3.1.3. Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)

The Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI), established in 1948,208 is the country's largest intelligence agency and has often exerted a strong influence on government policy.209 Sources described it as a military210/military-run211 organisation, with no specific law or formalised oversight process regulating its activities.212 Externally, the ISI engages in the collection of foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence activities,213 while in the domestic realm, it is known as an actor of repression in Balochistan and against individuals voicing dissent against the country's military leaders.214 The ISI has internal and external wings215 and a number of specialised sections,216 with sources from late 2025 reportedly indicating that the organisation was shifting away from human-intelligence centred approaches towards data-driven monitoring. 217

The ISI is headed by a Director-General who holds the rank of three-star army general.218 Since September 2024, this position has been held by Muhammad Asim Malik, who was additionally appointed to the post of National Security Adviser in April 2025.219 Both the ISI's directorate board220 and its core staff are composed of military officers. Meanwhile, the organisation also employs civil servants for administrative and analytical roles, as well as other civilians operating as informants and surveillance personnel.221 While no precise data was available of the overall size of the ISI,222 the New Delhi-based South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP)223 in mid-2025 estimated the agency's strength at around 25 000.224 The ISI has been involved in multiple enforced disappearances225 and extrajudicial killings in Balochistan.226

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