



Thematic Chronology of Mass Violence in Pakistan, 1947-2007

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1. Mass Violence Related to the State s Formation

1.1 The Partition Massacres, 1946-1947

The exact number of casualties during the Partition violence will always remain a matter of debate. Estimates range from around 200,000 to one-and-a-half million. A British contemporary estimates claimed that 180,000 people died (Moon, 1998: 269, 293). Another contemporary estimates from India put the death toll at 500,000, approximately 200,000-250,000 non-Muslims and 200,000-250,000 Muslims (Khosla, 1999: 298-99). According to Butalia, it would be closer to 1,000,000 dead, half of which are Muslims and the other half non-Muslims (Butalia, 1998: 1). However, Brass noted that a consensus figure would today be around 500,000 but that the sources that are most likely closer to the truth give figures that range between 200,000 and 360,000 (Brass, 2006: 18). The estimate given by Corruccini and Kaul is close to this as they put a maximum of 400,000 deaths with a wide margin of error that is plus or minus 100,000 (Corruccini and Kaul, 1990: 37). It further generated at least 13 million refugees, out of which 10 million from Punjab alone, comprising four and half million non-Muslims and five and half million Muslims (Hansen, 2002: 1). Besides, approximately 75,000 women have been raped and/or abducted across the two sides of the new border, placing them as the first victims of the Partition Massacres (Butalia, 1998: 1).

While some argue that the violence that erupted at the moment of Partition was popular and spontaneous and that it can t be considered as a general phenomenon due to the non-involvement of large-scale organizations (Alam, 1998: 98), the nature and the extent of the violence clearly underline the organized and planned character of the attacks. Furthermore, it suggests the involvement of private armies such as the Muslim League National Guard, the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) and the Akal Fauj, counting respectively 42,300, 59,200 and at least 8,000 members (Hansen, 2002: 135). Although the State did not directly participate in the violence, the communalized role of the police, the complicity if not direct involvement of the political leaderships and the State s attitude of *laissez-faire* point to its responsibility (Virdee, 2007: 16-36; Khan, 2007: 36-60). During its existence, between August 1 and 31, the 50,000 men Punjab Boundary Force was unable or unwilling to maintain peace and order (Jeffrey, 1974: 491-520).

Violence was not just a marginal phenomenon, a sudden and spontaneous communal frenzy that accompanied Partition. It was on the contrary at the very heart of the event. Nor was it merely a consequence of Partition but rather the principal mechanism for creating the conditions for Partition. Violence constituted the moral instrument through which the tension between the pre-Partition local character of identity and its postcolonial territorial and national redefinition was negotiated (Gilmartin, 1998: 1069-1089). Violence operated as the link between the community and its new national territory. That is precisely what gave it its organized and genocidal dimension as it was meant for control of social space so as to cleanse these territories from the presence of other religious communities (Hansen, 2002).

The most frequent form of collective violence was the attack by huge crowds upon villages, trains, refugee camps and long files of migrants. It generally took the shape of tit-for-tat mass murders, raids on villages and train stations, abduction, loot, arson, derailment of train and stabbing of the passengers, castration, mutilation and rape. Sexual molestation of women was deliberately meant to emphasize the vulnerability of the community and the incapability of men as protectors. As a result, some women were killed by members of their own families and communities, in order to avoid the honor of the whole community to be tarnished by atrocities against them (Butalia, 1998: p. 171). This practice was used particularly among Sikhs. The Muslim League s direct actions strongly contributed to the spread of violence from August 1946 to March 1947. The Rawalpindi massacre had a huge impact upon the Sikhs. According to many witnesses and analysts such as Governor of Punjab Sir Jenkins and Field Marshall Sir Claude Auchinleck, Sikhs, and

especially their leaders such as [Master Tara Singh](#) and Giani Kartar Singh, bear an important responsibility in the development of violence, particularly in East Punjab in August 1947 (Brass, 2003: 81; Hansen, 2002: 14). In West Punjab, Muslims carried out the same kind of violence against non-Muslims. Thus, the Partition violence seems, on the one hand, to be best described as a retributive genocide characterized by the forced expulsion of the opposed communities on both sides of the new boundary to establish a Muslim State, free of troublesome minorities, and on the other hand a consolidation and regroupment of the Sikh community as well as revenge and retaliation. To this must also be added local acts of violence carried out for a multiplicity of reasons and motives that were not genocidal in intent: loot, capture of property, abduction of women (Brass, 2006: 12, 48).

During the forties, the advent of independence generated increasing awareness among Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims who composed respectively 31%, 15% and 53% of the population in Punjab; and 54.7% of Muslims and 41.5% of Hindus in Bengal (Census of India, 1941) that it will imply the partition of the British Raj between two independent dominions, namely India and Pakistan. Whether the Partition of the British Raj was ineluctable or not will always remain a matter of debate. However, it appears that it was rather late, actually only after the failure of the Cabinet Mission in May-June 1946, that the project of partitioning British India acquired a territorial meaning. Until the May 16 Plan, the main demand was the establishment of a loose confederation formed by Hindu-majority and Muslim-majority provinces under the authority of a weak center. The impossibility or reluctance of reaching an agreement on that matter between the leaders of the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress made the territorial partition of the British Raj the only available option.

Violence first erupted in Calcutta, Bengal, on August 16, 1946, one year before Independence. It then spread in the rest of the province, especially in Noakhali on October 1946, as well as in Bihar. It subsequently receded but then peaked again in March 1947, this time in Punjab, which was to become the epicenter of Partition violence. The hastily announcement on June 3, 1947, of the Partition Plan by [Lord Mountbatten](#), which officialized the territorial partition of the British Raj on August 15, 1947, triggered unprecedented acts of communal violence, especially in the two Muslim majority provinces Bengal and Punjab that were to be divided. Communal violence climaxed between August 13 and 19, just before and after the Independence and the release of the Boundary Award. During the night of August 14 to 15, Pakistan and India became independent Nation States due to the dismantlement of the British Raj. The exact layout of the international border that was to divide Punjab between India and Pakistan was still not known at the time of Independence. It is only on August 16, 1947, that the Punjab Boundary Award was finally made public. This further aggravated the communal violence. During the following months until October 1947, the province of Punjab was the scene of numerous mass killings between Hindus and Sikhs on the one side, and Muslims on the other side.

1946; August 16, The Direct Action Day or [the Great Calcutta Killings](#): [Muhammad Ali Jinnah](#), leader of the Muslim League, chose August 16, 1946, to launch a direct action for the achievement of Pakistan following his refusal of the Cabinet Mission's plan and his decision to boycott the newly elected Constituent Assembly. On that day, which was declared as a provincial public holiday by [Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy](#) (Chief Minister of Bengal), Muslims in Calcutta were asked to stop their activity and to stage a protest in the streets of the city. In the morning, Muslim volunteers forced Hindu shopkeepers to close their shops in the Northern part of Calcutta. Then, Hindus answered by blocking the advance of the Muslim League's processions toward the Ochterloney Monument. Violence spread quickly as both the police and the military were prevented by Suhrawardy from interfering in the riots.

The official estimate of casualties, mostly Muslims, varies between 5,000 dead and 15,000 injured (Moon, 1998: 58) and 4,000 dead and 10,000 injured according to another (Hansen, 2002: 9) and 10,000 killed (Sengupta, 2007: 133). The role of the Muslim League in the organization of the riots is undeniable in regard of arming and transporting its followers. However, if Muslims were clearly the initial aggressors,

non-Muslims, especially Sikhs, retaliated, hence aggravating the death toll dramatically. It is only on the fourth day of the riot, while violence was increasing, that the army intervened. Finally, violence decreased on August 22. Following the riot, thousands started fleeing Calcutta. Some were caught in the violence that spread from Calcutta to the entire Bengal region and even in Bihar. *** (Moon, 1998; Hansen, 2002; Sengupta, 2007).

1946; October 10, The Noakhali Anti-Hindu Massacre: Retaliatory violence against Hindus then spread in Noakhali district and in some parts of the adjacent Tripura district. The majority of the population in the area was Muslim, around 82%, while most of the land belonged to Hindu landlords. As a consequence of the riots in Calcutta, a massive anti-Hindu pogrom was organized by Muslim locals so as to cleanse the region from Hindu presence either by killing them or by forcing them to flee the area. The death toll is close to 5,000 dead according to the press (Sengupta, 2007: 138), though Moon considered that it should rather be counted in hundreds (Moon, 1998: 59). It is claimed that nearly 75% of Hindus previously in the area left the place. ** (Sengupta, 2007; Moon, 1998).

1947; The Bihar Anti-Muslim Riots: The cycle of retributive violence went on in Bihar where anti-Muslim riots broke out at the beginning of 1947. The constant flux of non-Muslims refugees from Bengal to Bihar and the news they propagated, especially of killings of Hindu Biharis in Calcutta and Noakhali, propelled armed bands of Hindus to attack Muslim villages in the Bihar countryside as acts of revenge. Village after village were looted and burnt and their population killed, resulting in the death of thousands of Muslims in the province by armed groups of Hindus. ** (Sengupta, 2007: 143).

1947; March 3, The Rawalpindi Massacre or the March Killings: Khirz Hayat Khan Tiwana's Punjabi government (a coalition government gathering Congressists, Akalis and Unionists, under the leadership of the latter) resigned under the pressure of Muslim League's demonstrations and direct actions. The day after, Hindus and Sikhs staged a counter-demonstration and threatened Muslims. The latter then retaliated and launched large-scale attacks on Hindus and Sikhs in the frontier districts, especially in Rawalpindi division. By March 20, when law and order were finally restored, 2,049 people were killed and 1,103 injured, most of them Sikhs (Jeffrey, 1974: 494). Another estimate, though biased against Muslims, counts 2,263 non-Muslims and 38 Muslims casualties in Rawalpindi district alone (Khosla, 1999: 112) while another one counts 3,000 killed and 1,200 injured (Hansen, 2002: 11). *** (Jeffrey, 1974; Khosla, 1999; Hansen, 2002).

1947; August, The Gory Climax or the August Anarchy

1947; August 6: More than sixty people, essentially Muslims, were declared killed in Amritsar district, allegedly by Sikhs opposing Partition as it would divide their community and reduce them to a mere minority in both new countries (Jeffrey, 1974: 502).

1947; August 8: Muslims retaliated and killed seventy-four Hindus and Sikhs near Jalalabad, north of the Ludhiana-Ferozepur road, in Ferozepur District (Jeffrey, 1974: 503). During the first week of August, casualties are estimated at an average daily killing of about 100 people with sporadic raids killing 70 to 80 people (Brass, 2003: 87).

1947; August 13 to 19: Violence peaked during this week. In addition to derailment – the first case being the one of a Pakistani Special train carrying Pakistani government employees and their families from Delhi to Karachi, next to Patiala State in East Punjab, killing one woman and one child (Aiyar, 1998: 18; Hansen, 2002: 14) – attacks on train and stabbing of the passengers began. Lahore train station also became the scene of bloody carnages. On August 13, 43 non-Muslims were stabbed in the Mughalpura Railway Workshops. On August 14, 35 Sikhs were stabbed in Lahore station. On August 15, a train was held up near Wazirabad. On August 15 to 16, a Pakistani Special train was derailed next to Amritsar. Two train

derailments occurred in Sialkot between August 14 and 17. Three trains were attacked by Muslims mobs in the Wazirabad-Sialkot area. Two attacks on train happened in Rawalpindi area. (Aiyar, 1998: 18-19) Notwithstanding the train attacks, bands of armed men were going on raiding villages and killing their inhabitants.

1947; August 26: A group of Pakistani Baluchi soldiers killed around 10,000 non-Muslim civilians in Sheikhpura and raped girls and women so as to dishonor the whole community and to prove its inability to protect them (Hansen, 2002: 15).

1947; September 3: Bands of Muslims and Hindus fought each other at Harnoil in Mianwali district. Muslims were supported by Pakistani military and used tanks against their opponents. The total death toll is over 3,000 (Hansen, 2002: 17; Kirpal Singh, 1972: 150).

1947; September 21: A refugee train was attacked during the night by armed Muslims at Harbanspura making 1,500 non-Muslim victims (Aiyar, 1998: 21). Finally, by October 1947, the situation improved in both parts of Punjab. However, if law and order was relatively reinstated, the burden of the rehabilitation of refugees remained till the end of 1947. *** (Kirpal Singh, 1972; Jeffrey, 1974; Aiyar, 1998; Brass, 2003).

1.2. The Bengali Ethnonationalist Movement and the Civil War in East Pakistan, 1952-1971

At the time of Independence, the State of Pakistan was composed of two wings, namely West and East Pakistan, separated by more than 1200 miles of Indian territory. Although the two wings were linked by religion, they differed strongly from an ethnic and linguistic point of view. Whereas East Pakistan was constituted of a homogeneous Bengali-speaking population, West Pakistan was divided between Punjabis, Pathans, Sindhis and Baluchis. Moreover, Bengalis formed the majority of the population, around 56%, all of them concentrated in East Pakistan. The Pakistani federal system was excessively centralized to the detriment of the provinces. Economic and political power was concentrated in the hands of a tiny elite from West Pakistan. Bengalis were hardly represented in the army and the bureaucracy. All the natural resources located in East Pakistan, such as jute for example, were exploited by the western wing and the wealth hence created was not redistributed to the eastern wing. The situation was felt by East Pakistanis as a form of internal colonization. In East Pakistan, it soon propelled a demand for more provincial autonomy which initially crystallized, around 1952, on the question of language, particularly the status of Bengali, which, despite being the most spoken language in the country, was not recognized as a national language besides Urdu.

During the next twenty years or so, the grievances of East Pakistanis never ceased to increase and their demands acquired somewhat secessionist overtones as expressed in the [Sheikh Mujibur Rahman](#)'s Awami League's Six-point program. The relation between the two wings really deteriorated when [General Yahya Khan](#), who took over power from President/General Ayub Khan in 1969 following mass agitation against his regime, refused to acknowledge the results of the first free and fair December 1970 general elections he had himself masterminded. The Awami League (AL), an East Pakistani political party, won the election on the basis of its Six-point program in favor of full provincial autonomy as they managed to get 167 out of 169 seats in East Pakistan, hence securing an absolute majority in the National Legislative Assembly. [Zulfikar Ali Bhutto](#)'s Pakistan People Party (PPP) won 81 out of 144 West Pakistani seats. Following the results, General Yahya Khan announced on February 13, 1971, that the national Assembly was to meet on March 3, 1971, in Dhaka. However, as the Six-point program was unbearable for both General Yahya Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, they strongly refused to negotiate with [Mujibur Rahman](#), the leader of the Awami League and ought-to-be Prime Minister of Pakistan, and sent the army to repress any dissent, thus prompting a full-scale civil war with genocidal features in East Pakistan.

The assessment of the death toll and the qualification of the violence still remain, thirty-six years after the events, the object of a bitter controversy. The estimates of the death toll vary tremendously. Most of them oscillated between 300,000 (Sisson and Rose, 1990) and 3 millions (Muhit, 1992; Jahan, 1997), to what is added between 200,000 and 400,000 women raped (Brownmiller, 1975). According to the Bangladesh authorities, the Pakistan army was responsible for killing three million Bengalis and raping at least 200,000 East Pakistani women. The Martial Law administration put the death toll around 26,000 Bengalis and accused the Bengali insurgents of killing 100,000 non-Bengalis (Hamoodur Rahman Report, 1974). Both these propagandist estimations are obviously flawed respectively by excess and by default. The controversy over the death toll is due to the partisan character of the allegations made by the Bangladeshi and the Indian governments, on the one hand, and the Pakistani government, on the other. Besides, the press restrictions and the censorship during the events contributed to blur information. According to R.J. Rummel, the death toll would be approximately 1,500,000 Bengalis and 150,000 non-Bengalis, to what must be added 10,000,000 refugees who had fled to India (Rummel, 1994: 331). Regarding the number of women raped, there is also a polemic as some argued that the number of women raped should be counted in thousands and not in hundred thousands (Bose, 2007: 3864).

The nature of the violence is also the object of a controversy. Some refuse to qualify the military action as genocide (Bose, 2005), though some of them acknowledged 300,000 deaths (Sisson and Rose, 1990). Others claimed it was genocide and that 3 million were killed between March 1971 and December 1971 (Muhit, 1992; Jahan, 1997). Actually, two targets appear to have suffered from genocidal-featured violence as the aim was to cleanse the province from their presence. The first are the Urdu-speaking Biharis Urdu-speaking Muslims from Bihar who migrated to East Pakistan at Partition and it was perpetrated by the *Mukti Bahini* and Bengali armed mobs. The second are the Hindus targeted by the Pakistani army. Whether the Pakistani army is guilty or not of genocide against Bengalis remains unclear. Although Bengali civilians were straightforwardly and indiscriminately targeted, the basic aim did not seem to be their total eradication from East Pakistan.

The final and overall responsibility for the atrocities was attributed by the Hamoodur Commission to officers from the Pakistan army such as [General Yahya Khan](#), Lt. Gen. Pirzada, Maj Gen. Umar, and Lt. Gen. Mitha, while the immediate responsibility for executing the plan fell on [Lt. Gen. Tikka Khan](#) and Lt. Gen. A.A.K. Niazi. The Pakistani army is accused:

- of excessive use of force and fire power in Dhaka during the night of March 25 and 26, 1971, when the military operation Searchlight was launched;
- of senseless and wanton arson and killings in the countryside during the course of the sweeping operations following the military action; of targeting intellectuals and professionals like doctors, engineers, etc., and burying them in mass graves not only during the early phases of the military action but also during the critical days of the Indo-Pakistani war in December 1971;
- of killing Bengali officers and men of the units of the East Bengal Regiment, East Pakistan Rifles, and the East Pakistan Police Force on pretence of quelling their rebellion and in the process of disarming them; of killing East Pakistani civilian officers, businessmen and industrialists;
- of raping of a large number of East Pakistani women by the officers and men of the Pakistan army as a deliberate act of revenge, retaliation and torture;
- and of deliberate killings of members of the Hindu minority (Hamoodur Rahman Report, 1974: 19). Besides the Pakistani army, other actors have also perpetrated various atrocities and killings, especially the Awami League-backed Bengali liberation army, the *Mukhti Bahini*, which targeted pro-Pakistan elements such as West Pakistanis, Biharis and also pro-Pakistan Bengalis.

1.2.1 The Language riots in East Pakistan, 1952

1952; January 26: The Basic Principle Committee of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan recommended that Urdu should be the only State language, hence following the position of all the national leaders such as

[Muhammad Ali Jinnah](#), Liaquat Ali Khan and Khawja Nazimuddin since Independence. Two days later, students of Dhaka University held a protest meeting and demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Nazimuddin who, despite his own Bengali origin, refused to support the demand for Bengali as the second national language along with Urdu, and the State language of East Pakistan.

1952; January 30: Bengali students, politicians, artists and intellectuals launched the Bhasha Andolon, a language movement in favor of the recognition of Bengali as a national language. As a consequence, Dhaka was rocked with strikes, demonstrations and ultimately police-firings. The day after, an All-Party Committee of Action led by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, leader of the National Awami Party, was constituted in order to direct the agitation that was being carried on in East Pakistan for the inclusion of Bengali as a State language. The committee announced a general demonstration to be staged on the February 21 and called for a complete *hartal* (general strike).

1952; February 21: While the whole province of East Pakistan was under complete general strike, the students of Dhaka University held a meeting at the Medical College hostel at noon. This happened despite the official ban on meetings and demonstrations in Dhaka, promulgated by the Government of Pakistan under section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Police intervened by using teargas and demonstrators answered by brickbats. At 4 pm, as the whole campus was a battleground between the police and the students, the police fired at the crowd killing four students. The day after, the streets of Dhaka were full of demonstrators. But on February 24, the army was given full authority to restore law and order and arrested nearly all the students and the political leaders (Rahman, 1997: 836; Sen Gupta, 2007: 176-178). Justice Ellis of the High Court of Judi Cature at Dhaka concluded in March 1952, that the firing by the police was necessary; the force used by the police was justified in the circumstances of the case (Report of the Enquiry into the Firing by the Police at Dhaka, February 21, 1952). This day is since then commemorated as Shaheed (martyrs) day and observed as a provincial, then national, holiday. ** (Rahman, 1997; Sen Gupta, 2007)

1.2.2. Civil War in East Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh, 1971

1.2.2.1. Mob violence by Bengalis on non-Bengalis

1971; March 1 to 3: Following [General Yahya Khan](#) s decision, the day before, to postpone the Assembly indefinitely, while it was supposed to meet the day after, [Sheikh Mujibur Rahman](#) reacted by calling a five-day *hartal* throughout East Pakistan. Bengalis went to the streets in protest processions. During this period, the Awami League managed to marginalize the authority of the federal government and to seize control throughout East Pakistan. Its followers indulged in large scale massacres and rape against pro-Pakistani civilian elements, mostly west Pakistanis and Biharis but also Bengalis who supported West Pakistan, in the towns of Dhaka, Narayanganj, Chittagong, Chandragona, Rungamati, Khulna, Dinajpur, Dhakargaoa, etc. (Hamoodur Rahman Report, 1974: 17). The army answered by force and several clashes between soldiers and unarmed demonstrators occurred in Dhaka, Khulna, Jessore, resulting in approximately 172 persons killed.

1971; March 3 to 25: On March 3, the army went back to their cantonment and stayed there till March 25. Until that date, some attacks were done by Bengalis mobs on non-Bengalis civilians and commercial properties, and a large-scale riot occurred in Chittagong on March 4. Bengali demonstrators passed through Urdu-speaking Muslim Bihari areas in order to force them to keep to the *hartal* but were fired at by Biharis. Subsequently, a riot started in which around 200 persons were killed on both sides and around 700 Biharis houses were burnt. According to various estimates, between 100,000 and 500,000 persons were killed during this period by Awami League militants (Aziz, 1974). Even though talks between [General Yahya Khan](#), [Zulfikar Ali Bhutto](#) and [Sheikh Mujibur Rahman](#) took place between March 4 and 24, their failure to find a compromise and the subsequent breakdown of the talks resulted in a breakdown of law and order. On

the one hand, General Yahya Khan decided to reassert his authority by resorting to coercion while on the other hand, the Awami-backed liberation army, the *Mukti Bahini*, was prepared to launch an armed insurrection to sustain their claim of independence in accordance with the principle of the right for self-determination.

1971; late March to late April: Following the military operation, Bengalis civilians and fighters went on targeting non-Bengalis in areas not yet under the control of the Pakistani army.

1971; March 27, The Crescent Jute Mills Massacre: In the Crescent Jute Mills in Khulna, both Bengali and Bihari workers and their families stayed in the factory and tried to prevent the army from entering. In spite of a truce between the two communities not to attack each other, two Bengali police officers would have first fired at the Biharis and then the Bengalis would have killed the fleeing Biharis, resulting in hundreds of Bihari men, women and children dead (Horowitz, 2001: 332; Bose, 2005: 4466). ** (Aziz, 1974; Hamoodur Rahman Report, 1974; Horowitz, 2001; Bose, 2005).

1.2.2.2. Pakistani Army Repression on Bengali civilians and militants in Dhaka*

1971; March 25-26, Operation Searchlight: On March 25, the armed forces of Pakistan initiated a military action, code-named Operation Searchlight, in East Pakistan in order to crack down the Bengali armed rebellion, essentially led by the *Mukti Bahini*. The armed forces were also joined by a *razakar* (volunteer) force of about 50,000 men divided into two groups, *al-Shams* and *al-Badr*. The military repression was not only aimed at Bengali freedom fighters but also directed against the unarmed civilian population. The crackdown started in Dhaka during the night of March 25 to 26, when around 7,000 people died according to Dr. Mohammad Omar Farooq.

The Jagannath Hall and the Shankharipara Massacres: The two main areas targeted were Dhaka University and the old city of Dhaka. The Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University, an exclusively Hindu populated residence, was totally destroyed causing the death of at least 70 to 80 people in what is known as the Jagannath Hall Massacre (Roy, 2007: 286-295). In Shankharipara, a single narrow lane, specialized in the shankha (conch shell) business and essentially populated by Hindus, was targeted and destroyed without any apparent reason, besides the targeting of Hindus. According to Mascarenhas, around 8,000 men, women and children were killed in this area, a figure denied by Bose (Mascarenhas, 1971: 114; Bose, 2005: 4465). Within a week, as much as 30,000 people were said to have been killed (Payne, 1972: 48).

1971; March 27 and 28, The Comilla Cantonment Massacre: After seizing control of the Comilla cantonment, the Pakistani soldiers, under the orders of CO 53 Field Regiment, Lt. Gen. Yakub Malik, killed 17 Bengali officers and 915 men (all Muslims) during their disarming (The Hamoodur Rahman Report, 1974). By April, the Pakistani army regained control of all the major cities of East Pakistan.

1971; April to November, Mass killings during pacification operation in the countryside: The military action then proceeded to eradicate the mounting guerilla activity in the countryside. They resorted to indiscriminate house searches known as sweep operations. The army adopted a Collective Punitive Reprisal Program when the Bengalis began their work of sabotage and harassment of the military. Whenever sabotage occurred, the army sent soldiers into the area where it happened with orders to slaughter all the civilians and burn all the villages in reprisal, though the insurgents had already left. *** (Mascarenhas, 1971; Payne, 1972; The Hamoodur Rahman Report, 1974; Bose, 2005; Roy, 2007).

1.2.2.3. Pakistani army targeting of Hindus

Besides the two massacres in Old Dhaka and Dhaka University previously documented in which Hindus

were targeted, the harassment and killing of Hindus went on during the following months. In April, the army began to systematically persecute the Hindus considered as spies and traitors. The aim of the Pakistani government seemed to be the eradication of the presence of the eight to eleven million of Hindus, either by killing them or driving them out of the country. The army deliberately looted and burned thousands of Hindu villages, killing any one of them they encountered, whether men, women or children. Not only the army but also in some areas the Bengali Muslims participated in the persecution of Bengali Hindus out of hatred and greed.

1971; May 20: A small unit of Pakistani soldiers, approximately 20-25, coming from Jessore, killed dozens of Hindu refugees, mostly men according to Bose, among the thousands thronging the riverbank and bazaar of Chuknagar. Then, large scale looting of refugees properties was perpetrated by locals.

1.2.2.4. The Indo-Pakistan war and the Pakistani army and loyalist death squads killings

1971; November to December: Since the beginning of the insurgency in East Pakistan, the government of India had provided diplomatic, moral, logistical and financial support to the Bengali insurgents. Military training camps were set up on the Indian side for the *Mukti Bahini* fighters. Yet, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi only decided to intervene directly and declared war on Pakistan on the night of November 20 to 21. Justifying her move by the constant afflux of Bengali refugees in India and the resulting troubles, it is clear that she also seized this opportunity to dismember Pakistan. In less than one month, the Indian army managed to out power its Pakistani rival, which accepted a unilateral cease-fire on December 17, when General Niazi surrendered along with 93,000 Pakistani soldiers. Thanks to the military intervention of India, East Pakistan finally acceded to independence. On December 26 the sovereign State of Bangladesh was proclaimed under the leadership of [Sheikh Mujibur Rahman](#). At the final stage of the war, when it was clear the Indian army was about to win, the Pakistani army and its loyalist Bengali armed groups, such as *Al Badr*, systematically targeted Bengali professionals and intellectuals. Most of them were subjected to enforced disappearance and many bodies were found at a brick kiln at Rayerbazar in Dhaka. ******(Bose, 2005: 4467).

1.2.2.5. Revenge Killings on non-Bengalis Muslims and Loyalist Bengalis by pro-liberation Bengalis

Violence was not completely over after the departure of the Indian Army from Bangladesh in early 1972, as the slaughter of non-Bengali Urdu-speaking Muslim Biharis and loyalists Bengalis continued unabated forcing most of them to leave the country and to flee to Pakistan. ****** (Horowitz, 2001: 332).

1.3. The Baluch Ethnonationalist Movement, 1948-2007

Baluchistan is the largest province of Pakistan, covering 43% of its land. It is the less populated province representing around 6% of the total population, further divided between 54.7% Baluchis and 29% Pashtuns, the rest being Sindhis and Punjabis (Pakistan Census, 1998). Under British rule, only a small part of Baluchistan was directly and centrally administrated by the British Raj, the rest being divided between princely States such as Kalat, Kharam, Las Bela and the Makran coastal areas, and un-administrated tribal areas. On the eve of independence, Mir Ahmed Yar Khan refused to merge with Pakistan and declared Kalat as an independent State. As a result, Pakistan army's garrison in Baluchistan was ordered to march on Kalat and to arrest Khan. While Kalat was annexed, Prince Karim, Khan's brother, launched an armed insurgency that continued till his arrest in 1950 (ICG, 2006: 3).

The violence that affected Baluchistan during most of the postcolonial period can actually be interpreted both as a phenomenon linked to the State's formation as the Baluchi tribal leadership refused at Independence to merge within Pakistan and as State violence against an ethnic minority. Besides, the 1948

insurgency and before a full-scale civil war took place in Baluchistan between 1973 and 1977, two other low-intensity insurgencies occurred in 1958 and 1963. In 1958, the Baluch nationalists, who strongly resented the One Unit Scheme 1955 (that is the integration of West Pakistan's four provinces into one administrative unit so as to counter the weight of East Pakistan), launched another armed insurgency under the leadership of Prince Karim, who had just been released. In October 1958, the Pakistan army moved against the insurgents and arrested Khan. This operation generated violence throughout the province as Nauroz Khan organized a guerrilla movement that died out when he was arrested. In July 1960, five of his men were hanged on charge of treason (Harrison, 1981: 27-28; Grare, 2006: 7). In 1963, a new guerrilla movement, led by Sher Mohammad Marri, started because of the building of new garrisons in the province by the Pakistan army. The insurgents, operating from various base camps, resort to ambush and sabotage while the army damaged Marri's land. A ceasefire was accepted by the protagonists in 1969 when [General Yahya Khan](#) abrogated the One Unit Scheme 1955 (ICG, 2006: 4). According to independent sources, around 2000 people, including military officers, died during this insurgency (HRCP, 2006: 44).

The overwhelming centralization of Pakistan's federal system and the constant interference of the center within the provincial affairs are among the main factors that led to the 1973-1977 Baluch insurgency. Economic grievances played also an important role as the natural resources of the province, especially gas and coal, were directly exploited by the center without any redistribution of the wealth created. Despite being the least developed province of the country, it is rich in energy and mineral resources, meeting more than 40% of Pakistan's energy needs and accounting 36% of its total gas production while large energy reserves remain untapped (ICG, 2006: 2). The grassroots reasons for the reappraisal of insurgency since 2003-2005 are, more or less the same: the lack of democracy in the province and the country, the exploitation of natural resources, the launching of development projects, such as the Gwadar port, controlled by the Pakistani government and the overwhelming presence of security forces which is considered as a threat by Baluchis (Grare, 2006: 5-6). Numerous analysts hence considered the military and [President Pervez Musharraf](#) are responsible for the worsening of the conflict in Baluchistan (ICG, 2006: i; HRCP, 2006: 4).

In 1970, Baluchistan was finally granted a full provincial status. The same year, general elections were organized. Khan Abdul Wali Khan's National Awami Party (NAP) won a majority of the seats in Baluchistan on the basis of provincial autonomy. He thus formed Baluchistan's first provincial government in alliance with the Pashto-majority Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI). The province was ruled by Baluchi nationalists such as Ataullah Mengal, who became Chief Minister and Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, who became Governor. Following the arbitrary and unconstitutional dismissal of the provincial government by [Prime Minister Bhutto](#) in 1973, an armed insurgency spread all over the province for four years. It was finally violently suppressed by the Pakistani army through excessive and indiscriminate use of lethal force resulting in many civilian deaths.

Thirty years later, a situation of quasi civil war developed again. The situation worsened by 2003 but large scale violence erupted only by the beginning of 2005. Then, the targeted killing of Nawab Akbar Bugti, the chief of the Bugti tribe, in a military operation in the Bhambore area of Kohlu district aggravated the tensions during 2006. The violence spread throughout the province but tended to be concentrated in Dera Bugti and Kohlu districts. The BLA remains the major threat in the province. Operating with a loose structure and small autonomous cells, the BLA is able to carry out acts on their own without directive from abroad. Many of its militants acquired expertise in arms, explosive and ammunitions while living abroad, mostly in the Gulf. They were also joined by armed Marri Baluch tribesmen, who had previously been in exile in Afghanistan. In 2006 alone, there were 289 bomb blasts killing 34 civilians, 2,219 rockets fired killing 32 civilians, and 146 landmine blasts killing 81 civilians (HRCP, 2007: 93). Since then, the province has experienced a situation of quasi-civil war though the federal government denies it. In spite of Musharraf's denial of the presence and activity of armed forces in the province, the HRCP fact-finding missions claimed that there is a war-like situation, militarization and politico-economic conflict in

Baluchistan (HRCP, 2006: 12-21). Their reports highly documented the bombardment of civilian settlements and the killing of women and children among the victims, summary executions, disappearances and torture by the armed and paramilitary forces. Chief among the concerns of the HRCP is the exponential increase of enforced disappearances, 360 out of 400 complaints by HRCP between 2003 and 2006 concerning Baluchis.

1.3.1. The Civil War in Baluchistan, 1973-77

[Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto](#), soon after the passing of the 1973 Constitution, dissolved the NAP government on the false ground that Baloch leaders were trying to undermine the State. As a result, a large numbers of Marri tribesmen and Baluch students launched an insurgency movement by attacking the government and targeting the Pakistani and American oil companies. The insurgency was led by the leftist Baluchistan People's Liberation Front (BPLF) under the leadership of Mir Hazar Khan Marri. Another leftist militant organization, the Baluchistan National Army (BLA), emerged during the insurgency. These movements were supported, in the political realm, by the leftist Baluch Student Organization (BSO), one of the most important recruiting grounds for Baluch nationalist parties. When the NAP was banned in 1975, its radical Baluch elements joined the Marri and Mengal tribes raising the militant struggle to real guerrilla warfare throughout Baluchistan. The Pakistan army responded by sending more than 80000 soldiers and helicopter gun ships provided by Iran (ICG, 2006: 6). The insurgency was finally put to an end in 1977. More than 5,000 insurgents and 3,300 army men lost their lives (Harrison, 1981: 36, 46-47; Grare, 2006: 3). Not only militants and soldiers died but also hundreds of civilians, including women and children. *** (Harrison, 1981; Grare, 2006; ICG, 2006)

1.3.2. The renewal of civil war, 2005 onwards

2005; January 2: The trigger for the renewal of the armed insurgency was the gang-rape of Dr. Shazia Khalid, a company doctor at the Sui's Pakistan Petroleum Limited Colony. Following the rape, Bugti tribesmen and Baluch militants led by Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti launched attacks on the Sui Gas installation, electricity towers and railway tracks. Considerable damage to property resulted. The security agencies answered by force and killed civilians in Dera Bugti district as they were subjected to indiscriminate bombing. *** (International Crisis Group, 2006: 8; HRCP, 2006: 1).

2005; March 17: During a military intervention with helicopter gunship and heavy weapons in Dera Bugti on March 17, at least 62 unarmed civilians, 33 of them Hindu women and children, were killed by indiscriminate and excessive use of force by the security forces. *** (HRCP, 2006: 26-28; 46).

2005; December 17: After the failed attack on [General-President Musharraf](#) by Baluch militants during a public meeting in Kohlu, a military intervention took place three days later in and around Kahan, in Kohlu district. At least 22 persons, mostly women and children, were killed in bombing and firing in the Marri area of Jabbar and Pekal. *** (HRCP, 2006: 13-14).

2006; August 26: Nawab Akbar Bugti, leader of the Bugti tribe and President of the Jamhoori Watan Party, was killed, along with 21 army commandos and 37 insurgents in a military intervention in the Bhamboor Hills, between Kohlu and Dera Bugti. It then degenerated in violent protests and strikes throughout the province of Baluchistan. *** (SATP, Baluchistan Timeline 2006).

2007; February 17: Seventeen people died and 30 were injured in a suicide bombing in the Quetta District Courts compound. *** (SATP, Balochistan Timeline 2007).

2. Ethnic Violence in Sindh

The Sindh province was not immune to ethnonationalist demands. However, it was ethnic conflict between the various communities living in the province that occupied the center stage since Independence. According to the 1981 Census (the only reliable figures available on the ethnic composition of Karachi as the census due for 1991 was delayed till 1998 because of the chronic instability in the city and even the 1998 Census could only be done with the direct involvement of the army in exercise) Muhajirs composed 61%, Sindhis 7.1%, Punjabis 15.8%, Pashtuns 11% and Baluchis 5.3% of the population of Karachi (Kennedy, 1991: 940). Moreover, the population of Karachi rose from around 400,000 in 1947 to approximately 15 million today. Between 1985 and 1998, ethnic conflict alone caused just in Karachi 9000 deaths, and peaked in 1994-1995 when 2000 were killed (Samad, 2007: 166-67).

At Partition, the region of Sindh had experienced a massive influx of *Muhajirs* Urdu-speaking Muslim migrants from the United Provinces, the Central provinces, Delhi and Hyderabad of British India. They were approximately 815,000 in 1951 (Boivin, 2001: 181). Most of them settled in the urban centers of Sindh, especially Karachi and Hyderabad. The former, which had lost around 75% of the 51% Hindus who composed its population before 1947, became the administrative capital of Pakistan and its economic center. Among the Muhajirs are also today included a people called *Biharis* Urdu-speaking Muslim migrants who migrated to East Pakistan from Bihar at the time of Partition but then fled East Pakistan to West Pakistan due to their targeting by the *Mukti Bahini* during the civil war in 1971. Muhajirs gradually outnumbered Sindhis in urban Sindh. The Muhajirs were also strongly represented in the civil bureaucracy. Their dominance was soon resented by the Sindhis, self-styled the sons of the soil, who began to feel excluded from their own province. Further resentment was caused by the imposition of Urdu as the only national language and the One Unit Plan (1955-1970). Then, by the end of the fifties, domestic economic migrants from Punjab began to migrate to Karachi. A second wave of domestic migration took place during the sixties, this time essentially composed by Pathans (Pakistani Pashtuns) looking for economic opportunities who settled in Sindh's main urban centers. They were later joined by fellow Afghan refugees leaving Afghanistan due to the Soviet invasion in 1979.

Economic competition in Sindh urban centers propelled a four-sided ethnic violence between the local Sindhis and the migrant Muhajirs and between the declining Muhajirs and the rising Pathans with the State having the role of an additional player. The overall situation was so tense and volatile in Karachi at that time that such minor events as road accidents, electricity breakdown or water shortage could, if successfully manipulated by ethnic entrepreneurs, trigger large-scale ethnic riots. Besides, the crisis of the Pakistani State power and its related failure to provide security to its citizens contributed to the propagation of violence (Hussain, 2000: 190).

2.1. The Sindhis-Muhajirs Conflict

The initial tensions between Muhajirs and Sindhis crystallized over the question of language. While Sindhi was the most spoken language in Karachi by around 61% of its population in 1947, it receded to only 8.5% in 1951 (Boivin, *ibid.*). By the end of 1970, some tensions arose about the quota system that had been in effect for government employment and admission to educational institutions since 1949. Actually, the Muhajirs rejected it as unfair and it was made an electoral issue by Nawab Muzaffar Khan, leader of the Sindh Muhajir-Punjabi-Pathan Mahaz (MPPM). At the same time, the *Jeay Sindh Naujawan Mahaz*, inspired by G. M. Syed's nationalist rhetoric and demand for Sindhudesh, claimed full autonomy for Sindh. Then, the syndicate of the University of Sindh, in August 1970, followed in December by the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education in Hyderabad and supported by leading Sindhi intellectuals, decided to make Sindhi the official language of the province, hence triggering language-related riots between Sindhis and Urdu-speaking Muhajirs in 1971 and 1972. By the middle of the eighties, the Muhajir community was losing ground to other ethnic groups in the province, hence experience a feeling of relative

economic deprivation and social frustration. [Altaf Hussain](#), a Muhajir, created in 1984 a political party, the Muhajir Qaumi Party (the Muhajir People's Party, MQM; later renamed Muttahida Qaumi Movement, which means National United Front), in order to represent and defend the interests of the Muhajir community. Due to their loss of pre-eminence in politics, bureaucracy and industry, their absence of presence in the army and the Punjabization of the central government added to their loss of identity after the migration to Pakistan and the abandonment of Biharis by the Pakistani State during the 1971 civil war in East Pakistan, a significant part of the Muhajir community supported the radical agenda and methods of the MQM, which successfully managed to capitalize on Muhajirs' resentment in order to launch mass mobilization campaigns. The MQM initiated a process of ethnicization of the Muhajir community which it presented as the fifth nationality of Pakistan and for who it demanded a special minority status. The MQM increasingly resorted to street-gang methods in order to control the cities of Karachi and Hyderabad. As a result, the Sindhis started to fear the dismantlement of their province. Then, by 1988, the violent encounters shifted from Pathans and Muhajirs to Muhajirs and Sindhis, as it was already the case in the language riots of 1971 and 1972 but on more general grounds and more violently. From the end of 1988 to the end of 1990, several riots occurred between the two communities in Karachi and Hyderabad.

2.1.1. The Sindhis-Muhajirs Language Riots, 1971-72

1971; January: By the end of the year 1970, the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education recommended to adopt Sindhi as the official language of the board. Then, in January 1971, the Muhajirs, organized by Nawab Muzaffar, launched anti-Sindhis processions, to which Sindhis answered alike. The law and order situation degenerated and clashes occurred in Hyderabad, Mirpur Khas, and Larkana. By the end of the month, disturbances spread to Karachi up to the north of the province. For the first time, Muhajirs started to raise the demand for Karachi as a separate province (Rahman, 1995: 1013).

1972; July: After the creation of the independent and sovereign State of Bangladesh and the abrogation of the One Unit Plan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) ruled the remaining Pakistan. Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, Zulfikar's brother, became Chief Minister of Sindh and presented himself as the champion of the Sindhi cause. The Sindh (teaching, promotion, and use of Sindhi language) Bill of 1972 was submitted to the Legislative Assembly on July 3. The Muhajirs feared that if Urdu was not introduced as an official language of the province along with Sindhi, they would suffer discrimination. On July 7, Urdu-speakers began to mobilize themselves against Sindhis. In parts of Karachi, people were attacked and molested. The day after, large-scale language-related riots broke out in Karachi and Hyderabad, where curfew was subsequently declared. The attacks were mixed as the targets were both anti-police and anti-Sindhi (Horowitz, 2001: 340-341). Law and order were restored on July 16 through a compromise solution stating that both Sindhi and Urdu were to be the official languages of the province (Rahman, 1995: 1014; Ahmar, 1996: 1032). ** (Rahman, 1995; Ahmar, 1996; Horowitz, 2001).

2.1.2 The Muhajirs-Sindhis Riots 1988-90

1988; 30 September, The Hyderabad Massacre or Black Friday: On Friday, September 30, 1988, a dozen gunmen on motorbikes or cars, said to be Sindhis militants led by Dr. Qadir Magsi and Janu Arain, fired indiscriminately at people in the streets making approximately 250 casualties (Tambiah, 1997: 173; Ahmar, 1996: 1033), mostly Muhajirs, in South Hyderabad. On October 1, when the news of the gunshot in Hyderabad reached Karachi, crowds of Muhajirs went into the streets and retaliated by burning cars and houses, looting shops and killing people, hence increasing the death toll by 60-65 deaths, mostly Sindhis (Tambiah, 1997: 173).

1989; July: Despite the recent signature of the Karachi Declaration between the PPP and the MQM, an agreement supposed to heal the tensions between Sindhis and Muhajirs, some Muhajirs students have been fired at Karachi University and new riots erupted. By October 1989, the Accord had failed and new rounds

of violence made at least 81 casualties (Tambiah, 1997: 175).

1990; 27 May, The Pakka Qila Massacre: A demonstration of Muhajirs, fronted by women and children, carrying the Holy Quran upon their head, braved the shoot-on-sight curfew imposed the day before due to the violence that erupted in Pakka Qila, in which two policemen and a dozen of civilians were killed (Tambiah, 1997: 174), 30 according to another estimate (Verkaaik, 2005: 146). As the demonstrators refused to hold on, the police forces opened fire at the procession resulting in the death of more than 45 Muhajirs and 250 wounded, including women and children (Kennedy, 1991: 938). The local police forces mostly composed of Sindhis and Pathans bear most of the responsibility for these killings (Tambiah, 1997: 175).

The day after, Muhajirs retaliated against Sindhis in Karachi and made at least 40 casualties (Ahmar, 1996: 1034) and then 130 in a five-day period (Haq, 1999: 999). Violence continued unabated for ten days in Hyderabad and six days in Karachi. It is only the intervention of the army that managed to bring back law and order in the province. *** (Kennedy, 1991; Ahmar, 1996; Tambiah, 1997; Haq, 1999; Verkaaik, 2005).

2.2 The Pathans-Muhajirs Riots in Sindh, 1985-86

At their arrival, most Pathans occupied small jobs but they gradually managed to control the transport business and the building trade. Since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, some Afghan refugees also became involved in the arm and drug traffic. Karachi being the biggest port in the country, it was an important transit place for arms and drugs. Pakistan witnessed a huge inflow of arms meant to sustain the Afghan guerrilla and a concomitant outflow of drugs, particularly opium and heroin, used to finance the purchase of arms, both through Karachi which became marred by the so-called drug and Kalashnikov culture. The connections between political parties, ethnic groups, religious organizations and criminal gang contributed to establish a tense and volatile situation in Karachi. In this context, the economic competition between Pathans and Muhajirs frequently degenerated into ethnic riots. Ethnic violence climaxed between Pathans and Muhajirs in 1985 and 1986. The just born MQM gained wide momentum thanks to the outbreak of those ethnic clashes.

1985; April 15-16: On April 15, a young girl named Bushra Zaidi was walking to college and killed in a road accident involving a yellow devil, Karachi buses bloody nickname. What could have been just another traffic accident among others led actually to one of the bloodiest ethnic riot in the tumultuous and violent history of Karachi. Just after the accident, female students gathered and took the streets in protestation. As they were charged by police forces, some young male students intervened and were fired down by the police, causing at least ten deaths (Tambiah, 1997: 186). The same day, buses and other vehicles were burnt by angry crowds in the streets. Pathans were targeted as they detain a quasi monopole on the transport business. The following day, Pathan transporters retaliated by burning houses and police vehicles. The violence spread from Nazimabad to Orangi and Liaquatabad and to a lesser extent to the rest of the city. A mob of Pathans attacked Biharis and burnt shops in Orangi Township, a mixed area where Pathans and Biharis are majority. The conflict between Pathans and Biharis then became a large-scale ethnic conflict between Pathans and Muhajirs as the latter took side with their fellow Urdu-speaking Biharis. The army had to intervene in order to restore law and order. According to the official estimates, the death toll approximated 50 whereas by unofficial estimates it was closer to 100 (Tambiah, 1997: 185; Gayer, 2006: 8).

Although law and order were subsequently restored in the following days, 242 incidents of rioting occurred in Karachi. 188 deaths resulted from politically motivated bomb explosions and 78 from the transport problem from the beginning of 1986 till mid-1987 (Tambiah, 1997: 185).

1986; October 31: By the end of October, another road accident at a railway crossing resulted in the death of a dozen people (Shaheed, 2000: 207). This incident was then successfully instrumentalized by the recently created Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), which launched an anti-Pathan campaign. Then, a bus

full of Muhajirs on the way to a political procession in Hyderabad and organized by the MQM passed through Sohrab Goth, a locality at the margins of Karachi, predominantly populated by Pathans from NWFP and Afghan refugees and infamously known as one of the main places for drug dealing in Karachi. The passengers were fired at by Pathans resulted in six deaths (Duncan, 1989: 174). Finally, violence spread in Karachi and Hyderabad making around 40 dead during the next five days (Duncan, 1989: 174).

1986; December 12 to 17, The Karachi Riots: Another ethnic riot, probably the bloodiest, erupted between Pathans and Biharis/Muhajirs in the wake of an operation, codenamed Clean-up and led by the military at Sohrab Goth, a *mohalla* infamously known as a drugs and arms market. On December 12, army trucks surrounded the area and bulldozers destroyed houses in order to remove the residents and stop arm and drug dealing. Just before this operation, the police entered Orangi township, a predominantly Muhajir area, and seized arms and bombs.

On December 13, several hundred Pathans armed with Kalashnikovs and mobilized along ethnic lines attacked in a retaliatory move the Muhajir residential areas of Qasba, Aligarh and Sector I-D. From 10 am till 4.30 pm, Pathans and Afghans killed hundreds of Muhajirs and burnt several Muhajir businesses and homes (Kennedy, 1991: 948) in what is remembered as the Aligarh Colony Massacre .

The day after, violence spread all over Karachi. Mobs of men armed with rifles charged into houses of other communities and left only when everything was destroyed. In counter-attacks, armed marauders on bikes and cars resorted to random killing on the roads, machine-gunning, burning and looting. Biharis in Orangi were attacked by Pathans. Non-Pathans then started killing people on the streets. During these five days, at least 200 people were killed in the riots (Duncan, 1989: 174). The violence finally diminished even though at least 243 people, according to official estimates, were killed in smaller encounters (Duncan, 1989: 175). The Clean-up operation in Sohrab Goth would have initiated a cycle of violence that led to more than 1000 casualties (Boivin, 2001: 185). *** (Duncan, 1989; Tambiah, 1997; Shaheed, 2000; Boivin, 2001; Gayer, 2006).

2.3 The MQM Versus the Pakistani State and the MQM-Haqiqi

During the summer of 1991, two high-ranking officers of the MQM who had been expelled from the party on charges of corruption and conspiracy against [Altaf Hussain](#), Afaq Ahmad and Amir Khan, former commanders of the MQM's militant wing, the Black Tigers and previously very close to Altaf Hussain, formed the breakaway MQM- *Haqiqi* (real), allegedly patronized by the Pakistani security agencies. Then, in June 1992, the Pakistani army intervened in a government-initiated military crack down code-named Operation Clean-up , allegedly in order to quell the chronic ethnic unrest in the province. However it soon became obvious that the MQM's militants were the main target of the military operation in Karachi which was meant to eradicate the MQM. As a result, Altaf Hussain, the leader of MQM, went into self-imposed exile in London, from where he still leads the party. The MQM-*Haqiqi* (MQM-H) took advantage of the military operation to take control of MQM-Altaf (MQM-A) offices in Karachi and to make Landhi and Korangi no-go areas . ** (Verkaaik, 2005: 84-86; Gayer, 2004: 48).

1992; June 19: Following the army operation, which resulted in a thousand of so-called terrorists and *dacoits* killed (Verkaaik, 2005.), a vendetta ensued between the two rival factions of the MQM. The MQM (A), whose leadership had to go underground, set about recovering by force its lost offices and the localities of Landhi and Korangi controlled by the MQM (H). It soon took the shape of a proxy war between semi-autonomous gangs trying to control small patches of the city and which lasted for months causing the death of many bystanders.

1994; April 29 to May 5, The six-day insurgency: The MQM violently opposed the provincial government of Sindh as well as the federal government headed by the Sindhi leader of PPP, [Benazir Bhutto](#) . The MQM militants attacked more than 70 law enforcement agencies in the province and killed 32 people, mostly by sniper-firing (Haleem, 2003: 469). Till June, 62 policemen and more than 500 civilians were

targeted (Haq, 1995: 1003).

1994; November 30: The army withdrew from Sindh though law and order was not really reinstated, as the subsequent events will prove. It was then replaced by the police and the paramilitary. These law agencies resorted to several methods of extrajudicial killings against the MQM militants, hence reinforcing the resentment of the Muhajir community against the Pakistani State. The civil strife in Karachi caused 1113 casualties in 1994 and 2095 in 1995 (Ahmar, 1996: 1035). The MQM accused the security forces of killing 130 of its workers in fake encounters in 1995. ***(Ahmar, 1996: 1035; UNCHR, 1996: 4-8).

3. Religious Violence

Religion-related violence has been widespread in Pakistan since Independence. 96.28% of the Pakistani population are Muslims, 1.85% Hindus, 1.59% Christians, and 0.22% Ahmadis (Government of Pakistan, Statistics Division, No. SD. PER.E (53)/99-449, Islamabad, 16 July 2001). Religious violence can be divided into two kinds of violence: one directed against religious minorities such as Ahmadis, Christians and Hindus, and one between Islamic sects, especially between Sunnis (75-80%) and Shias (15-20%) but also within Sunnis sects as well. In fact, the violence against Ahmadis could be conceived as sectarian violence as they were originally considered as an Islamic sect. However, the main reason for the violence against them was that they were not considered as Muslims by Muslim orthodox, and they were later declared a non-Muslim minority. Then, the violence between Sunnis and Shias could also be interpreted as violence against a religious minority since Shias were first targeted by Sunni militant groups. Most of those killed in sectarian violence, around 70%, were Shias (ICG, 2005: 4). However, the subsequent level of militarization and retaliation by Shia militant groups is significant and necessitates distinguishing sectarian violence from violence against religious minorities who have never been able to retaliate.

3.1. Anti-Religious minorities Violence

3.1.1. *The Anti-Ahmadi Movement and Riots*

Ahmadis, also known as *Qadiyanis* or *Mirza is*, belong to an Islamic sect founded in the mid-19th century by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in Qadian, Sialkot district of Punjab, now in India, and are approximately two million. At Partition, they moved to Pakistan and most of them settled in Rabwah and around, in West Punjab. The main cause of controversy is that Ahmadis believed that Muhammad's revelation could be completed and perfected by their founder's interpretations, hence disregarding a fundamental pillar of Islam that is the end of the prophethood with Muhammad. They were thus considered as heretics by Muslim orthodox, who have continuously asked for them to be declared non-Muslims. Moreover, the general welfare of the Ahmadis, secured mainly due to their pro-British stance before Independence, was also a reason for the hatred they faced. Religious parties have constantly demanded the removal of the Ahmadis in post in the administration and the government, especially Zafarullah Khan, the Pakistani foreign minister.

The Islamization process undertaken during [General Zia ul-Haq](#) rule proved to be critical for the Ahmadis. The climax was reached in the early months of 1984 when the Ahmadis were then forbidden to pray openly, to spread their beliefs and to call Azan or use any Islamic expressions. It took place through the Anti-Ahmadi Ordinance XX that added Sections 298-B and 298-C in the Pakistan criminal code. Then, in 1986, the Blasphemy law, PPC 295-C, was passed. It prohibits Ahmadis from calling themselves Muslims or posing as Muslims, from referring to their faith as Islam, from preaching or, propagating their faith, from using words and salutations from the Holy Quran and from injuring the religious feelings of Muslims. Any transgression of this law results in a death sentence for the offender.

Since its promulgation, this law has been widely used in order to oppress the Ahmadi community. Generally, Ahmadis faced minor acts of violence such as killings, arson, destruction and desecration of mosques, internment on false grounds, torture, and social and economic boycott (as documented in the annual reports of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) since its inception in 1986). From 1987 to 2004 included, 4,000 people were accused under the Blasphemy law and 560 formally charged mostly Ahmadis and Christians (ICG, 2005: 26). As soon as 1949, in the context of the release of the Objectives Resolution, the Majlis-I Ahrar-I Islam (Society of Free Muslims), a populist Islamic party created in 1930 and led by Taju ddin Ansari, and the Majlis-e Khatme Nabuwat (Society for the finality of prophethood), launched an anti-Ahmadi agitation in order to test the professed loyalty to Islam of the government. In May 1951, the Ahrar used the West Punjab elections as a platform for their anti-Ahmadi propaganda. They found a strong support in the new Chief Minister of Punjab and leader of the Punjab Muslim League, [Main Mumtaz Daultana](#), who was eager to raise support among the religious electorate, hence allowing the Ahrar to pursue their anti-Ahmadi agitation. A first riot was launched by the Ahrar following Zafaru llah Khan's speech at an Ahmadi public session in Karachi on May 17, 1952. The Ahrar's anti-Ahmadi agitation was later joined, albeit reluctantly, by the Jamaat-i-Islami, another religious party led by Mawdudi. The anti-Ahmadi agitation climaxed in March, 1953, when riots broke out throughout Punjab. Later, in May 1974, another round of riots broke out in Rabwah. Following this incident, 18 religious groups renewed their demand for declaring Ahmadis non-Muslims which was finally granted by [Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto](#) in September 1974.

1953; March, The Punjab Disturbances: The anti-Ahmadi movement strengthened over the years and turned violent, resulting in riots, first in Karachi on February 27, 1953, following the rejection by the Pakistan government of the All-Parties Muslim Convention's demand that the Ahmadis should be treated non-Muslims, then, more dramatically, in Punjab, particularly in Lahore which became the scene of a vast hunt where thousands of citizens rioted murderously... in almost pogrom-like fashion (The Munir Report, 1954: 35). The Army had to intervene to restore law and order in the province and martial law was imposed on March 5. Firing by police that day left 10 people dead and 74 injured, and there were 11 more casualties before the situation got stabilized (Irfani, 2004: 153). On the whole, more than 300 people died in the riots (James, 1993: 14). The root cause for these riots was political opportunism by religious parties, especially the Majlis-e-Ahrar and other like-minded groups of Ulemas such as the Jamaat-i-Islami (Horowitz, 2001: 213-214; Kennedy, 1989: 87). Moreover, the administrative incompetence and collusion of Punjab government allowed the situation to degenerate (The Munir Report, 1954: 9-10). ** (The Munir Report, 1954; Kennedy, 1989; James, 1993; Horowitz, 2001; Irfani, 2004)

1974; May 22-29, The Rabwah incident: The controversy has resurfaced in 1974 under [Bhutto's](#) regime and again turned violent with the Rabwah incident. On May 22, a train full of students from Nishtar Medical College passed through Rabwah, the headquarters of the Ahmadis, shouting insulting slogans. A week later, when the students came on their way back, a mob of Ahmadis were waiting for them with light arms. Ahmadis beat up the students but no casualties happened. Then, violence spread from Rabwah to the whole province of Punjab. During the riot, 42 persons died, 27 of who were Ahmadis. ** (Kennedy, 1989: 90).

3.1.2 The Persecutions against Christians

The tiny Christian minority settled in Pakistan also suffered from recurrent and severe discrimination and harassment. They regularly suffer from killings, arson, desecration and destruction of churches, seizure of land and properties, forced conversions, rape, etc. These acts of violence against the Pakistani Christian community have only been systematically and precisely documented since the publication of the HRCP annual report in 1992 onwards. The Christians as well as the Ahmadis were frequently targeted through the drastic Blasphemy laws.

However, since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent American military intervention in Afghanistan, Christians have become the target of several major acts of violence such as gun firing, grenade launching, and bombing, sometimes by suicide bombers, on churches or other locations. The anti-Christian militant violence peaked in 2002 but then gradually receded to the kind of isolated acts of violence the Christians were used to face before the end of 2001.

2001; October 28: Eighteen Christians were gunned down when six assailants opened fire inside the St. Dominic Church at Bahawalpur. The dead included women and small children and at least a dozen other worshippers were seriously injured. The attack was allegedly linked to the US action against the Taliban in Afghanistan, which had begun a few weeks earlier (HRCP, 2001: 156).

2002; March 17: Four grenades were thrown inside a church located in Islamabad's heavily protected diplomatic enclave. Only two of the grenades exploded, killing five people and causing injury to over forty, many from among the diplomatic community. *** (HRCP, 2002: 166).

2002; May 8: A suicide bomber rammed a car full of explosive into a Pakistan Navy bus, as it was leaving the Sheraton Hotel in Karachi. Fourteen people were killed, among whom eleven French naval engineers, who were working on a submarine project with the Pakistan Navy. According to the HRCP, the French nationals were the main target. *** (HRCP, 2002: 166).

2002; June 14: A suicide car-bomb attack on the US Consulate in Karachi killed 12 persons, all of them Pakistanis and none of them Christians. The targeting of the US Consulate is nonetheless seen as a part of the continuing militant action directed against Western and Christian targets.

3.1.3. The Anti-Hindu Pogroms

The situation of the Hindu minority, particularly concentrated in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) was tensed since Independence. They generally lived the life of second-class citizens and were occasionally targeted in major pogroms. The first case of mass violence against Hindus occurred in East Pakistan at the beginning of 1950. It was started by the spread of false rumors, somewhat encouraged by the official media, and degenerated into retaliatory violence between West and East Bengal.

Then, a new pogrom occurred in 1964 again in East Pakistan allegedly due to the loss of Prophet Mohammad's hair from the Hazratbal mosque in Kashmir, India. There was however also a strong economic incentive as the attacks were originally directed toward the Hindu-owned cotton mills located nearby non-Bengali Muslim, mostly Bihari, factories. In 1971, during the civil war between the Pakistani army and the Bengali *Mukti Bahini*, the former organized massacres against the Hindus in East Pakistan as it was documented in the previous section dealing with the East Pakistan civil war.

Since the break-up of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh, the Hindu community, which remained in Pakistan, most of them concentrated in small pockets in Baluchistan and Sindh, though not suffering from acts of mass violence, has been constantly discriminated and harassed as it was the case with Ahmadis. These acts of violence against Hindus in Pakistan have been systematically and precisely detailed in the successive annual reports of the HRCP since 1992.

The Great Anti-Hindu Pogrom of 1950

1950; January: A clash broke out between Communists and the police in the Kalshira village of the Bagerhat area of Khulna district during which some policemen were killed. The police then retaliated by destroying some houses in the village some of which belonged to Hindus. The latter decided to migrate to India and spread a rumor of atrocities on Hindus, which was relayed by the West Bengal press. This rumor generated attacks on Muslims in West Bengal. In retaliation, Muslims from Kalshira and the neighboring

villages began to target Hindus in the area.

1950; February: Atrocities against Hindus went on especially in Dhaka and Khulna from the second week of February. These atrocities mainly took the shape of murder, arson and forcible conversion. Violence then spread to the coastal district of Barisal where five to seven thousand Hindus were said to be killed. *(Roy, 2007: 202).

1950; February 12, The Meghna Bridge Massacre: The Meghna Bridge, also known as the Bhairab Bridge and the Anderson Bridge, is a one-kilometer long bridge, which spans the wide Meghna river between Bhairab Bazar Junction on the Dhaka-Mymensingh eastern line and Ashganj near Brahmanbaria. Assailants boarded both sides of the train just before it got on the bridge and blocked the doors. They then stopped the train once it was fully on the bridge. Finally, they methodically picked out all the Hindus that were on the train and systematically killed them. *(Roy, 2007: 211).

The Hazratbal-inspired Anti-Hindu Pogrom, 1964

1964; January 3: A protest day was observed following the loss of Prophet Mohammad's hair from Hazratbal Mosque in Kashmir, India. On that day, at Daulatpur, Khulna district, Sabdul Khan made an inflammatory speech to a crowd of non-Bengali, mostly Bihari, Muslim factory workers, who immediately thereafter took out a procession, looted and set fire to Hindu houses, raped women and killed them indiscriminately without any interference from the police.

1964; January 13 to 17: The anti-Hindu attacks of January 3 generated retaliatory attacks on Muslims in West Bengal. In spite of the fact that the Indian army quickly quelled the riot, it was subsequently used as an excuse for further violence against Hindus in East Pakistan. The violence was particularly gruesome in the Adamji Mill area of Narayangunge, Nishat Mill area of Tongi, north of Dhaka, and the Mohammedpur colony of Tezgaon, Dhaka city and the Nawabpur area of old Dhaka. The common thread among them is that they were dominated by non-Bengali Muslim workers of non-Bengali-Muslim-owned factories. Following a meeting with the Chief Secretary of East Pakistan on January 13, the owners of these factories decided to declare January 14 and 15 as holidays. They supplied their workers with motor vehicles, iron rods, daggers, firearms, petrol cans and sprayers and summoned them to attack the Hindus in their area. There was an obvious economic incentive for this pogrom as the Muslim workers started to attack the Hindu-owned factories of Dhakeswari Cotton Mill, Chittaranjan Cotton Mill and Laxminarayan Cotton Mill. Their Hindu workers were killed indiscriminately and the factories were set ablaze. The Muslim rioters then turned to the village of Golkandayal where many Hindus had gathered for a fair at the occasion of the Hindu festival of *Makar Sankranti*. In Dhaka, at the same time, arson, loot and rampage occurred without any initiative from the government to prevent it till January 16. **(Roy, 2007: 271-74).

3.2. Sectarian Violence

3.2.1. Sunni/Shia Violence

Sectarian violence is amongst the most lethal in Pakistan since the mid-eighties. It opposes mostly *Sunnis* and *Shias*. Actually, it would be more accurate to describe this conflict as a *Deobandi*-Shia conflict since the former somehow appropriated the term Sunni for themselves and is supported in its anti-Shia struggle by *Ahle Hadit* organizations. Between 1985 and 1989, over 300 Shias were killed in sectarian incidents in Jhang district, Southern Punjab, the birthplace of organized sectarian militancy, the two sub-sects now living in separate parts of the city (ICG, 2005: 14).

Then, between 1989 and 2003 (July 6), 1,468 persons were killed and 3,370 injured in some 1,813 sectarian

incidents (Lakshman, 2003: 1). Till the mid-nineties, most of the killings remained concentrated in Punjab. 700 people were killed in this province alone between 1989 and 2001 (Zaman, 1998: 712; Abbas, 2001: 24). But then, sectarian violence spread to the whole of Pakistan, first in the Northern Areas and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), then in Sindh, causing 1850 dead in total (Abbas, 2001: 24). In Karachi alone, 293 people died between 1994 and June 2002, of whom approximately 200 were Shias (HRCP, 2002: 7). The sectarian violence peaked in Karachi in 1994-95 as 103 Shias and 28 Sunnis died during this period (ibid.).

Among those that have gained prominence are the *Sipah-i Muhammad Pakistan* (SMP; the Army of Muhammad), an off-shoot created in 1991 of the *Tehreek-Nifaz-i-Fiqh-e-Jafaria* (TNFJ) the main politico-religious Shia party in Pakistan, later renamed *Tehreek-e-Jafaria Pakistan* (TJP) formed in 1979; and on the Sunni side the *Anjuman Sipah-i Sahaba*, later renamed *Sipah-i Sahaba Pakistan* (SSP; the Sunni Pakistan s Army of the Prophet s Companions) established in Jhang in 1985 by [Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi](#), an off-shot of the *Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam* (JUI), a leading politico-religious Sunni Deobandi party. A further militant off-shot of the SSP is the even more violent *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* (The Army of Jhangvi), formed in 1990. Two other prominent militant Sunni Deobandi outfit are *Tehrik Nifaz Shariat-I Muhammadi* (TNSM; Movement for Protection of Muhammad s Religious Law) created in 1994, and the *Lashkar-e-Taiba* (The Army of the Pure) formed in 1997-1998.

The present state of organized sectarian conflict can be traced to the murder of TNJF leader Arif Hussain Al-Hussaini in 1988. Others date it to 1987 when Ahl-e-Hadith leaders, Allama Ehsan Elahi Zaheer and Maulana Habib ur Rehman Yazdani, were killed, along with six others, at a meeting in Lahore. From 1985 to 1995, the dominant pattern of sectarian violence was targeted killings of leaders and militants of each other s sects. The spiral of violence registered a sharp rise in February 1990 with the murder of [Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi](#), founder of the SSP. This led to violent clashes resulting in dozens of casualties and burning down of many houses and shops in Jhang. Then, by the mid-nineties, the pattern of sectarian violence shifted to targeted attacks on religious gatherings and mosques, even with hand grenades and time bombs. At that time, office bearers and government officials also became targeted. Since 1997, a new feature of sectarian violence appeared with indiscriminate gunfire on ordinary citizens not involved in sectarian activity, and tit-for-tat killings targeting doctors, lawyers and traders (Abou-Zahab, 2002: 78). Finally, in the post September 11, 2001 context, suicide bombing tends to become the dominant pattern of sectarian violence.

Several regional and international dynamics (Abou-Zahab, 2002: 115-128; Nasr, 2000: 171-190), such as the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan between 1979 and 1988, the Iran-Iraq war between 1980 and 1988, and Jihad in Kashmir since 1989, contributed indirectly to exacerbate the sectarian tensions in Pakistan and to radicalize the members of these sects. Furthermore, the direct financial support of Saudi Arabia and Irak to Pakistani Sunni organizations and of Iran to Pakistani Shia organizations allowed them to build a wide network of madressahs and to buy arms.

Some parallel domestic dynamics also contributed to the rise of sectarian violence. The main domestic reasons for the escalation of violence between Shias and Sunnis are, from a national point of view, the policy of islamization undertaken by [General Zia Ul-Haq](#), which alienated the Shia community. The emergence of sectarian politics linked to factionalism within religious parties and militant organizations must also be pointed out as it radicalized the tensions between Shias and Sunnis. The multiplication of madressahs (it is believed that there are currently between 10,000 and 15,000 madressahs in Pakistan, their number increasing between 10 and 15 times during the last two decades, with an enrolment of about 200,00 students) must also be taken into account. Though it does not explain the rise of sectarian violence as such and despite the fact that they often despise the other sects, at least a 100 of them provide military training, which constituted important grounds of recruitment for the militant organizations (HRCP, 2002: 12-14).

Besides, the crosscutting dynamics of ethnic, sectarian and criminal (drugs and arms) violence exacerbated an unstable situation. The spread of the so-called drug and Kalashnikov culture in Pakistan made drug money (especially from the culture of opium and heroin) and arms (it is said that there are approximately 20 million illegal weapons in the country) easily available (Samad, 2007: 173-77). Finally, local dynamics must not be undermined. Local politics that is the political rivalry and socio-economic competition at the local level are important incentives for sectarian conflicts (Abou-Zahab, 2004). For instance, the sectarian conflict in Jhang can be interpreted as the outcome of a struggle for political power between the traditional feudal families who are primarily feudal families and rural-based and the emergent middle class which is largely Deobandi or Ahl-i-Hadith and urban-based (Abou-Zahab, 2004: 136). In this local context, anti-Shia rhetoric proved to be a useful instrument of mobilization towards other ends.

While episodic violence between Shias and Sunnis was a recurrent phenomenon in South Asia, especially during Muharram-Ashura processions, even before Partition, it has become increasingly frequent and violent in Pakistan since the mid-eighties. One significant exception was the killing of more than 100 Shias in the Tehri village of the Khairpur district, Sindh, in June 1963 (ICG, 2005: 9). Pakistan is currently experiencing a full-scale sectarian conflict, which began in the mid-eighties, spreading throughout the country from Punjab to Northern areas and NWFP to Sindh and Baluchistan.

1988; May 17, The Gilgit Massacre: In Gilgit, the main city of the Northern Areas of Pakistan, a predominantly Shia and Ismaeli area, Sunnis, who were still fasting, attacked Shias while celebrating *Eid ul-Fitr*, in the wake of a theological quarrel between Shias and Sunnis over the starting date of Ramadan. Official sources said 200 people were killed but it was closer to 800 according to unofficial estimates (Aase, 1999: 60; ICG, 2005: 19), in a raid on the city by Sunni activists, mostly from North West Frontier Province (NWFP) tribal areas. These were assisted by local Sunnis from Chilas, Darel and Tangir, with the compliance of the Central government, which intended to build a Sunni mosque in the center of the city and ultimately to alter the demographic balance in favor of Shias in Gilgit and the rest of the Northern Areas. *** (Aase, 1999; ICG, 2005).

1992; July: A three-day riot occurred in the NWFP, particularly in Peshawar, between Shias and Sunnis. It caused the death of seven Sunnis and three Shias, and 49 people were injured. *** (Haleem, 2003: 469).

1996; September: A sectarian clash turned in a nine-day communal war, following an incident of wall chalking by sectarian students, involving mortars, rocket launchers and anti-aircraft missiles, between Sunni Orakzai and Shia Bangash tribe in Parachinar, the capital of Kurram Agency of the Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). It caused the death of more than 200 people (Nasr, 2002: 85; ICG, 2005: 18). This event set up the Parachinar paradigm of sectarian violence, dominant in the Tribal areas and marked by the use of heavy weapons by both sides, support of Afghan settlers and Taliban for local Sunnis, and the deployment of the army for restoring order. *** (Nasr, 2002; ICG, 2005).

1997; August 1-10: More than 100 people, mostly Shias, died in sectarian riots during ten days throughout Punjab in an unprecedented wave of sectarian strife, a few days before the anniversary of 50th year of Independence. *** (ICG, 2005: 13).

1998; January 11, The Mominpura Graveyard Massacre: Twenty-five Shias were killed and 50 others injured in Lahore when three gunmen, allegedly from the *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi*, fired upon a crowd gathered, as every Sunday, in the Mominpura cemetery for *Qurankhwani* (Quranic recitals) and *Majlis* rituals. This event propelled a new wave of sectarian violence resulting in 78 dead and some 80 injured in Punjab, and an estimated 150 in all of Pakistan. *** (Nasr, 2002: 86).

1998; March: Twenty-one Shias were killed in Hangu, NWFP, during an attack by Sunni militant

organizations. *** (Abou-Zahab, 2002: 124).

1999; January: Seventeen Shias were killed in Karamdad Qureshi, a small village near Multan. Punjab. *** (Abou-Zahab, 2002: 119).

2002; February 26: The attack on the Shah Najaf mosque in Rawalpindi resulted in the death of 11 people and over 19 wounded when three militants opened indiscriminate fire on worshippers.

2003; July 4, The Jama Masjid-o-Imambargah Massacre: Some 53 people were killed and 57 injured when two men opened fire and one blew himself up in a Shia mosque, the Jama Masjid-o-Imambargah Kalaan Isna Ashri in Quetta, capital of Baluchistan, during the Friday prayers. *** (Lakshman, 2003: 1; HRCP, 2003: 101).

2004; March 2: On the day of Ashura, SSP activists in connivance with police officers attacked a procession of Shias, killing 47 of them (especially from the anti-Taliban Shia Hazara community) and injuring 150 others, at Liaquat Bazaar in Quetta. *** (ICG, 2005: 21, 24).

2004; May 7 and 31: Two suicide bombings, both executed by members of LeJ, respectively on the Shia Hyderi Masjid on May 7 in Karachi and at Imambargah Ali Raza also in Karachi on May 31, killed 47 people. *** (ICG, 2005: 24).

2004; October 1 and 7: Two bomb blasts killed at least 71 people and injured 200 others in Punjab at a Shia mosque at Sialkot during the Friday prayers and at a large gathering assembled to mark the first anniversary of the killing of Sunni leader and SSP chief Maulana Azim Tariq in Multan. *** (SATP, 2007).

2005; May 27: Bari Imam Shrine Blast: Around 25 people died in a suicide bomb attack and over 100 others were injured during a crowded Majlis, where Bareilvi Sunnis were also present at the Bari Imam shrine of the Shia sect located in the vicinity of the diplomatic enclave in Islamabad. *** (SATP, 2007).

2005; March 19: At least 50 people were killed and approximately 100 others suffered injuries during a bomb explosion at a crowded gathering near the shrine of a Shia saint at Fatehpur village in the Jhal Magsi district of Baluchistan. *** (SATP, 2007).

2007; April 6-11: Around 55 people were killed during sectarian clashes in the Kurram Agency of FATA as Shia and Sunni militants attacked each other's village with heavy weapons. The violence broke out when Shias were attacked in an Imambargah in the morning while they were staging a demonstration outside their mosque against local Sunnis who allegedly chanted anti-Shias slogans during a religious rally the week before. *** (SATP, 2007).

2007; November 16-20: Sectarian violence in Parachinar, the capital of Kurram agency, FATA, erupted after unidentified people hurled a hand-grenade at the central mosque in the town, where hundreds of Sunnis were offering Friday prayers. State-run television has put the number of deaths in the violence to 91, and has reported that another 150 people have been injured. *** (SATP, 2007).

2007; December 22-27: The alleged incursion of Taliban fighters in the Kurram Agency of FATA in order to back Sunni militant organizations flared up sectarian clashes between rival Sunni and Shia groups resulting in at least 70 dead and several injured. *** (SATP, 2007).

3.2.2. Intra-Sunni Violence

Not only is there violence between Sunnis and Shias but there is also numerous intra-Sunni conflicts, especially between the *Barelvis* and the *Deobandis*. Sunnis in Pakistan can be broadly divided into four categories: *Deobandis*, *Barelvis*, *Ahle Hadit*, and revivalist, modernist movements. The first two Sunni sub-sects are products of 19th century Indo-Muslim reform movements that emerged from religious seminaries, one located at Deoband in 1867, and the other at Bareilly in 1897, both now in India.

Although they both follow the *Hanafi* school of Sunni Jurisprudence, their interpretations of it radically differ. The main controversy between them deals with the *Barelvis* promotion of the *Sufi* Islamic tradition of hereditary saints and shrine culture which is rejected by *Deobandis* who dismiss these practices as idolatry and favor a strict adherence to the classical texts of Islam. The third category is a small, ultra-orthodox and puritanical sect inspired by the purist *Wahabi* tradition originating from Saudi Arabia. The latter group is composed of modernist movements, which emerged during the 1940s such as the *Jamaat-i-Islami* (JI).

The main intra-Sunni conflict is the one opposing *Deobandis* and *Barelvis*, the two main Sunni sub-sects. The situation deteriorated into large scale violence when the major Barelvi sectarian outfit, the Sunni Tehreek (ST), an off-shot of the Jamaat-Ulema Pakistan (JUP), was created by Mohammad Saleem Qadri in 1990, with its stronghold and headquarters in Karachi, to counter the increasing hegemony of Ahle Hadees and Deobandi organizations over the Pakistani government. The pattern of intra-Sunni violence follows more or the less the same evolution as described in the case of sectarian violence. Beginning by aggressive occupation of mosques, it then moved to targeted killings of the organizations' respective leaders (Saleem Qadri was hence assassinated in 2001) to finally suicide bombing as in the case of the Nishtar Park bombing in Karachi in 2006.

Initially, the ST essentially targeted the Sipah-i-Sahaba and the Lashkar-e-Taiba. From 1990 to 2002, it especially resorted to aggressive occupation of mosques in Sindh and Punjab that were thought to have been taken over from their control by Ahle Hadit and Deobandi organizations (Rana, 2006: 374-75). It would have lost approximately 30 militants in these operations since 1990 (Shahid Gauri quoted in Boivin and Gayer, 2007: 52).

Since 2002, a few months after the targeted assassination of its leader and founder Saleem Qadri on May 18, 2001, the Sunni Tehreek entered politics. This politization of the Sunni Tehreek propelled a conflict with the MQM, the major political party in Karachi, though it is said that an agreement was reached between the two in 1995 when the federal State cracked down MQM's militants according to which these latter were offered protection in the ranks of the Sunni Tehreek. Between 2004 and 2006, the Sunni Tehreek said it lost 75 militants and accused the MQM for most of them (ibid.: 52). Sunni Tehreek's militants mostly suffered from targeted killings but violence climaxed during the Nishtar Park Bombing on April 11, 2006, when the entire leadership of the organization died (SATP, 2007).

2006; April 11, The Nishtar Park Bombing: At least 57 people, including prominent clerics, among whom the top leadership of the Sunni Tehreek and the Jamaat Ahl-e Sunnat, were killed and more than 200 people sustained injuries in a suicide bomb attack at Nishtar Park in Karachi. It is believed members of the Sunni Tehreek were outwardly targeted. However, it remains unclear whether the bombing should be attributed to Deobandi organizations or the MQM. ** (SATP, 2007).

4. War on Terrorism related Violence

A new trend of violence emerged in Pakistan following the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States, and the subsequent American military invasion of Afghanistan, allegedly carried out in order to oust

the Taliban regime accused of harboring Al-Qaeda militants believed to have masterminded these attacks. In the post- September 11 War on Terror context, Pakistan became the major frontline ally of the US. Musharraf regime s decision to back up the Americans in their global War on Terror , by providing logistics facilities, sharing intelligence and handing over terror suspects around 600 since late 2001 generated strong criticism from Islamists groups both within and outside Pakistan. Actually, the very same groups which were nurtured, financed, armed and trained by Saudi Arabia and the CIA, through the Inter-Service-Intelligence (ISI), to wage Jihad against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, and which were then used by the ISI to wage another Jihad, this time in the Indian-held Kashmir following the withdrawal of the Soviet Occupation forces from Afghanistan, are those which are now fighting the Pakistani State. Not only Musharraf s decision to back the US, but also his ban on Islamist organizations in January 2002 and on sectarian organizations in August of the same year, as well as his decision to halt the cover operations in Kashmir following the January 2004 Islamabad agreement between India and Pakistan, made him one of the most prominent targets of the Jehadi groups. Jihad was formally declared on Pakistan and its army. Nevertheless, the basic aim of the Jehadi groups seems more to compel the Pakistani government by their terrorist activities to stop backing the US in their War on Terror and to let them operate their activities unchecked.

As the epicenter of this war shifted gradually from Afghanistan to the fringes of the Pakistani territory bordering Afghanistan, especially within the tribal areas, the Pakistani army launched more and more attacks within in its own territory and against both foreign militants and members of its own population, labelled Pakistani Talibans. The Pakistani security agencies resorted increasingly to extrajudicial means to crackdown the militant groups such as arbitrary arrests, secrete and indefinite detentions, illegal extraditions (notably to the US), torture, unlawful executions, use of excessive force and unlawful killings, especially in the tribal areas, and enforced disappearances, hence causing numerous human rights violations. Some of these violations have been compiled with rigor and in great details in the last Amnesty International s report (Amnesty International, 2007). Although the fighting in the tribal areas could be considered as a face-to-face between regular army troops and irregular militant fighters, both knowing they can die in the process, the excessive use of lethal force, especially the increased resort to missiles fired from helicopter gunships, by both the Pakistani army and the US forces, caused a lot of collateral civilian victims. Not only that but even the official characterization of victims as terrorists is often challenged as some of them actually appeared to be tribal people, including women and children, unconnected to any terrorist activities or groups (ibid.: 77-83). Another feature of the State repression that could be characterized as mass violence is the increasing, especially since 2005, phenomenon of enforced disappearances of civilians, which has approximately reached 4,000 since the beginning of the US-led War on Terror in 2001, among whom there are political opponents, journalists, human rights activists, and Baluchi and Sindhi nationalists who have nothing to do with the United States campaign against terrorism (HRCP quoted in New York Times, December, 19, 2007).

As a result, the Pakistani Sate and officials faced increasing attacks engineered by both Jehadi and sectarian splinter groups formed in the wake of the Pakistani crackdown on militant Islamic organizations, most of which were banned after September 11, 2001, and the American invasion of Afghanistan. Actually, there are obvious linkages between sectarian and Jehadi organizations operating in Pakistan. The five major groups are *Lashkar-e-Taiba*, *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi*, *Jaish-e-Mohammad*, *Harkatul Mujahideen al-Alami* and *Harkat al-Jihad al-Islami*. The targeting of security forces and government officials is quite a new feature in Pakistan. As the major mean through which these attacks are conducted is suicide bombing, it results in many civilian losses. Regarding this technique, it appears to be very much a post September 11 phenomena though it was initiated in Kashmir after the 1999 Kargil war by Jehadi groups, especially by the *Lashkar-e-Taiba* and the *Jaish-e-Mohammad* (Rana, 2006: 337-39; Blom, 2007: 71-72). It is commonly resorted to since late 2001 by most Jehadi organizations both in the War on Terror related violence and the sectarian violence.

Terrorist violence never ceased to increase since 2003 as it rose from 140 civilians, 24 security force personnel and 25 militants, killed that year to 435/184/244, 430/81/137, 608/325/538 and 1523/597/1479 respectively in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007, the civilians hence being always the most affected (SATP, 2007). The year 2007 was by far the bloodiest year since the September 11 attacks. Fifty-six acts of suicide bombing, an average of more than one a week, were identified throughout the country (23 in Federally-Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA), 21 in NWFP, 9 in Punjab, 2 in Baluchistan and 1 in Sindh) resulting in the death of 419 members of the security forces and 217 civilians (Raman, 2008). Another commonly cited estimate is of 800 killed during the year (AFP, January 10, 2008). In 2006, there were six suicide bombings resulting in the death of 46 members of the security agencies and 91 civilians. Out of the 56 incidents, only four took place before July. The 52 remaining are believed to be a reaction to the commando action in the Lal Masjid on July 10-11, the suicide committed by Abdullah Mehsud, the Amir of the *Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan*, when he was surrounded by security forces in Baluchistan on July 27, and the army operation in the Swat Valley, NWFP, in December, against the members of the *Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi* (TNSM) headed by Maulana FM Radio Fazlullah (Raman, 2008). Following the military assault on the Lal Masjid, there were 15 suicide attacks between July 14 and 31, an average of one a day, which made it the deadliest month of the year followed by the month of December. The main targets were political leaders and the security agencies but the most affected were civilians.

4.1. Terrorist Activities and Suicide Bombings

2003; December 25: [President Pervez Musharraf](#) escaped an assassination attempt next to his army residence in the Jhanda Chichi area of Rawalpindi when his car was hit by two explosive-laden vehicles. The two suicide bombers died along with 16 people and 54 people were injured. This was the deadliest of at least six failed attempts on his life since he seized power in a bloodless *coup* on October 12, 2007. *** (Mir, 2006: 11).

2007; April 28: Following a political gathering attended by hundreds of people in an open field in Charsadda, NWFP, a suicide bomber blew himself up in an attempt to kill Interior Minister Aftab Khan Sherpao. The latter survived but the blast killed 31 people and wounded 35 others. This new Pakistani officials-targeted suicide attack was suspected to have been carried out by Islamic militants in reaction to Taliban commander Mullah Dadullah's killing two days ago in Afghanistan. *** (SATP, 2007).

2007; May 15: A suicide bomber blew himself up at noon on the ground floor of the Marhaba Hotel in Peshawar, NWFP, while numerous customers were having lunch, killing 25 people and wounding at least 35 others. The owner, Sadruddin, was an Uzbek of Afghan origin and most of the victims were Afghans. *** (SATP, 2007).

2007; July 17: A suicide bomber killed 16 people and injured 63 others outside the venue of a lawyers rally in Islamabad shortly before the reinstated Chief of Justice Iftikhar Chaudhuri was to address the lawyers of the Islamabad District Bar Association. The blast took place within the PPP camp and most of the dead were activists of the party, whose leader, [Benazir Bhutto](#), had endorsed the military action against the Lal Masjid. *** (SATP, 2007).

2007; July 27: A suicide bomb attack in a restaurant near Islamabad's Lal Masjid complex killed 13 people, eight of them policemen, and wounded 53 others. *** (SATP, 2007).

2007; September 4: Two suicide attacks, one targeting a bus carrying 35 employees of a defense agency on the way to their office near Qasim Market and the other next to RA Bazaar police station, killed around 30 people and injured 70 others in Rawalpindi garrison city. *** (SATP, 2007).

2007; October 18: Two explosions struck near the truck carrying former Prime Minister and PPP Chairperson [Benazir Bhutto](#) heading a procession of hundreds of thousands of PPP supporters in Karachi who had gathered to welcome their leader on her return from eight-years in self-imposed exile. Hundred and forty-three people died while over 550 were injured. Bhutto survived. *** (SATP, 2007).

2007; December 21: At least 60 persons were killed and 80 more injured when a suicide bomber blew himself up in the midst of a religious procession for *Id-ul-Adha* (festival of sacrifice) at the Markazi Jamia Masjid Sherpao in Charsadda, next to Peshawar, NWFP. Though it resembled a sectarian attack, the apparent prime target was Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao, the Interior Minister in the just-dissolved government, who was among the worshippers. *** (SATP, 2007).

2007; December 27: A gun firing and suicide bombing attack killed 31 persons, including former Prime Minister and PPP Chairperson [Benazir Bhutto](#), and injured at least 100 others, while she drove away from a campaign rally after addressing thousands of supporters at Liaquat Ali Bagh in Rawalpindi. *** (SATP, 2007).

4.2. Anti-Terrorist Operations and Disappearances

2004; January-September, The Military Operation in North and South Waziristan: The Pakistani army launched a military action in the tribal areas by the beginning of 2004 and continued during nine months. Violence peaked between June and September. The objective was to move out and arrest militants, allegedly belonging to Al-Qaeda or Taliban organizations, which were believed to hide in the tribal agencies along Pakistan's northern border after being pushed out of Afghanistan. Besides the fact that the real identity of the victims was difficult to assess, many civilians perished in the operation due to the excessive and indiscriminate use of force. According to official estimates, during this period at least 500 people died, among whom 202 militants, 150 soldiers, and 148 civilians. ** (HRCP, 2004: 73).

2006; October 30, The Bajaur Air-Strike: Eighty-two people, including 12 teenagers, were killed during an air-strike that targeted a madressah at Damadola in the Bajaur tribal Agency on the ground that it was a terrorist training facility. While Major General Shaukat Sultan said those killed in the attack were all militants and denied there had been any collateral damage, many tribal people and human rights activists claimed most of the dead were tribal people without any link to the War on Terror. ** (HRCP, 2006: 93-94).

2007; July 10, The Lal Masjid Assault: The Pakistan Army launched, after several deadlines for surrender, the final assault on *Lal Masjid*, or Red Mosque, in the centre of Islamabad. It was the first time the capital city experienced such a level of violence and the raid marked one of the biggest crackdowns on Islamist militants since Musharraf assumed power in 1999. Islamist militants led by the two brothers, Maulana Abdul Aziz and Maulana Abdul Rashid Ghazi, who are said to have close links with Al-Qaeda and Taliban militants, took control of the mosque at the beginning of the year. The Mosque became a base for outlawed Jehadi groups like Jaish-e-Mohammad, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Harkat-e-Jihad-Islami. They subsequently began to establish a Taliban-style strict Islamic Shariah system in the capital by creating their own Islamic courts. The situation came on the forefront when they raided a massage parlor and abducted half-dozen Chinese women in June. Armed with machine guns, rocket launchers and grenades, the militants held out against security forces, who had laid siege to the complex since July 3. More than 4,000 female students, many as young as five years, living in the adjacent Madressah, *Jamia Hafsa*, were used as human shields against the threat of use of force by the government. The exact death toll remains unknown and developed into a highly explosive political issue as it represents an important tool for the militants to mobilize anti-government feelings, though the majority of the population supported Musharraf's action (Hussain, 2007). The government put the death toll of militants at 73 and that of troops at 10. However, the authorities' refusal to allow the media to visit the curfew-bound Lal Masjid area raised

fears that the civilian toll could be much higher, maybe in hundreds, mostly of women and children. ** (Raza and Kiani, 2007).

2007; November 18: In the Swat and Shangla districts of NWFP, more than 40 people, including 10 civilians, were killed and approximately 30 more civilians were wounded when gunships helicopters and security forces continued targeting militants hideouts and faced retaliation. *** (SATP, 2007).

2007; November 29: At least 12 civilians were killed and 11 others injured in an air-strike by gunships on the Allahabad village of Swat district in NWFP. *** (SATP, 2007).

5. Lower-Intensity Political Violence

These case studies are grouped together in a separate part as they do not precisely come under the category of mass violence. In these cases, there was not a particular group targeted as such with a high level of victims (at least 12). They were rather demonstrations or riots wherein rivalry with political opponents or the State apparatus repression led to casualties. In other words, they were not a systematic attempt to eliminate an identified group of people but most of the time repeated and disorganized acts of violence related to a chaotic and riot type political mobilization. Nonetheless, they deserve to appear in this index, though in a separate part entitled Lower-Intensity Political Violence, as their death tolls have been quite heavy. As a matter of fact, the incidents of riot type political violence in which the number of dead was between 2 and 10 have not been included (as for instance Pathans-Muhajirs poll-related riots in Sindh in 1964-1965, the Rushdie Affair related riots in 1988-1989, the Danish Cartoons related riots in 2006, and fishermen and peasants protests repressed by the Army).

5.1 Popular anti-government agitation 1977

On January 7, 1977, [Prime Minister Bhutto](#) dissolved the National Assembly and called for general elections to be held in March. His own party, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), won the elections with a large majority. However, as soon as March 8, the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) claimed that the elections had been rigged. As a consequence, the PNA decided to boycott the provincial elections planned on March 10 and called for a nation-wide strike on March 11.

1977; March 14-27: A demonstration was held in violation of Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code on March 14 in front of Nila Gumbad mosque in Lahore. Another procession led by Maulana Obaidullah Anwar in Lahore on March 16 was fired at by the police. The same thing happened in Hyderabad as well, where three people were killed. Then, another procession was planned for March 18. However most of the PNA leadership were put in jail just before and during the demonstration. Actually, it has not prevented people from going into the streets. During another protest march on March 20, 30 demonstrators were killed by police firing in Karachi. The demonstrations were increasing in intensity and frequency all over the country. On the last day of March, police forces suppressed processions led by Ulemas from different mosques in Lahore, and in one of them have even beaten people up. On April 9, 30 people were killed by the police in Lahore as several processions were on the edge of gathering in front of the provincial assembly chambers. On April 21, a nation-wide strike was called. In Karachi, 13 people were killed and curfew was imposed in the city. The day after, the strike was continued and 25 people were killed throughout the country. Actually, between March 14 and May 27, approximately 241 people were killed according to the Attorney General, 291 according to the PNA. ** (Khan, 1989: p. 108-111; 122-123).

5.2 Karachi May 12, 2007, Mayhem

On May 12, 2007, the ousted Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Iftikhar Chaudury, was to attend the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Supreme Court in Karachi to address the Sindh High Court bar Association. During the preceding days, the MQM, a party that is part of the ruling coalition in Sindh and at the center, had warned that they will hold a rally on the same day in support of [President Musharraf](#) and asked the ousted Chief of Justice to cancel his proposed trip. The latter nonetheless stuck to his resolve and the provincial government decided not to allow him to leave the compound of the Jinnah International Airport and reach the Sindh High Court building by all means. Then, on May 12, MQM activists began to block all roads leading to the airport, torched vehicles, gun fired indiscriminately, and actually seized control of the city. On that day alone, at least 42 people died and the number of injured was over 150 (Ansari, 2007).

2007; May 12: Violence, mostly non-lethal, started early in the morning when lawyers were prevented from reaching the City Courts, the Sindh High Court and the Malir District Courts respectively. Then, from around midday onwards, violent clashes between rival groups broke out on the National Highway/Shahrah-e-Faisal corridor, the main road leading from the airport to the city. Violence flared up when an opposition rally led by PPP activists and supporters, and followed by some of the ANP and the PML-N, reached the roadblock set up by MQM s activists. There, intensive use of firearms resulted in a large number of casualties and injuries. Violence finally spread to other parts of the city such as Benaras Chowk, Sohrab Goth, Keamari, Malir Halt, and Baloch Colony Bridge. The violence was essentially unleashed by scores of young armed men belonging to the MQM to which armed activists from PPP and other political parties answered straightforwardly. Besides the roadblocks and armed clashes, six ambushes on rallies occurred, four of them launched by MQM activists and the last two targeted MQM processions. Several cases of abductions, most of them by MQM militants, also took place, especially against lawyers trying to reach the Sindh High Court, some of them leading to torture and executions. Moreover, some of the violence that happened during the day was ethnically-oriented as Pashtuns and Muhajirs fired at each other in Patel Area, Benaras Chowk, Qasba Colony, and Manghopir. Finally, reporters and emergency services were also targeted while many properties were damaged. The Sindh provincial government and the federal security agencies bear most of the responsibility for the security lapse that allowed the violence to spread throughout the city (HRCP, 2007: 10-31). As far as the perpetration of violence is concerned, the MQM is largely responsible and there is clear evidence that their quasi-military action was carefully and systematically planned, as shown by the commandeering of vehicles and the setting up of roadblocks from the day before, the manning of ambushes, the organized military manner of attack and retreat, the attempts at holdings prisoners and hostages, the abduction, torture and execution of suspects, and the reports of armed cadres receiving instructions from their handlers via cell phone, though other political parties activists share to a lesser extent this responsibility (ibid.: 37-38).

5.3. [Benazir Bhutto](#) s Death-related Riots 2007

2007; December 27-31: Following former Prime Minister and PPP Chairperson Benazir Bhutto s death in a gun firing and suicide bombing city after she addressed an electoral campaign rally in Rawalpindi, angry PPP supporters went on a rampage in several cities and towns across the country, burning vehicles and attacking shops. On that day, 23 people died in the riots. The following day looting and arson went on and the death toll reached 38. Finally, by December 31, the number of dead had raised to 58 dead and 89 injured.

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