

ANNUAL REPORT - 2023



Human Rights Council of Balochistan
HAKKPÁN BALOCHISTAN



AN OVERVIEW OF HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN BALOCHISTAN

601 FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED, 525 KILLED



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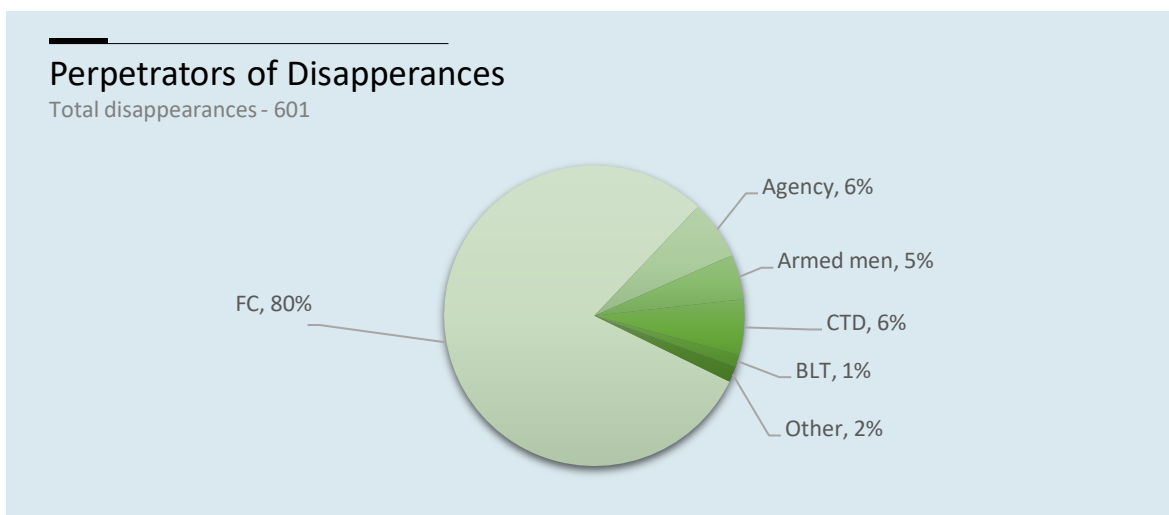


Human Rights situation in Balochistan: 601 forcibly disappeared, 525 killed in 2023

The Human Rights situation in Balochistan during 2023 was marked by grave violations, with 601 cases of enforced disappearances and 525 reported killings. This report is based on verified data, representing only a fraction (1/3) of the actual incidents due to limited internet access in many areas heavily controlled by the military, or completely ignored in terms of communication facilities. The violations were predominantly perpetrated by the Law Enforcement Agencies of Pakistan in the pretext of maintaining the security in the region.

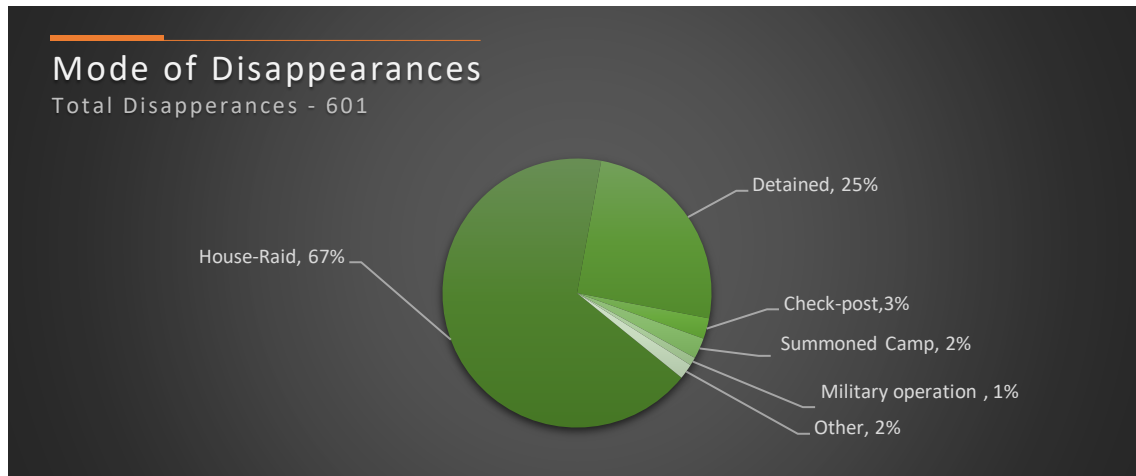
Enforced Disappearances

The year witnessed 601 cases of enforced disappearances, including 6 females and an infant. Key contributors to these incidents were the Frontier Corps (FC) with 480 cases, secret agencies with 38, Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) with 36, and Baloch Liberation Tigers (BLT) with 8 cases. Collaborative involvement extended to rangers, police, death squads, and the Frontier Works Organization (FWO), a branch of the Pakistani Army. Known and unknown armed militants, often operating at the behest of the Army, were also implicated. Only 142 victims have been released so far, leaving the fate of the remaining victims shrouded in uncertainty, while 18 of them were extra-judicially killed by the state forces.



Methods employed in abductions:

The methods employed in abductions varied, showcasing a disturbing spectrum of tactics, including house raids in 403 cases, detentions from different areas in 151 cases, detentions from checkpoints in 15 cases, summoning to camps in 15 cases, kidnappings in 6 cases, detentions during military operations in 6 cases, and 5 in uncertain methods.



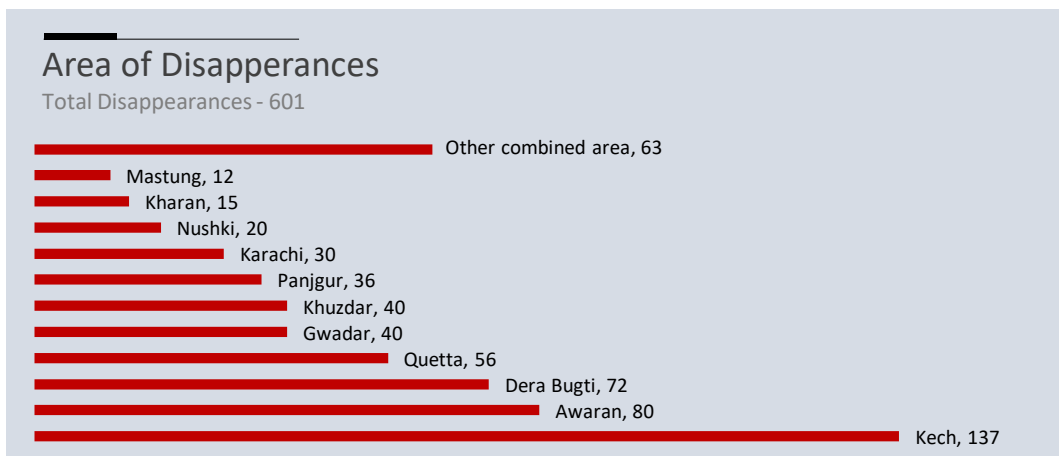
Forces systematically besiege entire villages to conduct military operations, house-to-house search operations and raids, often resulting in the detention of individuals who are then relocated to undisclosed locations. A comprehensive [report](#) by The Balochistan Post disclosed a staggering 425 military raids and 202 operations in Balochistan during 2023. On July 12, casualties among livestock and injuries to several local farmers, including women and children, were reported due to heavy firing and shelling by forces during a military operation in Rais Tokh near Sui, Dera Bugti. Moreover, the presence of military checkpoints, stationed every 5-10 kilometers throughout Balochistan, also contributes to the detention and disappearance of [hundreds](#). Another alarming method involves summoning individuals to military camps, where compliance often results in mysterious disappearances or deaths. Family members of the summoned also face similar fates. In 2023, a distressing number of 14 individuals were forcibly disappeared after being summoned to military camps; some were later released, some killed in custody, and the rest are still missing. On February 16, forces raided the Tank area of Mashkay, brutally beaten the local residents who failed to comply with camp requirements and threatened them with punishment if repeated.

Occupation of victims:

Victims of these abductions come from diverse backgrounds and occupations. Among them, students make up the majority with 129 individuals. Other professions represented include 15 laborers, 6 shepherds, 5 oil traders, 4 drivers, 4 businessmen, 4 security guards, 3 tailors, 3 farmers, 3 doctors, 2 shopkeepers, 2 policemen, 2 herdsmen, 2 singers, 2 poets, 2 teachers, and 2 boxers. Additionally, there was one victim each from professions such as footballer, writer, journalist, vegetable seller, boxer, data operator, activist, landlord, levies man, and three disabled persons. However, the professions of the remaining victims could not be specified.

Area of Abduction:

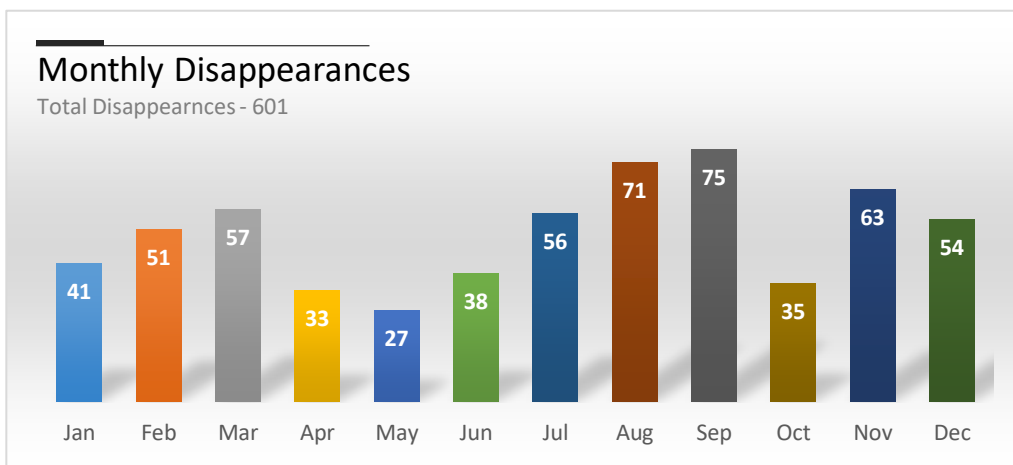
The reported abductions spanned 30 different regions inside and outside Balochistan, with varying numbers across each area. Notably, Kech experienced 137 cases, Awaran had 80, Dera Bugti recorded 72, Quetta with 56, Gwadar and Khuzdar witnessed 40 cases each, Panjgur 36, Karachi 30, Nushki 20, Kharan 15, Mastung and Sibi 12 cases each, Harnai 10, Kalat 7, Dera Ghazi Khan 7, Kohlu 6, Hub 4, Islamabad 3, Kachhi and Rawalpindi 2 cases each, and Washuk, Taunsa, Chaghai, Naseerabad, Usta Mohammad, Jhal Magsi, Ziarat, Lasebela, Punjab, and Sindh documented one case each.



Months:

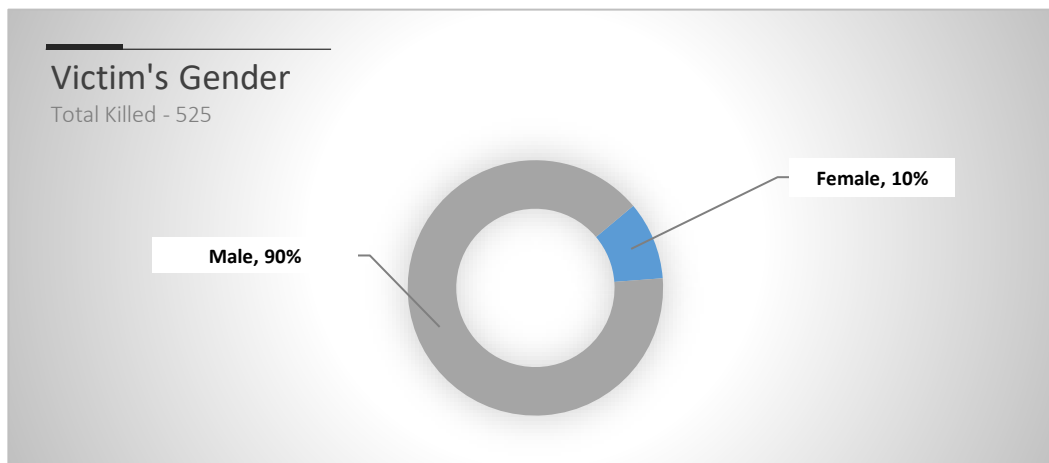
The reported abductions unfolded across the months as follows:

- January initiated the year with 41 cases, setting a concerning precedent.
- February continued the upward trend with 51 reported abductions.
- March witnessed a further increase, reaching 57 cases.
- April experienced a relative decline with 33 cases.
- May saw a slight decrease to 27 reported abductions.
- June marked a resurgence with 38 reported cases.
- July maintained an elevated level with 56 reported abductions.
- August witnessed a peak in activity with a staggering 71 cases.
- September sustained a high level, reaching 75 reported abductions.
- October experienced a decline with 35 cases.
- November surged again with 63 reported abductions.
- December maintained a concerning level with 54 cases.

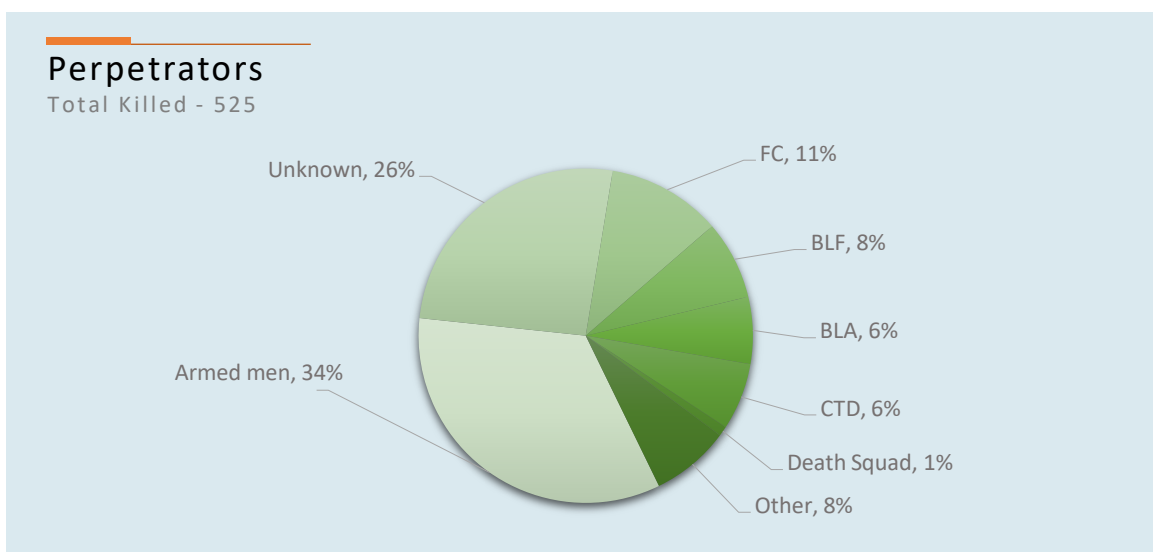


Killings

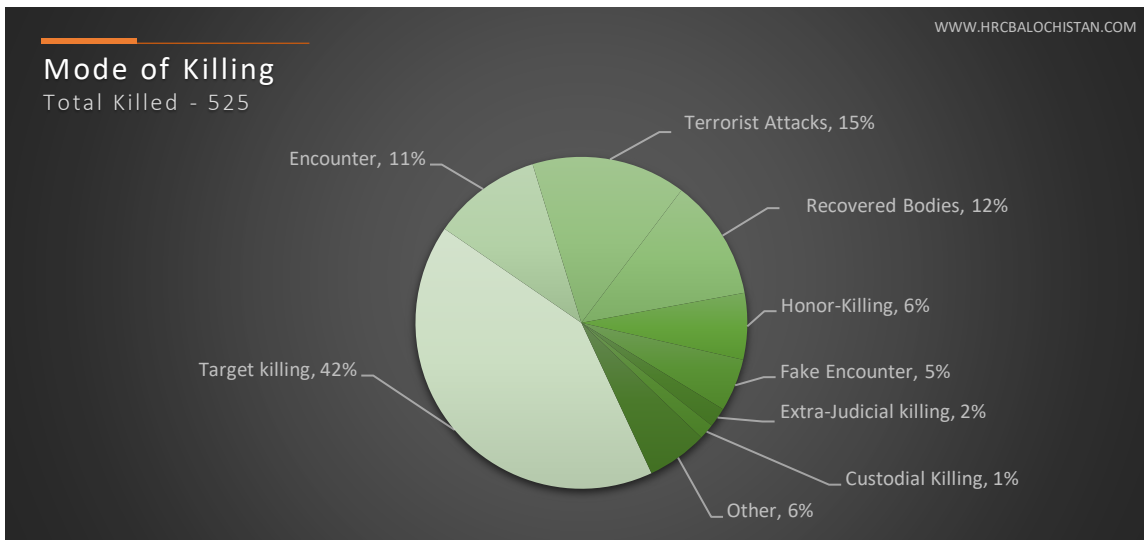
Throughout the year, a total of 525 killings were reported in the region, with 52 women among the victims, and 193 individuals yet to be identified. The incidents range from 41 different areas, with Kech, Mastung, Quetta, Awaran, and Khuzdar emerging as the most vulnerable regions.



In the domain of targeted killings, 218 individuals, including 24 women, fell victim to armed militants. A breakdown reveals that 140 of these killings were carried out by unknown armed men, often for unspecified reasons. The Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) was responsible for 40 killings, including two others who were killed in the group’s custody; the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) was responsible for 34 killings, including 5 killed in its custody; BLA (Azad) was responsible for 2 killings, and United Baloch Army (UBA) for 1, citing alleged collaboration with state forces as the reason. Additionally, state sponsored death squads eliminated 5 individuals, Daesh was responsible for 2, and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed 1 life.

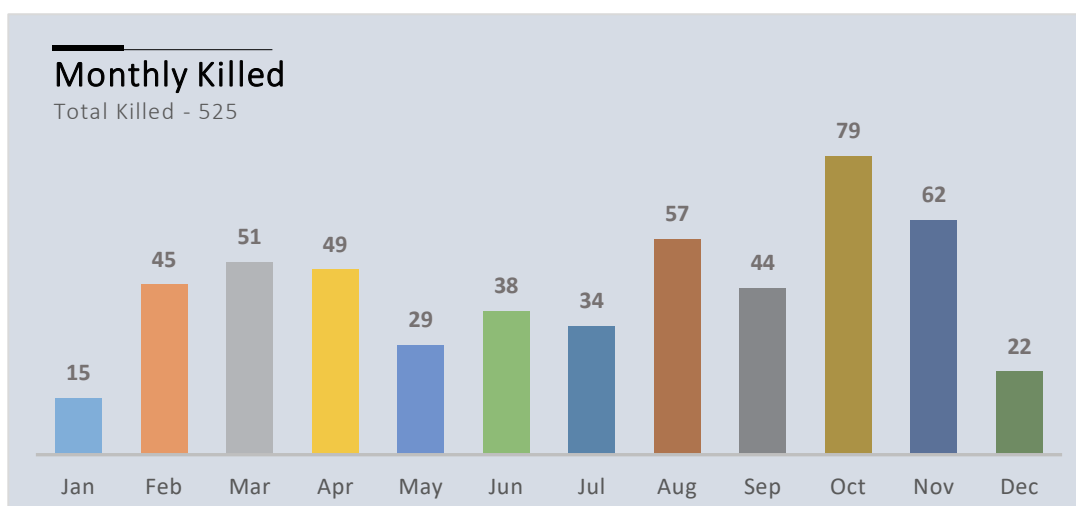


However, 56 people killed in clashes with forces, predominantly by FC with 45 casualties, while 10 killed by the CTD, and one by Levies. Among those killed were 8 BLA members, 29 BLF members, 5 TTP members, 2 former Baloch militants inadvertently targeted by FC, and 13 more individuals claimed by FC as alleged militants, though no group has officially owned them as of now.



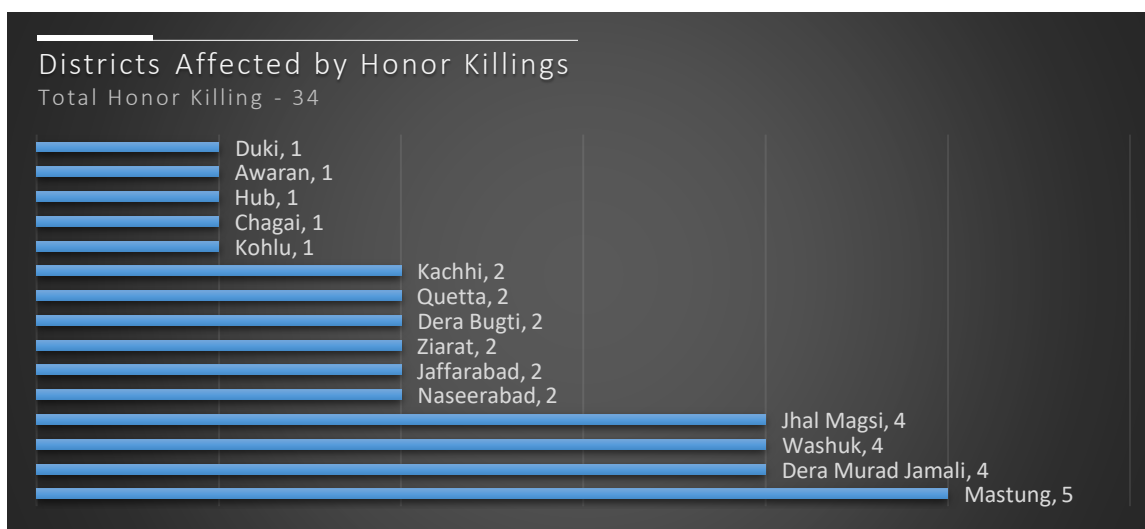
In a series of distressing events, a total of 79 lives were lost due to incidents ranging from suicide attacks to landmine explosions, landslides, and blasts carried out mostly by unknown terrorist groups. A heart-wrenching suicide attack near a mosque in Mastung claimed the lives of at least 55 individuals during a procession on the occasion of 12th Rabi'ul Awwal, leaving numerous others injured. 6 individuals lost their lives in two separate bomb blasts in district Barkhan, 3 people were killed in an attack by the Tehreek-e-Jihad Pakistan, 3 casualties due to explosions were reported in Chaman, 2 each in Khuzdar and Harnai, and 1 in Dera Bugti. Six more lives were claimed in an explosion within a coal mine in Harnai, and one person was killed in a tragic landslide incident.

Adding to the tragic toll, on May 16, a female school teacher named Najma from Awaran Gishkore reportedly committed suicide, citing exhaustion from working for Pakistani secret agencies and facing blackmail. Another incident involved an individual named Attaullah stabbed to death in Khuzdar.



Honor killings and tribal conflicts:

Honor killings and tribal conflicts are highly prevalent in Balochistan, often carried out with impunity. Every year, numerous lives are lost due to honor killings, personal enmities and tribal conflicts. The security situation is dire, allowing anyone to kill people without fear due to the state's negligence and its non-interference policy in domestic violence, tribal affairs, and enmities. In 2023 alone, 34 honor killings took place in different areas of Balochistan, resulting in the deaths of 14 females and 20 males. Moreover, 16 people were killed in tribal and personal enmities, and 10 in land disputes. Perpetrators of honor killings include husbands, fathers, brothers, fiancés, death squad members, and paid armed men.



Recovered dead bodies:

During the year, 62 bodies were discovered from various locations, including 7 women and 2 children. Among these bodies, 37 showed signs of mutilation, and 2 were found decomposed. However, 31 bodies remained unidentified. Most of the time, they are buried without identification.

In many cases, these bodies have been identified as those of previously disappeared persons, often subjected to severe torture by state forces before being discarded in desolate areas. Families of missing persons endure added anguish when these bodies are buried without identification.

The reasons and perpetrators behind most cases are unknown, although one identified perpetrator is former minister and influential tribal leader Sardar Abdul Rahman Khetran who operates a personal jail in Barkhan likewise many other state-sponsored tribal leaders, and has a history of crimes. He kidnaps and kills individuals who fail to meet his demands or resort to expose his crimes. Three youths, Mohammad Nawaz, and Abdul Qadir, sons of Khan Mohammad Marri, and Amira Bibi, were discovered in a well in Haji Kot area of Barkhan. They were confined in the private jail of Khetran since 2019 and then killed. Five more family members are still in his custody according to Marri.

Granting extensive authority to tribal leaders and influential individuals, the state has inadvertently allowed them to wield control over all regional affairs. Unfortunately, most of them, are deeply corrupt and implicated in various crimes.

In another case, Pathan Khan from Kohlu shared a similar story of his sister Zargul being held in a private jail by Wadera Gahru Mehndani, who is demanding money for her release. Similarly, Abdul Samad, a resident of Sibi, stood before the Press Club in Quetta, holding the Holy Quran in his hands, appealing for help. He shared the heart-wrenching story of his father, Mir Hassan, and sister, who fell victim to influential people in Barkhan. According to Samad, they were deceived into establishing a relationship, but upon arrival, his sister and father were taken into custody and left stranded.

Moreover, two dead bodies recovered from Khuzdar and Hub. One of them was of eight-year-old missing girl Humaira, daughter of farmer Abid from Jhal Magsi, who was found raped and murdered in the Nal area of Khuzdar. The second body that of a woman, was recovered from the Hub River, indicating she was stoned to death.

Blasphemy:

A school teacher in Turbat, Abdul Rauf lost his life on August 5 in a tragic incident related to blasphemy. Teaching at Bolan Grammar Center, a private language center, he was accused of making blasphemous statements in class based on a misinterpretation by one of his students. Following a religious Jirga in Malikabad, where he was summoned to clarify his statements, Rauf was shot dead. A video clip emerged, showing confrontations with aggressive Mawlvis accusing him.

Compounding the tragedy, Abdul Rauf's brother Sameer and sister-in-law Hani Gul were later kidnapped from their home in the Sarawan area of Iranian Balochistan by unknown militants dressed in civilian clothes. Unfortunately, soon their mutilated dead bodies were discovered.

This raises serious concern; Balochistan is already grappling with severe tragedies, and now the state's alleged empowerment of local death squads and religious elements is exacerbating the situation by promoting extremism.

Extrajudicial killings:

The body of Ghulam Farooq, a resident of Tehsil Zahri in Khuzdar, was recovered in Quetta on August 31, 2023. He was abducted by the FC from Mastung on October 27, 2022, where he was staying for labor. Ghulam Farooq, the breadwinner of his family, traveled to different places for work to support his family.

Allah Dad, son of Ibrahim, was killed by FC during a military operation in the northern hilly areas of Kolwah on March 18. He was tortured to death, and his dead body was handed over to Gishkore Levies, while his property and cattle were taken into custody by the forces and transferred to the forces camp at Tanzala.

Dadbaksh Miskan was tortured to death by FC for four consecutive days in the military camp of Gishkore. He was summoned to an army camp and disappeared until his dead body was found on February 2. According to local people, he had succumbed to injuries sustained during custody.

Salahuddin, son of Zafar Ali, was detained by FC and CTD. He went missing and was later found in a critical condition near Kharan city on March 14, and died on the way to the hospital.

Two Baloch youths were abducted by FWO guards in Karachi. Sharif Bugti, one of them, was tortured and killed on December 13, and his body found on a roadside, while the other youth, Salman Bugti, remains missing.

Moreover, ten individuals were extrajudicially killed as a result of indiscriminate firing by FC, police, and levies, including one incident involving Iranian forces. These tragic events occurred during indiscriminate firing on vehicles and house raids in various incidents. Notably, three of the victims were drivers, and one was a local policeman who was shot dead by personnel of FC.

Fake Encounters:

Throughout the year, 27 individuals, previously disappeared, fell victim to extrajudicial killings in fake encounters carried out by the CTD and FC. The victims include students, a tailor, a blind man, and a shopkeeper. These forces, when confronted by Baloch militant groups, often open fire on the civilian population or stage encounters to eliminate missing persons.

The first fake encounter in 2023 occurred on April 19, when FC personnel claimed to kill three individuals during a military operation. The victims, Ghulam Fareed Shahwani, a resident of Mastung district, was abducted in August 2022 and had been held by the forces since then. Azeem Khan, son of Yar Khan Marri, was taken from a check post on March 21, 2023, while traveling from Quetta to Nishpa, Harnai. Additionally, in August 2017, forces had tragically killed nine members of his family during a military operation. Hazrat Sumalani, a resident of Sanjawal, was abducted on March 23, 2023, and had been in the custody of forces since then. He had experienced forced disappearance in 2017, enduring seven months of incommunicado detention before being released.

Similarly, on September 1 the CTD killed five people in an alleged encounter. The victims were identified as Muhammad Yasin, Fahad Ali, Jamal Deen, Obaidullah, and Zakir Rahmat, all of whom had previously been forcibly disappeared and were under the custody of the forces. Zakir, who was blind, had been taken on June 13 by FC personnel from the Bunestan area of Panjgur, along with another individual named Waseem son of Abdeen, who remains missing. On that same day, the CTD announced the elimination of three alleged ISIS affiliates in Quetta, including Uttar Khan Bangulzai. However, his family strongly refuted these claims, asserting that he had been forcibly taken away by the CTD and intelligence agencies 25 days prior, during a raid on their home in Mastung.

On September 16, the CTD staged encounters in Khuzdar and Jafarabad, resulting in four deaths, including Ameer Bakhsh and Ijaz Mir Ahmed. Ijaz was taken during a military raid on August 23, and Ameer disappeared on September 5 with his uncle Khuda Bakhsh Zehri, who is still missing. The remaining two have still not been identified.

On October 7, two more people, Mohammad Yusuf Nichari and Mohammad Shafi Bangulzai, lost their lives in fake encounters by the CTD. Yusuf had disappeared on August 26, and Shafi was taken on August 13 along with his brother Mohammad Salman.

On November 8th, CTD officials reported the killing of three militants in Khuzdar. However, subsequent investigations revealed distressing details about the victims. Aftab Sumalani, previously disappeared by forces from Hazarganji Quetta on August 11, was identified among them. Another victim, Abdullah, had

been detained and disappeared by Pakistani forces two years prior. Hamza, the third victim, also had a history of disappearance.

Later, on November 19, the police brought three bodies to the Hoshap police station, asserting they were victims of a car explosion. Shockingly, upon identification, it was revealed that these victims—Nabi Bakhsh, Adil Essa, and Shahjan Essa—were students who had been forcibly disappeared on August 22.

Then, on November 23, the CTD once again transported four bodies to Teaching Hospital Turbat, alleging their deaths occurred in an encounter on Banuk Chadahi Pasni Road. One of the deceased, Balach, a tailor at Star Plus market and a resident of Absar in Turbat, had been detained by the CTD from his home on October 29th. Strikingly, he was produced in court on November 21st, and the court granted him a 10-day remand. During this period, his family met him, provided financial support, and witnessed legal proceedings, completely contradicting the claims made by the authorities regarding his encounter death.

The other three victims in this incident were identified as Saif, son of Umeed, also a resident of Absor, abducted on 1 August from his grocery shop; Shakur of Noor Jan, from Pullabad Kasano area of Tump, abducted on 25 June; and Wadood, son of Mubarak, a resident of Panjgur, abducted from an army camp on 27 April after being summoned.

On February 2, 2024, following an attack by Baloch militants in the Mach area of Bolan, the forces eliminated five missing persons, presenting them as militants. Among these, the bodies of Bashir Ahmad Marri and Arman Marri, forcibly abducted on July 2, 2023, along with Shakeel Ahmed, who was disappeared on June 4, 2023, were identified by their relatives. The fourth body was recognized as Subedar, son of Gulzar Khan, who was forcibly disappeared from Harnai Bazaar on September 9, 2023. His family was one of the participants of Islamabad sit-in protest for his recovery. Unfortunately, the identity of the fifth body remains unidentified, raising fears that this individual, too, is a victim of enforced disappearance.

Protests

In response to these events, one of the major protests in the history of Balochistan occurred in 2023, triggered by the fake encounter of Balach Mola Bakhsh. Widespread outrage led to protests across the region, as people from various walks of life joined victims' families against systemic violence and ethnic targeting by the state through practices like enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings. Despite peaceful protests, the forces responded with lethal measures, beating and disrespecting protesters and creating hurdles for marchers. The government's response included harassment, violence, and the arrest of hundreds of participants. Key figures leading the protests, such as Dr. Mahrang Baloch, Sammi Deen Baloch, and Gulzar Dost faced unjust accusations in fake FIRs, such as conducting rallies without proper permissions and inciting opposition against the state and the army by chanting anti-state and army slogans. They were labeled as terrorists and propagandists of their adversaries for addressing basic demands. Despite garnering widespread support across Pakistan, the protests fell short of bringing substantive changes in behavior of the state with regard to the core issues of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings. Regrettably, these killings persisted, with the forces engaging in the killing of five more individuals in fake encounters immediately following the conclusion of the protest in January. The forces killed five more previously disappeared persons in a staged encounter including Subedar son of Gulzar Khan whose family was among the protesting families in Islamabad to seek justice for him but received his dead body instead. Moreover, two young boxers, Shoaib Baloch and Zaman Baloch were also

brutally killed in March 2024. They were forcibly disappeared by the forces during a raid in the Lyari area of Karachi on August 12, 2023, alongside three others. Their families held a protest demonstration on December 28 for their safe release, but they also received their dead bodies.

Protests are a daily occurrence in Balochistan, in response to continuous human rights violations by state forces and socio-economic challenges faced by the local population that takes them to the streets to seek justice. According to the [data](#) published by The Balochistan Post a total of 813 protests were recorded in Balochistan and other parts of the globe, with 786 held inside Balochistan. Quetta had one of the highest numbers of protests with 554, followed by Turbat, Chaman, Khuzdar, Hub Chowki, and Gwadar. The protests addressed various issues, including enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, government employees' problems, border trade concerns, educational facilities, water scarcity, electricity load shedding, and basic amenities provision.