

THE REINVENTION OF THE TEHRIK-E-TALIBAN PAKISTAN

A Case Study

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SUMMARY

The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan had 42 militant outfits within its fold in 2024, and is the largest militant group in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region. Violent militancy in Pakistan caused in excess of 690 deaths from 306 attacks in 2023,¹ rising to 852 deaths from 521 attacks in 2024.² An alliance of five groups at its inception in December 2007, the TTP has evolved from a loosely knit conglomerate of multiple 'Jihadist' entities into an organized insurgent group which now functions as a shadow government in parts of the Afghanistan-Pakistan borderlands. The group has survived despite multiple campaigns by the Pakistan military to wipe it out, most notably between 2014–16, in 2017 and 2018.

Though the TTP retains certain core features from its inception, its strategic reinvention – in structure, financing, and messaging – has been critical to the group's success. This paper examines the TTP's strategic reinvention under the leadership of Noor Wali Mehsud, focusing on three main areas:

- The TTP's structural evolution: The reorganization of the TTP into a more centralized, efficient structure.
- The economy of the TTP: The codification of its financial systems, ensuring sustainability through diversified revenue streams including extortion and illicit trade.

- The Evolution of the TTP's messaging: The use of propaganda as a primary tool for expanding influence and framing the TTP as a legitimate alternative to the government, which has outperformed its military operations in shaping regional narratives.

This discussion paper illustrates that while the fall of Kabul may have provided a catalyst to the TTP's reinvention, the organization's consolidation has also been the outcome of a deliberate effort made under the leadership of Noor Wali Mehsud. Since 2017, the organization has followed an astute strategic approach to capitalize on the political divide in Pakistan, while simultaneously leveraging discord between Pakistan and the de facto rulers of Afghanistan, the Afghan Taliban. Thanks to such a strategy, the TTP has been able to expand its influence without solely relying on armed violence. Additionally, the paper shows that in contrast to its ground operations, the group's propaganda network has outperformed its operational capabilities and has far-reaching effects.

INTRODUCTION

The formation of the TTP³ was not, contrary to the popularly held belief, solely in reaction to Pakistan's decision to become a "front state ally" in the US-led War against Terror, but was a stepping-stone to the expansion of the Taliban's ideological frontier in Pakistan's tribal areas. These areas comprised "more than 3,000 km of an open border in Afghanistan and regions of tribes not under the political influence".⁴ The expansion formed a protective shield for mujahideen as envisioned by the founders of Al Qaeda.

Through its evolution, the TTP's core principles have not been diluted over time. The group's founding charter remains a driving force as guided by top Al-Qaeda (AQ) ideologues Sheikh Mustafa Abu Yazid, Abu Yahya al Libi (Shaykh Abu Yahya), and Atiyah Abd al Rahman (Shaykh Mahmud al Hasan).⁵ AQ's guidance has arguably been uninterrupted and intertwined with the group's actions with occasional rough patches from time to time. Security analysts, in fact view the group as a "by-product of Al-Qaeda's jihadi politics in Afghanistan-Pakistan after 9/11".⁶

The TTP's allegiance to the Afghan Taliban, as enshrined in its founding charter, remains consistent.⁷ The *Bayah*, or the oath of allegiance, is a fundamental tenet of the jihadist belief system. Both Al-Qaeda and the TTP have pledged their loyalty to the supreme leader of the Afghan Taliban, with *Bayah* renewing upon the succession of each new Taliban leader.

The TTP's modern resurrection follows the Afghan Taliban's takeover of Kabul and the departure of NATO and allied forces from Afghanistan in August 2021. The group's current Emir, Noor Wali Mehsud, has been instrumental in the TTP's ability to adapt strategically and realign its aims with its original guiding principles and goals while also undertaking important changes to the group's structure, financing, and messaging.⁸

In 2024, the TTP is the greatest unresolved issue between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The group's leadership is based in Afghanistan, and it continues to conduct disruptive cross-border attacks in Pakistan's tribal areas. Pakistan first attempted a negotiated peace independently with the TTP in 2020, however the talks crumbled following a 20-day ceasefire in December of that year. In late 2021 the Afghan Taliban began brokering a series of peace talks between the Pakistani government and the TTP. The talks continued for over 17 months, and despite a number of ceasefires, the talks would ultimately reach an over the TTP's demands that Pakistan roll back the integration of the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA⁹) with mainstream Pakistan.¹⁰ Following the breakdown of negotiations, Islamabad launched three aerial strikes in Afghanistan and the region experienced over 280¹¹ major and minor border skirmishes. As a result, the border has experienced regular and lengthy border closures, with bilateral trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan at its lowest level in two decades.¹² The escalation in conflict also led to Pakistan beginning a policy of forced repatriation of undocumented Afghans who have called Pakistan their home since 1988, as a political and foreign policy lever against the Afghan Taliban for their lack of cooperation in bringing the TTP under control.

The bulk of the TTP's cross-border attacks have been concentrated in the border regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.¹³ These areas are central to the TTP's existence, as much of its financial and militant salience depends on territorial control, networks, and kinship ties adjacent to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. The Pakistani government estimates that the TTP, along with other connected elements, form a Rs20 billion extortion and illicit economy in the border areas.¹⁴

This paper employs a qualitative methodology, involving a comprehensive review of literature, news reports, and media sources to analyze the TTP's strategic evolution. By examining its structural reorganization, financial codification, and propaganda mechanisms, this paper aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the group's adaptive strategies and discuss the implications for regional security.

(1) THE TTP'S STRUCTURAL EVOLUTION

The original TTP charter, written in 2007, outlines the formation of a growing group focused on expansion and survival. The TTP's structure was modeled after the Afghan Taliban, with a Shura Council acting as the executive body led by the Emir. The number of members in the council varied by region, depending on the population and the extent of the group's on the ground presence.¹⁵ The charter also featured extensive detail on the role of the organizations' Economic Council and approach to fund generation, that legitimized kidnapping for ransom from certain religious minority groups, as well as from government employees and non-governmental organizations.

Early Challenges and Fragmentation (2007–2016)

From 2007 to 2016, the TTP struggled for survival due to internal divisions, leadership instability, competition from other militant groups, and a perceived lack of credibility among the major jihadist groups. Governance in the TTP was structured as fiefdoms in the form of *Wilayas* (shadow provinces), with infighting and discord among fairly autonomous groups. In the early period, the TTP's core message—i.e., framing the Pakistan state as their primary adversary and target—failed to find salience with some TTP factions.¹⁶ It struggled with control after some chapters broke away to join ISIS¹⁷, and faced infighting between factions, particularly among the Mehsuds.¹⁸

Because of these internal and external challenges, Al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban saw the TTP as radical and uncontrollable. Al-Qaeda eventually cut ties due to the TTP's "illegitimate" activities, while the Afghan Taliban distanced itself, viewing the TTP as deviating from Islamic norms. Occasionally, the Afghan Taliban sent emissaries to advise the TTP to reform.

The TTP also faced regular leadership crises due to the targeted killings of emirs through drone strikes between 2009 and 2016. There were failed attempts to resolve these internal conflicts, with the last Emir of TTP from Swat, Mullah Fazlullah,

chosen through a lucky draw to avoid confrontation.¹⁹ Despite these efforts, the group remained fragmented until 2018 when Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud took over as leader.²⁰

Strategic Reinvention Under Noor Wali Mehsud (2017–Present)

The assumption of TTP leadership by Noor Wali Mehsud in 2017 marked a pivotal moment for the group. Acknowledging the internal fragmentation that had hindered its growth, he implemented a strategic overhaul of the organization. Noor Wali Mehsud revived the group's original charter, refocused its goals on combating the Pakistani military, and pursued a more formalized organizational structure. The changes have transformed the group from a militant organization into a hybrid entity with aspirations of governance, closely mirroring the organizational model of the Afghan Taliban. The TTP's growth reflects its evolution from a borderland group to one with influence in urban Pakistan.

The TTP organizational structure has expanded to now include seven ministries – knowledge, defense, welfare and development, accountability, economics, political affairs, and broadcast – administered under a council of 18 members. In 2022 the TTP announced a total of seven *Wilayahs*, along with two administrative commissions.²¹ In the following two years the organization undertook a rapid expansion, and by 2024 the group had announced eleven *Wilayahs*. Its ambition and presence had also expanded beyond the immediate border areas into all four Pakistan provinces as well as Gilgit Baltistan.²² Each *Wilayah* is led by an Emir with a council of four to five members handling tasks like finance and logistics.

One of the most significant changes was the development of a “Code of Conduct” in 2018, which set out the group's operational and governing principles, including more defined roles for leadership. The document identifies the Pakistan military as the TTP's sole target, along with any other branch of the State or individuals who supported it.²³ In doing so, the group applied a rationale to “exempt” formerly targeted individuals and groups at risk of more opportunistic violence from its members and allies influenced by local disputes and rivalries. Exemptions were granted to educational and health agencies, as well as political parties and their workers. The role of NGOs was left for scrutiny and assessed from time to time. Other religious sects were also exempted unless they committed blasphemy or openly came out in support of the military.

Lastly, under Mehsud's leadership, the group also attempted to broaden its coalition against the Pakistan military by closely aligning its messaging with the grievances of other dissident groups and ethnic nationalist movements, such as the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM).²⁴ While the PTM firmly rejected the TTP's overtures, the group's harnessing of messaging on the political grievances of the Pashtun people in Pakistan helped the TTP to attract former allies and new Jihadist entities. When Noor Wali Mehsud took charge, there were roughly 13 groups associated with the TTP, but at the end of 2024, their number had increased to 42 groups of varied sizes and strengths from all over Pakistan.

Entrenchment with the Afghan Taliban

The announcement of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan catalyzed the entrenchment of the TTP with the Afghan Taliban. At the start of the Doha Peace Process in 2019, the Pakistan military initiated secret backchannel talks with the TTP. After the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, peace talks between the Pakistani government and the TTP were revisited, with the Taliban acting as the broker between the parties. The general belief within the Pakistan military was that the TTP was a product of grievance and discontent related to the American-led War on Terror, and once the US and its allies had left the region and handed over control to the Afghan Taliban, the equilibrium would be restored, and peace would be achieved in Pakistan. As such, the military offered the TTP a general amnesty with the consensus of the local tribes and sought to resettle them into their respective areas of origin in Pakistan's northern borderlands. However, by early 2022, talks had stalled over prisoner releases,²⁵ and the TTP escalated attacks.²⁶

In response, Pakistan conducted airstrikes in Afghanistan targeting the TTP, but the Afghan Taliban remained largely unresponsive to demands that they exert greater control over the TTP's cross-border activities or deny them patronage. Peace talks resumed in early 2022 leading to the TTP declaring an indefinite ceasefire in June of that year.²⁷ However, changes in Pakistan's political landscape led to the process's abandonment. Irreconcilable positions over two key issues – the status of the merger of the former-Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the recognition of the Durand Line as an international border – led to an impasse. The Pakistani side believed that both issues were inserted into the TTP's charter of demands at the behest of the Afghan Taliban who now saw the TTP as a revisionist lever to expand the Emirate into the Afghanistan-Pakistan borderlands. By November 2022, the TTP unilaterally discarded the peace talks due to Pakistani military operations and irreconcilable positions, subsequently beginning an aggressive militant offensive against Pakistan.

(2) THE ECONOMY OF THE TTP

Alongside internal governance reforms, the TTP has systematically strengthened its *financial structure*, creating a multifaceted and organized fiscal operation that ensures sustainability through a diverse range of revenue streams. The introduction of a financial code – *Lahe-Amal* or Operational Code – in 2018 further aims to regulate the organization, limiting opportunistic excesses and violence among its members.²⁸

A Web of the TTP's Revenue Streams

An examination of the TTP's financial structure outlines a well-organized, hierarchical, and codified fiscal operation within the militant organization, adhering strictly to their version of the Sharia law with a Deobandi interpretation. A Central Finance Committee oversees regional committees; these are tasked with ensuring transparency by mandating daily financial reports from regional finance teams, all culminating in comprehensive monthly audits submitted to the central committee. The Central Finance Committee then submits quarterly reports to the Emir.

In addition to this financial structure, the code also provides protocols for ransom in *jihad* contexts, stressing ethical conduct and adherence to Sharia rulings to maintain integrity and avoid controversy within the organization's financial and operational practices. The central committee oversees who is responsible for collecting payments, and anyone found to be carrying out collection activities other than a designated individual receives criminal punishment.

The financial trail and the economy of TTP are sustained through a diverse range of revenue streams, with extortion being the most prominent one.²⁹ Contractors operating in areas under the group's influence are compelled to pay a fixed percentage of their earnings, typically around 5%, to the organization.³⁰ This extortion fee is mandatory for contractors to continue their operations without interference. During the pine nut season in the border areas, for instance, the rate of extortion significantly rises, and can be as high as 20%.³¹

In addition to extortion practices, the TTP's ability to adapt and exploit various sources of income, including drugs and weapons smuggling, kidnapping for ransom, and donations from madrassas, highlights the complexity of the organization's current financial networks. The TTP's involvement in illicit trade not only generates substantial revenue but also helps in creating alliances with other criminal organizations. The proceeds from drug trafficking are used to fund militant activities and the purchase of weapons. The smuggling of weapons is another critical source of revenue for the group. This illicit trade not only provides the organization with new arms to sustain its operation but also generates significant profits which are reinvested into their activities.³²

The Operational Code also outlines how funds are dispersed. Fifty percent of all revenue is administered by the Central Finance Committee for the core operations of the organization. The remaining funds are available to *Wilayas* upon the submission of a formal request to the Central Finance Committee. The request will then be forwarded by the region's finance committee in charge of the expenditure.

Financial Regulation and the rules of war

The TTP financial code outlines in great detail strict rules to limit opportunistic excesses and violence from its constituent members. It mimics the operational code of the Afghan Taliban during their insurgency, but it is used strategically to a) build legitimacy and credibility with their patrons, and b) to consolidate control over a factional entity whose members have diverse agendas. As such financial levers form an important instrument in coordinating the operations of the organization and limiting actions that go against the interest of the central committee.

For example, the TTP's financial code prohibits abuses such as kidnapping for personal gain and mandates that ransom money is used for *jihad*. No person is allowed to carry out a kidnapping without the knowledge and permission of their locally sanctioned governors/Emirs. After they are informed of all the operation's details and circumstances, the Emirs become responsible for the operation and its consequences.

The financial code also ensures that money taken from Muslims is returned if taken mistakenly and forbids the betrayal of captives. The code specifies that no money should be targeted from Muslims, even if they are immoral, and emphasizes the importance of fulfilling promises made to captives.

Previously, the TTP targeted specific sects and groups, including Ahmadis, Ismailis, Hindus, and Shia merchants. However, it now focuses on the state and its affiliates, forbidding the kidnapping or killing of women and children, as it distorts the image of *jihad*. The group also targets government, judicial, and NGO personnel, considering them agents of the "infidel" government. The code emphasizes that actions must be judged carefully, considering personal circumstances, ignorance, and the impact of media.

The reorganized financial structure and financial code help the TTP reinforce a strategic balance between financial sustainability and ideological commitment, ensuring cohesion and alignment with its overarching goals.

(3) THE EVOLUTION OF THE TTP'S PROPAGANDA

Parallel to its organizational changes, the TTP's media apparatus has evolved significantly, from a collection of outlets publishing war footage and interviews with combatants to a coordinated platform engaged in distributing propaganda and seeking to influence public debate.

In 2006, it established Umar Studio, later renamed Umar Media, which initially focused on publicizing and explaining suicide attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Over time, it began producing content celebrating the group's military campaigns in key areas like South Waziristan and Mohmand tribal districts, as well as focused on the TTP's campaigns in Afghanistan, featuring interviews with TTP *fidayeen* (sworn-to-death fighters) who aided Afghan Taliban in fighting the US and coalition forces.³³ After Baitullah Mehsud's death in 2009, Umar Media launched a campaign to introduce Hakeemullah Mehsud and began competing with other jihadist media, like Al-Qaeda's Al-Sahab Media.

By 2014–2015, Umar Media expanded its content, shifting focus from military actions to socio-political content in Urdu, comparing the TTP's jihad with political instability and alleged atrocities in Pakistan's tribal areas. The target audience was people in the former FATA region and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Simultaneously, the TTP launched a Pashto-language state, *Umar Radio*, which featured interviews with militants and religious sermons. Although less prominent than Umar Media, it provided a platform to document the history of TTP fighters and added another dimension to their outreach.

Diversifying Media and Audience

The TTP's media expansion into topics such as economic hardship, elite corruption, and abuse by security forces has helped reframe the militant organization as a legitimate alternative to the Pakistan government.

In late 2016, the TTP launched *Mujalla Taliban*, an Urdu-language magazine focusing on socio-political issues in Pakistan, marking its first significant media expansion. It was launched during a time of crisis and fragmentation of the TTP as an effort by the group to raise its profile in comparison to other Jihadist entities such as ISIS, which had a strong media presence. While the magazine's release was initially slow, with only eight issues from 2016 to 2020, it was revamped in 2022 and now publishes monthly. In 2023–2024, three new magazines were established: (1) *Sada e Taliban*, (2) *Mujalla Banat e Khadijt al Kabira*, and (3) *Mujalla Taliban Special Edition*. Importantly, *Mujalla banat e Khadijah al kabira* marked renewed attention by the TTP to female supporters by featuring interviews with the wives of senior commanders of the TTP.³⁴

The expansion of the TTP's multimedia platforms now sees it publish a podcast on socio-political issues called *Pasoon*, and 14 video series, half of which covered military topics, while the other half addressed politics, social issues, and TTP welfare policies. This diversification of platforms and messaging has broadened the TTP's reach, not just in tribal areas but also among other restive populations like the Baloch and urban communities in Karachi and Lahore.



The Angoor Adda Bazaar on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.
Photo Credit: Verso Consulting

Scope of the TTP's Current Messaging

Across its many platforms, the TTP's communications are professional and its messaging is tightly controlled. It now portrays itself as an independent insurgent group, positioning itself as an alternative to Pakistan's system and participating in the mainstream discourse, addressing broader societal and national issues such as the neglect of the Baloch population³⁵ and violence in urban centers like Sindh and Punjab. While active in encrypted non-public social media platforms such as Telegram, the TTP's official statements are released on its letterheads, and in a targeted language offering detailed positions on a broad range of issues.³⁶

The frequency of the TTP's public communication puts them in conversation with current discourse on contemporary social and political issues, on themes such as: popular grievance and governance issues in the borderlands; political conflict in Pakistan's domestic mainstream; foreign policy and regional stability; contemporary religious discourse; and, importantly, all issues that shape Pakistan's relationship with the Afghan Taliban.

After the fall of Kabul in 2021, the TTP completely aligned itself with the Afghan Taliban, shedding its identity as a global jihadist group and focusing solely on implementing Sharia in Pakistan. Official TTP statements have consistently rejected the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, referring to it as a "*farzi line*"³⁷ or temporary line, while the TTP frequently messages in support of a unified Pashtun identity – which they specifically frame as "Afghan".³⁸ The TTP has expressed solidarity and support for Afghans in Pakistan and Pashtun nationalists, and strongly condemning the forced repatriation of refugees, labeling the policy as "un-Islamic" and inhumane. They have urged people to inform against state officials involved in implementing the policy to expel Afghans, promising informers confidentially. Additionally, the TTP urged the people of Pakistan to provide financial and material support to refugees and undocumented Afghans in a display of Islamic charity.

Yet despite this alignment with the Afghan Taliban, the TTP has refrained from separatist rhetoric and since 2024 has stopped claiming attacks within Pakistan. The TTP's communications instead focus on issues that resonate with public sentiment, and the organization seeks political influence through alliances with major political entities and irredentist or sectarian movements in Pakistan. It has published two statements in favour of the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) and held talks with the Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam (JUI), Pakistan's largest right-wing political party, endorsed the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), and invited all of them to join its struggle. The group has also tacitly endorsed the Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) and asked the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement to join forces.³⁹

However, there is a divergence between the TTP and the Afghan Taliban on some domestic and regional issues. The TTP has avoided directly targeting Chinese interests in Afghanistan due to their reliance on the patronage of the Afghan Taliban. However, the TTP's position on China in Pakistan is more nuanced. While official accounts have explicitly denied the TTP's involvement in attacks on Chinese nationals and facilities,⁴⁰ pro-TTP social media accounts serving as proxy messengers have threatened Khyber Pakhtunkhwa residents for participating in Chinese projects and demanded a 5% share of Chinese trade.⁴¹

CONCLUSION

The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has proven itself to be a resilient and adaptive force, capable of evolving in response to shifting political dynamics. Under Noor Wali Mehsud's leadership, the TTP has strengthened its operational and financial capabilities while positioning itself as a key political actor. This shift marks the TTP's ambition to replicate the Afghan Taliban's governance model in Pakistan.

While the Pakistan government continues to address the group through counterterrorism measures, the TTP capitalizes on mistakes, often blaming the military for its actions. This strategy has allowed the TTP to fill the political void created by the growing divide and shrinking democratic space in Pakistan, despite not yet securing new political allies. The Afghan Taliban's refusal to take action against the TTP further complicates the situation, as the group maintains the ability to escalate tensions along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

By anchoring its messages with popular grievance and offering an alternative – often maximalist or violent – vision, the TTP has embedded itself fully within the discursive landscape of the border region. The organization now offers a politically coherent proposition to a potentially larger support base, which explains how it has assembled a diverse and factional community of jihadists into a much larger conglomerate. The TTP will likely continue to expand its influence, utilizing both a sophisticated financial network and an extensive media outreach.

To counter this evolving threat, Pakistan must adopt a more comprehensive strategy that goes beyond military engagement. A broader political dialogue, dispute arbitration, and focus on rebuilding borderland economies to address the grievances of ethnic and marginalized groups is essential to reduce the appeal of groups like the TTP. Strengthening counterterrorism efforts, disrupting the TTP's financial networks, and enhancing regional cooperation will also be crucial. Additionally, winning the war of narratives is key to preventing political elements from opportunistic and disruptive alignment with the TTP – more importantly, it is to address the underlying issues that fuel its rise. Pakistan's leadership must devise a robust strategy that combines military, political, and narrative-based approaches to effectively combat the TTP's influence.

ENDNOTES

1. Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (PIPS) Security Report 2023
2. Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (PIPS) Security Report 2024 https://www.pakpips.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Overview_PIPS-Security-Report-2024.pdf
3. The Revival of the Pakistani Taliban April/May 2021, Volume 14, Issue 4 Authors: Abdul Sayed, Tore Hamming
4. Defence of the Muslim Land by Dr. Abdullah Azzam Chapter 2: The Ruling of Fighting in Palestine and Afghanistan; To Begin With Afghanistan <https://ebooks.worldofislam.info/ebooks/Jihad/Defence%20of%20Muslim%20Lands.pdf>
5. Documents taken from Osama bin Laden's Abbottabad compound and released by the US Office of the Director of National Intelligence <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/features/bin-laden-s-bookshelf?start=1>
6. <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2021/12/the-evolution-and-future-of-terrik-e-taliban-pakistan?lang=en>
7. Documents taken from Osama bin Laden's Abbottabad compound and released by the US Office of the Director of National Intelligence <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/features/bin-laden-s-bookshelf?start=1>
8. TKD EXCLUSIVE: TTP Chief Unveils Meetings with The Afghan Taliban Leadership, says Relationship Based on 20 Years of Allegiance By Ihsanullah Tipu Mehsud <https://thekhorasandiary.com/en/2024/03/05/TKD-EXCLUSIVE-TTP-Chief-Unveils-Meetings%20-with-The%20Afghan%20Taliban-Leadership-says%20Relationship-Based-on%20-20-Years-of-%C2%A0Allegiance>
9. In May 2018, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) merged into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province with the 25th amendment to the constitution, integrating the semi-autonomous regions into Pakistan's mainstream legal and political framework
10. The first ceasefire was started in November 2021 that lasted one month. Again, in May 2022, a truce was signed. In November 2022 the ceasefire permanently ended in TTP's unilateral decision. TTP ends ceasefire with govt, orders its militants to 'carry out attacks in entire country' Published by Dawn <https://www.dawn.com/news/1723647>
11. Official statistics provided by Pakistani Security Forces
12. Pakistan to evict 1.1m illegal Afghan refugees; Caretaker cabinet gives authorities the go-ahead to send all Afghans living illegally in Pakistan back by Kamran Yousaf for The Express Tribune <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2437931/pakistan-to-evict-11m-illegal-afghan-refugees>
13. NACTA's Official DATA
14. Approximately 70 million USD. Estimate shared during the Provincial Apex committee meeting of KP on May 28
15. While regions like Swat, Bajaur, Orakzai, and the Mehsud territories in Waziristan were important to the TTP's growth, it was in Mohmand Agency (now district Mohmand) that the TTP first emerged as a formidable force in 2007 following the siege of the Red Mosque in Islamabad.
16. For instance, two major groups from sub-branches of the Wazir tribe – Hafiz Gul Bahadar's from North Waziristan and Commander Nazir's from South Waziristan – did not get along well with the Mehsuds, as both were interested in fighting in Afghanistan rather than shifting their focus to Pakistan.
17. In 2014, with the rise of ISIS and its Khorasan Chapter, the TTP faced significant military pressure and leadership instability in the Afghanistan-Pakistan borderlands. Several TTP chapters, including Orakzai, Kurram, and Khyber, led by figures like Mufti Hassan, broke away to join ISIS.
18. By 2016, the TTP was still embroiled in tribal clashes as Mullah Fazlullah tried to sort out the differences among the Mehsuds, the founding members of the group, who themselves were divided into two factions.
19. In 2017, a last-ditch effort was made by the group's executive council to regain control over its discordant elements by announcing that all matters, regardless of how petty they were, would be dealt with by the executive council itself. Pakistan Taliban chief Mullah Fazlullah 'killed in drone attack' <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/6/15/pakistan-taliban-chief-mullah-fazlullah-killed-in-drone-attack#:~:text=Fazlullah%20became%20the%20leader%20of,Video%20Player%20is%20loading>.
20. TTP appoints Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud as chief after Fazlullah's killing <https://www.dawn.com/news/1415660>
21. The two administrative commissions were the North and South Zones
22. The organization structure announced in 2024 included Malakand, Kohat, Makran, Hazara, Gilgit Baltistan, Peshawar, Bannu, Zhob, South Punjab, Mardan, and Dera Ismail Khan. Later on, Karachi and North Punjab were also added.
23. Document published by TTP
24. Official statements from TTP's media outlet
25. Govt releases over 100 TTP prisoners as 'goodwill gesture' <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2330584/govt-releases-over-100-ttp-prisoners-as-goodwill-gesture>
26. Pakistan Taliban ends ceasefire with gov't, threatens new attacks <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/28/pakistan-taliban-ends-ceasefire-with-govt-threatens-new-attacks>
27. Complete ceasefire agreed between govt and TTP: Fawad Chaudhry <https://www.dawn.com/news/1656804>
28. Official code of conduct on financial tasks
29. Zia-ur-Rehman, *Taliban faction in Pakistan spreads terror through extortion*, Global Initiative, December 2021
30. Interview with a local contractor
31. Interview with a local contractor
32. United Nations Security Council, [Letter dated 23 May 2023 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 \(2011\) addressed to the President of the Security Council](#)
33. Collection of videos archived by the author on Telegram in TTP media channels.
34. I. Firdous, R. Valle, I. T. Mehsud, *The resurrection of the TTP*, Dawn Prism, July 2023
35. On 24 July 2022, through its media outlet *Umar Media*, TTP issued a detailed statement condemning what it described as the "ethnic cleansing" of the Baloch people. The statement highlighted incidents where Baloch protesters were allegedly targeted with "shelling and tear gas." As a result, TTP declared it "their responsibility to protect the Baloch people."

36. Based on the authors' review of TTP statements released between 2021 and 2024.
37. On 19 August 2022, TTP, through its media outlet *Umar Media*, issued a statement regarding the killing of Commander Umar Khalid Khurasani and Maulvi Bajauri. The statement also addressed the status of the Durand Line, which TTP referred to as a "*Farzi Line*" (temporary border) between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The group reiterated its aim to eliminate this divide and unify Pashtuns and Afghans living on both sides of the border.
38. Umar Media statement released on 6 November 2023.
39. Official statements from TTP's media outlet
40. Following an attack targeting Chinese nationals in the remote Kohistan district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on 12 August 2021, TTP issued a statement denying any involvement, asserting that its war was solely against Pakistan's security forces and not the global community.
41. Social media analysis by The Khorasan Diary



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