

## PAKISTAN'S COUNTER-INSURGENCY CAMPAIGN IN BALOCHISTAN: AN ANALYSIS

**Fahad Nabeel\* & Dr. Mariam Asif\*\***

### Abstract

*Balochistan has been under the shadow of militant outfits for more than a decade. In early 2000s, the Pakistani state mostly employed military force and socio-economic developmental initiatives in order to curtail these groups. However, in recent years, political measures like Aghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan in addition to integration measures like 'Balochistan Peace Program' and 'Youth Mobilization Campaign' have been undertaken to weaken support for militant outfits and anti-state narrative. Meanwhile, security forces have also changed their approach since 2013 by eliminating the second and third tier leadership of militant outfits. The paper presents an overview of how military, socio-economic, political and integration measures employed by the state have played an instrumental role in restoring peace in Balochistan. Despite the restoration of peace, there is still a need to address the socio-economic grievances of a large segment of the people residing in the province. Until these grievances are addressed Balochistan will remain engulfed in turmoil.*

**Keywords:** *Balochistan, Deprivation, Pakistan, Peace, Security, Counter Insurgency*

### Introduction

Insurgency and counter-insurgency is depicted through various terms like guerilla warfare, (the stress is on tactics); armed resistance (emphasis is on the violent aspect); asymmetric warfare (demonstrates the asymmetries in power); "small wars," and revolutionary wars.<sup>1</sup> All these terms explain the various dimensions and

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\* MPhil International Relations, Department of International Relations, NDU, Islamabad. Email: fahadnabeelfn@gmail.com.

\*\* Lecturer, National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. Email: mariam.saqib1982@gmail.com.

characteristics of insurgency and counter-insurgency. Generally speaking, insurgency and counter-insurgency is defined as the use of force and violence to secure political aims and ensure that opponent surrenders to one's will.<sup>2</sup>

According to David Galula, the main target of the counter-insurgents is the insurgents' cause, which requires to be brought into disrepute or be 'stolen' by demonstrating that the injustices aggravating the insurgency are being properly addressed by the state. The second part is the experience of the counter-insurgent itself and tackling with the insurgencies which includes the political determination of its leadership and the external political, financial, military and moral aid.<sup>3</sup> For a number of researchers, the administrative limit of the counter-insurgent and their ability to control the population and territory without leaving a vacuum of governance where other structures of the insurgents could arise, are significant determinants in counter-insurgencies.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, counter-insurgency campaigns require effective coordination of all state apparatuses and agencies (military, police, intelligence, diplomatic, economic, judicial and propaganda devices). Thus, most of the authors assume that there are no military solutions to insurgency.<sup>5</sup>

Insurgency and counter-insurgency usually last for years and even decades in some cases, wherein both sides are trying to breakdown the other. In the words of Steven Metz and Raymond Miller, in most instances, insurgencies continue so long that their entire generations have to suffer from conflicts.<sup>6</sup> Since the independence of Pakistan in 1947, Germany-sized Balochistan, which constitutes 44 per cent of Pakistan's total landmass, has faced five waves of ethno-nationalist insurgency - 1948, 1958-59, 1962-63 and 1973-77. The fifth insurgency, which started around 2004, continues for over a decade thus making it the longest insurgency ever waged in any province of Pakistan.<sup>7</sup> At present, the most

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<sup>1</sup> Unaiza Niaz, *Wars, Insurgencies and Terrorist Attacks: A Psychological Perspective from the Muslim World* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 164.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> David Galula, *Counter-Insurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (London: Pall Mall Press) 19.

<sup>4</sup> Niaz, *Wars, Insurgencies and Terrorist Attacks: A Psychological Perspective from the Muslim World*, 167.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Steven Metz and Raymond Miller, "Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in the Twenty-First Century: Re-Conceptualizing Threat and Response," *Carlisle: US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Waleed Hashmi, "'Fierce and Warlike': Could the Baloch Separatist Movement Remain Pakistan's Longest Insurgency?" *Small Wars Journal*, accessed January

prominent ethno-nationalist organisations operating in the province are Baloch Liberation Army (both Hyrbyair Marri and Aslam Baloch factions)<sup>8</sup>, Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) and Baloch Republican Army (BRA).

The religious outfits have also been operating in the province which include Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi Al Alami (LJ-A). Most of the time, ethno-nationalist organisations have collaborated with these religious groups to conduct attacks in Balochistan. As a result, both ethno-nationalist and religious terror networks have been responsible for killing more than 5,500 people and wounding nearly 10,774 others in the province since 2006.<sup>9</sup>

In an attempt to address both these ethno-nationalist groups and religious terror outfits, the state of Pakistan employed some counter-insurgency measures. These include: military and law enforcement initiatives; socio-economic and political measures and integration efforts. The paper analyses the initiatives adopted by the Pakistani state against ethno-nationalist groups and religious terror outfits, the present obstacles to counter-insurgency measures, and recommendations for the success of counter-insurgency efforts in Balochistan.

## Military and Law Enforcement Measures

2004 onwards, Balochistan has been a victim of the fifth wave of ethno-nationalist insurgency.<sup>10</sup> The Musharraf regime initiated military operations in the region in February 2005 to deal with the security situation. The first step taken by the government was to ban Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) in April 2006. In the following days, bank accounts related with 42 suspected BLA members were frozen.<sup>11</sup>

The death of a significant Baloch leader, Akbar Khan Bugti in August 2006 served as a catalyst to the present ethno-nationalist insurgency as it not only aggravated the pace of the insurgency but

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28, 2018, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/fierce-and-warlike-could-baloch-separatist-movement-remain-pakistans-longest-insurgency>.

<sup>8</sup> In August 2018, Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) bifurcated into two factions – Hybyair Marri faction and Aslam Baloch faction. For details see, Fahad Nabeel, "Aslam Baloch's Killing: Implications for Balochistan Insurgency," *Centre for Strategic and Contemporary Research*, December 28, 2018, <https://cscr.pk/explore/themes/defense-security/aslam-balochs-killing-implications-for-balochistan-insurgency/>

<sup>9</sup> "Pakistan Security Reports," *Pak Institute for Peace Studies*, May 29, 2019, <https://www.pakpips.com/publications#1512730923805-d52fde57-07fa>.

<sup>10</sup> Mickey Kupecz, "Pakistan's Baloch Insurgency: History, Conflict Drivers, and Regional Implications," *International Affairs Review* 20, no. 3 (Spring 2012): 95-110.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 3.

increased the grievances of the people of Balochistan towards the federal government. In November 2007, the insurgency faced a huge loss in the form of the killing of BLA Chief Balaach Marri who died under disputed circumstances in Afghanistan.<sup>12</sup> Some BLA members without any proof assumed that BRA chief Brahumdag Bugti had a role in the killing of BLA chief and thus caused divisions between the two outfits.<sup>13</sup>

The action that was taken against BLA - the most prominent ethno-nationalist outfit - led to the weakening of the insurgency. Some of the dominant leaders of ethno-nationalist groups escaped to Afghanistan. The most significant among them was Brahumdag Bugti, who fled from Sui, Dera Bugti to Afghanistan. Bugti lived in Afghanistan as a state guest till October 2010 before he left for Switzerland.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, several leaders switched loyalties to the Pakistani side in exchange for amnesty. Moreover, frequent killings of civilians generated more hatred towards ethno-nationalist outfits. As a result, the province experienced a fragile peace. There was a 19 percent decrease in fatalities in 2007 in comparison to the previous year.<sup>15</sup>

Following persistent failure in bringing ethno-nationalists to negotiations, the PPP government decided to adopt 'carrot and stick' policy in 2010. In September 2010, the government put a ban on BRA, BLF, Lashkar-e-Balochistan, *Baloch Musallah Difai Tanzeem* (Baloch Armed Defence Organization) and Balochistan Liberation United Front, freezing their accounts and other assets.<sup>16</sup>

Security forces were able to make significant headway in the 'no-go areas' of Awaran district, which was considered as BLF's stronghold<sup>17</sup>, after the region was hit by an earthquake in 2013. The operations conducted by the security forces weakened the BLF and compelled the BLF

<sup>12</sup> Saleem Shahid, "Balach Marri killed: Violence in Quetta, Schools Closed," *Dawn*, November 22, 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Fahad Nabeel, "Factionalism in the Balochistan Insurgency – An overview," *Stratagem*, January 2017, 60.

<sup>14</sup> Shailaja Neelakantan, "Exiled Baloch leader Brahumdag Bugti to get Indian citizenship: Pakistan Media," *The Economic Times*, July 13, 2018, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/exiled-baloch-leader-brahumdag-bugti-to-get-indian-citizenship-pakistan-media/articleshow/54358610.cms>.

<sup>15</sup> Khuram Iqbal, "Counter-Insurgency in Balochistan: Pakistan's Strategy, Outcome and Future Implications," *Pak Institute for Peace Studies* (2008): 3, [www.san-pips.com/download.php?f=pvt0004.pdf](http://www.san-pips.com/download.php?f=pvt0004.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> "Pak Bans Five Militant Groups in Balochistan," *Hindustan Times*, September 8, 2010, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world/pak-bans-five-militant-groups-in-balochistan/story-ymIWTKHpdSfOHw9FrJf2kL.html>.

<sup>17</sup> Naziha Syed Ali, "Situationer: Who's Who of Baloch Insurgency," *Dawn*, June 1, 2015.

leadership to leave Awaran and take sanctuary in Iran. Following Operation Zarb-e-Azb and subsequent military operations, the focus of security forces shifted towards cleansing Balochistan from terror outfits. Since 2011, nearly 1,200 militants were killed in various counter-insurgency and intelligence-based operations.<sup>18</sup>

Since 2013, there has been a change in the military's way of dealing with the terror groups in Balochistan. Under the new approach, security forces started eliminating the second and third tier leadership of ethno-nationalist outfits and religious terror outfits. Through this new approach, security forces were successful in neutralizing chiefs of the Balochistan chapter of Lashkar-e-Jhagvi (LeJ) and Al-Qaeda (AQ), causing a severe blow to ethno-nationalist outfits. The main high-profile killings of ethno-nationalist and religious terror outfits are mentioned in Table 1.

**Table 1 – chiefs and senior commanders killed by security forces**

Date	Area	Group	Designation	Name
15 February 2015	Quetta	LeJ	Chief of Balochistan chapter	Usman Saifullah Kurd <sup>19</sup>
13 April 2015	Turbat	BLF	Commander	Hayatullah <sup>20</sup>
30 June 2015	Awaran	BLF	Commander	Balaach <sup>21</sup>
30 June 2015	Awaran	BLF	Commander	Shahjahan <sup>22</sup>
1 August 2015	Chaghi	AQ	Chief for Balochistan and southern Punjab chapter	Omar Abdul Lateef <sup>23</sup>
26 August 2015	Sui	BRA	Key leader	CheelaReesh <sup>24</sup>
30 January 2016	Mastung	BLA	Commander	Ashraf <sup>25</sup>
30 January 2016	Mastung	BLF	Chief Operational Leader	Dr. Manan Baloch <sup>26</sup>

<sup>18</sup> "Datasheet – Balochistan," *South Asia Terrorism Portal*, accessed January 28, 2019, <http://www.satp.org/datasheet-terrorist-attack/fatalities/pakistan-balochistan>.

<sup>19</sup> Amir Mir, "Killing of Usman Kurd a Major Blow to LeJ," *The News*, February 17, 2015.

<sup>20</sup> "BLF commander among 13 Militants Killed in Turbat Operation," *The News*, April 13, 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Syed Ali Shah, "Al Qaeda Chief of Balochistan and South Punjab killed in Chaghi: Bugti," *Dawn*, August 2, 2015.

<sup>24</sup> Syed Ali Shah, "Eight Militants Including Commander Killed: Frontier Corps," *Dawn*, August 26, 2015, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1202978>.

<sup>25</sup> Mohammad Zafar, "BLA Commander Killed in Crossfire during FC Raid in Mastung," *The Express Tribune*, January 30, 2016.

21 March 2016	Kohlu	BLA	Commander	Jamir <sup>27</sup>
21 March 2016	Kohlu	BLA	Commander	Baloch Khan <sup>28</sup>
28 September 2016	Dera Murad Jamali	BRA	Commander	Zafar Bugti <sup>29</sup>
11 November 2016	Hub	Jundullah	Chief	Amir Arif <sup>30</sup>
17 November 2017	Turbat	BLF	Commander	Younas Taukai <sup>31</sup>
4 April 2018	Kharan	BLF	Tactical combat unit commander	Ameer Baloch <sup>32</sup>
4 April 2018	Kharan	BLF	Tactical combat unit commander	Meeras Baloch <sup>33</sup>
20 July 2018	Kharan	BRA	Area commander	Abdul Bari Baloch <sup>34</sup>
21 October 2018	Bolan	BLA (Aslam Baloch faction)	Commander of Special Tactical Operations Squad	Fateh Qumbrani <sup>35</sup>

Source: Compiled by the authors.

As a response to the new approach adopted by the security forces, local leadership of most of the ethno-nationalist militant outfits and religious terror groups began to change their positions and code names for organizational and security purposes.<sup>36</sup> BLF leadership fled to Iran while

<sup>26</sup> "BLF Leader Killed in Gunbattle: Minister," *Dawn*, January 31, 2016.

<sup>27</sup> Mohammad Zafar, "Two BLA Commanders among 12 Militants Killed in Balochistan Operation," *The Express Tribune*, March 21, 2016.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> "FC Kills Militant in DMJ," *Pakistan Observer*, September 26, 2016.

<sup>30</sup> Sharif Khan, "Rangers Kill Jundallah Chief in Hub," *The Nation*, November 12, 2016.

<sup>31</sup> "Security Forces Kill 'BLF Commander Involved' in Turbat Massacre," *The Express Tribune*, November 17, 2017.

<sup>32</sup> "FC soldier martyred, two terrorists killed in Balochistan operation: ISPR," *Khyber News*, last modified April 4, 2018, <https://khybernews.tv/fc-soldier-martyred-two-terrorists-killed-balochistan-operation-ispr/>.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> "Two extremists killed, arms and ammunition recovered in Kharan," *Pakistan Today*, July 20, 2018.

<sup>35</sup> "BLA Commander Killed near Mach," *The Balochistan Post*, October 21, 2018, <http://thebalochistanpost.net/2018/10/bla-commander-killed-near-mach/>.

<sup>36</sup> Maaz Khan, "Balochistan Security in 2017," *Conflict and Peace Studies* 10, no. 1 (Jan – June 2018): 147.

many militants linked with BLA moved to various areas of Sindh. Feeling the need to cooperate for efficient response against the state, an increasing trend of forming alliances was observed among Baloch ethno-national militant outfits. In this aspect, BLA splinter faction, which was founded by Aslam Baloch, made an alliance with BLF in October 2017.<sup>37</sup> Few months later, BRA, UBA and LeB combined to form an alliance in February 2018 to help each other in conducting terror activities.<sup>38</sup> The alliance between BLA and BLF expanded by including the Baloch Republican Guards in April 2018. This new alliance was formally announced in November 2018 as Baloch Raji Aajoi Sangar (Baloch National Freedom Front). BRAS came into being in order to strengthen efforts to carry out coordinated attacks against Pakistani army; it also threatened Chinese interests in Balochistan including CPEC sites.<sup>39</sup> Baloch Republican Army's splinter faction<sup>40</sup> joined the conglomerate as a fourth group in May 2019.<sup>41</sup>

Despite shifting tactics of militant outfits, the military measures have played an important role in restoring peace, reviving economic activities and tourism in Balochistan. The residents of Dera Bugti, which was once considered a no-go area, now travel easily all across the province. Turbat, the second most populous city of the province, has witnessed return of businessmen, investors and artists from all over Pakistan.<sup>42</sup> Although exact figures are not available but there is a growing trend of domestic and foreign tourists returning back to explore Balochistan.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Fahad Nabeel, "Identity as a Pretext of Terror: Brief Backgrounder of Baloch Raaji Aajoi Sangar," *Centre for Strategic and Contemporary Research*, April 18, 2019, <https://cscr.pk/explore/publications/articles/identity-as-a-pretext-of-terror-brief-backgrounder-of-baloch-raaji-aajoi-sangar/>.

<sup>38</sup> Fahad Nabeel, "New Alliance among BSNGs – Prospects and Challenges," *Centre for Strategic and Contemporary Research*, March 10, 2018, <https://cscr.pk/explore/themes/defense-security/new-alliance-among-bsngs-prospects-and-challenges/>.

<sup>39</sup> Nabeel, "Identity as a Pretext of Terror: Brief Backgrounder of Baloch Raaji Aajoi Sangar."

<sup>40</sup> Baloch Republican Army bifurcated into two factions (one headed by Brahmdagh Bugti whereas the other one is headed by Gulzar Imam) in November 2018; For more details see: "BRA Commanders ka jlas, Gulzar Imampar ilzamat mustara, Naya Tarjuman Beebagr Baloch muqarar" بی آر اے "کمانڈروں کا اجلاس، گلزار امام پر الزامات مسترد، نیا ترجمان بیبگر بلوچ مقرر" (Meeting of BRA Commanders: Allegations against Gulzar Imam rejected; Beebagr Baloch appointed as new spokesperson), *The Balochistan Post*, November 19, 2018.

<sup>41</sup> "BRA (Beebagr) joining BRAS is a positive development – Baloch Khan", *The Balochistan Post*, May 31, 2019.

<sup>42</sup> Kiyya Baloch, "Amid Weakening Insurgency, Peace Returning to Remote Balochistan Corner," *Gandhara*, last modified April 18, 2017.

<sup>43</sup> "Tourism Flourishing after Security Boost," *The Express Tribune*, May 9, 2018.

## Political Measures

In March 2008, Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) came to power and adopted a number of confidence-building measures (CBMs) to address the grievances of Balochistan towards the federation. Some of the major measures were halting military operations; withdrawal of cases against former Chief Minister Akhtar Mengal; and tendering an apology to Balochistan. Further, in continuation of the CBMs, PPP introduced Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan (AHB) package with the objective of addressing the grievances of the people of Balochistan. Through the 7<sup>th</sup> National Finance Commission Award, Balochistan's share was enhanced from 7.05 per cent to 9.09 per cent. The introduction of 18<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment planned to give more autonomy to the provinces.

## Mainstreaming Separatists

In August 2015, the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif initiated the Balochistan Peace Program.<sup>44</sup> According to this program, a general amnesty was offered to those ethno-nationalists who were willing to surrender their arms before the state. Cash rewards were given to ethno-nationalists to enable their rehabilitation and to ensure their return to society as lawful citizens. More than 3,000 separatists have surrendered in the past three years.<sup>45</sup>

## Engaging Youth

Youth of Balochistan is an important group that needs to be engaged. Both ethno-nationalist groups and Islamist terror outfits are known for using youth for their nefarious activities.<sup>46</sup> Amidst such situation, Balochistan government and Army's Southern Command jointly launched Youth Mobilization Campaign in 2015 with the objective of promoting inter-provincial harmony among students and to demystify the existing stereotypes about one another.<sup>47</sup> Under the initiative, more than 40 tours have been arranged so far for students of Balochistan to different cities of Pakistan including Abbottabad, Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar and Quetta. Similar trips have been arranged for students from other provinces to various cities of Balochistan including Gwadar, Quetta and Ziarat as part of this campaign. Tours within Balochistan were also conducted so that students from southern Balochistan can visit northern Balochistan and vice versa to acquaint themselves with one another. In

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<sup>44</sup> Syed Ali Shah and Irfan Haider, "PM approves 'Pur-aman Balochistan' programme in Quetta," *Dawn*, August 6, 2015.

<sup>45</sup> Mohammad Zafar, "In Balochistan nationalist, sectarian terror is contained, says Zehri," *The Express Tribune*, October 24, 2017,

<sup>46</sup> "Child Soldiers Global Report 2008 – Pakistan," *Refworld*, May 20, 2008, [https://www.refworld.org/docid/486cb123c.html#\\_ftn25](https://www.refworld.org/docid/486cb123c.html#_ftn25).

<sup>47</sup> Fahad Nabeel, "Restoration of Peace in Balochistan,".



total, around 7,000 students have taken part in this campaign. The program has proved a success in transforming views about Balochistan and its people among youth of other provinces.

### **Engaging Women**

Like youth, special importance has been given to engaging women for the betterment of Balochistan. Security officials believe that women have more influential role in convincing their male relatives for either taking up or giving up arms. Realizing such influencing power of women, 50 per cent quota is allocated for females in every trip arranged under Youth Mobilization Campaign.<sup>48</sup>

### **Return of Missing Persons**

The issue of missing persons has remained a controversial matter for several years. There are conflicting figures about missing persons. The Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances has received 360 cases from Balochistan.<sup>49</sup> There are many people from Balochistan who are known to be jailed in Afghan provinces of Paktia and Nangarhar.<sup>50</sup> A major development took place around mid-January 2019, when *Voice for Baloch Missing Persons* (VBMP) temporarily brought an end to its camp after 10 years on the assurance of Chief Minister Jam Kamal that his government should be provided two months to resolve the issue. VBMP chairman Nasrullah Baloch has claimed that more than 250 missing persons have returned to their homes since the assumption of power by Kamal's government.<sup>51</sup>

### **Social Development Measures**

Besides the military and political initiatives, many socio-developmental measures have been implemented to raise the standard of living of the people in Balochistan. These attempts have played a significant role in weakening support for terror organisations, leading to a positive image of federation among people of Balochistan and improving the conditions of the local population.

### **Infrastructural projects**

During the rule of Musharraf, several important mega-projects were completed which include strategic Gwadar Port, Makran Coastal

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> "Data of Cases from March, 2011 To October, 2018," *Committee of Enquiry on Enforced Disappearances*, February 1, 2019, <http://coioed.pk/>.

<sup>50</sup> Fahad Chaudhry, "'Matter of missing persons politicised,' chief of missing persons commission says," *Dawn*, August 28, 2018..

<sup>51</sup> "Missing persons' relatives suspend protest after 10 years," *Daily Times*, January 17, 2019,

Highway, Mirani Dam and Sabakzai Dam. The Gwadar Port is the lynchpin for regional connectivity between South Asia, Central Asia and Middle East. It acts as sine qua non for China's Belt and Road Initiative. The port was formally operationalized in November 2016.<sup>52</sup> In addition, the construction of the Makran Coastal Highway has resulted in the development of coastal cities of Gwadar, Ormara and Pasni. Mirani Dam was built with the aim of supplying water for uncultivated land in Kech valley. It is also source of water for Turbat and Gwadar. Sabakzai Dam has the capacity to irrigate 10,000 acres of agricultural land.

A tribal conflict between the Luni (Pashtun tribe) and Marri (Baloch tribe) remained a hurdle in realizing the potential of the second largest coal mine in Asia, Chamalang Coal Mines, for more than three decades. In 2006, Pakistan Army took over and revived the project. Since re-opening of the project, more than 75,000 individuals of Luni and Marri tribes have been given employment.<sup>53</sup> In September 2017, then Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi inaugurated Kachhi Canal Project. Through this project, agricultural benefits are estimated to be Rs.10 billion per year. 72,000 acres of Dera Bugti will be irrigated in the initial phase of the canal project.<sup>54</sup>

### Educational Initiatives

In 2007, Southern Command of Pakistan Army started the Chamalang Beneficiary Education Program. The program initiated with the enrollment of 303 students and is now one of the biggest social sector development programmes in Balochistan. At present, more than 3,700 students are been given free education through this project.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, under AHB seats were reserved for Balochistan domicile-holder students in the universities and higher education rate has increased by 100 per cent.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>52</sup> "‘Today marks dawn of new era': CPEC dreams come true as Gwadar port goes operational," *Dawn*, November 13, 2016.

<sup>53</sup> "Army's Contributions in Development of Balochistan," *Pakistan Army*, February 5, 2019, <https://www.pakistanarmy.gov.pk/AWPReview/pDetails629f.html>.

<sup>54</sup> "Much-delayed Kachhi Canal's commissioning today," *Business Recorder*, September 5, 2017, [epaper.brecorder.com/2017/09/05/5-page/902911-news.html](http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/09/05/5-page/902911-news.html).

<sup>55</sup> Muhammad Khan, "The Socio-Economic Development of Balochistan (Pak Army's Contributions)," *Hilal English*, October 2013, <http://hilal.gov.pk/index.php/grids-preview/2014-09-09-14-38-33/item/652-the-socio-economic-development-of-balochistan-pak-armys-contributions>.

<sup>56</sup> Safdar Sial, "Pak-Afghan Relations Emerging Trends and Future Prospects," *Pak Institute for Peace Studies* (2011). url: [san-pips.com/download.php?f=164.pdf](http://san-pips.com/download.php?f=164.pdf).

More than 20,000 students of Balochistan have been admitted to educational institutions situated in the remote areas of the province, under Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps. In 2011, Sui was developed into an educational city by opening institutions like Balochistan Institute of Technical Education (BITE) and Military College Sui (MCS). These institutes have been established with the purpose of bringing Baloch youth at par with the students from the rest of the country. Cadets from MCS have won 'Sword of Honour'<sup>57</sup> consecutively in 2017 and 2018 and 'President's Gold Medal'<sup>58</sup> in 2017; nearly 4,500 students from Balochistan have received training through BITE and Army School of Technicians.<sup>59</sup>

For imparting quality education to the youth of Balochistan, Army and provincial government jointly established Gwadar Institute of Technology in April 2011. Army Institute of Mineralogy was established to impart basic knowledge and mining skills to the Baloch youth. Army also established Quetta Institute of Medical Sciences to promote medical education; Balochistan Institute of Marine Sciences for promoting vocational training in fishery and nautical sciences, and Balochistan Institute of Technical Education for imparting technical training.<sup>60</sup>

### **Employment Opportunities**

Through the AHB package, youth from the province has been recruited for different federal institutions including Federal Investigation Agency, Planning and Development Division and Anti-Narcotics Force, to name a few.<sup>61</sup> Over 3,900 candidates were recruited in the provincial education department. In order to attract Baloch youth to join Pakistan Army, Army's Southern Command launched a recruitment drive by relaxing pre-requisite medical and educational standards. Consequently, it has resulted in the recruitment of more than 20,000 youths in Pakistan Army since 2010.<sup>62</sup> Baloch representation in the Army now constitutes around 3.5 per cent of the total strength. Presently, 1,500 officers and 30,000 soldiers from Balochistan are serving in the military.

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<sup>57</sup> "Annual Parents Day held at Sui military college: ISPR," *The News*, November 18, 2018.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> "Army's Contributions in Development Of Balochistan," *Pakistan Army*, January 31, 2019, <https://www.pakistanarmy.gov.pk/AWPReview/pDetails629f.html>.

<sup>60</sup> "COAS General Kayani's achievements," *The News*, November 27, 2013.

<sup>61</sup> "2,000 Baloch separatists surrender in two years," *Pakistan Observer*, January 23, 2018, <https://pakobserver.net/2000-baloch-separatists-surrender-two-years/>.

<sup>62</sup> "Rules relaxed to induct Baloch youth into army: Gen Raheel," *Dawn*, December 13, 2013.

## Border Security Management Measures

### Afghanistan

Historically, Afghanistan has served as a safe haven for ethno-nationalist militant groups. BLA's first chief Balaach Marri was operating from Afghanistan when he was killed in November 2007.<sup>63</sup> Switzerland-based Brahmdagh Bugti, who is chief of Baloch Republican Army, resided in Afghanistan as a state guest before he fled Switzerland. Aslam Baloch, who was heading the splinter faction of Baloch Liberation Army operated from Afghan province in Kandahar since 2005 before he was killed there in December last year.<sup>64</sup> Meanwhile, it was also reported that BLF chief Dr. Allah Nazar also operated from Afghanistan.<sup>65</sup>

From 2010 onwards, cross-border raids from Afghanistan-based Islamist terror groups started wherein these anti-Pakistan organisations began to target Pakistani border areas and villages.<sup>66</sup> The principal Islamist terror groups functioning from Afghanistan include Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and its different factions, Lashkar-e-Islam, LeJ, LJ-A, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar and Hizb-ul-Ahrar.<sup>67</sup>

Since the completion of tripartite commission's mandate following the end of International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan's mission in December 2014, no coordination mechanism existed between Pakistan and Afghanistan regarding border security.<sup>68</sup> Thus, to stop cross-border attacks and movement of militant groups in Balochistan from Afghanistan, Pakistan implemented a two-pronged strategy – diplomatic engagements and border security management.

Following the tragic terrorist attack on Army Public School Peshawar in December 2014, both Pakistan and Afghanistan initiated cooperation for checking cross-border terrorism. As a result, both

<sup>63</sup> Nabeel, "Aslam Baloch's killing: Implications for Balochistan Insurgency."

<sup>64</sup> Anisa Shaheed, "Baloch Separatist Leader Killed In Kandahar Attack: Reports," *Tolo News*, December 26, 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/baloch-separatist-leader-killed-kandahar-attack-reports>.

<sup>65</sup> Nabeel, 60.

<sup>66</sup> "Pakistan Security Report 2011," Pak Institute of Peace Studies, last modified November 27, 2017, <https://pakpips.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/sr2011.pdf>.

<sup>67</sup> Tahir Khan, "A Profile of Pakistani Militants Killed in Afghanistan," *Center for Research & Security Studies*, December 31, 2017, <https://crssblog.com/a-profile-of-pakistani-terrorists-killed-in-afghanistan/>.

<sup>68</sup> "Afghanistan Delaying Move for Border Coordination," *Dawn*, December 5, 2015.

countries coordinated border patrols.<sup>69</sup> In July 2016, military officials from both countries met in Kabul to discuss various affairs including technical aspects of border security.<sup>70</sup> Meanwhile, Pakistani authorities repeatedly urged both Afghan authorities and NATO forces to target anti-Pakistan militants operating from Afghanistan. Consequently, a large number of high-profile leaders of different anti-Pakistan militant groups have been targeted in Afghanistan from 2016 onwards.

As part of diplomatic engagements, Pakistan handed over a list of 76 Afghanistan-based terrorists to Afghan authorities in February 2017 and asked them to either hunt them down or hand them over to Pakistan.<sup>71</sup> The visit of Pakistani Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa to Kabul in October 2017 gave birth to Afghanistan and Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS), an initiative between the two countries for cooperation in wide-ranging areas including counter-terrorism and violence reduction<sup>72</sup>; which became operational in May 2018.<sup>73</sup> Since 2012, more than 400 Afghanistan-based militants have been killed by security forces while they were attempting to intrude into Pakistani territory (See Table 2). The work on fencing Balochistan side of Pak-Afghan border, which is about 1400-km in length, is expected to be completed by the end of 2019.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Fareed Assad, "Reaching out to Islamabad: Options for Kabul," *Pajhwok*, September 21, 2015, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/opinions/reaching-out-islamabad-options-kabul>.

<sup>70</sup> Safdar Sial, "Security Landscape of Pakistan in 2016," *Conflict and Peace Studies* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 59.

<sup>71</sup> "Afghan Officials Summoned to GHQ, asked to Handover 76 'most wanted' Terrorists," *Dawn*, February 17, 2017.

<sup>72</sup> "New framework for Talks with Afghanistan becomes Operational," *Dawn*, May 15, 2018,

<sup>73</sup> "Islamabad-Kabul to Coordinate Military Operations against Terrorists," *The News*, July 25, 2018,

<sup>74</sup> "Work on 900km Pak-Afghan Border Fence Completed: Army," *Dawn*, January 28, 2019.

**Table: 2 –Number of Afghanistan-based militants killed by Pakistani security forces.**

Year	Number of militants killed
2012	247
2013	10
2014	33
2015	25
2016	11
2017	89
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>415</b>

Source: Pak Institute of Peace Studies<sup>75</sup>

## Iran

In recent times, Iranian soil has been utilized by Baloch ethno-national militant groups for a number of objectives. Iran serves as a transit point for entering into Afghanistan. BLA's splinter faction chief Aslam Baloch fled to Afghanistan via Iran after getting wounded by security forces in Balochistan in March 2016. Meanwhile, training camps of ethno-national militant outfits have also been created in Iranian region bordering Pak-Iran border.<sup>76</sup> The Iranian security forces are also providing protection to the families of Baloch militant groups' commanders.<sup>77</sup> The militants affiliated with ethno-national militant outfits have reportedly also undergone medical treatment in Iran.<sup>78</sup> Recently, Iranian soil has been used to plan terror attacks inside Pakistan.<sup>79</sup>

In 2014, a number of steps were taken by Pakistani and Iranian authorities regarding border security. In May, both countries agreed to establish hotline between Frontier Corps (FC) in Balochistan and the Iranian border security force. In October, Inspector General of FC Balochistan met with Iranian border force's chief in Tehran and both officials agreed to boost intelligence cooperation in terms of border security.<sup>80</sup> Following then Pakistani National Security Advisor Nasser Khan Janjua's three-day visit to Tehran in July 2016, both countries decided to

<sup>75</sup> "Pakistan Security Reports," *Pak Institute for Peace Studies*, May 29, 2019, <https://www.pakpips.com/publications#1512730923805-d52fde57-07fa>.

<sup>76</sup> "Fidayeen Majeed Brigade, the Elite Unit of BLA," *Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies*, last modified November 26, 2018, <https://www.picss.net/fidayeen-majeed-brigade-the-elite-unit-of-bla/>.

<sup>77</sup> Muhammad Amir Rana, "Religion, Nationalism and Insurgency in Balochistan," *Dawn, EOS*, July 14, 2019.

<sup>78</sup> "Fidayeen Majeed Brigade, the Elite Unit of BLA."

<sup>79</sup> Nabeel, "Tracing the Activities of Baloch Sub-Nationalist Groups in Iran."

<sup>80</sup> Syed Ali Shah, "Pak-Iran Agree on Intelligence Cooperation following Border Unrest," *Dawn*, October 22, 2014.

further engage on establishing an institutional mechanism for overseeing border security.<sup>81</sup> Pakistan started fencing its 900-km long border with Iran from March this year.<sup>82</sup> Till now, at least 215 km of the border with Iran has been fenced.<sup>83</sup>

## Constraints

Despite a number of measures undertaken across different fields, there still exist many constraints which enable terrorist groups to recruit fighters, instigate anti-state feelings, and xenophobic tendencies towards people of other provinces. Balochistan remains the poorest province with a poverty rate of almost 57 per cent. The poorest 40 districts are in the province with Washuk district topping the list with a headcount poverty rate of 72.5 per cent.<sup>84</sup>

Regarding food security, about 45 per cent of the population of Balochistan is food insecure.<sup>85</sup> Out of 32 districts, only Quetta and Jaffarabad are food secure.<sup>86</sup> The persistent drought conditions in southern and southwestern areas of Balochistan since 2014 have affected more than 200,000 families due to successive crop failures and significant livestock losses.<sup>87 88</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> "Pakistan, Iran for fighting common threat posed by IS," *Dawn*, July 28, 2016,

<sup>82</sup> Aamir Latif, "Pakistan to Fence Border with Iran," *Anadolu Agency*, March 19, 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/pakistan-to-fence-border-with-iran/1422980>.

<sup>83</sup> Imran Mukhtar, "Iran 'disrupting' Border Fencing," *The Nation*, May 11, 2019, <https://nation.com.pk/11-May-2019/iran-disrupting-border-fencing>.

<sup>84</sup> Ghazala Mansuri, Mohammad Farhanullah Sami, Muhammad Ali, Dung ThiThuy Doan, Bilal Javed and PriyankaPandey, "When Water Becomes a Hazard : A Diagnostic Report on The State of Water Supply, Sanitation and Poverty in Pakistan and Its Impact on Child Stunting," *World Bank*, November 11, 2018, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/649341541535842288/When-Water-Becomes-a-Hazard-A-Diagnostic-Report-on-The-State-of-Water-Supply-Sanitation-and-Poverty-in-Pakistan-and-Its-Impact-on-Child-Stunting>.

<sup>85</sup> Adeeba Ishaq, Mahmood Khalid and Eatnaz Ahmad, "Food Insecurity in Pakistan: A Region-Wise Analysis of Trends," *Pakistan Institute of Development Economics*, September 2018, <https://pide.org.pk/pdf/Working%20Paper/WorkingPaper-157.pdf>.

<sup>86</sup> Wajid Ali and AzizullahKakar, "Balochistan's Water," *Dawn*, April 13, 2018.

<sup>87</sup> "Pakistan," *Food and Agriculture Organization*, January 9, 2019, <http://www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?code=PAK>.

<sup>88</sup> "Pakistan: Drought," *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*, January 28, 2019, <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/Appeals/19/IBPKdr280119.pdf>.

The health sector of Balochistan has drastically failed in fulfilling the needs of the people. Balochistan has the worst ratio of doctors in the country. Only 6,157 doctors are available to cure 12.3 million population. The province also tops in infant and under-five mortality rate with 97 and 111 deaths out of 1000 children respectively. Maternal mortality rate (MMR) in Balochistan is nearly triple of the country's overall MMR.<sup>89</sup> In terms of child health, six per cent of children in the province face acute undernourishment while 40 per cent are underweight.<sup>90</sup>

Like the health sector, the educational facilities in Balochistan present a dismal picture. More than 1.9 million (70 per cent) out of 2.7 million children, between the ages of 5 and 16, are out of school in the province. In the last five years, there has been a drastic decrease in girls' enrollment in schools. Out of 11,627 total schools, more than 7,000 schools are shelter less, 6,700 schools need rehabilitation, 2,500 school buildings are considered dangerous and about 1,800 schools are without any building.<sup>91</sup> According to Alif Ailaan's 2017 District Education Rankings, Quetta was the only district of Balochistan which ranked among the top 50 most educated districts.<sup>92</sup> Balochistan has a literacy rate of 39 per cent.<sup>93</sup> The youth literacy rate of Balochistan is 50 per cent.<sup>94</sup> On gender basis, 18 per cent female and 56 per cent male population of ages 15 and older can read and write with understanding.<sup>95</sup>

In terms of access to basic utilities, some 62 per cent of people in Balochistan reportedly don't have access to electricity.<sup>96</sup> Despite

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<sup>89</sup> "Balochistan Far Behind in Density of Doctors and Health Indicators as Compared to Other Provinces," *Center for Investigative Reporting in Pakistan*, last modified February 14, 2018, <http://cirp.pk/balochistan-far-behind-in-density-of-doctors-and-health-indicators-as-compared-to-other-provinces/>.

<sup>90</sup> "Balochistan Children Facing Acute Malnutrition: Experts," *The News*, December 25, 2018.

<sup>91</sup> Asim Ahmed Khan, "Balochistan Government Failing to provide Safe Education to Children," *Daily Balochistan Express*, January 11, 2019, <https://www.bexpress.com.pk/2019/01/balochistan-government-failing-to-provide-safe-education-to-children/>.

<sup>92</sup> "District Ranking," *Alif Ailaan*, accessed January 30, 2019, <https://elections.alifailaan.pk/rankings/>.

<sup>93</sup> Syed Fazl-e-Haider, "Education should Remain Top Priority for Balochistan," *Pakistan & Gulf Economist*, December 3, 2018, <http://www.pakistaneconomist.com/2018/12/03/education-should-remain-top-priority-for-balochistan/>.

<sup>94</sup> In Pakistan, a literate person is defined as someone who can read a newspaper and write a simple letter in any language.

<sup>95</sup> Hammal Baloch, "Being Young in Balochistan," *Daily Times*, May 25, 2018.

<sup>96</sup> Muhammad Zubair, "Balochistan Deserves Justice in Chinese Projects," *Gandhara*, last modified January 14, 2019, <https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/>



producing over 2,000 MW of electricity, Balochistan only gets 700 MW.<sup>97</sup> Despite peak demand of about 1,800 MW, Balochistan's electricity distribution grid cannot transmit more than 700 MW.<sup>98</sup> Consequently, no power has reached to Balochistan through all energy projects completed so far as part of CPEC. Makran division, where the all-important Gwadar city is located, still remains unconnected to the national grid.<sup>99</sup> About 7.6 million people do not have the adequate facility of safe drinking water which makes Balochistan the most water-scarce province.<sup>100</sup>

Following the inauguration of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in April 2015, government officials, both at federal and provincial level, claimed that Balochistan will be the main beneficiary of the megaproject. However, the corridor did not bring any change in Balochistan so far. Despite providing 62 per cent of the land for the megaproject, the province has been allocated around \$5.5 billion (less than nine per cent) out of the total portfolio of \$62 billion. Furthermore, less than \$1 billion has been spent in almost past four years. Apart from Gwadar, no significant progress has made on roads comprising CPEC western route. Up till now, only two projects of the province – Gwadar Port and Hubco Power Plant – have been approved as part of the CPEC.<sup>101</sup>

The terrorist sanctuaries in Pakistan's western neighbourhood pose direct security threats to Balochistan. It is reported that the BLF leadership resides in Iran from where it plans and executes anti-Pakistan activities. Frustrated with not achieving substantial results regarding an independent Balochistan state, BLA (Aslam Baloch faction) has started use of suicide bombers to revive the weakened and factionalized insurgency.<sup>102</sup>

The law and order situation has also worsened in the province. Sectarian killings have also increased and the state has failed to provide security to other ethnicities in the region such as the Punjabis, Pathans and

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pakistan-balochistan-deserves-justice-in-chinese-projects-cpec/29708813.html.

<sup>97</sup> Adnan Aamir, "Making CPEC Public," *The News*, December 27, 2018,

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Khurram Husain, "Balochistan Cabinet Shocked by CPEC Presentation," *Dawn*, December 11, 2018.

<sup>100</sup> Ammaz Khan and Syed Shujaat Ahmed, "Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Balochistan," *Daily Times*, December 18, 2018.

<sup>101</sup> Saleem Shahid, "Balochistan Voices Concern over its Share in CPEC Projects," *Dawn*, December 10, 2018.

<sup>102</sup> Malik Siraj Akbar, "China Jald-azJald Baloch Sarzameen Say Dastbardar Ho: Aslam Achoo

چین جلداز جلد بلوچ سرزمین سے دستبردار ہو: اسلم اچھو [China should immediately withdraw from Baloch land: Aslam Achoo], *Malik Siraj Akbar*, December 26, 2018, (accessed February 5, 2019)

Hazaras. In such a case, a large number of settlers in the province are migrating to other regions. This is leading to a situation of brain-drain where many of the doctors and teachers have left for other cities due to the unstable situation. The problem of forced disappearances and missing persons has also affected the stability of Balochistan. In many of the cases the FC (Frontier Corps) and intelligence agencies are known to be involved in such acts. The inability of the state to handle these cases effectively has also adversely effected the counter-insurgent efforts.

The economic activity is also very slow in Balochistan. Even though the province is rich in natural resources, they have not been utilized effectively. Lack of irrigation and water facilities has led to under-development in the region. Shortage of essential facilities like gas and electricity has heightened the grievances of the people.

## Way Forward

Peace has been restored to a great extent in Balochistan, but in order to create a conducive environment and for ensuring that terrorist groups are not able to recruit fighters, it is important for federal and provincial governments to focus on improving the socio-economic situation of the local populace. To decrease poverty, the provincial government should devise a comprehensive strategy with the aim to provide support to the low-income sections of the population. The province needs an effective banking system that not only channelizes the resources to the neglected economic sector but exploits the potential opportunities in those sectors. A sustainable banking and finance sector should be encouraged to accelerate economic growth by providing finance to low-income segments for poverty alleviation through encouraging investment, businesses and employment. The provincial government should encourage micro-finance banking for expanding microfinance supply; it can play an instrumental role in the economic empowerment of low-income households, especially rural women.<sup>103</sup>

In the case of the missing persons, the provincial government should develop a fast track mechanism for resolving the issue at the earliest. Similarly, it needs to properly identify the actual number of missing persons. In collaboration with the federal government, the provincial government should channelize the youth of the province in an appropriate way by providing vacant government jobs to youth on merit.<sup>104</sup> The un-utilized educational budget should also be utilized for developing educational initiatives. The incumbent provincial government

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<sup>103</sup> Syed Fazl-e-Haider, "Poverty Ease In Balochistan, What We Can Do?" *Pakistan & Gulf Economist*, June 11, 2018, <http://www.pakistaneconomist.com/2018/06/11/poverty-ease-in-balochistan-what-we-can-do/>.

<sup>104</sup> KhaleeqKiani, "Jobs Promised to Balochistan Candidates Remain Unfilled," *Dawn*, December 22, 2018.

needs to put pressure on the federal government to seek a greater overall share in CPEC. Balochistan is important for CPEC because about the mega-project goes over two-thirds of Balochistan's landmass. The strategic Gwadar Port in Balochistan is sine qua non for CPEC. The provincial government should work in tandem with the federal government for introducing legislative measures to protect the ownership and inherent rights of local people in face of migrants coming from other provinces in search of employment to Balochistan.

The government needs to take up the issue of terror sanctuaries in its western neighbourhood on private and public level with official authorities in those countries. Intelligence-based operations should continue to target facilitators of foreign-based terror groups. In addition to fencing of borders with Iran and Afghanistan, strict border checking measures should be ensured. There is optimism among Pakistani security circles that the success of Afghan peace process can result in curtailing anti-Pakistan terrorist activities from Afghanistan.<sup>105</sup> There is the need of a political settlement between the state and the Baloch nationalists keeping in view the grievances of the people. The social contract based on mutual trust and confidence needs to be revived between the state and the people of Balochistan.

Despite the achievements made in dealing with ethno-nationalist groups and Islamist terror outfits, a number of steps need to be taken for socio-economic uplift of the people of Balochistan. Improvement in the living conditions of the people of Balochistan will not only downgrade the appeal of these terror outfits that help in recruiting people to fight against the state, but will also bring a realization among the terrorists that to surrender is an option better than to fight for an unachievable cause. Unless socio-developmental measures are taken, Balochistan will remain a vulnerability for Pakistan's internal security. Thus, a political rather than a military approach is to be adopted to address the security situation in Balochistan in the longer run.

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<sup>105</sup> Muhammad Amir Rana, "Situationer: US-Taliban Talks to Decide TTP's Fate, PTM's Future," *Dawn*, January 29, 2019.

