

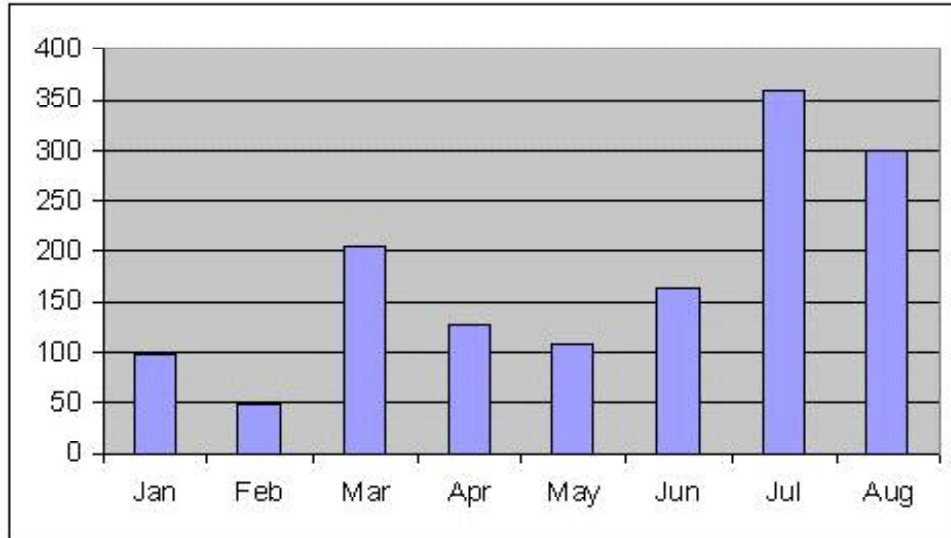
Introduction

Karachi, the capital of the Sindh province, is Pakistan's financial capital, the country's largest city, and also one of its most dangerous. In addition to crimes common to most big cities, organised gangs of extortionists, land grabbers, mercenaries in turf wars among political parties, ethnic groups and criminal gangs alleged to be linked to and protected by political parties have complicated the city's law and order woes. For decades, Karachi has held a place of unenviable prominence in Pakistan in terms of sectarian, political and ethnic strife that has grown increasingly violent in recent years. HRCP's first major report on lawlessness and violence in Karachi was issued in 1995. Since then there have been sporadic periods of relative peace but violence is never far from being sparked by any party interested in doing so.

A major and widely shared concern has been the glut of weapons in the city. Those involved in violence are armed with sophisticated weapons, including automatic rifles and hand grenades, and even rockets have been used in clashes with rivals. Questions have been raised about how weapons find their way into the city on such a large scale when everyone acknowledges that they are not manufactured in Karachi. Even though there have been vociferous calls for de-weaponisation, the government has failed to take meaningful steps to ensure that or to even facilitate a consensus in that respect among political parties that are—or have been—in the ruling coalition at the provincial and federal levels.

Although the city has a history of political, ethnic and sectarian violence, the year 2011 saw horrific bloodshed that was unprecedented even by Karachi's standards. This latest violence would erupt without a warning, claim dozens of lives and would subside as abruptly and inexplicably as it had emerged. This sequence of killings was often repeated several times a week. In July alone, at least 358 people were killed in flare-ups of violence that paralysed the city. Many of the victims were tortured, shot and stuffed in burlap sacks that were dumped in the streets or in sewerage drains.

The history of armed violence in Karachi in the last two decades has been such

Killings in Karachi violence (January-August 2011)*

that residents found that common sense, familiarity with the lay of the land and avoiding troubled areas could help keep them safe but that has changed in recent months. At the height of the recent unrest, people in many areas were reluctant to leave their homes for fear of being killed. Even rescue workers and emergency staff have been targeted. Although it has vowed to get a handle on the security situation, the government has consistently failed to stem the violence, or identify and prosecute the killers.

In the middle of July, when the intensity of recurring violence in Karachi spiked once again, HRCP decided to organise a fact-finding mission to look into the causes of violence in the city and to discuss solutions for sustainable peace.

The fact-finding mission

Members of the HRCP fact-finding mission visited various areas of Karachi affected by violence from July 29 to 31 and held meetings with representatives of a cross-section of society.

Several volunteers had carried out surveys in the riot-affected localities before the mission's arrival in Karachi and the process of gathering information and checking on facts continued for many days after July 31. Members of the fact-finding mission were: HRCP Chairperson Zohra Yusuf, vice-chairpersons Tahir Hussain Khan (Balochistan), Sher Muhammad Khan (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), and Amarnath Motumal (Sindh), HRCP Council members Hina Jilani, Perveen Soomro, Uzma Noorani, Ghazi

* See Annexure-I for detailed statistics.

Salahuddin, Roland deSouza, Asad Iqbal Butt, and HRCP Secretary General I.A. Rehman. The mission members were assisted in their work by HRCP Sindh chapter staff including the coordinator, Syed Shamsuddin, Abdul Hai, Taranum Khan and Kashan Kashif, HRCP District Core Group coordinators for Karachi Qazi Khizar (District West), Hassan Athar (District East), Shafi Sayal (District Malir), Masood Jamil Warsi (District Central), Makhdoom Ayoub Qureshi (District South), and volunteers Bilqias Khattak and Zainab Abdullah. Members of the mission were divided into a number of teams for the meetings and visits in order to get first hand information on the situation from as wide an area as possible.

The mission's aims were:

- ◆ To assess the number of casualties and the background (ethnic, social and economic) of the victims.
- ◆ To assess the immediate and long-term consequences of disturbances, including economic loss, displacement and migration of people from one area to another.
- ◆ To assess effectiveness or otherwise of the measures adopted by the authorities



Residents of a violence-affected locality recount their experiences.

to prevent lawlessness.

- ◆ To probe the role of political factions and officials in fomenting strife.
- ◆ To elicit the views of political parties and associations and civil society representatives on the causes of disturbance and solutions to the problem.
- ◆ To formulate a set of workable recommendations that could help Karachi return to sustainable peace.

Even though the team stayed in Karachi for a number of days and made several attempts to meet the provincial government, it did not succeed in that. The HRCP team also held a public hearing which was attended by citizens of Karachi, including those from the severely affected areas, who shared their experiences with the mission. The interim findings of the HRCP mission were released at the conclusion of the fact-finding mission on July 31. As far as possible, an attempt has been made in summarising the meetings to retain the exact words and expression of all those who met the team.

Civil Society concerns

Lawyers

Lawyers from the Karachi bar met the HRCP team on July 31. They shared the following comments and concerns:

- ◆ Four lawyers have been killed in Karachi in the past week, and 15 since March 2011. The lawyers have not been killed in random violence but have been deliberately murdered in targeted killings after due identification. After May 2007, there is an impression among the legal community that lawyers are being killed because of consciousness among members of the bar and their policy of raising important issues from their forum. The objective is to silence the conscious and responsible sections of the population and civil society. Human rights defenders and professionals including doctors and journalists have also been targeted. The lawyers continue to protest the killings even though they feel that their protests and strikes would achieve little. A case in point is that of Mukhtar Shah Bukhari advocate. He reported threats to his life and the Bar wrote a letter to the Sindh police chief, seeking protection for Bukhari. No measures were taken and he was killed in a drive-by shooting apparently for pursuing cases of Shias. Police advise lawyers to exercise caution and they consider this advice irresponsible and virtually meaningless.
- ◆ Freedom to pursue one's profession is affected when lawyers are targeted for taking cases of different communities or for their political affiliations. A lawyer might have political affiliations but that is not a crime. Every person is entitled to security and protection irrespective of his political leanings.
- ◆ The primary responsibility for restoration of law and order is with the



Representatives of lawyers share their views with the HRCP mission.

government and it must protect the people and create conditions that prevent violence. A power struggle is going on in Karachi where retention of power is deemed to be a compulsion. Political parties have armed groups and criminals have been running politics. When any side takes pride in weapons and superior firepower then the common man also thinks of acquiring weapons. It is vital to name and shame political parties so that they are embarrassed into jettisoning their armed groups. A campaign should be launched for confiscating all weapons, licenced as well as unlicenced.

- ◆ The people are sick of strikes and violence-ridden black days. On July 30, there was a peace rally in Karachi and on that day too 15 people were killed in the city.
- ◆ Rival political parties have a practice of claiming that those killed in violence were their workers/supporters. If a Pakhtun is killed Awami National Party (ANP) workers would claim that the deceased was their activist and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) would do the same if an Urdu speaking person was killed.
- ◆ Even if Karachi is held hostage by the mischief makers, other cities in the country are free. Voices should be raised outside of Karachi to mitigate fears of Karachi's residents and increase pressure on the government to take meaningful action.
- ◆ Peace would elude Karachi unless state institutions and the three main political parties in the city also want that. There are armed elements in all three parties. Religious and sectarian parties also have abundance of firearms.
- ◆ Deterioration of the law and order situation in Karachi hits the common man

hard. When violence erupts public transport becomes scarce, economic activity comes to a halt, the whole city shuts down and daily wage earners are deprived of livelihood.

- ◆ In the climate of distrust and ethnic strife in Karachi Urdu-speaking individuals among the injured are taken to Abbasi Shaheed Hospital, while the Pakhtuns generally avoid going there.

- ◆ The climate of fear and uncertainty has badly affected women, as well as children's education. Parents worry about their children's safety until they return from schools and colleges.

- ◆ There is an environment of violence in all institutions, including colleges and universities. What happens in the city affects educational institutions and political parties are involving students in violence.

- ◆ The people are angry about unabated killings but they feel helpless. Various groups are evicted or feel compelled to give up residence in areas of antagonistic ethnic concentration. Pakhtuns leave the Urdu speaking majority areas and vice versa.

- ◆ There is usually relative calm in the city during dictatorial rule in Pakistan. The situation aggravates during democratic regimes. The fundamental conflict in Pakistan is between democracy and dictatorship. Those who cannot come to power through democratic means seek to do so by other means.

Journalists' views

The group of media professionals that met the HRCF team included those from the print media, as well as from television and radio. Their names are not being mentioned on their request. They made the following observations:

- ◆ Journalists fear reporting from the areas affected by violence. Only a few TV channels have provided flak jackets to their reporters and there is no security for most of them.

- ◆ The journalists fear all groups equally and find it extremely difficult to move from an area dominated by one ethnic group to the next where another ethnic group is concentrated. For instance, if a journalist safely passes through a Pakhtun community area, he is looked on with suspicion by the Mohajir community in the same locality and vice versa.

- ◆ The city has been divided along ethnic lines. Even ordinary residents have been briefed by their respective parties on what to say to the media and their account of incidents is often exaggerated.

- ◆ Christians tend to support MQM, which is deemed to be liberal and pro-minority (another factor could be that the party controlled the City District Government Karachi for four years where a majority of Christians work as sweepers). Pakhtuns



The HRCP mission hears journalists' perspective.

have settled in Essa Nagri, once a predominantly Christian area. In a recent clash, three Pakhtuns and one Christian were killed. Even in housing complexes such as Rabia City in Gulistan-e-Jauhar and Mashriq Complex near National Stadium there are ethnic divisions in every block, e.g. Pakhtun families, especially single Pakhtun men, would find it extremely difficult to get accommodation.

- ◆ Law enforcement agencies have been politicised and have connections with criminal elements that need political cover. Investigators are absent or lazy so prosecution of cases remains weak.

- ◆ Political parties back groups responsible for violence. In Lyari, the warring groups are the Pakistan People's Party-supported Aman Committee and the MQM-backed Kutchi community. In Malir and Landhi, it is MQM-Altaf versus MQM-Haqiqi (MQM-H). In Orangi it is MQM-Altaf versus ANP. In Orangi, there are escape routes that lead to Balochistan, while in Malir there are Goths (villages) through which perpetrators of violence escape.

- ◆ The unrest is different from 1986 and the mid-1990s in that there are more targeted attacks now. Even rocket-propelled grenades have been used in the current phase of violence.

Intellectuals' input

Academics and intellectuals that met the HRCP panel made the following

observations:

- ◆ May 12, 2007 was a watershed in the context of violence in Karachi when another ethnic group (Pakhtuns) asserted itself. The 2008 elections revealed the demographic changes occurring in Karachi. A turf war started between MQM and ANP, the emerging political force in Karachi.

- ◆ Different parts of Karachi experience different types of conflict, e.g. the dimensions of violence in Lyari are different from those in Orangi.

- ◆ The problems of Karachi need a political settlement and that becomes tricky when every political party has a militant wing.

- ◆ The city is deeply divided; even Karachi University teachers are divided along ideological lines.

- ◆ Since 2002, political power and state machinery have been used to grab land.

- ◆ Organised land grabbing has also resulted in high rents, with the poor being pushed to the margins of society. There has been ghettoisation of communities in large parts of the city and Karachi Building Control Authority and Karachi Water and Sewerage Board have been serving the interest of builders. Low cost housing has not been



Members of the mission meet academics and intellectuals.

developed.

- ◆ State intervention in Karachi’s politics has been unlike that in any other big city in Pakistan—MQM was reportedly assured (during Musharraf’s government) that all opposition would be wiped out.

- ◆ On the positive side, Karachi now has an ‘integrative’ role in Sindh’s politics; e.g. Pakhtuns’ emergence as stakeholders in Karachi is good news for the federation and would defuse separatist tendencies.

- ◆ MQM would have to increasingly negotiate and assert itself through its political rather than the militant arm.

- ◆ In undertaking urban mega-projects, MQM has alienated working classes of other ethnic groups. With the expansion of the city and globalisation, demands and expectations of the people have grown. Unfulfilled expectations have also fueled resentment.

Orangi Pilot Project

The Orangi Pilot Project, launched in the early 1980s by social reformer Dr. Akhtar Hameed Khan, is an innovative project that involved squatter settlements in improving their living conditions through provision of better health, sanitation, education and micro-finance facilities. For several decades, people of different ethnic groups had lived peacefully in Orangi Town. Orangi Pilot Project Director Parveen Rehman said:

- ◆ The violence since July 5 has been more ferocious and unlike the past practice. Firing continued in Qasbah Colony for 10 days and police and Rangers remained absent. Boys as young as 15 were involved in the firing.

- ◆ People do not have much expectations from the government as it has little writ.

- ◆ After 2006, land grabbing increased when political parties backed by the government became involved. 70 percent settlements in Karachi are illegal. Around 100,000 illegal plots change hands in the city every year. It is a Rs 25 billion a year business. The city’s boundaries have expanded at a very fast pace. The land grabbed is mainly government property. Clashes are greater in areas where there are rival parties and where land value is higher. Land grabbers join political parties. First and foremost, it should be accepted that land grabbing is going on and all political parties are involved. The situation may improve if things move beyond the blame game and the political process proceeds.

- ◆ There is disparity in development. In Karachi’s Goths, people get a claim to use of land for 33 years while encroached state land is given on lease of 99 years.

Within three years, land grabbers facilitate the provision of electricity, water and gas connections for the land they encroach upon. There is a lot of anger among the youth of Goths who have seen grabbed state land regularized and leases awarded in front of their eyes, whereas they have remained without basic facilities.

- ◆ There have been attempts to raze structures in Goths amid assertions that no one is entitled to reside there even though Sikander Goth, Jumma Goth and other Goths have existed before the leased settlements. When residents of Goths protested they were fired on.

- ◆ It seems unlikely that Karachi can be dewatered any time soon. Persistent efforts might gradually yield results.

- ◆ With the exception of transporters, people in Karachi do not lodge compensation claims for their losses.

Lyari Resource Centre

Lyari Resource Centre (LRC) is an NGO working in Lyari to promote education, healthcare and sports activities among residents in the area with any discrimination. LRC office-bearers observed during their meeting with the HRCP team:

- ◆ Wrangling between political parties is behind the recent unrest in Karachi and mafias are active under political cover. This has been the state of affairs in Lyari for 10 years.

- ◆ In Lyari, the contest is between PPP and MQM but ethnic Baloch end up being killed because they are deemed to be supporters of PPP. No one is striving to resolve the problems of the Baloch in the locality. They support and vote for PPP but no one talks about protecting them.

- ◆ After the October 2010 Sher Shah Kabari Market killings in Lyari, 14 Baloch were killed but their murders were not covered by the media, nor the fact that it was very difficult for the Baloch to use the roads leading out of Lyari. The population in Lyari is not well educated, the people often get no more than menial jobs and the majority is unemployed. Still claims are made that there is a gang war going on in Lyari. The media has highlighted Lyari while chaos has affected the whole of Karachi.

- ◆ MQM is using Arshad Pappu Group against PPP sympathisers in Lyari while PPP is supporting Rehman Dakait Group. MQM supports every group that can work against PPP in Lyari. The groups in Lyari have sophisticated weapons. Three years ago the gang war had ended but it has been instigated again to target the Baloch. Kutchi Rabita Council has been egged on by the same people who kill the Baloch. Some people

want to sour relations between Baloch and Sindhis but that is not possible.

Political parties' perspective

Almost everyone that the HRCP mission talked to spoke of the involvement of the main political parties in Karachi and their armed/militant wings in violence and other crimes. This role of political parties extenuated concerns because there was widespread agreement that the crisis in the city needed to be resolved politically in order for peace to be sustainable. That seemed difficult as long as the preferred initiators of peace were seen to be involved in armed conflict. The HRCP mission held meetings with major political parties in Karachi to learn their views on the situation in the city.

Awami National Party

The HRCP team met Awami National Party (ANP) leader Bashir Jan, the party's Secretary General in Sindh, and other office-bearers at Bacha Khan Markaz. Shahi Syed, President of ANP Sindh, was abroad. The ANP leaders said that Karachi was the city where democratic movements were initiated. The present problems of Karachi had their roots in military dictator Gen Ziaul Haq's efforts in the 1980s to divide the city along ethnic lines. He fostered intolerance and lack of acceptance of other communities. The ANP leaders made the following observations:

- ◆ MQM is engaged in ethnic cleansing and expulsion of Pakhtuns from Mohajir-dominated areas of Karachi. Poor people who are not even politically affiliated are being killed on ethnic grounds. 69 ANP activists and 260 Pakhtuns have been murdered during violence in Karachi over the last two months. Many Baloch and Pakhtuns who operate small hotels, hardware shops and carpet shops in Mohajir-dominated areas such as Gulshan, Gulistan-e-Jauhar, Shah Faisal Colony and Korangi in District East of Karachi have been targeted and are being forced to vacate these areas. People feel compelled to sell their shops and businesses at throwaway prices. Between 200-300 people, predominantly Pakhtun hotel owners, have been killed.

- ◆ Altaf Hussain called upon his workers to arm themselves and made a speech in London in 2008 where he talked about hotels run by Pakhtuns. After that speech Pakhtuns in Karachi started receiving threats to close their hotels and other businesses.

- ◆ Mohajir-majority areas are being created in Karachi and delimitation of constituencies is being manipulated to influence election results. MQM has occupied numerous amenity plots in non-Urdu-speaking areas of Karachi, such as North Nazimabad, Gutter Baghicha, Mahmoodabad Sewage Treatment Plant, etc. All these plots have been sub-divided and allotted to Mohajirs to achieve favourable election results. Plots have been taken over at gunpoint. Waziristan Colony near Orangi was

demolished for creating Altafnagar, named after the MQM chief.

- ◆ MQM lacks political tolerance. Unlike other parties who have many splinter groups and factions, MQM-Altaf cannot tolerate the existence of MQM-H or other parties in Karachi. Even Mohajirs live in fear of MQM. Urdu-speaking industrialists/businessmen pay *bhatta* (extortion money) to MQM and some Mohajir houses along Manghopir Road in Orangi cannot close their doors at night because MQM activists might need the houses to hide or use them for other unlawful activities. All this is being done in the name of politics.

- ◆ If MQM was not well-armed, it would be in trouble even with the Urdu-speaking community from whose businessmen, industrialists and shopkeepers they extract *bhatta*.

- ◆ The level of intimidation and coercion is such in Karachi that if anyone refuses to donate a sacrificial animal's hide to a party on Eidul Fitr those demanding the hide shoot the animal.

- ◆ Pakhtuns and non-Urdu speaking communities face multifaceted discrimination. Discriminatory hiring and other practices are affecting the Pakhtun. Plots in government schemes are only being given to Mohajirs. Students with matriculation certificates from Peshawar are not allowed admission in colleges in Karachi. Pakhtuns are not hired at the Karachi Port Trust and Port Qasim Authority. The Karachi Electric Supply Company (KECSC) has sacked 4,500 non-Mohajir workers and has hired in their place, through a contractor, 7,000 Mohajir/Urdu-speaking workers. Pakhtuns working as watchmen and security personal in apartment buildings have been sacked on a large scale. They are common people and not political workers and have been victimised only because of their ethnic identity. Pakhtun and non-Urdu speaking areas remain less developed. The Benaras Chowk Flyover remains incomplete even after five years. All people living in Karachi are migrants and settlers. There must be no discrimination against communities settled in the city and all citizens must be given equal rights.

- ◆ Police are hand in glove with criminals, and mafias operate under government and police patronage. There is abundance of weapons in the city. Political groups are armed and criminal elements are used to spread violence. Criminal elements expelled from ANP have been taken in by MQM. Pakhtuns are being eliminated in a bid to take over their space. Certain forces with vested interests may be involved in instigating clashes and exploiting political violence to sustain divisions and promote instability in Karachi and elsewhere in Pakistan. Rangers have better resources than the police but both forces have failed to provide security even when they have worked together.

- ◆ Sipah-e-Sahaba and Taliban presence in Karachi is not new but there was no uproar about that during Gen. Musharraf's regime when major terrorist incidents

occurred in the port city, including an attack on the US consulate, and on the Corps Commander's motorcade. MQM has never been targeted by Taliban elements, who regularly target ANP. ANP opposes the Taliban and is suffering for that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

- ◆ Media is not free to report the facts on the killings because of pressure from MQM.

- ◆ MQM is trying to establish its hegemony over Karachi. The demographics are being changed in non-Mohajir areas of Karachi and delimitation of constituencies manipulated in order to influence the outcome of elections. In the next elections there must be electronic balloting, polls should be held under army supervision and effective measures must be taken to prevent the use of weapons on or before the election day.

- ◆ ANP supports the Commissionerate system and opposes the local bodies system.

- ◆ MQM's electoral gains are due to manipulation of polls.

Muttahida Qaumi Movement

The HRCP team met MQM leaders Kanwar Khalid Younus, Nasreen Jalil, Mustafa Kamal and Wasay Jalil at the party's secretariat in Azizabad on July 30. The team members were shown display boards with photographs of MQM workers and supporters killed during 1992-95 and 2008-2011. The party leaders denied charges that MQM had staked an exclusive claim on Karachi. Separately, MQM leaders Dr. Farooq Sattar and Wasay Jalil visited HRCP Karachi office on August 16 for a meeting. They also handed over documents on targeting of MQM workers in the violence and lists of individuals stated to be involved in violence and other crime, including those with alleged links to MQM-H, ANP, and from a gang in Lyari. They also shared with the HRCP team MQM's proposals for maintaining law and order in Karachi. In the two meetings the MQM leaders stated:

- ◆ Everyone unjustly blames MQM for the May 12, 2007 violence in Karachi even though MQM activists were actually victims of violence on that day. 16,000 Urdu-speaking people have been killed to-date and genocide of Urdu-speaking people has been going on for 20 years.

- ◆ Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Awami National Party (ANP) have conspired to marginalise MQM in some areas of Karachi, through groups such as Lyari Aman Committee. Sindh minister Zulfiqar Mirza's inflammatory statements represent official views of the PPP. Sindh ANP chief Shahi Syed is recognised as a land grabber.

- ◆ 85 percent of Karachi had voted for MQM, and yet elected MQM lawmakers cannot even build a sewerage line in their constituencies.

- ◆ It is a false assertion that only Mohajirs are treated at Abbasi Shaheed Hospital.

55 percent of the patients there are non-Urdu speaking.

- ◆ It is untrue that Mohajirs demolished two Goths in Gadap Town in 2006/07 and later occupied them and named them Altafnagar. There is no locality named as Altafnagar. (The locality is shown as Altafnagar in a water-supply tender document of City District Government Karachi.)

- ◆ Why had Rangers/police not intervened for days in the shootings and siege at Orangi?

- ◆ The Peace/Coordination Committee being advocated now had been set up earlier as well, without much success.

- ◆ MQM is restraining the Urdu-speaking people of Karachi, otherwise there would be such mayhem and bloodshed that the people would not be able to count the bodies. Since November 2008, there have been killings in Karachi without any reason, which have been called 'targeted killings'. Various political parties and groups have been held responsible for the killings. It is the responsibility of all political parties to maintain law and order in Karachi city, but they have failed to do so or one may say that they have been involved in creating this situation. But the role of political parties in the law and order situation is secondary. The main responsibility lies with crime syndicates. 70 percent crime in Karachi is committed by drug mafias, and groups of land grabbers and kidnapers (for ransom), while 30 percent may be committed by groups who have linkages with political parties. MQM is ready to play its role as it believes that Karachi's law and order situation stimulates lawlessness elsewhere in Pakistan.

- ◆ In the last five years, MQM has expelled criminal elements from the party who were damaging its image. Many of them were arrested and some left the country. Some MQM workers had indulged in crimes during the time when the party leadership was arrested and behind the bars. MQM has made no attempt to get any of the arrested criminals released. Due to extrajudicial killings of the years 1992-95, some MQM workers whose close relatives were killed might have indulged in revenge killings.

- ◆ For three years, the Karachi administration has been ignoring Taliban's crimes and is hand in glove with them. Law enforcement agencies are also collaborating with them.

- ◆ By creating all sorts of criminal activities and killings, the establishment has tried to confine MQM to Karachi and prevent the party from playing its role in national politics.

- ◆ MQM has tried its best to convince other political parties to adopt a joint strategy to fight crime, stop the killings and maintain law and order in Karachi. MQM submitted a bill in parliament for de-weaponising of Karachi, but is not clear about

other political parties' objectives. There must be no politics in de-weaponising the city. (At the first meeting Mustafa Kamal enthusiastically supported deweaponisation but Farooq Sattar said MQM had reservations.)

- ◆ The majority of people killed in violence in Karachi are MQM workers and supporters.
- ◆ MQM does not ask people for any contribution, except on the two Eids—it appeals to its supporters to donate hides of sacrificial animals on Eidul Azha and Zakat on Eidul Fitr.
- ◆ MQM has names of 500 gangsters operating in Karachi who are responsible for 70 percent of the criminal activity in the city.
- ◆ Taliban are responsible for killings in Karachi and their activities are helping religious parties and fanatics. They are also involved in kidnappings for ransom and armed robberies.
- ◆ MQM is being compelled by criminal elements and the establishment to react. If the situation persists the party would have no choice but to counterattack against these criminals.
- ◆ Peace in Karachi is contingent on all parties accepting each other's political status.

Pakistan People's Party

The HRCP team met Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leaders Taj Haider, Najmi Alam and Saeed Ghani at the PPP Secretariat. The team was shown a gallery displaying photographs of PPP activists killed in violence in the city. The PPP leaders stated:

- ◆ In order to comprehend the situation in Karachi, one has to understand how in the 1980s a dictator pushed Pakistan into a conflict between two superpowers in Afghanistan and then fractured the unity of residents of Karachi in order to prolong his rule. The city was developed in such a manner that people considered themselves unsafe and were pitted against one another.
- ◆ Land, drugs, weapons and other mafias have captured the resources of Karachi. Criminal elements use political parties as sanctuaries and even PPP has such elements. Many of them have been expelled from the party. PPP believes in enhancing its vote bank but by serving people, not by subjecting them to torture.
- ◆ Every political party should make a written commitment not to harbour criminals, not to seek release of criminals from police custody, promote peace through peace rallies and all-parties conferences, promise not to pressurise law enforcement agencies and form a joint front in collaboration with civil society against armed groups.

- ◆ Nawaz Sharif and his party cannot abandon extremism.
- ◆ An unbiased approach is required to fix the situation in Karachi but in view of the piles of weapons in Karachi use of force alone would lead to extensive bloodshed. Political sagacity and strategy need to be employed. There is so much weaponry in Karachi that any incident can turn the city into a Beirut.
- ◆ Values have now changed and the new heroes of youth are those who have murdered many men and possess sophisticated weapons.
- ◆ The circumstances in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have an impact on the situation in Karachi. If an operation is carried out there, families relocate to Karachi and riots begin here.
- ◆ Some crimes are organised and others are not. PPP also has weapons but those are for defensive purposes. The party does not have the firepower to match or take on MQM which is organised, and fires hundreds of thousands of bullets on a single utterance and then, on one word, stops it all.
- ◆ The city has been divided along linguistic lines and people are fearful of going to other parts of the city.
- ◆ Law enforcement agencies do not dare take action. 150 policemen have been killed in the city.
- ◆ Women's help should be sought in the campaign against weapons. They should ask men in their families to register their weapons.

Jamaat-e-Islami

Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) leaders Muhammad Hussain Mehnati, Naseem Siddiqui, Dr. Wasay Shakir, Muslim Pervez, Nasrullah Shajee and Asadullah Bhutto met members of the HRCF fact-finding team. They stated:

- ◆ Terrorism raised its head in Karachi in 1986. Then there was a massacre in Hyderabad and MQM picked up a fight particularly with Pakhtuns, Sindhis, Balochis and Punjabis. From 1988 onwards, clashes also occurred in educational institutions in Karachi.
- ◆ There used to be one terrorist group in Karachi. Now many more have emerged.
- ◆ A major factor has been the 2008 elections. The JI boycotted those elections and the two seats it used to win were bagged by ANP, which has also adopted the known path of bloodshed. PPP has also done the same and similar has been the case with Sunni Tehreek, Sipah-e-Sahaba and Sindhi nationalists wherever they hold sway.
- ◆ Ninety-five percent of those killed in ethnic/linguistic clashes are innocent people. ANP, PPP and MQM are part of the government. They patronise terrorists and

secure the release of anyone who is arrested. The political parties are essentially armed groups that provoke clashes. The three main political parties in Karachi in particular have abundant licenced and illegal weapons. They capture dead bodies and claim that the deceased were their activists. They are responsible for the bloodshed in Karachi as are the provincial and federal governments.

- ◆ There are no Taliban in Karachi. Taliban have separate objectives.
- ◆ MQM has illegally encroached upon parks and amenity spaces and has built houses for its activists there.
- ◆ Across the world, people migrate to coastal areas. MQM fears that Pakhtuns' migration to Karachi would change the city's demography. This too is a factor in violence. Efforts have also been made to reduce employment opportunities for new migrants.
- ◆ From the police station in-charge to the provincial police chief all appointments are made on political basis. How can the police then take action against the rulers?
- ◆ There have been efforts to instigate clashes between Shias and Sunnis, Deobandis and Bareilvis and Mohajirs and Sindhis but all these attempts have failed so far because the common man is neither interested nor involved in these fights. Mercenaries are involved in the killings, as are CIA, RAW and Mossad.

Jeay Sindh Mahaz

Jeay Sindh Mahaz (JSM) leader Abdul Khaliq Junejo said in a meeting with the HRCP team:

- ◆ The immediate cause of the law and order situation in Karachi is twofold: unregulated population influx from other parts of Pakistan and beyond; and the government's setting up and using armed/criminal groups rather than stamping them out. There are around three million illegal immigrants in Karachi from 27 countries. Over the past two decades fights over land have increased. Karachi has become a safe haven for criminal elements. Active political parties, both local and national, are involved in land grabbing and other criminal activity.
- ◆ The government's response to the law and order situation is inadequate and apathetic. All political parties are well armed and have armed militant wings. Each group murders people and throws their bodies in the other's area. Every party promotes its holier than thou image and blames other parties for violence and criminal activity. ANP, PPP and MQM claim that certain areas are their strongholds. They should also accept responsibility for keeping peace in those areas. Criminal activity is carried out under patronage of law enforcement agencies, which in turn are patronised by the

government.

- ◆ Unemployment is endemic and growing in Karachi. The unemployed are used for vested interests in exchange for easy money.
- ◆ Rather than ethnic and sectarian groups watching out for their respective interests, the state should be working to protect everyone's interests.
- ◆ 99 percent people have unlicensed weapons. All weapons should be confiscated.

Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz

Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM) leaders Illahi Bukhsh, Asif Bilal and Muhammad Khan Sheikh said:

- ◆ The various problems in Karachi are interconnected. The real problem is political and economic and is linked to overpopulation in Karachi. Innumerable people from all parts of the country have come to Karachi and continue to do so. Even immigrants from other countries flock to Karachi where they are not registered and just join the crowd. They buy property here, acquire national identity cards and become citizens of Pakistan. This has led to the law and order crisis as well as the energy and unemployment crises.
- ◆ Sectarian politics is common. Religious parties are very strong and ethnic/linguistic tensions aggravate the situation even further.
- ◆ The state has failed to provide education to the people. Tolerance has disappeared from everywhere and the mindset about tolerance has been isolated in educational institutions. Education and educational institutions have been ruined to promote religious extremism. Lack of education is in the interest of political groups.
- ◆ Human rights are denied and the most glaring denial is that of the right to life. The killers, their victims and the motives for killing remain unidentified. The day Zulfiqar Mirza issued a statement against Mohajirs, 20 JSQM activists were murdered in Lyari. Their throats were slit. The killers roam free. Even if they are apprehended they are allowed to walk in the name of reconciliation after one phone call.
- ◆ The government has given up on rule of law and is itself a party in the law and order situation in Lyari.
- ◆ ANP has decided to expand the strength of the Pakhtun along with their weapons and bring MQM to heel. Karachi today is a throwback to a tribal society where 'Mohajir tribes' and 'Pakhtun tribes' are at each other's throat. Urban and rural feudal interests have coalesced.
- ◆ There are land grabbers in all parties. MQM has captured all parks of Karachi. Zulfiqar Mirza has formed a terrorist organisation in the name of Aman Committee (peace committee). All parties are striving to gain the maximum number of weapons

and hoodlums.

- ◆ There are so many Taliban in Karachi and they are so strong that they can topple the government.
- ◆ Since 1992, no less than 900 policemen have been murdered in Karachi. No government has taken notice of that.
- ◆ The local bodies system was being operated from Islamabad. Introduction of the Commissionerate system was a longstanding demand of JSQM, which welcomes the move.
- ◆ Religious hatred is being fomented in Karachi with a view to exploiting it whenever deemed necessary.

Jeay Sindh Tehreek

Jeay Sindh Tehreek (JST) leaders Dr. Safdar Sarki and Habib Baloch stated in a meeting with the HRCP mission members:

- ◆ The ANP-PPP-MQM alliance that is purported to be the outcome of a reconciliatory policy is nothing more than an arrangement for each party to get maximum share in power and money. They are shareholders in land grabbing, narcotics, *bhatta* (extortion) and kidnappings for ransom. The real dispute is about who owns the city and the claimants have their daggers drawn.
- ◆ A whistle blows and the killings start. Another whistle and they end. Who is responsible for the people killed after Zulfiqar Mirza issued a statement against Mohajirs? All three parties have blood of the people on their hands.
- ◆ Weapons from other countries come to Karachi overland and by the sea. In tribal areas of Sindh weapons can be bought on credit, installments or even rented. Why is action not taken against the agencies responsible for preventing weapons smuggling? It is obvious that the government is not interested. The agenda of political parties and of the agencies appears to be the same.
- ◆ If weapons are not controlled there would be such a ferocious civil war in Karachi that the bloodshed in Beirut and Palestine would pale in comparison.
- ◆ The Taliban and Mullah are being pampered and the religious minorities in Sindh are paying the price.
- ◆ JST supports the Commissionerate system but wants it improved and its flaws removed.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leaders Saleem Zia, Dr. Bahadur Khan

Dahari, Syed Hafizuddin, Zahid Shahmir, Khalid Mehmood Awan, Saeed Tanoli and Malik Muhammad Taj met the HRCP team. They stated:

◆ Before 1986 Karachi was a peaceful city. Beginning that year, politics based on linguistic identity was intentionally promoted and the city has been burning in the fire of linguistic and sectarian hatred ever since. Pakistan is reaping what its rulers had sown.

◆ The government is there only in name. Even in the presence of police, Rangers, army and intelligence agencies, thousands of people have been killed and the killers have not been apprehended. Property worth billions and businesses worth hundreds of billions of rupees have been destroyed.

◆ Two PML-N activists were killed the previous day and those responsible for the killings took away the body of one of the killed activist by force, claiming that he was their activist, and organised his funeral prayers.

◆ The mandate that the political parties talk about in Karachi is fake. PML-N had tried to “reason with the mandate-holders of Karachi” that contesting elections in this manner is detrimental to their credibility, but we did not succeed in convincing them.

◆ Other people in Karachi are not as organised as the ‘mandate holders’ and also lack civic facilities. They have been intimidated and harassed so that they would not take part in any activity. People are now being killed in Karachi for no reason other than their appearance. Anyone who appears to be Sindhi, Baloch or Pakhtun is killed even if he is in fact Urdu speaking.

◆ All political parties in the government engage in power politics and harbour criminal elements. MQM’s appetite for crime is now spreading to ANP and PPP’s Aman Committee. It seems that only criminal elements will be able to contest the next elections in Karachi.

◆ There is no ambiguity about the identity of perpetrators of unrest in Karachi. The provincial senior minister has publicly stated how many target killers had been held and which party they belonged to, but still politics of give and take continues. There can never be peace in Karachi through such devices. Peace is possible only through across the board and indiscriminate action in accordance with law.

◆ The mafias interested in land grabbing, *bhatta*, drug, weapons and political influence are behind the unrest in Karachi. Police, Rangers and intelligence agencies are also responsible. There is no likelihood of peace through Rangers. The role of police will have to be improved.

Concerns of business community

HRCP teams also met Talat Mahmood, Senior Vice President of Karachi Chamber



KCCI representatives with members of the HRCP mission.

of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and office-bearers and members of KCCI as well as Shafiq Baig, from the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI). They observed:

- ◆ The law and order situation in the city is creating a negative image in the West, reducing foreign investment and trade, causing flight of capital and shuttering of industries/businesses.

- ◆ 68% of government revenue in Pakistan is generated from Karachi, which has two seaports. Each day of strike in Karachi costs the country a loss of Rs 2.5 billion in industrial areas and commercial markets alone.

- ◆ The government should guarantee law and order. The situation right now is such that entrepreneurs are unable to do business. If the three main political parties play their role the city would not be in this mess. ANP, PPP and MQM are coalition partners and should be able to resolve their differences. There should be no killings. Recent peace initiatives are very important.

- ◆ De-weaponisation has been a constant and repeated demand. All weapons should be confiscated.

- ◆ The government cannot run commercial/industrial enterprises. PIA, Pakistan Steel Mills, Railways, etc., are incurring billions of rupees in losses every month on account of poor management, corruption and overstaffing with political motives. Privatisation of these industries is unlikely in view of the three-month law and order problem created by 4,500 Karachi Electric Supply Corporation workers who were

sacked.

- ◆ Political parties' flags and wall chalking across the city must be removed. Only the national flag should be displayed on Independence Day.

- ◆ KCCI established Police Chamber Liaison Committee in 2003, including Grade 18 government members from Intelligence Bureau, Federal Investigation Agency, police, and National Crisis Management Cell, and provided six vans and 100 motorcycles for police patrolling in Saddar Town. This has helped in curbing cases of extortion and kidnapping, but the problems still exist.

- ◆ Karachi Police operate under political pressure and patronage, and fail to uphold the law.

- ◆ Infrastructure in Karachi has deteriorated, especially electricity and gas supply, water availability, quality of roads, the transport system and garbage collection. This has generated frequent public protests, strikes and affected commercial activity and industrial output.

Transporters

Karachi Goods Carrier Association President Noor Khan Niazi and representatives Raana Aslam, Malik Sher and Abdul Razzaq as well as representatives of Karachi Transport Ittehad met the HRCP team and highlighted their concerns.

- ◆ The government has completely failed in restoring law and order. The three main political stakeholders in Karachi still sit together in government for their own interests. If so many people are dying in the city why do they not quit this disgraceful coalition?

- ◆ PPP, ANP and MQM have divided the city among themselves. Every party is short on tolerance and stakes an exclusive claim on Karachi. This is a power struggle with no writ of the government and no respect for the judiciary. Whenever there is unrest or a strike in the city buses and other vehicles are the first to bear the brunt of anger and are often torched even on the night preceding the strike. Initially MQM used to do that. Now all parties do that, particularly ANP, PPP, Sunni Tehrik and religious organisations. All these organisations also collect *bhatta*. When Sindh minister Zulfiqar Mirza delivered an inflammatory speech against Mohajirs, businesses of Pakhtuns were torched in inexplicable and entirely unfounded retaliation.

- ◆ Peace can be restored to the city if and when the government so desires. No one can take on God or the government. There is abundance of weapons in Peshawar as well but the mayhem in Karachi is unmatched. There is no concept of crime and punishment in Karachi. All manners of mafias operate in the city under official patronage. If the terrorists are arrested they are released on a phone call. There are now four

parallel governments in Karachi.

◆ On the eve of a strike transporters' vehicles are torched. The next day people do not bring their vehicles on the road out of fear and thus the strike automatically becomes successful. In no city other than Karachi are vehicles fired on during protests. In Karachi, minibuses, buses and trucks are fired on as soon as the law and order situation deteriorates. Karachi has 3,000 buses, 7,000 coaches and 8,000 minibuses. Since Benazir Bhutto's assassination 138 buses and 468 minibuses have been torched. Around 35 drivers/conductors/cleaners have been severely injured and 16 of them killed. Families of some of the deceased have been given compensation. The law and order situation of Karachi, in fact in the whole of Pakistan, is so precarious that countless trucks have been torched and yet the government has not given any compensation.

◆ Whenever there is a strike or demonstration trucks and buses become the first target of arson attacks. The terrorists now use such inflammable chemicals that the targeted vehicles light up instantly. Whenever such incidents occur the two most affected communities are Pakhtuns and Punjabis, with some Baloch as well. Manifestations of violence against goods transporters are different in different parts of Pakistan. They suffer severe losses in riots and strikes in Karachi, where the criminals stop trucks and torch them along with their cargo. In riots and strikes in Punjab, the trucks are pulled over, the drivers are beaten and windshields smashed. In Peshawar, drivers' faces are painted black. When the goods transporters learn of poor law and order situation in a city, they divert their trucks to other cities, incurring additional expenses as a consequence.

◆ Even though the truckers offer services 24 hours a day and toil hard no one considers goods transport a worthy vocation. There is a lack of educated individuals in



Favourite targets of protestors' wrath.

the profession. Transporters and their input in discussions are not taken seriously in government meetings.

- ◆ The political parties and mafias receive extortion money. Businesses have been destroyed. People would now sell their buses and get out of this profession as plying buses in Karachi has become impossible. The transporters are forced to pay *bhatta* (extortion money) and those demanding extortion money smash vehicles' windows if the drivers/owners refuse to pay up. They have also ravaged the Karachi Goods Carrier Association offices and locked the office-bearers and owners out on one occasion because of their refusal to pay *bhatta*. Karachi Goods Carrier Association also operates vehicles out of an old truck stand at Mauripur where the going monthly rate for *bhatta* is Rs 1,000 per office and Rs 2,000 to Rs 5,000 for every hotel. Around two million rupees are collected as *bhatta* every month.

- ◆ Even those who have been in the city for over half a century now say that their whole families have become mental patients and the women keep contacting the men and children outside the house to ask where they are, if they are safe and when they would return home.

- ◆ 80 percent policemen do not perform their duties with sincerity. How can policemen protect the citizens when they are unsafe themselves? Only two policemen from the last Karachi operation are still alive.

- ◆ The Karachi Goods Carrier Association representatives say that they have been deprived of basic facilities such as safe water, sewerage and roads for over two decades. With the end of the local bodies system and revival of the Commissionerate system there has been improvement in the form of access given to clean water within 20 days. Drains clogged for 20 years are being cleared. The roads would also be completed this year.

Meeting with affected families

Approximately 30 people from Lyari, Orangi Town, Qasbah, Kala Pahari and other affected areas attended a public hearing organised by the HRCP team at the Karachi Press Club on July 31. They shared with the team accounts of the violence they had experienced.

The families that attended the public hearing were from the Pakhtun and Baloch communities; the Mohajir/Urdu speaking community was missing, a fact noted by the HRCP panel. Separate efforts were subsequently made to record their point of view.

It was clear from the personal accounts of the affected families that the killings had an ethnic basis. Most of the family members present at the July 31 public hearing did not hesitate to point the finger at MQM and its activists for the killings. The women



Members of the mission hear accounts of the affected families.

present had lost young sons, some of whom were their families' sole breadwinners.

The narratives covered incidents of arson attacks on shops and other property, killing and sometimes torture of family members. There was a general complaint of lack of response from the police, although some cases were registered with the police. The affected families said that the government had failed to provide them compensation. The cases below are examples of the type of violence inflicted and the repercussions for the suffering families:

- ◆ Hameeda, a Pakhtun woman, said her house was burned down on July 8 and she had not received any compensation.
- ◆ A woman from Qasbah Colony said her son, Shahzad, 20, was killed 10 days earlier in Street #5. Two other boys were killed. Even burying them became a problem because of firing.
- ◆ Nusrat from Dubai Chowk, Lyari, said her 22-year old son was burnt alive two weeks earlier. His body was recovered by Edhi staff.
- ◆ Sajida from Jumma Goth, Osmanabad, said her husband was killed and an aunt shot at through their house window. Police had registered a case.
- ◆ Muhammad Altaf, from West Garden, was shot dead while repairing his rickshaw. Police took no action; however, Sindh minister Zulfiqar Mirza visited the family and gave them a rickshaw.
- ◆ Sabrina Gul, a Baloch woman from Garden East, said her 25-year old son was



Families of victims of violence at the public hearing.

shot outside their home on October 10, 2010, but he could not be taken to hospital due to the unrest and violence. She said dead bodies of Baloch men were frequently found in Karachi.

- ◆ Sher Khan from Kala Pahari, Street #12 said he was thrown out of his house on July 8 by armed men who burnt all his belongings and set up a bunker in his house. He said the arsonists were Mohajirs from his neighbourhood. There had been no response from the police or Rangers.

- ◆ In Aligarh Colony, Orangi Town, eight shops were torched. PPP and Jamaat-e-Islami leaders had provided some relief. Police and fire brigade had also arrived.

Testimonies

In addition to the public hearing at the Karachi Press Club, the HRCP team and volunteers visited many areas affected by violence to assess the people's problems. The areas included Kati Pahari, Aligarh Bazar, Qasbah, Benaras, Muslimabad, Kali Pahari, Khokhrapar (Malir), Jaafar Tayyar Society, Shabana Cinema, Aamir Yasir Society, Haleemabad, F-South and Ghareebabad.

During the public hearings and visits to the affected areas, the HRCP team heard ghastly accounts of killings and destruction of property by armed criminals affiliated with political parties in sprees of violence that went on for days, as well as lack of action from the law enforcement agencies. Residents in all areas that the HRCP team

visited said that they considered themselves unsafe and that they often barred their children from leaving the house, patients did not venture out to visit doctors and people found it difficult to get to their workplace because of fears for their lives. In all of the areas visited, the pockmarks left by bullets in the walls showed the intensity and indiscriminate nature of firing. Members of all ethnic communities spoke of excesses which were not very dissimilar in details. Only the perpetrators or victims were from different ethnic communities. Often the only ground for targeting an individual or a family was their ethnicity. Some of the testimonies recorded by the fact-finding team are reproduced below.

1. A woman who lived in Garden West said: “My 22-year-old son worked as a refrigerator and AC mechanic. He was at work when Mohajirs shot him because he was Baloch. We didn’t even know that he had been killed. Police came to our house and told us. There was so much violence and unrest in the city that we could not go to the hospital and his body was brought home later. He had been shot in the head. He was the only one of my children who earned money and he was martyred. Where are law, justice and the government? Even if we do not speak the same language we share the same religion. What manner of Muslims are these who are enemies of Muslims. No one came to my house to ask about how we were. I forgive the murder of my son. I leave justice to Allah but what has happened to us is extremely unjust. We have not lodged a case with the police. We have left the matter to Allah. I have not seen such excesses in my life. Why should an innocent person be killed? The situation here is very bad. Last night the body of another murdered Baloch was brought to our area. We do not get employment or justice, just dead bodies.”

2. A young man who lived in Qasbah, Shahzad Cinema said in Pashtu: “My brother was visiting our sister’s house when on the way back he was nabbed at Hina Bakery and shot five times. He died there and then. He was my youngest brother. There was so much firing that we could not even bury him. His body was kept in the Edhi morgue. Four days later, two sons of my maternal aunt were killed. One of them was killed in his house from shots fired from a ‘*morchha*’ (attack post), the other was abducted from the entrance of his house, taken to a government school and murdered there. We buried their bodies and my brother’s body all in one day. They also torched my maternal aunt’s house. Before that they looted jewellery and other articles kept for her daughter’s wedding. We have no link with any political party.”

3. A resident of Muslim Abad, Qasbah said: “My son Faizan was an MQM worker. He was 24. Firing had continued in our area for four days and Faizan had high fever. On July 7, heavy firing started when he had gone out to a nearby shop to get something for his younger brother. He was shot in the chest. There was no vehicle to take him to the hospital because of the situation. People put him on a pushcart and were taking him

to the hospital when he died. The bullets that killed him were fired from the Pakhtun population area. Pakhtuns want the Urdu speaking people to leave the area. Law enforcement agencies personnel came to the area four days later. No one knows when the firing would begin again. It often starts at night without a warning.”

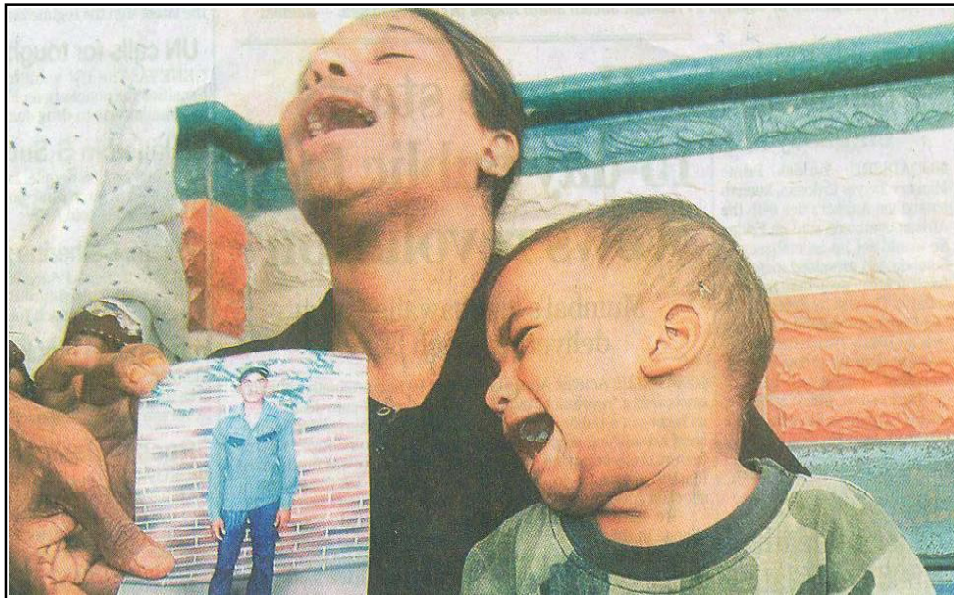
4. A woman at Sector A1 Qasbah said: “On July 5, Pakhtun youth attacked our house. They razed the outer walls and looted and destroyed things in the house. They occupied the house and set up ‘*morchas*’ in the upper storey rooms from where they continued firing for four days. Four days later Rangers came to the area but the firing continued. Rangers told us that they had not received orders to act. Firing and throwing of stones from the Pakhtun population area continues even now.”

5. A woman at Muslim Abad, Qasbah said: “On June 14, the children were playing out in the street when my 15-year-old son, Wahid Khan, was shot dead. He was targeted because he was Pakhtun. He earned 80 rupees a day packing boxes in a factory. My husband earns 6,000 rupees a month. We live in a rented house. I have now borrowed money to open a shop in my house. Law enforcement agencies are not visible and have no role. We live in constant fear that firing would resume.”

6. A resident of Kali Pahrai said: “On July 7, my house was fired on. They looted my house and even took things I had kept for my daughter’s wedding. Later they set my house on fire. They had entered the house not through the door but by razing a wall. Neither the Rangers nor the police listened to me or registered my report. They said to me ‘*tum bhi maaro*’ (you go ahead and kill them too). How do I kill them? I do not have anything. Do I provide for my children or seek revenge for what they have done to us? I am a Pakhtun living in a Mohajir area. They have set up a *morcha* in my house. Rangers and police have visited the area and they have also not expelled them from my house.”

7. A woman in Sector 1-B, Kali Pahari, Orangi Town said: “My son and two nephews have been killed by Mohajirs because we are Pakhtun. My son Pir Muhammad was 35. They barged into our house and shot him five times. My nephews Ibrahim Khan and Yaqub have also been murdered in the same area. Ibrahim was abducted from his house and murdered. His house was looted and set on fire. Yaqub was also forcibly taken from his home and murdered. Only an FIR of rioting was registered against unidentified men. Law enforcement agencies do not help us at all. During four days of firing, no police or Rangers personnel came here. They just stood at the main road below. When we complained they said that their vehicles could not come up. They do not stop the killers. Mohajirs want to murder us so that there are no Pakhtuns in the area. They tell us to go to our own province. The situation is tense and people look at each other with hatred and contempt. Things can flare up again any time. Firing still continues at night.”

8. A 20-year-old man from Qasbah said: “Firebombs were thrown at our house



A heart rendering but familiar sight in a violence-hit locality in Karachi.

and announcements were made on loudspeakers from a Pakhtun mosque that Mohajirs were descendents of Jews and that people should do jihad by killing them. This was a fight between two groups and as always it was the poor who died and the groups used the deaths to further their aims. No government agency has done anything to help us. When we leave the house we are not certain if we will come back alive.”

9. Another man who was injured in violence in Qasbah said he was an activist of MQM and added: “I was returning from work when armed men stopped me and started beating me. They took everything I had. When I tried to run away they shot me in the legs. I fell down. This is a fight between two groups and the helpless people are suffering. We appeal to the government to restore peace. Rangers and police allowed Lyari gang war and Pakhtuns to attack Mohajir settlements for four days. The government has not helped us.”

10. A woman in Ammar Yasir Society, Phase II, Malir Extension said: “My 22-year old son was injured in intense firing on July 22. Doctors had to amputate his left leg to save his life. The state agencies have done nothing to help. MQM leaders and parliamentarians visited our house to sympathise. The situation is tense and there is firing every second or third day.”

11. A woman from Essa Khan Road, Lyari said: “My son, Abdul Rehman, was shot and killed on July 20. He was 40. He was returning home from work when

someone opened fire in a street behind Radio Pakistan at 8 pm and he was killed. Two other boys were also killed in the firing. Our sin is that we are Baloch. MQM kills us mercilessly because we vote for the Pakistan People's Party. MQM gunmen fire on the area because they want to capture it. Then Lyari Aman Committee activists return fire. The situation is really bad. The law enforcement agencies have done nothing to help because we are poor labourers and our people are not in the police or the army. So nobody cares about us."

Common afflictions

Arif Hasan is the most prominent authority on urban planning and settlement in Pakistan and has several books to his credit. He is one of the best informed persons on the situation of Karachi. In August this year, he interviewed 14 persons from the violence-affected areas of Karachi. Their observations were not very different from the findings of the HRCP mission and are summarised below:

- ◆ The fear of kidnappings and killings has become so real that people are afraid to leave home and only do so if absolutely necessary. There has been a considerable decrease in the number of working women due to violence and transport-related problems. Household incomes have fallen as a consequence.
- ◆ People are afraid to send their children to school and before doing that listen to TV news channels and check the neighbourhood to see if the roads are open. Many families have stopped sending younger children to school altogether.
- ◆ Young men and women are forcibly taken to public rallies. Those who resist are threatened, roughed up and sometimes even killed. Parents live in constant fear for their grown up children.
- ◆ The ban on pillion riding on motorbikes has escalated travel costs and increased the burden on public transport, forcing an increasing number of people to travel on roofs of buses. Women are the worst affected since they cannot do that.
- ◆ A lot of plastic imitations of weapons are available in markets. Children play gang wars of their own with replica guns. They idolise gang leaders and there is a lot of bullying and violence among children.
- ◆ Inter-ethnic friendships have become a thing of the past. People look at each other, even at an individual level, with hatred and suspicion. Even mosques are divided along ethnic lines.
- ◆ Cells in ethnic parties now settle community and family disputes regarding property, crime, marriage and divorce. Government institutions dealing with these issues have become redundant.
- ◆ Much of the violence in Karachi is aimed at changing the demographics of

those constituencies where there is an unequal mixed ethnic population among a larger homogeneous one. This is done to guarantee victory in elections. Such change is brought about by terrorising the population through indiscriminate firing, and target killing of a few members of the community. It is also done by buying properties either by coercing families into selling or by offering prices in excess of market rates for properties on the main corridors and then “suffocating” the population at the back.

- ◆ One party supports the completion of Lyari Expressway while another opposes it, not for technical reasons, but for the fact that if the surviving trans-Lyari settlements are removed one party loses a large number of votes in two constituencies.

- ◆ Extortionists used to personally go and ask for *bhatta earlier*. Now they send a *parchi* (chit). Sometimes a person receives multiple *parchis* from various extortionists. Those ignoring the *parchi* are threatened with death or kidnapping of their family. If the demands are still ignored the threats are carried out. More recently, failure to comply with *parchi* demands have resulted in hand grenades being thrown at shops. As a result of this, small businesses owned by communities that were in a minority in certain neighbourhoods have moved to areas where their ethnic population is concentrated. This is systematic ethnic cleansing and helps manipulate election results. All businesses have to contend with extortionists linked to political parties. Gangs also ‘tax’ drugs, gambling dens and property transactions. They give no *bhatta* to the police as they are stronger than them but used to do so six or seven years ago.

- ◆ Revenue land and the Goth Abad scheme process are manipulated through bribes and coercion and land records changed. The new settlements created through this process are ethnic in nature and are protected by the ethnic parties. In some cases, people who claim to belong to political groups have told the local estate agents that they should have the first right of purchase if any property is up for sale. Estate agents who ignore the demand are threatened and a few of them have been killed.

- ◆ Owners of under construction buildings used to pay bribes to the KBCA authorities to get approval for various stages of development. Now they pay the *bhatta* mafia as well and in an increasing number of cases only the *bhatta* mafia which “permits” them to violate rules.

- ◆ In the old town and in all areas where there is a possibility of profit, there is considerable pressure and coercion for house owners to sell their properties to developers. In addition, there has been large-scale encroachment on formally and informally developed properties, including houses and apartments. Money is demanded for ending encroachment. Disputes are taken to political parties who charge a fee for settling them. Even property belonging to the Sindh High Court near Khuda Ki Basti has

been encroached upon with help of political parties.

Healthcare/rescue/emergency services

The HRCF team visited Abbasi Shaheed Hospital, which is Karachi's third largest government hospital with 890 beds. Senior medical officials at the hospital said:

- ◆ Doctors and paramedical staff at the hospital do not have any ethnic or racial bias and around 60 percent of all those who visit the hospital for treatment are non-Mohajirs. Injured and deceased Pakhtuns were brought to the hospital following the recent violence in Karachi. The injured were treated. Doctors' concern is a patient's medical condition and not his ethnic or linguistic identity.

The additional police surgeon at the hospital stated:

- ◆ There had not been any untoward incident at the hospital during the recent unrest in Karachi. Around 99 percent people brought here are injured or killed by firearms and the injured are treated without any discrimination.

- ◆ There is a political party's unit office on the hospital premises which cooperates with doctors and staff in keeping order. When the law and order situation deteriorates parliamentarians from that political party also reach the hospital and supervise the situation.

- ◆ People from all ethnic groups came to the hospital for treatment in the last few days and the unit office of the political party ensured that the law and order situation did not deteriorate.

The HRCF team also met senior medical officials at Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) who stated:

- ◆ JPMC was earlier run by the federal government but under the 18th Amendment its control had devolved on the Sindh government.

- ◆ Hospitals in Karachi seem to have been divided on linguistic basis. Pakhtuns do not go to Abbasi Shaheed Hospital as they feel threatened there. They prefer Valika Hospital and come to JPMC for emergencies. Those from Lyari seek treatment at Civil Hospital.

- ◆ A large number of victims of street crime used to be brought JPMC but now most of the cases are of targeted killing. At times up to 30 cases of gunshot wounds are brought to the hospital in a single day. Usually victims of target killing or those who are injured in such attacks are brought to the hospital unaccompanied, whereas family members accompany other injured. All the injured are first taken to emergency ward where paperwork begins and the medico-legal officer (MLO) summons the police. Often the injured in target killing bids die on the way to hospital. In case of a major



The killings have traumatised Karachi's children.

incident the police immediately arrives at the hospital and in cases of targeted killing the MLO calls the police. The police trace the family. The few unclaimed bodies are placed in the Edhi morgue where they are kept for seven days and buried if they remain unclaimed. Members of a political party recently came to the hospital and said that JPMC was favouring Pakhtuns and ANP people. We do not have any support from the administration and have to be very careful. JPMC has well trained staff that attends to all patients. In the climate of tension medical staff is accused of partisanship and threatened if there is any delay, however unavoidable, in attending to a patient.

◆ According to the additional MLO at the hospital, most of the cases come from Karachi's District West and District Central. Usually those injured in political clashes are brought to the hospital from Lyari, District South. Reports on these cases are sent to the Police Surgeon, the provincial health secretary and the provincial health minister. Killings in Districts East and West may be target killings. Generally, the people targeted are shopkeepers, rickshaw drivers, etc. Because the victims are afraid of revenge there is a low rate of prosecution. During the violence and unrest in the last three days, victims could not reach the hospital in time.

Edhi Foundation, whose ambulance service is the largest volunteer ambulance service in the world, is extensively called upon to carry the victims of violence in Karachi to hospitals. The HRCP team also met representatives of Edhi Foundation.

They stated:

- ◆ Around 200 people had been killed and 350 injured or severely injured in the unrest in Karachi in the last two months. Most of the deceased and injured were women and children. The majority of those killed had died of gunshot wounds. Most of the deceased were Pakhtuns and there were also Mohajirs, Kutchi and Baloch.

- ◆ There are organised groups of killers in Karachi who are linked to various political groups and mafias.

- ◆ The most severely affected areas are Qasbah, Kati Pahari, Lyari and Baldia, where the ratio of fatalities is high. People from one area throw dead bodies in another area so that they are not blamed. A person is at times shot and injured and then taken to another area on a motorcycle where he is thrown to the ground and shot to death. The killers fire into the air to scare the people away.

- ◆ During the recent riots and unrest no aid could reach Qasba Colony for five days. Even ambulances were fired upon. People had run out of food and water and there was no milk for children. Edhi Foundation provided dry rations to the people and tried to help as many people as it could.

- ◆ A very organised group engages in kidnapping children of businessmen for ransom in Karachi and collects tens of millions of rupees.

- ◆ *Bhatta* mafia works under the patronage of a few main political parties who are part of the government.

- ◆ Karachi is a trade and economic hub with a large number of foreign residents, particularly Afghans. Burmese, Bengalis, Indians and people from African countries also reside here. Karachi is a hub of income for jihadi groups. Afghans have made considerable investments in Karachi and have acquired Pakistani identity cards through graft. Eighty percent of the business on Karachi's famous Tariq Road market is controlled by Afghans. They also engage in Afghan transit trade and import without customs levy goods that are theoretically destined for Afghanistan but are offloaded from containers and sold in Pakistan's bazaars. This practice has ruined Pakistan's industry, particularly garments, increased unemployment and deprived the government of taxes.

- ◆ Every political party now keeps a militant wing and acquisition of weapons has become their need. There are many sources of access to weapons in Karachi. The highest proportion comes from Darra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Weapons from Iran and Russia also find their way to Karachi.

Citizen-Police Liaison Committee

The team met Ahmed Chinoy, Syed Mehdi Raza Zaidi and Shaukat Ali Suleman at

Citizen-Police Liaison Committee (CPLC), who raised the following points:

- ◆ Over 800 people have been killed in the unrest in Karachi in 2011. Law enforcement agencies apprehend no one and no one is prosecuted.
- ◆ There is a lack of political will to improve the situation. No party wants to do anything about law and order so long as it is benefiting from the status quo. The parties are content with blaming each other. Time and again killings happen at the same place.
- ◆ Police in Karachi are politicised and work under tremendous political pressure. Postings at Karachi police stations are lucrative. The police and rangers went to Kati Pahari at the peak of violence there but then left without any action. Police Station House Officers (SHOs) know everything and do nothing.
- ◆ When there is violence going on, people also use the opportunity to start fighting their own battles and settling scores. It is difficult to say if illegal immigrants are involved in the unrest.
- ◆ The drug, land, arms and *bhatta* (extortion) mafias want to destabilise Karachi so that their business continues.

Law enforcement agencies

The HRCP team met Sindh Inspector General of Police (IGP) Wajid Ali Khan Durrani, Additional Inspector General of Police (AIGP) Saud Ahmed Mirza and Deputy Inspectors General (DIGs) of Karachi East, West and Central. In addition to a briefing and answers to queries, the IGP also handed over a report titled “Law and Order/Crime Situation” to the HRCP team. The law enforcement officials attributed violence in Karachi mainly to the following factors:

- ◆ Karachi has witnessed five or six cycles of violence in the recent past. Demographic changes in city in the wake of displacement of persons from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and FATA as well as influx of economic migrants from KP and South Punjab have also played a role. Fault lines emerged in 2007-2008 and May 12, 2007 was a watershed as one community clashed with the other and one political party realized that another could challenge it. The ethnic interfaces in various parts of the city and the hardened attitudes contribute to violence. District West, East, Orangi Town and Malir have pockets of ethnic fault lines.
- ◆ Now there are turf wars for political control and economic leverage (extortion, land grabbing, etc.) as there are more stakeholders in Karachi. That has added to the intensity of violence. The political groups fight to safeguard territories under their control and to expand their control over more territory.
- ◆ Mercenaries have entered the picture and they switch parties/groups and join

those looking for muscle power.

◆ Development activity has taken place in only certain areas of Karachi and one-third of the city is extremely poor and can be categorised as one of the biggest slums in the world. Abysmal living conditions and poor environment have also promoted violence. Policing becomes difficult in the circumstances. In Lyari, there is disharmony between the Baloch and Kutchis. Extortion and political patronage of armed group have also played a part in violence in Lyari.

◆ The requisite planning to curb crime has been lacking. Police work on a day-to-day basis and matters have to be handled politically.

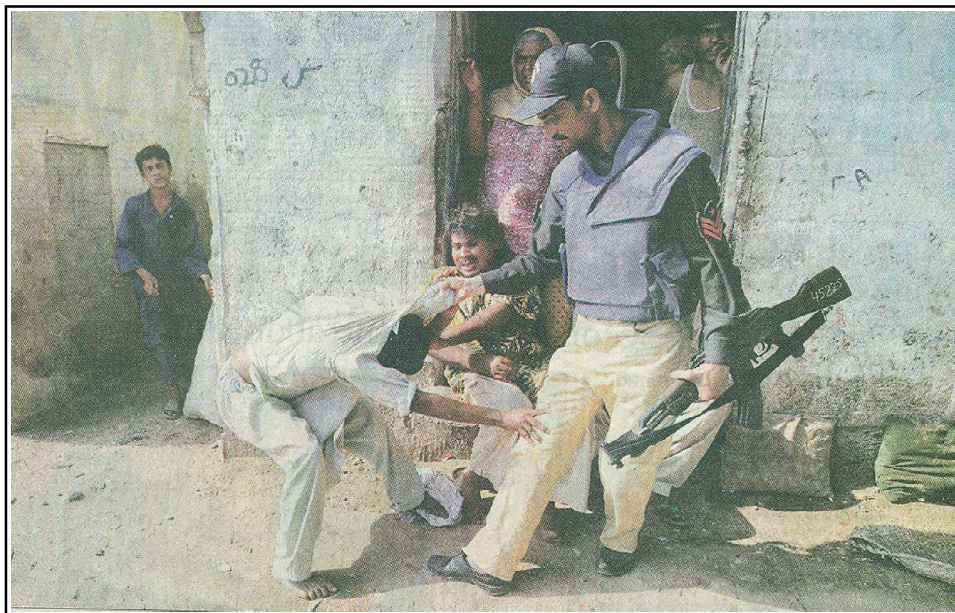
◆ Apart from major political groups, the Taliban and Baloch nationalists are also involved in violence.

◆ There is a glut of weapons. It is difficult to control the flow of weapons coming in from abroad.

◆ The police do not face any political pressure.

Reasons for police inability to curb violence:

◆ Abundance of sophisticated weapons with criminals is a major deterrence. Police officials rule out de-weaponisation as practically impossible. Police feel vulnerable and insecure in entering localities where criminal groups are heavily armed. These



Standard operating procedure for rounding up suspects.

include areas such as Orangi where two million people live in a radius of 20 square kilometers. In the recent spate of violence, 4,000 Rangers personnel and 1,000 policemen were deployed to control the situation. Such deployment is not always possible.

- ◆ Acquittals by courts have also encouraged militants / criminals.
- ◆ There is no witness protection plan in place; therefore witnesses do not come forward which makes prosecution difficult.
- ◆ Criminal elements have joined political parties and are involved in land grabbing and extortion.
- ◆ The violence has also affected day-to-day crime handling by the police. About 20,000 incidents of crime occur in Karachi every day. The police/population ratio is also low in Karachi at 1:550. The ratio is 1:250 in Lahore and 1:200 in New Delhi. One-fifth of the police force in Karachi is on VIP duty (which the police officers do not consider a hindrance to their performance).
- ◆ Lack of technology for police and absence of surveillance systems has also aided terrorists / criminals.
- ◆ There is a need to beef up the police force and provide them with more resources. An additional 5,000 police are needed in urban and another 5,000 in rural areas. They should be provided with better technology surveillance system and better training. Policing has to be done on modern lines.

Steps taken to restore peace:

- ◆ The police officials were greatly encouraged by the coordination committees recently set up under three DIGs (East, West and Central). They meet every week to assess the situation and review their goals. The three major political parties in Karachi, MQM, ANP and PPP, are represented on the committee. The stakeholders are to be held responsible for peace in their districts.
- ◆ Through negotiations, the police have been able to re-settle families in Lyari.
- ◆ 90 people involved in 158 incidents of target killing have been arrested. The police have not faced any political pressure for their release.
- ◆ 400 Community Police Centres are being set up. Concerned citizens should come forward and establish peace in their areas.

Findings and conclusions

The fact-finding team believes that all of the main political parties in the city bear responsibility for the people being massacred in Karachi. Even the political parties that have not assigned armed wings to pull the trigger have a lot to answer for. All of the

main political parties in Karachi shoulder considerable blame for their consistent and prolonged failure to prevent the loss of human life and of property. There is more than enough blame to go around and little evidence that there is even any realization among the political parties, much less remorse, of how they have failed the people. There are many accessories to these murders. This is one of those instances when no bystander is innocent.

There are no two views that the state has miserably and utterly failed in its responsibility to safeguard the people's right to life. The fact that Karachi is in a state of turmoil should not surprise anyone. More than two decades of myopic state policies were bound to end in disaster. All stakeholders in the city are in agreement that despite the horrific bloodshed in recent months the potential for chaos in Karachi is infinitely more, thanks in no small part to well armed cadre of the main political parties and the huge political and economic stakes involved.

The HRCP mission to Karachi makes the following observations:

1. The main political parties in Karachi point to each other's role in instigating violence and patronising criminals and highlight the number of members of their own ethnic community/party killed. All are reluctant to acknowledge any role of their activists/militant wings in killing others, and generally state that members of their community (but not party members) may be retaliating against violence by other parties and ethnic communities. The main political actors in Karachi acknowledge that peace can only be restored with a joint approach, yet there is little evidence of efforts to devise such an approach. Karachi continues to attract migrants, mainly from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and South Punjab and the MQM fears losing the battle of numbers to its political rivals. ANP dreams of increasing their seats in the National / provincial assemblies, provided that elections are free and fair, cannot but cause concern in the MQM camp which would like its present electoral status to remain unchanged. This would be Karachi's main fault-line.

2. Intellectuals describe May 12, 2007 as a turning point in the context of violence in Karachi when another ethnic group (Pakhtuns) asserted itself and a turf war started between MQM and ANP, the emerging political force in Karachi. The problems facing Karachi need a political settlement and although nearly all political parties agree that it is necessary for all to respect each other's position and legitimate interests and desist from attempts to capture political high ground through violence, they still rely on militant wings to battle it out to protect or expand their turfs.

3. In the form of ruling political parties' patronage for criminals, state power and militant powers have come together and the citizens are viewed increasingly through their identity with an ethnic / linguistic / political group. The political parties focus on

and watch out for their own financial and political interests rather than the interest of the people at large. State intervention in Karachi's politics has been unlike that in any other big city in Pakistan. Since 2002, political power and state machinery have been used to grab land. While gangs of land-grabbers and mafias have tried to exploit the breakdown of law and order, they do not appear to be the main directors of the horrible game of death and destruction; that distinction belongs to more powerful political groups and it is they who hold the key to peace.

4. Even issues that everyone acknowledges as crucial have not been addressed, such as de-weaponisation, because of different interpretations of de-weaponisation. There is no reason why an all-party campaign to recover weapons, including the licenced ones, cannot be launched immediately.

5. Not that long ago, ethnic identity was a mantra for the political parties and not for the people themselves. However, Karachi is a deeply fractured city now, in the grip of a multi-sided wave of political, linguistic/ethnic and sectarian polarisation. Nothing epitomises the divisions better than the fact that even the injured and dying victims of violence are taken only to hospitals seen to be sympathetic towards one's ethnicity. The people find that there is no security for life or property and killings have attained an ethnic basis. In upsurges of violence, often pushcarts, rickshaws, trucks, and roadside restaurants—primarily businesses run by Pakhtuns—are targeted, and it is immaterial whether those targeted have any political affiliations or not.

6. Law enforcement agencies are inefficient, ill-prepared, poorly resourced, and lack the political support to be effective. Killing of hundreds of policemen in the city in the past decade has affected morale and the policemen are not keen to stick their necks out.

7. The emergency and paramedical staff are intimidated and have to remain ever vigilant lest they be seen to be sympathising with any ethnic group, simply on account of treating the victims of violence.

8. It seems that the problems inherent in Karachi's urban growth and expansion as an industrial and commercial mega city have not been tackled imaginatively or even properly appreciated. Overpopulation, uneven, ill-planned and poorly implemented development and turf wars have compounded the law and order problems. Organised land grabbing has also resulted in high rents, with the poor being pushed to the margins of society. There has been ghettoisation of large parts of the city and the official watchdogs have been serving the interest of commercial builders and developers. Low-cost housing has not been promoted, even though the greater part of population increase in the city is of the poor. The glaring problems of employment, housing, transport, education, healthcare, supply of water, electricity and gas continue to aggravate amid

apathy from the government.

9. Journalists express a sense of fear in reporting from the areas affected by violence. With a few exceptions, they have not been provided any safety gear by media organisations. They fear all groups equally and say it is extremely difficult to move from one ethnic-dominated locality to another. A journalist that manages to pass through a locality dominated by one ethnic group is viewed with suspicion by the other. The political parties have even briefed the people of their respective ethnic community on what to tell the media and reporters feel that they can no longer be certain of the veracity of their version of events.

10. The government has completely failed to ensure safety of life or property, or provide justice or compensation to the affected families. Families narrate harrowing accounts of killing and torture of family members, and arson attacks on shops and other property. Even when cases are lodged with the police and some arrests made, families do not see the judicial process moving forward. The complaints against law-enforcing agencies received by the HRCP mission range from dereliction of duty, abandonment of post, and long delays in responding to distress calls to downright collusion with criminals. In at least some cases where police have failed to take action, policemen asked the victims' families to take revenge on their own. The people of Karachi feel that unless these shortcomings are removed there is little hope of peace and security.

11. From small to medium and large, all businesses are subject to extortion. The extortionists are believed to have links with all political groups present in Karachi and operate in areas where these political groups exercise greater control. Much of the violence is linked to disputes over who collects from which area. Businessmen feel that police operate under political pressure and patronage, and fail to protect them from extortionists and other criminals or to generally uphold the law. Infrastructure in Karachi has deteriorated, including electricity and gas supply, water availability, quality of roads and transport systems and garbage collection. This has generated frequent public protests, strikes and affected commercial activity and industrial output. The law and order situation has ruined Karachi's image internationally and foreign investment and trade has plummeted, leading to flight of capital and shifting of industries/businesses to other cities in Pakistan or abroad.

12. Lawyers in Karachi are being murdered in targeted killings. The lawyers continue to lodge protests even though they consider it unlikely that their peaceful protests and strikes would achieve anything substantial. The lawyers' target killings are elaborately planned and are certainly not random. Fifteen lawyers have been killed in the city since March. After May 2007, there is an impression among the legal community that lawyers

are being killed because of consciousness among members of the bar who raise important issues from the forum of the bar.

13. Despite the state's weakened capacity to keep order, the ultimate responsibility for the present situation and for addressing it and ensuring people's rights, including their right to life, lies with the state. People expect the state to act not for the sake of votes in the next elections, but simply because that is what the state is under an obligation to do. The arrest, trial and conviction of a few ringleaders will have a salutary effect on the situation.

14. Some people interviewed by the mission expressed complete disappointment with democratic governance and looked up to extra-constitutional forces for deliverance. Other said that the cycles of violence were never as intense under dictatorial rule. HRCP has explained to this tiny minority why it does not share their inclination for out-of-the-frying-pan-into-fire solutions.

Postscript

Underlining Karachi's fearsome potential for disorder, the conclusion of HRCP's fact-finding mission on July 31, 2011, was marked by a new and momentous surge in violence. For some time, the established pattern of targeted killings was overtaken by the kidnapping of innocent citizens, picked up on the basis of their ethnic identity, and their brutal murders. August, overlapping the holy month of Ramazan, thus certified a remarkable shift in the nature of violence that was committed in some affected neighbourhoods. An interlude that called for piety and forbearance was stained by displays of exceptional barbarity. There were reported instances of victims being butchered and videos made of their ordeal. In one week of August, 100 killings were counted.

Another apparently qualitative shift in the Karachi situation was the outrage that it aroused across the country, setting off a sequence of initiatives to deal with the crisis. Karachi has been a perennial source of concern for the entire nation but the manner in which the imperative for conducting an effective and indiscriminate operation in the city to restore peace and order in the city was felt and expressed was unprecedented. There was a national sense of anxiety and alarm about the implications of economic and social turmoil in Karachi.

While it is not possible, in this postscript, to go into details and benefit from any field study to make informed assessments of the various explanations of the evolving situation in Karachi, a few dominant trends can be identified. In this context, the proceedings of the five-judge special bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, held in the Karachi registry, are of considerable significance. This has been the outcome of the

suo motu notice of the security situation in the city taken by Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry. A number of clarifications have emerged in these proceedings. It has also seemingly reinforced the resolve of the administration to conduct what is generally described as a surgical operation to strike at all criminal networks, irrespective of their political affiliations. This operation, with the prominent involvement of the paramilitary Rangers personnel, is a work in progress and its impact would have to be judged at a later stage.

But it was Dr. Zulfiqar Mirza, former home minister in the Sindh government and a Pakistan People's Party leader, who exploded on the scene with his highly charged denunciation of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement. What has emerged as a fiery campaign, laced with sworn charges of treason against MQM leader Altaf Hussain and an equally forceful attack on Interior Minister Rehman Malik, was launched in a highly dramatic press conference held in Karachi on August 28. It appears to have the ingredients of a catalyst and has spawned a number of conspiracy theories. In any case, it is bound to have an influence on the nature of the political alliances that have to be worked out in Sindh. Although disowned by the PPP leadership, it is safely presumed that Dr. Mirza's revelations reflect the voice and the wishes of the PPP cadres in Sindh. In the immediate context, MQM was put on the defensive and its belated response has further ensured that Dr. Mirza and his utterances would remain a point of reference in the changing scenario.

Against this backdrop, the army leadership is seen to be watching the Karachi situation with keen interest. In the first place, it has publicly expressed its concern and has called for an effective operation to bring peace to Karachi. After its evident loss of face in the wake of the Abbottabad and the Mehran Base incidents, the army has apparently improved its image with some elements openly demanding military intervention in Karachi. HRCP's interim statement on the Karachi situation, issued on August 1, had noted that a few people had expressed complete disappointment with democratic governance and were looking towards extra-constitutional forces for deliverance – while, of course, categorically rejecting this option. It seems possible that the further breakdown in law and order in August had enhanced the citizens' loss of confidence in the political administration.

This invocation of the spectre of military intervention, it appears, has prompted the army to exercise its influence indirectly. Dr. Mirza had spoken about his consultations with the chief of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and his revelation of some hitherto classified documents relating to confessions made to Joint Investigation Teams led to more such disclosures in the media. The ISI briefed the Supreme Court bench on September 8 and it was the attorney general of Sindh who argued that because of the sensitivity of the matter, no one except the members of the bench should be allowed to attend the briefing. On the same day, Interior Minister Rehman Malik made a presentation

on the horrors of Karachi to the federal cabinet and its contents were not provided to the media. Also on September 8, Karachi was reported to be a subject of discussion in the conference of the Corps Commanders.

There are evident signs that the Karachi situation is moving towards a possible denouement. But there are little indications as to how the crisis will be resolved and whether it will satisfactorily protect the fundamental rights of the harassed citizens of Karachi. Without any doubt, a lot more than the future of the city itself is at stake.

Dark clouds are hovering across the Karachi horizon. A cloudburst is possible. Whether it will wash off the accumulated filth or wreak further havoc is hard to predict.

Recommendations

1. *So far the government's stance on Karachi has been long on rhetoric and woefully devoid of substance. That has led to an entirely justifiable crisis of confidence in the government's ability and sincerity to prevail over crime and bloodshed. The government must now reform its ways, speak with one voice and only make promises that it intends to keep.*

2. *The state has little writ in Karachi. Whatever strategy the government had for restoring law and order in the city has clearly not worked and must be thoroughly reviewed. Law enforcement agencies should be given political support and adequate resources to be effective. The police department should be depoliticised and given the confidence that they would not be signing their death warrants by acting against criminals. Effective investigating of the large-scale murder of policemen in the city and prosecution wherever possible would also send a positive signal of the government's commitment and support. Political intervention to secure the release of criminals the police do arrest has been alleged in several quarters. Proper investigation into these allegations and punishment of anyone found guilty will have a deterring effect on the various gangs.*

3. *In order to re-establish the independence, credibility and community respect of the police, they must resume implementing the law without fear or favour in all fields, major and minor (traffic, encroachments on roads, tackling street crime, better crime investigation procedures, etc). The involvement of non-political community leaders in policing work must be encouraged.*

4. *The people who have suffered losses in the bloodshed in Karachi must be given appropriate compensation without exception, for the simple reason that it was the obligation of the government to prevent the losses that have befallen the residents*

of the city.

5. *The state must use all means at its disposal to safeguard people's right to life and other fundamental human rights. It must demonstrate that it considers human life precious and has zero tolerance for the sort of killings that have become the norm in Karachi. Robust measures should also be taken to prosecute the unspeakable acts of terror that have visited Karachi and the law breakers' affiliation with one political party or another must not be seen as a 'mitigating circumstance'. No exceptions must be made in invoking the law of the land for any instigation to violence, harbouring of criminals, extortion of money and land grabbing. A witness protection programme, and technological support for investigation would go a long way in securing prosecution and conviction of the mischief makers.*

6. *Outsourcing of policing responsibilities to the community or different parties in different parts of Karachi must end forthwith. Karachi is in its present state of woe in large part because the state either looked the other way or facilitated political parties as they formed and armed militant wings, which are in essence private militias. All such militias must be disbanded. Resisting the temptation to pick favourites in Karachi would be central to a sustainable solution to the lingering law and order challenges in the city.*

7. *There is a broad consensus on the need to de-weaponise Karachi. The main political stakeholders may disagree on details, and the crisis of confidence in the government's word and its ability to deliver what it promises are bound to be major hurdles. However, there is no longer any alternative to biting the proverbial bullet. Karachi must be purged of all weapons, both licenced and otherwise, especially because political parties are known to have facilitated plenty of weapons licences for their activists and supporters. Nothing short of total de-weaponisation would work. It is up to the government to persuade all concerned that citizens and political parties would not need guns to protect themselves as the government would do that. It is well known that the state is not in charge in the city. It takes days for the law enforcement forces to get to sites of crime and violence. In the circumstances reluctance to give up weapons is obvious. The task would not be easy because of the severe lack of confidence in the government, but a sincere effort has to be made. Beefing up security to prevent more weapons being smuggled into the city must be the first step.*

8. *Instead of jointly striving to address the causes of friction and stamp out violence, all political actors in Karachi have been content with playing to the galleries in their respective constituencies. The level of mutual distrust among the main political parties in Karachi is truly astounding. However, the fact that they have remained part of coalition governments for years testifies that politics is indeed art of the possible. All political parties should make an effort for the sake of the perpetually suffering*

people of Karachi to work for peace as enthusiastically as they have to arm themselves. The decision would be made easier if a clear message is sent by the government that violence and crime will not be tolerated in the name of politics and reconciliation.

9. *It is time to take a critical look at Karachi's urban growth and address the challenges of overpopulation, lack of employment, housing, transport and uneven/ill-planned development of infrastructure on priority and in consultation with the people. Prioritisation and resource allocation in this respect must actively seek to prevent discrimination and perceptions of favouritism.*

10. *The state land grabbed by the encroachers should be recovered to send a message that there would be no premium in grabbing or dealing in such land as it would be reclaimed by the state without exception. Low-cost incremental housing (in the style of Khuda Ki Basti) should be developed on the recovered land to prevent ghettoisation of the city.*

11. *Mainstreaming and integrating all communities in Karachi is vital because of the multi-faceted polarisation of the city. Imaginative steps need to be taken to prevent discrimination or marginalisation of particular communities to end the resentment on which violence feeds. No-go areas established by different political parties in Karachi should be cleared and barriers should be removed permanently.*

12. *Reports of hospitals treating patients on the basis of ethnicity underline not only the deep fissures in Karachi but also the urgent need for steps to promote inter-communal harmony and tolerance.*

13. *All illegal immigrants in the city should be registered.*

14. *Civil society organisations must not sit on the sidelines anymore. They must play their role in campaigning for de-weaponisation, engage the people and organise discussion groups to sustain the dialogue.*

15. *There is a consensus that extortion rackets thrive partly on the people's inability to secure facilities (licences, permits, access to utilities, transport) to which they are lawfully entitled. A thorough revamping of the public service functions of the administrative agencies will reduce the people's dependence upon and vulnerability to extortionists.*

16. *Last but not least, state intervention in Karachi's politics must end. The state should think of caring for and dealing with the people instead of abandoning them to the whims of armed gangs masquerading as political groups.*

Killings in Karachi violence

(Jan 1-Aug 31, 2011)

Date	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total
1	2	1	5	4	5	5	6	16	44
2	2	1	0	1	0	4	9	29	46
3	4	0	4	4	5	2	5	7	31
4	6	4	5	4	3	5	10	6	43
5	4	2	6	2	5	5	10	1	35
6	0	0	3	2	9	3	31	3	51
7	0	1	5	5	5	8	7	11	42
8	4	1	7	3	5	4	37	6	67
9	3	1	6	2	3	7	38	11	71
10	2	2	4	4	3	4	2	4	25
11	3	4	0	4	3	5	3	6	28
12	5	0	7	5	7	2	7	10	43
13	9	4	13	0	4	5	8	10	53
14	10	3	11	13	3	13	4	7	64
15	12	0	10	5	7	11	17	8	70
16	5	1	6	6	3	13	4	14	52
17	5	0	7	9	6	6	19	1	53
18	1	2	8	3	1	1	14	22	52
19	0	3	5	6	0	2	7	29	52
20	3	4	11	1	3	10	9	35	76
21	3	0	14	5	2	3	3	12	42
22	0	3	6	5	5	6	0	11	36
23	4	2	12	0	2	5	21	12	58

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Date	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total
24	3	5	9	5	4	6	11	7	50
25	1	2	15	9	1	7	21	1	57
26	5	1	10	1	4	5	7	3	36
27	1	1	3	4	2	6	7	3	27
28	1	0	2	4	5	3	8	2	25
29	0		1	6	2	3	9	4	25
30	0		5	5	0	3	11	5	29
31	0		4		2		13	4	23
Total	98	48	204	127	109	162	358	300	1,406