



Changing Targets, Mounting Civilian Casualties

# **Study Report on Suicide Attacks in Pakistan**

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## Summary

Militants have carried out 12 suicide attacks in Pakistan during past three months. According to a study conducted by the Conflict Monitoring Center 158 people, mostly civilians (123) were killed and 336 were injured in these attacks. Except 28 Security personal, all injured people (308) were civilians. Twenty-one security forces personnel also lost their lives in suicide attacks during the period between July and September 2011. Out of these 12 suicide attacks, 4 were carried out in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 3 in Balochistan and 4 in Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) while one suicide attack occurred in Sindh. No suicide attack was carried out in Punjab, Azad Kashmir, and Giligit Baltistan regions. Seven suicide attacks were carried out at public places while five were aimed at security forces. Only one suicide attack was carried out during the study period on Pak Army, which was foiled by a soldier.

Twenty-five suicide attacks were carried out by Afghan militants during the study period. The period between July and September saw 132 deaths in suicide attacks in Afghanistan while 243 people were injured. During the period, 49 security forces' personnel and 48 civilians were killed while 123 security forces personnel and 110 civilians were injured in suicide attacks.

## Only One Suicide Attacks against Military

Conflict Monitoring Center's study determines that militants' ability to target military installations has significantly diminished. Despite their desire to inflict heavy losses to Pakistani military, the militants could carry out only one suicide attack during the study period that too, was foiled by a soldier who gave his life to save many lives. On July 24, a suicide bomber tried to attack an army check post in South Waziristan but was shot dead by a soldier. During the shooting, explosive tied with the body of the suicide bomber exploded. A soldier was killed in the blast. Apart from this lone suicide attack, militants were not able to target Pakistani military in the above-mentioned period of three months.

It is worth noting that during first 9 months of the year 2011, militants carried out 36 suicide attacks in Pakistan however, only four suicide attacks were aimed at military installations. Out of these four attacks,

more than one soldier was killed in only two attacks. These two attacks were also carried out on soft military targets such as a recruitment center and a bakery run by Pak Army.

It is a matter of fact that suicide attack is most lethal weapon in the armory of militants. It looks almost impossible to stop someone who is bent upon giving up his life. However, Pakistani military, especially army has managed to safeguard its installations against suicide attacks successfully during first nine months of the year. Suicide attacks are of prime concern for military leadership as they create desperation and disappointment in the affected people. To address this concern Pakistani military has improved its security mechanism to avert suicide attacks at the first place. However, if a militant manages to detonate himself, the military has tried to ensure minimum loss of lives. It looks that protection measures adopted by Pakistani military are effective.

### **Planning and Operational Capabilities of TTP Badly Damaged**

Besides effectiveness of security mechanism by Pakistani military, it is also a matter of fact that after Swat and South Waziristan military operations and effective intelligence, planning and operational capacity and capabilities of Pakistani Taliban are badly damaged. Conflict Monitoring Center's study shows that TTP lacks planning component of its anti-state activities. Initially suicide attacks were meant to target only high value targets, which required high level of planning, but now TTP using its suicide weapon just like a shotgun with almost no strategic planning involved.

Death of Qari Hussain last year in a drone attack was a big blow to TTP as he was mastermind and trainer of suicide attacks in Pakistan. Pak Army has eliminated many of the top leadership of TTP during its military operations. Now the group is led by Hakeemullah Mehsood who is relatively young and does not possess any significant experience in guerrilla war. Besides this, he and his lieutenants are on the run due to military operations. TTP's command structure is now ineffective and suicide attacks are no more controlled by its central command. It is now at the discretion of local TTP commanders to plan and execute suicide attacks. Tariq Afridi group of TTP that operates in some areas of Khyber

Agency has used a suicide bomber against a mosque killing more than fifty people and earning bad name for TTP. The attack was badly condemned by public in FATA and TTP lost public support in many areas where local people had some sympathies for the group.

It is also evident that operational capabilities of the militant are also destroyed considerably. Only a single suicide attack against military shows that TTP is not able to execute effective suicide attacks against military targets. In the past militants used to target newsworthy military targets to attract more media coverage but during the study period the lone suicide attack against military was aimed at just a check post in a remote area of South Waziristan, which could hardly get media attention.

### **Fewer Attacks on Mainland Pakistan**

It is also notable that 8 out of 12 suicide attacks during the study period were carried out in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Province of KPK is already badly affected by militancy where it is easier for the militants to infiltrate from their sanctuaries in the tribal areas. Punjab, which saw some spectacular suicide attacks in the past remained out of reach of suicide attackers during the study period. It is worth mentioning here that last suicide attack in Punjab province was carried out on April 13, 2011 while during first 9 months of the year militants carried out only two suicide attacks in the province. First suicide attack in Punjab during current year was carried out on January 25 when a suicide bomber struck at the Ghora Chowk in the Urdu Bazaar area of Lahore, the Provincial Capital of Punjab, killing at least 10 people, including a woman and three Policemen, and injured at least 85 others. Both of the suicide attacks were aimed at public places.

Only one suicide attack was in observed Sindh Province during the study period. At least eight people were killed and 30 others injured in a suicide car bomb attack targeting SSP CID Chaudhry Aslam in the Darakhshan area of Karachi in May 2011. This was the only suicide attack in Sindh during first nine months of the year. However, militants had carried out a devastating assault on Pakistan Navy's Mehran base in Karachi. Taliban militants assaulted the headquarters of Pakistan's naval air force, killing 13 people, injuring 16 others and blowing up at least two military aircraft. The dead include 11 navy officials and 1 Ranger.

## **No increase in Suicide Attacks after Bin Laden's Death**

Conflict Monitoring Center's study shows that Osama Bin Laden's death in a US covert operation in Abbottabad on May 2 has made no impact on intensity of suicide attacks. Prior to the Abbottabad operation militants carried out 17 suicide attacks while 19 such attacks were observed in next five months. In other words, militants carried out 17 suicide attacks in first 4 month of the year and 18 such attacks in next five months.

The world feared retaliatory attacks by Al-Qaeda and its affiliates like TTP after Bin Laden's reported death. TTP had also threatened to take revenge from Pakistani military and government. However, CMC's study reveals that Bin Laden's death remained irrelevant to the suicide attacks in Pakistan. It demonstrates that capabilities of Al-Qaeda in Pakistan have been reduced extensively. Perhaps Osama Bin Laden himself was also irrelevant to the operational aspects of his own organization and was only a symbol of inspiration for the militants.

## **More Suicide Attacks on Public Places**

Militant groups responsible for carrying out suicide attacks in Pakistan claim that they are waging Jihad, which is one of the basic tenets of Islam. Nevertheless, practically these militants follow neither Islamic nor International rules of war. Worship places like mosques and shrine, hospitals, markets, hotels, bakeries or be it whatever public place; they do not hesitate to target it with whatever type of attack they like. Inspired by Al-Qaeda's Takfeeri group's ideology, these militants create their own theories, logics, and arguments to justify their ruthless attacks. Conflict Monitoring Center's study shows that during past three months 66.6 percent of the suicide attacks were carried out at public place. Mounting civilian casualties in suicide attacks can be gauged from the fact that 84.24 percent (123 out of 146) of those killed by militants in such attacks were ordinary civilians.

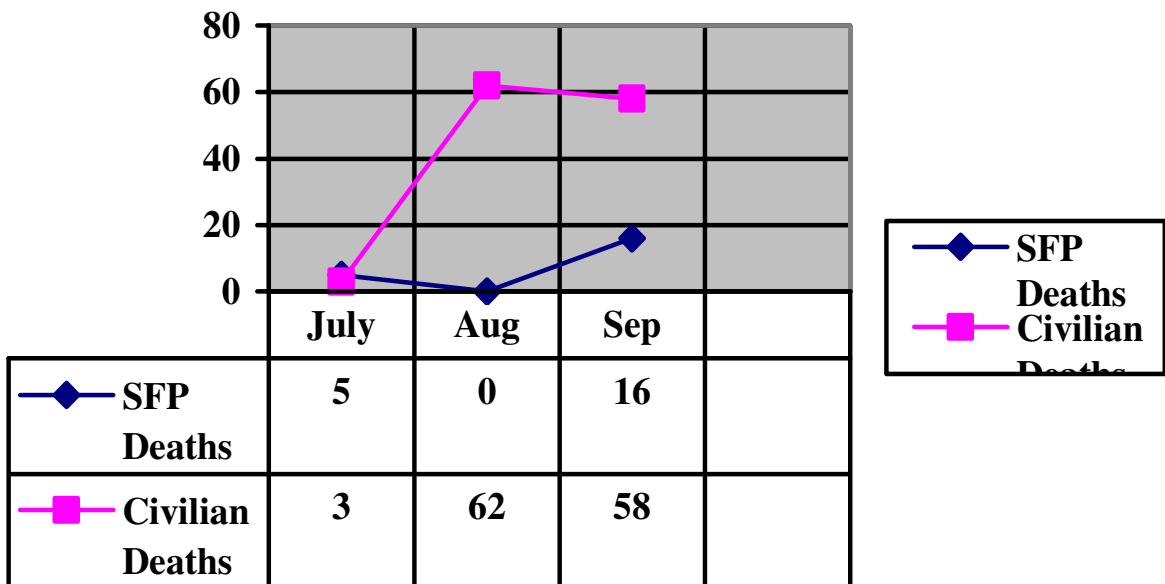
Growing suicide attacks on public places also demonstrate that militants are desperate in their actions. They have lost their focus on security forces. There was a time when Pakistani public opinion was divided on the issue of these Pakistani militants but suicide attacks at public places

deprived these militants off from any sympathy they were enjoying in certain quarters of the society.

Growing tendency to target civilians in suicide attacks tells that the militants try to acquire soft targets. This trend of attacking civilian targets creates terror and havoc in the society, which leads to a sense of insecurity and lack of trust in the ability of country's security forces to protect its citizens. It seems the efforts are focused on shaping the will, opinion, and spirits of the people of Pakistan. It seems militants are trying to enforce their 'policy of compellence'. Its people are actually the center of gravity of Pakistan and the real players in building comprehensive national security.

Consistent suicide attacks against Shia and Brailvee communities exhibit that militant groups active in Pakistan are more occupied with sectarian strife.

**Graphical Comparison w.r.t. Security Forces and civilian deaths in Pakistan**



## **Comparison with Previous Year's same period**

During the Three months period from July to September in 2010, militants carried out exactly same number of suicide attacks. However, the resultant casualties were much higher as 334 people were killed and 800 were injured during the period.

## **High Profile attacks**

During the three months study period of July to September 2011 Following suicide attacks were significantly high profile.

### ***Attack on DIG FC***

At least 28 people, including an FC Colonel and the wife of the Deputy Inspector General of Frontier Corps, were killed in two suicide attacks outside the official residence of the DIG here on September 8, 2011. The DIG, Brigadier Farrukh Shahzad, and 16 FC personnel were among 82 people injured in the attacks. There were 13 security personnel and 15 civilians among the dead. The suicide attack, in which Brig Farrukh Shahzad was an apparent target, took place in a high-security neighbourhood which has several government offices and residences of senior officials, including the Governor's House, Chief Minister's House, residences of IG Police and chief secretary just about 500 metres from the bombing area.

### ***Attack on SSP's Residence in Karachi***

A suicide bomber drove an explosives-laden car into the home of a senior anti-terror police officer in Defense area in Karachi on September 19, killing eight people, including a woman and her eight-year-old son. Although investigators were not sure about the way the attack was carried out on the residence of SP Muhammad Aslam Khan, better known as Chaudhry Aslam, who heads the anti-extremist cell of Sindh police's Crime Investigation Department (CID), they insisted that the attacker driving a double-cabin pick-up packed with over 300kg of explosives hit the entrance gate of the residence in Street 32, off Saba Avenue, DHA Phase VIII. Three policemen, Zakir Khan, Zunaid Khan and Sohail Moin guarding the SP's house, and his cook Nizamuddin, died on the spot. A driver of the neighboring bungalow, Muhammad Anwar, and his son

Muhammad Asif, also became the victims with fatal wounds of bomb splinters. A widow in her mid-30s, and her eight-year-old son Mohid Khan were also killed in the bombing. She was taking her only son to a nearby school.

### ***Attack on Mosque during Friday Prayers: 51 Killed***

At least 51 people were killed and 105 injured, in a suicide attack inside Mandokhel Masjid in the Jamrud area of Khyber Agency on August 19, 2011. a young boy aged 15-16 years had entered the mosque through a window and exploded himself in the main hall during Friday prayers. Officials also confirmed that the blast was a suicide attack. Locals said some militants had entered the area but had been forced to leave by tribal elders. When the suicide bomber entered the mosque, he is reported to have shouted "Who will throw me out of the area now?"

### ***Suicide Attacks during Eid Prayer***

A car suicide bombing at the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr on August 31, 2011 killed at least 11 people and injured 21 in Quetta. The attack took place in the parking lot of a mosque when hundreds of Muslims were leaving after Eid al Fitr prayers. "The attacker wanted to ram the explosive-laden car into Eid Gah (the mosque) but the explosion occurred in the parking lot," city police chief said, adding that due to "tight security" around the mosque the attacker could not get beyond the car park. Two women and a boy are among the dead.

### ***Suicide Attack on Funeral prayer***

On September 15, 2011, a suicide bomber detonated himself in the funeral prayer in Jandol area of lower Dir district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, killing 35 and injuring 71 civilians. It was funeral prayer of a tribel elder Bakht Khan who had established a private Lashkar (Armed group) against Taliban.

## **Comparison with Afghanistan**

According to Conflict Monitoring Center's study report covering July to September 2011 period 25 suicide attacks were carried out by Afghan militants during the study period. The period between July and September

saw 132 deaths in suicide attacks in Afghanistan while 243 people were injured. During the period, 49 security forces' personnel and 48 civilians were killed while 123 security forces personnel and 110 civilians were injured in suicide attacks. Targets of suicide attacks in Afghanistan were diverse in nature as in 7 attacks police was attacked, 5 attacks were aimed at International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) including NATO forces, government officials were targeted in 6 attacks, private security guards were targeted in 2 attacks while three attacks were carried out at public places. British Consulate was also attacked in a suicide attack.

During the study period, highest number of suicide attacks was carried out against afghan police. To destabilize government machinery militants often target Afghan police. Writ of Afghan government can effectively be established when its police can maintain law and order situation. Being soft target for militants, Afghan police is generally unable to perform its primary task. Taliban has established a parallel shadow government in most of the areas of Pashtune belt. Police's basic job is not counter insurgency operations. It is trained and equipped only for maintenance of law and order situation as well as control ordinary crimes. Militants find it easy to target police and give a message to the public that the government is unable to protect them.

Police is also first step of the ladder of security system in any country, which directly interacts with public. Afghan police being unable to protect itself cannot establish its trust in the eyes of Afghan public.

In contrast to civilian casualties in suicide attacks in Pakistan the ration in Afghanistan is significantly low. Almost same number of security personnel and civilians were killed in suicide attacks in Afghanistan.

**Graphical Comparison of Pakistan and Afghanistan w.r.t. Number of suicide Attacks**

