

# 4.2.3. Punjab

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### ○ (a) General description of the province

Punjab is the second largest of Pakistan's provinces, making up 25.9 % of the country's total landmass with a size of 205 344 square kilometres.827 The province is located in eastern Pakistan and shares internal borders with Sindh province to the south, Balochistan and KP provinces to the northwest and the ICT and the AJK region to the north. Externally, it shares borders with India and the Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir region to the east and northeast.828 In terms of administrative units, Punjab is divided into nine divisions (Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi, Sahiwal, Sargodha), which are further subdivided into 36 districts. Lahore city is Punjab province's capital.829

Punjab province is the country's most densely inhabited830 and most populous province and the second largest by area.831 Punjab had a population of 127 688 922, according to the 7th Population & Housing Census of Pakistan of 2023. The Punjabis are the province's main ethnic group (67 %), with Saraiki-speaking communities constituting roughly 21 % of Punjab's population and Urdu-speaking groups making up around 7 %. Smaller language groups include Pashto (also: Pushto), Mevati, Balochi, Hindko, Sindhi, and others.832 According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), most of Punjab's population is Muslim, with Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and Ahmadis also present in the province.833

In a May 2025 article, The Reporters noted that Punjab accounted for more than 70 % of the country's wheat and rice production and of almost 60 % of its cotton production. However, it added that the harvest had seen 'alarming declines in recent years'.834 Punjab province reportedly has an active mining sector,835 with newly discovered gold, 836 as well as oil and gas reserves in Attock district.837

### ○ (b) Presence and general activities of the armed actors

The military headquarters of the Pakistan Armed Forces, including the Joint Staff Headquarters and the Pakistan Army General Headquarters, the Air headquarters and the Navy HQ838 are located at the Noor Khan base in Rawalpindi.839

Both PIPS and PICSS reported an increase in militant attacks in Punjab province in 2024 compared to 2023,840 with a slight reduction in 2025 (see below).841 In 2025, the security situation in Punjab province showed a persistent intent by militants to maintain a foothold, as reported by PICSS.842 Militant attacks occurred in various districts, including Mianwali,843 Lahore, Dera Ghazi Khan,844 Bahawalpur and Taunsa in 2024. 845

The TTP has reportedly created two shadow provinces in Punjab846 (Wilayat North Punjab and Wilayat South Punjab847), uniting with armed factions and appointing regional commanders.848 The group was the main perpetrator of militant attacks in 2025,849 focusing on South Punjab, as noted by PICCS.850 PIPS recorded all TTP attacks in Punjab in 2025 in the Dera Ghazi Khan district.851 In 2024, the TTP focused its attacks on targets such as police stations and checkpoints, with Lahore emerging as the most affected district, followed by Mianwali.852 Attacks in districts bordering KP and/or Balochistan during the reference period indicated an expansion into areas beyond the TTP's traditional strongholds.853 In November 2025, the Jamestown Foundation reported that the TTP's intensified efforts to expand its operational network, including into Punjab province.854

In 2025, isolated incidents of militancy were noted in Rawalpindi, Attock, Taunsa and Mianwali, indicating a limited yet geographically dispersed militant presence. Notably, major cities like Lahore experienced no attacks, suggesting effective disruption of urban militant cells by intelligence agencies, with anti-militant operations expanding further in the second half of 2025.855 However, PIPS reported one attack in Lahore attributed to the HGB group, which targeted a Head Constable, leading to his death. 856 The International Crisis Group refers to Muridke and Bahawalpur in Punjab as headquarters for the Laskhar-e-Taiba (LeT) and JeM.857 Additionally, PICSS linked LeJ to sporadic incidents in the province.858 An article from May 2025 by RFE/RL corroborated that JeM and LeJ had bases in these areas.859

In 2024, PICSS noted intensified counterterrorism efforts, particularly in districts near KP. Lahore, which faced limited militant activity in 2023, became a primary target for security operations, resulting in 31 operations and the arrest of 275 suspects linked to groups such as TTP, ISKP/ISPP, Al-Qaeda, LeJ, and Sipah-e-Muhammad (SMP), highlighting Lahore's strategic importance in the militant landscape.860 PIPS reported

that four counterterrorism operations were conducted in Punjab in 2024.[861] The killing of TTP regional intelligence chief Habib ur Rahman in 2025 in Taunsa Sharif was believed to have weakened the militant command.[862] An ISKP affiliate involved in propaganda was also arrested in Okara in 2025, according to PICSS.[863] In early 2026, sources further reported security operations against organised crime (dacoits) in southern Punjab province's Katcha region[864].

PIPS noted in November 2025 that incidents like the public targeting of minorities and forced conversions of Christian and Hindu girls indicated that religious extremism was 'extending beyond terrorism'.[865] With reference to several sources, the German BAMF reported incidents of detainment of members of the Ahmadi community in Punjab province in early 2025 for offering Friday prayers. Furthermore, persecution of the community by supporters of the TLP party, as well as attacks on places of worship were reported. In one instance, in early March 2025, authorities removed the minaret of an Ahmadi place of worship in Bahawalnagar district responding to TLP pressure.[866] An October 2025 Dawn article reported with reference to police officials that 25 attacks on churches and other religious sites in Punjab between 2022 and 2025, including vandalism and explosions, were linked to TLP workers.[867] In October 2025, authorities blocked roads and suspended mobile internet services ahead of a TLP protest march. The march, which started in Muridke, was dispersed by security personnel and led to clashes between TLP supporters and security forces, eventually leading to a ban of the TLP under the Anti-Terrorism Act on 24 October.[868]

In April 2025, Verma A. and others noted that minor Baloch militant factions exhibited limited activity in southern Punjab, attacking gas pipelines and mineral extraction machinery.[869] Additionally, PICSS indicated that the Baloch Republican Guards (BRG) were active in Punjab province in 2025.[870]

On 7 May 2025, amid escalating tensions with Pakistan, Indian forces launched missiles into various cities in Punjab and parts of AJK,[871] resulting in civilian casualties.[872] The escalation involved gunfire and mortar fire.[873] For detailed information on the relationship between the two countries, see section 2.2.2. Relations with India. For information regarding border security, see section 4.2.6. Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and 4.1.2. Border security, including incidents along the Durand Line (Afghanistan), the Line of Control (India), and the Pakistan–Iran border.

### ○ (c) Recent security incidents and impact on civilian population and infrastructure

*Security incidents*

CRSS documented 25 violent incidents (including militant attacks and counter-militancy operations) in 2025 in Punjab province[874] compared to 51 incidents in 2024.[875] PIPS documented 7 militant attacks in Punjab in 2025 compared to 11 in 2024.[876] PICSS documented 16 attacks in Punjab in 2025[877] compared to 21 attacks in 2024.[878]

From 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026 ACLED reported 122 security incidents in Punjab: 42 were coded as battles, 27 as explosions/remote violence and 53 as incidents of violence against civilians.[879]

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**Figure 5: Evolution of security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Punjab province between 1 November 2024 and 24 April 2026, based on ACLED data**[880]

**Fatalities**

From 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026 ACLED reported 138 fatalities.[881]

*Civilian casualties*

According to PICSS, 4 civilians were killed in militant incidents in 2025 (2 in Taunsa, 1 each in Rawalpindi and Attock).[882] In 2024, 3 civilians had been killed (all 3 in Lahore) and 6 injured (3 in Lahore, 3 in Rahim Yar Khan).[883]

*Impact on infrastructure*

No information could be found on the impact of the security situation on the infrastructure in Punjab province during the reference period.

*Displacement and return*

No information could be found on conflict-related IDP or return movements from or into Punjab province during the reference period.

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