



# MONITOR

## Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan

June 2015



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## Ominous Banners Appear in the Heart of the Provincial Capital



The banner, courtesy of the Traders of Circular Road, Lahore, is displayed at the Charing Cross, outside of the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab building (seen in the background)

The banner, displayed in full glare in front of the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab at Mall Road, Lahore, contained the following text:

“(30) baras pehlay jin siyasadnanon kay gharon main choolha nahin chalta tha, jo chotay motay aik karkhanay ya cinema kay malik thay, aaj woh kharbon-pati kaisay ban gayay? Dehshatgard madrassay kee chat kay neechay ho ya siyasad kee chattri talay, mazhabi dehshat gardi kay khilaaf kamyabiyon kay baad lutairon, qabza groupon, aur bhatta khoron kay khilaaf Zarb-e-Azb jari rahay gi. Zardari Sahib, ab eent say eent inhi ki bajay gi.

*Kadam barhao, Raheel Sharif – qaum tumharay saath hai”*

### Translation

“How have the politicians, who were barely able to make ends meet thirty years ago, become billionaires now? Whether the terrorist operates under the Madrassa, or under the patronage of politics, after the success against religious terrorism, Zarb-e-Azb will continue against plunderers, land mafia and extortionists. Zardari Sahib, these are the people who will be destroyed completely.

Take the step, Raheel Sharif. The nation stands with you”.

The text of the banner indicates that it was probably motivated by the reaction to Mr. Zardari's speech of June 16, 2015 in which he had apparently criticised the Military. However, it is extraordinary and a sign of times that the businessmen (the core constituency of the PML-N) in a city that is the home town and power base of PML-N, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif, people are pinning hopes of combatting crime on the Army Chief and openly asking him to 'take the step' and not the Provincial or Federal Governments and their leaders. This is a part of the emerging trend in which the COAS is presented as the 'saviour' and the elected Governments, Prime Minister and the Chief Minister are almost marginalised.

## Mr. Asif Ali Zardari's Fiery Broadside

If one thing defined civil-military relations in Pakistan in June 2015, it was perhaps the fiery speech made by the Co-Chairman of the PPP and former President of Pakistan, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari on June 16, 2015. The diatribe, which is almost unconventional for Mr. Zardari's usually passive demeanour, was openly critical of the Military, as he warned it against 'stepping out of its domain'.<sup>2</sup>

PILDAT believes that the renewed vigour observed in the Karachi Operation during the past few months has created several ruptures in the civil-military seams, especially in Sindh. At least two political parties, the MQM and the PPP, appear to be facing the brunt of the operation. It is perhaps for the very same reason that the two are reportedly seeking a political alliance again, with Mr. Zardari also reaching out to other political parties.



Mr. Asif Ali Zardari during his fiery speech made on June 16, 2015<sup>1</sup>

Relevantly, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari in speech on June 16, 2015 stated that:

*“Hamari kardaar-kashi karna chorr doh. Agar hum nay apki shuru ki, toh pata nahin Pakistan bannay say aj tak kitnay jarnailon [Generals] ki shuru ho jayay gi. Main nahin chahta kay institution hamaray kamzor hon. Iss liay kay hamain pata hai kay kitnay courton main case chal rahay hain, aur kitnay chalnay walay hain jiss main apkay paitee bhai, woh accused hain. Unki list lay kay jiss din hum nay press conference ki, toh apki eent say eent baj jayay gi. Iss waqt poori dunya main jab ap kamzor ho rahay ho, hum apkay shaana bashaana kharray rehna chahtay hain ... Yeh hamara institution hai. Ap nay sirf 3 saal rehna hai. Uss kay baad apnay chalay jaana hai. Hamesha kay liay hum nay rehna hay. Toh humain mutt tang karo. Agar humain tang karnay ki koshish kee toh hum apki ki bhi eent say eent baja dain gay ... Hum iss waqt, jab aik sarhad peh apko Bharat nay lullkara hua hai, doosri sarhad pay apko kuch kaladam tanzeemon nay lullkara hua hai, jin k peechay bhi RAW hai, Balochistan main apko RAW nay lullkara hua hai aur saath main kuch baloch sardaron kay bachon ko rakha hua hai. Toh hum apko kamzor nahin karna chahtay. Toh hoshyaar, hoshyaar, hoshyaar, hoshyaar!”*

### Translation

“Stop with our character assassination. If we start with yours, then no one knows the number of Generals that may be implicated, since the formation of Pakistan. I do not want to weaken our institutions because we know there are cases pending in court, along with others that might be introduced in which your colleagues are accused. The day we do a Press Conference on the basis of that list, you will be destroyed. We want to stand besides you as you are being weakened... This is our institution. You will stay for only three years, while we will be here forever. Therefore, do not vex us. If you try doing that, then we will destroy you... We do not want to weaken you at this time when on one frontier, you are facing challenges by India, on the other by some proscribed organisations supported by RAW [Research and Analysis Wing], along with the challenges it has posed for you in Balochistan in collusion with the children of a few Baloch *sardars*. Therefore, beware, beware, beware, and beware!”

Yet again, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari in his evasive style did not directly refer to any person or institution in the speech. However, with allusions to security challenges that the country is facing, and the resultant 'weakening' of the institution, it is clear that he is addressing the Military leadership.

1. Picture courtesy daily Dawn

2. For details, please see Zardari cautions military establishment for 'stepping out of domain', Dawn, June 17, 2015, as accessed on July 02, 2015 at: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1188576>

Such criticism of the Armed Forces by a person who had been President / Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and whose party rules a Province at a time when we are in a state of war is irresponsible, to say the least. Mr. Zardari or the representatives of the Sindh Government should have raised it at appropriate forum such as the apex committee. Additionally, Mr. Zardari should be giving out facts and constitutional references if he chooses to go public on an issue as serious as this rather than going for an emotionally charged tirade. Mr. Zardari's party, instead of endorsing his tirade, should have held him accountable for irresponsible utterances.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps displaying the 'twice shy' syndrome in the aftermath of its posture following the assassination attempt on Mr. Hamid Mir, the Federal Government's quick criticism of Mr. Zardari's speech provides yet another window into the complex nature of our present-day equation of civil-military relations. That the Prime Minister cancelled his pre-scheduled meeting with Mr. Zardari after the latter's outburst could have been enough of a signal of him distancing himself from Mr. Zardari's views. However, in a very curious fashion, Mr. Sharif, the elected Prime Minister of Pakistan, especially called the Chief of Army Staff, who was on a visit to Russia at the time,<sup>3</sup> to reportedly convey personally to the Army Chief his distancing from Mr. Zardari's "criticism of the armed forces."

The statement issued from the PM House, quoting Mr. Sharif, went on to even credit the "coordination between the civilian and military leadership" to have "strengthened democracy" in Pakistan:

*"Coordination between the civilian and military leadership has strengthened democracy. This harmony is evident in the decisions taken by the All Parties Conferences (APC) during which the civilian and military leadership set joint national targets."*<sup>4</sup>



Office of the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) was raided by the Pakistan Rangers Sindh on June 15, 2015<sup>5</sup>

### **Raid on the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) Office: Are the Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) 'Acting Beyond their Authorities'?**

Saying that the Pakistan Rangers' 'raid' on the office of the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) and Lines Area Development Project (LADP) on June 15, 2015 ruffled a few feathers within the Sindh Government will be an understatement.<sup>6</sup>

Director General of Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) based in Karachi, Maj. Gen. Bilal Akbar's presentation to the Apex Committee Meeting on June 04, 2015 had already delineated land grabbing and 'China-cutting' as two sources for funding of the terror-nexus prevalent in Karachi. With the dubious flight from the country of the

SBCA's previous Director General, Mr. Manzur Qadir, the SBCA and LADP appear to be in the front and centre of the

3. While the comments in the media by the PPP Vice President Senator Sherry Rehman essentially said that Mr. Zardari's statement referred to former Military dictators, a press release emanating from the party's Central Executive Committee meeting held on June 17, 2015 stated that "taking notice of media comments on the co-chair's remarks made at a party event where only one part of the speech was emphasized repeatedly. The meeting decided that it is important for all institutions to work within their mandated constitutional parameters." As accessed on July 9, 2015 at: <https://mediacellppp.wordpress.com/2015/06/17/ppp-central-executive-committee-resolution> Additionally, Mr. Qamaz Zaman Qaira, a senior member of the PPP stated that 'PPP had strong reservations about role of the Army but always respected it'. For details, please see the tweet issued by the PPP's Media Cell on June 18, 2015, as accessed on July 09, 2015 at: <https://twitter.com/MediaCellPPP/status/611507788301205505>
4. For details please see Nawaz cancels Zardari meeting after anti-military outbursts, Dawn, June 17, 2015, as accessed on July 02, 2015 at: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1188745>
5. Picture courtesy The Express Tribune
6. For details, please see Rangers raid SBCA office over illegal construction in Sindh, The News, June 15, 2015, as accessed on July 02, 2015 at: <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-188107-Rangers-raid-SBCA-office-over-illegal-construction-in-Karachi>

alleged land grabbing in Karachi.

However, the letter written by the Chief Minister of Sindh, Syed Qaim Ali Shah, MPA, to the Director General of Pakistan Rangers (Sindh), Maj. Gen. Bilal Akbar, on June 17, 2015 showed that the Sindh Government had decided to take exception to the raids conducted by the Rangers. It stated, “*It has been reported that the offices of SBCA and LARP were raided on June 15 and the officers were harassed, waylaid and also mishandled. This reflects that the Rangers are acting beyond their authorities and mandate. It is therefore advised to restrict your movement as per the authority given to you*”.<sup>7</sup>

The development raises two questions of relevance, especially with regards to the role that Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) have acquired in law enforcement in Sindh:

1. What are the powers available to Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) in the law enforcement dynamics of the province?
2. Where exactly did the Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) break the protocol, prompting the Chief Minister to write the letter?

Although the answer to the first is not patently clear, it is obvious that the raid on the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) was the catalyst for the letter. As for the powers available, the letter makes a specific reference to ‘*clause 1 of subsection 3, of section 4 of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997*’<sup>8</sup> to highlight the powers given to Pakistan Rangers (Sindh),<sup>9</sup> although *prima facie*, the said provision defies the position of the Sindh Government.

The response given by Maj. Gen. Bilal Akbar to the letter is also worthy of consideration. During a media talk, he stated that the raid had been based ‘*on intelligence that a suspect named Yasir is running a network of terrorism in there [the SBCA Office]*’. During the same interview, he stated that the Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) were authorized to undertake targeted operations like on Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) under powers vested by the Apex Committee, headed by the Chief Minister of Sindh, Syed Qaim Ali Shah, MPA, who issued the letter in the first place.<sup>10</sup>

However, as PILDAT has already noted in its Monitor on Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan for January 2015, the legal standing of the Apex Committees, specifically as a decision-making forums, remains in question. No official notification was circulated by either the Federal or the Provincial Governments regarding their formation and the citizens remain in the dark about their terms of reference, composition, etc.<sup>11</sup>

The Civil Armed Forces, including the Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) have been assigned the role of policing and prosecution of ‘*enemy aliens*’ and ‘*combatant enemies*’, which ostensibly the suspect named Yasir at the SBCA may qualify as, under the Protection of Pakistan Act, 2014.<sup>12</sup> It has also been seen in the past that the Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) have been given policing powers on multiple occasions by the Provincial Government, rather than affecting any systematic reform in the Police Service of Sindh. The Civil Armed Forces have, therefore, become a crucial part of the law enforcement landscape in Sindh, considering their presence in the role for the past 20 years.

Holistically, the result of these apparently contradictory statements will be a compromise on the effectiveness of the Karachi Operation, which saw a renewed vigour in June 2015. It contributes not only to the civil-military friction observed in Sindh during the recent months, but also exacerbates the impression of a confused State and its various institutions in cracking down against the terrorist nexus persistent in Karachi.

7. For details, please see Overstepping boundaries: CM tells Rangers to stay within its mandate, Express Tribune, June 18, 2015, as accessed on July 02, 2015 at: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/905400/overstepping-boundaries-cm-tells-rangers-to-stay-within-its-mandate>

8. Ibid.

10. For details, please see DG Rangers says authorized to take actions like SCBA, Samaa TV, June 18, 2015, as accessed on July 02, 2015 at: <http://www.samaa.tv/pakistan/18-Jun-2015/dg-rangers-says-has-power-to-take-actions-like-scba>

11. The publication can be accessed at: [http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/CMR/MonitorOnCivil-MilitaryRelationsinPakistan\\_Jan012015\\_Jan312015.pdf](http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/CMR/MonitorOnCivil-MilitaryRelationsinPakistan_Jan012015_Jan312015.pdf)

12. For details, please see the PILDAT publication titled Legislative Brief, Protection of Pakistan Act, 2014, which can be accessed at: [http://www.pildat.org/publications/publication/LB/PILDATLegislativeBrief20\\_ProtectionofPakistanAct2014.pdf](http://www.pildat.org/publications/publication/LB/PILDATLegislativeBrief20_ProtectionofPakistanAct2014.pdf)

## Rs. 230 Billion and the Terrorist Nexus in Karachi

In an apparent indictment of the civilian administration in Sindh, a Press Release issued by the Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) on June 11, 2015 alleged that annually a total of Rs. 230 billion was collected through illegal means in Karachi.

The statements declared the 'District Government, District Administration, construction companies, estate agents and police officials' to be complicit in the racket.<sup>13</sup> The Press Release was based on a presentation by Director General Pakistan Rangers (Sindh), Maj. Gen. Bilal Akbar, during a meeting of the Apex Committee of Sindh on June 04, 2015, chaired by Chief Minister of Sindh, Syed Qaim Ali Shah, MPA.

The development signifies yet another public statement, critical of the Sindh Government, issued by the Military leadership with regards to the Karachi Operation. It came on the heels of the speech made by Corp V Commander, Lt. Gen. Naveed Mukhtar on May 16, 2015, encapsulating the Military leadership's concerns about performance of the Sindh Government vis-à-vis law and order situation in the province.<sup>14</sup> The weeklong lapse between the presentation at the Apex Committee meeting, and the Press Release issued on its basis was a cause of perplexity for many observers. However, some clue for the delay may be furnished by a Report published in The News that stated:

*"In the last apex committee meeting [i.e. on June 04, 2015], the Chief Minister had agreed to constitute a Committee to look into the allegations regarding involvement of ministers, politicians, bureaucrats in serious financial crimes, which directly or indirectly contribute to terrorism and other grave crimes. However, after the Chief Minister had consulted his party leadership, it was decided not to proceed against Ministers, politicians and senior members of the bureaucracy on the basis of Rangers' complaint".<sup>15</sup>*

Given that this was indeed the case, it unfortunately signifies that the existing forums for civil-military interaction in Sindh, and their effectiveness have significantly been exhausted. The Press Release issued patently belies frustration on the part of the Military leadership with regards to the Sindh Government stalling the formation of a Committee to investigate the allegations.

A Committee was finally formed by the Sindh Government, upon orders of the Chief Minister, on June 12, 2015. However, for many observers, it is nothing more than an eyewash as the Committee's independence is questionable on account of its very composition which consists of two hand-picked former (not serving) members of the Judiciary, and the Home Secretary of Sindh (who reports to the Home Minister and the Chief Minister and hence can't be expected to be a part a quest which may embarrass the Chief Minister or his Cabinet colleagues and party comrades).<sup>16</sup>

PILDAT believes that adequate internal mechanisms already exist within the Sindh Government to hold those accountable that committed the crimes mentioned in the allegations levelled by the paramilitary force. Considering that the Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) have given a precise amount of Rs. 230 billion collected through illegal activities, it implies that sufficient evidence may already exist to carry out an effective prosecution. This should indeed be the course adopted by the Sindh Government rather than the formation of a Committee to apparently give a false sense of comfort to not only the various institutions involved, but also the populace, also leading to a critical waste of the Government's time and resources.

13. According to the Press Release, these illegal activities include extortion, land-grabbing, smuggling of Iranian diesel and illegal water supply, and 'China-cutting'. For details, please see Over Rs. 230 billion collected in Karachi annually: DG Rangers, Geo TV, June 11, 2015, as accessed on July 02, 2015 at: <http://www.geo.tv/article-187689-Over-Rs.230-billion-illegally-collected-in-Karachi-annually-DG-Rangers>
14. For details, please see the PILDAT publication titled Monitor on Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan, May 2015, which can be accessed at: [http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/CMR/MonitorOnCivil-MilitaryRelationsinPakistan\\_May012015\\_May312015.pdf](http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/CMR/MonitorOnCivil-MilitaryRelationsinPakistan_May012015_May312015.pdf)
15. For details, please see War of nerves between PPP and establishment, The News, June 12, 2015, as accessed on July 02, 2015 at: <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-323188-War-of-nerves-between-PPP-and-establishment>
16. For details, please see Sindh govt. forms Committee to probe Rangers' terror-funding claims, Dawn, June 13, 2015, as accessed on July 02, 2015 at: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1188002>

## Growing International Role of the COAS

The developments of June 2015 further indicate the continuation of the developed international role of the COAS. The highlight for June 2015 in this regard was the COAS' three-day visit to Sri Lanka that lasted from the June 06-08, 2015. The culmination of his visit was the meeting with the Sri Lankan President, Mr. Maithripala Sirisena, on June 08, 2015. Apart from Mr. Sirisena, the COAS also met the Sri Lankan Prime Minister, the State Minister for Defence, the Secretary of Defence, the Chief of Defence Services, and Commander of the Sri Lankan Air Force.<sup>18</sup>



COAS calling on the Sri Lankan President, Mr. Maithripala Sirisena on June 08, 2015<sup>17</sup>

According to the media reports and Press Release issued by the ISPR, Pakistan's Ambassador did not accompany the COAS to Sri Lanka during his meeting with Sri Lanka's civilian leaders. It remains a cause of concern not only for the distorted civil-military equation in Pakistan, but even from the perspective of good statecraft, that the country's envoys in foreign nations visited by the COAS are not represented in the latter's interaction with civilian leadership of the foreign governments.

With each passing day, the Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Raheel Sharif, appears to be in the front and centre of Pakistan's international diplomacy initiative. Whether it can be merely described as “close coordination” in Prime Minister Sharif's words,<sup>19</sup> or a crafty 'division of labour' resulting out of the alleged “deal” between the Premier and the Army Chief,<sup>20</sup> perhaps no conclusive facts may ever be available. However, while this apparent trend may appear to be serving short-term gains of either office holders, it is questionable how these developments will cast their shadow in the long run on the strength, maturity and character of its institutions.

## No Meeting of the National Security Committee – Yet again!

It has been observed each month that as new security related challenges arise, the current elected Federal Government fails to utilize the National Security Committee, a forum of its own creation.

Consider, for instance, only the list of defence-related challenges observed during the month of June 2015:

- i. First and foremost, increased friction was observed in Pakistan-India relations, as the rhetoric was significantly kicked-up between the two.
- ii. The onslaught against the MQM's top leadership took a particularly sensitive turn as the BBC report surfaced on June 24, 2015, alleging that the MQM had received Indian funding, along with holding regular interactions with India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).<sup>21</sup>

17. Picture courtesy the ISPR

18. For details, please see the Press Release issued by ISPR on June 08, 2015, as accessed on July 02, 2015 at: [https://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press\\_release&id=2907](https://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press_release&id=2907)

19. For details please see Nawaz cancels Zardari meeting after anti-military outbursts, Dawn, June 17, 2015, as accessed on July 02, 2015 at: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1188745>

20. For details, please see Pakistan Army Chief Holds Off Generals Seeking PM's Ouster, Reuters, September 05, 2014 at Voice of America: <http://www.voanews.com/content/reu-pakistan-army-debate-prime-minister-nawaz-sharif-ouster-protests/2439957.html>

21. The complete report can be accessed at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-33148880>

However, even though June 2015 saw the Prime Minister and the COAS interacting twice, no meeting of the NSC was held. It is worth remembering that the latest meeting of the NSC was held on October 15, 2014, nearly 8 months ago, while the institution has met for a total of four times since its formation on April 22, 2013.

In a country beset with more than its fair share of security-related issues and crises, the lack of utilisation of institutions formed with the intent speaks volumes about the style of governance and handling of crises by the elected Federal Government.<sup>22</sup>

### Premier-COAS Interactions



During the May 2015, the Prime Minister and the COAS met twice<sup>23</sup>

During the month of June 2015, the Prime Minister and COAS official met twice.

1. The first meeting between the two was held on June 23, 2015 as the COAS called on the Prime Minister. During the meeting, *'It was decided that operation against criminals and terrorists would continue unhindered across the country to optimally utilize the environment created due to phenomenal successes of Zarb-e-Azb'*.<sup>24</sup>
2. The second meeting was held on June 30, 2015 during which *'Operation Zarb-e-Azb as well as return, rehabilitation and resettlement of Temporarily Displaced Persons (TDPs) came under discussion'*.<sup>25</sup>

The Federal Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, MNA was not present in either of the two meetings held during month.

22. While supporting the need for a body of consultation on national security decision-making, and acknowledging the need for consulting Military in Pakistan's national security decisions, PILDAT has maintained that a review of the decision-making role of the NSC is required. The details of the proposed reform can be accessed in the heading **The National Security Committee: A Dormant Institution?** On page no. 13 of the PILDAT publication titled **Monitor on the Quality of Democracy in Pakistan; June 01, 2014-May 31, 2015**, which can be accessed at: [http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/Democracy&LegStr/MonitorQualityofDemocracyinPakistan2ndYearoftheFederalandProvincialGovernments\\_June01\\_2014\\_May31\\_2015.pdf](http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/Democracy&LegStr/MonitorQualityofDemocracyinPakistan2ndYearoftheFederalandProvincialGovernments_June01_2014_May31_2015.pdf)

23. Picture courtesy Pakistan Today

24. For details, please see the Press Release issued by the Prime Minister Office on June 23, 2015, titled PM meets Chief of Army Staff, which can be accessed at: [http://pmo.gov.pk/press\\_release\\_details.php?pr\\_id=1055](http://pmo.gov.pk/press_release_details.php?pr_id=1055)

25. For details, please see the Press Release issued by the Prime Minister Office on June 30, 2015, titled Prime Minister meets Chief of Army Staff, which can be accessed at: [http://pmo.gov.pk/press\\_release\\_details.php?pr\\_id=1061](http://pmo.gov.pk/press_release_details.php?pr_id=1061)