



## IDSA Strategic Comment

### Violence in Pakistan: Trend Analysis November 2008

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Even as the terrorist attacks on Mumbai and the terrorists' linkages with Pakistan have refocused global attention on Pakistan, casualties of terrorist violence within Pakistan during November reduced significantly. Like in the last few months, there has been an increase in violence during November, though there was a more than 20 per cent reduction in the number of casualties. This commentary analyses the trend in terrorist violence in Pakistan during November 2008 based on media reports.

Though the number of terror related incidents increased from 346 in October to 372 in November 2008, the death toll dropped significantly for the second month in succession from 1081 in October to 804 in November. However, the number of security forces personnel killed in these incidents rose from 47 in October to 56 in November. The most significant reduction has been in FATA, where it appears as if the security forces have allowed the Taliban a free run in South and North Waziristan. Pakistan's military operations were generally confined to Bajaur Agency and neighbouring Mohmand Agency. Although aerial attacks by allied forces continued during the month, they were more focussed and mostly hit terrorists with little collateral damage. Towards the end of the month there were ethnic riots in Karachi, where Pakhtoons and Mohajirs clashed violently, paralysing large parts of the city.

## **NWFP**

Following the trend of the previous two months, NWFP continued to witness the most number of violent attacks, which increased from 160 in October to 184 in November, at an average of over six such incidents every day. Casualty figures for the province also increased to 650, even though the death toll reduced marginally from 405 to 342. 190 alleged militants were killed and 123 injured during the month as against 223 killed and 13 injured in October. Security forces also arrested 98 alleged militants during the month. On the other hand 111 civilians were killed and 157 were injured in November, as against 136 killed and 100 injured the previous month. Similarly 41 security forces personnel were killed and 28 injured during the month as against 46 killed and 59 injured in October. Besides, 32 civilians and 3 security forces personnel were kidnapped by the militants in November.

The main targets of militant attacks were security posts, police stations, schools and shops selling CDs, wine and cosmetics. According to a November 20 report in *Daily Times*, in Swat Valley alone 123 schools had been destroyed over the last ten months. There were two rocket attacks on Peshawar International Airport, symbolising the growing reach of the militants. Large tracts of Swat valley continued to remain under militant control and the district was the epicentre of violence in the province and saw heavy exchange of fire between security forces and militants. Pakistan Air Force jets and helicopter gunships continued to hit alleged militant strongholds. Kohat was another centre of increased violence.

There were six suicide attacks in the province during the month which resulted in 28 deaths and injuries to over 53. All suicide attacks in the province barring one were directed against security forces personnel. The lone exception was the suicide attack at the packed Qayyum Stadium in Peshawar, which killed four and wounded 20. Other suicide bombers targeted security forces personnel in Hangu, Bannu and Charsadda districts besides the Swat valley, indicating the growing presence of militants in different parts of the province. In a major success on November 16, security forces apprehended 30 militants in Kohat. In another major incident, 40 militants including four foreigners were arrested from Michini area and a huge

quantity of arms and ammunition was seized on November 24. There were attacks on NATO supplies in Peshawar and nearby regions leading to large scale destruction of NATO vehicles and supplies.

## **FATA**

Like in NWFP, incidents of violence in FATA increased marginally from 101 to 108 in November, though there was a drastic reduction in the number of casualties. Although the death toll in the region during the month at 373 remained the highest in Pakistan, it had come down drastically from 605 in October. Similarly the number of injured reduced to 125 in November vis a vis 290 the previous month. During the month 254 militants were killed and 68 injured as against 455 killed and 60 injured in October. 88 militants were also apprehended by the security forces in November. On the other hand, 111 civilians as against 149 in October were killed and only 67 civilians were injured as against 227 in October. Eight security forces personnel were killed during the month as against only one in October. During the month the militants also kidnapped five security forces personnel and 23 civilians, most of whom were part of tribal *lashkars* (armies) set up by the government to take on the Taliban.

There were two suicide attacks in the region during the month, one against the security forces and the other against a tribal *lashkar*. The two attacks resulted in the death of 21 people. On November 2, a suicide car bomber rammed his vehicle near the main gate of the Zalai Fort, a checkpoint in South Waziristan where Frontier Corps troops had gathered and killed eight of them. In another attack in Bajaur Agency on November 20, a suicide bomber blew himself up at a mosque in Badan village area of Mamoond tehsil when people were offering evening prayers. The chief of a tribal *lashkar* and 12 other people were killed in the attack.

Most of the military operations took place against Taliban hideouts in Damadola, Seweai, Sparay, Kharkay, Shinkot areas of Mamoond tehsil and Charmang and Zoorband areas of Nawagai tehsil in Bajaur Agency. Security forces with support from local tribal *lashkars* arrested 88 militants including many suspects with arms and ammunitions from FATA. In a significant

development, in Bajaur Agency, on November 17, the Barmang, Utmankhel and Arang tribes handed over 38 men suspected of links with the Taliban to the political administration. Similarly, on 10<sup>th</sup> November, 12 Taliban commanders surrendered to the political administration, at a jirga of Otmankhel tribes in Bajaur Agency. What was even more significant was the Taliban’s proclamation in the aftermath of the Mumbai attack, that in case of war between India and Pakistan, it would fight alongside the Pakistan Army. This was a clever statement meant to enhance its popularity amongst the masses, as well as to discredit the Pakistani security forces, in case they continued with their operations against the Taliban.

**Table of Casualty Figures in Pakistan - November 2008**

<u>Places</u>	<u>Incidents</u>	<u>Militants</u>			<u>Civilians</u>			<u>Security Forces</u>			<u>Total</u>	
		Killed	Injured	Arrested	Killed	Injured	Kidnapped	Killed	Injured	Kidnapped	Killed	Injured
FATA	108 (101)	254 (455)	68 (60)	88 (29)	111 (149)	57 (227)	23	8 (1)	0 (3)	5	373 (605)	125 (290)
NWFP	184 (160)	190 (223)	123 (13)	98 (456)	111 (136)	157 (100)	32	41 (46)	28 (59)	3	342 (405)	308 (172)
Balochistan	30 (22)	12 (0)	15 (0)	17 (53)	23 (17)	11 (43)	2	5 (0)	1 (0)	0	40 (17)	27 (43)
Others (Punjab, Sindh etc)	60 (63)	6 (2)	0 (0)	37 (24)	41 (52)	175 (138)	8	2 (0)	1 (0)	0	49 (54)	176 (138)
<b>Total (Pakistan)</b>	<b>372 (346)</b>	<b>462 (680)</b>	<b>206 (73)</b>	<b>240 (582)</b>	<b>286 (354)</b>	<b>400 (508)</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>56 (47)</b>	<b>30 (62)</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>804 (1081)</b>	<b>636 (643)</b>

Note: Based on media reports. Injury figures are approximate. Figures in parenthesis indicate October 2008 figures.

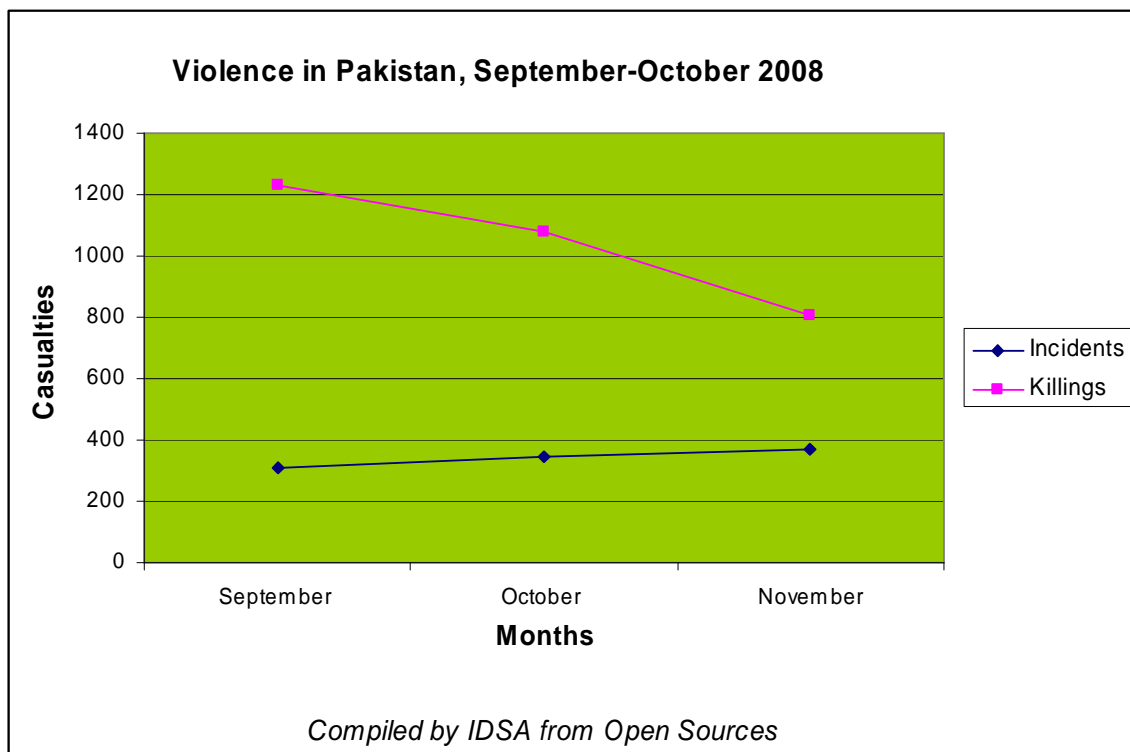
## **Balochistan**

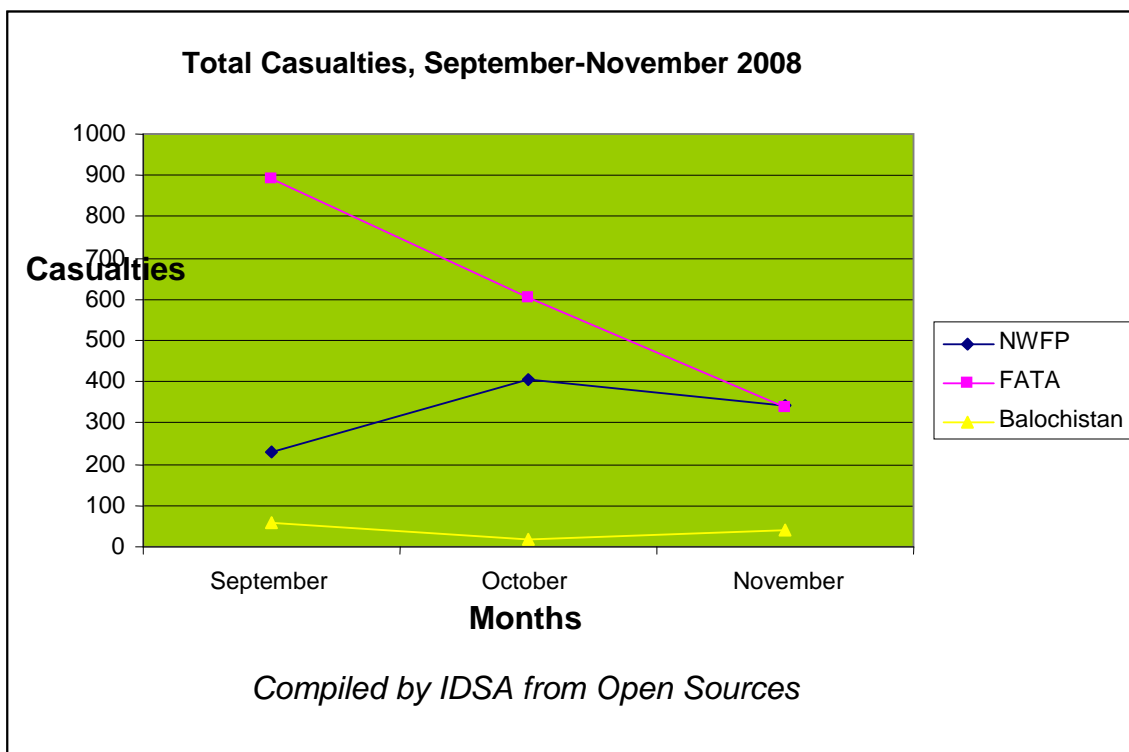
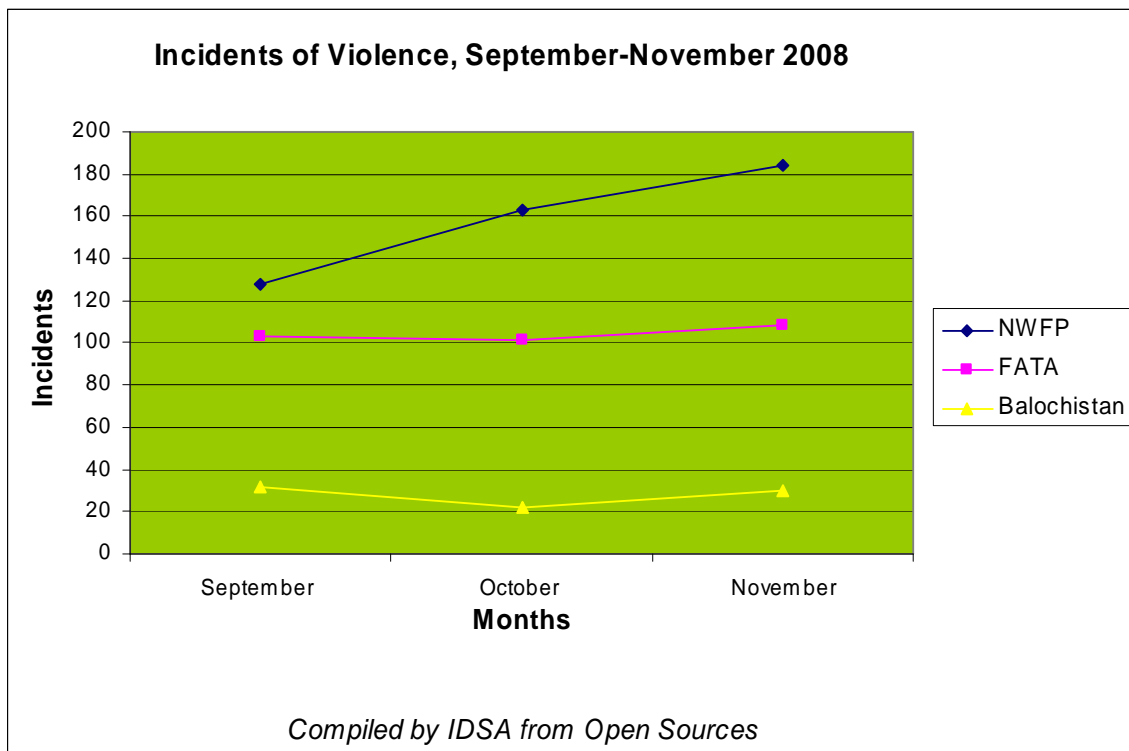
Unlike in October when there was a marked reduction in violence in Balochistan, November saw a return to the level of violence that prevailed in September 2008. Violent incidents in Balochistan during the month increased to 30 from 22 in October and the death toll in these incidents rose to 40 from 17 in October. However, the number of persons who sustained injury had decreased from 43 in October to 27 in November. Unlike in the previous month which saw two suicide attacks in the Pakhtoon belt, there were no such attacks in November. Out of the 40 people killed in November, 23 were civilians. Most of those targeted were either government collaborators or government servants or migrant Punjabi Muslims, who have been asked to leave Balochistan. 12 militants and five security forces personnel were killed and 15 militants and one security personnel were injured during the month. 11 civilians as against 43 in October received injuries in violent incidents during the month. Baloch extremists also kidnapped two civilians. On the other hand, 17 militants were arrested by the security forces in various crackdowns during the month. Most of the violence during the month took place in Dera Bugti and Quetta districts. Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and Baloch Republican Army (BRA) were fairly active during the month. Besides targeting the security forces and their posts, the two outfits mainly targeted former allies who had turned collaborators of the government.

## **Other Areas**

Militant activities in other parts of Pakistan were more or less at the same level as in October. There were 60 incidents of violence as compared to 63 in October. 49 people were killed in these incidents and 176 were injured. Of these, 41 civilians were killed while 175 received injuries. Two security forces personnel were killed and one was injured, whereas six militants lost their lives. Most of the civilian casualties were the result of a violent armed ethnic riot that started in Karachi towards the end of the month and saw a number of vehicles being set ablaze.

Pakistan’s security forces arrested 37 miscreants and recovered large quantities of arms and ammunition in November. These included some potential suicide bombers. There were two bomb explosions in Lahore. On November 12, a bomb exploded at the office of a local NGO at Girjaghar Road in Cheechawatni in Lahore, though nobody was hurt in the incident. Subsequently on November 22, at least three people including a teenager were injured in a series of explosions near a Cultural Complex in Lahore, where the international World Performing Arts Festival was in progress. Unlike the previous month there were no suicide attacks in Pakistan outside NWFP and FATA. There were, however, a number of targeted killings of political workers. TTP spokesman Maulvi Omar confirmed on November 23 that Taliban cadres were present in Karachi, but vowed not to disturb the peace in the city, unless any political party (MQM) or the government left them with no other choice. The presence of the Taliban in Karachi was used by the Mohajir organisations in that city to target Pakhtoons and their vehicles as the transport business in the city is dominated by the Pakhtoons.





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