



1. What is the current security situation in Quetta for the general population and for Hazaras?

Figure 1: 'Location of Quetta in Pakistan'¹



Information indicates the current security situation in Quetta is poor for both Hazaras and the general population. The city has suffered frequent violent attacks in recent years as it plays host to a regional separatist insurgency, sectarian violence, Islamist militants and ruthless retaliatory actions by the state.² Sources report that killings regularly go unaccounted for and that many victims are innocent members of the public.³

¹ 'Location of Quetta in Pakistan' in 'Pakistan Country Specific Information' 2011, US Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs, 24 March http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_992.html#safety – Accessed 13 July 2011 – Attachment 1

² 'Quetta violence: Gunman kills three in sectarian attack' 2011, *The International Herald Tribune*, 10 July <http://tribune.com.pk/story/206924/quetta-violence-gunman-kills-three-in-sectarian-attack/> – Accessed 13 July 2011 – Attachment 2; 'Swiss hostages moved to Pakistan Al-Qaeda hotbed' 2011, *AFP*, 4 July <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jfxsI6bsP8jM4trCJQKbVgT8-pKg?docId=CNG.9f2d07beee623352c0609f91ab86c499.4c1> – Accessed 13 July 2011 – Attachment 3; 'Why we

RRT *Country Advice PAK38635* and *Country Advice PAK38764* from May 2011 provide comprehensive information on the security situation in Quetta for Hazaras. According to that advice, there is substantial evidence indicating that Hazaras in Quetta are targeted by extremist groups such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan. Hundreds of Hazaras have been killed in the city over the past decade in suicide bombings and targeted assassinations. Since the completion of that advice, there have been more deadly attacks on Hazaras/Shi'ites in Quetta, including an attack on 18 May 2011 on a utility vehicle that killed seven Hazari Shi'ites and a number of sectarian gun attacks on 10 July which killed nine, at least two of which were Hazaras.⁴

The US Department of State (USDOS) notes in its travel advice for Pakistan of March 2011 that there has been an increase in violent attacks in the city in recent years. The advice states:

Quetta, the provincial capital, has experienced an increase in bombings, occasional gun battles in the streets, and the imposition of curfews. Terrorist attacks against Pakistani government installations and infrastructure have been reported throughout 2009 and 2010.⁵

The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) lists the following serious incidents of violence in Quetta for the months of May and June 2011 alone:

On 13 June, a bomb blast near a National Accountability Bureau (NAB) office in Quetta left one person dead and one injured.⁶

On 1 June, militants assassinated a Balochistan University professor in Quetta.⁷

On 29 May, militants killed two policemen and injured two civilians in Spini Road region of Quetta.⁸

Seven Shias were killed and six others were injured in a suspected sectarian attack in Saryab town of Quetta on 18 May. The Sunni militant group, Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ),

should worry about Balochistan' 2011, BBC News, 11 January <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12215145> – Accessed 13 July 2011 – Attachment 4 .

'Why we should worry about Balochistan' 2011, BBC News, 11 January <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12215145> – Accessed 13 July 2011 – Attachment 4.

³ Amnesty International 2011, 'Pakistan: Balochistan atrocities continue to rise', 23 February <http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/pakistan-balochistan-atrocities-continue-rise-2011-02-23> – Accessed 14 July 2011 – Attachment 5; 'Why we should worry about Balochistan' 2011, BBC News, 11 January <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12215145> – Accessed 13 July 2011 – Attachment 4.

⁴ Shahid, S. & Kasi, A. 2011, 'Terrorists kill Seven Hazaras in Quetta' 2011, *Dawn*, 18 May <http://www.dawn.com/2011/05/19/terrorists-kill-seven-hazaras-in-quetta.html> – Accessed 19 May 2011 – Attachment 6; 'Quetta violence: Gunman kills three in sectarian attack' 2011, *The International Herald Tribune*, 10 July <http://tribune.com.pk/story/206924/quetta-violence-gunman-kills-three-in-sectarian-attack/> – Accessed 13 July 2011 – Attachment 2; '12 killed in Balochistan firing incidents' 2011, *The News International*, 11 July <http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=7337&Cat=13&dt=7/11/2011> – Accessed 13 July 2011 – Attachment 7.

⁵ 'Pakistan Country Specific Information' 2011, US Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs, 24 March http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_992.html#safety – Accessed 13 July 2011 – Attachment 1.

⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2011, Security and Militancy report for Pakistan for the week ending 15 June 2011, 15 June – Attachment 8.

⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2011, Security and Militancy report for Pakistan for the week ending 7 June 2011, 7 June – Attachment 9.

⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2011, 'Security and Militancy report for Pakistan for the week ending 31 May 2011', 31 May – Attachment 10.

claimed responsibility for the attack. In a separate incident in the town the same day, unidentified militants killed a school teacher.⁹

On 17 May, Pakistani armed forces reportedly killed five alleged Chechen militants (including three women) in a clash on the outskirts of Quetta. A policeman was also injured.

In another incident on the outskirts of Quetta the same day (16 May), two persons were killed and two (including a paramilitary soldier) were injured.¹⁰

On 6 May, eight members of the Shiite Hazara community were killed in a sectarian attack in Hazara Town in Quetta. Eight other people were injured. The banned Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ) Sunni militant group claimed responsibility for the attack.

On 4 May, unidentified militants injured a senior leader of Balochistan National Party (BNP) in a politically motivated attack in Quetta, Balochistan.¹¹

In September 2010 DFAT indicated that the situation had deteriorated since Post's last visit to Quetta in July 2010, and subsequently staff are currently unable to undertake "regular travel" to the city.¹²

Writing in *The Nation* in March 2009, Aziz-ud-din Ahmad provided a grim assessment of the security situation in Baluchistan and Quetta, describing the latter as the most dangerous city in the country. Aziz state:

[t]hanks [to] the apathy on the part of Islamabad, Balochistan is in unending turmoil. Not a day passes without news of sabotage activities that include attacks on gas pipelines, power distribution system, railway lines and paramilitary personnel and police. Meanwhile Quetta has turned into the most dangerous city in the country. Nobody is safe, be he Punjabi, Baloch, Pushtun, or Hazara. As in the case of John Solecki, foreigners are on the hit list now. No area including the cantonment can claim to be outside the reach of the terrorists. Terrorists of all hues and colours are active. There have been sectarian killings and attacks on settlers and on law enforcement personnel."¹³

Sources point to several causes for the high level of violence in Quetta and the Balochistan province more generally. Firstly, Baluchi tribal militants have been engaged in a long-running insurgency against the Pakistan state and army.¹⁴ Some insurgents advocate complete secession from Pakistan, while others demand "greater control of the region's natural resources and

⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2011, Security and Militancy report for Pakistan for the week ending 24 May 2011, 24 May – Attachment 11.

¹⁰ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2011, Security and Militancy report for Pakistan for the week ending 18 May 2011, 18 May – Attachment 12.

¹¹ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2011, Security and Militancy report for Pakistan for the week ending 10 May 2011, 10 May – Attachment 13.

¹² DIAC Country Information Service 2010, *Country Information Report No. 10/60 – Pakistan: The Hazaras*, (sourced from DFAT advice of 28 September 2010), 29 September – Attachment 14.

¹³ Ahmad, A. 2009, 'For Balochistan, from bad to worse', *The Nation*, 26 March <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Opinions/Columns/26-Mar-2009/For-Balochistan-from-bad-to-worse> – Accessed 29 March 2010 – Attachment 15.

¹⁴ Amnesty International 2011, 'Pakistan: Balochistan atrocities continue to rise', 23 February <http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/pakistan-balochistan-atrocities-continue-rise-2011-02-23> – Accessed 14 July 2011 – Attachment 5.

political power.”¹⁵ After a six month ceasefire, Baluchi armed groups resumed politically motivated kidnappings and killings in January 2009.¹⁶ According to a January 2011 article from the BBC the violence has since spiralled out of control with insurgents and state agents engaged in a vicious cycle of tit for tat abductions and killings. The article states:

As Pakistan slithers down the slope of Islamic extremism, economic meltdown and a continuing political crisis, there has been little concern for the long running insurgency in Balochistan that has picked up pace as Baloch separatists take advantage of the national chaos, while ever more ruthless retaliatory actions by the state go unchecked.

Every day dead bodies turn up, many of them innocent victims of the mayhem in the province.

According to human rights groups, the suspected killers either belong to the intelligence services or Baloch militant groups.

Nobody claims responsibility for the spiralling death toll.¹⁷

The USDOS Report on Human Rights Practices in Pakistan for 2010 reports a large number of politically motivated killings in Quetta in 2010.¹⁸

As well as this, sources report that Quetta is a stronghold of the Taliban and other Sunni extremist groups such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan. The Afghanistan Taliban’s leadership council, known as the Quetta Shura, is reported to operate in the city with near impunity.¹⁹ These Sunni extremist groups are known to actively target the Shi’a population and attacks are well documented. Thousands have been killed in sectarian violence in the city since the 1980’s.²⁰

2. What state protection available for the general population and for Hazaras?

Information suggests the level of state protection available for the general population and for Hazaras is inadequate. Sources indicate that despite a heavy military presence in Quetta, militant groups operate openly and the state is unable to prevent violent attacks. As mentioned in the response to Question 1, deadly attacks resulting from regional insurgency and sectarian violence have increased in frequency in recent years.

Information on state protection for Hazaras in Quetta is available in *Country Advice PAK38635* from May 2011. The advice notes that state protection for Hazaras in Quetta remains inadequate. Furthermore, it notes that Hazara members of the Baluchistan police force are themselves

¹⁵ ‘Pakistan: 2009: Year of Terrorism’ 2009, *Daily The Pak Banker*, 25 December – Attachment 16.

¹⁶ Amnesty International 2010, *Amnesty International Report – Pakistan*, 28 May, p.250 – Attachment 17.

¹⁷ ‘Why we should worry about Balochistan’ 2011, BBC News, 11 January <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12215145> – Accessed 13 July 2011 – Attachment 4.

¹⁸ US Department of State 2011, *2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 8 April, Section 1a. www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/index.htm – Accessed 11 Apr 2011 – Attachment 18.

¹⁹ Aziz, Faisal 2011, ‘Pakistan city nervous about U.S. hunt for Taliban chief Omar’, *Reuters*, 14 May <http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/pakistan-city-nervous-about-us-hunt-for-taliban-chief-omar/> – Accessed 14 July 2011 – Attachment 19; ‘Quetta Cantonment’ (undated), GlobalSecurity.org website, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/pakistan/cantt-quetta.htm> – Accessed 13 July 2011 – Attachment 20.

²⁰ International Crisis Group 2009, *Pakistan: The Militant Jihadi Challenge*, Asia Report no.164, 13 March, p.16 – Attachment 21; Hughes, M. 2010, ‘Suicide attack death toll reaches 73 in Quetta Pakistan’, *The Examiner*, 4 September <http://www.examiner.com/afghanistan-headlines-in-national/suicide-attack-death-toll-reaches-73-quetta-pakistan-video> – Accessed 8 October 2010 – Attachment 22.

frequently victims of targeted killings. *Country Advice PAK38764* (Questions 5 and 6) also provides detailed advice on the level of state protection in Balochistan and Pakistan generally.

Quetta is described by one 2010 source as a “garrison city”.²¹ A May 2011 Reuters article also notes that ‘security in the capital of gas-rich Baluchistan province is heavy with numerous checkpoints on roads while guards with rifles slung over their shoulders pace the pavements outside buildings’. Nevertheless, neither the armed forces nor the police in Baluchistan appear capable of providing adequate protection to people targeted by either Baluchi nationalists or Sunni extremists. Indeed, in many instances police are either victims of sectarian violence, or suspected perpetrators. According to a February 2011 article from Amnesty International, extrajudicial killings by security forces have become so commonplace in Balochistan that people are afraid to report abuses for fear of reprisal. The article states:

Human rights abuses attributed to the security agencies have created a climate of fear for the families of the disappeared. They are terrified to speak out in fear that security agents will kill their loved ones or abduct other family members in reprisal.²²

A January 2011 article from the BBC, reports that the Pakistani Government, judiciary and army has failed to protect the general population from an ever increasing cycle of violence and the situation in Balochistan is close to civil war. The article states:

The government launched a so-called peace process 15 months ago but it is stalled.

Of the 61 steps envisaged in the package, only 15 have been implemented so far, according to Dawn newspaper.

“Balochistan has also become the epicentre for growing regional rivalries and warfare”

..No organ of the state has fulfilled its promises to the Baloch people over the past two years.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan says the situation in the province is close to civil war.

If the government has failed, so have the courts and the army.

A year ago the Supreme Court promised to look into the cases of hundreds of Baloch who have gone missing over the years or made to disappear, but no remedies have been offered.

“Missing” usually means they have been kidnapped and then killed or kept in secret locations.

Blasts and ethnic violence have become a way of life in Balochistan province

²¹ Khan, A. 2010, *Media In Balochistan: Blighted But A Brave New World Beckons*, Intermedia, p.77
<http://intermedia.org.pk/pdf/BALUCHISTAN%20REPORT%20FINAL-2010%20white.pdf> – Accessed 8 October 2010 – Attachment 23.

²² Amnesty International 2011, ‘Pakistan: Balochistan atrocities continue to rise’, 23 February
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/pakistan-balochistan-atrocities-continue-rise-2011-02-23> – Accessed 14 July 2011 – Attachment 5.

Some of those missing are political figures, others victims of criminal syndicates looking for ransom, while others are just innocent bystanders.

The Baloch accuse the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) of carrying out the kidnappings.

The ISI denies the charges and says government officials are being targeted by the Baloch.²³

Sources report that Pakistani authorities are unable or unwilling to deal with the presence of Sunni terror groups based in Quetta who are responsible for the sectarian violence described in Question 1.²⁴ According to a May 2011 article from *The Long War Journal*, such groups shelter in the city with the support of Pakistani authorities. The article states:

The Pakistani city of Quetta, where the al Qaeda fighters operating in Kandahar and Zabul were organized, is a bastion for the Afghan Taliban and numerous Pakistani terror groups linked to al Qaeda, including the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. The Afghan Taliban's leadership council, which is known as the Quetta Shura, is based in the provincial capital. Mullah Omar and other top Taliban commanders are known to shelter in Quetta, with the aid and support of Pakistan's military and the Inter-Services Intelligence agency.²⁵

3. Deleted.

²³ 'Why we should worry about Balochistan' 2011, BBC News, 11 January <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12215145> – Accessed 13 July 2011 – Attachment 4.

²⁴ 'Why we should worry about Balochistan' 2011, BBC News, 11 January <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12215145> – Accessed 13 July 2011 – Attachment 4.

²⁵ 'ISAF targets Taliban leader of al Qaeda cell based in Quetta' 2011, *The Long War Journal*, 31 May http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/05/isaf_targets_taliban_2.php – Accessed 13 July 2011 – Attachment 24.

Attachments

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