

Scenario 157

SECTARIAN KILLINGS CONTINUED....

A surge in sectarian killings continued in the whole country and new fears about Pakistan's stability were widely felt and discussed, as violence against Shiites and other minorities were spreading in most major cities including Karachi. Masked gunmen had been targeting Shiite doctors, lawyers and college professors.

[There were 687 sectarian killings in Pakistan during year 2013 - a 22pc increase over 2012's toll; according to the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies. Although the sectarian deaths represented just a small portion of violence in Pakistan — which claimed 4,725 lives during 2013 — such unrest was spreading throughout the country and becoming routine in heavily populated areas like Karachi.

Later, it was felt that sectarian tensions triggered not only by terrorism incidents, but average clashes within the sectarian communities.]

'Washington Post' dated 15th January 2014 is referred.

Pakistan's largest city, Karachi, was rattled in January 2014 when six men were found executed near a Sufi shrine. All of the victims' throats had been slashed, and at least two of the men had been beheaded. The details of the event have been given on other pages of this volume.

Meanwhile, Shiite professionals had increasingly been targets of assassination attempts; among the victims were a prominent poet in Karachi too. Extremists were apparently trying to intimidate educated Shiites into leaving the country — a brain drain by force was seen around. There was a very real sense that the state was not able to protect the Shia community.

Pakistani officials held sectarian violence intensified in the aftermath of the Nine Eleven 2001, when the Taliban regime was ousted in Afghanistan and its fighters crossed into Pakistan. As the border became less stable, hun-

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dreds of thousands of people sought refuge in Karachi, Lahore and other Pakistani cities. The influx had meant that hard-line Shiites and Sunnis brazenly competed for space in heavily populated areas.

In the first week of January 2014, a video released by Pakistani Taliban commander blamed Shiites for the unrest in Rawalpindi and called on Sunnis to *“rise and kill the Shias, kill their officers and target their businesses.”*

The call made certain factions out of control; what needed was just basic law enforcement, arresting people who killed others and incited violence, and that was not happening in any consistent way – definitely a show of poor performance by the PPP’s Sindh administration and Federal government of the PML[N].

TWO SCHOLARS SHOT DEAD:

During the course of Rangers’ operation, political and ethnic killings showed a significant decline in Karachi whereas the graph of sectarian killings had not fallen to that extent. The murder of policemen in the city continued at the same pace as before, with 171 taking place last year and 96 in the period from January to July 2014. Ahmed Chinoy, the Citizens-Police Liaison Committee [CPLC]’s Chief, told:

“Sectarian murders are being carried out as a point-scoring strategy by extremists on both sides. This is not for money. Also, many militants have their strongholds in illegal settlements on the outskirts of the city; these are huge areas where we can’t keep a check on flow of weapons or influx of militants from other parts of the country,” daily ‘Dawn’ dated 20th August 2014 is referred.

Moreover, according to DIG South Abdul Khaliq Shaikh, the *‘hands-off policy’* regarding certain hard-line *madrassahs* undermined the efforts to control religious militancy. *“There’s no search of such madrassahs and militants now; they can take shelter and keep weapons there without fear.”*

Enhanced, coordinated intelligence across provincial borders was crucial to curbing religious extremism in Karachi. Jameel Yusuf, a former CPLC chief said:

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"Terrorism, including sectarianism, cannot be effectively tackled without the activation of the National Counter Terrorism Authority and its provincial counterparts. Sectarian organisations like Lashkar-e-Jhangvi [LeJ] are based in Punjab while their activists operate in Karachi. We need to track their movements and monitor them."

Still, there was some drop registered in sectarian killings; attributed to arrest of members of extremist groups — both Sunni and Shia — during the operation by the LEAs. Several police officers maintained that:

"....this is also on account of the large number of political activists that have been taken off the streets. Some of them also engaged in sectarian killings, either because of ideological leanings or for political ends. It serves [certain political forces] to demonstrate that without involving them there can be no peace in the city."

In several instances, digital forensics analysis had determined that the *same weapon was used to murder both Sunnis and Shias* on ostensibly sectarian lines. It clearly indicated that certain mercenaries were available on hire or rent for killing and perhaps the payments were being made per casualty; thus any group could avail their services. An intelligence officer held:

"There are wheels within wheels where the violence in Karachi is concerned. The latest spate could also be linked to the protest marches in Islamabad, in order to put more pressure on the central government."

The unrelenting pace of killings of policemen — which actually touched 25 in January that year alone — speaks to the viciousness of the conflict that was raging in Karachi between militants of all stripes and law enforcement personnel. DIG Police East was upset while saying:

"Demoralising the police force is part and parcel of terrorism. It's a tragedy that hardly any of these cases are being pursued. The value of a cop is now Rs:2 million in compensation dues but it's a huge loss to the state in terms of training and manpower; if at all you ignore the humanity factor."

The limitations of the Karachi police were a significant factor in the continued existence of militants' safe havens in parts of the city despite numerous Rangers and police joint raids. A security expert held:

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"The Rangers enter 'no-go' areas in convoys of 20 vehicles with mobile jammers etc. The local police on the other hand have one mobile, with only seven litres of fuel allowance per day.

All said and done, to make a far-reaching, sustainable improvement in Karachi's crime graph, there is no substitute for a well-equipped and depoliticised police force."

On 10th September 2014; religious cleric *Dr Maulana Masood Baig* associated with Jamia Binoria was gunned down in North Nazimabad area of Karachi. Dr Masood, son-in-law of prominent religious scholar Mufti Naeem was chief administrator in girls' education wing of Jamia Binoria and was also discharging his duties as a lecturer at University of Karachi.

While those high profile killings were blamed on the fresh wave of sectarian killings, the IG Sindh police and religious circles suspected that a 'third force' was behind them. Dr Masood Baig was targeted while he was driving his car to pick up his children from a private school in North Nazimabad's Hyderi Market.

As Dr Baig slowed down the vehicle near the KDA Chowrangi, gunmen on a motorcycle opened fire on him and fled. He sustained multiple bullet wounds and was taken to a private hospital, where doctors declared him dead. Later the body was taken to the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital for a post-mortem examination. Investigators found six spent bullets of a 0.9mm pistol at the crime scene.

Dr baig dropped his children at Falcon Grammar School in North Nazimabad in the morning and went to KU. Later he visited his parents' home in Azizabad from where he was supposed to pick up his children before coming to the seminary on whose premises he lived. Taking notice of the killing of the teacher, the authorities removed the Central SSP and demoted the SHO concerned.

In the second attack, a 30-year-old man was shot dead in Sharifabad at noon. Qasim aka Danish Raza was sitting at his shop in FC Area when gunmen riding a motorcycle and wearing helmets attacked him. He sustained three bullet wounds and was taken to the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. A spokesman for the *Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat* [ASWJ] said the victim was a worker of the party. The victim, father of three, was a resident of Orangi Town.

In the third such killing, Imran Ali 35, was gunned down in Surjani Town locality. The victim was sitting at his TV repair shop in *Khuda Ki Basti* when

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gunmen riding a motorcycle targeted him. The victim was the MQM's worker and a Shiite also. MWM told that Imran Ali was an organiser of processions while he was the party's circle in-charge.

On the face of it, Dr Masood Baig's murder was seen as a tit-for-tat response to two recent killings.

A week earlier, *Allama Ali Akbar Kumaili*, son of Jafria Alliance Pakistan Chief, Allama Abbas Kumaili, was shot dead. Before that, in July 2014, a senior lawyer and son-in-law of prominent Shia scholar Allama Talib Jauhari was killed while on his way home from court. The IGP told the media that an alleged killer of the son-in-law of Allama Talib Jauhari was arrested recently while another suspect was killed in an 'encounter'.

[On 6th September 2014; Allama Ali Akbar Kumaili, son of Shia scholar Allama Abbas Kumaili was gunned down by unidentified assailants in the Sindh capital; the incident took place in Azizabad neighbourhood.

Allama Kumaili was accompanied by his two guards when he was targeted while going home from his ice factory.

Akbar Kumaili was shot three times and was taken to a local hospital in critical condition where he later succumbed to his wounds. Majlis Wahdatul Muslimeen [MWM] and Tahaffuz Azadari Council [TAC] strongly condemned the incident and announced to observe a three-day mourning, which was later endorsed by Muttahida Qaumi Movement.]

In August 2014; a Shia man and his daughter were killed; his wife and daughter injured in a sectarian attack. While one could scarcely hope for a 'code of honour' among those who used to commit murder in the name of religion, it seemed that the benchmark of savagery had risen further. Even the much-vaunted Karachi Operation was unable to stop sectarian killers running amok.

The trick had worked well, as lawyers, doctors, clerics, shopkeepers, students - all Shia, and all targeted by bullets intended for them - had fallen; the government had barely noticed.

According to a press conference held by the *Majlis e Wahdatul Muslimeen* [MWM] in Karachi's Soldier Bazaar Area in mid September, 160 Shia had been killed in the city till that day of the year, despite a military and police

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combined operation to crack down on the extremist groups that have made this their agenda. It included five lawyers, five doctors, five engineers, three professors and 21 traders.

The series of sectarian deaths come in spurts; that most recent series began with Shia cleric Allama Kumaili's assassination. From the shower of bullets directed his way, two found their way to his chest and one to his abdomen. He died at the scene.

Five days later, Dr Maulana Masood Baig, the famous Sunni cleric was shot dead. He met with a barrage of bullets and died at the scene, too. A PhD scholar, his dissertation had been entitled *"Islam's Philosophy of Brotherhood and Tolerance"*. While Karachi deeply ensconced in hatred, it seemed, the propagators of such learning were destined for death.

In the midst of these two more high profile killings, and before and after, others more ordinary met their deaths. That particular strain of local killings in Karachi, lining up bodies in its morgues, connected then to a global blood lust as the IS was propagating, whose seeds were sown; germinating and growing in Pakistan's largest city, without anyone at all to stop them.

SAFOORA GOTH MASSACRE:

The holy month of Muharram could be a dangerous time in Pakistan. It marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar but is also a period of mourning more for Shiite Muslims though the other sects also respect the day equally. Each year, huge processions are seen in streets to observe Ashura. Over the past few years, with astonishing punctuality, Shiite processions and mosques have been brutally attacked allegedly by some Sunni militants bent on starting a sectarian war in Karachi.

In 2009, two bombs exploded along the Ashura '*jaloos*' route, splattering the concrete street with human entrails and shredded clothing, and killing 30 at the spot.

[On 28th December 2009; *the Ashura procession was on its settled rout, the attacker had been walking amidst them with tens of thousands of people – then there was a sudden explosion. Police later found the severed head of the suicide bomber. After the explosion, marchers turned their anger on ambulance workers, security forces and journalists.*

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The mourners torched dozens of shops and vehicles, while members of the security forces who had been guarding the procession were pelted with stones. Karachi Mayor Mustafa Kamal appealed for calm urging that it was what terrorists aimed at; the city was once again on fire.]

On 22nd November 2012: in Orangi Town neighbourhood, two bomb blasts killed five people, as the city's undaunted Shiites were continuing with their mourning processions.

Understandably, Karachi's streets were tense on the ninth night of Muharram in 2012, as final preparations were being made for the Ashura festivities. Nervous government officials had cut cell phone service across the city for 11 hours that day, hoping to prevent attacks. Some 10,000 police officers had been dispatched to the main parade route, though in a city with about 20 million people, even that show of force was only a drop in the bucket.

Shiite vs. Sunnis row always remained a matter of concern for the respective city admin and Sindh governments in Karachi.

On 13th May 2015; 45 people were killed and 13 injured in a gun attack on a bus carrying *Ismaili Shia* Muslims, carrying men, women and children, in Karachi. Six gunmen on motorcycles had stopped the bus and fired indiscriminately at passenger; 9 mm pistols were also used in that heinous criminal act. Pakistani Taliban [TTP]'s splinter group *Jundullah*, through their spokesman Ahmed Marwat; and Islamic State [IS] in Khorasan [ISIS' affiliate in Afghanistan], both claimed they had carried out the attack.

The attack was the second deadliest in Pakistan that year after 62 Shia Muslims were killed in a suicide bombing in January.

This was the first such attack on the *Ismaili* community in Pakistan, and it was shocking even by the standards of Karachi. The sheer numbers of casualties and the manner in which they were killed provide an uneasy contrast with the peaceful image of this *Shia* sect in Pakistan.

Ismailis consider the Aga Khan their hereditary spiritual guide. They mostly inhabit the Himalayan region of northern Pakistan, but also have a significant presence in Karachi where they run businesses and charities, and tend to use community - built accommodation and transport. Both the PM Nawaz

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Sharif and the Army Chief Raheel Sharif had set aside other engagements to head for Karachi immediately because the attack was likely to cause diplomatic tensions for Islamabad as the Aga Khan IV has been a major source of development funds.

Pakistan's Army Chief Gen Raheel Sharif had cancelled a trip to Sri Lanka and while leading the investigation, ordered its Rangers to handle the case at priority. Those days Karachi was being cleansed by the Rangers through drastic operations against the illicit arms dealers and target killers. With about 20% Shia population, Karachi had got a reputation for persistent sectarian violence and marked killings since a decade.

About 60 people were on the bus when it was stopped in the Safoora Chowk area on its way to the *Ayesha Manzil Ismaili Centre*. "As the gunmen, dressed as policemen uniforms, climbed on to the bus, one of them shouted, 'kill them all,'" a survivor told the media. "Then they started indiscriminately firing." The bus driver was killed and an injured passenger drove the bus to Memon Hospital Institute. The bus was making one of five daily scheduled trips between a gated community housing mainly *Ismailis* on the north - eastern outskirts and the main city.

[Ismaili Shias, in common with other Shia Muslims, revere Hazrat Ali RAU, the 4th Caliph, but they also revere the Imam Ismail who died in 765 AD. They read and believe the Koran and other Islamic rituals like all other Muslims by all means in acts and appearances. There are about 15 million Ismailis in more than 25 countries, including half a million in Pakistan.

Spiritual leader Prince Karim Aga Khan is a philanthropist and business magnate. He gives his name to bodies including a university, a foundation, and the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has encouraged Ismailis settled in the industrialised world to contribute to those communities.]

Ismaili spiritual leader Prince Karim Aga Khan issued a statement the "attack represented a senseless act of violence against a peaceful community". In fact the said attack marked a new low in a campaign of sectarian violence that left Pakistan's religious minorities fearing for their lives. The killings event was a deplorable attempt to spread chaos while the extremists in the country were operating with impunity. *Jundullah* group had carried out the attack because it considered the victims to be infidels; threats of more attacks against Ismailis, Shias and Christians were feared.

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[Most Pakistanis do not remember that in the year 1906, the imam of the same Ismaili Muslim community had led the process of forming a political platform for South Asian Muslims at a meeting of the All-India Muhammadan Educational Conference in Dhaka. Sir Sultan Muhammed Shah Aqa Khan III suggested the name of the party – *All India Muslim League* – and was elected its first president.

Seven years later, a young Mumbai based lawyer, also belonging to the Ismaili community, left the Indian National Congress and joined the party founded by his spiritual leader. That charismatic lawyer turned the party into the voice of Indian Muslims and changed the course of history by founding a new state 34 years later, named Pakistan, when he was a terminally ill old man – he was *Muhammad Ali Jinnah later known as Quad e Azam*.

Starting its journey as an Islamic state, Pakistan by now had become a sectarian state where Ismailis, along with Shias and non-Muslim minorities, were misfits. Some clerics used to call Jinnah as the Great Infidel and Allama Iqbal was also labelled so. Interestingly, in the case of His Highness Aga Khan, it was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who raised the question of him not being perfect Muslim while Allama Iqbal had defended his teachings through an article.

Unlike the Middle East where empires with rival sectarian allegiances had created much bad blood, in South Asia there was enough space for Lal Shahbaz Qalandar to turn himself into an eagle and fly unhindered and for Shah Waliullah to carry out his scholarly work. Referring to 'the News' dated 22nd May 2015;

"What changed things in Pakistan for Ismailis – and for everyone else – was the attitude of the state. Over time, the Pakistani state has assumed a sectarian character and its religious institutions have become blatantly sectarian; International Islamic University in Islamabad is an example with the president of Pakistan as its chancellor.

The attack on Ismailis in Karachi was preceded by a fatwa against the whole denomination from one of the country's most influential madrassahs. Violent extremism is only a fruit of the tree the state itself had planted."]

Coming back to the Safoora Goth event; the gunmen appeared to have been well-prepared for the attack. Most of the victims were shot in the head, SSP East Karachi told later. The attack was "*disturbing in terms of*

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the fact that definition of who is a proper Muslim is shrinking as far as the extremist groups are concerned," the general populace worried. 26 males and 17 females were killed; the youngest person died was 16 years old.

The multiple claims of responsibility from the Islamic State in Khorasan, and the TTP's Jundullah only reinforced the fractured, opportunistic and at times competitive nature of Pakistan's militant landscape. The relationship between Jundullah and ISIS mostly remained unclear in Pakistan. Jundullah had joined the ISIS fold during November 2014 though the ISIS had not publicly acknowledged the pledge.

Apparently, it was unlikely for TTP to collaborate openly and directly with ISIS in launching an attack because of their publicly known loyalty to Mullah Omar rather than ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. However, the possibility could not be ruled out because several Pakistani Taliban leaders had defected to ISIS during 2014 after losing out in a power struggle. If the ISIS was there, it was the group's first significant attack in Pakistan - a move likely designed to boost its profile and stir sectarian tensions.

In December 2015, the Ministry of Interior approved the transfer and trial of 18 cases, including the Safoora Goth massacre and the murder of Sa-been Mahmud, to the military courts.

On 12th May 2016; Chief of Army Staff Gen Raheel Sharif signed the death warrants of five "*hard core terrorists*", said a statement released by the Inter-Services Public Relations [ISPR]. It said the culprits were convicted for "*perpetrating Safoora bus attack and were also involved in improvised explosive device (IED) blast near Saleh Masjid Karachi, killing of social worker Sabeen Mahmud and attacks on law enforcement agencies.*" The convicts were:

- Saad Aziz alias Tin Tin - tried on nine charges
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- Tahir Hussain Minhas alias Sain - tried on ten charges
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- Asad-ur-Rehman alias Malik - tried on four charges
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- Hafiz Nasir alias Yasir - tried on four charges
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- Mohammad Azhar Ishrat alias Majid - tried on five charges

The convicts admitted their offences before the trial court, added the statement from ISPR.

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Saad Aziz - a student from one of Pakistan's finest and most prestigious business schools could become a "*trained militant who provided funds for terror activities*" in the city was difficult to understand for many. He was a BBA graduate from the reputable Institute of Business Administration [IBA] - had also confessed to masterminding the murder of human rights activist Sabeen Mahmud.

Five eye-witnesses had identified suspects Saad Aziz and Tahir Hussain for their involvement in the Safoora Goth carnage; eye-witnesses included two women and were those who were injured in the attack. The witnesses had rightly picked up the accused during the identification parade held in the court of a judicial magistrate in Malir.

Previously an eye-witness had identified Saad Aziz, the main accused in the *attempted murder of American educationist Debra Lobo*, as the man who shot at the US national.

Ms Lobo, a US national and vice principal of Karachi's Jinnah Medical and Dental College, was shot at and wounded in the month of April 2015 when four suspected terrorists on two motorcycles attacked her on *Shaheed e Millat* Road.

AFTERMATH OF SAFOORA EPISODE:

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan [HRCP] said that 2,909 people including some 142 law enforcement personnel from police and paramilitary rangers were killed in the year 2014. The law enforcement agencies [LEAs] also killed 594 suspected criminals and militants during January-December that year as violence continued to plague Pakistan's biggest city – Karachi; the 'dna India' dated 7th January 2015 is referred.

The HRCP report also cited that around 134 political activists of different political parties were killed in the city in different incidents of targeted killings; also 340 bodies were found in different areas of the city.

Targeted killings, sectarian violence and terrorist attacks continued throughout the year in Karachi, Pakistan's financial hub and biggest revenue generating region which had been blighted by political and ethnic unrest for years.

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The HRCP report says that as many as *120 people were killed in sectarian violence and 89 were targeted by banned outfits while another 28 lost their lives in bomb blasts*. Those who were killed included 154 women and 78 children in different incidents of murders, targeted killings, kidnappings, bomb blasts or on sectarian grounds. Six women were also victims of honour killings in the city as the highest number of people killed occurred in March 2014 when 281 persons lost their lives.

On 4th March 2015; a senior Shiite lawyer, who was also a counsel for several activists of the MQM was shot dead in Karachi's Korangi area. Two motorcycle riding gunmen intercepted Advocate Ali Hasnain Bukhari's vehicle as he left his residence for work. The assailants shot the lawyer three times and managed to escape from the site after the attack. The victims succumbed to his wounds while being shifted to a hospital.

The senior lawyer was also a member of the MQM's legal aid committee and was representing several party workers in cases related to enforced disappearances and arrests during the ongoing operation in Karachi. The killing was the fourth incident of its kind during the past week. The Sindh Bar Council, an apex lawyers' body at the provincial level, gave the call for boycott of courts across the province in protest against the targeted killing.

On 16th April 2015; the vice-principal of the Jinnah Medical and Dental College's student affairs wing was shot and seriously injured on Shaheed-e-Millat Road Karachi. Police told the media that a flyer was recovered from the crime scene which appeared to be from a militant group, saying the shooting was revenge for the killings of militants in the Kemari encounter that week. The leaflet found did not carry a logo of any militant organisation but claimed that they were *'lions of Islamic State'* and *'falcons of the caliph'*.

55-year-old Dr Sibte Zafar had left the college at 3pm for her home when four gunmen shot her twice in the cheek and shoulder; she was an associate professor of community medicine. She was an American national too.

On 29th April 2015; Dr Syed Wahidur Rahman, also known as Yasir Rizvi, was shot dead; he was an assistant professor of the University of Karachi [KU] and an instructor at University's Mass Communication department. It was just because the slain professor belonged to the Shia community, he was killed when four unidentified attackers riding two motorcycles opened fire on his car; he received five bullet wounds on his face, neck and chest.

Dr Wahid was an active member of the faculty and his colleagues termed it as *"great loss for the department"* and that he was a kind and polite per-

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son. He had also been working as a journalist for the past 15 years and was relatively a new staffer at the varsity but *"he was a very dedicated and honest teacher and it's possible that his killing might be related to the recent killings of teachers at KU and NED."*

Earlier in September 2014, Prof Dr Muhammad Shakeel Auj, dean of the faculty of Islamic Studies at KU was shot dead on University Road in Gulshan-i-Iqbal.

Sabeen Mahmud's Murder: In April 2015, prominent rights activist and co-founder and Director of The Second Floor [T2F], Sabeen Mahmud was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Karachi.

Sabeen, accompanied by her mother, left T2F after 9pm and was on her way home when she was shot by unidentified gunmen in Defence Phase-II. She died on her way to the hospital. Doctors said they retrieved five bullets from her body. Her mother also sustained bullet wounds, but survived the wounds.

The interrogation report of the Safoora Goth incident, interalia, told that Saad Aziz was the main suspect in the murder of rights activist Sabeen Mahmud. Before killing her, he had attended two seminars at her social forum, Titled as *The Second Floor*; a picture was available in police file in which he was seen sitting there. The file carried the material that:

"Saad Aziz hatched a plan to kill Sabeen Mahmud as he did not like her views about Lal Masjid cleric, Valentine's Day and Burqa [veil]."

On the day of her killing, Saad Aziz, Ali Rehman, Haif Umer, Mehmood (code name) and Tayab (code name) were present at the crime scene, the police investigator report contained.

As Ms Mahmud left her office along with her mother and driver in a car, Saad Aziz and Mehmood chased them on their motorcycle and targeted her at the Defence traffic signal before fleeing."

On 2nd July 2015; Raja Umer Khattab, an official of the Counter-Terrorism Department [CTD] of Karachi police released a report and made it open before the media that the militants involved in the killing of 47 Shia Ismailis near Safoora Goth were inspired by the self-styled Islamic State. Raja Umer also addressed a press conference and said:

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"The militants established their own group in the year 2014 but they did not give it a name. This group is inspired by terror activities of Islamic State [IS] or Daish and wanted to establish their link with it.

They were previously associated with Al-Qaeda but last year Tahir alias Minhas alias Sain, the key suspect in the Safoora bus attack case, developed some differences with another militant, Jalal, over provision of funds and other organizational matters. Later, Tahir established his own group while Jalal remained associated with Al-Qaeda.

Possibly Jalal-led Al-Qaeda militants were involved in the recent killing of two deputy superintendents of police, one superintendent of police and other police officers.

The interrogation by a Joint Investigation Team [JIT] of the five detained suspects had been completed. Besides Tahir, the other four suspects were Saad Aziz, Hafiz Nasir Ahmed, Mohammed Azhar Ishrat and Asad Rehman."

The polygraph test of the suspects corroborated their confession about their involvement in over two dozen terror attacks. No one could rule out the possibility of links of Jalal-led militants with Indian 'RAW' or other anti-Pakistan agency.

The Police record later revealed that the militants had planned to target Ismaili community members two months ago. They had made track record of the bus five times and prepared a map in which six points were shown. At least 10 militants actually took part in the terror act while their two accomplices were present in their cars at nearby places.

On that black day at least six attackers got into the bus. Some of them were wearing police uniform, others were clad in *shalwar-qameez* and trousers and shirts. Four of the attackers fired at the passengers, another drove the bus while one stood on the door so that no one could escape. The attackers used foreign weapons and that they executed the plan within 10 to 12 minutes.

The Counter Terrorism files of Karachi Police kept enough material to prove that Tahir Minhas had been associated with the Al-Qaeda group which was active in Karachi and Hyderabad, while their local leader was Jalal who along with *Haji Sahib* [elder brother of Ramzi Yusuf] used to provide funds to terrorists. Jalal was associated with Al-Qaeda's Arab network while *Haji*

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Sahib (code name) was active in Karachi and Wadh area of Balochistan where mainly the Baloch youths were involved in kidnapping for ransom, terrorism and attacks on NATO containers.

The files also contained photos of the Al-Qaeda members, identified as Hasan Masood, Mohammed Amir Khan, Irshadullah and Kamran Aslam, who were allegedly involved in the recent killing of policemen.

On 12th October 2015; Inspector General Police [IGP] Sindh Ghulam Hyder Jamali, while briefing the Standing Committee on Interior, claimed that *'100 per cent of all high-profile murder cases – including those of Parveen Rehman and Abbas Kumaili's son – have been solved'* - there was a 98pc decline in cases of kidnapping for ransom and theft due to National Action Plan strategy.

The Sindh IGP also told the Standing Committee that Daesh or the self-styled Islamic State [IS] and the banned sectarian militant group *Lashkar e Jhangvi* [LJ] were linked to each other. Referring to the Safoora attack suspects, he told they had been involved with *Daesh* for at least a year and had been receiving instructions from one Abdul Aziz located in Syria.

Six laptops containing sensitive information were recovered from the suspects and decrypted. A 'hit-list' of to-be-targeted officials was also recovered from the Safoora suspects which included known Fashion Designers, politicians and professors.

IGP Jamali said that during that year, 166 Al Qaeda affiliated terrorists, 644 other terrorists and 186 members of Lyari gangs were arrested in Karachi. Action had also been taken against the facilitators and doctors who had treated injured Afghan nationals in the city. Senior police official Chaudhry Aslam Khan, who was killed in January 2014, had been targeted by Al Qaeda affiliates in Karachi.

CRACKDOWN URGED ONCE MORE:

Referring to the 'Express Tribune' dated 9th September 2015:

In a meeting held at the CM House to review the implementation of NAP in the province, Sindh Home Secretary Mukhtar Soomro presented the same three months old figures:

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“As many as 3,662 madrassas in Sindh [2,122 in Karachi, 1,548 in Hyderabad] have so far been geo-tagged as part of the National Action Plan [NAP] to see exact location of these seminaries; out of 9,590 madrassas found in the province, 6,503 were registered.”

IG Sindh Ghulam Hyder Jamali disclosed that they had sealed 167 *madrassas* in the province owing to different reasons. Also that while searching 21 suspected seminaries in Karachi, Hyderabad and Badin, they had recovered hate material from some of them.

On 10th September 2015; in a high-level meeting to review progress of the implementation of the National Action Plan [NAP], the country's top civil-army leadership approved countrywide crackdown against sectarianism. Interior Minister Ch Nisar told:

“It was unanimously decided during today's meeting of the country's top civil-military leadership that elements challenging the writ of the state would be eliminated. It has been decided that there will be zero tolerance for hate speech and hate literature from any side.

There will be no tolerance for calling each other infidel or liable to be killed; there is a very thin line between sectarianism and terrorism. They both go hand-in-hand.”

The meeting had discussed introducing fresh legislation, seeking to completely ban sectarianism and its financiers – but no implementation seen even after a year.

About seminaries, it was resolved that the process of their scrutiny would continue with consultation of their leadership; *ulemas* should portray the narrative of Islam and Pakistan rather of those who kill the innocent. The federal government would keep an eye on international NGOs, and regulate them while at the same time, the provincial governments were also required to regulate the local NGOs. A regulatory policy for the NGOs was being sent to the concerned.

Over 0.5 million weapons were confiscated by law enforcers during crackdown against those holding illegal weapons – but no systematic process of the next actions were available with the government. It was evident that those weapons would one day be declared ‘stolen’ from police stations and would again be sold to the same owners by some rogue police *moharrars*.

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On 19th December 2015; the Counter Terrorism Department claimed to have arrested a highly educated private university executive for facilitating the militants involved in Safoora Goth tragedy. At a press conference, Raja Umar Khattab told that suspect Adil Masood Butt had been taken into custody during a raid at his residence in Defence Housing Authority. Butt was BSc in Management from Indiana University, Bloomington and MBA from Fordham University and said to be a member of the board of governors at the Karachi-based educational institute College of Accounting and Management Sciences [CAMS].

The accused Adil Butt was in the CTD preventive custody for 90 days. He was also the business partner of Saad Aziz, one of the key - suspects of Safoora Goth carnage. Scores of other suspects had already been arrested and all such terrorists were highly educated professionals.

Several attacks on the Army and Rangers personnel during the last two months of the year 2015 indicated the existence of sophisticated terrorists in the city. As per sources, about 28 surveillance cameras were installed around the CM House but only 15 out of them were functioning while the remaining 13 including vehicles checking cameras were out of order; what the common Karachiites could think about level of security for themselves.

Referring to the 'Dawn' dated 8th April 2016:

In its latest security report, the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies [PIPS] reported a 53pc increase in sectarian violence for 2013. More than 85pc of such attacks and 68pc of the people killed were concentrated in Karachi, Quetta, Gilgit and Kurram Agency.

In year 2015, as many as 212 were killed in 132 sectarian-related attacks in Karachi. However, a cycle of tit-for-tat sectarian killings on city's streets since 2011 sparked ethno-political violence with various sectarian outfits contributing to the growing body count.

The banned sectarian group *Lashkar e Jhangvi* [LeJ], sharing operational and ideological ties with *Tehreek e Taliban* Pakistan [TTP], demonstrated how militancy elsewhere in the country affected the city through a lethal nexus; SSP Ch Aslam, the head of the Sindh police's CID, was assassinated in Karachi in January 2014, confirmed that hard binding. The leader of LeJ's Balochistan wing, Usman Saifullah Kurd, was also connected with city's sectarian militants.

SSP Aslam had said in his 7th January 2014 interview that:

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"...after the crackdown against LeJ in Karachi and Punjab, their cadres have found sanctuaries in the tribal areas. In the raid of last November [2013], we had killed LeJ's Karachi chief Gul Hasan, involved in suicide attacks on the Haideri mosque and Imam-bargah Ali Raza [in 2004] and an attack on the Chief Justice of the Sindh High Court, Justice Maqbool Baqar in August 2013."

Ideological and turf wars between the *Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat / Sipah e Sahaba Pakistan*, following the Sunni Deobandi school and the Barelvi Sunnis, represented mainly by the *Sunni Tehreek*, added to this volatile situations however, they could not be differentiated as terrorist groups and sectarian outfits separately.

Nobody exactly knew what had been the background factor of the sectarian violence; whether it was expected Islamisation of laws, specific religious education, parallel judicial systems, politicisation of the administration, failure of the state and the military, the marginalisation of secular forces or what else.

Links of various sects with different countries and huge funding from them could be part of the explanation [consider proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran]. Leaders of supposedly banned groups such as the SSP operated with virtual immunity, using new avenues like social media to propagate their militant ideas and enter electoral politics aligned to mainstream political parties – also remained cogent factors.

Shiite political party *Majlis e Wahdatul Muslimeen* [MWM] claimed *'they do not indulge in violent killing'*; cogent reports were awaited to confirm the claims.

The cost of militancy always included damage to the economy, national security, citizen morale and political stability. Shrinking space for an alternative liberal discourse was evident as political patronage for the religious right went unchecked with banned extremist organisations and *madressahs* raising their public profile, providing endless recruits and sectarian-oriented curricula and publications to further fuel intolerance and bigotry.

As Karachi's sectarian militants conduct 'businesses' on home turf with their political utility intact, the consequences mainly remained uncertain.

On 9th April 2016; three people were shot dead in the city's North Karachi area; the victims, all of whom belonged to the Shiite community, had just offered Friday prayers at the Najaf Imam-bargah. The victims were riding a

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motorbike and were attacked near *Shafiq Mor*; one was a gold medallist in applied physics while the other two were father and son.

This was the first major incident of sectarian violence in Karachi in 2016. Incidents of sectarian violence had decreased since early 2015, but professionals continued to be targeted on the basis of their faith.

As per HRCP report, during the year 2015, as many as 58 incidents of sectarian violence were reported – nearly half as many as those in 2014. Several thousand citizens belonging to religious minority communities had left the country over the past few years *"on account of faith-based violence, discrimination and persecution"*.

Police sources said that three elements — a political party, banned sectarian outfits and hired assassins — were responsible for the killings of the law-enforcers in the metropolis over the past few years.

On 6th September 2016; the anti-terrorism police claimed busting a group of hit men and capturing five suspects who had been carrying out sectarian killings in the city for the past several years; the arrests were made during raids conducted in District East neighbourhood.

The target killers were identified as Syed Amir Hussain Rizvi alias Babar alias Irfan, Zainul Abideen alias Sunny, Faizyaab Ali alias Isphan alias Sheraz, Syed Mohsin Hussain alias Talha alias Pagal and Syed Mohammad Abbas alias Ashir alias Hamza.

The police found lethal weapons including 9mm pistols on the suspects, who were taken to the CTD HQ for questioning. The seized weapons and bullets were sent to the Sindh Police's Forensic Division, which confirmed that the same guns had been used in several sectarian killings in Karachi. The arrests were made in the murder case of a known religious scholar, who was targeted in Gulistan-e-Jauhar a few weeks ago.

The accused admitted to murdering Hafiz Mohammad Sajid in Shah Faisal Colony, Habibur Rehman in Gulistan-e-Jauhar, Dr Fazalur Rehman in Landhi and Mufti Ghulam Akbar and Mufti Kamran Hussain in Gulshan-e-Iqbal this year. The sectarian activists had been active in the city since 2014, and last year they targeted Iftekhar Ahmed in Jamshed Quarters, Naseem Khan and Asif in the airport police remit, besides attacking Maulana Yasir and injuring Ahmed in Gulistan-e-Jauhar.

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In 2013-14, the suspects had gunned down Qari Ghulam Sarwar in Samanabad, Essa in Boat Basin, Mohammad Imran in New Karachi and Mohammad Tanveer and Mohammad Tauseef in Khokharapar; efforts were being done to extract information about those who were working with them as facilitators.

JUNDALLAH IN KARACHI:

Jundallah [Soldiers of God] is a terrorist militant group associated with the Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan [TTP] and its initial recruited strength was 10,000 to 12,000. From the first day it remained associated with the TTP, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan [IMU] and kept its links with Khorasan, an outfit based in Afghanistan NOT the Province of Uzbekistan.

The Pakistani Jundallah should not to be confused with Jundallah of Iran or Lebanon.

The later reports confirmed that the said Pakistani Jundallah had emerged in 2003 after the 9/11 attacks. But the fact remained that it used to be one of the anti-Shia franchises of the TTP, which operated under different names in different parts of Pakistan. *Mainly based in the port city of Karachi*, the group had reorganised itself four times since its inception in 2003 and following the deaths and arrests of its leaders and members by the LEAs.

The Jundallah group was commanded by a known TTP's Chief Hakimullah Mehsud until his death *on 1st November 2013*.

[The name Jundallah also remained linked to a similar organization based in Balochistan supposedly led by one Abdul Malek Riggi, a Sunni Iranian Baloch who was fighting against Iran for their alleged mistreatment of Sunnis.

Later, Riggi was caught and hanged in Iran in 2010. His brother Ali Riggi took over the leadership of Jundallah, which turned against Pakistan for unknown reasons and was helping various sectarian groups, mainly the TTP and the LeJ, in targeting Shias and security forces in Balochistan.]

However, referring to 'The Friday Times' of 14th November 2014; Karachi - based Jundallah was a separate group; its creation was in fact a prime example of Al Qaeda's changing face in Pakistan. This Karachi based

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group was founded by one Attaur Rehman, a Karachi University student of Statistics and a leader of *Jamaat e Islami* [JI]'s student wing *Islami Jamiat e Talba* [IJT].

Rehman's journey towards terrorism started in 1991, when he went to Afghanistan to receive military training at a *jihadi* camp set up by *Harkatul Mujahideen*, close to the Afghan border.

Rehman told his interrogators that he formed *Jundullah* after the arrest of top Al Qaeda operatives in March 2003, including Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, the alleged mastermind of the 9/11 terrorist attacks who was caught from the residence of serving deputy mayor Rawalpindi and was a JI leader. He was Ahmed Abdul Qudoos, whose wife, Farzana Qudoos, was also an office - bearer of the Rawalpindi chapter of the JI.

Karachi Police had come to know about *Jundallah* much late when it launched a terrorist attack on Muharram procession in the city that killed more than 45 people. Attaur Rehman was arrested in June 2004 on charges of masterminding a series of terrorist attacks targeting security forces and government installations. The eldest son of a local businessman, he grew up in a middle-class neighbourhood and worked actively for JI.

Ataur Rehman was then patronised by the South Waziristan-based Taliban commander, Nek Mohammad. Barely six days after the botched attack on 10th June 2004 on Gen Aslam Hayat, then Corps Commander Karachi, Nek Mohammad was killed in the first-ever US drone strike on the Pakistani soil, on 17th June 2004.

Ataur Rehman remained imprisoned in the Karachi Central Jail, but was lucky enough to have dodged the gallows even after lapse of ten years, as the Sindh High Court had not decided his appeal against the death sentence handed down by the Karachi ATC.

[On 14th June 2002; two militants from the group, including its Chief, perpetrated a bomb attack on the US consulate in Karachi; twelve people were killed and 51 injured.

A group called al-Qanoon claimed responsibility for the attack. The said group was believed to be connected with al-Qaeda and Harkat ul Mujahideen, then a large insurgent organisation. In November 2004, the alleged mastermind of the attack, named Naveedul Hassan, was arrested.

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The attack was similar to the bombing of the Egyptian embassy in Islamabad in 1996 which was later claimed by Al Qaeda leader and Osama Bin Laden's deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri.

It is believed that the Jundallah was in making then and it was why Al-Qanoon was coined and named.]

Jundallah group's most famous attack till then was of 10th June 2004 in which they had tried to blow up the convoy of Gen Ahsan Saleem Hyat, the then Karachi Corps Commander near Clifton Bridge Karachi. Eleven people were killed and another 12 injured in the attack. The corps commander, however, escaped unhurt in the ambush.

[Then Jundallah was a well-knit cell comprising of some 20 militants, most of them working-class professionals in their twenties and thirties.]

Death penalty was awarded to 11 activists of this group including its leader named Qasim Toori, on 22nd February 2006 but they had approached Sindh High Court in appeal against verdict awarded by the Anti-Terrorism Court Karachi.

Among those arrested for their association with Jundallah were Akmal Waheed, a cardiologist, and his brother Arshad Waheed, an orthopaedic surgeon. Caught in 2004, the two men were active members of *Jamaat e Islami* [JI] and were associated with their medical wing, the *Pakistan Islamic Medical Association*.

Both member doctors were accused of providing medical help and shelter to top Al Qaeda fugitives, including Abu Massab, Gul Hasan and Qassam-al-Sani, who were injured during attack on Gen Hayat, and Attaur Rehman's deputy Shahzad Bajwa alias Abdullah, after he sustained injuries during an attack on a Pakistan Rangers vehicle in Karachi.

Police found their contact information in Attaur Rehman's cell-phone, and they had used a car rented by Rehman, who had admitted close links with the two men.

The doctor brothers were sentenced to seven years of rigorous imprisonment on 14th March 2006, only to be acquitted three months later for lack of evidence - on 11th July – after they challenged the verdict. But the doctor brothers' Jundallah and al-Qaeda connections were firmly estab-

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lished when Dr Arshad Waheed was killed in a US drone attack in South Waziristan in March 2008.

[On 16th March 2008; *an American drone attack was launched on a house in South Waziristan in which 16 people were killed at the spot; later four injured persons also died making the toll as 20.*

Dr Arshad Waheed was amongst the killed ones; he was running his dedicated free clinic for the Jihadis in that house.]

Jamaat e Islami [JI] was highly critical of those arrest, but was embarrassed when Al Qaeda's media wing *Al Sahab* Media Foundation soon released the third part of a series of videos entitled '*The Protectors of the Sanctuary*'. The 40-minute video, their first ever Urdu production, commemorated Dr Arshad Waheed as a martyr.

[The said video was given shape by Al-Qaeda's then chief operational commander, Mustafa Abu Yazid, who had earlier claimed responsibility for the assassination of Benazir Bhutto on 27th December 2007, to announce an open tribute to Dr Arshad Waheed through that video message.]

However, the *Jamaat e Islami* had denied any link with those who were involved in terrorism saying that '*past association of someone with the JI cannot be proof of its link with someone's present activities*'.

On 29th February 2012; 18 Shia Muslims travelling from Rawalpindi to Gilgit on a bus were stopped in Kohistan and massacred based on their religious affiliation by individuals dressed in Military uniforms. After the incident, Ahmad Marwat claiming to be the commander of the banned terrorist group *Jundallah* claimed responsibility for it by contacting the media.

On 22nd June 2013; *Jundallah* claimed responsibility for the killing of 12 tourists and their Pakistani guide in Gilgit-Baltistan. The tourists were mountain-climbers who were moving ahead hoping to climb Nanga Parbat. The dead included five Ukrainians, three Chinese, other nationalities and their guide.

On 22 September 2013; a twin suicide bomb attack took place at All Saints Church in Peshawar, Pakistan in which 127 people were killed and over 250 injured. It was the deadliest attack on the Christian minority in the history of Pakistan.

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On 23 October 2014; a suicide bomber targeted Maulana Fazlur Rahman of JUI-F in Quetta, who was unhurt while three deaths occurred on spot and dozens were injured. The Maulana had a narrow escape because of the bullet-proof land cruiser he was travelling in.

On 2 November 2014; a suicide bomber attempting to enter the parade arena after flag lowering ceremony detonated explosives, killing at least 60 people, including two Rangers, and injuring more than 110 others. Victims included 10 women and 7 children. *Jundallah* claimed responsibility for the attack, positing it as retaliation for Operation Zarb e Azb.

On 17th November 2014; *Jundallah* spokesman announced allegiance of his group to the ISIS after holding a meeting with a three-member Daish delegation which had travelled from Syria under the leadership of Al Zubair Al Kuwaiti for the moot. *"They [ISIS] are our brothers, whatever plan they have we will support them,"* said Fahad Marwat, the spokesman of Jundallah in Pakistan, after the meeting.

On 30th January 2015; Jundallah carried out a powerful suicide attack on Shiite Muslims in Imam-bargah of Shikarpur when they were offering Friday Prayer. At least 49 were massacred at the spot in the mosque. While many succumbed to death as there were no ambulances in immediate movements while Pakistani Authorities were not serious concerning such group activities.

Two men suspected of facilitating that Shikarpur Imam-bargah attack were arrested after being identified by the already arrested suspects during interrogation; they had allegedly played the role of facilitator for the suicide bombers. The age of the suicide bomber was estimated to be between 18 and 20 years and before carrying out the attack on Imam-bargah, Ilyas stayed for a week with Ghulam Rasool and Khalil. Later reports told that at least 64 people were killed.

Before carrying out the Shikrapur bombing, *Jundallah* had claimed responsibility for the 26th November 2014 killing of four polio workers in Karachi, including three women.

Referring to 'the News' dated 2nd February 2015;

"An intriguing common aspect in the profiles of most of the Jundallah members is their past association with the Jamaat-e-Islami [JI] and the IJT. Jundallah, which was established by Aatur Rehman, was assisted in recruiting youngsters to wage 'jehad' by

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Karachi's Dr Arshad Waheed, an orthopaedic surgeon, his brother Dr Akmal Waheed, also a neurosurgeon and Engineer Ahsan Aziz.

They were not only active members of the JI's Medical Wing but also had close links with Syed Salahuddin - led Hizbul Mujahideen."

On 13th May 2015; *Jundallah* claimed responsibility for the Safoora Goth attack on a bus in Karachi killing 47 Aga Khan Shia Ismaili Muslims at the spot – full details have already been given in the preceding paragraphs.

On 11th November 2016; the law enforcement agencies [LEAs] killed the commander of banned *Jundallah* during an action in Hub area of Balochistan late night. Police told that Arif alias Saqib, the commander of Jundallah Pakistan, was killed in Rangers raid on a house, adding that a large cache of arms and ammunition was also recovered.