peace in absence of government, which I did, and that must be appreciated.”

With minor breaks, the truce is still in vogue – of course, with the active backing of the Pakistan Rangers making it as part of the *Zarb e Azb* Operation.

OPERATION MOVED ON GROUND:

The targeted operation in Karachi began on *5th September 2013*, and within a span of two weeks only, some 300 suspects were arrested and charged for keeping illicit weapons and explosive material. The Rangers were mostly leading the operation which was being conducted across the city – not just in the political strongholds of one party.

The Rangers high-ups made everyone to realize that Karachi had to be won by everyone, politically and in uniform, everywhere. He set upon a premise to fix the mega-city, but with a tough warning: all uniforms and politicians would have to align for the plan to work; ‘Freelancers’ and ‘Tangos’ - codes for those who didn’t enjoy political cover and Taliban factions, respectively – would be targeted first, and more frequently.

Rangers targeted the truly lawless first; Mangopir, Kanwari Colonies and the Kati Pahari to start with; then moved to Intelligence Based Operations [IBOs]. In similar fashion, the mega-slum of Lyari was partially cleared, as many of the gangs there were enjoying PPP’s patronage. The operation continued catching momentum especially in Karachi’s slums first.

For the militants connected to Karachi’s political barons of the MQM and the PPP, special arrangements were made downtown. In major operations or high profile detentions – the Governor House was looped in. Seldom, the Chief Minister was also briefed; but Governor Ishratul Ebad, though hailing from the MQM, was brought to think for the country’s security first – and the governor was found cooperative.

The success of the targeted operation was mainly depending upon LEA’s performance in the ‘no-go’ areas, including Sohrab Goth in Awami National Party [ANP]’s stronghold and Manghopir in the MQM’s monopoly areas.

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These areas were ungoverned territories where law-enforcers had no writ since years.

On 19th September 2013; Chief Justice of Pakistan [CJP] Iftikhar M Chaudhry remarked that arms were being channelled in Karachi from a number of countries including India, Israel, US and Russia. He observed:

"....the arms which flow from the South into Karachi come from India and Israel and the arms which flow from the North into Karachi come from NATO, US and Russia.

If we are determined then not a single bullet will come into the country through illegal paths. Rocket launchers and anti aircraft guns were also recovered from the city."

The CJP made the statement while presiding over a 5-member bench of SC during the hearing of the Karachi violence case. The other members of the bench were Justice Jawwad S Khawaja, Justice Khilji Arif Hussain, Justice Amir Hani Muslim and Justice Azmat Saeed.

The Federal government, Chief Secretary Sindh and the police presented the report on Karachi situation in the court. The report alleged that the ISI and MI had declared an ongoing target operation in Karachi effective and had proposed to continue it. As per report, 1357 accused persons involved in target killing, extortion of money and other crimes were arrested during 5-16th September in Karachi and 3 Kalashnikovs, 347 pistols and 9 hand grenades were recovered from them.

On 23rd September 2013; Pakistan Rangers recovered explosives, grenades and other weapons from fruit crates on a truck in the Old *Sabzi Mandi Sakhya* Ground area of Karachi. No one was arrested as the criminals managed to get away.

The Rangers were then conducting raids and apprehending criminals affiliated with political parties including the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party [PPP] along with the gangsters of Lyari; a few of them being suspected target killers and extortionists. No one accused of sectarian violence and terrorism was caught or picked up at that initial stage of the operation.

On 3rd October 2013; Police and Rangers arrested 29 suspects accused of target killing and extortion during multiple raids in Karachi. Rangers spokesperson told the media that the suspects were arrested from Lyari, Afshani Gali, Garden, Nipa Chowrangi, North Nazimabad, Bazarta Line and

other areas of Karachi. The arrested people allegedly belonged to various political parties and were involved in target killing, extortion and other serious crimes. Rangers officials also recovered weapons from them.

SC HARD ON ARMS SMUGGLING:

On 29th October 2013; the Supreme Court of Pakistan [SC], which was conducting day to day hearing into the deteriorated law & order situation in Karachi, rebuked the federal government for not taking steps to control the smuggling of arms, ammunitions, drugs as well as tax evasions on the imports.

Headed by Chief Justice Iftikhar M Chaudhry, the larger bench had resumed hearing of Karachi law and order [implementation] case at the apex court's Karachi registry. Justice Jawwad S Khawaja, a member of the bench, remarked:

"The black money earned through tax evasions, drugs and arms smuggling through the ports is fuelling the fire in the entire country including Karachi."

Pakistan Customs officials admitted before the apex court that arms were being smuggled through land routes but no major haul was seized by them. *"It means there is a complete failure on the part of the customs' intelligence and prevention departments,"* the bench remarked.

The SC bench said the law and order situation could not improve without pulling in loopholes. It also scolded the officers for not divulging correct information about the arms, ammunitions smuggling and taxes evasion.

At the outset of that day's proceedings, the Deputy Attorney General filed a sealed confidential report of the interior ministry and the Director General [DG] of Pakistan Coast Guards. A report was also filed on behalf of DG Rangers, informing the court that they had arrested 34 criminals during ongoing targeted operations and that the cases were lodged at three police stations jointly run with the police.

The SC bench had felt the need of speedy trials of the culprits under the Anti-Terrorism laws, including then recently promulgated Pakistan Protection Ordinance [PPO]. The Karachi situation could not be resolved until

the trials were not conducted in a speedy way – but even then they did not advise about the possible improvements in procedures through the court injunction.

The intelligence agencies were evaluating complicity of the policemen with the criminals or political parties. The bench also considered MQM-Haqiqi's petition for seeking removal of no-go areas, and for re-settlement of that party's displaced leaders and activists in their homes.

During next day's court proceedings, the heads of Federal Board of Revenue [FBR] and Anti-Narcotics Force [ANF] apprised the bench about steps they had taken to stop the illegal smuggling of arms and drugs to Karachi. CJP Chaudhry had observed that:

"...criminal elements with political backing were waging a turf war for economical gains. The police, Coast Guard, Anti-Narcotics Force [ANF] and Customs are involved in drug smuggling.

Everyone is a mafia. They are only involved in making money; no one cares about Karachi and its general public. The DG ANF is not doing his work properly.

- *Gen Sahib, the entire country has been handed over to you. Had you given results, you would not have to appear in the court today.*

3,000 Coast Guard personnel are present in Karachi but they are unsuccessful in stopping drug smuggling."

The remarks were very serious – but in 'democratic Pakistan' it was a routine saying; no consequences; perhaps not to be taken so solemnly.

The chief justice ordered the DG ANF to visit *Kala Pul* in Karachi and "*see what is going on over there*" – he was expressing his disappointment. In fact, the Supreme Court had rebuked the federal government for not taking steps to control the smuggling of arms, ammunitions, drugs as well as tax evasions on the imports.

When questioned about cleansing Karachi of illegal arms, the Attorney General said the security forces had asked people to voluntarily submit their weapons to nearby police stations; it was a joke of the day and quite a non-serious disposition on behalf of the ruling regimes.

In the city of 20 million people, Karachi, not a single weapon was surrendered in any police station – the highest law officer of the country was living in fool's paradise.

The bench had expressed their dissatisfaction over the above report submitted by Attorney General Munir A. Malik. It was basically regarding a *joint plan* devised by Maritime Security Agency [MSA], Pakistan Coast Guards, Anti Narcotics Force [ANF], Customs and other agencies to block smuggling of illegal arms and drugs in the port city.

That was why the Chief Justice Iftikhar M Chaudhry rejected the blue print presented by the Attorney General Munir A Malik regarding illegal weapon and drug smuggling during that hearing at Karachi. Addressing the AG, the chief justice said:

"...not a single word in the blue print states what action will be taken regarding the smuggling taking place in the city.

Malik Sahib, all things are going on under his [ANF DG's] nose. It seems as if General Sahib is expert at playing politics. He should not indulge himself in such things. We know no one will let DG ANF work as per law."

Chief Justice Chaudhry also pointed out that the reports submitted by the Customs and Anti-Narcotics Force [ANF] had skipped over any mention of the troubled Yousuf Goth and Sohrab Goth areas. The court remarked:

"Even the Lieutenant General of the army is scared to write the name of Yousuf Goth, it seemed. No one wants to work. Anyone who does not want to work should be removed from duty. Why are they harming this country?"

The FBR is explicitly directed to deal smuggling of weapons and drugs, custom duty evasion and black money with zero tolerance and ensure that all necessary steps are taken to stop menace of duty evasion within seven days".

Three-member bench of apex court, headed by Chief Justice Iftikhar M Chaudhry and comprising Justice Jawad S. Khawaja and Justice Gulzar Ahmed, were continuing the hearing [on 31st October 2013] and going through the details of arms and weapons imported through the dealers during the past three years via Karachi ports.

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The apex court was told that movement of black money was possible through banks, money changers and *Hundi* system. The Attorney General told the apex court that:

"In order to control black money, powers were delegated to Chairman FBR and its members to have access to banking information, and Financial Monitoring Unit [FMU] of the State Bank would share suspicious Transaction reports with FBR."

The apex court said that efforts made by the law enforcement agencies were commendable, which showed that culprits were not above law. However, it was a considered opinion that extraordinary measures were required to be made by law enforcement agencies to restore writ of the government without extending any leniency towards culprits.

The chief justice said the campaign for recovery of illicit arms in the city launched by the Sindh government had turned out to be fruitless by most standards of governance.

On 1st November 2013; the Supreme Court issued an interim order in Karachi law and order implementation case and ordered Customs officials to investigate the matter of missing 19,000 containers and how many of those missing containers contained arms and ammunition.

Heading a three-judge bench, Chief Justice Iftikhar M Chaudhry remarked that drug business was running under the nose of DG ANF Maj Gen Zafar Abbas, and he bashed the officer over his misconduct. In its interim order, the court directed the authorities concerned to investigate about weapons coming into the port city through apparent legal ways.

The SC order outlined a two phase investigation process. The first was to investigate weapons dealers and determine what weapons were ordered by them and for what purpose. The second was to investigate what licensed gun owners were using their weapons for, to determine where and when each bullet they purchased was used.

"It is responsibility of Customs to see for what purpose the legal arms are being brought into Karachi," the bench said; then added:

"Police and Rangers should also investigate it in second phase and conduct door to door checking of legally imported arms and take action against the license holders if they committed any violations."

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They must also check for what purpose the licensed holders purchased the bullets and where did they use them."

Pakistan's intelligence agencies, federal secretaries of interior, anti-narcotics, revenue and finance were also directed to extend cooperation to Sindh government. FIA's Director Karachi was asked about the record of foreign exchange cases. At the inception of hearing Attorney General Munir A Malik presented federal government's report on curbing arms and drugs' smuggling and duty evasion worked out keeping in view the reports of Shoab Suddal Commission and Ramzan Bhatti Commission.

The apex court was told that two scanners were installed at Port Qasim to scan each container; but only five containers of each lot were being checked. That was the real aspect through which all culprits were being let Scot free with their weapon's consignments without any responsibility over Custom officials – and where the corrupt practices were being covered.

However, chief collector customs said that before 2011, there was an agreement between two countries - Afghanistan and Pakistan - that only 5 percent of the total containers would be examined randomly but since June 2011, 100 percent containers had been examined as per new agreement.

The SC bench also directed DCs of the five districts of Karachi to cooperate with customs officials and after completing exercise, details be given to IG Sindh Police and DG Rangers so that they could undertake a physical exercise to examine door-to-door use of arms and ammunition.

A senior lawyer, Raja Irshad, who was a member of Commission formed to probe into allegation regarding the Missing 19000 Containers, told the court that not a single container was subjected to physical examination at Karachi ports. He told that a container as per declaration containing food items was cleared from port but Taxila police intercepted it, opened the container and recovered liquor from it.

The Chief Justice observed that customs officials had not shown seriousness to ascertain the content of containers brought to Pakistan under the rubric of Afghan Transit Trade [ATT]. The apex bench directed customs authorities to look into the matter of that container seized by Taxila police for having liquor and find out who was responsible for clearing a container from Karachi port.

The Attorney General informed the court that the federal government had decided to launch a joint operation against arms and drugs within 15 days.

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The joint operation was to be carried out over the reports of Customs intelligence and other organisations.

In his written report filed to the court, DG ANF had also laid out a plan of action for the operation and indicated the affected areas of the metropolis – *Sohrab Goth, Banaras and Lyari* – affirming that the force would go to any extent to cleanse the city of drugs. The bench expressed its satisfaction over the new action plan.

Earlier, the SC bench suspended SSP Investigation East, Junaid Shaikh for remaining absent. Junaid was due to appear in the apex court to present the investigation report on Shera Pathan murder case but he couldn't. Shera was a member of Arshad Pappu gang.

CRIME STATISTICS FOR YEAR 2013:

With over 2,000 people killed by September in the city, it was no secret that a crisis was brewing in the country's financial hub Karachi. Perturbed, newly elected Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif flew in to kick start remedial action. Taking all parties into confidence, and deciding on keeping the army in the barracks, a fresh assault on crime was announced on 5th September 2013.

Politically sponsored sectarian and ethnic violence in Karachi did not abate during 2013. Despite highly publicised and much touted operations by law enforcement agencies, year 2013 has gone down in Pakistan's history as the bloodiest year for Karachi with 2,700 people killed and crime soaring past 40,000 reported incidents in a year; HRCP data is referred.

Data released by the Sindh Police and Rangers showed that even though LEAs were seen to be in constant action, crime soared to 40,848 incidents of reported crime, even as thousands of criminals were arrested, raising questions about the gains claimed by the government.

The released data demonstrated 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 saw incidents of heinous crimes such as killings, extortion, kidnappings, robberies, theft, terrorism, remain at all time highs, similar to trends seen in 2012.

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While 181 target killers were arrested [69 by police, 112 by Rangers], the data provided that 2,715 people were killed in the year.

The word 'cracker', a term for a tennis ball filled with explosives to make a crude improvised explosive device, became a household name in 2013, while bomb blasts regularly marked turn of events. Yet LEAs reported the arrest of just 33 terrorists [19 by police, 14 by Rangers] during the whole year of 2013.

[Nearly before the year ended, a minor was killed when a grenade was hurled into a house in PECHS locality of Karachi. Though police suspected that the incident was related to extortion, the owner of the house was reluctant to divulge that.

Police also suspected that a blast in the car of a travel agency owner was caused by explosives planted by extortionists. With estimates that only a third of extortion cases were reported, these and many other cases did not make it into police's list of 519 reported cases of extortion in the year 2013.]

The LEAs claimed to have arrested 253 extortionists [101 by police, 152 by Rangers], illustrated that the fight was nowhere close to being won. With 3,086 robberies in the year, including 28 bank robberies, and 10,501 reported mobile snatching, police and Rangers could arrest only 321 robbers and 149 street criminals.

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. Thus a total of 1,441 people were booked under anti-narcotics laws, forming the third largest group of people arrested for heinous crime; however, success in capturing the most deadly criminals was low.

Vehicle theft and snatching though were the most reported crimes in the year with 26,352 cases reported. Of these, there were 22,284 cases of motorcycles being either stolen [16,083] or snatched [6,201]. There were 4,068 cases of four wheelers being either stolen [3,222] or snatched (846).

The Rangers data claimed that of the 2,325 raids that they made in 2013, over half [1,283] were in the last four months of the year. These targeted raids yielded 43pc [1242] of the 2,874 people arrested in the year and 34pc [1,915] of the 5,628 weapons recovered.

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Though the bloodletting did not stop, police data claimed there were only half as many killings in September as compared to August 2013.

Till the end of the year, the month-on-month graph of killings was in steady decline. Having peaked in March [318], the data claimed that the daily average of killings for the second part of 2013 was almost half compared to the first part. Other crimes were shown in decline too.

Kidnappings, dacoities, vehicular snatchings and theft, which peaked in July, were all shown to be down by almost half by the end of the year. However, in comparison to the hundreds of raids and thousands of arrests, the gains looked less impressive; may be that the said operation had started just four months before.

Extortions, which peaked in September with 77 reported cases [after, jump in reporting them] was steady at the year's average number of 39 reported cases in December 2013.

The year was the deadliest for law enforcement personnel as well. As many as 172 policemen were killed in the city, along with 19 comrades from the Rangers. In the same period, police and Rangers reported killing 105 criminals in 2013. The Rangers were the more ruthless of the two LEAs, reporting as many as 48 criminals killed in 28 encounters.