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# **SECTARIAN VIOLENCE AND PEACE IN PAKISTAN'S KURRAM DISTRICT**





# Executive Summary

Sectarian violence swept Kurram District in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan in the year 2024, which saw great losses of human life and infrastructural material. The casualties involved over 68 dead bodies and hundreds wounded during Shia and Sunni tribal clashes. It also pointed to deeply rooted sectarian tensions arising from weak governance, external factors, and instability in the region. Peace could only be brokered between December 2024 but still has the volatile tendency in the region. This report assesses the implications for Indian national security and regional stability by focusing on cross-border spillover effects, radicalization risks, and strategic opportunities for India to engage diplomatically and secure its interests in South Asia.







# Background

## Historical Context:

- Kurram District has a background of sectarian tensions and clashes; its history indicates more sectarian attacks, mainly targeting Shia and Sunni populations.
- Local rivalry is manipulated by militant outfits in this area as part of wider political objectives on both sides.

## 2024 Violence:

- Violence erupted mid-2024, with causes rooted in disputes over land ownership and religious differences. External factors, including militant factions, inflamed the tensions.
- Pakistani authorities could not intervene and mediate; the clashes persisted for a long time, resulting in many casualties.

## Peace Initiatives:

- In November 2024, Pakistan government mediators and tribal elders agreed to a temporary truce, then a peace accord in December.
- The agreement focused on disarmament, compensation for victims, and mechanisms for conflict resolution.







# Strategic Analysis

## **Regional Instability:**

- The violence in Kurram has ripples across South Asia, particularly in Afghanistan and India. Militant groups can take advantage of the instability to plan cross-border operations.
- The sectarian dimension might create similar mayhem in India, especially in the sensitive regions like Jammu & Kashmir.

## **Pakistan's Governance Issues:**

- Weak governance and the inability to address systemic sectarianism create a threat to Pakistan's internal stability.
- Temporary peace deals at the cost of structural reforms reveal a vicious cycle of violence that will keep re-emerging.

## **India's Strategic Interests:**

- The destabilization of Kurram District raises the possibility of radicalization and infiltration into India.
- China may take the unrest as an opportunity to strengthen its military and economic footprints in the region through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects in Pakistan.





# Scenario Analysis

## Escalation:

- Sectarian violence escalates with the involvement of external actors, such as the Taliban or ISIS-K.
- The migration pressures and radicalization in India intensify.

## Stalemate:

- The peace agreement seems to hold initially, but the systemic issues persist.
- Militant groups carry out low-intensity operations that continue to destabilize the region.

## Resolution:

- A strong peace mechanism, bolstered by regional stakeholders, establishes sustainable stability.
- Pakistan implements genuine reforms to tackle sectarian divides and improve governance.





# Strategic Recommendations

## **Strengthen Border Security:**

- To combat the potential of infiltration, bolster intelligence-sharing and surveillance agreements along the India-Pakistan border.
- Develop high-tech means of cross-border movement monitoring.

## **.Diplomatic Engagement:**

- Partner with Afghanistan and other South Asian nations to track and deal with militant activity in the region.
- Push for international platforms to push Pakistan toward governance reforms and tackling extremism.

## **Economic and Developmental Measures:**

- Engage in infrastructure and community development schemes along India's border districts to mitigate spillovers of instability.
- To further enhance partnerships with the global actors of the US and the EU for regional security issues.

## **Counter-Radicalization Efforts**

- Implement programs targeted at vulnerable groups in sensitive regions of India in order to stop sectarian radicalization.
- Leverage India's moderate Islamic leadership to promote peace and tolerance.





# Conclusion

The Kurram District's sectarian violence highlights the fragility of Pakistan's internal stability and its implications for South Asia. While the peace agreement offers a temporary reprieve, sustainable solutions require addressing systemic issues and engaging regional stakeholders. For India, this presents both challenges and opportunities. Proactive measures in border security, diplomatic engagement, and counter-radicalization can help mitigate risks while positioning India as a stabilizing force in South Asia.







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