

# Separatist attacks in Pakistan kill 21, dozens of militants dead

[AFP::](#) Separatists launched “coordinated” attacks across Pakistan’s Balochistan province on Saturday, killing at least 10 security personnel and 11 civilians, an official said, the latest violence in the insurgency-hit southwestern region. Officials said dozens of militants were also killed in clashes triggered by the attacks, a day after the military said its forces had killed dozens of ethnic Baloch insurgents.

Pakistan has been battling a separatist insurgency in Balochistan for decades, with frequent attacks on security forces, foreign nationals and non-locals in the mineral-rich province bordering Afghanistan and Iran.

The senior security official, speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to the media, said “terrorists... launched coordinated attacks this morning at more than 12 locations”.

“Ten security personnel were martyred while a few others were injured,” the official said, adding that 67 militants were killed in clashes.

He said 11 Baloch civilians, including three women and three children, were also killed by militants.

The circumstances surrounding the deaths of the civilians were not immediately clear. Baloch separatists have previously targeted civilians believed to have collaborated with state agencies.

A senior military official in Islamabad said the attacks were “coordinated but poorly executed”, adding that they had “failed due to poor planning and rapid collapse under

effective security response”.

– ‘Explosions one after another’ –

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif praised security forces for “foiling” the attacks.

“We will continue the war against terrorism until its complete eradication,” he said in a statement in which he accused India of backing the separatists.

Police officials in four districts told AFP that the attacks were not yet completely under control.

In Quetta, Balochistan’s provincial capital, an AFP journalist heard several explosions as heavy security was deployed across the city, with major roads deserted and businesses shut.

“Since morning, there have been explosions one after another,” Abdul Wali, a 38-year-old private employee, told AFP as he struggled to find blood for his hospitalised mother.

“The police point guns at us and say ‘go back’, otherwise they beat us. What should we do?”

A senior official in Quetta told AFP that militants had abducted a deputy district commissioner.

A senior government official in another district said militants had “freed at least 30 inmates from a district jail, seizing firearms and ammunition. They also attacked a police station and took ammunition with them”.

Mobile phone services have been jammed and traffic disrupted in the affected districts, while train services have been suspended across the province.

The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), the most active militant separatist group in the province, claimed responsibility for the attacks in a statement sent to AFP.

– Suicide bombings –

The group said it had targeted military installations and police and civil administration officials in gun attacks and suicide bombings.

It said major highways were blocked to disrupt military operations.

Several women were involved in the attacks, according to statements and videos released by the BLA.

Saturday's attacks came a day after the military said it had killed 41 insurgents in two separate operations in the province.

"Over the past 12 months, security forces in Balochistan have sent more than 700 terrorists to hell, with around 70 terrorists eliminated in just the last two days alone," said Sarfraz Bugti, the chief minister of Balochistan province.

"These attacks cannot weaken our resolve against terrorism."

Balochistan is Pakistan's poorest province, despite an abundance of untapped natural resources, and lags behind the rest of the country in education, employment and economic development.

Baloch separatists have intensified attacks on Pakistanis from other provinces working in the region in recent years, as well as foreign energy firms that they believe are exploiting its riches.

The separatists attacked a train with 450 passengers on board last year, sparking a two-day siege during which dozens of people were killed.

In August 2024, militants blew up bridges, stormed hotels and targeted security installations in assaults across the province that killed dozens.

AFP