

South Asia Conflict Monitor

monthly newsletter on terrorism, violence and armed conflict...



Rohingya Muslims of Rakhine: Still Caught Between the Deep Sea and the Devil

In 1991, Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her campaign for democracy in Myanmar. Twenty years down, on 11th December, 2019, the same Nobel laureate defended the oppressive regime of Myanmar at the International Court of Justice (ICJ, The Hague, Netherlands) for the charges of carrying out genocide against the Rohingya Muslim minority. Responding to Gambia's charges presented by Justice minister and Attorney General, Abubacarr Marie Tambaou, Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi defended the actions of her country against the Rohingyas. Much to everyone's surprise, her defense came after a three hour presentation at the ICJ by human rights lawyers and experts who described some of the horrors inflicted upon the Rohingya Muslims by the Myanmar army. Adding to the outrage, in November 2019, the head of a UN fact-finding mission on Myanmar had found that "there is a serious risk of genocide recurring" in Myanmar. The Myanmar government have labelled a section of Rohingyas to be terrorists. In August 2018, in a lecture in Singapore, Suu Kyi said "The danger

of terrorist activities, which was the initial cause of events leading to the humanitarian crisis in Rakhine, remains real and present today." A few months later in November, Soe Han, director general of the ASEAN Affairs Department at Myanmar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told the media that 54 of 6,472 Rohingya Muslims, whose names appeared on a list of refugees in Bangladesh being considered for repatriation, are involved in terrorist activities.

Not only Myanmar, but Bangladesh also has similar impression of the Rohingyas. Addressing the three-day "Dhaka Global Dialogue-2019" on November 11, 2019, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh are a threat to the security of the entire region. "In terms of regional security, I would like to say that more than 1.1 million Rohingya citizens of Myanmar fled to

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(December 2019)

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Bangladesh in the face of persecution and they are a threat to the security not only for Bangladesh but also for the region.”

On the contrary, for the last decade, the UN has been reiterating that the situation as “deeply depressed” and has been urging Myanmar to assume responsibility by dealing with the "root causes" of the Rohingya Muslims's exodus and work towards their safe repatriation. In response, Myanmar has turned a deaf ear to UN observations by knowing fully well that the most extreme measure the international community can impose are economic sanctions; a method that had never been successful before.

According to the UN, as of 24th May, 2018, more than 9,00,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled Myanmar's restive Rakhine State since 1978 after the eruption of communal violence between the Buddhists and the Muslims, followed by a military crackdown in 2016 and 2017. The exodus of refugees in large numbers has resulted in a major crisis in neighbouring Bangladesh.

Demonising Rohingyas?

Myanmar's accusation and Bangladesh's perception of the Rohingyas as terrorists is perhaps validated due to the reportage of the involvement of Muslim migrants in a series of terror strikes in Europe and Bangladesh since 2014. There has been a constant concern of the Rohingyas rising sympathy regarding the Islamic State also known as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria's (ISIS). Close to 20 foreigners were reportedly killed by ISIS sympathizers on July 1, 2016, in Bangladesh. Although the government claimed the attackers were mostly homegrown terrorists and did not have any connections with ISIS and Al-Qaeda, external sources indicated the role of ISIS behind the attacks. Before the attacks, Bangladeshi security agencies and media reports had indicated ISIS and Al-Qaeda were sympathetic towards the Rohingya Muslims in Bangladesh. Media reports also said that due to a desperate need for an identity, a job, and better living conditions, some Rohingya Muslims in

India were allegedly involved in sending Rohingyas of Bangladesh to Saudi Arabia to join the ISIS by using fake Indian passports.

External linkages

Over a period of time, especially under the Awami League government, Bangladeshi agencies have indicated external linkages of Rohingya refugees, especially with terror groups like the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) which instigated Rohingyas to avenge the 2012 communal episode in Myanmar. Media reports in Bangladesh citing Intelligence agencies even mentioned that certain Pakistan based terror groups and Saudi Arabian financiers has planned to radicalize Rohingya refugees. Before the violence, Al Qaeda explosive expert Nur Bashar and the banned Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan's Shura member, Mufti Abu Zarraul Burmi had reportedly visited 'Arakan' or present day Rakhine State of Myanmar. The LeT also supported the Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO) in Bangladesh in the past.

There are also reports on a Saudi based organization called Rabita Al-Alam Al-Islami which has been allegedly encouraging the radicalization of Rohingyas in two Bangladeshi camps. This was confirmed in 2013 when a Delhi-based Rohingya refugee started raising the humanitarian crisis faced by the Rohingyas at international forums and made contact with the Saudi Arabia-based Gulf Rohingya Council. Jamaat-ul-Arakan (JuA) and the RSO have been running terror training camps in remote areas of Bandarban district of Bangladesh. Furthermore, it is believed that two RSO cadres from Bangladesh had joined Afghan Jihad.

Apart from that there are also unconfirmed reports on the Bangladesh Rohingya refugees' linkages with Harkat-ul Jihad-e-Islami (HUJI) in Bangladesh and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan-based terror outfits like LeT, JuD and Falah-i-Insaniyat Foundation (FIF) have all been known for their concerns and sympathizes with Rohingya Muslims. For example, on June 1, 2015, LeT

chief Hafiz Saeed issued a statement in Lahore accusing India of assisting the Myanmar Buddhists for targeting Rohingyas.

Apart from these links, international terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda, Jamaah Anshar-ut Tauhid and Al Shabaab had expressed solidarity towards plight of the Rohingyas.

Never ending plight!

Given the protracted nature and intensity of the conflict, it is not surprising that a form of sympathy and linkage has been established with certain sections of the Rohingyas living in either Myanmar or Bangladesh and the external radical Islamist groups. It would be unfair to conclude that all Rohingyas have turned terrorists as projected by Myanmar. Even children and women have been branded to be terrorists. Most importantly, the ARSA activities are not supported by all Rohingyas and do not represent every single one of them. (BBC, October 11, 2017).

Several research studies found that radicalization amongst the refugees could be possible if there are pre-existing militants in the refugees camps. This is followed by other factors like policies and actions of the receiving country, militants organizations used by host against origin country, loose security and strict vigilance, absence of social infrastructure, local economic conditions and poor resilience, and poor living conditions limit opportunities.

While pre-existing militants in the three refugees' camps in Bangladesh have not been found, other factors like strict vigilance and absence of social infrastructure have contributed to depression and anxiety amongst the camp inhabitants. Given the series of recent criminal activities like unauthorized use of mobile phones, drug trafficking charges against some refugees, attempts to construct bombs, contract killings, extortion, etc. in the camps, the Bangladeshi government has taken a slew of measures which could aggravate the plight of the refugees. To curb their activities, the

government has recently started fencing around the three camps and there are also reports that the government has prohibited aid organisations from providing accredited or formal education in the refugee camps.

The repatriation of the Rohingyas is shrouded in uncertainty since talks between Myanmar and Bangladesh failed due to problems with verification of repatriated refugees. In addition, the Myanmar government failed to create a favorable situation for repatriation as per the November 2017 agreement between the two countries. Moreover, the refugees demanded a guarantee of citizenship in Myanmar before the repatriation process began. This was not acceptable to Myanmar.

Unfortunately, the international community and the UN agencies have failed to come to a unanimous viewpoint on the status or the identity of the Rohingyas. There is still much confusion on whether they belong to Rakhine, Myanmar or Bangladesh, or are seen as terrorists or as refugees. Even interventions by India and China did not yield results.

While the conventional diplomatic channels have been unsuccessful to resolve the conflict so far, the stalled process has been revived during a four-day official visit of the Bangladesh military delegation led by General Aziz Ahmed, to Myanmar on 8th December, 2019. Since the Myanmar army plays a very important role in this issue, the latest visit and subsequent bonhomie could offer another channel of negotiation to resolve the refugees' issues in foreseeable future.

Cover collage:

Right: Rohingyas © Saiful Huq Omi/ The Humanitarian Practice Network
Middle: Map of Rakhine State (Formerly Arakan) of Myanmar/Google.
Left: A Snag Tree/Animesh Roul.

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SOUTH ASIA NEWS ROUNDUP: OCTOBER 2019



AFGHANISTAN



After a gap of three months, the USA-Taliban peace talks revived. The announcement came from US President Donald Trump during his secret and Thanksgiving visit to US troops in Kabul. Unlike previous round of peace talks, both the sides committed for an early ceasefire this time. Just a week before the visit and announcement, the Taliban had released two Western hostages in exchange for three high-ranking Taliban prisoners. Before this, the Taliban leaders had visited Islamabad and Tehran for seeking support to revive the peace talks. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held talks in Tehran with a Taliban delegation led by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. However, both the sides are yet to decide how to engage Afghanistan government in the renewed peace process. The modality for the ceasefire is yet to be finalized. The ceasefire could be limited between USA and Taliban. There could be a separate arrangement between the Taliban and Afghan State government.

Despite this progress, and again in absence of a ceasefire before the peace deal, Afghanistan forces with the support of NATO and American air forces continued their air attacks on the suspected Taliban stronghold areas. The Taliban witnessed a large number of casualties in Baghlan, Ghazni, Faryab, Nangarhar, Zabul, Kabul, Paktia and Uruzgan provinces. In retaliation, the Taliban forces also attacked some security forces camps. This month also witnessed increase in Taliban attacks on security forces and civilians. Since the

Taliban does not have any arrangement to counter air strikes, it inflicted attacks on ground forces and civilians.

The month under assessment once again witnessed no substantial progress in declaration of results of the September Presidential elections. Preliminary results of Afghanistan's presidential elections were deferred for a second time. The Election officials announced this by citing various technical problems. Responding to the IEC reports, a large number of people carried out demonstration by demanding transparent election results and clarification on the 300 thousand suspicious and non-biometric votes. If the situation continues like this then it could affect the renewed peace process in the short term and peace and stability in Afghanistan in post peace deal period.

MAJOR EVENTS:

November 04: Nearly 26 Taliban militants have been killed including three senior commanders identified as Mullah Ghawsudin, Mullah Salehudin and Mullah Noor Ali, during a crackdown conducted by the Afghan forces in districts of Charbolak, Kushanda and Zarey located in the northern Balkh province (Afghanistan Times).

November 05: Four police personnel have been killed and several of them wounded during the Taliban's overnight attack in the remote Nejrab district in Balkh province. Police said the Taliban had established a presence in part of Nejrab district and occasionally attack checkpoints (RFE/RL).

November 05: At least 25 militants killed and six others injured in multiple military operations carried out by the Afghan security forces in different areas of Baghlan, Ghazni, Faryab, Nangarhar, Zabul, Kabul, Paktia and Uruzgan provinces. Ministry of Defense in a statement said the Afghan National Army (ANA) in collaboration with Afghan National Police (ANP) and National Directorate of Security (NDS) personnels conducted joint operations against insurgents (Afghanistan Times).

November 06: Six security force personnels including one female police officer killed and four others wounded in a roadside bomb morning in Moqor district of Badghis province. Badghis is among the insecure provinces in western Afghanistan, where the militants actively conduct their subversive activities against the government and security forces. (The Afghanistan Times).

November 07: Four Judges were killed in an ambush in the Mohammad Agha district of Logar province when unidentified gunmen ambushed their vehicle. The needle of the suspicion was on the Taliban. However, the Taliban has not taken any responsibility about the incident.(Tolo News).



November 13: Around 300 Daesh members including women and children were reportedly surrendered to Afghan Special Forces in Achin district of Nangarhar province. (Tolo News).

November 13: Seven people were killed and as many injured in a car bomb blast near the interior ministry in Kabul. The blast took place in Qasim Street of Kabul's PD15 (Indian TV).

November 19: Two Western hostages, U.S. national Kevin King and Australian Timothy Weeks who were kidnapped by the Taliban in August 2016, have been released from Taliban custody in exchange for three ranking Taliban prisoners, Anas Haqqani, Hafiz Rashid Omari and Haji Milli Khan. Anas Haqqani is the younger brother of Sirajuddin Haqqani, the leader of the Haqqani network and deputy chief of Taliban. The exchange took place in southern Nawbahar district of Zabul Province, a region under Taliban control. (Tolo News).

November 22: Taliban released ten Afghan soldiers from captivity in a confidence-building gesture with the government, following the successful prisoners swap that freed two Western professors. They were released and handed over to the ICRC (Red Cross) in Nahr-e Saraj, Helmand Province (RFE/RL Gandhara/ [Tolo News](#)).

November 20: According to the 2019 Global Terrorism Index, Taliban was the world's deadliest terrorist group in 2018. The survey conducted by Sydney (Australia) based Institute for Economics and Peace, shows that the number of deaths attributed to the Taliban rose by nearly 71 percent in 2018 to 6,103, and accounted for 38 percent of all terror-related deaths globally (Gandhara/ RFE/RL).

November 24: Ani Raj, an Indian origin, American national died in the attack on United Nations vehicle in Kabul city. Five civilians including two Afghan UN workers were also wounded in that attack. Afghan Interior Ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi confirmed the attack and the casualties (Khaama News).

November 27: At least 15 Afghan civilians, including six women and eight children, were killed when their vehicle hit by Taliban planted explosive device in Afghanistan's northern Kunduz province (Aljazeera).

November 28: Afghanistan will hand over 13 surrendered Islamic State-Khurasan militants to India, under the recently ratified extradition treaty. The treaty was ratified on November 24, 2019. The two countries signed a bilateral extradition treaty during the visit of Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani to New Delhi on October 14, 2016. (Economic Times).

BANGLADESH



Bangladesh was relatively peaceful in November, except several arrests of extremist elements affiliated with Ansar al-Islam, Neo-Jama'atul Mujahideen, Alah'r Dal, Hizb-ut Tahrir and Islami Chhatra Shibir. Early in November, the Bangladesh chapter of Islamic State, suspected to be a violent faction, the so called Neo-JMB proclaimed support and allegiance towards the new leader of the Islamic State jihadi group Abu Ibrahim al-Hashemi al-Quraishi. While the threat from Islamic State inspired groups remained plausible, the security forces were largely busy in neutralizing revival of several indigenous terrorist groups within the country.

An uptick in Hizb-ut Tahrir's activity lately in the country, especially in Chittagong city caused concern within the security establishments. HuT's members have been holding recruitment in the name of coaching or tuition centres as well as engaged in a membership campaign at different educational institutions of the

port city. During the review month, the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal announced death penalty to seven Islamist militants for their role in July 2016 terror attack in the Holy Artisan café that left 22 people, mostly foreigners, dead. Besides the persistent militant threat, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina underscored threat from over 10 lakh Rohingya refugees presently sheltered inside Bangladesh.

MAJOR EVENTS:

November 02: A group of militants purported from Bangladesh chapter of Islamic State welcomed the new leader of the Islamic State jihadi group Abu Ibrahim al-Hashemi al-Quraishi. Pro-Islamic State Nasher News posted photographs of the pledge and masked militants (BenarNews).

November 04: The Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of Bangladesh Police arrested four Neo-Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (Neo-JMB) militants from Ramna area in Dhaka. They are identified as Arif Mollah, Mohamad Elias Hossain, Mohamad Farhad Ali, and Muntasim Billah. Incriminating documents were recovered from them (Business Standrad).



November 06: Bangladesh government banned militant group Allaha'r Dal. The organization was formed in 1995 under the leadership of Matin Mehedi alias Mominul Islam. Matin was arrested in 2007. In August 2019 police arrested four of its activists, including acting chief Ibrahim Ahmed Hiro. (Dhaka Tribune).

November 15: Six Ansar Al Islam (Bangladesh affiliate of Al Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent) were arrested in Uttara, Dhaka district and Shyamnagar in Satkhira

district. The police claimed that these people were operating virtually (online) and through encrypted messaging apps. (BDNews24.com).

November 16: The Rapid Action Battalion arrested five cadres of banned militant outfit Hizb ut-Tahrir when they were distributing leaflets at Uttara area of Dhaka city. The RAB also seized leaflets from their possession. The leaflets address the establishing of a "Khilafat State", anti-Indian speech, and restoration of the Babri Mosque. (Dhaka Tribune)

November 18: Three activists of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) were killed after two of its rival factions engaged in a turf war at a remote area in Rajasthali upazila of Rangamati. According the eyewitness, the clash took place between MN Larma and Santu Larma groups in the Balumura area. (Dhaka Tribune).

November 19: The Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU), a special unit of Bangladesh Police received the status of an investigation agency under a new Government rule ("Anti-Terrorism Unit Rules 2019" (Daily Star).

November 22: Police arrested 15 suspected operatives of the banned militant outfit Hizbut-Tahrir, including regional chief of the outfit, in Chittagong area. Police also recovered cash, party flags, leaflets, press statements, training manuals, two laptops, electronic devices, and a motorcycle from these cadres (Dhaka Tribune).

November 22: Rapid Action Battalion have arrested Three JMB operatives from Char Raninagar of Chapainawabganj (Rajshahi Division). Police recovered jihadi literatures and leaflets from their possession (Prathom Alo).

November 22: Bangladesh Police arrested 15 Hizb-ut Tahrir (HuT) members, a banned group in Bangladesh, in Chittagong city. The banned militant group is engaged in a membership campaign recruiting members of Bangladesh National Cadet Corps (BNCC) through conducting secret campaigns at different educational institutions of the port city as BNCC men have training in both technical and operational side. Earlier on November 16, Police in the capital city of Dhaka, arrested five Hizb ut-Tahrir members from Dhaka city (Daily Star).

November 25: A Chapainawabganj court sentenced three JMB members to death and four others to life term imprisonment for killing a man in 2012. The condemned convicts are-Sanwar Hossain, Jahangir Alam (from Nachole locality) and Abdus Shukur (from Gomostapur area). The convicted members had killed Ruhul Amin of Dhanmondi area on April 26, 2012 at a mango orchard in Nachole sub-district. (Prathom Alo)

November 25: The Anti- Terrorism police unit in Dhaka have arrested three members of the JMB from Dhaka and recovered detonators and explosives materials from their possession (Dhaka Tribune).

November 25: Nine Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) members were arrested from Najipur Alhera Annur Forkania Maktab (Islamic School) in Naogaon district. ICS is the student wing of Jamaat-e- Islami (JeI). The arrested members were engaged in a secret meeting and planning subversive activities ahead of the pronouncement of the verdict in the Holey Artisan militant attack case. The arrested are, Abdullah Al Mamun, Mohamad Rezwan, Mohamad Ansar Ali, Mohamad Sabbir Hossain, Mohamad Mottakin Hosain, Moktadir Rahman, Mohamad Russel Reza, Mohamad Hosain Ali, and Mohamad Yamin (Dhaka Tribune).

November 27: Seven Neo-JMB militants sentenced to death for their involvement in Holey Artisan Bakery attack. The Holey Artisan Café attack left 22 people, including 17 foreigners, dead in July 2016. Police pressed charges late last year

against eight persons out of the 21 “Neo JMB” militants who were involved in the country’s deadliest terror attack ever. The verdict termed it as ‘disgraceful attack aimed at assassinating the non-communal character of Bangladesh’(Daily Star/ Daily Star).

November 28: Three Allah’r Dal operatives were arrested from a school premise in Chuadanga district. They were identified as Ruhul Amin, Kalam Mandal, and Nur Islam Pakhi ([Daily Sun](#)).

November 28: According to the Global Terrorism Index 2019, Bangladesh is the most successful South Asian country in countering terrorism. “Bangladesh had the largest improvement of any country in South Asia. It recorded 31 terrorist attacks and seven fatalities in 2018, a 70 percent reduction in deaths from the prior year,” the index published by the Sydney-based Institute for Economics & Peace showed. The country was ranked 31 last years, while it was 25th the year before, according to the report (TBS News).

INDIA



Like previous months, the three major conflict theatres of India had witnessed completely three different types of developments in the review period. The security forces remained on high alert in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and curfew was imposed in several places. However, law and order situation improved. The level of violence, especially attacks on civilians by the militants, went down. But the militant groups’ attempts to attack security forces continued. They also tried to provoke locals against security forces during curfew relaxation time. Besides, the border districts (especially Baramulla, in Kathua, Poonch and Rajouri Districts) of the Jammu and Kashmir region witnessed heavy firings from Pakistani Army side.

While the newly formed union territory of J&K witnessed moderate level of conflicts, the central, south and eastern parts of India witnessed a mix of arrests and killing of some left wing extremist cadres (in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand). The Maoists also tried to disturb Assembly elections in Jharkhand. The CPI-Maoists’ attempts to revive the movements by generating extra funds and weapons from both internal and external sources continued. The outfit also extended its support to the separatist movement in Kashmir and criticized government of India on National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the proposed Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB).

In the north-eastern parts of India, barring substantial progress in the peace negotiations between the central government and NSCN-IM, other insurgent outfits continued their violent activities. The region also witnessed a series of street protests by the civil society groups and student associations of almost all the provinces against the NRC and the CAB.

The number of incidents and casualties remained low due to regular counter insurgency operation in the worst affected areas. Specially Manipur witnessed a large number of violent incidents. The J&K will continue to remain the biggest challenge before the security force. So is the north east region due to CAB. Since Union Home Minister Amit Shah has ordered the CRPF to take strong action against the Maoist outfits, central India could witness some violence in near future. The revival of Khalistan based militant groups and their involvement in drug peddling in Punjab could create serious law and order situation in that state. Similarly, Manipur could witness increase in violence in the post Naga peace talks developments.

MAJOR EVENTS:

November 01: High level of security alert have been issued for possible Islamic State inspired 'lone wolf' attacks ahead of the January 26, 2020 Republic Day celebrations in the country. A purported communication issued by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (UMHA) to all the States stated that the overall security scenario in the country remained a cause for concern on account of the threat emanating from Pakistan and the Afghanistan-Pakistan belt (The Hindu).

November 02: Muslim clerics are to be engaged in fighting the Islamic State online propaganda, as per new strategy of devised by the government to tackle virtual radicalisation. This internet-based "non-official channel of religious leaders" is being planned to stop Muslim youths from falling into jihadi trap. The Muslim scholars and clerics will be trained to create YouTube channels, podcast, accounts on social media and websites to counter IS narrative. They are directed to highlight the atrocities carried on women and children by the IS leader Abu Bakr al- Baghdadi and team (New Indian Express).

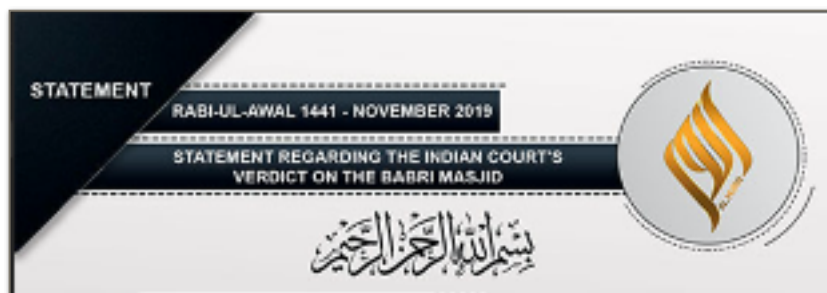
November 04: There are intelligence inputs regarding the emergence of new terror outfit Al Hind Brigade, mostly comprising former leaders of banned outfit Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). Media reports citing the intel inputs suggest that Al Qaeda and few other Pakistan sponsored terror groups like Jaish-e- Mohammad (JeM), are trying to expand their presence in the wake of abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution that granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir. This "Al-Hind Brigade" claimed responsibility early this month (Oct 19) for the murder of Hindu Samaj Party president Kamlesh Tiwari: "We at Al-Hind Brigade claim the responsibility for killing Kamlesh Tiwari, who tried to defame Islam and Muslims. More to come. " the group said in a WhatsApp message (News18.com/ Pioneer).

November 05: Coordination Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) announced that it will continue its ongoing "alert campaign" in connection with the Naga peace talks. Addressing a press conference at AIMS office, Imphal, COCOMI alleged that no positive response came forth even after the expiry of the deadline it had set for the disclosure of the details of the "agreement" that was reached between the Centre and Naga groups. COCOMI had set November 4 as deadline to the Centre to disclose the "agreed points" of the Naga peace talks to the public on or before November 4. (The Murung Express)

November 07: Pro-Al Qaeda and Kashmir Jihadist elements released Urdu language video message ahead of India's landmark Temple- mosque verdict. The "documentary video" by the media group known as "Dai Ilallah [Preacher to God]" comes at a time when India's Supreme court will give its verdict on the ownership of the land where the demolished Babri mosque once stood. The video contains an Urdu Nasheed (jihadist chant), footage of the mosque's demolition (Dec 1992) and short interviews with people. It is produced by Dai Ilallah's official media wing "Hind Media" and was shared via the group's channel on the messaging app Telegram. [TELEGRAM/ URDU).

November 13: Al Qaeda/ AQIS's Urdu-language magazine has criticised an Indian Supreme court ruling that would allow Hindus to build Ram temple at the site of a demolished mosque. An editorial in a new edition of the magazine Nawa-i-Afghan Jihad said it was "saddened and angered" by the court decision, and called for jihad as a means to end alleged injustice against Muslims in India (Al-Sahab: alsahabmedia.net, presently offline/Transcript available).

November 15: Union Home Minister of India directed the paramilitary forces (CRPF) to carry out an effective and decisive campaign against Left Wing Extremism in the next six months. Action needs to be taken against the urban Naxals and their facilitators. The Home Minister emphasized that the road connectivity and medical infrastructure in LWE areas should be upgraded. (PIB, India).



November 16: Al-Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent's ally in Indian Kashmir Ansar Ghazwat ul-Hind (AGH) has vowed to avenge India's Supreme court ruling that allowed Hindus to build a temple at the site of demolished Babri mosque in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh. "In the end, the weak and oppressed Muslims of Hind have heard the final judgment

regarding the martyred Babri Masjid which caused immense pain and hurt" the message said. The Babri mosque was demolished by Hindu mobs in December 1992 to pave the way for building a Ram Temple at the spot. The AHG's

media arm 'al-Hurr' through Telegram messaging platform circulated the message to "slaughter every infidel" who builds the temple at the site of the Babri mosque and the message also urged Indian Muslims to join jihad. (Telegram).

November 18: Meghalaya-based insurgent group Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC) is banned by the central government for its increased activities of violence and other subversive acts. In a notification, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said the HNLC along with all its factions, wings and frontal organisations has been openly declaring as its objective the secession of the state's areas, which are largely inhabited by Khasi and Jaintia tribals, from the Indian Union (India Today).

November 21: The National Socialist Council of Nagalim- Unification (NSCN-U) reportedly recruited over 1000 members in October 2019. NSCN-U is one of the prime constituents of the Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs), which is in talks with the Centre to end the decades old Naga political problem. (Northeast Now)

November 21: The Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF), the apex body of Reang refugees sheltered in the six relief camps of Tripura, placed two new demands for their repatriation to Mizoram. The new demands include resettlement of all Bru families in and around the Dampa Tiger Wildlife Sanctuary in Mizoram and a permanent development package for all refugees under Union ministries like the DoNER, Tribal Welfare and Minority Welfare. (The Assam Tribune)

November 22: Four police personnel, including an assistant sub-inspector, were killed in a Maoists attack near Lukiatand village in Latehar district of Jharkhand.

November 23: India deployed the special forces of the Army, the Navy and the Indian Air Force (IAF) to carry out counter-terrorist operations in the Kashmir Valley. The troops include the Army's Para (Special Forces), Navy's Marine Commandos (MARCOS) and Indian Air Force's Garud have been deployed in the Kashmir Valley. The special forces have been deployed under the defence ministry's Armed Forces Special Operations Division (AFSOD) (India Today).

November 25: Indian agencies have arrested three suspects in Assam state either influenced by the Islamic State or having any links to the group (not yet defined) for planning terror strike in the capital Delhi and in Assam. These men are from Assam's Goalpara district, identified as Ranjeet Ali, Muquadir and Zameel (Hindustan Times).

November 26: The Kerala Police have hinted that the proscribed Communist Party of India (Maoist) might have gained considerable influence in urban localities since 2016. The police suspect that an urban Maoist cell possibly based in Kalpetta is behind the poster campaign at Mundakkai in Meppadi and other localities in the State. (The Hindu)

November 26: In a Facebook posting, Meghalaya's Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC) demanded 'separate flag and constitution' for the tribal Khasis. The HNLC also demanded for its own 'Parliament' and a 'Supreme Court' (Northeast Now).

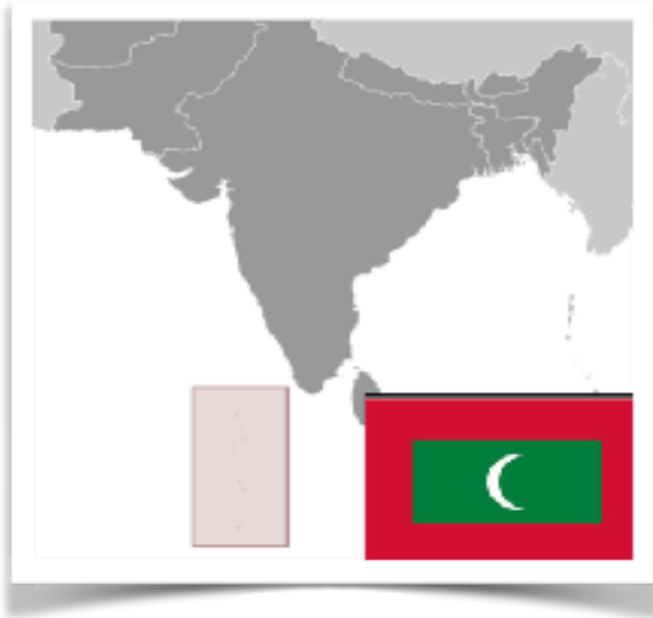
November 27: The Union government extended the ban on United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and its various factions, wings and fronts for five years. According to a Ministry of Home Affairs notification, ULFA has indulged in various illegal and violent activities intended to disrupt the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India in furtherance of its objective of liberating Assam and aligned itself with other unlawful associations of North Eastern Region to secede Assam from India (The Asian Age).

November 27: Afghanistan's defence ministry has confirmed that a group of more than 10 women and children from southern state of Kerala, who left the country [India] to join the militant group Islamic State, reportedly surrendered before the army in Afghanistan. The group was found from Achin district of Nangarhar Province. It is believed they belong to Thrikapur and Padne in Kasaragod district of Kerala. To note, a group of 21 people from Kerala left India in June 2016 in the name of religious studies and trade in Sri Lanka and joined the IS in Afghanistan under the leadership of Abdul Rashid. (Mathrubhumi)

November 27: A special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court in Kochi (Kerala) awarded 14-year rigorous imprisonment to a person arrested in connection with a conspiracy to carry out terror strikes across Kerala and neighbouring States in 2016. The Court found guilty six persons including prime accused Manseed Mehmood under various sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) including offences relating to conspiracy and membership of a terrorist organisation and support given to a terrorist organisation. All the six persons were arrested by the NIA in the Kanakamala Islamic State (IS) terror plot case. The NIA had busted this IS module from Kanakamala in Kannur District in October 2016 when they were holding a meeting to plan terror attacks against prominent persons, including judges, Police officers and politicians, and foreign tourists (Telegraph).

November 29: At least six terror modules unearthed in last November 2019 in Jammu and Kashmir region. The joint team of security forces have arrested 28 over ground workers who supported militants in Pulwama. They also recovered arms and ammunition from these arrested supporters found to be working for Pro-Pak Terrorist Outfits Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM) and Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT).

MALDIVES



In November, the issue of 'Islamic radicalisation' is still in the limelight and dominated the national discourse. This month proved to be very vital for Maldives as far as counter radicalization effort is concerned. Early in November, Ibrahim Mohamed Solih led government allocated funds for the establishment of a de-radicalization and rehabilitation centre in Himmafushi (Kaafu Atoll).

The present government under President Solih promised to bring back stranded Maldivian women and children (relatives of Maldivian jihadi extremists) from Syria for rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The much awaited Presidential Commission report confirmed that a hardline group affiliated with Al-Qaeda had killed a legislator and couple of free speech writers in the country. The Commission also found Islamic State's footprints on the country's soil.

The most notable finding, however, was about the religious conservative NGO Jamiyyathul Salaf, which, according to the Commission, has been encouraging terrorism in Maldives since long. It seems the present government is serious in tackling the growing menace of extremist ideology which has a burgeoning presence in the archipelago since last decade or so and the present government is not shying away or hiding the fact that scores of Maldivians have been travelling and fighting in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan in the name of Jihad.

MAJOR EVENTS

November 04: The government in the national budget for 2020 included 1.96m Maldivian rufiyaa (127,000 USD) to establish a de-radicalisation and rehabilitation centre in the Maldives in Himmafushi, in Kaafu Atoll. President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih had earlier said that efforts would be made to bring back Maldivian women and children in Syria and return them to society after a rehabilitation programme. ([Maldives Independent](#)).

November 05: Maldivian government cancelled the registration of Rights NGO Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN) in an attempt to dissolve the organization over its 2016 anti-Islamic report. MDN, a non-governmental organization (NGO), has been found guilty of mocking Islam and Prophet Mohamed in its 'Preliminary Assessment of Radicalisation in the Maldives'. Azra Naseem, one of the authors and members MDN who had been summoned to the police over the MDN's report that allegedly mocked Islam, had informed the police that she refused to obey the summons. Police said Naseem had refused on the grounds that the environment in the Maldives was not safe for her to return to. She currently lives in a undisclosed European country (Ireland perhaps) ([AVAS](#)).

November 17: Presidential Commission report confirmed that a hardline group affiliated with Al-Qaeda had killed MP Afrasheem Ali, a moderate religious scholar, in October 2012 and abducted and murdered Maldives Independent journalist Ahmed Rilwan in August 2014. Following the reveal of the report, Parliament's security services committee has decided to launch further inquiry about the Al Qaeda linked jihadi organization headed by Mazeed and Somith Mohamed and its influence in Maldives. The Presidential Commission report also stated that religious conservative NGO Jamiyyathul Salaf have been encouraging terrorism in Maldives ([Maldives Independent](#)).

November 20: Several Maldivians were among the Islamic State (IS) insurgents that surrendered to Afghanistan's government in Nangarhar province last week. Although the exact number of Maldivians captured is unknown, Pajhwok new (Afghan) revealed that Afghani nationals, and individuals from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Iran, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan were also among those that surrendered. The Maldivian government has yet to release a statement concerning the matter. ([Edition](#), November 20).



November 24: A religious extremist group (not named in the media report) with child brides was uncovered on Nov 21 following a dispute within the group led to a near-fatal stabbing. Ismail Hammad, from Madduvari was stabbed on a fishing boat and narrowly escaped by jumping and swimming to a nearby island. He was assaulted for refusing to pledge allegiance to the leader of the group and “sentenced to death” by his colleagues. The stabbing victim Hammad was reportedly married to a 13-year-old girl who was now pregnant and another man in the same group married a nine-year-old girl. Both marriages were illegal and administered out of court. ([Maldives Independent](#)).

November 24: A group of four men painted city walls in Maaugoodhoo with the logo of Islamic State. The walls were vandalised by these four unidentified men who came to the island in a sea cucumber fishing boat after sunset and left at midnight. The incident is under investigation ([Maldives Independent](#)).

NEPAL



Nepal witnessed sporadic bombings at the election rallies in November as the security agencies continued their pursuit against the members of Netra Bikram Chand-led Communist Party. The cadres of the outfit were mostly indulging in bombing infrastructures, extorting money from private schools and colleges, businesspersons, officials and representatives at local levels, even threatening them of life and planting bombs in main streets of cities. Despite that, the government did not take any strong measure against the top leaders of the outfit. Rather the government continued its policy of appealing to the Chand faction to join the peace talks.

Nepal held by-elections for multiple positions in the review period. The elections were held for 52 vacant posts of people’s representatives in 37 districts, which include one member of the House of Representatives, three provincial assembly members, and 48 chiefs, deputy chiefs and ward chairs of local levels. The final results indicated that the ruling NCP performed well in most seats where its leaders had emerged victorious in the election held three years ago. The main opposition Nepali Congress (NC) could not performed well except in one provincial assembly seat in Bhaktapur and a few positions of local governments. The NC remained the second largest political party in terms of the seats won in the elections.

MAJOR EVENTS

November 05: Nepal is currently the biggest hub for the India-based terrorist group Indian Mujahedeen, according to the latest US State Department country report on terrorism. It stated "IM's stated goal is to carry out terrorist actions against Indians for their oppression of Muslims. IM has also expanded its area of operations into Nepal, which is now the biggest hub for IM operatives." In its report, the State Department said that the IM maintains ties to other terrorist entities including Pakistan-based Lashkar-e- Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI). Indian agency also alerted about terror groups targeting Uttar Pradesh state (bordering Nepal/ At least seven terrorists have entered UP via Nepal and are believed to be hiding in Ayodhya, Faizabad and Gorakhpur. Five of the seven terrorists have reportedly been identified -- Mohammed Yakub, Abu Hamza, Mohammed Shahbaz, Nisar Ahmed and Mohammed Qaumi Choudhry.(Rediff.com/ India Today).

November 10: Police arrested around 20 cadres of Netra Bikram Chand-led Communist Party of Nepal for staging a demonstration in Kathmandu against a recently published Indian political map that has depicted Kalapani region as Indian territory. (The Himalayan Times)

November 25: An unidentified group detonated a bomb targeting a car parked inside the residence of Pokhara Metropolitan City-33 Ward Chair, Shiva Prasad Acharya, at Himalitol of Pokhara-17. No casualties are reported in the incident. (The Rising Nepal)

November 27: An unidentified group exploded bomb during an election campaigning rally of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) in Pokhara of Kaski district. The bomb went while Co-chairperson of the party Pushpa Kamal Dahal addressing as public rally about the upcoming by-elections. Other senior party leaders were also present at the event. (The Himalayan Times).

November 28: Pakistani terrorists using Nepal as alternative route to enter India according to media reports citing sources in the Indian government agencies. have stated that Pakistani terrorists have managed to enter India through an alternate route via Nepal even after security forces are on high alert in Line of Control (Jammu and Kashmir). According to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the intelligence department input, seven terrorists from groups including the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) have used this route to enter India (News Live TV).

PAKISTAN



In November 2019, Pakistan witnessed a surge of militant violence mostly targeted at the security forces in Miranshah, Peshawar and Lahore. A violent Taliban faction, Hizbul Ahrar (HuA) carried out most of the attacks in the month. Except these events, Pakistan remained relatively violence free. However, there were reports of sharp increase of attacks on journalists in the country. Although the level of political violence came down, the internal politics of Pakistan took a dramatic turn with many protest rallies organized by Maulana Fazlur Rehman led Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI-F), one of Pakistan's largest Islamist parties, against Prime Minister Imran Khan. Hundreds of thousands of cadres of the JUI-participated in the anti-Imran Khan rally, the so called Azadi March (freedom rally). It is suspected that some top Pakistani Army officials, who were not in favor of giving extension to General Qamar Javed Bajwa, supported the rally. Role of external forces

like USA, Saudi Arabia and Iran, were also suspected for supporting the protest rallies.

Meanwhile, the political temper in Islamabad increased further as Supreme Court suspended PM Imran Khan's proposal to extend three years' service term of Army Chief General Bajwa. Instead, the Court ordered only six months extension to the Army Chief. Prime Minister Imran Khan granted three-year

extension to him in August 2019 ostensibly due to regional security issues and particularly growing tension with India on Kashmir dispute.

MAJOR EVENTS

November 05: Two Frontier Corps (FC) officers were killed when unknown militants opened fire on an FC convoy in Dera Ismail Khan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to District Police Officer (DPO), the FC personnel were on their way to their check post in Loni area when "unidentified armed terrorists" attacked them near Qasim river. (Dawn).

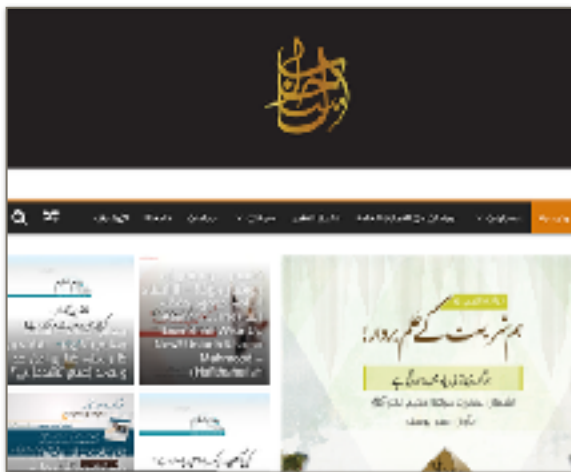
November 12: Three soldiers of the Pakistan Army were killed and one soldier is injured in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in North Waziristan. The soldiers were part of the army's patrolling team. The attack was later claimed by Taliban faction Hizbul Ahrar (Daily times).

November 14: In an undated interview to media, former Pakistan president retired Gen Pervez Musharraf admitted that Kashmiri militants were trained in Pakistan to fight against Indian Army in Kashmir and touted as 'heroes'. He also claimed that "we had introduced religious militancy in Afghanistan in 1979 to benefit Pakistan and to push Soviet out of the country.... we trained them, supplied weapons. Haqqani was our hero. Osama bin Laden was our hero." (India Today)

November 15: Three security force personnel were killed and four others sustained injuries in a blast at Kuchlak's Bypass, Quetta. The blast was occurred when a vehicle of security force was crossing the Bypass area. No group has claimed for this attack. (Business Recorder).

November 15: Pakistan Taliban faction Hizb ul-Ahrar (HuA) claimed killing seven Pakistani soldiers in a "big raid" on an army checkpoint in the tribal district of North Waziristan in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. In a statement the group claimed a large number of its members participated in the "coordinated assault" in North Waziristan's Miranshah city on November 14. The group also claimed killing Ghani Khan, a policeman in Peshawar. Last week, Hizb ul-Ahrar released a video purportedly showing two attacks by the group in North Waziristan (Dawn).

November 18: A district court in Hague, Netherlands jailed a Pakistani origin man identified as 'Junaid P. for 10 years over Dutch anti-Islam MP murder conspiracy. He was planning to assassinate anti-Islam politician Geert Wilders after he announced a cartoon competition depicting Prophet Muhammad. He was arrested in August 2018 at a train station in The Hague after he posted a film on Facebook in which he said he wanted to "send Wilders to hell" and urged others to help. He travelled from France to the City that time. (Dawn).



November 25: Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) has urged its members to "learn lesson" from the death of Islamic State (IS) leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and ensure unity in AQIS ranks. In a booklet, AQIS spokesman and present leadership Osama Mahmoud criticised IS and its slain chief, accusing the group of sowing discord among jihadists and destroying jihad. Mahmoud's long article first appeared in the latest edition of the group's Nawa-i-Afghan Jihad magazine that came out on 13 November. It was repackaged and released as a booklet by the magazine on 25 November. Al-Sahab , Al Qaeda's official media arms shifted to new domain name, alsahabmedia.co now, after the previous one,

alsahabmedia.info, became unavailable. (alsahabmedia.co / Telegram).

November 25: A tribal leader and his son was killed in a bomb blast targeting a vehicle by an unidentified group in Tank area of Dera Ismail Khan. The bomb was planted by the road and was detonated by remote control blew up the vehicle carrying a tribal elder, Malik Khan Gull and his son, killing both of them on the spot. (Daily Times).

November 28: At least 10 people were injured in an explosion that occurred in a rickshaw in Lahore's Chauburji area. Taliban faction Hizbul Ahrar took responsibility for the attack. The incident happened one day after the facilitator of the May 8, 2019 Data Darbar suicide bombing was sentenced to death. As many as 12 people, including 5 security personnel dead in Data Darbar incident. (Dawn).

November 30: The Anti-Terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore announced to indict on December 07 proscribed Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed and other JuD leaders who were booked in July for offences pertaining to terror financing. The JuD members are (other than Saeed), deputy emir Hafiz Abdul Rehman Makki, Hafiz Abdul Salam bin Mohammad, Professor Zafar Iqbal, Mohammad Ashraf, Yahya Aziz ([Dawn](#)).



The South Asia Conflict Monitor (SACM) aims to provide in-depth analyses, country briefs, summary sketches of important players and a timeline of major events on issues relating to armed conflicts, insurgencies and terrorism. It also aims to cover the government's strategies on conflict resolution and related policies to tackle these risks and crises.

The South Asia Conflict Monitor is a monthly bulletin designed to provide quality information and actionable intelligence for the policy and research communities, the media, business houses, law enforcement agencies and the general reader by filtering relevant open source information and intelligence gathered from the ground contacts and sources.

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