

“Since 2004, the strategic Pakistani province of Balochistan has become a deadly battleground where the Pakistani military and armed Baloch separatists have waged a war over issues of cultural identity, equitable resource distribution, and indigenous rights. Caught in the crossfire are ordinary civilians—moderate Baloch voices, political leaders, civic activists, scholars, lawyers, and journalists—who have been the victims of enforced disappearance, torture, and politically motivated killings. Excessive use of force by the state, retaliatory acts by Baloch separatists, insufficient space for political dialogue, media censorship, and threats against journalists continue to limit prospects for conflict resolution.



To end the cycle of human rights abuses plaguing Balochistan, the international community should call on all stakeholders in the conflict to repudiate violence and opt for peaceful and democratic negotiations. The Pakistani state must bring to justice those responsible for rights violations, provide compensation for victims’ families, ensure freedom of the press, and protect defenders of democracy who are striving for a peaceful and prosperous Balochistan.”

— Malik Siraj Akbar, May 2, 2012

“The United States is deeply concerned about the ongoing violence in Balochistan, especially targeted killings, disappearances and other human rights abuses.”

—Victoria Nuland, U.S. Department of State Spokesperson, January 13, 2012

“The state is primarily to blame for this situation due to its inability or unwillingness to protect civilians from human rights abuses or bring perpetrators to justice.”

—Amnesty International, February 8, 2012

“The security forces have continued to behave with the same impunity they enjoyed under the military government of President Gen. Pervez Musharraf. This impunity seems to penetrate the system at all levels.”

—Human Rights Watch, July 2011

“Balochistan stands out for more than one reason even in the appalling human rights situation across Pakistan today. The state security apparatus in the province has been accused of serious human rights violations. By far the largest number of enforced disappearances in any province of the country has been reported from Balochistan.”

—Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, June 2011

# THREATS TO DEFENDERS OF DEMOCRACY IN BALOCHISTAN



**Malik Siraj Akbar**

**Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow**

**May 2, 2012**

**The views expressed in this presentation represent the opinions and analysis of the speaker and do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for Democracy or its staff.**

# PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- I. Background to the Conflict in Balochistan
- II. Threats to Defenders of Democracy
  - A. Political Assassinations
  - B. Enforced Disappearances
  - C. Press Under Siege
- III. Recommendations





1666: Founded as an autonomous Kalat state

1948: Annexed by Pakistan

1955: Merged with Pakistan's Western Unit (province)

1970: Renamed the province of Balochistan

# Balochistan's Geo-Strategic Importance

- One of NATO's supply routes to Afghanistan
- U.S. sub-leased Shamsi Airbase from 2001–2011
- U.S. Balochistan consulate impasse
- \* Misuse of U.S. military assistance
  - noncompliance with the Leahy Amendment
- Presence of Quetta Shura/ Possible U.S. drone strikes
- Future Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline
- Increasing levels of Chinese and Iranian influence

\* Amnesty International, *Balochistan Briefing for Committee for Foreign Affairs, US House of Congress*, February 8, 2012

# BALUCHISTAN: Richly Poor

- Sui Gas Fields: Pakistan's largest national gas production
- Gwadar Port: Gateway to Central Asia
- World's biggest copper-gold reservoirs at Reko Diq

## YET

- Lack of investment in human development
- \* Baloch have limited access to basic services
  - Low health and education indicators
    - Highest infant mortality rate in South Asia
    - Literacy rate of 25%
- \* Baloch are underrepresented in state institutions

\* Akmal Hussain, *Pakistan: National Human Development Report*, UNDP, 2003

\* Senate of Pakistan, *Report of the Parliamentary Committee on Balochistan*, Nov. 2005.

# Troubled Relationship

- 1948: First Insurgency
- 1958: Second Insurgency
- 1962: Third Insurgency
- 1973: Fourth Insurgency
- 2004—present: Fifth Insurgency



# Stakeholders

- Pakistani Government
- Pakistani Military and Paramilitary Forces
- Intelligence Services
- Militant Baloch Separatists
- Anti-Nationalist Underground Groups
- Defenders of Democracy:
  - Moderate Political Leaders, Lawyers, Journalists, Civil Society Activists, Scholars and Student, Families of Victims



# POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS

# Who is Assassinated by the Government?

- ❁ Pro-secession Baloch leaders and activists
- ❁ Pro-right to self-determination leaders
- ❁ Pro bono lawyers
- ❁ University professors
- ❁ Human rights activists
- ❁ Family members of Baloch opposition leaders

\* Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, *Balochistan: Blinkered into Chaos*, June 2011

# Slain Political Leaders



**Senator Habib Jalib**  
Secretary General  
Balochistan National Party



**Balach Marri**  
Member of Baloch Parliament



**Ghulam Mohammad**  
Chairman  
Baloch National Movement



**Nooruddin Mengal**  
Central Leader  
Balochistan National Party



**Lala Munir Baloch**  
Vice President  
Baloch National Movement



**Sangat Sana Baloch**  
Baloch Republican Party

# Conflict Mismanagement

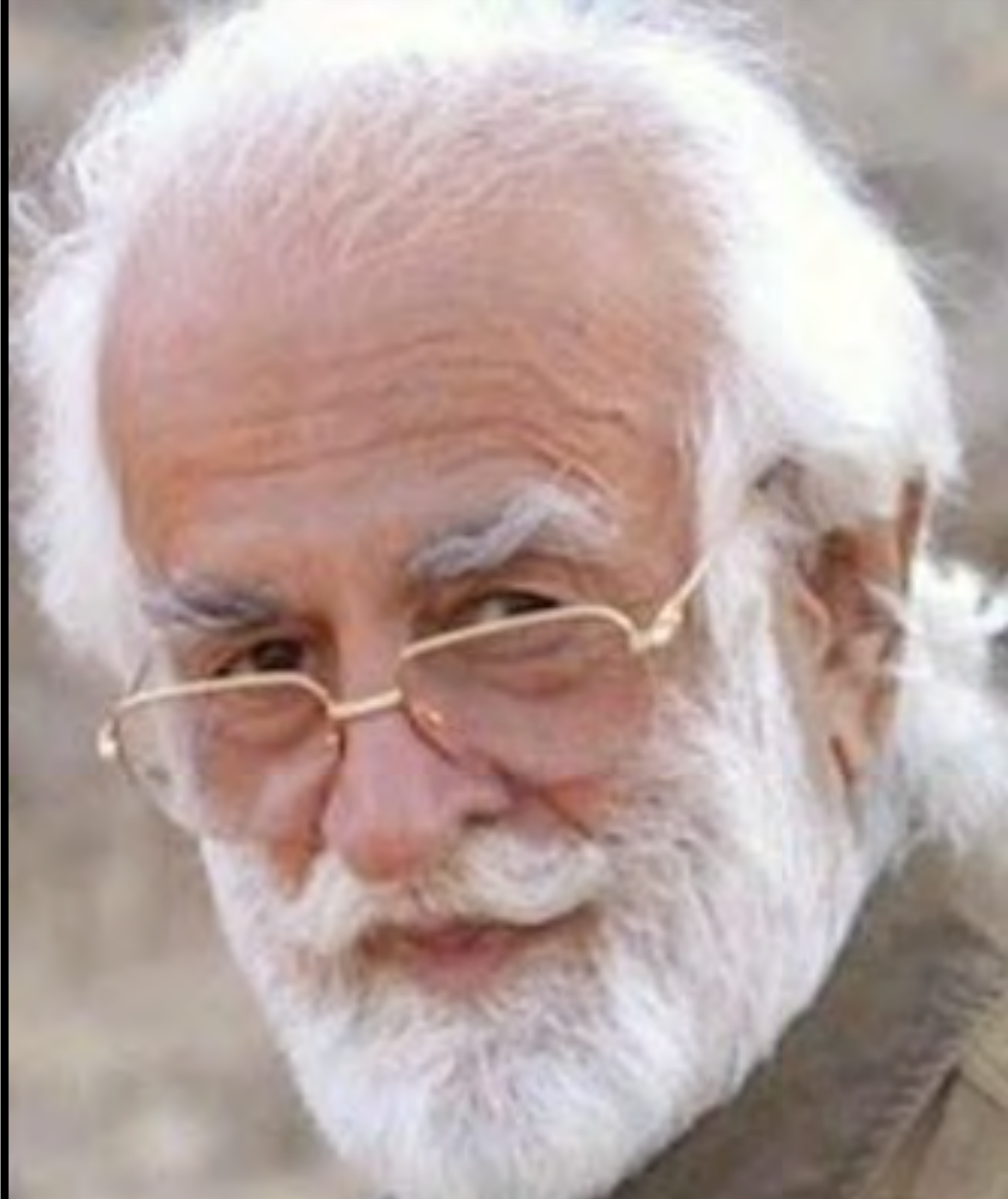
“It is not the '70s that they will climb mountains. They will not even know what and from where something has come and hit them.”



**Pervez Musharraf**  
Former President (Retired) General



“They might kill me. But I am sure our coming generations will continue my mission for the attainment of Baloch rights”



**Nawab Akbar Bugti**  
Baloch Nationalist Leader (1927–2006)





# Fallout

- ❑ Increased demand for independence
- ❑ Departure of genuine leadership
- ❑ Rise of new radical groups and irreconcilable youth
- ❑ Breakdown of negotiations
- ❑ END OF PARLIAMENTARY POLITICS

# Political Assassination Leads to Exodus



**Sardar Akhtar Mengal**

Former Chief Minister, President  
Balochistan National Party



**Bramdagh Bugti**

Chairman  
Baloch Republican Party



**Hairbayer Marri**

Former Minister and  
Member of Parliament



**Mir Suleman Dawood**

The Khan of Kalat



**Sanaullah Baloch**

Former Senator, Balochistan National Party



**Mir Kachkol Baloch**

Opposition Leader



# Military Government Responds



- ❑ Denial of military operation
- ❑ Failure to investigate political killings
- ❑ Divide and Rule tactics
- ❑ Lack of cooperation with provincial government
- ❑ Insufficient confidence building measures

\* Amnesty international, *Pakistan Urged to Investigate Murder and Torture of Baloch Activists*, October 26, 2010

## STATE

- ▣ Politicization of security forces
- ▣ Increased influence of intelligence agencies on government
- ▣ Disruption of peaceful political public rallies and events
- ▣ Killing of moderates and reconcilable leadership
- ▣ \*Assaults on dissenting professionals
- ▣ \*Formation of anti–Baloch nationalist underground groups

## MILITANT SEPARATISTS

- ▣ Attacks on local government officials
- ▣ Attacks on non-locals
- ▣ Attacks on moderate Baloch leaders

## OTHER ACTORS

- ▣ Transformation of the middle class and educated youth

\* Dawn, *Baloch Scholar Shot Dead in Quetta*, June 1, 2011

\* The Friday Times, *Disappearances and Assassinations*, January 28, 2011





ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

# Who are the Missing Persons?

- Ethnic Baloch
- Students, political activists, doctors, and ordinary citizens
- Relatives of political activists
- Members of lower and middle class families
- Breadwinners and heads of families
- Range from 12–80 years of age

\* Human Rights Watch, *"We Can Torture, Kill, or Keep You for Years": Enforced Disappearances by Pakistan Security Forces in Balochistan*, July 2011








# What Happens to Them?

- ❑ Picked up in public places by security forces
- ❑ Kept at various undisclosed locations where they are subject to:
  - ❑ Torture
  - ❑ Solitary confinement
  - ❑ Food and sleep deprivation
  - ❑ Intensive interrogation
- ❑ Unaware of the charges against them
- ❑ Denied the right to legal representation
- ❑ Warned of retaliation if they speak up
- ❑ Disappear for days, months, years, and even decades
- ❑ May even be killed

\* Human Rights Watch, "We Can Torture, Kill, or Keep You for Years": Enforced Disappearances by Pakistan Security Forces in Balochistan, July 2011

# How Many Have Disappeared?

## ACCORDING TO:

Military		<b>None</b>
* Civilian Government		<b>110</b>
* Interior Minister Sherpao		<b>4,000</b>
* Human Rights Groups		<b>100s</b>
Local Civil Society		<b>more than 10,000</b>

\* Dawn.com, 'Fifty-nine Missing Persons Recovered in Balochistan', February, 10, 2012

\* Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, *Conflict in Balochistan HRCP Fact-Finding Missions*, December 2005 - January 2006

\* Human Rights Watch, "We Can Torture, Kill, or Keep You for Years": Enforced Disappearances by Pakistan Security Forces in Balochistan, July 2011



# Who Represents Them?

International Voice for Missing Baloch Persons

Voice for Missing Baloch Persons

Baloch Women's Panel

Baloch Bar Association

Baloch Students' Organization

Baloch National Front



# Who Represents Them?

Families of the missing persons use posters to wish well the disappeared who are unable to join them on the eve of the Muslim festival Eid



Supporters of Ghulam Mohammad Baloch, chairman of Baloch National Movement, commemorating their slain leader



Families of the disappeared go on hunger strike





Qadir Baloch, father of missing political activist Jalil Reki, addresses a press conference at the Karachi Press Club



# Cost of Protest

THE EXPRESS  
**TRIBUNE**  
WITH THE International Herald Tribune

HOME PAKISTAN BUSINESS WORLD SPORTS LIFE & STYLE MULTIMEDIA OPINION MAGAZINE BLOGS JOBS CLASSIFIEDS

SINDH PUNJAB **BALUCHISTAN** KP & FATA JAMMU & KASHMIR GILGIT BALTISTAN

**Alerts**

## Baloch missing persons: Relatives receive threats to end strike

By Shehzad Baloch  
Published: October 17, 2011

Share this article  
Print this page  
Email a friend

RELATED STORIES

DAILY HEADLINES NEWSLETTER

Sign up to receive the day's top stories, emailed every morning

Name





# Jalil Reki, 35

## Information Secretary of Baloch Republican Party



Disappeared February 2009

Bullet-riddled body found with marks of torture on November 2011

## “Kill and Dump”

Hundreds of the disappeared are found dead

- Visible marks of torture
- Multiple shots in the chest and head
- Mutilated and unrecognizable bodies
- Dumped in deserted places

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, *Masses Must Push Government to Stem the Rot in Balochistan*, December 2011

# Fault Lines

- ❑ Lack of an effective official inquiry
- ❑ Slow judicial process
- ❑ Insufficient police cooperation
- ❑ International media and human rights groups denied access
- ❑ No compensation for the victims' families

\* Human Rights Watch, "We Can Torture, Kill, or Keep You for Years": *Enforced Disappearances by Pakistan Security Forces in Balochistan*, July 2011



# PRESS UNDER SIEGE

# PRESS UNDER SIEGE

- Pakistan has been the deadliest place for journalists (2010–2011)
- Local journalists face high levels of insecurity
  - Threats of assassinations and enforced disappearance
- Foreign journalists are denied access to Balochistan
- Closure of newspapers and internet censorship
- Underdeveloped local media
- National media provides limited coverage of Balochistan

\* Aurangzaib Khan, *Press in Stress – Media Under Threat in Balochistan*, Intermedia, December 2011



# Journalists Killed in the Line of Duty (2010–2011)



**Ilyas Nazar**  
Monthly Darwath



**Siddiq Edio**  
Daily Intekhab



**Ejaz Raisani**  
Samma TV



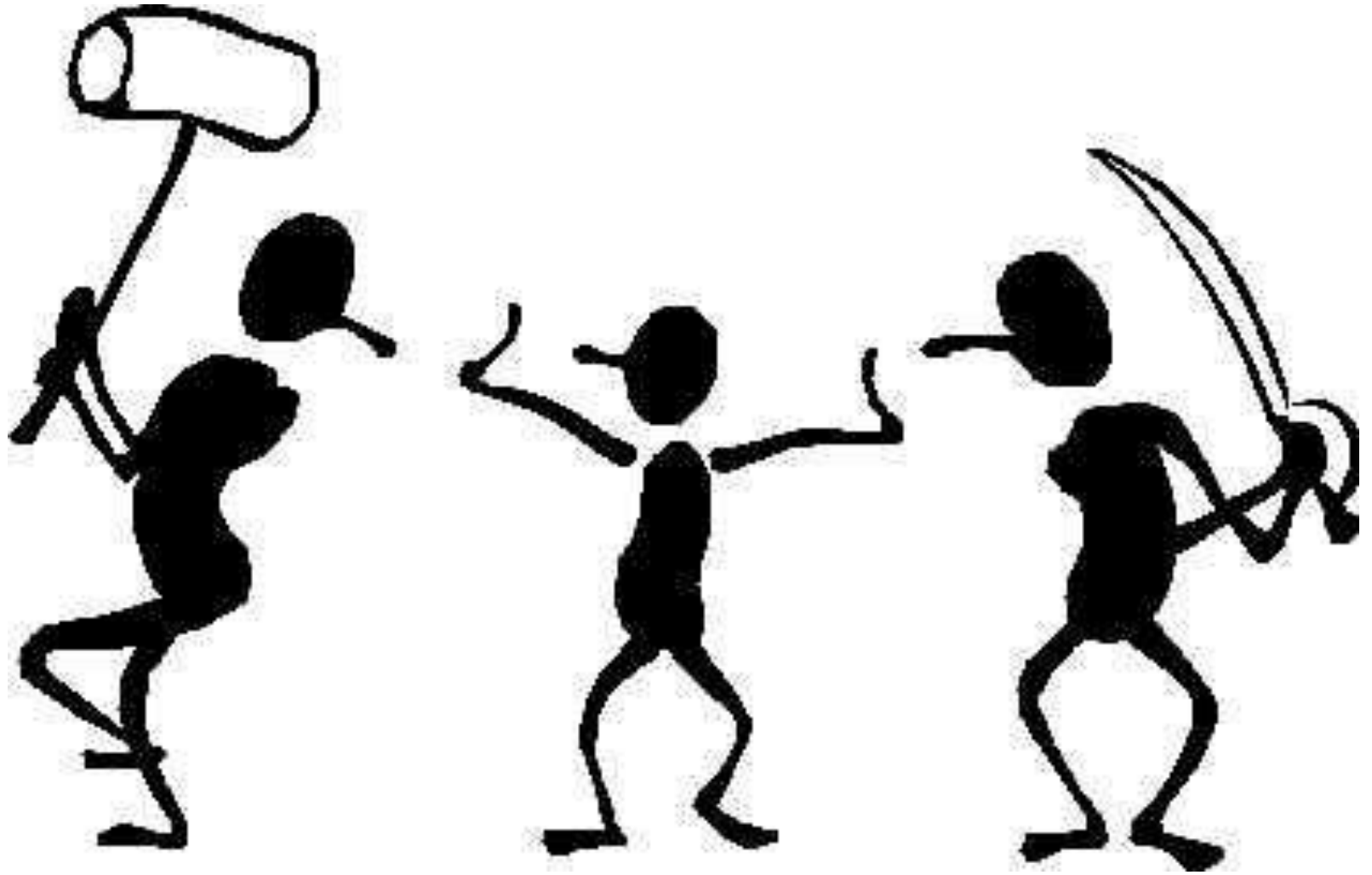
**Mohammad Khan Sasoli**  
President, Khuzdar Press Club



**Rehmatullah Shaheen**  
Daily Tawar



**Lala Hameed Hayatan**  
Daily Intekhab



# RECOMMENDATIONS

# To the Pakistan Government

- Immediately end and investigate “kill and dump” operations
- Abandon underground anti-nationalist armed groups
- Bring the military and intelligence services under civilian control
- Ensure Baloch representation in security structure (Army, police, Frontier Corps)
- Establish a truth and reconciliation commission on Balochistan

# To the Pakistan Government

- Ensure freedom of the press
- Investigate attacks on journalists and civil society activists
- Provide access to international human rights groups and the media
- Provide compensation to families of victims of political assassination, enforced disappearance and torture

# To Moderate Baloch Leaders

- End boycott of parliamentary process
- Contest general elections in 2013
- Condemn the killing of innocent civilians
- Disown and disassociate from violent methods of struggle



# To Militant Baloch Separatists

- Stop killing innocent civilians
- Halt attacks against parliamentary leaders
- Stop pressuring international NGOs and the media
- Seek a peaceful and democratic solution to the conflict

# To the U.S. Government

- Ensure implementation of the Leahy Amendment, preventing US weapons and training facilities from being used to crush democratic forces
- Facilitate an international conference on Balochistan at a neutral venue to decide on a roadmap to peace
- Encourage Pakistan to replace the 60,000 FATA-origin Frontier Corps with local Baloch and to end Frontier Corps' support for the Taliban
- Press Pakistan to respect human rights and sign the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
- Urge Pakistan to lift the ban on online news sources and investigate the killings of journalists in Balochistan

# To International NGOs

- Undertake initiatives that highlight the situation in Balochistan
- Build the capacity of local journalists and rights activists
- Open up doors for endangered activists and victims of torture
- Facilitate asylum cases of at-risk leaders and activists
- Ensure organizational presence in Balochistan to monitor human rights abuses
- Encourage research and independent investigation of the conflict