

# Pakistan's Mounting Security Challenges

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## Summary

*Pakistan's deteriorating security situation, compounded by economic fragility and interprovincial tensions, presents a severe challenge to state stability. As insurgencies expand in both scope and sophistication, Pakistan's ability to contain them remains hampered by weak governance, financial constraints and deteriorating regional relations.*

Pakistan is grappling with an increasingly volatile security situation, compounded by economic turmoil and persistent political instability. The past few months have seen an alarming rise in militant activity, with attacks becoming more frequent, coordinated and deadly. The surge in violence, spearheaded by groups such as the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), has placed immense pressure on Pakistan's security forces and has raised urgent questions about the country's counterterrorism strategy. With the government already struggling to stabilise the economy and manage political unrest, this escalation threatens to push the state into deeper turmoil.

Pakistan's worsening security environment is starkly reflected in the findings of the [Global Terrorism Index 2025](#), which ranks Pakistan as the world's second-most affected country by terrorism. In 2024, the country recorded 1,081 terrorism-related deaths, a staggering 45 per cent increase from the previous year. The TTP was responsible for [over half of these casualties](#), carrying out 482 attacks that claimed 558 lives – a sharp rise from 293 deaths in 2023. Its growing operational capacity highlights the failure of Pakistan's counterterrorism measures, particularly in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) region. The TTP's resurgence has been closely linked to the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

Pakistan's military and government officials have repeatedly accused Kabul of harbouring militants and providing them with safe havens. Inter-Services Public Relations Director General Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry has publicly condemned [Afghanistan's lack of action against the TTP](#), arguing that Pakistan's security crisis is being fuelled by external forces operating across the border. The deteriorating relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have resulted in periodic military standoffs and border closures, further complicating regional security dynamics.

While the TTP remains Pakistan's primary security concern, the [BLA's escalating insurgency](#) in Balochistan has added another dimension to the crisis. The group's increasing brazenness was most evident in the [hijacking of Jaffar Express](#) on 11 March 2025, an attack that shocked the nation. BLA militants seized the train, segregated passengers based on ethnicity and took hostages while engaging in a prolonged standoff with security forces. Pakistan's government has accused both Afghanistan and India of facilitating the BLA's growing activities. Intelligence sources claim that intercepted communications link the attackers to [handlers in Afghanistan](#), with Indian involvement suspected in orchestrating recent attacks. The Pakistan foreign ministry has demanded greater accountability from Afghanistan, citing

a long history of militant groups using its territory as a base for operations against Pakistan. The BLA's actions reflect a broader trend of increasingly sophisticated insurgent attacks in Balochistan. The group carried out [150 attacks in 2024](#), with tactics ranging from roadside bombings to suicide missions. The train hijacking, however, marks a shift toward high-profile, symbolic operations that not only [target security forces](#) but also seek to instil widespread fear among civilians.

The situation in KPK remains particularly unstable, with the TTP carrying out frequent attacks against both military and civilian targets. In mid-March 2025 alone, the group launched a suicide bombing on a [military camp in Jandola](#), attacked [four police stations in Bannu and Lakki Marwat](#), and orchestrated a roadside bombing targeting security personnel. The intensity of these attacks has exposed serious deficiencies in Pakistan's counterterrorism operations and intelligence-gathering capabilities. The persistence of these assaults suggests that insurgent groups have greater operational freedom than in the past. Pakistan's security forces have launched multiple military raids in [Mohmand and Dera Ismail Khan](#), targeting militant hideouts; yet, these actions have done little to deter further violence. The lack of a coordinated, long-term counterinsurgency strategy remains a critical weakness in Pakistan's response.

Beyond the direct security implications, Pakistan's worsening insurgency problem carries significant economic consequences. A country already reeling from inflation, declining foreign investment and an International Monetary Fund (IMF)-mandated austerity programme is ill-equipped to finance an extended military campaign against the insurgents. While Pakistan has been able to secure a [US\\$1 billion \(S\\$1.34 billion\) IMF loan tranche](#), the government's [request for tax exemptions on foreign investments](#) was recently rejected, further complicating its efforts to stimulate economic recovery. At the same time, Pakistan continues to increase its reliance on Chinese military hardware, with China supplying [81 per cent of Pakistan's arms imports](#) over the past five years. The deepening security partnership with China spotlights Pakistan's strategic pivot amid strained relations with its Western allies. However, a militarised response alone cannot resolve the country's insurgency challenges.

Pakistan's security challenges are further compounded by growing discontent over resource allocation, particularly the [government's military-backed Green Pakistan Initiative](#) and its plan to construct six new canals for corporate farming. Aimed at irrigating 4.8 million acres, the project has faced strong opposition, especially in Sindh, where officials warn it will deepen existing water shortages. Sindh's Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro has cautioned that the plan could ["turn Sindh barren"](#). Protests against the six-canal project warn that diverting the Indus River water will threaten agriculture, create drought-like conditions, exclude Sindh from decision-making, benefit corporate interests over local farmers and replicate past controversial projects like the Kalabagh Dam which adversely impacts water distribution.

The simultaneous challenges of insurgency, economic fragility and regional tensions demand a response that extends beyond short-term crisis management and reactive security measures. Without a comprehensive strategy that integrates counterterrorism efforts,

economic recovery and equitable resource distribution, Pakistan risks further destabilisation.

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