

# ANNUAL SECURITY REPORT 2015



# **ANNUAL SECURITY REPORT 2015**

**“Dedicated to the marginalized and  
conflict affected people of FATA”**

# About FATA Research Centre

FATA Research Centre(FRC) is a non-partisan, non-political and non-governmental research organization based in Islamabad. It is the first ever think-tank of its kind that focuses on the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in its entirety. The purpose of FRC is to help concerned stake holders better understand this war-ravaged area of Pakistan with independent, impartial and objective research and analysis. People at FRC think, write, and speak to encourage all segments of Pakistani society and the government to join their strengths for a peaceful, tolerant, progressive and integrated FATA. This FRC Quarterly Security Report reviews recent trends in conflict such as the number of terrorist attacks, type of attacks, tactics used for militancy and the resulting casualties. It gives updates and other security trends. The objective of this security report is to outline and categorize the forms of violent extremism taking place, the role of militant groups and the scale of terrorist activities. This report is the result of intensive monitoring and research by the FRC team.FRC also inherits certain limitations due to the persistence of high-intensity security zones in FATA. The research center collects data through its field reports and other reliable sources present on the ground. The area under discussion is security sensitive so spans of curfew, cross firing and / or other limitations on mobility are common in different parts at different intervals. Thus, the number of actual occurrences of violence may be greater than those are being quoted here, mainly due to underreporting.

# Acknowledgement

During the course of compilation of the FRC Annual Security 2015, the constant collaboration of the team of FRC has been significantly invaluable. It is truly a fruit of their teamwork.

FRC expresses sincere appreciation for completion of this report to all those, whose contribution in this work are far from being negligible.

The report was drafted by Irfan U Din (Senior Researcher). The Security Report was supervised by Mansur Khan Mehsud (Director Research) and was shared with Saif Ullah Mehsud (Executive Director) for his expert views and valuable input.

# Map of FATA



# Table of Contents

---

About FATA Research Centre	i
Acknowledgment	ii
Map of FATA	iii
Acronyms	v
Glossary	vi
Introduction	1
Profile of FATA	1
Methodology	4
Chapter 2: Security Overview 2015	5
Chapter 3: Quarterly Analysis of 2015	9
Chapter 4: Agency Wise Comparative Analysis of 2015 & 2014	24
Chapter 5: Trends and Analysis	27

# Acronyms

<b>AI:</b>	Ansar-ul-Islam
<b>APA:</b>	Assistant Political Agent
<b>BA:</b>	Bajaur Agency
<b>FATA:</b>	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
<b>FC:</b>	Frontier Corps
<b>FCR:</b>	Frontier Crimes Regulation
<b>FDA:</b>	FATA Development Authority
<b>FR:</b>	Frontier Region
<b>IDP:</b>	Internally Displaced Persons
<b>IED:</b>	Improvised Explosive Device
<b>KA:</b>	Kurram Agency
<b>KHA:</b>	Khyber Agency
<b>KPK:</b>	Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa
<b>LI:</b>	Lashkar-e-Islam
<b>MA:</b>	Mohmand Agency
<b>NATO:</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>NWA:</b>	North Waziristan Agency
<b>OA:</b>	Orakzai Agency
<b>Sect:</b>	Sectarian
<b>SF:</b>	Security Forces
<b>SWA:</b>	South Waziristan Agency
<b>TI:</b>	Tauheed-ul-Islam
<b>TTP:</b>	Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan

# Glossary

**Operational Attacks:** Large-scale operations launched by military and paramilitary troops against militants in FATA to preserve law and order and writ of the state. This category includes search operations, attacks on military and military operations in the region.

**Militant Attacks:** Indiscriminate use of violence by militant outfits both locals and foreigners such as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Al-Qaeda, Uzbeks, Lashkar-e Islam (LI), Ansar-ul-Islam(AI) and other Taliban groups including Wana Taliban, Gul Bahadar group etc respectively, manifested through suicide attacks, beheadings and destruction of educational institutions, CD/video shops, etc.

**Security Forces:** Include the military , frontier corps, frontier constabulary , khassadar force, levis force and the police to combat militants and militant attacks.

**Inter-tribal Clashes:** Clashes or feuds reported between tribes, mainly in FATA.

**Peace Forces:** People from tribes of FATA who are battling militants and terrorists on the ground. Examples include the AmanLashkar/Civil Militias/Peace Committees often backed by the state.

**Terrorist Attacks:** The category includes suicide attacks, firing, mortar shelling and terrorist insurgent attacks.

**Bomb Blasts:** The category of bomb blasts include the explosions including IED, landmine blasts, roadside blasts, remote controlled bomb blasts and other explosions.

**Total Number of Casualties:** The sum of total killed and injured in FATA due to violence and social unrest.



# Introduction

### Profile of FATA

FATA is strategically located on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, between the settled areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Afghanistan. FATA, both historically and traditionally, enjoys a unique administrative and political status since British control over the area in 1894. In 1893, a demarcation line was drawn between Pakistan and Afghanistan known as the Durand Line, marking the boundary of British control and artificially dividing the lands held by the local tribes between the two domains. British colonizers controlled the agencies through an effective combination of Political Agents and Tribal Elders, while allowing people to practice their traditions with internal independence. The administrative head of each tribal agency is a Political Agent who wields extensive administrative as well as judicial powers. Each agency, depending on its size, has about two to three assistant political agents, about three to four Tehsildars, four to nine Naib Tehsildars and requisite supporting staff. Pakistan inherited this system and it continues with a few minor changes even today. FATA is characterized by a very strong tribal structure, and a very diverse, ethnic cultural heritage. There are 26 main tribes with approximately 32 sub tribes in FATA. The population of FATA is estimated to be 4.45 million with an average growth rate of 3.76 percent and an average household size of 12.2 since 1998. Administratively, the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) is the chief executive for FATA as an agent of the President of Pakistan. There are three administrative set-ups, namely, the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), the FATA Secretariat, and FATA Development Authority (FDA) which supports and runs FATA under the direction of the Governor KPK. FATA is governed through the Frontier Crimes Regulation Act (FCR) of 1901, amended in 2011.

**Bajaur Agency:** Bajaur is the smallest of tribal agency, situated on the extreme north of FATA. It is considered to be the most vulnerable region for cross-border attacks from Afghanistan. It shares a 52 km of border with Afghanistan's troubled province of Kunar which is known for extensive militants' activities in Afghanistan. The current roots of militancy in Bajaur could be traced back to the religious activities of Maulana Sufi Muhammad<sup>1</sup>, a former member of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), and current head of the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi or TNSM (Urdu for Movement for Enforcement of Muhammad's Sharia) (Rahmanullah, April 2010). The TNSM took brief part in the initial fight against anti-Taliban Afghan forces and US troops who overthrew the Taliban regime in

---

<sup>1</sup> Sufi Muhammad Head of *Tehrik-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat-i-Muhammadi (TNSM)* in Swat Valley which has been noticed in Bajaur Agency and in Mohmand Agency.

November 2001. Later, the TNSM under Mullah Fazlullah, son-in-law of Sufi Muhammad, resorted to armed uprising against the Pakistani government in July 2007 when the later conducted a military operation, Operation Silence, against the Lal Masjid (Urdu for Red Mosque) to stop its Islamist vigilante activities in Islamabad. A series of military operations, starting with Operation Rah—e-Haq in November 2007, successfully suppressed the Taliban in the Agency. However, Pakistan continues to deploy army troops to ensure that the Taliban does not stage a comeback. Reports of Taliban's presence in the area are confirmed through various targeted operations conducted both by the government as well as the assassination drive by the Taliban of their opponents. However, most of the militants have shifted to the neighboring Afghanistan after the military operation in the agency.

**Mohmand Agency:** The Mohmand Agency (MA) shares a border with the Bajaur Agency in the North, Khyber Agency in the South, Malakand and Charsadda districts in the East and Peshawar District in the Southeast. According to the 1998 population census, the Agency boasted a population of 334,453 with a population density of 171 person/ sq/km. Ghalanai is the Agency's headquarters. Indigenous Taliban emerged as a major social force in the agency in July 2007 in the aftermath of the Lal Masjid Operation when they seized a revered holy shrine, Haji Sahib Turangzai Shrine, and declared it Lal Masjid. Soon afterwards, armed Taliban militants began to patrol the area and enforced strict Islamic codes upon its inhabitants. The nature of militancy is clearly anti-government in Mohmand, where anti-government sentiments increased soon after 2007 Lal Masjid (Raza Khan, April 2010). Besides local militant activities, non-local and foreign militant groups also affected peace in the region. To counter the Talibanisation of the Agency, Pakistani security forces have operated at various levels including involvement of the local people in the shape of forming Amn Lashkars (Urdu for civil militia) against militants. Moreover military operations of 2011 and 2012 helped in clearing most area of the Mohmand Agency from the Taliban militants that has significantly helped in bringing back normalcy to the area. However, Taliban continue to pose considerable threat and continue to conduct anti-state activities in the area. The most active Taliban group in the Agency is the Jamaat-Ul-Ihrrar [a splinter group of TTP].

**Khyber Agency:** The Khyber Agency borders Afghanistan to the West, Orakzai Agency to the south, Kurram Agency to south west and Peshawar to the east. The agency is administratively divided, into three units—Bara, Jamrud and LandiKotal. Its population of about 546730 is divided into four main tribes in which Afridi tribe is the largest one. The other three tribes are Shinwari, Mulla Gori and Shilmani. The agency has multifaceted militancy: sectarian violence, Taliban groups and criminal elements, especially drug and weapon cartels that fuel conflict in the area. Although the current militancy is the offspring of sectarian violence in the Khyber Agency between supporters of Mufti Munir Shakir, who later founded the Lashkar-e-Islam (LI), and Pir Saif-ur-Rehman<sup>2</sup>, whose followers formed Ansarul Islam (AI). Lashkar-e-Islam is currently headed by Mangal Bagh. The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) also maintained significance presence in the Agency. The nature of conflict is quite different in Khyber Agency where even counter-militancy<sup>3</sup> measures ironically accelerated militancy.

**Orakzai Agency:** The Orakzai Agency is administratively divided into two sub-divisions; Upper and

---

<sup>2</sup> Mufti shakir was follower of Deobandi school of thought while Pir Saif-ur-Rehman was a Baralvimuslim

<sup>3</sup> Counter militancy strategy involved the local people through forming Lashkars. These tribal Lashkars later on turned in terror and militancy.

Lower Orakzai, with a total population of 450,000, having population density of 250 square km (650 sq/km). The agency comprises of a total area of 1,538 sq/km and is bound in the north by Khyber Agency, in the east by FR Kohat, in the south by Kohat and Hangu districts and in the west by Kurram Agency. It is the only tribal agency which does not share borders with Afghanistan. However, the Agency has remained a hotspot of militancy since 2007. The Agency also hosts a significant Shia population and has witnessed sectarian violence since many decades. The TTP and TNSM maintain militant presence in the Agency. The Tehrik-i-Tulaba (Urdu for Students' Movement) is<sup>4</sup> present in the agency and is led by Maulvi Muhammad Rehman, a local cleric who has contributed in militarizing the religious society of the Agency. According to reports and analysis sectarian conflict between Shia and Sunni Muslims exists in Orakzai Agency but its intensity is low compared to the bordering Kurram Agency. The Agency was once a safe haven for the TTP ex-chief, late Hakimullah Mehsud, who launched hundreds of attacks on NATO supply vehicles from the Agency.

**Kurram Agency:** The Kurram Agency is bordered by Afghanistan in the north and west (the provinces of Ningarhar and Paktia respectively), in the east by Orakzai Agency and Khyber Agency, in the southeast by Hangu and North Waziristan Agency in the south. The Agency is 115 kilometers long with a total area of 3,380 sq/km. The population, according to the 1998 census, was 448,310. Since late 1970s, the Agency is suffering from sectarian violence ever since the launch of Islamization drive in Pakistan by former country's president, General Zia-ul-Haq. The sectarian violence intensified with the introduction of sophisticated weapons that passed through the Agency during the Afghan Jihad of the 1980s. Strategically the Agency is very important. Therefore, the Pakistani Taliban, especially those belonging to the Mehsud and Wazir tribes of the North and South Waziristan, as well as Afghan Taliban led by the Jalaluddin Haqqani faction began their activities in the Agency soon after the overthrow of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in late 2001, and have been involved in anti-Shia fighting. In response, many local and non-local Shia militant organizations arose to fight back the Taliban.

**North Waziristan Agency:** The North Waziristan Agency (NWA) on the north is bordered with Kurram Agency and Hangu district, on the east with Tribal areas adjoining Bannu district and Tribal areas adjoining Karak and Bannu districts, on the south with South Waziristan Agency, and on the west also with Afghanistan. It has a population of about 361,246 as per 1998 census<sup>5</sup>. NWA is famous for the Haqqani Network<sup>6</sup>, an Afghan Taliban organization based in the agency. There were three kinds of militant groups in the agency; the local militant group (s), foreign militant organizations and non-local militant groups which include the Punjabi Taliban, the TTP and other groups. The nature of conflict is different in NWA where a huge number of foreign militants<sup>7</sup> are anti-government. Operation Zarb-e-Azb was launched in July 2014 to eliminate all kind of militant groups in the agency.

**South Waziristan Agency:** The South Waziristan Agency (SWA) is the largest in size of all the other agencies in FATA. It is bordered, on the north with North Waziristan Agency; on the north-east with Bannu and Lakki Marwat districts; on the east with Tribal area adjoining Tank, Tank district and Dera Ismail Khan Districts; on the south with Zhob District of Baluchistan Province and the tribal areas

---

<sup>4</sup> Pakistan Bureau of Statistics <http://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/area-population-administrative-units>

<sup>5</sup> Sirajud-din Haqqani is the current head of the Haqqani Network before it was headed by his father Jalal ud din Haqqani, the aging former anti-Soviet insurgent leader.

<sup>7</sup> Foreigner militants include Afghan Taliban, Al-Qaeda, Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Chechens etc.

adjoining Dera Ismail Khan District; and on the west with Afghanistan. South Waziristan has a population of around 0.8 million. SWA has been home to three kinds of militant groups; foreign, non-local and local militants, since the US invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 when they crossed the border in search of a safe haven. The local militants were closely affiliated with the Afghan Taliban; when the latter were ousted from Afghanistan by the US. Soon, the local Taliban started organizing themselves into proper armed movements which later in December 2007 appeared in the shape of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which was headed by Baitullah Mehsud<sup>8</sup>. Over a passage of time, the TTP was confined to only the Mehsud tribes while militants belonging to Wazir<sup>9</sup> tribes organized under the leadership of Mullah Nazir. Mullah Nazir<sup>10</sup> received the support of locals, especially from the religious community, when evicted Uzbek militants belonging to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) from Wana, Agency's headquarters and its surroundings. Now, though, there is no presence of Uzbeks in Wana however there are militants present in Wana including both local and non-local Taliban like the Punjabi Taliban.

## Methodology

FRC research team collects information and data from both primary and secondary sources and presents its analysis and expert opinion on the security issues.

FRC internal database, daily monitoring of more than a dozen English and Urdu newspapers, periodicals, magazines, monitoring and reviews of locally distributed literature in the field and data collected from political administrations in FATA contributes to compilation of this work. Additionally an up-to-date archive system at FRC headquarters is consulted for authenticity and reference to important events and incidents. FRC correspondents based in seven agencies of FATA provide information and collect data after verifying it with relevant government officials and local people.

---

<sup>8</sup> Fazal Ullah is the current head of TTP

<sup>9</sup> Wazir and Mehsud are the two major tribes in South Waziristan along with other small tribes such as Burki, Suleman Khel etc.

<sup>10</sup> Ayubi is the current head of Nazir's group in Wana

# Security Overview 2015

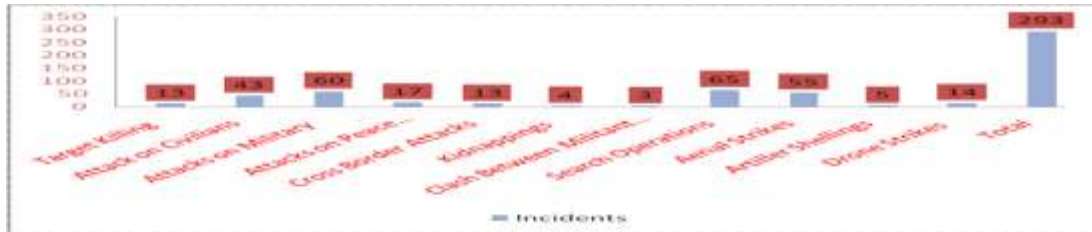
The year 2015, like the previous year, remained turbulent in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan where armed conflict between non state militant actors and law enforcement and security agencies remained at its peak. As a consequence of exacerbating militant activity and intense use of kinetic approach by the Pakistan Armed Forces, such as aerial strikes, shelling, ground offensives and drone strikes, the local population continued to suffer from mass displacement, shrinking of economic activities, psychological issues and many more. Almost every agency of FATA faced subversive activities by the militants in one way or the other. However, compared to the previous year of 2014, a significant decline in militancy and counter militancy related incident were reported. Overall, there was a decline of 40 % in militant violence in the FATA region compared to 2014.

The following table gives a comprehensive account of the violent incidents. The table highlights the nature of attacks, their intensity, type of casualties and relevant players in different areas of FATA.

Security Overview 2015																		
Nature of Attacks	Incidents	Bajaur		Mohmand		Khyber		Orakzai		Kurram		NWA		SWA		Total		
		K	I	K	I	K	I	K	I	K	I	K	I	K	I	K	I	
Target killings	13	6	2	1	0	4	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	14	6	
Terrorist Attacks	on Civilians	43	21	8	3	3	8	51	9	17	33	89	0	0	3	0	77	168
	on Military	60	3	12	9	21	44	19	21	11	22	12	69	16	46	32	214	123
	on Peace Lashkar	17	5	5	4	1	22	11	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	31	18
Cross Border Attacks	Shelling	7	3	1	0	0	4	4	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	8	8
	Guerilla Activities	6	0	0	5	0	20	0	0	0	18	6	0	0	0	0	43	6
Kidnappings	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	8	0	16	0	
Clashes Between Militant Groups	3	0	0	0	0	12	8	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	14	8	
Military Operation	Search Operations	65	11	2	32	18	0	0	1	0	5	0	28	0	7	0	84	0
	Aerial Strikes	55	0	0	0	0	456	135	8	0	5	3	537	34	13	0	1019	172
	Artillery Shelling	5	0	0	0	0	20	0	32	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	68	0
Curfews	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Drones Attacks	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	84	30	7	2	91	32	
Lashkar Operations	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>1679</b>	<b>561</b>	

Amid the intensive military operations, Zarb-e-Azb, in the North Waziristan and Khyber 1&2 in the Khyber Agency against local and foreign militants, IED blast, suicide attacks, target killing, cross

border attacks, clashes between militants groups and militant ambush on security forces remained a common trend of militancy in the year 2015. In total, 293 militancy and counter militancy incidents were recorded from all the seven agencies of FATA, which resulted in 2,240 casualties; 1,679 killings and 561 injuries. A total of 13 incidents of target killing; 43 incidents of militant attacks on civilians, 60 incidents of militant ambush on military and 17 incidents of militant attack on members of various peace committees were recorded in the year 2015. On 13 occasions cross border attacks were carried out by militants belonging to the Tehrik-e-Taliban and ISIS, harboring in safe heavens in Afghanistan while four incidents of Kidnapping for ransom and three incidents of clashes between militants outfits occurred in different areas of FATA.



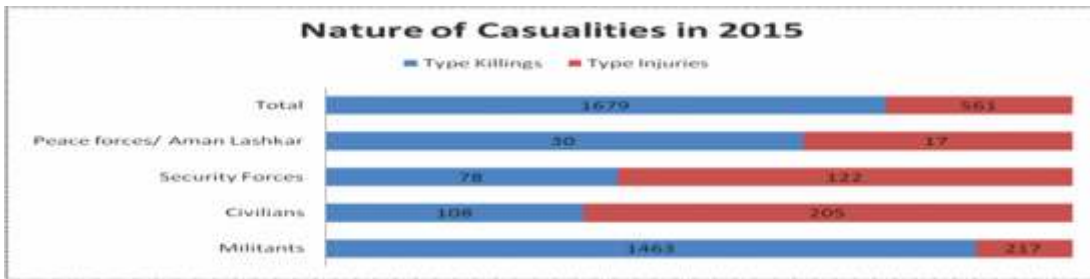
X-axis shows the details of militancy and counter militancy incidents while y-axis shows several killings and injuries against each incident

To counter the escalating militant activities in FATA, intensive hardcore counter terrorism measures i.e. aerial strikes, ground operations, search operations etc., and were undertaken by Pakistani security forces during the year 2015. The above graph of nature of incidents in FATA indicates that a total 125 counter terrorism incidents [43% of the total incidents] including 65 search operations; 55 aerial strikes and 5 artillery shelling were recorded in the year 2015. 14 incidents of drone strikes [12 US Drones strikes and 2 Pakistani Drone Buraq] were carried out against both local and foreign militants in North and South Waziristan Agencies of FATA as part of counter terrorism strategy.

Casualties Type 2015																
Type	Bajaur		Mohmand		Khyber		Orakzai		Kurram		NWA		SWA		Total	
	K	I	K	I	K	I	K	I	K	I	K	I	K	I	K	I
Militants	8	0	34	0	553	135	53	0	57	13	708	63	50	6	1463	217
Civilians	23	9	9	9	13	78	9	19	43	90	0	0	11	0	108	205
Security Forces	6	16	4	24	14	17	9	9	11	9	10	17	24	30	78	122
Peace forces/ AmanLashkar	12	5	7	10	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	30	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>1679</b>	<b>561</b>

As a consequence of escalating militant activities and employment of intensive hardcore approaches [Military operations Zarb-e-Azb and Khyber 1&2] 2,240 casualties; 1,679 killings and 561 injuries were reported across the seven agencies of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan.

The graph below illustrates that out of the total casualties, 1,463 were militants accounting for almost 65% of the total casualties in year 2015. The high number of militant casualties in the year 2015 is a manifestation of the effectiveness of intensive aerial strikes and ground offense carried against militant in North and Khyber Agencies along with surgical and targeted strikes and proactive search operations carried out against militants operational in the five agencies of FATA.



X-axis shows the type of casualties while y-axis measures the toll of casualties

Despite the effectiveness of hardcore approaches in dismantling militant networks in FATA, militants belonging to TTP, JuA, ISIS etc on several occasion targeted civilians, military personal and member of peace committee. Civilian casualties, 313, stood at second including 108 killings and 205 injures almost 14 % of the total casualties followed by security forces, 78 killings and 122, almost 9 % of the total casualties, and member of peace committees with 30 killings and 17 injuries, almost 2 % of the total casualties.

Agency wise, North Waziristan and Khyber Agencies, where military operations against both local and foreign militants are going on, remained the most turbulent agencies of FATA. The graph of Agency wise killings and injuries below illustrates the most number of casualties, i.e., 822; 590 killings and 232 injuries [37 % of the total casualties] took place in Khyber Agency while North Waziristan remained second with 798 casualties; 718 killings and 80 injuries, almost 36 % of the total casualties. Kurrum and South Waziristan Agency also a witnessed a disturbed phase with high number of casualties; 111 killing and 112 injuries in Kurrum Agency, almost 10 % of the total casualties and 86 killings and 36 injuries in South Waziristan Agency, 5.4 % of the total casualties .



X-axis shows the Agency wise the types of casualties while y-axis give the toll of casualties

However, compared to the other agencies of FATA, Bajaur Agency, despite few cross border attacks, IED attacks and target killing incidents witnessed a peaceful epoch with least number of casualties, 49 Killings and 30 injuries, 3.5 % of the total casualties; followed by Mohmand Agency, 54 killings and 43 injuries, 4.3 % of the total casualties and Orakzai Agency with 71 killings and 28 injuries, around 4.4 % of the total casualties in the year 2015.

From the security point of view, the most turbulent area during the outgoing quarter remained North Waziristan and Khyber Agencies where military operations “Zarb-e-Azaband Khyber 1&2” against local foreign militants is going on. In North Waziristan, Datakhel, Miramshah, Mir Ali and Shawal tehsil remained the most affected areas of the area remained the main target of militancy and counter militancy activities where 537 militants were killed while 34 others were critically wounded in 37 counter militancy operations. According to military sources almost 90 % of the agency

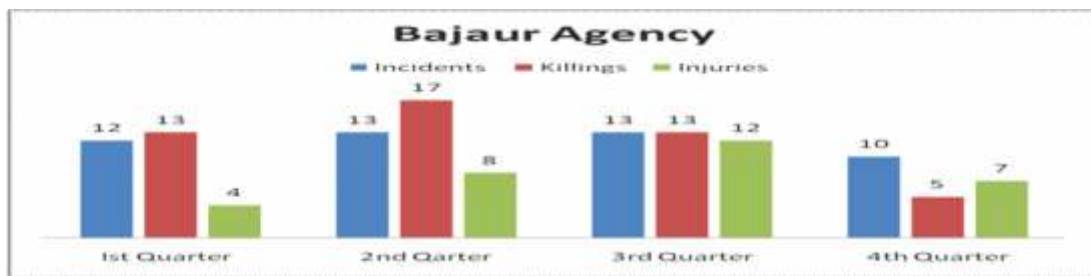
has been cleared with exception to few pockets in the border areas of Shawal Valley where military operations in its final phase is going on. In 2015, 49 incidents of counter militancy actions by Pakistani security forces in the Khyber Agency were reported. Similarly, 32 terrorist attacks attributed to the anti-state militants employing IEDs, ambushes, cross border attacks, target killing etc were reported against the security forces, tribal elders and members of Amn militias.

According to FRC sources, to avoid the consequences of intensive hardcore approaches i.e. Zarb-e-Azab in North Waziristan, Rah-e-Nijat South Waziristan agencies and Khyber 1&2 in Khyber Agency, which have largely dismantled terrorist networks thereby forcing militant groups like Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Mehsud Taliban, Lashkar e Islam, JamaatulAhrar, Al Qaida, Turkistan Islamic Party(TIP), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan to leave the area and shift to newly established safe havens in Khost, Paktika, Paktiya and Nangarhar provinces of Afghanistan.



# Quarter Analysis of 2015 Bajaur Agency

## Bajaur Agency



X-axis shows the type of nature of incidents & casualties while y-axis gives the toll of incidents & casualties against each Quarter of 2015

Security situation in Bajaur remained turbulent during the year 2015. The above graph illustrates that during the first quarter from January to March of 2015, Bajaur Agency witnessed a surge in militancy related incidents. A total of 17 casualties; 13 killed and 4 injured were recorded in 12 terrorist attacks on civilians, security forces and member of peace forces.

Security wise, Momand and Nawagai Tehsil of the agency remained the most perturbed areas. Militants belonging to the TTP and JuA opted for tactics like IED attacks, cross border attacks and ambushes to pursue militancy in the said agency from January to March, 2015. Civilians and security forces remained the main target of militant during the first quarter.

The second quarter in Bajaur Agency also did not pass unperturbed. Out of the total 13 terrorist incident that took place in from April to June of 2015, in Bajaur Agency, the biggest number of terrorist attacks occurred in Omari, Gat Agra, Badan, Larkhaloozo areas of Momand tehsil where 6 different terrorist incidents claimed several lives while causing damages to both private and public properties. For instance, in a target killing incident Levies personal Tayyab Khan was killed in Larkhaloozo area of Momand tehsil while in another incident a security personal lost his life when an IED detonated near Government High School Badan of Mamond tehsil which was claimed by the TTP claimed.

Likewise increased number of cross border attacks against security forces and civilians by militants based in Kunar province of Afghanistan were also reported during the second quarter in Mamond and Chamarkand tehsil of the Agency. In another important security development in the second

quarter, TTP nominated Maulvi Shiekh Gul Mamond and Dr Burhan-ud Din as head commander and deputy commanders respectively of TTP Bajaur Chapter. Gul Mamond and Dr Burhan-ud-Din replaced Abu Baker and Qari Zahid; who joined Islamic State [ISIS] several weeks ago.

The turbulent security situation in the agency persisted in the third quarter from June to September 2015. A total of 25 casualties; 13 killing and 12 injuries were recorded in Utmankhel, Nawagai and Mamond tehsil of the agency. The biggest number of attacks occurred in Charmang area of Nawagai tehsil, Sperai, Zari and Damadola area of Mamond tehsil where 10 different terrorist incidents claimed several lives while causing damages to both private and public properties.

Although cross border attacks have been one of the effective tactics militants based in Kunar province of Afghanistan have been employing against security forces and civilians however, compared to the 2nd quarter there was a decline in cross border attacks in the 3rd quarter from July to September of 2015.

Majority of the militancy incidents in the 3rd quarter were carried out by militants belonging to the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and Jamat-ul-Ahrar, a splinter group of the TTP. However, according to FRC sources, Islamic State [IS] or Daesh (Acronym for Daulat al-Islamiya fi al Iraq Wa Shaam) is also making inroads in the Agency particularly the bordering areas adjacent to the Kunar province of Afghanistan. In this regard it is pertinent to mention here that, militants' belonging to Islamic State [IS] carried out an IED blast in Arang area of Utmankhel subdivision, considered as the most peaceful area in Bajaur agency, where 2 tribal elders including 3 civilians were killed. Islamic State [IS] militants also target Adil post of security forces in Dhamadola area of Mamond tehsil in September 2015.

However, towards the end of the year from October to December of the year 2015, Bajaur Agency witnessed a nose dive in militancy related incidents. IED attacks (6 incidents), target killing (two incidents) and cross border attacks (two incidents) remained the dominant trend of militancy in the fourth quarter while member of peace remained the main target of militants as 5 peace committee members were killed from October to December 2015.

In order to counter the militant activities in the Agency, the local administration and security forces have taken certain hardcore counter terrorism measures to ensure peace and security in the agency. As a part of counter terrorism strategy, search operations and targeted operations were being conducted in different areas of the agency against suspected hideouts of militants and their facilitators on regular basis. A total of 16 search operations were conducted during the fourth quarter. The search operations were largely reactive as most of the search operations, 10 out of 16, were conducted after militant ambush, IED blast etc. For instance, during the opening weeks of the year agency political administration in collaboration with the area security forces conducted search operations in the proximity of Khar, Shahnaray and Shinkot, and destroyed the houses of militants that were wanted to the forces in multiple militancy related cases. During the same period the move against militants in search operations intensified and few more operations were carried out in Damadola area of Mamond tehsil thereby razing to ground, more houses of militants. While in Salarzai tehsil the political administration set a five-day deadline to the elders of Salarzai tribe to hand over 24 wanted militants in their area to the authorities otherwise the houses of militants would be demolished. Similarly, in search operation, security forces foiled a terrorist bid by seizing 94 bags of explosives with prima cords and other material used in the making of IEDs in the Khar, agency headquarter Bajaur Agency.

# Mohmand Agency



X-axis shows the type of nature of incidents & casualties while y-axis gives the toll of incidents & casualties against each Quarter of 2015

The security situation in Mohmand remained disturbed in the year 2015. The above graph illustrates that during the first quarter of 2015, from January till March, the remained the most turbulent epoch of 2015 as 14 militancy and counter militancy incidents resulted in 22 casualties; 13 killings and 9 injuries were reported in areas of Mohmand Agency. Bomb blasts and IED explosions were the dominant trends of militancy while Baizai tehsil of the agency remained the most disturbed areas of the agency. Security forces and members of peace committee remained the main target of militants during the first quarter.

Taliban of banned outfit, Jamaat Ull hrar continued with their anti-state activities during the first quarter of the agency. In Khwezai tehsil of the agency Taliban kidnapped four people. Ihsan Ullah Ihsan, the spokesman for the banned Jamaat Ull hrar took the responsibility of the incident. In another incident of terrorism, a government-run primary school was blown up in Yakaghund area of lower Mohmand while in another in another incident the miscreants also blew up a government-run community center in Shalkor area of Yakaghund tehsil of the agency.

However, in the second quarter, from April till June of 2015, a decline in militancy incidents was witnessed. Although 25 people were killed during the second quarter but majority, 21 out 25, were militants. The most preferred mode of attack by militants remained the use of IEDs and bomb blast as 4 out of the 6 incidents took place in the agency were IED attacks on Security forces and member

of peace forces while Safi tehsil of the agency remained the most disturb area during the second quarter year 2015.

A major militancy incident in the second quarter was the killing of at least 20 terrorists in Shunkrai area of Mohmand Agency when security forces reatiated a cross border guerilla attack by militants of JuA from the Afghanistan. However, Ehsan Ullah Ehsan, spokesman for the militant group Jamaat Ul Ahraar, in an electronic message to FRC, denied that any clash had taken place at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. According to him “there was no such clash. We believe our colleagues in the custody of the government were brought there and shot dead. It has happened in the past also but we would avenge the killing of our brother mujahids”.

Mohmand Agency remained relatively peaceful in the outgoing quarter of 2015; however, 5 terrorist incidents were recorded in the agency that included 2 bomb blasts, one terrorist attack on security check post and 2 search operations by security forces and member of peace committees. Compared to the previous quarter a decline in militancy incidents was witnessed in the outgoing quarter. The most disturb area of the agency during the 3rd quarter of 2015 included Chopan area and Azian village of Pandayli tehsil and the most the most preferred mode of attack by militants remained the use of IEDs and bomb blast from July to September 2015, as on two occasions, militants employed IED tactics to attack security forces and member of peace forces in Pandayli tehsil of the agency.

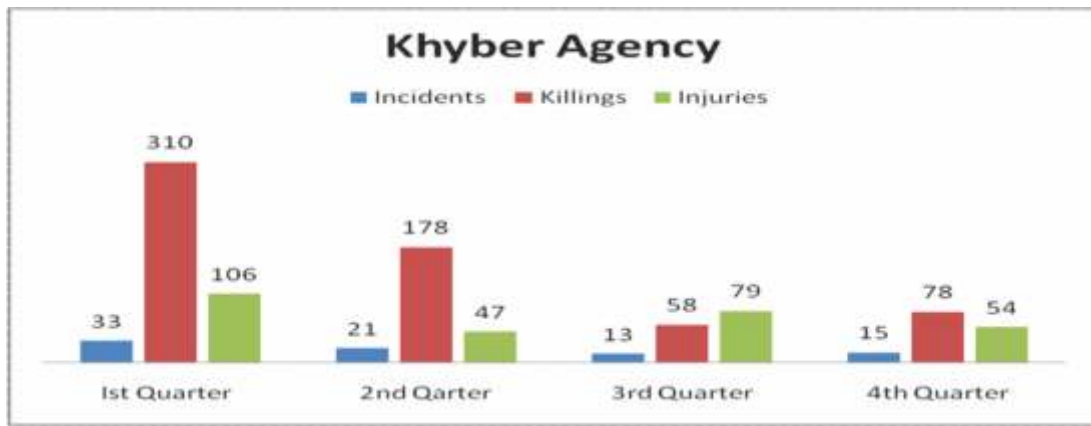
Likewise, Mohmand Agency, during the fourth quarter, from October to December of 2015, with exception to few terrorist attacks, largely remained peaceful. A Total of 6 terrorist incidents were recorded in the agency that included 4 bomb blasts, one incident of cross border attack on security check post from Afghanistan while on one occasion security forces carried out search operation against militants.

Baizai tehsil of the agency remained the most turbulent area of the agency where militant belonging to Jammata UllAhrar and TTP on several occasion through IED attacks targeted security forces and member of peace forces.

To counter the menace of militancy and ensure sustainable peace in the agency, security forces along with political administration have been employing both hardcore and soft core approaches. In total 10 Search operations were conducted as a part of counter terrorism strategy in the agency against militants of Tehreek-e-taliban Pakistan and Jamt-ul-Ahrar. For instance, security forces and civil militia on two occasions conducted search operations in Soran Darra, Kodakhel and Bazai area of the agency and after a fierce clash with militants in which 3 people including a security personal was killed, security forces secured several areas by defusing 85 landmines. The forces also conducted search operation in Main Mandi Bazaar where 27 arrests were made. In the operation dozens of houses and shops were searched and data of people living in rented buildings were collected.

A part from hardcore approaches, the government authorities are also working for ameliorating the state of public life in the agency. For instance, the governor during a meeting with the elders of Khwezai tribe promised to reopen the Pak-Afghan highway in the agency which can be significant in reviving economic activities in the agency. Likewise, the FM radio station functioning in Galanai since 2009 was upgraded with R.s 2.1 million, will feature multiple programmes on culture, education, health, agriculture, Islamic education, and patriotism. FM radio being the only source of information in the agency can be used as an effective tool to counter the militant propaganda in the

# Khyber Agency



X-axis shows the type of nature of incidents & casualties while y-axis gives the toll of incidents & casualties against each Quarter of 2015

Khyber Agency remained turbulent in 2015 and stood second to the volatile North Waziristan in terms of suffering high number casualties and terrorist incidents. The graph above shows that the first quarter, from January to March of 2015 witnessed a surge in terrorist incidents as 416 casualties; 310 Killings and 106 injuries were recorded in 33 militancy and counter militancy activities. Out of the 33 incidents, 11 incidents were militancy related which resulted in 62 casualties. 2 target killings killed 2 and injured 2. 1 terrorist attack on civilians caused no casualty. 5 attacks on security forces caused 16 deaths and 15 injuries while 2 attacks on the peace lashkar resulted in 6 deaths and 9 injuries. Similarly 1 clash between militant groups: Lashkar-e-Islam – the banned outfit – and pro-government peace lashkars, occurred which claimed 7 lives and caused 5 injuries.

The agency has been passing through a disturbed phase since the start of military operation “KHYBER-1” launched in the final quarter of the year 2014 and “KHYBER-2” in March 2015. According to military sources Bara Subdivision was cleared in the military operation Khyber 1 while Tirah Valley of the Agency still remained the most volatile area and a strong hold of militants in first quarter of 2015. According to military sources, during aerial bombing, areas like Mehraban Kalay, Wache Wane and Serrai are targeted, where militants belonging to LI and TTP have been in hiding. These areas lying near to Pak-Afghan border were previously inhabited by the Kukikhel tribe of Jamrud tehsil, however Taliban of Darra Adam khel, Tariq Afridi group, took control of it in 2011 and since then they, besides other groups, had been occupying houses vacated by the Kukikhel families.

On 17th March 2015, Brigadier Zahid Khan, in-charge of the military operation in Bara region of Khyber Agency, in a media briefing at Bara training centre announced successful end of the operation Khyber “1”. Brig Zahid while giving the details of the operation said that over 100 militants were killed during the operation, around 450 terrorists had been arrested for their involvement in anti-state activities and around 17 military troops while 38 others receiving injuries. He explained that operation “Khyber-1” was divided into three phases as the action was held in first stage in Nala of Malikdin Khel, second in Shalobar and third stage in Aka Khel tribe of Bara. However in February this quarter Commandant Khyber Rifles 'Colonel Tariq Hafeez' told reporters that Khyber-2 military operation against Taliban and other terrorist groups hiding in different parts of the Tirah valley was to begin next month (March). He added that with the arrest of 25 hardcore terrorists, security forces had achieved much of the objectives of the Khyber-1 operation.

Another important security development in during the first quarter was the dissolution of a pro-government militant organization Amar bil Maroof waNahi Anil Munkar. The organization was founded by Haji Namdar, who was killed in Khajori area of Bar Qambarkhel tribe in Bara in 2004. It spread rapidly, particularly in Bar Qambarkhel area, as people were joining it voluntarily to solve various problems and disputes faced by the locals of the area.

The security situation in Khyber agency remained turbulent during the second quarter, from April to June 2015. A total of 21 militancy and counter militancy related incidents were recorded during this quarter resulting in 225 casualties. Eight counter militancy raids were reported in which, 129 militants were killed and 35 others were injured. Likewise in 3 incidents of clashes between security forces and militants, 42 people were killed while 5 others were injured. Three incidents of IED attacks resulted in killing 5 and injuring 4 others while in 2 incidents of target killing 2 persons were killed and 3 were injured.

According to ISPR during the Operation Khyber-II the security forces advanced and took control of several mountain tops and cleared 80 percent area in Tirah valley. The ongoing military operation in the area is largely focused on aerial strikes and shelling combined with ground offensive and search operations to clean the area of militants. Military sources claimed that the control of Sipah and Akkakhel was so far the biggest achievement of security forces during operation Khyber “2”. Likewise, it was also revealed that the Pakistani security forces also pressed their ground advance towards the TTP-controlled Kukikhel areas in the valley with fierce ground battles in DwaThoe and Zarmanza areas of Kukikhel, Garhai of KamarKhel, JabbarMela of QambarKhel and also in Nakai and Ziyarat area of MalakdinKhel which used to be the strongholds of outlawed Lashkar-e-Islam and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. LI spokesman Salahuddin Ayoubi conceded that the army had taken control of certain areas in Tirah but termed it their 'tactical retreat' and revealed that they would soon retake the area with support of TTP and Jamaat-ul-Ahrar fighters. However, FRC sources, army's control of Sipah and Akkakhel was a severe blow to LI because it had been controlling the region for the past 10 years and LI had established its recruitment and training centers along with several hideouts in Sanda Pal, Sandana, Nangrosa and SpeenDrand areas of Sipah, DarsJumaat, Kulla, Mastak, SadakoMarkaz and Sultan Khel localities of Akkakhel. During the past 10 years, the LI had defended the strong bases against arch rivals Ansaarul Islam and Tauheedul Islam.

During the second quarter it was also reported that the Islamic State's [ISIS] commander-designate for Pakistan, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed of Orakzai agency, was killed with two others in a bomb explosion in the ToorDara area of Tirah Valley which later proved to be false, as FRC sources reveal that Hafiz Muhammad Saeed is still alive and is leading ISIS in Khurasan region [Pak-Afghan

Region]. Likewise, according to FRC sources two banned militant organizations, Lahkare-Islam (LI) and Amrbil Maroof wa Nahi Anil Munkar (Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice), clashed in a remote mountainous area of Jabbar Mela near the Pak-Afghan border. As a result, three militants of Lashkar-i-Islam, including an important commander Shahmat Khan, were killed on the spot and their two associates sustained injuries while two commanders of Amrbil Maroof wa Nahi Anil Munkar, identified as Zari Jan and Ibrahim, were also killed and another was injured.

The security situation in Khyber agency remained disturbed during the 3rd quarter, however, compared to the previous quarters a decline in militancy incidents was witnessed in the agency. A total of 9 militancy related incidents were recorded during this quarter while three counter militancy raids [Air Strikes] were reported, and on one occasion lashkar forces [Tauheed-e-Islam] conducted operations against militants. Similarly, militants of Lashkar-e-Islam executed five members of a rival pro-government peace lashkar Tauheedul Islam from Zakakhel bazaar. After which the member of peace committee arrested and executed three suspected militants of Lashkar-e-Islam.

An important security development during the 3rd quarter was wrapping up of the military operation Khyber II on June 15, 2015, after restoring government writ in 95% of the agency; however precise air strikes continue to be carried out against militants hiding in pockets in Kachkol and Rajgal areas near the Afghan border to clear the remaining 5% of the area from militants. Despite claims made by military sources about the successes of military operation Khyber I & II, a surge in militant activities was reported in the Agency. Militants belonging to TTP, JA and LI carried out 9 militant attacks in Jamrud, Bara, Landikotal and Sadna area of Tirah Valley of the agency, from July to September of the year 2015.

The intensive military offense in the agency has largely not only dismantled the militant networks operating in the agency for decades but have also forced them to flee the area. According to FRC sources, to avoid the consequence of military operation, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Jamat-ul-Ahrar and Mangal Bagh along with his 200 to 300 member of Lashkar-e-Islam have now fled to safe heavens in Naziyan province of Afghanistan where Mangal Bagh has now teamed up with the Islamic State or Daesh [IS] to take on the Afghan Taliban. Moreover, harboring in the Nagahar province of Afghanistan these militants will regroup and initiate cross border attacks against Pakistani security forces deployed along the Afghan border. For instance, four soldiers of Pakistan arm forces lost their lives when a rocket fired from militant hideouts in Nagarhar province of Afghanistan hit a security check post in Khandwala Kandao, Tirah valley of Khyber Agency.

The fourth quarter in Khyber Agency from October to December 2015 also did not pass on unperturbed. 6 search operations and 4 aerial strikes were carried out against militants hiding in Kachko and Rajgal areas of Tirah Valley which resulted in 102 casualties; 78 killed and 24 injuries. However, 98 out of 102 casualties, almost 96% were militants.

# Orakzai Agency



X-axis shows the type of nature of incidents & casualties while y-axis gives the toll of incidents & casualties against each Quarter of 2015

Orakzai Agency having passed through calmer periods of tranquility and presents no high threats to the established peace. Though two military operations launched in the adjacent agencies - Khyber 1&2 in Khyber Agency and Zarb-e-Azb in North Waziristan Agency - remained potential threats for the sustainability of peace in Orakzai Agency but so far the impacts of these operations over the agency remained low. Security wise Orakzai Agency with exception to few terrorist incidents witnessed a peaceful period during the year 2015. The graph above illustrates that in the first quarter from January to March 2015, 12 casualties; three killings and nine injuries recorded as a consequence of five militancy incidents. Militants attacked a volleyball match in Kada Bazaar in lower Orakzai Agency via remote controlled bomb planted in the stand of spectators. Nine people were injured in this incident while one was killed. Following this a search operation was launched and a few suspects were arrested but no militant group accepted the responsibility for the incident.

In Bezoat area of lower Orakzai militants blew a government run school with explosive material causing a major portion of the premises to collapse. The agency education officer said that the number of destroyed schools in Orakzai Agency reached to 141, of which 38 have been rebuilt so far by the political administration. Yet in another incident of the same nature bomb disposal squad of security forces defused implanted bomb in the limits of girls' primary school in Babu Tang area of the agency.

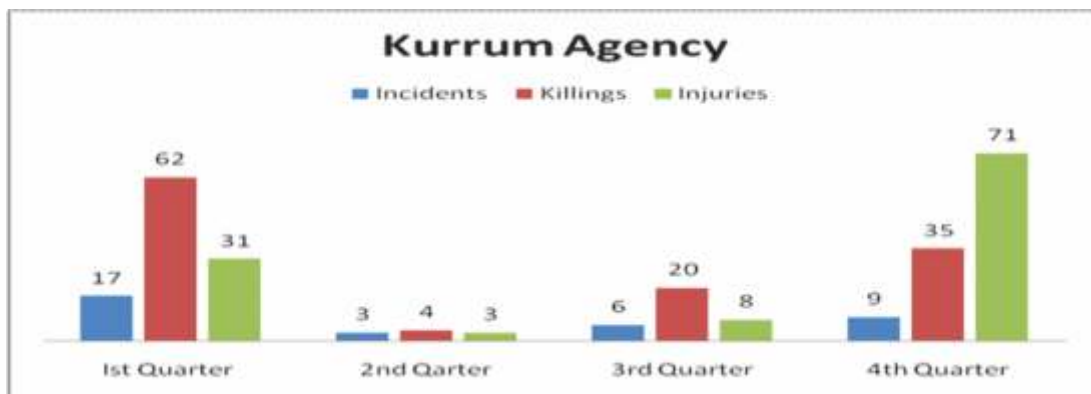


In the second quarter a surge in militancy incidents was witnessed in the Orakzai Agency. Out of the 10 incidents, two were bomb blast in which 2 people were killed and four others got injured; two incidents were of clashes with militants in which 24 people were killed while four were injured. Moreover, military conducted aerial strikes against militants in which thirteen militants were killed.

In the wake of military operation Zarb-e-Azb and Khyber 1&2 military forces also conducted aerial strikes in central Orakzai against militants who, avoiding military offensive in NWA and Khyber Agency fled to Orakzai Agency. In aerial strike the military gunships and helicopters pounded on militants hideouts in Chappar Mushti, Toorsimth, DaranShiekhan, OvtMela and ZaffarGhari of central Orakzai Agency; resultantly ten militants were killed while five militant hideouts were destroyed. Moreover, military's gunship helicopters targeted the positions of militants in Kasha, ShakarTangi, SafialDarra and other areas in central parts of the Orakzai Agency and LalaSar mountain range, which also borders the Hangu district. Besides aerial strikes, security forces also conducted search operations against militants outfit in the agency. According to FRC sources, about 16 villages of ZubDarra, central Orakzai, vacated their houses some 25 days ago after security forces launched search operation against Taliban militants operational in the area.

Orakzai Agency remained peaceful in the 3rd and 4th quarters of 2015. There was a nose dive in militancy incidents from July to September 2015. 70 % less militancy and counter militancy incidents were recorded in last few months of 2015 and the number of casualties was also on the lower side, 87 % less than that of earlier quarters of 2015. The decline in militancy incidents in Orakzai Agency doesn't imply that the agency has been cleared off militant outfits. According to FRC sources militants to avoid military offense in North Waziristan and Khyber Agency have fled to safe heavens in the bordering areas of Orakzai Agency. To counter the militants taking refuge in the agency, security forces in the previous quarter [April to June] conducted precise air strikes and search operations in various areas of central Orakzai, however, during the outgoing quarter only search operations were conducted the agency. One militant of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan was killed while five others were arrested during a search operation in Masti bazaar in Central Orakzai Agency. Another important security development was the surrender of 12 members of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan [Aslam Farroqui faction] along with Razman Shah an important commander for Orakzai agency.

# Kurram Agency



X-axis shows the type of nature of incidents & casualties while y-axis gives the toll of incidents & casualties against each Quarter of 2015

Kurram Agency after remaining a peaceful in the year 2014, witnessed a surge in militancy related incidents in during the first quarter of 2015. The graph above illustrate that 17 militancy incidents resulted in 93 casualties; 62 killings and 31 injuries.

Shabak area in lower Kurram Agency remained the notably disturbed portion of the agency in this quarter. This area is densely forest populated and lies adjacent to North Waziristan Agency where a military operation is still underway. It is assumed that due to the ongoing military operation the militants have moved into the region. Mostly military convoys were targeted through IEDs and ambush attacks. In mid of February dozens of militants from Afghanistan attacked security picket in Shabak locality and intense firing took place between Pakistani security forces and the attackers. According to military sources in the fight at least fifteen militants were killed while others managed to run back to Afghanistan. It was learned that the militants were equipped with heavy machines and fighting arms. Terrorists attacked the same locality again after gap of few days however the timely response of security forces managed to repulse the attack successfully.

The escalating activities of militants in the agency raised the concern of the military and civilian administration while maintaining the established writ of the government. The area security to counter the militants acted upon tip off and conducted many search operations where encountered insurgents in armed conflicts. To keep the peace of the area intact the Political Agent Kurram Agency Amjad Ali along with Commandant Kurram Militia Colonel Maqbool Ahmed called a Jarga of tribal elders to discuss and initiate a co-ordinated security measures with the help of local

population and peace committees.

In the second quarter of 2015 a nose dive in militancy incidents were recorded in Kurram Agency. Total of seven casualties, including four deaths and three injured, were resulted in three security related incidents; two militants were killed while two civilians lost their lives and 2 others got injured. Similarly, one security personal was also injured in a terrorist attack.

Although military operations in the past have largely dismantled militant networks in Kurram however, militants under the banner of TTP are still operational in different areas of the central Kurram. For instance, two militants of the proscribed Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) were killed in a clash with gunmen in the Tor Thoot area in the central parts of Kurram Agency while in another incident two armed groups traded gunfire in the hilly area of Tor Toot in which two TTP militants, including commander Mullakhel, were killed. However, none of the militant outfits claimed responsibility for the attack.

In the last two quarters of 2015 from July to December 2015, Kurram Agency witnessed a surge in militant activities. A total of 6 militancy and counter militancy incidents were recorded, around 50 % higher the previous quarter from April to June 2015 in which resulted in 28 casualties; 20 killings and 8 injuries. Likewise, 35 people were killed while 71 others were critically wounded in 9 incidents of militancy and counter militancy, 33 % higher than the 3rd quarter.

The areas remained turbulent during the current quarter of 2015 included Spar Kot and Tora Warai in Central Kurram, Sarka area, Bagan area, Yaqoobi village in Lower Kurram agency.

# North Waziristan Agency



X-axis shows the type of nature of incidents & casualties while y-axis gives the toll of incidents & casualties against each Quarter of 2015

North Waziristan Agency, the most volatile agency during the year 2015 quarter, witnessed an assortment of militancy and counter militancy incidents in a large number. In the wake of military operation Zarb-e-Azb, North Waziristan Agency that has been passing through a military operation since June 2014 saw a surge in the number of casualties this quarter. Mostly the agency witnessed aerial bombing carried out by security forces targeting the militant hideouts in the troubled area. In total, 15 incidents caused 167 casualties, 144 killings and 23 injuries.

Drones - widely believed by western allies as an important tool to counter militancy in Pakistan - continued to hover over the agency during the whole quarter. In total, five such strikes were recorded in the first three months of the year 2015. The first attack of the year came on January 5, 2015 that targeted twin compounds in Datta-Khel tehsil. The pilotless war plane continued hitting their targets mostly in the far flung Shawal valley and Datta-Khel tehsils of NWA.

A surge in militancy and counter militancy incidents persisted during the second quarter from April to June 2015. 22 militancy and counter militancy incidents resulted in 287 casualties, including 260 deaths and 27 wounded. Reportedly, 252 militants were killed and 22 others were injured in counter militancy measures in the area during the 2nd quarter while 8 security personals were martyred and 5 others were wounded in militant attacks. As part of the ongoing operation Zarb e Azb, more than 11 military raids against militants were carried out in Toor Tangi area of Datakel; Zoi Saidgi, Dabori, Gorbuz and Wareka Mandi area of Shawal tehsil in North Waziristan where 178 militants were killed and 19 others got injured while huge caches of arms and ammunition were destroyed in aerial

strikes.

According to military sources, since the onset of military operation in North Waziristan, approximately 30,000 personnel of the Pakistan Armed Forces have so far succeeded in exterminating around 2,763 terrorists, destroyed 837 militant hideouts and 253 tons of explosives were also recovered. Likewise, 9,000 terrorists were apprehended during the Intelligence Based Operations (IBOs). So far, 347 military officials and soldiers have embraced martyrdom in the military offensive. Still, a few pockets of militants remain in the NWA along the Afghan border and efforts are underway to secure those.

Likewise, according to FRC data base, from April to June 2015, five drone strikes were carried out in Zvekharba, Dray Nashter and Zve Narray areas of Shawal, a remote mountainous area along Afghan border in which 30 militants both local and foreigners, were killed in the attacks while 3 others got injured.

In the third quarter of 2015, a total of 17 militancy and counter militancy incidents were recorded in the agency. Out of 17 incidents, 9 incidents of military raids were carried out; three incidents of clashes between security forces and militants, 1 IED blast and on one occasion security forces conducted search operation against militants. Furthermore, three drone strikes, two US done while one Pakistan Drone "Buraq" strikes were carried out in the agency in which 16 militants were killed while 4 others were injured.

Notably the most turbulent areas of the agency during the 3rd quarter included Spinwam, Alwaramandi area, Datta Khel, Lawarabanga and Gurbaz area of Shawal valley of the Agency.

In the wake of military operation Zarb-e-Azb, a large number of militants fleeing the operation in Mir Ali, Miramshah and Datakhel tehsil of North Waziristan are believed to have taken refuge in Shawal Valley, which is considered to be an Al Qaeda sanctuary and a stronghold of Gul Bahadur, a warlord once considered pro-government and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. To counter the militants hiding in Shawal Valley more than 9 military raids against militants were carried out in Datakel and Gharlamai, Dabori, Gorbuz and Warekhamandi area of Shawal tehsil in which 223 militants were killed and 19 others got injured while huge caches of arms and ammunition were destroyed in aerial strikes. Along with the precise air strikes, on 21 August Pakistan Army pushing deep into the deeply forested ravines of the Shawal valley, initiated ground offense against militants, the final phase of Operation Zarb-e-Azab. According to military sources, majority of the area in North Waziristan have been cleared off from both local and foreign militants and ground offense against militants in Shawal valley is described as the final clearing of the militants' last hideouts in the valley. However, militants have denied the claims of military regarding killing of militants in precise air strikes and said that the Pakistani security forces were not aware of their whereabouts. In an electronic message sent to FRC, the spokesperson of TTP, Mohammad Khurrasani revealed that "The government does not know where we are."

# South Waziristan Agency



X-axis shows the type of nature of incidents & casualties while y-axis gives the toll of incidents & casualties against each Quarter of 2015

South Waziristan agency remaining peaceful in the previous year witnessed an escalation in militancy and counter militancy activities during the year 2015. The graph above illustrates that during the first quarter of 2015, 20 casualties; 8 killings and 12 injuries were recorded in South Waziristan Agency.

To counter the rising tide of militancy in the agency 3 search operations were carried out resulting in no casualties, while a military operation was launched in South Waziristan Agency on 18th March 2015, targeting areas like Ladha, Makeen and Dwatoe. It was reported that Taliban offered resistance to the forces of Pakistan, however, due to the remoteness of the area casualties and their nature could not be reported. It was also learnt that due to the military operation, to which no name has been given by the concerned authorities, has forced a number of militant commanders to flee to other areas including Afghanistan and Shawal mountainous areas of NWA. A veteran commander and head of Ladha of TTP Sajjna group, Shameem, had reportedly left the area for Afghanistan. It was learnt that Sajjna group is at war with the government after the failure of peace talks between them.

Likewise in the second quarter 2015, 33 casualties, 18 killed and 15 injured were recorded in 10 terrorist incidents. 12 militants were killed in a clash between security forces and militants; 3 civilians lost their lives in 4 bomb blast incidents while 12 security forces were wounded.

In an important security development on May 6, 2015 three different factions of Taliban in South Waziristan Agency merged with the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and pledged to work and abide by the central command of Mullah Fazal Ullah. According to TTP central spokesperson, Muhammad Khurasani, “this union will definitely heighten the powers of TTP and will work as a catalyst in Jihad moment in Pakistan in the days to come”. Those militant groups who amalgamated with TTP included; Abdus Samad Group led by Commander Qari Mati-ur-Rehman, Qarilhsan Group headed by Commander Qarilhsan-Ul-Haq and Shikarri Group being commanded by Commander Mohammad Shamel.

Third quarter from July to September of 2015 remained the most turbulent epoch for South Waziristan Agency in the year 2015. A Total of 9 militancy related incidents were recorded from July to September of 2015. Out of the total terrorist incidents, 4 incidents were militant ambush on security forces, 1 incident was IED blast; 1 was target killing incidents; 1 was precise air strikes; 1 was search operation and on one occasion incidents of drone strike was also carried out in the agency.

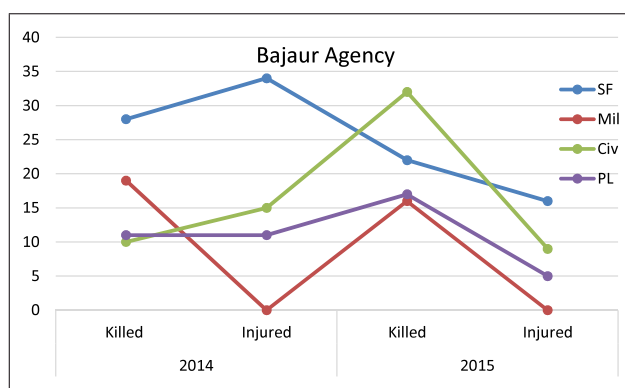
The areas remained disturbed militancy wise in from July to September in South Waziristan included Pre Ghar area, Wanna, Ladha and Makeen.

Precise airstrike and two search operations were conducted in which around twenty four militants were killed in Pre Ghar, Wanna and Ladha. In a search operation conducted in Wanna, security forces with help of gunship helicopters and bulldozers annihilated dozens of shops belonging to suspected militants. A part from aerial strikes and ground operations by security forces, US drone campaign was resumed in the agency after being halted for several months in the current year of 2015. According to FRC sources, 7 militants of Khan Said Sanjna Group were killed while two other were wounded in drone strike carried out in Ladha area of the agency.

The intensive military operation has largely dismantled the militant network operational in Mehsud inhabited areas, once used to be the sanctuary and strong hold of militants, yet militants in pockets are carrying out terrorist activities against security forces. Mehsud Taliban i.e. Shehyar Mehsud Group and Khan Said Sajna Group were intensively targeted through precise air strikes and consequent ground operation, forcing them to flee the area. According to FRC sources, to avoid the military operation, Shehyar Mehsud, the current head of Mehsud Taliban and Khan Said group, Splinter group of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, both have fled the area and are taking refuge in unknown location in the adjacent Patkiya province of Afghanistan.

# Agency Wise Comparative Analysis of 2015 & 2014

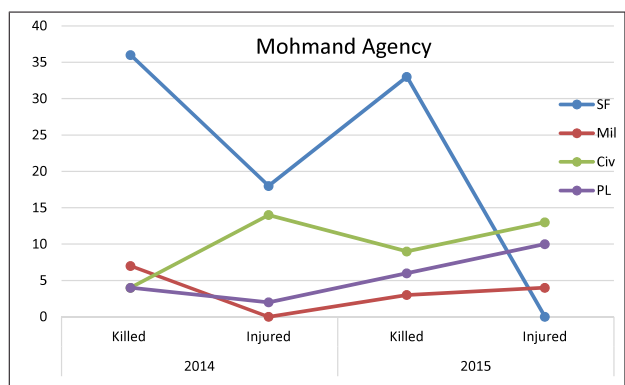
## Comparative Analysis of Bajaur Agency 2015 & 2014



X-axis give details of indicators while along y-axis the toll of casualties are shown.

Overall a downward trend was observed in the total number of casualties in Bajaur Agency during the year outgoing year of 2015 as compared to the year before (2014). Around 39% decrease has been found in the total casualties of security forces. However an incremental increase in the civilian casualties' was recorded that soared by 64% compared to previous year. Militants belonging to TTP, JamatulAhara and ISIS on several occasions, through IED attacks and target killing tactics targeted largely civilians and member of peace forces during the year 2015.

## Comparative Analysis of Mohmand Agency 2015 & 2014



X-axis give details of indicators while along y-axis the toll of casualties are shown.

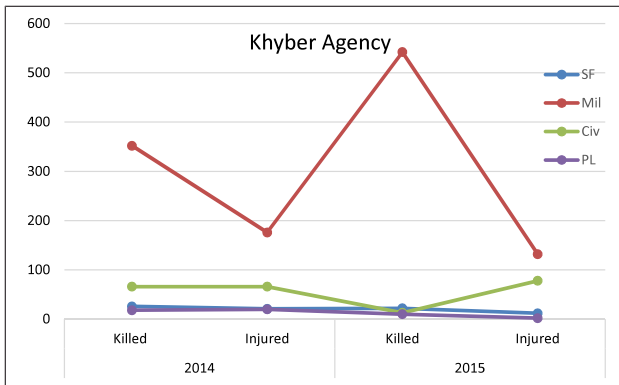
Although the year 2015 in Mohmand Agency remained less disturbed than the previous year however casualties didn't halt to happen this year too. A significant of 39% was observed in the casualties 'of security forces, however an assortment of 22 % was witnessed in overall civilian casualties in 2015 compared to previous year of 2014. Likewise, an incremental increase of around 166% has been recorded in the overall casualties incurred by Peace Forces during the outgoing year.

During the year 2015, militants though IED attacks and target killing tactics largely targeted personnel of Peace forces in Bazai, Yakaghund, Safi and Pandiyali tehsils of the agency.

## Comparative Analysis of Khyber Agency 2015 & 2014

The security situation Khyber Agency, where military operation “Khyber 2” during the year 2015 was in process presents a bleak picture. With exception to an increase in militant casualties, which stood



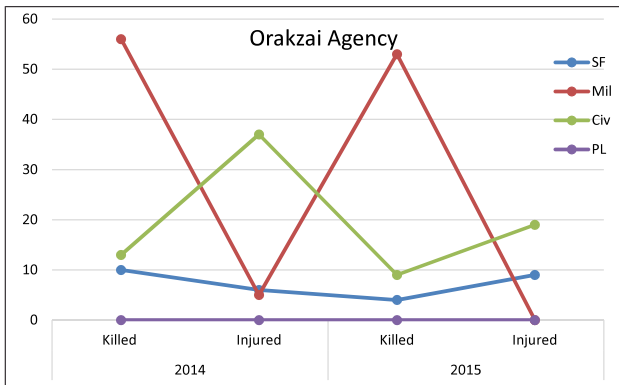


X-axis give details of indicators while along y-axis the toll of casualties are shown.

at 28% increase, a significant decline in overall casualties i.e. security forces casualties, 28%, Civilians 31% and 68% in peace lashker members was witnessed in the year 2015 compared to the year before.

### Comparative Analysis of Orakzai Agency 2015 & 2014

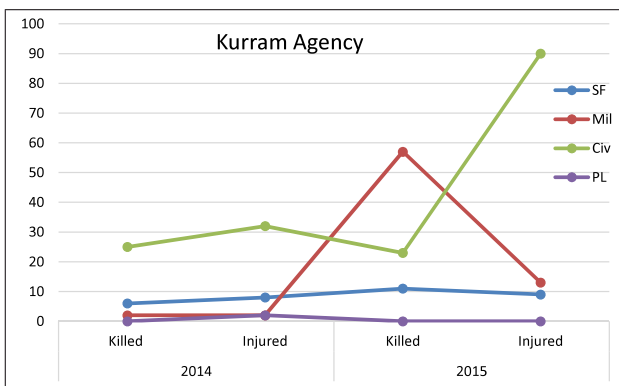
The year 2015 in Mohmand agency marked a peaceful period compared to that of 2014. An overall declined of 19 % security forces casualties and 44% decrease in civilian casualties was witnessed in 2015 compared to that of the year before. Militant casualties' also reduced by 13% during the year.



X-axis give details of indicators while along y-axis the toll of casualties are shown.

The main target of militants during the year remained civilians and personal of security forces. Total of 19 militancy and counter militancy incidents were reported in the year 2015 in which militants largely employed tactics of IED attacks and ambush to target civilians and security forces in distinct areas of lower and central Orakzai Agency.

### Comparative Analysis of Kurram Agency 2015 & 2014

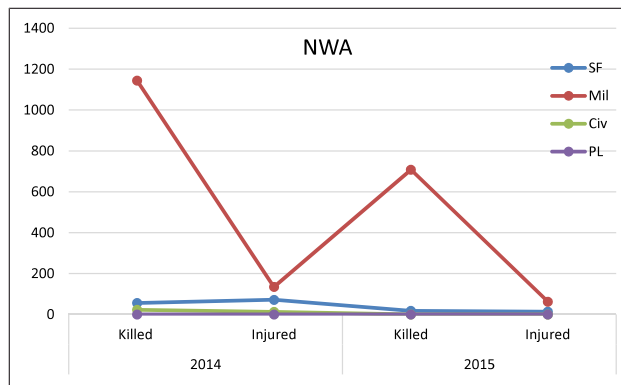


X-axis give details of indicators while along y-axis the toll of casualties are shown.

Kurram Agency remained turbulent during year 2015. The agency witnessed an extraordinary increase in casualties in all forms. In the year 2015 casualties on part of security forces were around 43% more than previous year while 98 % increase civilians casualties was witnessed in 2015. An assortment of 1650% in militant casualties compared to the previous year of 2014 was witnessed in the outgoing year of 2015.

Spar Kot and ToraWarai in Central Kurram and Sarka area, Shabak area, Bagan area, Yaqoobi village in Lower Kurram agency remained the main target of militants during the outgoing year of 2015. Militant employed tactics of IED attacks, cross border attacks and ambush to pursue militancy in the agency. In a terrorist incident 26 civilian were killed while 71 other received injures when a bomb hidden in a bag ripped through a crowded Eidgah bazaar, mainly Shia inhabited area of the agency. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) 'international' wing, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi Al-Aalmi in an electronic message to FRC claimed the responsibility for the attack.

### Comparative Analysis of North Waziristan Agency 2015 & 2014

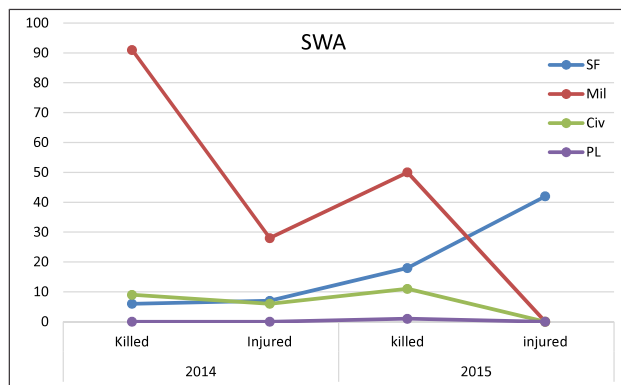


X-axis give details of indicators while along y-axis the toll of casualties are shown.

Agency with exception to few pockets in the bordering areas of Shawal valley.

North Waziristan Agency has been passing through an intensive military operation “Zarb-e-Azb”, since June 2014, witnessed a nose dive in the number of casualties during the year 2015. Compared to the previous year of 2014, casualties of security forces decreased by 75% and that of civilian a decline by 100% in the year 2015. A downward trend of 40% was also witnessed in casualties incurred by militants, which illustrates that militants have been evicted from the

### Comparative Analysis of South Waziristan Agency 2015 & 2014



X-axis give details of indicators while along y-axis the toll of casualties are shown.

Compared to the previous year of 2014 a significant decline in militant casualties, around 58%, while a marginal decline, around 7%, in civilian casualties was witnessed, in the year 2015.

The year 2015 marked an overall decrease in casualties across the agency compared to previous year with exception to an incremental increase of 362% in security forces casualties. Only in the first quarter of 2015, militants targeted security forces through 5 five IED attacks in Nano, Mula Khan Sarai, Spin Rakzai area of Sararogha Tehsil, Raghzai Road near Wanna bazaar and Shakai tehsil, in which 2 security forces embraced martyrdom while 7 sustained

injuries. Toorwam village in Sarwakai area, AngoorAdda, Ziaratzai, Tormandai, PreGhar area, Wanna, Ladha and Makeen areas of the Agency remained turbulent during the year 2015.

# Trends and Analysis

## **Mapping Conflict in FATA**

The Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan after remaining turbulent for the past few years witnessed improvement in security situation during the year 2015. According to FRC data base, a total of 293 militancy and counter militancy incidents were recorded, out of which 153 were militancy related, marking a 40% decline in militancy related incidents in 2015 compared to the year before. In the immediate aftermath of the Peshawar Army Public School (APS) attack, both the federal as well as provincial governments in Pakistan approved the 20-point National action Plan (NAP) in January 2015 to root out terrorism from the country. The government subsequently released a list of 5,400 suspected terrorists, and undertook swift counter-terrorism measures to nab the sympathizers, financiers and facilitators of banned militant outfits across the country. The formation of National Action Plan galvanized the civilian and military leadership to publicly vow against militants, and construct a narrative of zero tolerance against militant. In this regard, kinetic approaches employed as part of counter-terrorism strategy i.e. the initiation of military offensives such as Khyber 1&2 and Zarb-e-Azb in June 2014, further squeezed the operational space of the terrorists and eliminated their safe havens in FATA to a large extent. According to a recent statement by the ISPR, the government has cleared 95 % area of FATA from terrorists' presence and dismantled their infrastructure and network.

## **Militant Tactics in 2015**

The incessant military operations, Zarb-e-Azb and Khyber 1&2, against militants has]ve witnessed their gradual attrition. A loss of terrorist training infrastructure, hideouts, safe havens and the displacement of local population have deprived them of recruiting local youths into their militant movements. Similarly, intra-factional and inter-factional fighting between the militant groups have tremendously weakened them. The gradual loss of local support within the Pashtun communities has significantly indented their local support.

Subsequently, the militant groups have also altered their tactics, strategies and outlook to adjust to the changing environment. According to FRC Database, the militants mainly employed target killing against personnel of law enforcement and security agencies, political representatives, tribal elders and members of anti-Taliban tribal militias. The suicide attacks, which used to be the most preferred and effective tactics of militants in the past, witnessed a sharp decline of more than 50% during the past two years [2014-2015]. The shift in militants' tactics i.e. from suicide attacks to target killing amid the nose dive in militancy-related incidents illustrates the significance of intensive hardcore approaches adopted by the Pakistani government in debilitating the militant networks of both local and foreign militants operating in tribal areas of Pakistan. Likewise, since majority of the militant

groups have shifted to Afghanistan, they are facing the problem of recruitment [particularly suicide bombers] for their respective groups and a considerable number of their rank and file have separated from their groups during the year 2015. This is a major reason which could explain why TTP is opting for tactics of target killing rather than suicide bombers.

Moreover, realizing the significance of media - both electronic and print - during the year 2015, the militants remained very active in advocating their cause of so called “Jihad” (Arabic for Holy War) and justify their violent tactics of militancy, i.e., bomb blasts, target killings by regularly and directly communicating their actions to the media personnel on regular basis. These communications are usually aimed at explaining their positions on various issues and also serve as a rebuttal to success claims made by the government against respective militant groups. According to Mohamamad Khurrasani, in the year 2015, militants belonging to the TTP carried out 136 terrorist incidents in which 680 people were killed while 2 helicopters and 47 vehicles were destroyed due to their operations. Out of the total incidents carried out by the TTP in 2015, 47 incidents of target killing; 19 IED attacks; 17 rocket attacks; 12 ambush attacks; 10 incidents of raid and 5 incidents of suicide attacks. The year 2015, according to Mohammad Khurasani, was among one of the successful and fruitful year for TTP. According to him, the TTP militants involved in all the above mentioned attacks, with the exception of the five suicide attacks the proscribed group conducted, remained unhurt, while successfully achieving their targets. He denounces the biased attitude of media towards Taliban insurgents and said that the media is only propagating the one-sided and false version of Army's mouthpiece, the ISPR. He also threatened the journalist of serious consequence if they continued to biased attitude towards TTP.

Similarly, the militants are aware of rising anti-militant feelings within the Pakistani masses and despite carrying out attacks in public places in various parts of Pakistan, deny those attacks that bring miseries to ordinary people.

### **Terror Financing**

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan [TTP] and other Islamist militant groups, after shifting to Afghanistan, to avoid the consequence of military operations in Zarb-e-Azb and Khyber 1&2 have lost most of their terror financing sources. According to FRC sources, the TTP was making enormous amount of money via kidnapping for ransom and extortion activities in FATA and four provinces of Pakistan. The TTP militants through their agents in all the major cities of Pakistan used to identify rich businessmen, foreigners, government officials and NGO workers for the TTP. Later, the TTP militants would abduct these people and would release them after receiving a large sum of money. The TTP was also making a lot of money through extortion activities in Karachi and all the major cities of KPK and Punjab province of the country. Now due to the tightening of noose around the militants in the ongoing military operations, militants have lost most of their money generating sources which not only negatively affected the TTP's operational capabilities but has created disputes among senior commanders of the group. Although, the TTP and other Pakistani militants are facing no problems from the Afghan government side but according to FRC source, they [Pakistani militants] are worried after losing their vital source of generating finances through extortions and kidnapping for ransom.

Moreover, in the wake of military operation against militant in FATA, Qari Saifullah Mehsud, a senior commander of Shehryar Mehsud Group of South Waziristan, said that Jamat-ul-Ahrar, a splinter group of TTP has been receiving financial assistance from India. This is the first time that a senior member of Pakistani Taliban has blamed a militant group of receiving funds from India although the

Pakistani military establishment and civilian leadership on several occasions have pointed the finger at India for backing up Pakistani militant outfits to fuel insurgency in Baluchistan and FATA.

### **Rehabilitation of IDPs in FATA**

Although militancy activities have subsided during 2015, yet the challenge to eradicate militancy and extremism are huge and manifold. For instance, the existing counter-terrorism strategy is largely based on the use of kinetic force while soft-core measures i.e. mainstreaming FATA through legal, political and administrative reforms, rehabilitation and reintegration of millions of IDP along with intensive behavioral change programs which can be significant in eradicating militancy and extremism in long run, are largely ignored.

In post-operation Zarb-e-Azb, i.e. the resettlement and rehabilitation of around 2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), 70 percent of whom are women and children, is a massive burden for any country to handle. As part of a soft-core strategy, the incumbent government on April 09, 2015 launched 'FATA Sustainable and Rehabilitation Strategy' with a time frame of 24 months which will address five key pillars; (i) rehabilitating physical infrastructure (ii) strengthening law and order (iii) expanding government service delivery (iv) reactivating and strengthening the economy (v) strengthening social cohesion and peace building, however the process of rehabilitation is moving on at snail pace. According to FDMA, the IDPs return would occur in phases: Phase 1 (March 2015-July 2015), Phase 2 (August 2015-November 2015), Phase 3 (December 2015-March 2016) and Phase 4 (April 2016-November 2016). In the first and second phase of Rehabilitation, around 132, 623 families have returned to North and South Waziristan, Khyber, Orakzai and Kurrum Agencies of FATA. Despite, the tall claims of government, the rehabilitation and reintegration of IDPs is going on at a snail pace. According to FRC data base, out of the total 71,124 IDPs only 19800 families of IDPs have so far repatriated in South Waziristan Agency while in 42, 569 families out of total 95, 925 IDPs families in North Waziristan, 1, 14, 796 IDPs families in Khyber Agency, 10904 out of the total 29, 501 IDPs families in Orakzai Agency and 1, 958 out of 25, 856 IDPs families in Kurrum Agency.

### **Mapping of Armed Non-State Actors: Pakistani Taliban in Afghanistan**

To avoid the consequence of military operations in FATA and intensive search operations in the settled areas as a part of the counter terrorism strategy, the militant groups like Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Mehsud Taliban, Lashkar e Islam, JamaatulAhrar, Al Qaida, East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) etc., have shifted to Khost, Paktika, Paktiya and Nangarhar provinces of Afghanistan. According to FRC sources, Pakistani militants who have fled to Afghanistan are not only welcomed in Afghanistan but Afghan government is helping them in regrouping and re-establishing their networks, which may trigger a massive wave of terrorist attacks in Pakistan in the near future.

FRC field reporter for South Waziristan Agency who paid a visit to Afghanistan in October 2015 where he met TTP's and Mehsud Taliban militants in Khost bazaar and other areas of Afghanistan, revealed that tribal families and militants who have migrated from Pakistan to Afghanistan after the military operation by the Pakistani army against local and foreign militants based in North Waziristan are enjoying full support from Afghan government. According to a senior Pakistani Taliban commander of Hakeem Ullah Mehsud group of South Waziristan, "Afghan government has been providing Pakistani militants and their families with tents and mud compounds for residence in Khost, Paktika and other provinces of Afghanistan and has also allowed them to keep AK-47 guns for their security purposes". Likewise, Abdul Wadood Afridi affiliated with Lashkar Islam of Mangal Bagh who has shifted to Afghanistan few months back from Khyber Agency to avoid the

consequence of military operation against his group in Khyber Agency told Sailab Mehsud that most of the time Afghan forces do not stop them even on the main highway of Nangarhar, illustrating the reluctance and lack of willingness on part of Afghan government to take action against Pakistani Taliban.

Moreover, Asad Mansur Mehsud, a close ally of Shehryer Mehsud, acts as a middleman to hold negotiations with the National Directorate of Security (NDS), and facilitates in re-establishing and regrouping Pakistani militants' networks in Afghanistan. According to FRC sources, Afghan government through the good offices of Asad Mansur, is offering around US \$800 per month to every Taliban commanders belonging to Mehsud tribe of South Waziristan while US \$400-500 per month to every Taliban Commander from other parts of Pakistan. The Afghan government has used such individuals in the past like Latif Mehsud, who was arrested in Nangarhar province of Afghanistan, to insight insurgency in Pakistan.

To garner support of Pakistani Taliban, the Afghan government also approached Khan Sayed alias Sanja, the head of Mehsud Taliban of South Waziristan, who is currently taking refuge in Afghanistan to join hands with them to initiate an intensive revolt against Pakistan. According to FRC sources, Khan Said alias Sajna declined the offer of the Afghan government however, he promised he would not target Afghan security forces inside Afghanistan.

#### **Emergence and Expansion of ISIS in Pak-Afghan Region**

Another important security related development in this regard is the emergence and expansion of ISIS in the Pak-Afghan region since late 2014. Abdur Rauf Khadim, an important Afghan Taliban commander who was killed in an American drone attack inside Afghanistan in late 2014 was the first head of ISIS in the Pak-Afghan region, however, now ISIS is headed by Hafiz Saeed Khan who previously was the head of TTP [Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan] Orakzai chapter. At present, time ISIS militants are said to be present in Nooristan, Nangarhar, Kunduz, Helmand, Herat, Badkhsan and Ghazni provinces of Afghanistan. According to FRC reports, ISIS has now thousands of militants in its ranks inside Afghanistan. Mullah Toofan, a senior and important commander of TTP and who was once the head of TTP in Kurram agency, has joined ISIS. He is now based in Achin District of Nangarhar Province of Afghanistan, and is a senior commander of ISIS in Afghanistan.

According to Mullah Toofan, ISIS is present both in Pakistan and Afghanistan and ISIS militants main target are Afghan Taliban instead of NATO and Afghan forces to defend the areas under ISIS control inside Afghanistan. "At the moment our top priority is to conquer Afghanistan and after capturing Afghanistan we will teach a lesson to the Pakistani army and government for its crimes against the Mujahideen. We will take revenge for our Mujahideen killed by the Pakistani army to please the Americans and NATO countries", says, Mullah Toofan.

The rift between different factions of Afghan Taliban over leadership of Mullah Akhtar Mansur, who become the head of Afghan Taliban after the death of Mullah Muhammad Omer, is also helping ISIS in penetrating and consolidating its position in Afghanistan. For instance, some Afghan Taliban, who were not ready to accept Mullah Akhtar Mansur left the group and joined ISIS. Likewise, in mid 2015, clashes took place between ISIS and Afghan Taliban militants inside the Afghan Province of Nangarhar where many militants were killed from both sides. However after a couple of weeks the deadly clash between the two militant groups subsided and the fighting was over. The reluctance of Afghan army in taking action against the militants of ISIS present in the above mentioned provinces of Afghanistan is also helping ISIS militants in penetrating into the socioeconomic political landscape

of the Pak-Afghan region.

According to a senior commander of ISIS, Iqbal Khan, who belongs to North Waziristan and was affiliated with Gull Bahadur group and has shifted to Afghanistan in 2014 to avoid the consequence of military operation Zarb-e-Azab, said that ISIS is likely to defeat the Afghan Taliban in less than two years. He said ISIS [Islamic State] considers Afghan Taliban tool of Pakistani government, an ally of America and NATO, for its interest inside Afghanistan.

Moreover, according to FRC Field Researcher divisions and disputes are on the rise in Hakimullah group of South Waziristan Agency since the past six months due to the group future policies regarding joining hands with ISIS or keep its independent status. Hakimullah group has a soft corner for ISIS and they do cooperate with ISIS militants but so far they have not announced merging their group with ISIS due to some unknown reasons. Another reason for the widening rift among the different commanders of the notorious group is shortage of cash to cope up with the escalating operational expenses of the group. According to QariSaifullahMehsud, a senior commander of Hakimullah Group, who is currently based in Kurram Agency, “Sheryar is a weak and incompetent commander and he is not fit to head the group any more”. He further says that now that the group is facing problems and has lost its sanctuaries in the twin agencies of Waziristan SheryarMehsud is sitting silently in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. However, he didn't mention why SheryarMehsud in Kabul and what business he has there.

It is also important to mention here that the head of TTP Kurram Agency, Daulat Khan, is said to be very close to ISIS and it is believed that he is no more with TTP and now a day he represent ISIS in the Agency increases the chances that QariSaifullahMehsud may make an alliance with Daulat Khan of ISIS which would be beneficial for both commanders and this would strengthen both groups in Kurram Agency.

Although ISIS is trying hard to penetrate into the socioeconomic and political landscape of Pak-Afghan region, majority of Taliban commander both in Afghanistan and Pakistan have rejected the ISIS and on several occasion have reiterated their support for Afghan Taliban under the leadership of Mullah Mullah Omar. Tehreek-e-Taliban issued a detailed document in early 2015, rejecting the ISIS ideology reiterating their support for Afghan Taliban. Likewise, Azam Tariq, the spokesman of Khan Sayed Group, in an interview with FRC field researcher, denied the news regarding the growing presence, influence and escalating operational capacity of ISIS in Afghanistan and said “ISIS [Islamic State] is not going to get the support and sympathies of the local people in Afghanistan and Pakistan and in less than two years ISIS [Islamic State] will fail in Afghanistan and Pakistan”, said Azam Tariq.

#### **Release of Mullah Ghani Baradar: Prospects for Peace in Afghanistan**

Another importance security development during the year 2015 was the resumption of peace talks with Afghan Taliban aimed at ending more than 13 years of war between the Taliban and the Western-backed government in Kabul. This was the first ever face-to-face meeting of senior officials of Afghan Government with the Taliban insurgents in Murree city of Pakistan. However, the Murree peace Process was disrupted when the Afghan intelligence agency the news of Mullah Omar. Although Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour was appointed leader at a meeting of the Taliban's top representatives, many of whom are based in the Pakistani city of Quetta, however, the reports of Omar's death not only threw into disarray a fledgling peace process fostered by the neighboring Pakistan, but the fears of that it could trigger potentially bloody succession battle and further

deepen divisions within the militant movement in Afghanistan. Particularly after the emergence of a new Afghan Taliban faction, lead Rasool Group, lead by Mullah Mohammad Rasool, who refused to make allegiance to Mullah Akhtar Mansour as the new leader of Afghan Taliban. Just a week after the picking up of Mullah Mohammad Rasool to lead the splinter group in the country a fierce infighting among Mullah Akhtar Mansour Group and Mullah Mohammad Rasool group, took place in Khak-e-Afghan and Arghandab districts of Zabul province in which 60 fighters of Mullah Dadullah and 20 of Akhtar Mansour were killed.

To abridge the growing rift among Afghan Taliban, according to FRC sources, the Pakistani Government during the final quarter of 2015 have freed Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the former second in command of Afghan Taliban and the brother in law of late Mullah Muhammad Omar and he is now said to be Afghanistan. It is believed that Mullah Baradar may replace Mullah Akhtar Mansour as the head of Afghan Taliban to end the disputes and divisions in the ranks of Afghan Taliban. If Mullah Baradar is appointed as the head of Afghan Taliban it would have a positive effect on the Afghan Taliban movement and the disputes and division over succession may end up. Firstly, because Mullah Baradar is someone on whom majority of Afghan Taliban would have no objection if he becomes head of the movement and secondly he is the one who has been associated with Mullah Omar since the 1980s and whom Mullah Omar trusted the most. Moreover, he [Mullah Baradar] would also be acceptable to Afghan government because in the past Afghan government under Hamid Karzai was involved in peace negotiations with him and he may again play a significant role putting back on track the fledgling peace process fostered by neighboring Pakistan aimed at ending more than 13 years of war between the Taliban and the Western-backed government in Kabul.



# CONCLUSION

The year 2015 marked a significant decline in terrorism related incidents in the tribal areas of FATA. In total, 293 militancy and counter militancy incidents were recorded from all the seven agencies of FATA in the year 2015. However, militant violence declined by 40 % compared to 2014. In 2015, 1679 people were killed and 561 were injured. 13 incidents of target killing; 43 incidents of militant attacks on civilians, 60 incidents of militants ambush on military and 17 incidents of militant attack on member peace committee were recorded. A total of 13 cross-border attacks were carried out by militants belonging to the Tehreek-e-Taliban and ISIS, who are stationed in the Afghan border areas. Similarly, four incidents of kidnapping for ransom and three incidents of armed clashes between various militants outfits occurred in different areas of FATA.

Although a nose dive in militancy incidents was witnessed during the year 2015 yet the challenge to eradicate militancy and extremism are huge and manifold. Pakistan remain vulnerable to terrorist attacks in 2016 due to ISIS' emergence and its expansion in the Pak-Afghan region; growing rifts and divisions among Afghan Taliban; proxy war between Pakistan on the one hand and India and Afghanistan on the other. The role of Afghan government in facilitating Pakistani Taliban in regrouping and re-establishing their networks may trigger a massive wave of terrorist attacks in Pakistan in the near future. Therefore, it is imperative for both the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan to co-ordinate and collaborate with each other to abridge the long standing trust deficit between the two countries and also initiate sincere and effective sharing of intelligence information and better border coordination for they are pre-requisite for resolving the decades long turmoil which has brought havoc to entire region. In this regard the release of Mullah Baradar is a positive move which can contribute not only in abridging the rifts among Afghan Taliban but will also help in reviving the peace process between Afghan government and Afghan Taliban.

