

# South Asia Conflict Monitor

*monthly newsletter on terrorism, violence and armed conflict*



## AFGHANISTAN: CHALLENGES BEFORE TALIBAN EMIRATE 2.0

ANIMESH ROUL & NIHAR NAYAK

On August 15, 2021, the Taliban declared the war in Afghanistan is over, after taking control of the presidential palace in Kabul. Except for the ongoing resistance from National Resistance Front (NRF) in Panjshir valley and sporadic violence from Islamic State's Khorasan branch, Afghanistan has witnessed relative calm since then. However, the law and order situation continues to remain grim. The common people, especially women, former government officials and media personnel, have been living under constant fear and insecurity since the Taliban took over Kabul in Mid-August. There are reports of Taliban fighters harassing women and torturing anti-Taliban forces despite announcing that it would adopt a liberal approach towards women and former government officials.

There are frequent reports in social media that Taliban fighters have forcefully entered the houses of civil society activists and former Afghanistan officials. Fahima Rahmati, a civil society activist, who is also the head of the charity committee in the southern province of Kandahar, on September 12, said that an "armed group belonging to the Taliban stormed into her house and beat some members of her family". Earlier, the international Human Rights organisations demanded that the Taliban and the international community investigate human rights abuses in Kandahar and Kabul. On September 7, a

large number of women organised street protests in Kabul to support achievements gained in the past 20 years. Moreover, the Taliban fighters had beaten four Afghan journalists and camerapersons and had temporarily detained others who tried to cover the anti-Pakistan and anti-Taliban protests in Kabul. The brutality of the Taliban fighters is confirmed by the UN human rights chief, Michelle Bachelet. During a media briefing, she said her office had received credible allegations of reprisal killings by the Taliban of former Afghan security forces, as well as instances in which officials in the previous government and their relatives were arbitrarily detained and later turned up dead.

Taliban used coercive methods to suppress public resentment. The Taliban's new government in Afghanistan has issued strict restrictions on holding street protests against the Taliban and Pakistan. This tactic became successful because the international community, including the UN, has been a mute spectator of the developments. In the absence of external support, the public voice against the Taliban is visibly and quickly suppressed.

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## Taliban Government

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid announced names of acting cabinet members in a press conference on September 07 in Kabul. Members of the cabinet are appointed as acting heads to run the caretaker government.[1] This has been widely criticised in four aspects. First, most of the cabinet members are listed as terrorists under the UN and USA sanction committees. Second, the cabinet was formed after due consultation with Pakistan. Third, there is no women representation in the cabinet. Fourth, the cabinet is not an inclusive one as it excludes minority ethnic groups of Afghanistan. Therefore, hundreds of people, including men and women, set a large demonstration in front of the Pakistani embassy in Kabul to protest “Pakistan’s interference in Afghanistan” affairs. The protestors were also chanting for “freedom”. Initially begun by several women activists and dozens of men, the protests spread to the capital city’s streets. The protestors had painted -- Pakistan, Pakistan, leave Afghanistan -- on the banners.

## Humanitarian Aid

Immediately after the formation of the new government, Pakistan supplied humanitarian aid to Afghanistan with 30 tonnes of food ingredients and medicines on September 9. The humanitarian assistance came as the Taliban government appealed to the international community to provide the people of Afghanistan with unconditional humanitarian aid to prevent a humanitarian crisis. Earlier, Qatar, UAE and Bahrain had sent humanitarian aid. China announced emergency aid of over \$31 million and three million doses of Covid vaccines to the people of Afghanistan.

Thousands of Afghan people have fled their homes and have been seeking resettlement in Kabul and some major cities due to fierce fighting between the Afghan security forces and the Taliban. In the absence of a credible government and its inability to address the looming humanitarian crisis, on September 13, the UN organised a donors’ conference and generated more than \$1.2 billion in emergency pledges for helping 11 million Afghans. Interestingly, all the participants in the ministerial-level meeting reiterated that the aids would be provided for the conflict victims of Afghanistan, not to the Taliban government. They also asked the Taliban to keep its promises on women rights and cooperate in delivering relief materials.

## Challenges before Taliban

Several Afghan watchers have viewed the Taliban as a security and cultural challenge to the Central and South Asian regions. But instead of posing as a challenge to others, the Taliban itself will face immense challenges in bringing peace, stability and development to set up an Islamic Emirate under Sharia law. It is a fact that it took just 45 days to capture Kabul since the US forces quietly departed from Bagram airfield, and the control of the Islam Qala and Torghundi border crossings, both in Herat province, by the Taliban in the first week of July 2021. Although the Taliban captured territory rapidly, it struggled to establish a system of governance, despite having absolute control over the country.

Some other challenges the Taliban could face in the coming weeks, if not months, are internal factionalism, fund generation for basic administrations, the undoing of liberal democratic values set up in the last 20 years, neutralising growing Pakistani interference in its internal matters, and most importantly, bringing equilibrium in the diplomatic relations between Iran, Qatar, Pakistan, Russia, China and India. Pakistan will expect the Taliban to take action against the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) leaders taking shelter in Afghan territory. It will affect TTP and Afghan Taliban relations and the Pashtun communities living across the borders.

Iran has already opposed Pakistan’s interference in Afghanistan. In a veiled reference to Pakistan, Iran condemned “foreign interference” in the Panjshir Valley conflict. Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson Saeed Khatibzadeh stated that the September 6 attacks are condemned in the strongest terms. And the foreign interference must be investigated. We are investigating it.”

Similarly, Russia refused to attend the oath-taking ceremony of the new government in Kabul. Instead, the Russian Secretary of Security Council Nikolai Patrushev discussed the Taliban regime with his Indian counter in New Delhi and expressed concern about the Taliban’s takeover of Kabul. It must be noted that the Taliban is a banned outfit in Russia.

Other than Iran and Russia, the Qatari government sent its foreign minister to Kabul on September 12 and advised the new Taliban government to

reconsider its decision on women rights and freedom. Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, on September 13 in a joint news conference with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, said in Doha that the Gulf state has urged Afghanistan's new Taliban rulers to respect women's rights and that it was still too early to consider recognising their government.

Therefore, seeking international recognition would be a significant challenge before the Taliban. A week after the formation of the new government, no country has so far recognised the Taliban government in Kabul. In this situation, there could be two options before the Taliban. The Taliban Emirate has two options: it has to run the government as per the suggestions of the international community or wait for the collapse of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan.

## Conclusions

It is interesting to note that the Taliban is not a monolithic group. It is a conglomeration of various ethnic groups of Afghanistan, who keep their distinct ethnic identity despite being part of the Taliban. Importantly, these groups have sympathy and linkages with neighbouring countries of Afghanistan. Despite internal challenges, the Taliban worked as a cohesive force due to a common enemy -- the US. But in the absence of the US's presence in the region, it would be difficult for the top leaders of the Taliban to hold unity. There are high possibilities of clash of personalities and factionalism within the Taliban associated with ethnic groups and external forces. Perhaps that was why the Taliban took more time to announce the new government and abruptly cancelled the oath-taking ceremony where it had invited many countries to attend. The media also

reported that the new acting deputy prime minister Mullah (Abdul Ghani) Baradar was injured during a factional fight in a meeting on government formation. Factionalism and ideological differences in the Taliban intensified after Pakistan pushed for more representation for the Haqqani group in the new government. Therefore, the Taliban might explore projecting some external force/s as the new enemy to keep the unity intact and maintain the support base consisting of unemployed and illiterate youths.

## NOTES

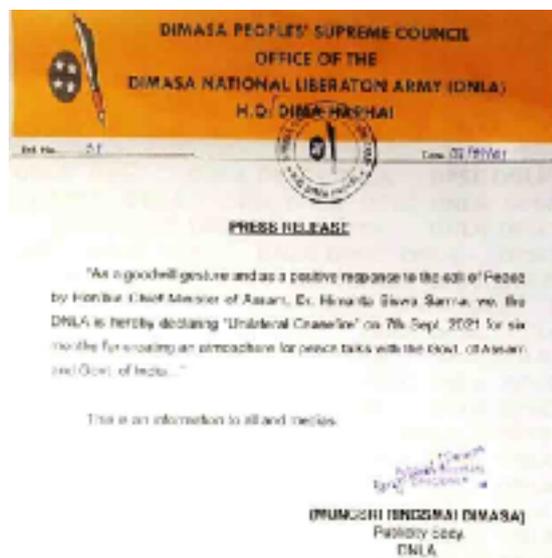
[1] "Taliban announce cabinet", MENAFN - Afghanistan Times, September 07, 2021, <https://menafn.com/1102756283/Taliban-announce-cabinet&source=24>

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## INDIA: Dimasa National Liberation Army, Assam

The suspected militants of Dimasa National Liberation Army (DNLA), a separatist militant group active in Assam and parts of Nagaland, killed five truck drivers in the Dima Hasao district of Assam on August 26, 2021. The trucks were transporting coal as well as other materials for a cement manufacturing plant in the region. The proscribed DNLA militants reportedly targeted the truck drivers after failure of the cement factory to pay the extortion amount demanded by the militant group.



This was not the first violent incident by the DNLA since its formation in April 2019. Between 2019 and 2021, the DNLA was reported to have been involved in several incidents. Earlier, on August 10, the DNLA announced 36-hour bandh in five districts of Assam -- Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao, Cachar, Hailakandi, and Karimganj -- demanding formation of an independent nation called “Hirimba Raji State” to be effective from August 14. In May 2021, six militants were reportedly killed in an encounter with Assam Rifles and Assam Police in Karbi Anglong and a large amount of arms and ammunition were confiscated.

However, the timing and nature of the latest incident indicted that the DNLA wanted to send a message to both the Union and the State government of Assam that the

ongoing peace initiative in the region has not been successful yet. Otherwise, there was no rationale behind killing of the innocent truck drivers. It appears that the DNLA deliberately wanted to disturb the ongoing peace initiatives in the region. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, after assuming office on May 10, had made an appeal to all militants to come forward for talks. The ULFA (I) had declared an unilateral ceasefire from May 15 initially for three months, which was extended by the outfit for another three months on August 14. In addition, the incident took place while the government of India signed a peace agreement with a conglomeration of seven Naga nationalist political groups (NNPGs). But the peace deal was criticised by the NSCN-IM (National Socialist Council of Nagaland), which is allegedly supported by the DNLA.

## Origins and Demands

The DNLA was formed in April 2019 under the chairmanship of Naisodao Dimasa and former Home Secretary Kharmindao Dimasa who is the information and publicity secretary of the group. It was formed after the two factions of former rebel outfits Dima Halam Daogah – Nunsia and Garlosa -- signed a memorandum of settlement with the centre and disbanded the organisations.

The goal of the DNLA is to revitalise the national struggle and fight for the liberation of the “Dimasa Nation,” a sovereign and independent nation. Their primary objective has been to get a separate Independent Dimasa Nation.

The demand for a separate Dimasa state started in 1991 when the Dimasa students organised themselves under All Dimasa Students’ Union (ADSU). The ADSU demanded creation of a separate full-fledged state ‘Dimaraji’ by incorporating all the territories that were included in the ancient Dimasa Kachari Kingdom so as to enable them to enjoy all constitutional rights and privileges to bring all round developments.

Due to cold response from the then Assam and the Union governments, but with the growing public support in favour of the movement, the Dima Hasao region witnessed the emergence of a militant outfit called the Dima Halam Daogah (DHD) in the mid-90s. The DHD called for the creation of a sovereign Dimasa state by departing from the ADSU’s position.

The DHD then split into two factions -- DHD (Jewel) and DHD (Nunisa). The Jewel faction was also known as the Black Widow group. This group used a “sophisticated network” of government funding to purchase arms and ammunition from overseas dealers and carry out insurgent activities in the region till its disbandment in 2014.

Like the DHD, the DNLA consists of members of the Dimasa indigenous community and has publicly stated its intent to protect and unify the community. The outfit’s operational areas are Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong districts in Assam, which are mostly dominated by Dimasa tribals. Some Naga tribes are also

found in this region. The two districts are among the three Autonomous Councils in Assam, formed under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. The three Autonomous Councils, which also includes the Bodoland Territorial Council, have been given varying degrees of autonomy within the state legislature.

Recently, the DNLA strongly opposed the controversial national Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) introduced by the central government as well as the construction of detention camps for the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Dima Hasao district. The group argued that the region needs more educational institutions instead of detention camps.

Interestingly, DNLA is demanding a "sovereign, independent Dimasa nation" while the earlier outfits were mainly seeking a separate state of Dimaraji by including all areas in the northeast inhabited by Dimasa tribe people. The DNLA has also established a 'government-in-exile' called 'Dimasa Peoples' Supreme Council by adopting the NSCN-IM model. Thus it was believed that there could be a fraternal and strategic partnership between the NSCN-IM and the DNLA. This suspicion turned true in 2019 when an arrested cadre of the DNLA, John Dimasa alias Master, disclosed that the DNLA was a NSCN-IM proxy. The NSCN raised, trained, armed and sheltered DNLA cadres.

### **Conclusion**

In a surprise turn, on September 7, the DNLA declared unilateral ceasefire for three months after the late August 2021 incident. The decision came after an appeal from Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biwa Sarma. The DNLA has expressed its interest to engage in peace talks with both the state and the central governments. This development came just one day before ceasefire agreement between the Union government and the Niki Sumi faction of the NSCN-K (National Security Council of Nagaland – Khaplang). The agreement will be in effect for one year beginning September 8. In response to that, the Assam government has suspended security operations against the group for one month. However, this would be premature for Assam government to take things lightly, as DNLA could use the ceasefire months for further consolidation.

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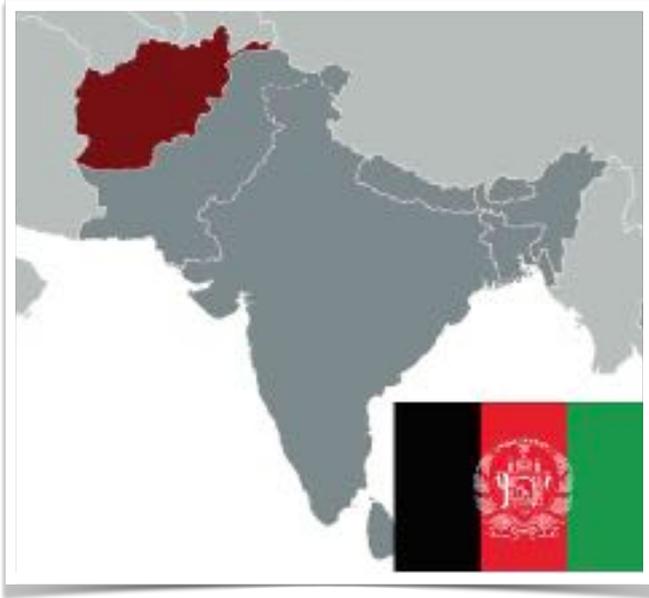
### **NEWS ROUNDUP: AUGUST 2021**

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## AFGHANISTAN

### MAJOR EVENTS:



**August 02:** Afghan President Ashraf Ghani stressed the need for unity among all the lawmakers and politicians to counter the Taliban. Ghani was speaking at an emergency joint session of the parliament. "Our aspiration was to achieve a lasting peace and we still have this aspiration. Our people face a clear invasion [from Taliban forces] now which is based on sedition... This sedition and war has been imposed on us," he said at the session. He further added that "The Taliban are not the same as they were 20 years ago... They have become more cruel, more oppressive, more non-Muslim." (National Afghanistan TV)

**August 06:** The United Nations (UN) envoy for Afghanistan, Deborah Lyons, said the

UN Security Council should issue a statement against attacks on Afghan provincial capitals by the Taliban as the human toll of this strategy is extremely distressing and the political message is even more deeply disturbing ([Tolo News](#)).

**August 09:** The Taliban have carried out attacks across the country and advancing in key provincial capitals like Lashkargah in the southern province of Helmand and Mazar-e Sharif in the northern province of Balkh. The Taliban have also launched attacks near Balkh capital Mazar-e Sharif. Apart from Lashkar Gah and Mazar-e Sharif, the Taliban have also carried out attacks in Badakhshan capital Fayzabad, and Panjsher capital Bazarak. Until now, the Taliban have overrun five other provincial capitals in the past three days. These include Kunduz city, Sar-e Pol city, Taloqan in Takhar, Sheberghan in Jowzjan, and Zaranj in Nimroz. (Afghan Islamic Press).

**August 09:** Suspected Taliban militants have killed two female police officers identified as Azra and Maryam in Ghazni city's Kashk area. Both the officers were abducted on August 7 from Sai Ganj area in Police District No 1 of Ghazni city while they were returning to their homes after work. (Etilaat-e Roz/[KabulNow](#))

**August 15:** The Taliban swept into Kabul after the Ghani government collapsed. Heavily armed Taliban fighters fanned out across the capital, and several entered Kabul's abandoned presidential palace. ([AP News](#))

**August 23:** Al-Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) congratulated the Afghan Taliban militants and offered prayers that they would be successful in implementing sharia laws. The AQIS statement addresses the Afghan people, the broader global Muslim community (Ummah), and the Afghan Taliban. (Telegram)

**August 26:** Over 200 persons, including 13 US soldiers, were killed in a series of suicide blasts in the Kabul airport attack. IS-Khorasan province has reportedly claimed responsibility for the bombings at the airport and a hotel nearby. It identified the bomber as Abdul-Rahman al-Logari, a nom de guerre suggesting he came from Logar Province, south of Kabul. ([Times Now](#))

**August 29:** The United States (US) troops have begun their withdrawal from Kabul airport. There were fewer than 4,000 troops left at the airport. According to Pentagon spokesperson John Kirby, the withdrawal had already begun. ([Times of India](#))

## BANGLADESH

### MAJOR EVENTS:



**August 10:** Four Neo-Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh JMB (Neo-JMB) militants were arrested in separate events from Kafrul and Khilgaon areas of Dhaka city. The militants are identified as Jahid Hasan Raju, the military wing chief and bomb expert, Saiful Islam Maruf, Rumman Hossain and Nazmus Shakib. Jahid was involved in several incidents violence targeting police and planting bombs in police boxes. He was also involved in a plan to carry out attacks on important installations and police boxes, by attaching bombs to drones. ([BenarNews](#); [UNB News](#))

**August 11:** Anti-Terrorism Unit of Police arrested four Ansarullah Bangla Team militants from Rayerbagh area of Dhaka city. They were identified as Raihan Hossain, Tanvir Hossain, Aminul Islam and Sagar Islam. ([Daily Star](#).)

**August 16:** Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Shafiqul Islam underscores that the Taliban's recapture of Afghanistan might encourage militancy in Bangladesh and other countries in the sub-continent. He said that a resurgence of militancy in Bangladesh was always connected with such international major events, adding that the current development in Afghanistan might encourage some youths in Bangladesh to get involved in militancy. ([Dhaka Tribune](#))

**August 17:** The Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) officials said that Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) is presently working with Al Qaeda linked Ansar al Islam and Islamic State linked Neo-Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (Neo- JMB) to revive militancy in the country. JMB, which was formed by Shaikh Abdur Rahman in 1998, has around 2,000 members now. The outfit still has a strong base in some places in 12 Districts - Mymensingh, Sherpur, Jamalpur, Kurigram, Rangpur, Bogra, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari and Chapainawabganj, ([Daily Star](#).)

**August 19:** Hefazat-e-Islam (HeI) has selected Muhibullah Babunagari as its new Ameer (Chief) after Junaid Babunagari died on August 19. The decision was made by senior leaders of the Qawmi madrasa-based platform before the Namaz-e-Janaza of Junaid Babunagari. ([Dhaka Tribune](#).)

**August 26:** The Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) police have arrested a female operative of Ansar al-Islam from Badda area of Dhaka city. She is identified as Zobaida Siddiqua Nabila, a 19 years old woman. Preliminary investigations revealed Nabila maintained two Facebook accounts, one ChirpWire account and four Telegram accounts. Her four Telegram accounts have more than 15 channels and 25,000 followers. Many violent jihadi propaganda books were uploaded at different times in these channels.

**August 28:** Bangladesh Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said that there is no existence of Taliban militants in Bangladesh. He said ‘there are many small groups in the country. But they have no capacity to create chaos.’ ([Dhaka Tribune](#))

**August 31:** Dhaka city’s Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal (ATST) sentenced six Ansar al-Islam militants to death for killing former USAID official Xulhaz Mannan and his friend Mahbub Rabbi Tonoy in April 2016. In 54-page verdict, the ATST sentenced to death a former Army Major Ziaul Haque, Rahman Siam, Mozammel Hossain Saimon, Sheikh Abdullah alias Jubair, Asadullah alias Foyjul and Akram Hossain. Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent endorsed the attack while the Bangladesh counter-terrorism officials said that the ‘Al Qaeda-inspired’ Ansar Al Islam was behind the attack. ([New Age](#))

**August 31:** Almost 42 percent of all arrested members of Ansarullah Bangladesh Team (ABT) have secured bail and are moving around freely, according to media report. Altogether 350 ABT operatives were arrested in 76 cases filed on charges of murder and militancy beginning 2013. Among them, 148 have secured bail, this correspondent has found. Ominously, 17 of the accused who secured bail have been missing since their release. ([Dhaka Tribune](#))

## INDIA

### MAJOR EVENTS:



**August 06:** Liberation Tiger of Tribal (LTT) commander-in-chief Khaikhohao (also Haopu Khongsai) and two others were found shot dead near Maojang village in Kangpokpi district of Manipur. No groups has claimed responsibility for the incident. Media sources said among the two other victims, one was Naolun Khongsai, son of the slain LTTs chief while the third victim is suspected to be his bodyguard. ([E-Pao.net](#))

**August 09:** A Baratiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and his wife were shot dead by terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir’s Anantnag district. The leader was identified as Gulam Rasool Dar who was the Kulgam BJP Kisan Morcha president. ([Zee News](#))

**August 10:** The banned rebel group, Dimasa National Liberation Army (DNLA) called for a 36 hours shutdown from August 14 in five districts in Assam, demanding an independent nation called “Hidimba Raji State”. ([The Times of India](#))

**August 13:** The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah) chief Thuingaleng Muivah reiterated the demand for a separate Naga flag and constitution. In a speech delivered, the 86-year-old stated that as per the 2015 Framework Agreement (FA) signed between NSCN-IM and Government of India, Nagas can co-exist with India, but will not merge with it. ([Hindustan Times](#))

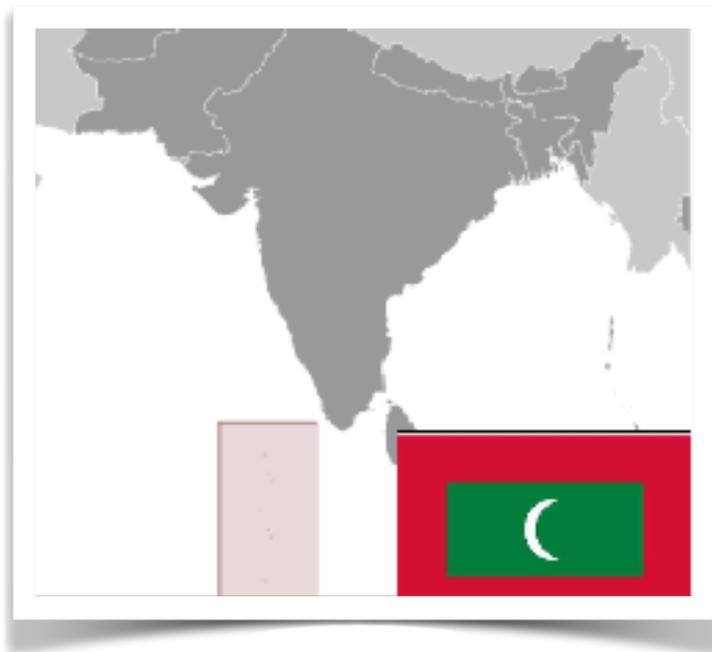
**August 18:** Former deputy chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir and Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) member Dr Nirmal Singh said that the terrorists had killed 23 members of his political party in the past two years in Kashmir. He demanded the police should provide security to all vulnerable political activists in the region, irrespective of their political affiliations.

**August 27:** Five people died after suspected militants belonging to the Dimasa National Liberation Army (DNLA) fired indiscriminately at seven trucks and set them ablaze in Assam’s Dima Hasao

district. The local police suspect that the attack happened upon refusal of a cement factory to yield to the DNLA's extortion demands. ([Hindustan Times](#))

## MALDIVES

### MAJOR EVENTS:



**August 11:** Abbas Faiz, special envoy in the investigation into the May 6, 2021, Male bombing said in tweet about the conclusion of that first part of the probe into May 6th assassination attempt on the speaker of Parliament Mohamed Nasheed. and the next step is "links and finances". He added that Maldives Police Service and the Prosecutor General's Office assured that "wider links and financing are being investigated". ([Times of Addu](#))

**August 12:** Hassan Afeef, The Chair of the May 6th committee, and MP for Vilufushi constituency indicated that Islamic Ministry would be conducting special programmes on religious extremism to raise awareness in the

Maldives. Afeef also said that the committee's most prioritized task is the investigation of the May 6th assassination attempt (on Nasheed), and confiding the findings to the National Congress. Afeef went on to say that the religion of Islam has certain rules, and that no individual should seek to kill another on an unjustified basis. A program will be conducted to prevent such beliefs from forming throughout society. ([Raajje.mv](#))

**August 21:** Male Criminal Court has ordered for Ali Haisham, one of the key suspects of the May 6, 2021, Male bombing to be detained pending the outcome of his trial. The Court also extended the remand of the rest of three suspects of the incident, Ahmed Rasheed, Mujaz Ahmed, Thahumeen Ahmed ([Sun.mv](#)).

**August 23:** Maldives' Minister of Islamic Affairs Ahmed Zahir Ali, Minister of Home Affairs Sheikh Imran Abdulla and the Commissioner of Police Mohamed Hameed have engaged in discussions on how to stop to religious (Islamic) extremism in the country through the powers of law. Relevant parties came to an agreement on how to deal with acts of Islamic extremism and the normalization of activities against Islamic laws while discussing the obstacles faced in coming to solution. ([Raajje.mv](#))

**August 26:** President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, while speaking at a ceremony for the graduates of the 67th Basic Training Course of the Maldives National Defense Force (MNDF) stated that exchange of intelligence is extremely important at a time where the world is facing many challenges in the form of terrorism and extremism both regionally and internationally. The ceremony was held at the MNDF military base, Kalhuthukalaa Koshi, and was attended by First Lady Fazna Ahmed, Minister of Defence Mariya Ahmed Didi, Chief of Defence Force Major General Ahmed Shamal and other senior MNDF officials. ([PSM News](#))

**August 31:** Criminal Court has extended the remand period of Is'haq and Fahmy Ali, arrested for their involvement in the terrorist attack aimed at Speaker and President Mohamed Nasheed on May 6th. According to the Maldives Police Service (MPS), Is'haq, Ali Haisham, 27 and native to Manadhoo island in Noonu atoll and Mohamed Thasleem native to Hoarafushi island in Haa Alif atoll, are suspected to have led the execution of the attack. ([Raajje.mv](#))

## PAKISTAN

### MAJOR EVENTS



**August 09:** Two policemen were killed and 21 others were injured after a bomb exploded at Zarghoon Road, near the city's University Chowk, Quetta. The Baloch insurgent group Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for the attack. ([The News](#))

**August 10:** Three officials of the customs department were killed after unidentified assailants opened fire on them on Dera-Zhob road near Kulachi area in Dera Islamia Khan. ([Dawn](#))

**August 12:** Five suspected armed militants belonging to the Baloch Liberation Army have been killed in a gun battle with Counter Terrorism Department personnel and security forces in the New Marri Camp area of

Hazarganji, Quetta. ([Express Tribune](#))

**August 20:** Two children were killed and four others, including a Chinese national, were injured when a suicide bomber blew himself up targeting a vehicle carrying Chinese nationals in Gwadar. The banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)'s Majeed Brigade had claimed responsibility for these attacks. ([Al Jazeera](#))

**August 25:** Balochistan counterterrorism department killed seven suspected Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) terrorists in Loralai district's Kohar Dam area, soon after they entered the country from Afghanistan. However, the CTD claimed that it received credible source information that the BLF terrorist were planning to attack a sensitive installation. ([Samaa TV](#))

**August 26:** Three Levies personnel were killed and as many injured when their vehicle hit a landmine near Mangi Dam in Balochistan's Ziarat district. The Balochistan Levies is a force in charge of maintaining law and order in the tribal areas of the province. ([Dawn](#))

**August 29:** Two Pakistani Army personnel were killed in an exchange of fire with terrorists from across the Afghan border in Bajaur district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In a similar incident, a paramilitary soldier was martyred on August 26 when terrorists attacked a check-post in the Three Baman Sector from across the Afghan border. ([Dawn](#))

**August 31:** A Pakistan Army soldier was killed when an improvised explosive device exploded during an area clearance operation in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's South Waziristan district. In a separate incident, the Army claimed that a fleeing terrorist was killed during the exchange of fire between the terrorists and the security forces in South Waziristan's Asman Manza area. ([The Express Tribune](#))

## SRI LANKA

### MAJOR EVENTS



**August 04:** Sixty-two people who were arrested on charges of having links with Zahran Hashim, the mastermind of the Easter Sunday attacks of April 2019, have been remanded until August 19. ([Hiru News](#))

**August 17:** Mohamed Razik Mohamed Taslim, who was shot in the head by followers of Zahran Hashim was offered Rs. 2.5 million in cash by Public Security Minister Sarath Weerasekera for providing information to the Police over Easter Sunday suspects. Taslim was the first person to reveal information on the suspects, who vandalized Buddhist statues in Mawanella in late December 2018. He was shot in the head in March 2019 at his home in Danagama area of Mawanella. ([Daily Mirror](#))

**August 26:** President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has appointed an Advisory Board as per the Section 13 of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), No.48 of 1979. The Advisory Board is expected to make recommendations and advise the President on the investigation, release, granting of bail and future action related to the persons imprisoned over terrorist activities and detained under detention orders. The Chairman of the Advisory Board is retired Chief Justice Asoka de Silva. Other members are retired high Court Judge A.A.R. Heiyanthuduwa and retired Solicitor General Suhada Gamalath. ([Colombo Page](#))

**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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## **ABOUT SSPC**

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