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MQM CHIEF DITCHED PAKISTAN

ALTAF DOOMED HIS OWN STATE:

On 22nd August 2016: Muttahida Qaumi Movement [MQM] Chief Altaf Hussain's attacking speech was an utter disappointment. The general populace were convinced that state institutions would use the speech as a justification for setting up hi-treason proceedings against him and like-minded MQM activists.

Parts of the speech that went viral on social media just few minutes after the violence broke out in the city's south districts showed that while addressing the MQM workers protesting outside the Karachi Press Club against "alleged enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings of workers", Hussain not only raised slogans against Pakistan but also called the country "*a cancer for the entire world*". The words were:

"Pakistan is cancer for the entire world; Pakistan is headache for the entire world. Pakistan is the epicentre of terrorism for the entire world. Who says long live Pakistan; it's down with Pakistan – 'Pakistan Murdabad [dead]'."

The London-based MQM chief then turned to the party workers for different questions about their next 'move' after leaving the hunger strike camp, suggesting that something violent should be shown to the Pak Army, Rangers and the PPP government.

"So you are moving to ARY and Samaa [TV offices] from here...right?" he asked to receive, from the crowd, a unanimous and loud reply in the affirmative.

"So you go to Samaa and ARY today and then refresh [yourself] tomorrow for the Rangers place. And tomorrow we would lock down the Sindh government building which is called Sindh Secretariat."

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The directives charged the crowd, prompting women workers whose voices could be heard over microphone raising pro-Ataf slogans: *"Bhai ka ho ik ishara, hazir hazir lahu hamara [on directives from Altaf Hussain, we can shed our blood]."*

As shown by the news channels and footage shared on social media, the final move before the violence occurred when the workers were directly interacting with Altaf Hussain over telephone; a new phenomenon the city was being seen into.

"Bhai, we just need your nod and nothing else," a woman worker was heard asking the MQM leader before receiving this from him: *"Bismillah, Bismillah, Bismillah."*

Within seconds of Mr Hussain's reply, the protesters stood up and chanted slogans in his and party's favour and left the camp. Then different voices of women emerged informing their leader over phone attached with microphone about their move. One of the voices said:

"Bhai we are moving from here to ARY and Samaa and don't you worry that we would get justice on our own".

It was on record that two TV anchors, Sami Ibrahim of ARY News and Kamran Shahid of the Express TV took the two veteran politicians, Lord Nazir Ahmed from UK and Irum Azeem Farooqui [a woman lawmaker of the MQM, who went to Twitter and announced quitting her party and the membership of the Sindh Assembly *after Altaf Hussain's said speech*] from the US who both condemned the strategic planned move of India and the MQM to disintegrate Pakistan by anyone by any way.

It was interesting to note that in his 15th August 2016's speech at Delhi Fort, the Indian Prime Minister Mr Modi had mentioned it specially that:

'Pakistan is asking for Kashmir but we'll break Pakistan to have more chunks with us...'

Exactly after a week, MQM's Hussain launched that public address of 22nd August trying to give shape to the *'holy words'* of Indian PM Modi.

Let us travel into the recent past for a while.

Years ago, *the BBC* dated *12th July 2013* had said:

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"The most powerful party in Pakistan's largest city Karachi, is run from the quiet London suburb of Edgware. But the MQM's reputation is far from peaceful - its activists on the ground are key players in Karachi's constant political strife.

MQM's party leader Altaf Hussain, who lives in self-imposed exile in London, is largely unknown in the UK, but in Pakistan he is famous for addressing mass rallies in Karachi by a conference telephone connected to loud speakers.

For years there have been claims that the MQM has been involved in violence - and for years the UK authorities have turned a blind eye.

But BBC Newsnight understands that now police in London are investigating the MQM for possible money-laundering and complaints alleging that Mr Hussain has used his base in the UK to incite violence in Pakistan."

Owen Bennett-Jones, the author of Target Britain writes in 'the guardian' of 29th July 2013:

'Anxiety about the MQM is not restricted to Pakistan. One member of the British House of Lords who has been openly critical of the MQM recently said: "If I went to Karachi now, I would be killed." Another peer has similar worries: "This is one issue I don't ask questions on. I have my child to worry about."

For more than 20 years, Altaf Hussain has operated from the north London suburb of Edgware, beyond the reach of Pakistani prosecutors. He is almost completely unknown in the UK: his four-million-plus devoted supporters live thousands of miles away.

Pakistani president Gen Musharraf implemented his National Reconciliation Order [NRO], granting most of the country's senior politicians an amnesty. One of the biggest beneficiaries was Hussain, against 72 cases were dropped, including 31 allegations of murder. The MQM rejected all the murder charges lodged against Hussain. He had said in March 1984:

"When everyone else had a province, the Mohajirs should have one too."

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In 2007, Imran Khan paid a visit to the Metropolitan police in London to hand over, he claimed, evidence of Hussain's wrongdoing. *Apparently unimpressed with the quality of that evidence, the police did not bring any charges and Khan let the issue drop.* But in May this year [2013] when PTI's Zahra Shahid Hussain, was shot down outside her home, Imran Khan openly accused the MQM of her murder.

At his [Altaf Hussain's] birthday party in 2009, he regaled his guests with a remark aimed at Pakistan's rich landowners and businessmen:

"You've made big allegations against the MQM. If you make those allegations to my face one more time you'll be taking down your measurements and we'll prepare your body bags."

Because he is in London, Hussain addresses rallies in Karachi over the telephone. Crowds gather to listen to his voice through loudspeakers. In one such speech he had this message for TV anchors:

"If you don't stop the lies and false allegations that damage our party's reputation, then don't blame me, Altaf Hussain, or the MQM if you get killed by any of my millions of supporters."

Most of his threats have been aimed at people in Pakistan but at least one was directed at the UK journalist Azhar Javaid who asked a question once too often. At a press conference in September 2011 Hussain warned Javaid that his *"body bag was ready"*.

In December 2012, Hussain had ranted:

"If your father won't give us freedom just listen to this sentence carefully: then we will tear open your father's abdomen. To get our freedom we will not only tear it out of your father's abdomen but yours as well."

On two occasions British judges have found that the MQM is a violent organisation. In 2010 a Karachi-based police officer sought asylum in the UK claiming the MQM was threatening to kill him in revenge for his having registered a case against one of its members. The judge, Lord Bannatyne, granted asylum and in his judgment accepted that:

".....the MQM has killed over 200 police officers who stood up to them in Karachi".

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The figure is often cited by the Karachi police themselves, and refers to those officers who were closely involved in Benazir Bhutto's anti-MQM crackdown in 1995, Operation Clean-up. Many of the police officers responsible have subsequently been murdered.

When asked about the allegations, MQM issued the following statement to *'the Guardian'*:

"We'd also like to point out here that it is the MQM that has been the worst victim of violence in recent history of the country. The Taliban and other jihadi elements killed scores of MQM members."

In 2013, the British police were running another MQM-related inquiry. It concerns the September 2010 murder of a senior MQM member, Imran Farooq, who was stabbed to death outside his flat in Green Lane, Edgware. The Counter Terrorism Command has launched a massive and sustained investigation into Farooq's death.

In December 2012 they [the British Police] raided the MQM's Edgware offices where they found substantial thousands of documents. Since most of the material was in Urdu and some, from MQM lawyers, was subject to client privilege, assessing it was extremely time-consuming - with 12 officers working on the case full-time and a whole range of specialists available to carry out specific tasks when needed.

In its statement to the Guardian, the MQM said:

"..... Altaf Hussain has not been arrested nor charged with any criminal offence. The police are treating Mr Hussain as one of a large number of potential witnesses in their investigation and not as a suspect."

Police raids of 2012 had turned up with £150,000 at the party's Edgware's offices and with £250,000 at Hussain's house in Mill Hill. The British Police said they were making significant progress in the Imran Farooq murder case. This remained one of the most active elements of the British Police's work. The question was: where does all the money seized in the raids and that used to buy the MQM's extensive UK property portfolio come from?

Altaf Hussain arrived in London in February 1992 and just three years later, the then PM Benazir Bhutto was asking for London's help while saying:

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"I think the British government has a moral responsibility to restrain Altaf Hussain and say you cannot use our soil for violence."

In 2002 he was issued with a UK passport. Off the record, British officials admit that the process by which he obtained nationality was flawed – a decision in January 1999 to grant him indefinite leave to remain in the UK was made as a result of a "clerical error". Despite repeated questions, the Home Office has refused to disclose what that error was.

What was the clerical error? The fact remains that once No: 10 Downing Street received a letter from Altaf Hussain, and that how the UK and the MQM have tried to conceal the true nature of their relationship. Written just two weeks after 9/11, in it Hussain said that:

".....if the UK wanted hundreds of thousands of people on the streets of Karachi denouncing terrorism he could lay that on with just five days' notice.

He could also organise human intelligence on the Taliban and could set up a network of fake aid workers in Afghanistan to back up Western intelligence gathering efforts there."

Disclosures under the Freedom of Information Act established that the letter was in fact authentic. Faced with that information, the British Foreign Office admitted it had received the letter.

As Hussain suggested in the letter, British interest in the MQM was largely driven by the perception that the party offered a defence against *jihadis*. But there was more to it than that. On the British turf other secret games were being played by the foreigners:

'Karachi is one of the few places left on earth in which the Americans let Britain take the lead. The US Consulate in Karachi no longer runs active intelligence gathering operations in the city. The British still do.

When it comes to claiming a place at the top table of international security politics – London's relationship with the MQM is a remaining toehold.'

And there's something else. The UK's Foreign & Commonwealth Office [FCO]'s most important currency is influence. Successive Pakistani governments included Altaf Hussain's parliamentary bloc in various coalition gov-

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ernments. From the FCO's point of view, it's a great source of access. Right on their doorstep, in London, they have a man with ministers in the Pakistani government.

For its part the UK government insists there is nothing unusual about its contacts with MQM and that its meetings with MQM officials are: *"a normal part of diplomatic activity around the world"*.

A key British official was asked about the MQM and asked why the UK government, so keen to declare its commitment to human rights, seemed so willing to deal with the party despite officials privately saying that it used to deploy violence to achieve its goals. She said:

"There is one thing I can assure you of – it's not a conspiracy."

A year later, *the BBC* dated 3rd June 2014 expressed the same opinion;

"MQM party leader Altaf Hussain is one of Pakistan's longest - serving and most powerful and divisive politicians.

Mr Hussain lives in self - exile in London, and has run his party from a non-descript office block in the northern suburb of Edgware since 1992. He addresses mass rallies in the southern city of Karachi by a conference telephone connected to loudspeakers.

His online critics, however, have accused him of being the leader of a "terrorist organisation and a land grabber" who is responsible for much of the ubiquitous violence and corruption that in recent years has blighted his stronghold in Karachi.

He is accused of no fewer than 30 murders in the city, allegations he strongly denies along with all the other criminal charges against him.

Following different attacks that injured him and killed his brothers and nephews, Mr Hussain requested political asylum in the UK in 1992, later gaining British citizenship.

It describes itself as a modern, secular and middle-class party that offers the best chance of opposing the rise of the Taliban in Pakistan's largest city.

But his critics - accuse him of cementing his power base through increasingly violent tactics. The list of alleged crimes includes running extortion rackets, demanding protection money, carrying out targeted killings and generally menacing the Karachi population."

CAUSE OF ALTAF BHAI'S BOIL:

On 30th July 2016; probably the most recent cause of disturbance for MQM Chief appeared when Anti-Terrorism Court [ATC] of Karachi declared that the MQM Chief Altaf Hussain and others proclaimed offenders [once again] were wanted in a 1997 triple murder case. Minhaj Qazi alias Asad, with his accomplices was booked in the murder of the then MD of the KESC [later renamed K-Electric] Shahid Hamid, his driver, and a guard in the Defence Housing Authority in 1997.

Police had submitted an investigation report in which they charge-sheeted Qazi as one of the alleged shooters saying that he and Saulat Mirza with their two accomplices had fired at the KESC MD's car with Kalashnikovs. They also named Altaf Hussain, party convener Nadeem Nusrat, London-based MQM leader Sohail Zaidi and two workers — Rashid Akhtar and Athar Hussain — as absconders in the supplementary charge sheet.

Subsequently, the court twice issued non-bailable warrants for the arrest of the absconders, but could not be executed. The court had ordered to start proceedings against the absconding accused under Sections 87 & 88 CrPC (proclamation for persons absconding and attachment of their property). On IO's recommendations, the ATC-V judge Jawaid Alam bifurcated their case and kept it dormant till their arrest.

[An ATC had already sentenced MQM worker Saulat Ali Khan, better known as Saulat Mirza, to death in 1999 in this case and he was executed in Machh jail in Balochistan in May 2015.]

Referring to 'the News' dated 4th June 2014; the Scotland Yard Police [London] confirmed that a 60-year-old man had been arrested on suspicion of money-laundering but did not name Altaf Hussain. GEO TV was the channel to break the news of Altaf's arrest exclusively but every thing was seen in doldrums and suspicion.

GEO TV also was the channel to film the North London property of Altaf Hussain being searched by around three dozen detectives from the Spe-

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cialist Operations Unit. The operation began at 5:30am and all members of the household were asked to leave the property and Altaf Hussain was arrested. Initially, the MQM denied the news of the arrest and issued several denials and later on issued a detailed press release in that regard. The Metropolitan Police confirmed that:

"We would like to inform that Mr Hussain has been very ill for past several days and only yesterday (Monday) the MQM central coordination committee discussed his health situation and contacted his personal doctor.

The doctor visited the residence of Mr Hussain and examined him. He advised to shift him to the hospital. He also consulted various specialist consultants and it was decided that today i.e. Tuesday in the morning Mr Hussain will be admitted to a London hospital where he will undergo treatment for the next few days."

However, it was not the first time that Altaf Hussain had gone off beam; see an article appearing in 'the News' dated 5th August 2015 by Malik M Ashraf titled as *The leader appears to be out of control:*

"The London based MQM supremo Altaf Hussain addressing an annual convention of the party demanded separate province for Mohajirs and during his discourse also asked the party workers to stage protest demonstrations before UN, White House and NATO HQ and ask them to send NATO troops to Karachi.

He [Altaf Hussain] also characterised India as a coward country saying had it some honour it would not have let further bloodshed of Mohajirs on Pakistani soil. He also made disparaging remarks about the Army and security institutions."

Earlier, the MQM Secretariat in London also sent a letter to the UN Secretary General alleging that its workers were being mistreated during the current security operation being conducted in Karachi and law enforcement agencies were unlawfully detaining their workers. It particularly mentioned the raid on MQM headquarters on the night of 17th June 2015 and the arrest of a member of the *Rabita Committee*.

This was not [even then] the first time that Altaf has indulged in denigrating the state institutions, security establishment and the Rangers. The reaction had however become more pronounced since the initiation of the targeted operation in Karachi after the JIT report on Baldia Town fire incident, the revelations made by the criminals arrested from and around Nine

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Zero, recovery of weapons from the MQM HQ and the confessions made by Saulat Mirza.

One could estimate the contents of his speech, the unmistakable inference drawn from it was that it had exposed the sinister designs of Altaf for the creation of a separate province for *Mohajirs*, a permeating perception among the people and security establishment of Pakistan since long, strengthened and reinforced by the culture of militancy promoted by the MQM in a systematic way. His invitation for intervention by foreign forces in Pakistan and expecting India to protect *Mohajirs* clearly pointed to treason and declaration of war against the state.

The media held that Altaf Hussain had crossed all the limits. Almost all the political forces in the country had severely condemned Altaf's tirade against the state institutions and his act of treason. No doubt, MQM as a political entity was an irrefutable reality and no one could think of depriving it of its political right to participate in the national politics.

The interior minister had rightly said that the party was a patriotic political outfit and loyalty of the supporters of the MQM to Pakistan was beyond any reproach; but he singled out MQM Chief and his London Secretariat for their anti-Pakistan stance. Thus it was a right time for MQM to revisit the contours of its political creed, come out of the denial mode regarding many alleged crimes of target killings and extortion which was pointed out by the Supreme Court in its decision of October 2011.

The targeted operation in Karachi was being carried out indiscriminately by the Rangers only against the criminals irrespective of their political affiliations and not against the MQM only. The Rangers had taken action against the criminals belonging to the PPP, ANP, *Ahl-e-Sunnat Wal Jamaat* [ASWJ] and others as well.

The PPP had also expressed resentment over Rangers' raids on Civic Centre and the Karachi Building Authority which prompted Zardari to vent his frustration through an outburst against the security agencies. However, sanity soon returned and Zardari had no other option than to retract and through under the table negotiations he, however, managed to come back to Pakistan in ending year 2016.

MQM's APPARENT U-TURN:

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The MQM dominated Sindh's urban politics for quite some time. It built a reputation on many counts including its ethnic politics, frequent shutting down the city, *bori-band* bags, *bhatta* mafia, target killings, traffic blockades with containers and, most of all, the telephonic addresses from across the borders. But one incident of 22nd August 2016 suddenly turned the tables on the party, and its exiled leadership. It started at the Karachi Press Club, and ended in a brazen attack by its workers on media offices.

This attack, instigated by the exiled leader, was nothing new but this time, the reaction was different. Altaf Hussain's anti-Pakistan address followed by high-pitched drama, in which the key player, MQM's top tier leader in Pakistan, Dr Farooq Sattar started defending his London-based leadership in press conference, explaining his characteristic tirade as a result of mental strain; then his shifting of gears – would be remembered in the history of the country for very long time.

It was 23rd August 2016; Altaf Hussain was still MQM's supreme leader and the deputy convener Farooq Sattar, in whose name the party was registered in Election Commission of Pakistan, could not change his position, much less announce disassociation with Altaf Hussain.

[In the MQM constitution, Altaf Hussain has the supreme powers; in its last chapter Altaf Hussain is recognised as Quaid. It says Altaf Hussain can form and break any body. MQM is bound to get its policy decisions endorsed by Altaf Hussain. Hence, no leader, be it the deputy convener, can take party decisions.]

In the press conference, the way Dr Farooq Sattar conveyed that the party decisions would be done at Karachi, and NOT in London, was termed as fake gesture. Dr Farooq was party's deputy convener while convener Nadeem Nusrat was in London. MQM Supreme Council had also not endorsed Dr Farooq's statements.

About 20 hours later, yet in another defence, Dr Farooq Sattar divorced MQM Karachi from MQM London, took over leadership of the local chapter, and disclaimed any utterance by the London leader. In yesteryears, such a radical move from any party leader would have been blasphemous; such was the capricious nature of politics. Apparently what Dr Farooq Sattar said signalled the end of the Altaf Hussain era in local politics.

Many political pundits refused to accept Dr Farooq Sattar's defence plea. Incidentally, the above drama was unfolded just a day before the election of the Karachi's mayor – which eventually led to an imprisoned MQM leader, Waseem Akhtar, being the new mayor of Karachi. Things were confused

in the city. By design or incidence, the MQM was seen split between two cities, two leaders, and two sets of followers – if not ideology.

On the same day of 23rd August 2016, MQM Chief Altaf Hussain apologised to Chief of Army Staff Gen Raheel Sharif and Director General [DG] Rangers Maj Gen Bilal Akber for his vitriolic speech a day earlier in which he referred to Pakistan as *“a cancer for the entire world”*. MQM spokesperson Wasay Jalil shared on Twitter:

“From the depth of heart, I beg pardon from my remarks against Pakistan, the establishment including Gen Raheel Sharif and DG Rangers.

I was under severe mental stress over extra-judicial arrests and precarious condition of my workers sitting at the hunger strike camp.”

MQM supreme also urged the authorities:

“..... to end all steps taken against MQM.

Being a Pakistani, I assure the Pakistani people, establishment, army, ISI, all higher authorities and leaders that I will never use such words again.

For God's sake, don't cut MQM from the national mainstream.”

Altaf Hussain also regretted the violence against media houses, ARY, Samaa and GEO which were attacked in the aftermath of his speech and asked for the release of MQM leaders who were later arrested. MQM leader Syed Ali Raza Abidi had hinted in a Tweet that the people who resorted to violence were not party activists but no one believed him.

However, on the same day of 23rd August 2016, Altaf Hussain allegedly appreciated his followers' gathering in Chicago [USA] who repeated the slogans of 'Pakistan Murdabad' and had promised on oath that 'they would take part in any move initiated by Altaf Bhai to break Pakistan'.

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The Pakistan media went surprised over the two different statements of the same day from a leader of such stature. ARY and Express TV anchors conducted special live programs on 24th August, displayed the videos from America, and exposed the American leadership of the MQM declaring them *'liars of the first order'*.

On 27th August 2016; MQM's senior leader Dr Farooq Sattar formally announced that there would be a complete disconnect with Altaf Hussain from that moment. Vocal Dr Sattar, during a press conference in Karachi, clearly told the media:

"There will be now a complete disconnect with Altaf Hussain. We have no links with Altaf Hussain. It should be clear to all now.

If even after this announcement TV talk shows keep speculating on this matter, the leaders from MQM Pakistan will not go to TV programs."

His statement came after speculations were made that the MQM Chief would keep leading the party from his London Secretariat. Dr Farooq Sattar added that the party [MQM in Pakistan] had completely de-linked MQM of the London secretariat. *"No one has the right to question our sincerity now."*

Dr lamented that the offices of MQM were being raided and demolished despite their act of distancing themselves from the 'former' Chief. Naming some of the offices of the party, Dr Sattar said these were built on legal land and that they had literacy centres in them.

However, Babar Ghauri not only refuted the said allegation but also placed his sentiments on his twitter account. *MQM Senator Babar Ghauri said on 28th August 2016 that he had not apologized to anyone for saying Pakistan Zindabad.*

Speaking to the media, Babar Ghauri said that he had tendered an apology not for saying *Pakistan Zindabad* but for violating the party discipline. He said that his *'Pakistan Zindabad tweet'* would remain available on his Twitter account; it was never deleted despite pressure from a meeting of the party in the United States. Mr Ghauri had also tweeted:

[Babar Khan Ghauri @BabarKGhauri](#)

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"Note that I had never retracted my Pakistan Zindabad tweet. Let it be clear to the media and fellow citizens that I stand by what I said."

PM Nawaz Sharif, though expressed his explicit determination that Altaf Hussain would not be condoned for his anti-Pakistan slogans but from inside he felt having a light breath because for some days the media's attention remained diverted to Altaf Hussain's issue instead of discussing ways and means to pull the PM down on charges of Panama-Leaks corruption.

[Participants of a high-level meeting presided over by PM Nawaz Sharif said that '...no compromise to be made on country's solidarity, dignity; action against miscreants to be expedited *that those who speak ill of Pakistan will have to pay for it and their apology will not be accepted.*

Without naming the MQM, it was stated that '*someone living in a foreign country would not be allowed to destroy peace in Karachi.*']

Two criminal cases were registered against the MQM in Lahore and another two in Karachi. The Pakistan Justice Party [PJP] submitted an application at Lahore's Anarkali police station against MQM Chief and other party members, including Dr Farooq Sattar, Dr Aamir Liaquat Hussain, Amir Khan and Kh Izharul Hassan. The PJP's application accused them of treason and violating the law and constitution by chanting anti-Pakistan slogans, incitement to violence, spreading chaos, attacking TV channels, burning vehicles, and spreading terror.

A similar application was filed in Rawalpindi at Civil Lines police station by Advocate Raja Mohammed Rizwan Charagh.

ARY TV & SAMAA TV ATTACKED:

Two media houses, ARY TV and Samaa TV, were ransacked as activists chanting pro-MQM slogans went wild and crazy on 22nd August 2016 after listening to the provocative speech of their leader Altaf Hussain and resorted to a violent protest, firing and arson that left one person dead and a dozen others wounded. The army chief Gen Raheel Sharif condemned it and issued directives for immediate arrest of culprits.

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A police mobile van and a motorbike were torched while several other vehicles were damaged amid the wave of violence that turned the Saddar area into a battle ground between law enforcers and protesters. The protesters opened fire besides hurling stones at police and cameramen of three TV channels. Police fired teargas shells to disperse the mob besides resorting to a baton-charge.

A number of MQM workers, including women, marched towards Zainab Market from the press club and surrounded the Madina City Mall, which housed the ARY TV and Neo TV offices.

The police tried to stop the unruly mob and save the people but they attacked the police. *Women and children were leading the protest, followed by some 'criminal elements' who opened fire on police.* The mob injured security guards at the offices of the TV channels, particularly ARY, who put up resistance, and hurled stones at policemen and staff.

The violent episode continued for around 45 minutes. Traffic got suspended on the busy roads of Saddar; Zainab Market and other adjoining markets were immediately shut after the violence erupted.

The protesters returned to the hunger strike camp at the KPC again and hurled stones at the club building and used abusive language against media persons. However, the Rangers and police rushed to the spot and arrested around 10 workers of the MQM. The hospital record showed that one dead body of Arif Saeed, and 11 injured persons including two police officers, three TV channel cameramen and two women were destined there.

Dr Sattar demanded that MQM HQ Nine-Zero be opened and urged that *'detainment of their female workers be stopped once and for all'*. A visibly angered Kh Izharul Hassan questioned that if women were ever arrested in the country's history and remanded in police custody, referring to the arrest of party workers allegedly responsible for attacking media offices on 22nd August in Karachi after the party supremo's speech. Hassan added:

"I request Maryam Nawaz to recall that your father was also taken into custody but your family's women were not sent behind the bars. I appeal you to please get our women freed.

Asefa Zardari to take notice of the issue as her mother, Benazir Bhutto, was also jailed extra-judicially."

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But perhaps, the law was helpless because the arrested women of the MQM were seen, identified and displayed on TV channels world over and alive while the media offices were being ran-sacked that day. Some of the media news pointed out that MQM's former minister Babar Ghauri had also raised shout of 'Pakistan – MurdaAbad' during Altaf Hussain's address to his workers in the States.

After that, the Sindh Rangers launched a full-scale crackdown against the MQM activists in Karachi, arresting its senior leaders — Dr Farooq Sattar, Kh Izhar-ul-Hasan and Aamir Liaquat Hussain and raided the party's Nine Zero HQ and its Khurshid Begum Complex, which were in control of the MQM women activists.

Meanwhile, in their brief response to Altaf Hussain's speech that resulted in attacks on media houses, the British police said: *"We are aware of media reports concerning an attack on a media house in Karachi. This is a matter for Karachi law enforcement."*

The Pakistan-based leadership of the MQM party distanced itself from his comments and decided to strip him of organisational powers for an indefinite period. Altaf Hussain has been running the organisational affairs of MQM over phone from the confines of his London residence and the International Secretariat for a long time, although he never held any office in the MQM.

While three leaders of the MQM — MNA Kanwar Naveed Jameel, Shahid Pasha and Qamar Mansoor — were arrested and remanded in police custody by an Anti-Terrorism Court, the stance adopted by Dr Sattar, Kh Izhar-ul-Hasan and Aamir Khan lent credence to reports that the establishment still wanted to implement the '*minus-one formula*' in the MQM.

Sindh Governor Dr Ishratul Ebad remained busy the whole night between 22nd & 23rd August persuading all decision makers to allow the MQM to carry on its political activities. Mr Hussain's apology had also come following Dr Ebad's nightlong efforts, it was believed.

Two cases were registered in Karachi, at Artillery *Maidan* police station in District South while one each with the SITE Super Highway and Steel Town police stations. Apart from Altaf Hussain, over a dozen MQM leaders, including Dr Amir Liaquat Hussain, Dr Farooq Sattar, Kh Izharul Hasan, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Qamar Mansoor, Shahid Pasha and Kanwar Naveed Jamil, were nominated in the FIRs as facilitators. About 150 workers of the party who were present at the hunger strike camp were also mentioned in case FIRs. IGP Sindh Allah Dino Khowaja added that:

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"One case pertains to treason for his [Altaf Hussain's] anti-state speech and the other pertains to the incidents following his speech which saw media houses attacked by MQM activists."

Though Dr Amir Liaquat Hussain denied being nominated in any case, SITE Super Highway's FIR had his name in it as facilitator. On 23rd August 2016; while talking in ARY's live TV show with Kashif Abbasi, Aamir Liaquat said in a very disturbed tone:

"I am not part of MQM from today and I am leaving the party. I am also quitting Pakistani politics. Pakistan is everything for me, whatever I am today it is all because of Pakistan."

"If Altaf can't control his emotions and tongue he should also leave the politics and write books."

Indian daily '*The Hindu*' dated 24th August 2016 added a script from the recent history of MQM while saying that He [Altaf Hussain] continued to run the MQM from his London office, often addressing his supporters in Karachi through telephones, and at times giving inflammatory speeches. In one of such addresses, he told his critics:

"If you don't stop the lies and false allegations that damage our party's reputation, then don't blame me, Altaf Hussain, or the MQM if you get killed by any of my millions of supporters."

The newspaper [*the Hindu*] quoted other similar acts by referring the same to a 2004 report by the US Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services. The paper also cited a 2009 US diplomatic assessment:

"In the mid-1990s, the MQM(A) was heavily involved in the widespread political violence that wrecked Pakistan's southern Sindh province, particularly Karachi."

MQM has 10,000 active armed members [in Karachi] and as many as 25,000 armed fighters in reserve. In 2006, the Federal Court of Canada declared the MQM as a terrorist organisation."

..... When the then President Pervez Musharraf offered amnesty to the country's senior politicians in 2007 as part of his reconciliation plan, Mr Hussain was one of the biggest beneficiaries. The authorities dropped 72 cases against him."

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On 25th August 2016; Dr Farooq Sattar, Deputy Convener of the MQM, reiterated that he was the party head in the country and those sitting in London had accepted the decisions made in Pakistan; for the first time a decision made in Karachi was imposed on those in London, and confusion apparently ended after Altaf Hussain's statement against Pakistan.

Dr Farooq Sattar was referring to a later statement issued by Altaf Hussain where he handed over all the powers to run the party to the Rabita Committee. Dr re-assured that:

"The MQM is working for politics in Pakistan. All of its decisions will be made in Pakistan; and that they would not give a chance or platform to Altaf to address the party workers."

On party's official website, the MQM's London Chief had also accepted the decision announced by Dr Farooq Sattar. The statement, as quoted by *BBC Urdu*, said:

"I respect the decision the MQM leaders have taken in their press conference. As the founder of the party, I hand over the powers to make decisions and organising the party to the Rabita Committee."

..... and that Altaf Hussain will pay attention to his health as directed by the Rabita Committee."

The party's website was blocked in Pakistan.

The Karachi city administration continued its crackdown on the MQM Chief's speech against Pakistan and demolished various sector offices of the party and removed pictures of the party chief. Pictures and bill-boards from city areas of Hyderabad and Mirpur Khas were also removed by the respective administrators.

The name of the *Mukkah Chowk* in Karachi was restored to its original and official name as Liaquat Chowk. The DC Central issued a notification in this regard. The Mukkah Chowk was inaugurated in 1991 and it was renovated during the period of Mustafa Kamal when he was the City Mayor.

In another development, the government decided to demolish all the unit and sector offices of the MQM which were set up or built on the government land; most offices of the MQM were established in public parks or public sports grounds. Till the end of the day [26th August 2016], 190 MQM's sector offices were sealed while nine illegally built offices were de-

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molished. The flag at the residence of Altaf Hussain was removed and pictures and portraits of the MQM chief were also removed from all the MQM offices.

Three police contingents were deployed at the Nine Zero and around Azizabad. The media department of the MQM was also closed down. Before the attack on media houses, there were barriers around Nine Zero and no one was allowed to enter without permission but after Dr Farooq Sattar's press conference, there was no barrier. People were not asked as to where they were going; even the media people were not checked.

It seemed as if the majority of the MQM workers had left the city or gone into hiding due to fear. Many people were found asking questions like who kept the actual command of the party i.e. Dr Farooq Sattar in Pakistan or Altaf Hussain in London.

The Pak Sarzameen Party [PSP] also launched their trials to cash in the spoils caused by such rupture; as an in-house change in the MQM could be distinguished. The split was going to have an impact on Sindh's politics. *Mohajir* community was worried fare in that transition. Time was needed for their adjustment in new roles vis a vis the new political reality, the new face of the MQM, and a new set of challenges.

BUT why such hue & cry on that 22nd August speech; had he not threatened the media before, cursed judges and taunted army Generals? His former associates, including Mustafa Kamal and Saulat Mirza, had shared accounts of MQM's reliance on violence and terror as well as links with Indian intelligence – it was all on papers in black & white.

Article 5 of Pakistan's Constitution declares "*loyalty to the state*" to be the basic duty of every citizen, and that, "*obedience to the constitution and law is the inviolable obligation of every citizen...*" Altaf Hussain, wishing Pakistan ill and inciting supporters to violence, only confirmed the suspicions of many patriot Pakistanis belonging to all other political and religious parties.

Then there was visible change in Karachi – hats off to the Pak-Army and its Rangers. Altaf Hussain lost physical control of Karachi manifested in his inability to shut it down at whim. He also lost control over public narrative around the MQM, previously in place due to the media's fear of Altaf together with a vocal MQM political wing skilfully projecting the familiar narrative of *Mohajir* persecution, inequality and restricted access to the state services.

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Till few years back, fear was so palpable that criticism of Altaf Hussain was unthinkable; steadily the situation had gone quite different. But where was the law to take serious note of inciting violence; perhaps the state had allowed him to do so. After ceding absolute control of Karachi to the MQM, the state had to throw all its weight for Maj Gen Bilal Akbar, the Rangers' Chief in Karachi, to wrestle it back from Altaf Hussain.

The 'Times of India' dated 25th August 2016 wrote;

'In a new audio clip, Hussain while addressing an event in the US via telephone from London said, "If the US and Israel help, I will go myself to fight Daesh (an acronym for Islamic State group), al-Qaida, Taliban and the Inter - Services Intelligence and Pakistan army who created them."

After the new audio surfaced, Hussain's posters were taken down from party strongholds and sector offices and also from streets and by lanes in Karachi in the past 24 hours.

The MQM supremo while addressing "Hindus" allegedly said, "We could not recognize the British conspiracy [to divide the subcontinent] and we became part of it".'

22nd August 2016's speech was in fact a desperate reaction to power slipping through Altaf Hussain's fingers. The other side of the picture was that sane *Mohajirs* distanced themselves from him or someone who would speak, act or behave like him. Altaf Hussain was a sign of terror but during 2015-16, his ability to inflict violence dissipated - so the fear he had instilled in people also vanished.

[Barrister Farogh Naseem, a senator of the MQM from Karachi, was seen more angry in a TV live show at ARY News on 23rd August 2016 where he had come with his own and many other's resignations.]

Already there were moves in propagation, like evolution of Pak Sar-zameen Party [PSP] headed by Mustafa Kamal, who had felt themselves duty bound to 'save' *Mohajirs* from Altaf Hussain whose leadership was known as the saviour of *Mohajirs* from alleged tyranny of the *Punjabis and Sindhis*. But then the canvas changed. Altaf's MQM denied the *Punjabis* their due share in Karachi's business and trade – later persecuted them so they had to shift their capital to Indonesia, Bangladesh, Dubai and somewhere else.

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It remains a fact that Altaf Hussain had put together an amazing political and administrative machine in MQM: endowing well-spoken, self-made folks with political recognition and responsibility but vesting administrative power and financial control in another tier represented by sector commanders [*whose authority trumped that of the political wing*] with both tiers reporting directly to him; maintaining direct contact with the mass support base.

The real challenge for the state was to re-order the politics of Karachi but the philosophy of creating a King's party was also seen in play. The state had tried such attitudes and beliefs multiple times before and failed. Some forces were trying to balance their scores with *'traitors'*.

It was bad to see it as an opportunity to run tutorials on patriotism. Rangers' personnel pulling Dr Farooq Sattar away in public view was an unseemly sight; *men in police uniform tearing down Altaf's posters were unnecessary and unwanted too.*

Babar Sattar in *'the News'* dated 27th August 2016 pointed out that:

"Is it for anyone but the Mohajirs to decide who speaks for them? The problem with Altaf was that crime and violence became so entwined with his politics that the two were inseparable. The problem was the means he chose to pursue his politics. It is those means that the state must target, not the politics.

And that isn't something the state has done. The militant wings and extortion mafias of Karachi will not go away so long as the state continues to treat allegiance to the law as optional.

Saulat Mirza's confessional statement being streamed out of his death cell perfectly synchronised with the timing of the Karachi Operation or Waseem Athtar being arrested right before his election as mayor for involvement in a crime from 2007 doesn't strengthen public faith in the writ of law but rather makes it look like a tool in the hands of the powerful."

Public faith in rule of law and its ability to dispense justice was not seen strengthened – the requirement was that the masterminds and perpetrators of tragedies such as the *Baldia Factory* arson were convicted in public trials expeditiously.

MQM: THE BREACH WITHIN:

Federal Minister for Information, Pervaiz Rashid said *on 27th August 2016* that Altaf Hussain was not a citizen of Pakistan but of Britain and that it was time to get rid of him. The minister told that the government had forwarded a reference to the United Kingdom for taking stern action against Altaf for inciting people to violence and attack media houses in Karachi.

But this exercise had been carried out many times and the UK government had never taken it seriously. The reason has already been discussed in the above paragraphs – an essay of *'the Guardian'* dated *29th July 2013* is referred again.

The federal minister simply tried to cover the issue whereas the facts were otherwise. Here a live talk show at Prime TV, titled as 'G for Garida' dated 25th August 2016 is referred in which the guest speaker Dr Tahirul Qadri told the nation that:

".... The people of Pakistan should know that MQM's Altaf Hussain has uttered, against Pakistan, the same words which were passed on to him from Islamabad.

It was because the PM Nawaz Sharif was entangled in Panama Leaks issue and he could not see any way out. Across the borders, it was 4th day of curfew in Occupied Kashmir where 89 deaths [till then] were being agitated.

The Indian PM Modi has passed on the message to the PM to do something – so that episode of 22nd August surfaced through Altaf Hussain."

Dr Qadri had categorically stated PML[N] government's strategy in the live TV talk that:

- *No action would be taken against the MQM party or any of its members here in Pakistan.*
- *No concrete action would be taken against Altaf Hussain or any of his colleagues except release of sentimental statements as an eye-wash.*
- *The MQM would not be banned at all – the theatre would continue as before.*
- *No case or reference under 'hi-treason' would be moved by the government against any of Altaf's assistants here in Pakistan.*

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Each word of Dr Qadri's prophecy proved true. MQM Pakistan or Dr Farooq Sattar did not utter a single word against Altaf Hussain in his press conference and the matter was sent to the media anchors of all TV channels for live discussions – nothing beyond.

The decision announced by Dr Farooq Sattar in his press conference of 23rd August [*that now onwards, the MQM's decisions would be made in Pakistan only and no dictation from London would be taken*] was also agreed by Altaf Hussain, as detailed earlier, in the larger interest of Mohajir community who was the major stakeholder in the whole game of changing horses.

Dr Farooq Sattar on next day placed that approval of MQM [London] Chief Altaf Hussain before the media people describing it '*that MQM London has formally surrendered all powers to them.*'

However, uncertainty continued to prevail in the ranks and files about the future role of the London-based leadership because Dr Farooq Sattar was known as docile leader since years. The whole MQM leadership in Pakistan held a unanimous view that their acceptability to the masses, or the *Muhajir* community, would largely depend on Altaf Hussain's future actions.

In the meantime a statement by MQM [London] leader Wasay Jalil appeared that Altaf Hussain would continue to endorse decisions of the Coordination Committee and that the MQM [London] Chief himself decided to hand over all powers to Karachi's MQM leadership. The statement from London said:

"I respect the views expressed by senior MQM [Pakistan] leader Dr Sattar and others at their press conference and hand over all decision-making and organisational matters to the coordination committee. I will pay special attention to my health on the advice of the coordination committee."

Many MQM members in Karachi were sceptical of Dr Sattar's success. Most mid-order MQM activists held that perhaps "*London MQM will not allow us to function in a beneficial way,*" they were murmuring in reference to the Chief Altaf Hussain's stronghold over the party since decades.

Such views were echoed by sane MQM lawmakers with concluding remarks that "*...we don't see ourselves and many other like-minded people in the MQM if the London [office] tries to influence our decisions.*"

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The fact remains that Altaf Hussain already knew that something was cooking up in the Karachi MQM and a rebellion was in the offing. The tainted language he often used against senior leaders was aimed at forcing them to either become inactive or to switch their loyalty to the party led by former Karachi Mayor Mustafa Kamal. But citing the example of Mr Kamal's failure to gain wide public support against Altaf Hussain, one member opined that:

"Monday's speech provides everyone an opportunity to stand against him [Altaf Hussain] while staying in the MQM as you cannot find even one activist in Pakistan who defends his speech, however, we all know the moment we leave MQM we will become a traitor in the eyes of Muhajirs.

Though the party stands registered in the name of Dr Farooq Sattar since 2013 – but that doesn't mean there is any dearth of his [Altaf Hussain's] loyalists here or across the globe."

It was only a matter of time before Altaf Hussain could start complaining to his followers that the Karachi's lot betrayed him and they should rise up against them. It neither was a smooth sailing for Dr Farooq Sattar nor was there any way out.

In 27th August 2016's press conference, DR Farooq Sattar called the London-based leader neither bhai nor Quaid as a deliberate snub. Ending four days of ambiguity over its relationship with Altaf Hussain, the MQM led by Dr Sattar completely dissociated itself from the London-based supremo and asked the establishment not to doubt their intentions and to allow them freely resume their political activities.

[It was a complete departure from his 23rd August's press conference in which he just disowned the MQM chief's anti-Pakistan remarks – and not him – and repeatedly referred to him as Altaf bhai and MQM Quaid.]

MQM's Waseem Akhtar, on 24th August 2016, won the Karachi mayor election from prison and the party also won three of Karachi's six districts as well as top municipal offices in Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas and some other towns in Sindh.

In a parallel move, over the past four days a renewed crackdown against the party had been launched with authorities sealing over 200 MQM offices, picking up some lawmakers and dozens of activists, including women, and demolishing at least 20 offices in Karachi. The Nine-Zero headquarters,

which was sealed on the night between Aug 22 and 23, was not opened even after the mayoral election.

About ten MQM offices were demolished because the same were constructed on state lands and public parks through illegal grabbing. The MQM's rival, the Pak Sarzameen Party [PSP], also termed the crackdown and demolition of offices 'unfortunate' and regretted that the PML[N] government had so far taken no concrete step against the person who delivered the anti-Pakistan speech and left the whole nation roasted.

With every talk show host subjecting Dr Sattar to strong criticism for not condemning and disowning Altaf Hussain, the MQM leadership in Pakistan finally realised that their mere disowning the statement was not enough, as it was the desire of the MQM's educated community that they completely detach themselves from the London-based leader.

Finally on 27th August 2016, Dr Sattar categorically disowned Altaf Hussain and urged his detractors to believe his words and stop doubting his intentions. During the earlier four days, MQM's local leader had announced leaving the party but that day the whole MQM left its London secretariat. Without naming Pak Sarzameen Party, he said

".....certain quarters had earlier created another MQM. Now tickers are being run regarding the arrest of terrorists of the MQM London secretariat. This shows that they are creating one more MQM.

.... that an unannounced ban on MQM's political activities be lifted forthwith and party offices, including the Nine-Zero HQ, be unsealed."

On the same day of 27th August 2016; PSP Chairman Mustafa Kamal asked the establishment and the federal and provincial governments as to why they did not take any concrete step against the person who made the anti-Pakistan speech. In his opinion, the arrest of MQM workers and demolition of their offices would further a sense of deprivation among *Mohajirs* and provide anti-state elements another chance to call themselves as victim.

Mustafa Kamal urged that the federal and provincial governments take meaningful steps; abolish the quota system and provide jobs to *Mohajirs* so that no one in future could exploit the sense of deprivation in the Urdu-speaking community. Adding that the MQM and Altaf Hussain were not two separate entities and Dr Sattar was not capable of replacing his London-based leader.

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On 29th August 2016; DG Rangers Maj Gen Bilal Akbar told that the 22nd August attack on media houses was planned and executed by the MQM and six of their party-men had confessed to their crime. The DG said while talking to media during his visit to Jinnah Hospital:

"The members of MQM's unit and sector offices carried out the attack on the directives of the party's Rabita Committee and Central Executive Committee [- and not only Altaf Hussain alone] .

The six arrested miscreants have revealed that they brought batons and knives and organised the attackers on the directives given. Those are being handed over to police for further investigation and subsequent trial, while we will continue to carry out raids to nab the remaining miscreants."

Two officials working in banks near the Karachi Press Club, belonging to the MQM labour division, provided refuge to the miscreants prior to attack. One of them, Javaid Shaukat has been arrested while the other, Khurram Khan is still at large and raids are being conducted to arrest him."

On the same day of 29th August 2016, the authorities made decision to form a Joint Investigation Team [JIT] to probe the 22nd August violence in the metropolis. The decision was taken due to the anti-terrorism clauses applied in the case pertaining to the violence. The JIT comprised officials from different agencies. Till then 45 people including three women had been arrested in connection with the violence.

On 31st August 2016; another blow came to the MQM party and its cause when the Supreme Court [SC] of Pakistan permitted to bring an amendment in a plea seeking to hold MQM's appointed Mayor Waseem Akhtar from dealing with government affairs after he was sworn in a day before.

A two-member bench of the apex court presided over by Justice Dost Muhammad Khan, heard Shahid Ghouri's plea which was filed with the Supreme Court's Karachi Registry a day before. Ghouri had filed the petition under Article 184(3) of the Constitution.

During the hearing, J Dost M Khan voiced concerns of the judicial panel stating how could Waseem Akhtar handle government affairs from inside the jail? He observed that *"...a mayor needs to take care of important matters and thus cannot perform his duties effectively from inside a prison."*

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The petitioner stated that a criminal could not assume the charge as the mayor of the city as he was involved in different crimes, including violence that erupted in the streets of Karachi on 12th May 2007. He requested the court to permit bringing an amendment to the petition to stop Waseem Akhtar from dealing with government affairs after he was sworn in on 30th August. The Supreme Court granted his request.

Waseem Akhtar was arrested a month earlier after a court refused extension in interim bail in an alleged terror case of year 2007- astonishing it was that Pakistan's judicial hierarchy kept on sleeping over the case for nine years and suddenly got awakened when a 'culprit' had sworn in as the Mayor of the city.

On 2nd September 2016; the National Assembly of Pakistan unanimously adopted resolution against MQM founder Altaf Hussain. The resolution was submitted by Federal Minister Birjees Tahir on behalf the government and opposition. It condemned anti-Pakistan remarks by MQM founder Altaf Hussain and the violence that took place in Karachi on 22nd August.

The resolution demanded action as per the law and constitution against those responsible for anti-Pakistan slogans. Speaking in the NA, MQM Pakistan leader Dr Farooq Sattar said 'they fully support the said joint resolution' of the government and the opposition, however, Sattar said he wanted to present their resolution before it. He said August 22 was not the worst day for the entire national but also for MQM.

WHY ONLY MQM POINTED AT:

...But all other political stakeholders were equally blood-stained in Karachi.

Within two weeks of Altaf Hussain's objectionable speech of 22nd August, the Mohajir community was seen divided in factions; one of the mayors of Karachi named himself the new leader of the MQM. The other dynamic young mayor had already formed a new political party whose only selling point was that *'it is not the MQM'*.

Since at least October 1999, the MQM had been the active partner of military regime under Gen Musharraf but then the same MQM was facing the wrath of the Rangers – a part of the same military establishment.

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In the later scenario when some one asked the other fellow to do a word association test for the MQM and the likely responses were "target killing", "extortion", "land grabbing" etc. And the MQM was assigned all those vices and more. But here's the thing: so was every other political party. Just as, if the MQM patronised criminal gangs as a way to maintain its hold on political power, so did most other politicians in rural Sindh and Punjab.

The link between power, violence and land is as old as the story of the Subcontinent. The difference between other politicians and those of the MQM was that old feudal and traditional violence was an accepted fabric of society because it had been passed down from generations – and usually stayed within the same families – while the violence of the MQM was seen to have the added explosive ingredient of nationalism – *Mohajir* nationalism in the said case.

Rana Sanaullah's politics under PML[N] banner since 2008 in Punjab while openly harbouring extremists like Malik Ishaq [*since killed in July 2015*] is case in reference.

Jam Sadiq Ali, a former Chief Minister of Sindh, was found in the 1990s to be involved with dacoits from rural Sindh who had kidnapped Japanese visitors - but it did not lead to calls for banning the PPP and branding it a terrorist party.

Kal-Bhoshan, an established Indian RAW agent, was when caught from Sharif's industrial complex, no one called PML[N] to explain their patriot standards. While there were an indication of 300 more Indian workers in various units of Sharif's empire.

Nadir Hassan's essay in daily 'the News' dated 4th September 2016 described the above game of double standards in the following way:

"Depicting the MQM as uniquely violent be compared with other types of political violence in the country, which fall into many categories.

There is the use of police and other law-enforcement parties as an adjunct of the political party, something the MQM has been guilty of but again not uniquely so – after all the term 'encounter' was first devised in the Punjab of the 1980s when it was ruled by the PML[N].

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The second type of violence which the MQM has been guilty of, and for which it is facing repercussions right now, was carried out at the behest of others, such as on May 12, 2007. For that type of violence to be eliminated, it is not just the MQM but those in the establishment who used and disposed of it on the basis of need – all concerned set-ups are required to be reformed.

The third kind of violence – and this is the kind for which the MQM and the political culture of Pakistan can be indicted – is that which is perpetrated by the party to exact revenge on rivals and enemies and extend its territorial influence. Examples of such violence would include target killings and the Baldia Town factory fire.

It is here that the new leadership of the [MQM] party needs to rein in its own worst instincts.”

Giving the MQM space to breathe and actually trying to understand it rather than perpetuate convenient assumptions was the responsibility of the establishment. Positively using that space - was the duty of the MQM.

Najam Sethi articulated his editorial comments on and the analysis of the said situation by saying:

“Ataf Hussain is incorrigible. He has got into the obnoxious habit of abusing and threatening anyone who dares cross him. He gets away with it because the MQM death squads that blindly answer to his will instil fear in everyone high or low.

No media dare expose him and no witness testifies against him because of the fear of violent reprisals. Indeed, no one within the party dare criticise, much less challenge Ataf for the same reason.

But his reign of terror is coming to an end. He has brought the MQM to the brink of disrepair and the country is united as never before in opposing Ataf Hussain's blackmailing and terror tactics.

Former COAS Gen Asif Nawaz was the first one in 1991-92 to tackle the MQM, compelling Ataf Hussain to flee to the UK. Then in 1994 Benazir Bhutto unleashed the Rangers under Gen Naseerullah Babar when she too couldn't stomach his blackmailing and murderous ways.

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Nawaz Sharif tried to do business with him but gave up in frustration and anger. However, Gen Musharraf undid the good work done by his immediate military predecessors and rehabilitated Altaf for politically expedient reasons.

Altaf Hussain's MQM used the space and clout of Gen Musharraf era to entrench itself in Karachi and Hyderabad by an indiscriminate use of armed might. The terrorist rank and file of MQM swelled and Altaf Hussain became Lord and Master in exile. All dissent in Pakistan and the UK was violently quashed. The PPP in Sindh became hostage to its armed might. The "Pearl of the East", Karachi, became an ungovernable nightmare.

The decline of Altaf Hussain's MQM was foretold some time ago owing to the unsustainable policies of its mentor. Just as Azeem Tariq's murder in 1993 set the stage for Altaf Hussain's rise to unchallenged power, the murder of Imran Farooq in London apparently became a millstone around Altaf Hussain's neck.

Imran Farooq's murder provided the British government an opportunity to open investigations into charges of murder, money laundering and incitement to violence against him, denting his "invincibility". In Pakistan, the alliance with the PPP collapsed despite Asif Zardari's deal-making expertise.

PM Nawaz Sharif and COAS Gen Raheel Sharif were the last nails in Altaf - MQM's coffin; the flight of dissenters from the rank and file of his MQM went open, blatant and conspicuous. First it was Mustafa Kamal and Co who fled to Dubai. Then a host of others bolted to South Africa or the USA or just slunk away into nooks and crannies in Pakistan. Sindh Governor Ishrat ul Ebad was next to cut the umbilical chord.

The return of Mustafa Kamal to lay foundations of a new mohajir party in Karachi [allegedly under the aegis of the military establishment again] marked a turning point in the fate of Altaf's MQM not because it posed a serious challenge to it through electoral polls as demonstrated by jailbird Wasim Akhtar's elevation to the Mayor-ship of Karachi, but because it signalled an end to the politics of fear in Karachi.

It was this desperation that had both provoked Altaf Hussain to cross the red line in Karachi vis a vis the military establishment but also, ironically enough, given Farooq Sattar and the Rabita Com-

mittee the courage to stand up, however haltingly, to tell Altaf Hussain to give them space to breathe and survive."

['The Friday Times' dated 26th August 2016 is referred]

It was not the '*Minus-One Moment*' for Altaf Hussain but the process had taken immediate start and unambiguously. Farooq Sattar was found crying in the wilderness into which Altaf Hussain had shoved him and the *Rabita Committee*. He was pleading and begging Altaf Hussain to cut him some political space in Karachi, with the military establishment fuming at Altaf's outrageous "*anti-Pakistan*" and "*anti-Pak Army*" tirades.

Najam Sethi continued to comment that:

"Altaf Hussain immediately retreated tactically as he had done so often in the past; it was a temporary acquittal. His apology was artificial, unnatural and meaningless; he was not at all serious to give up the reins of power to anyone in London or Karachi, not even if he was imprisoned in UK or repatriated to Pakistan."

Thus Dr Farooq Sattar's whole show of embarrassment, so many media briefings in succession, was termed as his personal frustration and could not convince any one in the country.

The atmosphere was not clear; it contained all sort of impurities like dust and smoke but one could see the beginning of the end of Altaf Hussain's politics of alleged fear, blackmail and terror. The civil-military establishment of Pakistan had taken an irrevocable decision and the rank and file of the MQM were not inclined to risk life or limb for Altaf anymore even though they were still going to vote for *mohajir* politicians in other shapes.