

Scenario 134

GANG CULTURE & NO-GO AREAS

*Karachi is burning since 1990s.
Each Pakistani knows its reasons and keeps full
knowledge of 'criminal collaboration of political hands'
involved. 100s of pages will be required to summarize its his-
tory of carnage & killings.
Let me start it from the current decade – to avoid
repetitions.*

POLITICS & GANGS IN KARACHI:

In a secret communication of the American Consulate in Karachi dated 22nd April 2009, referring to *WikiLeaks*:

"The police in Karachi are only one of several armed groups in the city, and they are probably not the most numerous or best equipped. Many neighbourhoods are considered by the police to be no-go zones in which even the intelligence services have a difficult time operating.

Very few of the groups are traditional criminal gangs. Most are associated with a political party, a social movement, or terrorist activity, and their presence in the volatile ethnic mix of the world's fourth largest city creates enormous political and governance challenges."

As per record of the Americans, Muttahida Quami Movement [MQM] was [and still it is] an ethnic political party of the Urdu speaking community making up around fifty percent of the total population in Karachi. MQM is middle-class, avowedly secular and anti- extremist - *the only party to publicly protest the Swat's Nizam e Adl regulations in 2008-09.*

MQM's armed members, known as 'Good Friends' were the largest non-governmental armed element in the city; as per estimate, MQM had ten thousand active armed members then and as many as twenty five thousand armed fighters in reserve.

The WikiLeaks' above mentioned report had further disclosed that:

'Comparing with the city's thirty-three thousand police officers, the MQM operates through its 100 Sector Commanders, who take their orders directly from the party leader, Altaf Hussain, who lives in exile in UK.

The Sector Commanders plan and monitor the activities of the armed elements. MQM's critics claim these armed men are involved in extortion, assassination of political rivals, shootings at campaign rallies, and the murder of people from other ethnic communities.'

According to the said report the police officers acknowledged the extortion and the likely veracity of the other charges. In the past eight years alone [till April 2009], MQM was issued over a million arms licenses, mostly for handguns.

Most foreign media itself observed MQM security personnel carrying numerous shoulder-fired weapons, ranging from new European AKMs to crude AK copies, probably produced in local shops. MQM consistently and mostly controls the neighbourhoods of Gulberg, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Korangi, Landhi, Liaquatabad, Malir, Nazimabad, New Karachi, North Nazimabad, Orangi Town, Saddar and Shahrah e Faisal.

Muhajir Quami Movement-Haqiqi [MQM-H] is a small ethnic political party that broke away from the MQM in the mid-1980s. MQM-H has its strongholds in the Landhi, Korangi and Lines Area neighbourhoods of Karachi. The MQM regarded these areas as no-go zones when it was in power during Gen Musharraf's regime. As a condition for joining the Sindh government in 2003, Altaf Hussain had asked that MQM-H be eliminated.

The local police and Rangers were used to crack down on MQM-H and its leaders were put behind bars. The rank and file of MQM-H found refuge in a local religious party, Sunni Tehrik. The local police believed that MQM-H maintained its armed groups in the areas of Landhi and Korangi, and that the party could re-organize itself had its leadership been released from jail.

Awami National Party [ANP] represents the ethnic Pashtuns in Karachi. The local Pashtuns do possess personal weapons, following their tribal traditions and there were indications they had also organized formal armed groups. With the onset of combat operations in FATA in August 2008, a growing number of Pashtuns fled south to swell the Pashtun ranks of what already was the largest Pashtun city in the world.

The said trend increased tensions between ANP and MQM because it was believed that these armed elements were potential threats to the MQM con-

control in Karachi. Pashtuns mostly control the Sohrab Goth neighbourhood; located in the Northeast of the city.

Sohrab Goth and its surrounding areas were also a no-go area for the police. Generally believed that the Pashtuns were involved in drug trafficking and gun running and if police wanted to move in their areas they had to do so in civilian clothing. The police reports indicated that ANP gunmen were frequently fighting MQM gunmen over protection - racket turf.

Sunni Tehrik [ST] is a small religious cum political group with a presence in small pockets of Karachi. The group used to manage winning a handful of council seats in local elections but militarily it was disproportionately powerful because of the influx of MQM-H gunmen after the government crack-down on them. ST organized the party and its gunmen along the lines of MQM by dividing its areas of influence into sectors and units, with sector and unit commanders.

ST and MQM had allegedly been killing each other's leadership since April 2006 Nishtar Park bombing that killed most of ST's leadership; ST blamed MQM for that attack but the investigations pointed out that banned *Lashkar e Jhangvi* [LeJ] outfit was responsible for that carnage.

[Nishtar Park Killings:

On 11th April 2006; more than 50 people, including several religious leaders, were killed and over 100 others wounded in the massive bombing that ripped through a congregation of the 12th Rabiul Awwal at the Nishtar Park Karachi.

Sultan Mahmood alias Saifullah, Mufti Zakir Hussain Siddiqui, Mohammad Amin alias Khalid Shaheen, and Rehmatullah, said to be associated with the banned Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, were held for their alleged involvement in the act of terrorism.

The Nishtar Park blast case is pending before Anti-Terrorism Court for evidence of prosecution witnesses since July 2007. A judge Abdul Ghafoor Memon, indicted all the accused on 4th May 2009 but the prosecution could not produce even a single witness till August 2010, when Mohammad Amin filed an acquittal application under Section 265-K of the CrPC and the court exonerated him for lack of evidence.

Following the acquittal of the accused, the court framed the amended charge against the remaining three accused in September 2010; out of a list of 200 witnesses on record, only 18 had been examined in the case till March 2013.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

One accused Sultan, arrested in mid 2007, had already been convicted in Allama Hassan Turabi murder case; got recorded his confessional statement before a judicial magistrate admitting his participation in Nishtar Park Massacre.

Amanullah, alias Mufti Ilyas and Qari Abid Iqbal are still absconding and the case is still lying in the court pending trial.]

Pakistan Peoples Party [PPP] is led by, and centred on the Bhutto family. The party enjoys significant support in Karachi, especially among Sindhi and Baloch populations. The party had not run a formal armed wing, but the workers of the PPP do possess weapons, both licensed and unlicensed and some of them had been working under aegis of PPP legislators. With PPP in control of the provincial government, a large number of arms permits were issued to PPP workers since 2008; to come at par with MQM.

Arshad Pappoo [AP] and Rehman Dakait [RD] Gangs were two traditional criminal gangs in Lyari that had been fighting each other since early Musharraf's days. Both gangs gave their political support to PPP in the parliamentary elections of 2008. The gangs got their start with drug trafficking in Lyari and later included the more serious crimes of kidnapping and robbery in other parts of Karachi.

[Kidnapping is such a serious problem in Karachi that the Home Secretary once asked the American Consulate for small tracking devices that could be planted under the skin of upper-class citizens and a satellite to track the devices if they were kidnapped]

Each of the above mentioned two groups had once about 200 hard-core armed fighters. According to police, various people in Lyari had around 6,000 handguns till ending 2007, which were duly authorized through valid weapons permits. Later, PPP's Home Minister Dr Zulfiqar Mirza issued FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND weapon licences to the Lyari people just to counter the MQM armed contingents.

In addition, the two gangs were in possession of a large number of unlicensed AK-47 rifles, Rocket Propelled Grenade launchers and hand grenades.

The weapons used to be carried openly and brought into play against each other as well as any police or Rangers who entered the Lyari area during security operations. During police incursions, the gang members maintained the tactical advantage by using the narrow streets and interconnected houses. There are some parts of Lyari that remained inaccessible to law enforcement agencies in the past and even till today.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

Pakistani Taliban [TTP]: The fact remains that all Pashtuns in Karachi are not Taliban, but all Taliban are Pashtuns. The size, scope and nature of '*Talibanization*' and true Taliban terrorist activity in Karachi remained difficult to pin down, but the whole foreign media and even the American Consulate in Karachi keep record of certain characteristic events of the Taliban in Pashtun areas.

There are several theories about Taliban activity in Karachi; one school of thought keeps it that MQM was too powerful and was not allowing the Pashtuns to operate in Karachi, and this, combined with the ease of operating elsewhere in Pakistan, made Karachi their desirable, enviable and sought after venue.

Another line of thinking claims Karachi is too valuable as a hiding fort and place to raise abundant money through every kind of criminal activity.

During the later years, more dangerous gangs appeared in Lyari and Pashtun areas – like *Uzair Baloch gang* and *Baba Ladla gang*; their details are given in up-coming pages.

In April 2009, the police in Karachi arrested Badshah Din Mahsud, from their Most Wanted Terrorist list [known as the Red Book]. It is alleged he was robbing banks in Karachi at the behest of Baitullah Mehsud of FATA, and the money was being used to finance terrorist activity.

There was a body of threat reporting which pointed towards the equipment and personnel for carrying out attacks in Karachi; Karachi CID had arrested five men of Khyber PK in that connection. CID had also claimed they had reliable information that suicide vests were brought to Karachi.

The PPP's decision to invite MQM to join the coalition governments in Sindh and Islamabad thrice helped prevent a return to the PPP - MQM violence wave of the 1990s. But the potential for MQM - ANP conflict kept on growing as Pashtuns challenged *Mohajir* political dominance and aspired for control of key economic interests, such as the lucrative trucking industry.

Even today, any such sign [*that political violence has returned to Karachi, especially if it is related to the growing strength of conservative Pashtun or Taliban*] will send extremely negative shockwaves through the society and likely accelerate the flight from Pakistan of the business and intellectual elite of the society; which actually did take place in mid 2011.

WikiLeaks of dated 7th September 2011 released another cable emanated from the US Consulate Karachi confirming that the armed gangs held sway over many parts of the city, engaging in extortion, land grabbing, po-

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

litical assassinations and a myriad array of other crimes both heinous and relatively less brutal in nature.

The assessment, made by former US Consul General Stephen Fakan in April 2009 [referring to their observations narrated in earlier paragraphs], had placed particular emphasis on the activities of the PPP, MQM, ANP, Sunni Tehrik, Lyari gangs and 'Pashtun terrorists'. This, tragically, has been the reality in Karachi for three decades, dating back to mid-1980s. Since then, we have witnessed political, sectarian and ethnic strife as well as a surge in armed criminal activity in a city that has grown increasingly weaponised over time.

An American communication observed that:

'In short, Karachi has been held hostage by armed thugs for years now. Hundreds of people have lost their lives, daily-wage earners are often unable to work and put food on the table and industry too has suffered.

It seems that the periodic peaceful lulls are destined to be broken by another spell of violence. Is that to be the perennial fate of people trying to make an honest living in Pakistan's commercial powerhouse?'

The consensus, however, remained that the armed gangs who operated almost at will were far superior equipped than the police. There have been several reasons for this shortcoming. Most powerful criminals enjoyed the backing of one political party or the other making the job of the police difficult if not hazardous for reasons of fear, expediency or personal profit.

On 29th December 2009; 40 people were killed and more than 90 were wounded when an IED explosion took place in a religious procession on M A Jinnah Road Karachi. Two Pakistani Rangers were also killed in the blast. Angry mobs set fire to the nearby wholesale market and torched more than 1,300 shops on that main road. Dozens of vehicles were also set on fire in the violence that followed the bombing incident.

The following crime statistics for Karachi are based on reporting by the *Citizens Police Liaison Committee* [CPLC]; a non-governmental organization - partially funded by the Sindh Government, but most funds come from the business community, working to assist law enforcement in Karachi, which maintains crime statistics as well as a criminal database. It always remained difficult to estimate the actual number of cases not reported to the CPLC.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

According to CPLC's statistics for 2010, there were a total of 4368 reported vehicle thefts in Karachi with an average of 364 thefts per month. For 2011 this number increased by 8% to 4720 with an average of 393 thefts per month. Unlike many other crimes in Karachi, most vehicle thefts were actually reported in the hopes that the vehicles would be recovered but it never happened into being. Police, however, claimed that they recovered 49pc of all reported stolen vehicles in 2011.

Statistics from the CPLC for 2010 indicated there were a total of 1339 terrorist killings, i.e. murders associated with terrorist acts or groups. This number increased in 2011 to 1724 terrorist killings, which was an increase of 29pc; 2011 was recorded as Karachi's second deadliest year in the past 20 years.

There were a total of 29,168 incidents of cell phone larceny reported in 2010; it decreased to 23,704 in 2011 - a decrease of 28pc.

CPLC statistics for 2011 showed the number of reported cases of kidnapping increased by 2pc to 114 as compared to 2010 where 112 cases of kidnappings were reported. These 114 cases were identified as "*kidnapping for ransom*", of which 103 cases were solved.

Over the past 30 years, there has been a history of political and terrorist violence in whole Pakistan in general, as well as on-going sectarian violence. Karachi continued to be the site of numerous incidents of terrorist, sectarian, ethnic, political, and criminal violence. It was often difficult to determine who was responsible for specific incidents of violence. A variety of groups, including extremist religious elements from the Sunni and Shiite sects and criminal elements from within local political organizations, appear to be involved in organizing and committing violent acts in the city.

People living in Karachi are aware of the fact that acts of violence and terrorism are possible at any time without warning or apparent provocation.

DISMAL LAW & ORDER IN KARACHI:

Since the PPP's taking over at centre and in Sindh in February 2008, targeted killings were part of Karachi's political landscape; however, the casualties flared up in June onwards. It was mainly MQM[A] versus MQM[H] show. During year 2009, there were 152 deaths on record whereas unofficial figure touched 200 plus. During the first week of year 2010, there

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

were five deaths in Karachi; next week was defined with 47 additional killings in the Lyari neighbourhood.

That latest surge in Karachi violence began in 2010 as the tenure of the municipal government, run by the MQM expired. Why the next polls did not take place because, though the MQM was in a coalition with the PPP at the centre and in the Sindh province but the PPP had no interest in conducting local polls and devolving power to an MQM-run city government. The PPP preferred to rule Karachi, the mega-city through its own appointed bureaucrats.

The MQM-PPP coalition was a marriage of convenience arranged in Dubai by bureaucrats from London and Washington, who saw an alliance between "secular" parties in Pakistan as key to winning the war on terror [WOT]. But in the later scenario of local politics the Pakistani Taliban [TTP] and other religious extremists started claiming their share – and often got more than they aimed at. The war on terror could not unite Karachi's secular parties as had been perceived.

During MQM's governance between 2005 and 2010, there was hope that the party would transition away from violence but it re-dedicated itself to violence upon its exit from power; perhaps motivated in part by changes in the city's demographics. The British authorities looked MQM as an effective partner in combating *jihadism* and a source for human intelligence in Karachi but London's tolerance enabled the MQM to go more violent.

British authorities initiated action against the MQM only after the party committed violence on British soil; when on *16th September 2010*, Imran Farooq was murdered. Meanwhile, the coalition willed together by London and Washington engaged in a tit-for-tat gang war in the Karachi's slum of Lyari - with gang leaders backed by the senior-most officials of both parties.

By 10th January 2010, there were Sindh Rangers and police contingents to restore order in Lyari; police conducted raids and arrested over 30 people. Protestors from Lyari took to the streets next day saying the government crackdown targeted only them and not MQM supports. Lyari was a stronghold of Pakistan Peoples Party [PPP]; they demanded operations in other parts of Karachi as well. On 11th January there were four more killings; MQM suffered the loss but threatened to leave the government coalition in protest.

On 7th October 2010, eight persons were killed and over 60 injured in a suicide attack at the Abdullah Shah Ghazi shrine in Karachi.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

Poor State Response: Since 1990s till ending months of 2010, including Gen Musharraf's military rule, the state response to the developing crime trends and up-coming of *Bhatta* and *Bori-band* mafia, land grabbing alliances, sectarian extravaganza and drug + weaponry cartels etc remained weak rather awfully neglected in Karachi. The menace continued escalating with the rise of each day.

There have been two key problems in this response. First, the gradual weakening of state institutions and decline in governance over this period contributed to a decrease in the capability of law enforcement agencies [LEAs] to tackle the said issues. Secondly, the politicisation of the police and political interference in operational law enforcement emasculated the city's police force.

That political interference had been propagated by successive governments, both civilian and military, in the form of appointments of senior officers, prevention of police action against criminals affiliated with the ruling party of the time, and demands for police vacancies to be filled by party activists.

Karachi police held that the above two factors led to an organisational breakdown within the force, with officers often more loyal to their political patrons than to their commanders. Police officers who had threatened to upset the status quo by arresting criminals affiliated with political parties were frequently removed from their posts and sometimes ridiculed in public.

In later years, criminal gangs, sectarian militants, the Taliban, and political activists opted to target police officials; dozens were killed simply because they were in uniform. In 2013, 171 police officers were killed in the line of duty in Karachi. It is available on record that about 400 officers who took part in two operations against the MQM in the 1990s were subsequently murdered. There were several major attacks against law enforcement agencies by the Taliban.

[On 11th November 2010; the headquarters of the Criminal Investigation Department [CID], which includes the police's counter-terrorism unit, was destroyed in a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attack that left 20 police officers dead and 100 injured.

A truck laden with explosives slammed into its boundary wall, detonated its load and almost completely destroyed the structure. The blast could be heard across several miles of the city of 18 million people.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

The blast left a crater 40ft wide in front of the gutted building in Pakistan's financial and commercial capital; over a dozen militants tried to storm the building. An exchange of fire took place for at least 15 minutes then a pick-up truck rammed its way inside.

Referring to the BBC News dated 11th November 2010:

"Pakistan's continuing battle against militancy appears to have arrived in its main business capita, Karachi.

The city had managed to escape much of the violence since Pakistan's security forces launched a crackdown on Taliban and al-Qaeda militants in the North West of Pakistan; many of these fled the region to take refuge in Karachi - keeping a low profile.

It appears Karachi's security forces are firmly in their crosshairs."

The CID officials and their offices - including this building - had been targeted in Karachi in the past; the latest attack came a day after the same unit had arrested several activists of *Lashkar e Jhangvi* [LeJ] in the city - Pakistan's most dangerous militant group. The group, then known to be closely linked to al-Qaeda, had been involved in high profile attacks across the country.

It was presumed that LeJ's suspects were being detained in the complex at the time of the attack. SSP Ch Aslam Khan, of the CID, told the BBC that the arrested men were planning to carry out bombings on Shiite processions in the city.

The site of the blast was within a high-security area in the south of Karachi, known as the "red zone"; not far from the Sindh Chief Minister's residence, the US Consulate and several five-star hotels including the Sheraton. Other buildings close by were badly damaged in the blast, which shattered windows within a two-mile radius.

No group had immediately claimed responsibility for the attack but the LeJ militants or Taliban had been behind a number of similar attacks on police and army compounds in those months.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

Then, on 9th January 2014; SSP Chaudhry Aslam - a senior police officer heading the CID - was killed when a suicide bomber attacked his bullet-proof vehicle. The TTP claimed both attacks as retaliation for the CID's efforts to capture TTP militants.]

The continuing violence against the police turned the law enforcers into victims. Such attacks and the inability to pursue politically connected criminals had a demoralising effect on the force, leading to a neglect of regular policing functions, which produced a spike in crimes such as armed robbery, vehicle hijacking, mugging, and rape.

Moreover, the growing economic disparities within the city had been constantly pointing out that it was more cost-effective for an unemployed youth from an impoverished neighbourhood such as Lyari or Nazimabad or Sohrab Goth to rent a pistol for Rs:8000 [£50] a day, using it to hijack a car or snatch mobile phones, or killing a pointed subject as a part of regular business – then why he'll knock door to door for an employment.

On 28th December 2010; an explosion wounded several students at Karachi University. In many areas of the city, there was huge resentment toward outsiders. Load shedding [frequent power shut] for many hours a day led to sporadic demonstrations and violence in many parts of the city.

From the start of 2011, armed factions linked to Karachi's political parties engaged in the targeted killings of their opponents; bystanders also became victims.

On 25th January 2011; two police officers were killed near a Shia procession in Karachi.

On 21st April 2011; an explosion in the Birch Club by the Grass Market in Lyari left 15 people dead and 35 injured.

On 22nd May 2011; militants attacked the Pakistan Navy's Mehran Base in Karachi. During the 16-hour siege, the gunmen killed 18 and injured 16 others. Full details of the event is given in '*Judges & Generals in Pakistan Vol-III*'; Chapter 89, pps 1428-39, GHP Surrey [UK]

In July, 324 people were victims of targeted killings.

On 28th August 2011; the National Assembly formed a 17-member all-party committee headed by Minister for Religious Affairs Syed Khurshid

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

Shah to probe the killings and violence in Karachi and Balochistan and submit its report in two months; no report till today.

However, the Supreme Court had taken a *suo moto* notice about the Karachi's lawless situation and heard the case from 26th August to 6th October 2011; the full report about SC's recommendations has already been placed on previous pages of this volume.

The tenuous balance between ethnic and sectarian groups, patronised by PPP, MQM and ANP was broken by significantly altered demographics in the city. The parties engaged in a turf war over '*bhatta*' (extortion) collection and illegal land grabbing of government lands. The flashpoints of violence in Karachi were Lyari, Orangi, Katti Pahari, Qsba Colony, Pak Colony, and Shah Faisal Colony. Between 925 and 1400 people were killed in sectarian, ethnic and political violence during first eight months of 2011; HRCP held.

[On 19th September 2011; *militants bombed the residence of SP Chaudhry Aslam, a senior police officer in Karachi, killing eight people.*

By mid-2011 Karachi was caught in a wave of violence that by some estimates had killed more people comparing to the past three years; the worst violence the city has seen since 1995, driven by a complex web of ethnic, political, and social tensions.

As per the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan [HRCP]'s report, 1138 persons were killed in that political violence spree in Karachi during the first six months of the year, 490 of which were targeted killings.]

Meanwhile, debate over the issue of local governance in Sindh continued through harsh exchange of words in Sindh Assembly. Conflicting positions among the PPP and MQM prevented the Sindh government from passing an amendment to the 'Local Body Ordinance'. The MQM wanted continuation of the system established under Gen Musharraf, putting elected *Nazims* at the forefront of local leadership in the urban centres of Karachi and Hyderabad but the PPP was bent upon to go exactly at 180 angles.

In fact, the situation in Karachi was very serious – even comparing with that of South Waziristan and polarization to an unprecedented level on the political, ethnic, and religious divides was seen all around. The only viable solution with the political leadership was to eliminate militancy from their wings but the PPP, MQM and ANP did not put any collective effort.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

Karachi's all genuine politicians were quite upset because the criminals had penetrated in their parties with handsome chunks of looted and grabbed money for their fellow colleagues. Party flags were being used by those criminals and some political hands were actually providing them protection – thus police remained helpless.

On 6th October 2011; the Supreme Court of Pakistan issued a judgment calling upon political parties to disassociate themselves from criminals to whom the parties had provided financing as well as political support.

[The ruling made a number of recommendations in that regard – which have been given in detail in on earlier pages in this volume.]

Inter-alia, the apex court observed:

"There are criminals who have succeeded in making their ways in political parties notwithstanding whether they are components or non-components of government, and are getting political and financial support allegedly from such parties.

Therefore, the political parties should denounce their affiliation with them in the interest of the country and democratic set up and they should not allow them to use their names as militant outfits of the political parties."

During 2012, the overall casualties subsided in Karachi but the number of sectarian / terrorist attacks went up markedly - by 224pc, *2012's report by the Pak Institute for Peace Studies [PIPS]* is referred. According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, more than 1,450 people including children were killed in Karachi in the first six months of 2012.

NO-GO AREAS IN KARACHI:

Referring to a 'foreigner's note' sent to an American intelligence cum security agency on 23rd August 2011;

[The goons of Lyari and adjacent central Karachi take their orders from London and operate with a free hand because of reciprocal agreements with Pakistan's enemy spy agencies. The people of

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

Pakistan understand about all the sanctioned gangs who act-up or lie low, according to the needs of their political manipulators.

Karachi burns now, because they want it to burn. Until the Pakistani people rise-up against this [PPP] government tyranny they will continue to live under these hellish conditions.]

Law-enforcement agencies [LEAs] of Karachi revealed that terrorists from outlawed Baloch insurgent groups like Balochistan Liberation Army [BLA] were present in the troubled Lyari neighbourhood of Karachi and stoking the ongoing violence in the city.

Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani was told in a briefing that the BLA – which was behind the Balochistan insurgency – had been promised a safe haven in Lyari by ‘some quarters’ [*perhaps referring to Uzair Baloch gang*]; that was the one cause of the unabated violence in Karachi.

The acting Director General [DG] of Sindh Rangers was telling the PM that:

“...his paramilitary force could control the situation within two weeks, if given ‘free hand’ by the political authorities.

He sought powers to chase the terrorists and target killers even if they take shelter in the offices of any political or religious party.”

The Rangers chief held and conveyed a firm assurance that his force could restore peace in the violence-plagued city with the help of police, if given full powers; however, the planning of all operations should be the sole prerogative of his forces.

Officials of the intelligence agencies told the prime minister that they have gathered information about all ‘no-go areas in the city’. On the basis of this classified data, they said, an operation could be launched against miscreants in the city.

The fact remained that the Sindh police chief was made to stand out during the briefing due to his alleged ‘non-serious attitude’. When asked to brief the meeting on the Karachi situation, the IGP presented a long list of demands to the prime minister. His demands included more armoured and bullet-proof vehicles and weapons which was also correct; the PM didn't want to hear that because it was a provincial subject.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

PM Gilani heard the whole issue but could not approve any solution because the gangs in Lyari were directly connected with the PPP office bearers; and gangs in central Karachi were controlled and operated by the MQM legislators who were the PPP government partners in Sindh and Islamabad.

Moreover, PM Gilani could not find courage to interfere in the city affairs which was considered as President Zardari's exclusive domain – so the killings kept on showing surge and no-go areas continued to stay.

The law-enforcers were at odd over the existence of no-go areas in Karachi – media reports of 3rd April 2013 carried interesting details.

The political parties kept consensus that the financial hub Karachi had become a '*territorially locked city*' where a common man could not move freely with his own free will as per the constitution; the Law Enforcing Agencies [LEAs] like police, Rangers and Intelligence departments were upset over the continued situations since a decade at least.

The stakeholder political parties like PPP, MQM and ANP themselves were in fix as it was impossible for them to enter those territorially locked areas to run their election campaigns through their own voters.

In December 2008, the Sindh Home Department issued a notification; asked the then Sindh Inspector General of Police [IGP] to take immediate measures for removal of barriers from all parts of the city. The said orders were passed on to all SHOs of the areas concerned to remove the blockades at the earliest – but they were found helpless.

Initially, those no-go areas were marked by the criminal gangs by blocking certain streets in the city by installing barriers to protect themselves but then the streets were blocked by certain influential criminals, under the protection of their respective party politicians, for extortion and kidnapping activities. Torture cells were developed by those criminals so that LEAs were not able to interfere in their activities.

Once, Chief Justice of Pakistan [CJP] Iftikhar M Chaudhry had ordered elimination of no-go areas from the city by 4th April [2013] but the LEAs kept engaged themselves in sorting out the true '*definition of no-go area*'. They could not come on agreement that which street could be cleared and which left – of course, the power play by politicians and certain 'partisan police officers' were pulling the strings from immediate behind.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

Police officers claimed that some no-go areas did exist in the city while others claimed the entire city had become a no-go area. In short, Sindh police were successful in devising a plan to deceive the apex court till that day of 4th April. On the other hand, Sindh Additional Chief Secretary Home Israr Hussain had no knowledge about the issue of no-go area. It was finally held that:

"The entire city has become a no-go area; the political parties have cordoned off the entire city by installing barriers, a common man cannot move easily in other parts of the city due to barriers.

When a stranger visits any area, armed people start investigation that where have you come from and where do you want to go – and is often looted there at barriers."

Contrarily, Criminal Investigation Department [CID]'s SSP Ch Aslam said:

"...there is no no-go area in Karachi; police can enter any part of the city easily and launch operation whenever and wherever it wants. We have launched an operation in Lyari and removed all the barriers."

When he was asked about a number of barriers installed in every nook and corner of the city, he said: *"...the residents have installed barriers for their security and no criminal is hiding there."*

When asked if there was no no-go-area in Karachi then what about Lyari, the SSP turned angry and said in response to the FIA statement:

"Police are conducting raids in the city. And I want to tell you we have arrested big fishes over the last many days and you would see peace prevailing everywhere in the city shortly. FIA is a 'memon force' and we are 'hard police'."

The SSP Ch Aslam was really brave – but he was martyred by the Taliban on 9th January 2014 because of his on-going iron grip over the target killers; in fact every target killer, from what group he might be, was happy on SSP Ch Aslam's demise.

All Pashtun dominated areas in Karachi had emerged as no-go areas then; as ANP's Rana Gul Afridi explained while asserting that:

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

"Landhi, Sohrab Goth, Frontier Colony, Ittehad Town, Sultanabad, Pakhtunabad and some parts of Orangi Town have emerged as no-go areas.

Police and Rangers are conducting raids in Manghopir since the last many years but they could not ensure movement of a common man there.

In Sultanabad and Pakhtunabad, the criminals call traders and collect extortion openly but no one can dare to go there and stop this practice."

Banned Peoples Amn Committee [PAC] member Zaffar Baloch said:

"Police launched an operation in Lyari and removed barriers from Siraj Colony located in Moosa Lane only.

In this locality, the people who belong to Shia sect had installed barriers after suicide attacks to secure themselves but they [police] uprooted these barriers."

A general feeling prevailing in the Supreme Court premises on that day was that the law-enforcers had befooled the apex court with their usual gimmicks; police made the judges happy by launching fake and papered operation in *Pakhtun* dominated areas.

On 17th April 2013; the Supreme Court gave 24 hours to Sindh LEAs to arrest those persons whose names were divulged in the JITs and registered FIRs. The bench also directed the *police to clear all 'no-go areas'* and remove the fearful influence of the criminals from different areas of the metropolis.

A five-judge larger bench headed by CJP Iftikhar M Chaudhry heard the Karachi law and order implementation case; the CJP expressed reservations over the law and order situation in Karachi.

During the course of hearing, Shahid Anwar Bajwa, counsel for DG Rangers, submitted a Joint Investigation Team [JIT]'s report and claimed its confidentiality. The court noted that there were 71 persons involved in different cases; most of them were in custody and had confessed committing capital crime but were booked under minor charges.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

They themselves had revealed their involvement in such cases, but unfortunately, instead of submitting *challans* [final reports u/s 173 CrPC] against them as per the JIT recommendations, the police had filed the *challans* for lesser punishment.

The police itself was committing another kind of heinous crime by going hands in gloves under the influence of their respective political patrons.

The bench also expressed surprise over non-prosecution of the two alleged target killers identified as Munir Ahmed and Naeem Sheikh who, according to JIT report, confessed for killing 115 and 47 persons respectively. They were only charged with encountering police and carrying illegal weapons that led to their bail from a court of law, after they were arrested.

The apex court said it was mandatory upon the LEAs to interrogate their cases. The CJP said it seemed that there were no coordinated and concerted efforts made by the LEAs amongst themselves to bring all of them to 'proper justice'.

During the proceedings, police report related to the no-go areas in Karachi was placed before the bench. It was mentioned in the report that there were 106 police stations in the city out of which partial no-go areas continued to exist in the premises of seven police stations. On this, the CJP questioned if police accepted the presence of no-go areas in seven police stations – which were those.

The report had identified localities with partial no-go areas; those were PIB Colony, East Police Station, Sachal Police Malir, Sohrab Goth, Kala Kot, Chakiwara, South Karachi and Pirabad. The SC bench ordered the IG Police Sindh to ensure clearance of those seven police station's premises from no go areas; AND sarcastically saying 'plus little more areas'.

After knowing the police version of 'No-Go areas in 7 police stations' the SC bench handed over the IGP Sindh an exhaustive list of actual no-go areas on ground – the court had made it on the basis of intelligence reports of agencies. The list of ethnic killing areas contained:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Safoora Goth | 2. Area near Micassa apartment |
| 3. Area at Old Sabzi Mandi | 4. Shireen Jinnah Colony |
| 5. Shah Rasool Colony | 6. Hijrat Colony and Sultanabad |
| 7. Memon Goth | 8. Sharifabad |
| 9. Kati Pahari | 10. Qaidabad |
| 11. Bilawal Shah Noorani Goth | 12. Pehlwan Goth |
| 13. Hazara Goth | 14. Sherpao Basti |

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 15. <i>Natha Khan Goth</i> | 16. <i>Bizerta Lines</i> |
| 17. <i>Delhi Colony</i> | 18. <i>Chanesar Goth</i> |
| 19. <i>Ilyas Goth</i> | 20. <i>PIB Colony</i> |
| 21. <i>Parts of New Karachi</i> | 22. <i>Azizabad</i> |
| 23. <i>Jamali Goth3</i> | 24. <i>Areas along Drigh Road</i> |
| 25. <i>Jackson and docks</i> | 26. <i>Khokrapar</i> |
| 27. <i>Mehran Town</i> | 28. <i>Parts of Landhi</i> |
| 29. <i>Shershah</i> | |

Complete no-go areas because of the presence of militants or gangsters:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A. <i>Pakhtunabad</i> | B. <i>Sultanabad</i> |
| C. <i>Ittehad Town</i> | D. <i>New Mianwali Colony</i> |
| E. <i>Parts of Lyari</i> | F. <i>Macchar Colony</i> |
| G. <i>Settlements in Sohrab Goth</i> | H. <i>Shanti Nagar & Dalmia</i> |
| I. <i>Qayyumabad</i> | J. <i>Afghan Basti</i> |
| K. <i>Kunwari Colony</i> | L. <i>Chota Plaza</i> |
| M. <i>Supermarket area of Sohrab Goth</i> | |

The apex court was informed that the PPP had been supporting the criminal elements in Lyari. *The Chief Justice remarked that every act in the city was politically motivated.* The Rangers counsel stated that in Lyari, action was difficult against criminals because they always take shelter behind women and children; another Lal Masjid like situation could erupt and go out of control.

On the same day of *17th April 2013*, the apex court also heard the petition filed by MQM leader Nasreen Jalil regarding presence of Taliban and '*bhatta*' in Karachi. The counsel for Sindh government said that it was very odd situation that those [referring to MQM] who wrote the letter were in government for the last 20 years. The current interim set up in Sindh had also come into power with their wishes.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court was informed that 17,878 acres state's land had been illegally allotted in Karachi during the previous five years whereas 558 allotments were carried out in city area exclusively. Upon this, the court issued notices to the authorities of Karachi Port Trust, Port Qasim Authority and Defence Housing Authority [DHA] regarding illegal occupation of state's land by them.

In response to the Supreme Court order, Sindh government formed one man commission of a senior consultant of Board of Revenue [BoR] Nazir

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

Muhammad Laghri, who submitted the commission report before the larger bench. He requested the bench to declare the report as '*classified*'.

The SC bench, however rejecting his request directed the Member Land Utilization of the BoR Sindh Saqib Somro to issue notices to all those individuals and organizations whose names were mentioned in the commission report and conduct hearing over titles of the land within two weeks.

While giving details regarding allotment of government land in Karachi, the apex court was told that as many as 18 cases were approved for General & Commercial purpose and 168 for Industrial purpose category. The member also stated that the allotments of the government land in Karachi were not granted according to the market value.

The court issued notices to the PPP leaders Muzaffar Tappi, and Qadir Patel regarding their alleged involvement in the illegal occupation of 15 acres plot in Qayyam Abad Karachi.

Despite all the efforts by the Supreme Court, the No-Go Areas could not be cleared whatsoever till at least 4th September 2013, when Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif ordered law enforcement and intelligence agencies to abolish the long existing no-go areas in the metropolis at any cost.

After chairing a high-level meeting with the officials of LEAs at Governor House, PM Nawaz Sharif ordered the concerned authorities to deal with the no-go areas and crimes happening therein with an iron hand. During the meeting, the members deliberated over the administrative and legal complications surrounding the law and order issue in the metropolis.

The Prime Minister discussed the joint strategy options while expanding intelligence mechanism so that the Supreme Court's order pertaining to Karachi law and order could be implemented in letter and spirit; the time to consider excuses and compromises had lapsed.

Showing his concern over the situation, the premier could not keep his eyes and ears shut over the deteriorating [*which already had deteriorated much*] situation in the city. He instructed the LEAs to act promptly against the identified miscreants' groups to begin with. He ordered the civil institutions to ensure action on information provided by the intelligence agencies.

On that day of 4th September 2013, PM Nawaz Shairf approved 'KARACHI OPERATION' with sole intentions that unbiased and strategic

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

operation should be conducted to restore peace in the biggest business hub of the country. He further informed the participants that decision to introduce reforms in the anti-terrorism laws had already been taken; the prevalent laws were not sufficient to restore peace in Karachi at all.

The motto of the Karachi operation was that *'the extraordinary situation demands extraordinary steps'*. The session was attended by Interior Minister Ch Nisar Ali Khan, Information Minister Pervaiz Rashid, DG ISI, DG Rangers, DG IB and Chief Secretary Sindh along with other relevant officials.

Next day, a special session of the federal cabinet was held at Governor House Karachi to review the recommendations pertaining to control the crime plus law and order situation of Karachi. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali and Governor Dr Ishratul Ebad also attended the meeting of the federal cabinet as special participants.

MQM was not invited to that Cabinet meeting. However, PM Sharif desired to hold one-on-one meeting with the MQM's parliamentary leader Dr Farooq Sattar which the later refused showing his reservations.

Karachi Operation [2013] has been discussed in detail in the next chapter.

MORE LAWYERS KILLED:

Lawyers Killed Again: the history of killings of lawyers in Karachi has been disconcerting and worrying, thus alarming too, since a decade at least.

Referring to South Asia Terrorism Portal [SATP] record;

"During 2007, 16 lawyers were killed and 54 injured in two incidents in Karachi; in 2008, 7 lawyers were killed and 80 injured; in 2010, two lawyers were killed; in 2011, 19 were killed; in 2012, five were killed; in 2013, six were killed and one seriously injured; in 2014, 13 lawyers were assassinated and 25 injured and in 2015, two advocates were killed in two incidents."

On 13th June 2011; unidentified armed militants shot dead Zia Alam Advocate, lawyer of Ajmal Pahari in North Nazimabad within the jurisdiction of Sir Syed Police Station.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

On 26th August 2011, two unknown miscreants killed Barrister Murtaza Chinnoy in his office in Clifton area of Karachi. Sindh HC Bar Association took serious notice of it because *since start of 2011 till that day 19 lawyers had lost their lives during target killing spree*. The lawyers' community of Karachi was not very hopeful with the SC's interference under reference because the SC itself declared that '*.....this suo motu action is not aimed at any person or body.*'

The facts available on record told that when the army had launched operation in Karachi in 1990s, the MQM was the only party to decide about peace or war in the city. Neither there were organized *Pakhtuns* nor the ANP was there to oppose them. The ammunition dealers were also non-existent. Thus the only target was the MQM activists.

That was the reason that MQM was not easy with the PML of Nawaz Sharif in 1990-92 but then equally angry with the PPP in 1994-96. After that the police and Rangers had handled all operations in Karachi. However, in the said turmoil of August 2011, the PPP held a much better position because MQM's pressure was not there to threaten their government at Islamabad.

The scenario of ethnic constitution in Karachi had changed much till then. The *Pakhtuns*, though less in numbers in comparison with the Urdu speaking, but had gained more financial strength both on legitimate and 'other' sides especially when almost the whole transport system of Karachi was held by them and about 500 tankers daily were being booked for NATO supplies alone.

ANP, another ally of the PPP, was also with them to provide guidance and protection when and where needed. In that backdrop of changed realities on ground, the PPP could have launched a determined and indiscriminate operation much earlier.

The MQM's main demand from the PPP remained that their rival faction, MQM-H of Afaq Ahmed [*who had joined back the MQM a year later*], must be abolished, which was not an easy task. MQM also wanted that in the census for voting, ANP should not be given as much weight as ought to be; considered an unjustified demand by the ANP. As per MQM's stance, the *Pakhtuns* were to be counted as they existed, nothing more and nothing less, they maintained.

On 30th August 2011; the Supreme Court's Karachi Registry heard Sindh government's lawyer Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, President Sindh High Court Bar Anwar Mansoor and the lawyer of *Sindh Bachao* Committee Mujeeb Pirzada

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

– all appeared before the bench and placed their arguments. Continuing his arguments, Hafeez Pirzada had said that:

'The foreigners are involved in Karachi violence and some have dual nationalities thus such people do not have the right to represent people as their loyalties cannot be trusted.'

The CJP simply heard this point, no reaction - no more details.

The hearing of the Supreme Court continued till 15th September 2011 [of course with some intervals] and the judgment was reserved till later.

On 26th January 2012; in sectarian killings, *three Shia lawyers were killed* and another was injured in an ambush in the Arambagh area of Karachi.

The triple murder occurred just a day after *two legal advisers of the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat [ASWJ], were shot dead* near the City Courts.

Four advocates — Gohar Shakeel Jaffery, his father Badar Munir Jaffery, Kafeel Ahmed Jaffery and Babar Ali Shah — were travelling in a car when four men riding two motorcycles and wearing helmets sprayed the vehicle with bullets near the *Masjid-i-Khizra* at Pakistan Chowk and fled. Babar Shah, who was driving the car, drove to the Civil Hospital in an injured condition. The other three were pronounced dead on arrival.

Later, SSP Raja Umer Khattab said that:

"The three murders are part of an ongoing wave of sectarian killings in which two rival sects are involved. The banned Sipah-e-Shahab Pakistan has lost all its lawyers, who were fighting cases of its activists in courts; the major blow to the banned outfit was when its legal adviser, Maqboolur Rehman, was targeted on New MA Jinnah Road on 11th January instant, and when Rehman's two assistants were gunned down on 25th January in the Risala police limits."

SSP Mohammad Fayyaz Khan of the Crime Investigation Department [CID] Sindh confirmed the sectarian killings had been on the rise since the release of murder accused, including Naeem Bukhari of the *Lashker-e-Jhangvi*, who allegedly reorganised his group after his release in 2009 and started killings.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

On 28th May 2013; in Karachi un-identified gunmen shot dead a lawyer and two of his sons as he took them to school; the family was targeted for its Shia faith. The lawyer, Kauser Saqlain, was taking his two sons aged 12 and 15 to school in the morning when gunmen on a motorbike opened fire on his car.

An extremist Sunni militant group, *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* [LeJ] was suspected it carried out the attack; LeJ has been accused of killing scores of Shiite doctors and lawyers in Pakistani cities, besides carrying out large-scale bombings against the country's Shia Hazara minority in the south-western city of Quetta.

Meanwhile, there was no document available to show that how many target killers were arrested or shot dead by the police in encounters, perhaps nil. However, it was fact *that intelligence agencies not only had perfect data about the target killings and operations of mafias in Karachi, they also had information about the influential people behind those heinous crimes.*

Referring to monthly 'Herald' of July 2016 titled as: 'Living in Fear.....'

On 26th September 2013; a public prosecutor Naimat Ali Randhawa was gunned down near his home in Karachi's Nazimabad neighbourhood. He was leading the prosecution side before an Anti-Terrorism Court [ATC] that was hearing the murder case of a TV reporter, Wali Khan Babar, killed in Karachi in January 2011. Niamat Ali's son, who was also a lawyer, told:

"My father wanted to re-examine a witness but some of his friends advised him to withdraw from the case. Those friends were, in fact, conveying him a message from someone who did not want the trial to proceed. My father did not withdraw."

Other public prosecutors Muhammad Khan Buriro and Mubashir Mirza withdrew from Babar's case after an eyewitness, Haider Ali, who had identified the suspects in front of a judicial magistrate after their arrest, was killed in November 2012, a day before he was to testify in the trial court.

In Karachi – where hundreds of cases against the activists of sectarian and militant organisations, criminal gangs and target killers were being heard by anti-terrorism courts – threats to the lives of prosecutors who represented the state in those trials were numerous and real. Naimat Ali had apprised his seniors and the Sindh home department about the "*messages*" being

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

conveyed to him through his friends but the government took no measures to ensure his safety.

Sitting inside the Sindh high court's cafeteria on a hot summer noon in June 2014, Abdul Maroof, the then public prosecutor in Babar's case – as well as in several other cases including the case of Akram Lahori of *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* [LeJ] – had survived two attacks on him – both made during his tenure as a public prosecutor.

[On 21st November 2013, armed men tried to break into Maroof's house in Karachi's DHA; the intruders escaped when he fired at them.

On 7th April 2014, his house was attacked with gunfire.

Five days later, on 12th April 2014, his brother was killed by unknown assailants in Jhelum; the murder was definitely linked to Maroof's work as a public prosecutor in Karachi as he claimed.]

After the murder of his brother, Maroof told to media that his superiors were advising him to stop publicising the attacks on him and his family.

In August 2014, Maroof left Pakistan for the US on a student visa. He had to leave in a hurry because the senior police officials in Karachi had informed him that he was on the hit list of several terrorist organisations. He did not return to Pakistan even after his leave ended.

Moving abroad has been an effective safety mechanism public prosecutors used to employ to keep themselves and their families safe. All of Naimat Ali's family – except his one son Tauqeer Ali – shifted to Saudi Arabia.

Once, the government engaged special public prosecutors in the Safoora Goth massacre case at a promised remuneration of one million rupees but then the amount was suddenly reduced to even less than 10% of the original – to only Rs:80,000. They refused to work on the case saying:

"Who would risk his life for such meagre amount of money and conduct prosecution in cases involving suspects who have affiliations with terrorist organisations, such as the Islamic State and the al Qaida?"

Prosecutor General Sindh Shahadat Awan, the highest official of the government prosecution in the province, told that:

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

“During the last four to five years, around 60 lawyers have been killed in Karachi alone. Were they all prosecutors? - Only two or three of them were.

Reasons for these killings are not necessarily related to the profession of the deceased. If there is really any threat to the life of an official in terrorism cases, it is to the investigation officer who collects evidence and records statements of both the witnesses and the suspects.”

Awan kept the view that the Pakistan Bar Council or the Sindh High Court Bar Association should have asked the provincial government for proper security. These could include improvement of security for everyone linked to anti-terrorism cases – judges, prosecutors, investigators and witnesses.

Saeed Naeem was a senior public prosecutor at the Anti-Terrorism Court-II in Swat. He led the prosecution side in the trial of the attackers who had tried to kill peace activist Malala Yousafzai while she was riding a school bus in 2012.

The trial took place inside Swat's Pakistan Australian Institute of Hotel Management which the military had taken over to use as a rehabilitation centre for captured Taliban militants. An armoured personnel carrier and a pick-up truck for his travel to the court and back home were arranged for him through the Pak-Army instructions.

Saeed Naeem also recalled the judge who announced the verdict in the Malala attack case in June 2015 – convicting two people and acquitting eight others – was sitting in the court with his back towards the suspects so that they could not identify him.

Since the announcement of the verdict in the Malala case, Naeem had been receiving calls from unknown phone numbers – even those registered in Afghanistan – threatening him of serious consequences for his role in the case – but that should have been on the priority agenda of dummy, fake and coward lawmakers of Pakistan.

On 17th September 2015, the threats assumed a concrete form: unknown armed men fired multiple shots at his home. Instead of providing him security, the police in his neighbourhood were reluctant to even register a first information report [FIR] of the firing incident. He had to move the court to get that basic job done.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

On 23rd September 2016; a short documentary on 'Samaa' TV told that Pakistan's National intelligence agencies had come up with a report on investigations about the killings of lawyers in Karachi. The investigators revealed that most of the lawyers were killed by target killers hailing from Muttahida Quami Movement [MQM].

According to the report, killers including Outb-ud-Din, Qadir Ghanchi, Tahir Topchi, and Shakeel Fauji killed 19 out of 26 lawyers in the metropolis.