

Pakistan's security landscape in 2014

A total of 1,206 terrorist attacks were carried out by militant, nationalist/insurgent and violent sectarian groups in Pakistan in the year 2014. At least 1,723 people lost their lives while another 3,143 were left injured. This is a decrease of 30 percent from 2013, while the overall number of people killed and injured in terrorist attacks in 2014 also decreased by 30 and 42 percent, respectively.

About 61 percent (731) of all 1,206 terrorist attacks were carried out by the Pakistani Taliban, mainly the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and affiliated outfits or other groups with similar objectives such as Jamaatul Ahrar, Lashkar-e-Islam and Jundullah. At least 1,212 people were killed and another injured 2,088 in these attacks alone. Baloch and Sindhi nationalist insurgents carried out 334 attacks that claimed the lives of 258 people and injured 758. Meanwhile, 141 terrorist attacks were of a sectarian nature, largely perpetrated by banned Sunni and Shia sectarian groups. These claimed 253 lives and injured 297 others.

The comparative 30 percent decrease in the number of terrorist attacks reported across Pakistan in 2014 was marked by the decreased incidence of terrorist attacks in most regions of Pakistan, except Punjab and Islamabad. The number of people killed in terrorist attacks also decreased in 2014 compared to the previous year in all but those two regions. Compared to 2013, terrorist attacks decreased in Karachi by 39 percent, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by 35 percent, in Balochistan by 30 percent, in FATA by 20 percent, and in interior Sindh by nine percent. The number of attacks reported from Punjab and Islamabad in this year, however, was an eight and 250 percent increase, respectively.

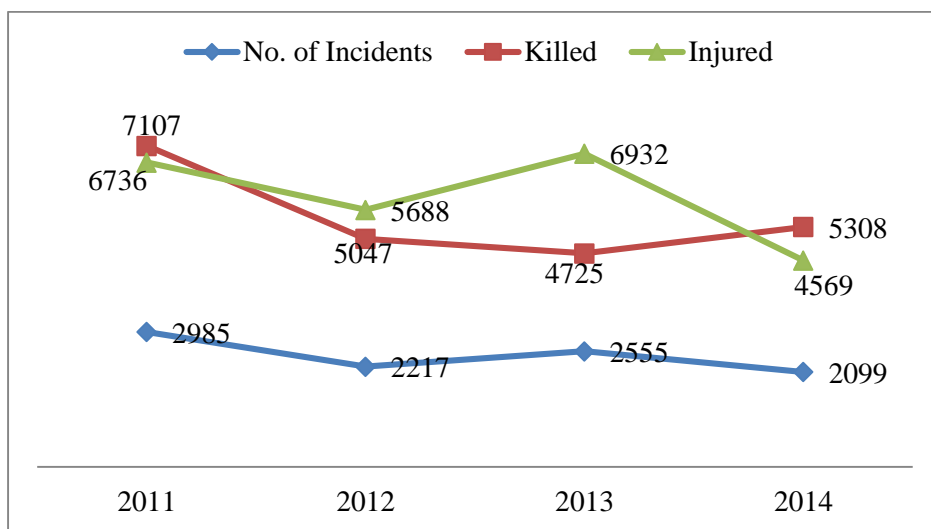
Table: Terrorist attacks in Pakistan in 2014

Region	No. of Attacks	Killed	Injured
KP	325	542	829
Balochistan	341	375	926
FATA	234	293	389
Punjab	41	126	274
Karachi	217	317	438
Sindh(excluding Karachi)	31	23	63
Gilgit-Baltistan	3	3	12
Islamabad	14	44	212
Total	1,206	1,723	3,143

In all, as many as 2,099 incidents of violence of different types were reported from across Pakistan in 2014, including the terrorist attacks cited above, as well as operations carried out by security forces and clashes/encounters with militants; incidents of ethno-political violence; drone attacks; inter-tribal, inter-militant and clashes between tribesmen and militants; sectarian clashes; communal violence; cross-border attacks and clashes; clashes between rival criminal gangs as well and with security forces; and abductions by militants and nationalist insurgents etc. A total of 5,308 people were killed and 4,569 injured in these various incidents.

The number of violent incidents reported in Pakistan decreased by about 18 percent; from 2,555 in 2013 to 2,099 in 2014. However, the overall fatalities in these incidents increased by about 12 percent, from 4,725 in 2013 to 5,308 in 2014.

Chart: Comparison of overall incidents of violence & casualties (2011-14)



Statistically speaking, 2014 was not a particularly bad year from a security perspective as a downward trend was recorded in the number of overall incidents of violence. Also, the number of terrorist attacks came down by 30 percent as compared to 2013. The long-awaited military operation in North Waziristan was launched after a push towards peace talks with the Taliban ended without achieving anything. Operation Zarb-e-Azb helped not only to improve the security situation inside the country, but also provided room for better regional coordination to counter terrorism and promote stability in the region.

A terrorist attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar on December 16, 2014 forced the state to adopt a ‘zero tolerance’ approach in the fight against terrorism. A working group of counterterrorism experts and the anti-terrorism action committee of Parliament successfully extracted a clear and workable framework from previous practices and policy documents to address immediate challenges posed by terrorists. Concerted efforts and political will are needed to implement this plan.

Recommendations

- The Cabinet Committee on National Security (CCNS) should be given the role of coordinating among various institutions. National Counterterrorism authority (NACTA) can act as an advisory body to CCNS, with its special focus on data processing and developing assessments.
- There is a dire need for establishing a national dialogue forum (NDF), to serve as a platform for scholars, academics, political and religious leaders and policymakers to bring the key challenges on the discussion table and to understand various viewpoints. The prime minister's office can lead this initiative, through a formal secretariat and administrative body.
- In order to neutralize violent extremist tendencies, detaching the conventional militant groups from the terrorism landscape and curbing hate speech, the government has to initiate a reintegration scheme which can offer amnesty to those banned groups which obey the constitution, quit and denounce all kinds of violence and criminal activities. Meanwhile, on the level of provinces, de-radicalizations centers should be established.
- The government needs swift action to not only provide full facilities to the internally displaced persons (IDPs) from conflict zones but also to check undesirable practices and exploitation of the displaced persons by charity organizations in IDP camps.