

*The report covers events and activities regarding both peace and anti-peace and political process in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly in the newly merged districts. The report enhances connectivity among activists by providing them information in a holistic manner*

# **Peace and Democracy in the Newly Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

Quarterly Report August to October 2022

**A Report by Khadim Ul Khalaq  
Foundation (KKF)**

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# Quarterly Report on Peace and Democracy in The Newly Merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa **August to October 2022**

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## Introduction

Major activism was seen in the last quarter report against resurgence of militancy and target killing. This phenomenon has also been observed with some more similar developments during the current quarter with a slight change in the behavior of state representative, i.e., security forces including police. In many districts Jirga were called by either police or security forces for a joint action against militancy and terrorism. This quarter has also observed an increase in sit-ins, peace walks and protests for establishment of peace.

People of the newly merged districts have rejected the strategy of security forces of peace committees or village defense committees for combating terrorism; rather, they ask the government and security forces their due constitutional role.

Kidnapping for extortion and target killings seem to be increasing day after another. The quarter reported a maximum number of attacks on and target killings of police in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It also reports presence of strong networks of the militants in new districts as well as in Pakhtunkhwa. This revelation can be confirmed by the maximum number of attacks by the militants on not only public but on police officials and their check posts also. This report reveals poor governance and service delivery in new districts.

## Peace

A Jirga was called by the police in Malakand. Elders, political leaders and all security agencies participated in the jirga. The regional police officer said that police, army and other security agencies were jointly [conducting operations against terrorists](#) and other anti-state elements who were trying to disturb the law and order situation in the region. [Another jirga](#) attended by tribal elders, senior government officials and elected representatives expressed its resolve to protect the ‘hard-earned peace in Malakand division at all costs’. In Bajaur, a [jirga comprising senior officials](#) of security forces, district administration and police urged the elders and political leaders to fully cooperate with them to deal with miscreants involved in unpleasant incidents in order to restore exemplary peace in the district. In [another official gathering](#) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Inspector General of Police said restoration of peace and ensuring law and order was the top priority of his department and that attempts to sabotage peace would be thwarted. In Bajaur, district police officer asked the police officials to remain alert to [deal with the fresh wave of insurgency](#) effectively in Bajaur tribal district.

The public demonstrations and sit-ins still continue demanding establishment of peace from the government. A rally of [thousands at Bara Bazaar](#) was demanding of the government to restore peace in Khyber district and provide security to them. The [huge gathering titled Khyber Amn](#) (peace) March was organized by Khyber Siyasi Ittehad. Holding white flags, the participants of the rally marched through different roads before converging at the main Bara Bazaar. Speaking on the occasion, [PTM head Manzoor Pashteen](#) regretted that ‘an atmosphere was intentionally created on Pakhtuns’ soil in order to attract militancy and extremism and deprive the people of their legitimate rights and due share in the natural resources’. A similar peace march held in district [Kurrum](#) against ‘armed groups’. Scores of people took to the streets in [Khwazakhela tehsil](#) of district Swat calling for the elimination of ‘anti-peace and anti-state’ elements from Swat region. Another [protest was organized](#) by Swat Qaumi Jirga and Swat Olasi Pashoon. Apart from civil society and peace activists, [leaders of all the political parties](#) except Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf addressed the gathering. Streets of [Charbagh tehsil](#) in Swat district resounded with the slogans of ‘only peace’. The [Bajaur peace action committee](#), a body of local elders and political leaders, called upon the authorities to take tangible steps for bringing improvement in law and order situation and restoration of peace in the district. The residents took out a [rally in Lakki city](#) against recent acts of terror and for maintaining peace in the district. Thousands of people took to the streets in [Lower Waziristan district in a show of defiance](#) against a militant group, which had set November 15 as deadline for taking over control of Wana town from police. The workers of all the component parties of the [Pakistan Democratic Movement \(PDM\)](#) staged a ‘[peace and integrity](#)’ rally here. They carried banners and placards inscribed with slogans for peace and integrity of the country. A huge gathering, “peace march” was organized in Swabi by the [ANP against the recent wave of terrorism](#), extortion and target killings and for protection of rights and lives of Pakhtun.

On the other hand, the provincial [assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa criticized the government](#) for its poor response to the surging of militancy and extortion cases in the province. The opposition also asked the PTI led government to take the lawmakers on board about the current peace talks with the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) because [Special Assistant to Chief Minister has refused](#) any negotiations with the TTP by the Pakhtunkhwa government.

### **Anti-Peace**

Thousands of the people are protesting against resurgence of militants in new districts and Malakand Division while the PTI led government and the law enforcement agencies are denying such resurgence. This attitude of the government and law enforcement agencies have disappointed the masses are experiencing the resurgence on daily basis. The rally at district Khyber complained that the presence of suspected militants in parts of [Tirah valley caused unrest among locals](#) while law enforcement agencies were constantly denying the presence of such elements in the region. Now the militants are openly announcing their presence, as, [a local militant commander](#), had announced a few days ago to start policing in Wana town from Nov 15 (Tuesday), claiming that peace was not possible in the area without the presence of what he said 'good Taliban'. The presence of strong foot hold of the militants can be seen in the maximum number of attacks. In, Dawezai, district Mohmand, [an attack of least seven miscreants](#) on the Kanara check post from different directions was effectively repulsed. On the other hand, the TTP has recently held escalation of the army responsible for ending the 'ceasefire'. . TTP orders fighters to carry out attacks 'wherever and whenever' they can while government and ISPR remain tight-lipped on threat as law enforcers fear reprisals. The TTP also issued warnings to the political and social activists and all those who oppose TTP. Recently, the outspoken lawmaker of Awami National Party in provincial assembly, Sardar Hussain Babak, has been alerted by the security agencies about [imminent threat to his life](#) from outlawed groups for speaking in favor of peace in the region.

The target killings and extortions throughout the new districts as well as rest of the Pakhtunkhwa are of great concern for the common people of Pakhtunkhwa and the NMDs. . To get rid of this menace, the people of every walk are trying to find a way out in the form of sit-ins, protests and Jirga. In district Mohmand, a [Jirga of various tribes](#) demanded immediate arrest of the killers of two brothers of Safi tehsil. In another [target killing incident](#) Principal of a private school and his nephew were killed when unknown assailants opened fire on them in Kotaki area of Salarzai tehsil, district Bajaur. Two students and a teacher were injured when [unknown miscreants lobbed a grenade](#) onto a seminary in Taj Colony on Chashma Road, DI Khan. In district Khyber, [Unidentified gunmen killed a tribesman](#) and injured another in Jamrud tehsil. In Bajaur, [Gunmen killed a senior Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl activist](#) in Mamond tehsil. Another [man was killed](#) when unknown assailants opened fire on him in Shinkot area of Khar tehsil, Bajaur. In district Tank, [unidentified armed persons kidnapped](#) three engineers who were working on the '100 houses project' announced by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the flood-affected people in Dabarra area of Tank district. The bullet-riddled body of a man, [kidnapped by armed persons](#), was found at a deserted place in Birmal area of South Waziristan

A [policeman was killed](#) near Choudhwan police station. A constable was killed in a [grenade attack](#) on Khanmai police station, Charsadda. Unidentified assailants [shot dead a policeman](#) in Jamrud. A [policeman was martyred and another injured](#) when unidentified gunmen attacked a check post in Mamond tehsil, Bajaur. A [policeman was shot dead](#) near his house in Ismailkhel area of Bannu. A [police constable was killed](#) when unidentified assailants opened fire on him in Prova police station limits, DI Khan. A [police official was martyred](#) in a terrorist attack on a police station in Azam Warsak area of South Waziristan district. [Two constables were martyred and two others injured](#) when terrorists attacked a police station in Raghzai area of Lower Waziristan district. Six policemen including an assistant sub-inspector (ASI) had been martyred in [an armed assault by militants in Kurrum Par](#) area. The entire Lakki Marwat district wore a blanket of gloom and sadness as people thronged the residences of martyred policemen to offer condolences to their relatives.

## Political

The PTI led government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has failed to provide good governance and security to the people. The government is not sincere to provide protection to its people. Awami National Party and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leaders said in their separate gatherings that the provincial government should fulfill its responsibility to [provide protection to the people](#) and ensure peace in Swat and other districts of the province. The opposition, , in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly [condemned the provincial government's](#) ‘‘lackluster’ response to the surging militancy and extortion cases’ and asked it to take the lawmakers on board about the current peace talks with the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Similarly, Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) central leader and JUI-F chief has said that the provincial government has yet to convene a cabinet meeting on [the law and order situation in Swat](#), the home district of Chief Minister Mahmood Khan.

In the backdrop of its ten years performance in the province, the PTI led government is criticized for its poor delivery. The Chief Minister is also not warmly welcomed during his visits to different areas of the province. A similar [rejection of the CM visit](#) was seen in Bajaur where the tribal elders and political activists announced to boycott the Chief Minister visit to Bajaur for ‘ignoring’ the district in development projects.

## Social

A group of women lawyers from different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, mostly youth, have formed a network to help protect legal and constitutional rights for tribal women and spread awareness among them regarding their basic rights. Named as the Merged Districts Female Lawyers Network (MGFLN), the new organization also has representation from Khyber, Bajaur, Kurram and North and South Waziristan districts with the total strength of 32. Hamna Akram, president and a founding member of the network, told Dawn that the idea was initially floated by three young women lawyers, including herself and it rapidly attracted more of their interested colleagues in the legal fraternity as majority of the lawyers working in the merged districts were men. (DAWN: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1712780>)

Study circle is now a trend these days even in the merged districts, engaging people in informal educations regarding civic education. KKF/CRPD (project of KKF) is organizing study circles in

these districts. On October 23, 2022 the mentioned organization organized a study circle in Atokhel area of district Mohmand. Awami National Party's provincial secretary culture Dr Khadim Hussain has said that exploitation of Pakhtuns must end and they be given their first right to use their resources. He was speaking as chief guest at a study circle held here on Saturday in Atokhel area of Halimzai tehsil under the auspices of party's Mohmand chapter. ANP district president Saifullah Khan, general secretary Hazrat Khan Momand, Halimzai tehsil president Abdul Majeed and lawyers, teachers and writers associated with the party attended the event. (DAWN: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1716420>)

A jirga of Barang tehsil in Bajaur tribal district on Saturday banned women from visiting shops without the company of their male family members, and also slapped a Rs15,000 ban the shopkeepers selling products to such women. The jirga took this and several other decisions during a meeting held in Memola area, the main town of the region, according to a statement issued to the media on Saturday. (DAWN: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1716412>) Elders of Barang tehsil on Tuesday distanced themselves from a purported attempt by some people to bar women from visiting bazaars without the company of their male family members, making it clear that such decisions violated the women's fundamental rights guaranteed to them by the country's Constitution. The elders made the announcement during a meeting held in Kamal Dara area. The participants termed the decision totally wrong, unlawful and a violation of fundamental rights of women. (DAWN: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1716974/barang-elders-deny-banning-womens-visits-to-bazaars>)

### **Festive tourism**

Jamaat-i-Islami workers on Sunday held a demonstration to express their anger over holding of a musical concert during the inauguration ceremony of a cricket tournament at the Bajaur Sports Complex here on Sept 6. Speaking to the protesters, the JI leaders termed the concert against the local customs and traditions, and warned that workers of religious parties and residents would strongly react if such events were held in future. (DAWN <https://www.dawn.com/news/1709623>)

The Aga Khan Music Awards Master Jury has announced to honour 10 prominent folk artists, composers and instrumentalists around the world and Pashto folk maestro Zarsanga Bibi is among the recipients of the prestigious award. Senior vocalists, artist organizations and music buffs have appreciated conferring the Aga Khan music award on Pashto melody queen Zarsanga Bibi. They have demanded of the authorities to provide permanent abode and healthcare to the folk music maestro. (DAWN: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1714352>)

A two-day Bajaur Festival featuring sports and cultural events was launched here on Sunday to encourage the youth to participate in healthy activities and promote tourism potential of the district. The festival was being organized jointly by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority, department of tourism, culture, sports and youth affairs of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Frontier Corps (North), district administration and Bajaur Scouts at the Bajaur Sports Complex, Khar. (DAWN: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1715391>)



## Border and Borderland

The border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, known as Duran Line, remained a major source of income for the people both side at borderland. This region has been victim of terrorism for the last four decades where the border has been fenced and closed in the name of security. Overall the social structure of the borderland has been deteriorated along with the closure of business activities for the locals. The disrespectful behavior of the border officials at every point throughout Durand Line also frustrates the public at borderland. Such as, the harassments cases are increasing day after another. In this regard, a head constable of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) deployed at immigration check post at Torkham was [suspended for harassing](#) an Afghan woman. Similarly, scores of aggrieved laborers and porters held a [protest demonstration against](#) what they alleged rough treatment with them by the staffers of different government departments at Torkham. Holding black flags, the protesters chanted slogans in support of their demands and against the government employees.

This borderland is now observing conflicts and deaths. In this quarter, for example, [three army soldiers embraced martyrdom in](#) Kurram district when terrorists attacked them from Afghanistan. The borderland is now not safe for the traders also. [Three traders belonging to Bannu district were gunned](#) down in Mirali town. Officials said that unknown assailants whisked away the three traders from a jewelry shop in the main bazaar late night when they were sleeping.

Similarly, scores of jobless daily wagers demonstrated at the [Torkham border to protest](#) a ban on their cross-border movement. Holding black flags, the protesters gathered at the Nadra Chowk, chanting slogans and calling for relaxing the visa restriction. They also accused immigration and National Logistics Cell staff of misbehaving with the laborers and also subjecting them to torture in order to prevent them from going near the border. The Pak-Afghan [border crossing at Angoor Adda](#) in South Waziristan was reopened after successful talks between the district administration officials and the elders of the Ahmadzai Wazir tribe. The border crossing with Afghanistan was closed after local traders and residents staged protest demonstrations against a ban on some ‘unauthorized’ commercial activities in the area.

A little improvement at cross-border trade is observed in the behavior of the custom officer at Torkham border. The quantum of [bilateral trade with Afghanistan via Torkahm](#) has been increasing owing to some corrective measures and relaxation introduced by the federal government in the recent past. [Afghan Consul General and the Pak-Afghan](#) Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) have agreed to make coordinated efforts for addressing the issues impeding enhanced trade between the two neighbouring countries. The agreement was reached during a meeting of business community with the Afghan diplomat.

## Governance and Service Delivery

Governance and services delivery are the missing component throughout the new districts. The lack of developmental funds and weak or no institutionalization along with uncertainty due to continued terrorism is responsible for the poor governance and services delivery in the new districts. In this regard the [UNDP organized a day long program](#) at Bajaur that stressed the need for frequent interaction between the district administration and local government representatives to improve governance. The poor services delivery by government is observed in every institution. For example, there is a shortage of educational institutions, yet, there is a [shortage of instructors](#) too in those educational institutions in the ones that currently exist. Similarly, students of [Nawagai college, Bajaur](#) and [Wana girls college](#), lower Waziristan, protested for shortage of teachers in the colleges. This poor governance is mainly due to non-availability of funds to the [elected local bodies](#). The local of bodies have staged many [protests for getting funds](#) from the government but in vain. For provision better governance the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government divided the vast territory of [south Waziristan district into two districts](#); South Waziristan Upper and South Waziristan Lower, comprising of Mehsud and Ahmadzai Wazir tribes respectively.

On the other hand, the [Young Teachers Association \(YTA\)](#) on Saturday threatened a long march on Banigala, the residence of former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf chairman Imran Khan, if his party's government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa failed to pass the KP Teachers (Appointment and Regularization of Services Bill, 2022) into a law during the upcoming session of the assembly. . Among the services delivery, providing justice to the public is priority but in the new districts the courts are still not properly operating. Some districts do not have their own courts inside the district. For example, North Waziristan court is still operating in district Bannu and the additional chief secretary and home secretary said the [North Waziristan courts operating](#) in the adjoining Bannu district couldn't be shifted to the tribal district for security reasons.

The law and order situation is deteriorating on one side but on the other side the government is not committed to fulfill the demands of extending parliamentary, administrative and judicial domains to the NMDs. A [training is boycotted by the Policemen](#) from five new districts as they say it is designed for constable level officials. The khasadars of the new districts are needed to be fully employed as provincial police for improvement of law and order situations in the region.

It is new for the people of new districts to follow the police inquiries and the court procedures for dispute resolutions. Therefore elders have [called upon police to resolve local disputes](#) through Jirga instead of registering First Information Report (FIR). The call was made during a Jirga between local police and elders in Landi Kotal, district Khyber.

In the new districts, there is almost no services delivery as there is no program for services delivery yet. The educational and health services are poor throughout new districts while

electricity is negligible. Only the centers of every new districts are having some semblance of electricity with load shedding for prolonged hours.

After military operations started in 2008, huge infrastructure in Bajaur was destroyed which was promised by the government to compensate but majority of the compensation is still pending. The traders of Loi Sam Bazaar [staged a protest demonstration](#) against lack of basic facilities and delay in payment of compensation for their shops destroyed in the war on terrorism in 2008. A number of socio-political figures also participated in the demonstration held on Bajaur-Peshawar road in the main bazaar. Similarly, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf MPA from Orakzai district has urged tribesmen to stage protests in Islamabad to highlight their predicament caused by the government's [alleged failure to adequately compensate](#) them for their destroyed shops and houses.

## Conclusion

The data in third quarter reveals terror haunts the atmosphere of both the new districts and the adjacent areas where Taliban and the “unknown” attacked civilians and security personnel equally. These incidents are growing day after another. This quarter has reported high number of attacks on police by the unknown persons. Majority of these attacks are on the check posts and police stations which also show the strong presence of militants groups in overall Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, mostly in the new districts. .

The report also observed a poor performance of governance and services delivery by the Pakhtunkhwa government, especially, in the new districts. The reason for this poor governance has been noted as non-provision of the developmental funds for which the provincial government accuses federal government. Another major obstacle in services delivery is the law and order situation in the new districts, the increasing intensity of terrorism and resurgence of terrorism which have created an atmosphere of fear among the public and business community. The opposition parties in Pakhtunkhwa are criticizing the government for not showing its sincerity and seriousness in combating terrorism.

The situation at border and borderland remained the same where the locals complaining against visa regime. The fencing of border and visa regime has deteriorated the local businesses and social structure and cohesion at the borderland. The local traders at borderland have staged protests and demonstrations at different points across the Durand Lines passes demanding relaxation in crossing the border.

It has been observed from the data that poor governance and service delivery and the menace of terrorism are due to the absence of institutionalization. It is believed that proper institutionalization would solve issues with service delivery, local business and peace-building in the new districts.