



Center for
Research &
Security
Studies

*Pakistan-focused Questions,
Independent Answers.*

VICTIMS' VOICES

***Resonating Consequences
of
Conflict***

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Why “Victims' Voices”?

Inspired by various projects in conflict-hit societies, CRSS began collecting voices affected directly or indirectly by violence some time in early 2012. The purpose was to listen to their experiences in an environment marked by terrorism and subversion by anti-State religious radical groups.

Some of these direct victims of various kinds of violence are maimed, physically incapacitated, or psychologically traumatized because of the intermittent roar of guns, thuds of bomb blasts or deafening blare of suicide bombings – over 350 in Pakistan since March 17, 2002. The CRSS radio reporting team also went after those who lost their near and dear ones; asking them how they endured the tragedy itself.

They also approached widows or female orphans to find out how they are coping with the trauma after the loss of their fathers, brothers and husbands in acts of terror by a faceless enemy operating in the name of religion. These religious extremists demonstrate scant regard for humanity, relations, and seem totally oblivious to the consequences of their heinous acts on community.

Deployment of violent tactics by extremists is not primarily aimed at hurting the immediate victims of those attacks; also to instill fear and create a general atmosphere of chaos within the society by randomly targeting innocent civilians. The wounded and the killed are considered as collateral damage. These are a mere abstraction for the perpetrators. However, in the process, they are hurting and killing innocent and very real people. (<http://www.icct.nl/activities/project/victim-voices>).

Recording the personal stories of these victims in a way that may induce critical thinking in the minds of silent supporters and empathizers of faith-based militancy is an absolutely essential tool to fight and highlight the consequences of gruesome inhuman acts perpetrated by tunnel-visioned radicals.

While ventilation of sufferings helps in alleviating psychological stresses and healing the wounds inflicted on non-combatants and innocent civilians, at the same time, it also exposes the negative side of acts committed in the name of religion. Disseminated through media and discussed among civil society organizations, such stories can not only resonate individual stories of sufferings but also work to multiply indirect messaging on the socio-political consequences of militancy or the support for it.

In other words, such stories can serve as a preventive measure against radicalization; pave way

for de-radicalization and help in promoting efforts for rehabilitation as well as reintegration of militants into social mainstream.

Following pages offer only a few of the dozens of stories of individuals – both male and female - from areas synonymous with Taliban militancy and terrorism. But this compilation of personal impressions (of direct or indirect victims of violence) also includes some cases from urban centres of the most affected Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, such as Peshawar.

These cases - stories of orphans, widows, and those who lost limbs in gruesome acts of terrorism - are extracts from the interviews and reports that the CRSS team compiled and ran in different radio shows - 'Da Aman Aawaz] (Voice for Peace), and 'Sabawoon' (the Dawn).

CRSS considers this not only tribute to those who fell victim to terrorism, and those who survived terror and stood up to the ensuing challenge of survival, but looks at it also as recording small bit of the consequences of a wave of violence that has severely disrupted life across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

CRSS is extremely thankful to the United States Institute of Peace for its support to our radio programmes as well, which were the vehicle for disseminating the victims' voices from various parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Areas.

Imtiaz Gul

Executive Director

CRSS, Oct 2013

Why did they kill my father?

Hudaibia lost her father in a bomb blast. The bomb had been planted at the Tablighi Markaz (the centre of Muslim preachers) at, Mingora, Swat. This mighty explosion on January 10, 2013 killed 23 persons,



including Hudaibia's father, Siraj Khan.

“He had promised to buy me some beautiful dresses me on coming Friday but terrorists never permitted him to return, ***I wish he returned one day***” Hudaibia the 10-year old girl recalled, with tears rolling down her cheeks. Already distressed because of economic adversity and the omni-present threat of terrorism in the 'Gul Kadar' suburb of Mingora, the death of the father multiplied the big family's ordeal, forcing them into a life of financial hardships.

Siraj Khan had left behind six children. Inamullah (16), a class 8 student, being the eldest of all. Inamullah recalled his instant reaction to the deafening blast that rocked the main town Mingora like an earthquake.

“I instantly dialled his cell number but the phone was off. It made us worry a bit but then somebody informed us

about our father's dead body being in the hospital,” Inamullah said while recounting those dreadful moments. Inamullah is now the sole bread winner for the other five siblings and a distressed mother. He had to abandon schools and take up work as a daily-wage worker.

“I am eager to complete my education and would expect the government to lend us some support to resume my studies and live an honourable life”, Inamullah said imploringly.

Despite economic adversity and insecure social environment, the family hangs on the father's memories.

“He still lives in our hearts, with all the golden memories, but we know our cries cannot make him return home,” said the pensive Hudaibia, visibly shaken by the trauma the entire family suffered following her father's sudden demise.

Radical religious militancy reared its head across Swat / Malakand in the summer of 2007 and went on to terrorize local populations like never before. A massive three-pronged military operation that began in May 2009 eventually cleared the mountainous area of extremist militants, they have kept targeting innocent civilians and security forces, including the area commander Major General Sanaullah Khan Niazi, who was killed through a remote-controlled improvised explosive device in September, 2013.

This sad tale of Hudaiba and her family is just one of hundreds of such stories, affected by terrorism and suffering the economic consequences of fanaticism in a region that was once known for its peace and crime-free social milieu.

(Report by Khurshid Ali in program Hujra 06-03-2013)

Note: For security reasons, most of the victims refused to be published with photo identity

Ambassador of Peace silenced



Malik Taj - from Lowi Maguari village in Bajaur. This ambassador of peace lost his life in a suicide bombing. His crime: he was pursuing peace in this embattled region as the head of the Peace Committee and Peace Militia. For a sensitive person like Taj, the only way to confront militants was to deny them the social space. Despite repeated warnings by Taliban militants, Malik Taj remained undeterred and went about his mission

to lobby for peace and confront the militants collectively. Eventually, he paid with his life when militants sent a suicide bomber to a meeting Malik Taj was chairing.

This way, Taj became the casualty of the relentless wave of violence. CRSS reporter Afzal Mohmand from Bajaur went out to Bajaur to record impressions of Taj's near and dear ones.

“Taj had deep love for everybody and was very upset with the way militants wanted to impose their will on others”, Malik Shatir Khan, brother of Malik Taj said. That is why Taliban militants abhorred him and sent several messages, warning him of dire consequences. But Taj remained unruffled, Shatir Khan recalled.

Villagers sounded a little wary of government's apathy to Mailk Taj's services. They recalled that although Taj lost his life in a cause that coincided with the government peace efforts, yet he received no official recognition. Awarding a peace medal to Taj in recognition of his services would have emboldened us all, villagers told CRSS. Such a move could also reinvigorate the craving and struggle for peace in the region. ***(Report aired in the renowned Pushto Show, Nomawary Pakhtuna, 13.01.2013)***

Maimed for life



Kabir Bibi's heart-rending story exemplifies those innocent victims of violence who – for no fault of theirs – end up living a miserable life – maimed and dependent on others.

Ms Kabir Bibi's life took a turn for the worse, when a bomb planted in dustbin exploded with a bang, killing and injuring many in Parachinar, the administrative headquarter of the Kurram border region, in May 2010.

The 24 year old girl from Kurram Agency, who had just moved away after dumping garbage in the dustbin, sustained multiple serious

injuries. But her infant child could not survive the explosion. She was first taken to the Kurram District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ) and then moved to the better-equipped Hangu DHQ hospital, where surgeons saw no alternative but to amputate both of her legs.

“It was a double trauma for us all – first losing the only child and then the two legs,” Kabir Bibi told CRSS reporter Sameena Naz before bursting into tears.

Kabir BiBi now lives with her father, a very poor man living of with daily wages. They find it extremely difficult to pay the rent for their one-room mud house in the centre of the town.

“We must somehow manage the rent because of the proximity to the hospital,” She explained of the compulsion of having to live near the hospital. Occasionally she suffers psycho-traumatic fits that require instant transfer to the hospital, and thus she must stay close to the facility.

Kabir Bibi, like many other victims of violence, is wary of the authorities and complained of their apathy towards her plight.

“All I received is a wheelchair, no other compensation for us poor people,” she grumbled in a heavy voice.

Kabir Bibi's story highlights another aspect of the misery that victims face: government apathy towards survivors. For lack of or insufficient compensation, many victims are forced to live a wretched life, dependent on others – both physically as well as financially.

Why did they kill my son?



Ms Nasreen Bibi is a living example of the plight of thousands of those mothers who lost their sons to either the ranks of militants or fell victim to their heinous acts against innocent human beings.

She lost her son in a horrible act of terror that struck Peshawar, a city that has endured more than 210 suicide bombings since the war against terrorism in Afghanistan began unfolding in late 2001.

Tragedy befell this family on October 28, 2009 when a car bomb tore through the busy Meena Bazaar market in Peshawar, leaving 91 dead on the spot. One of the victims in this bloodbath was Raheel Husain, the only son of Naseen Bibi, 51.

Raheel, who had become his family's sole bread earner after the death of his father a few years ago, owned a small shop dealing in embroidered clothing at the Meena Bazaar, a popular shopping destination for women and young girls in particular.

“Nobody has a clue as to why terrorists are killing innocent women and children, why are they depriving mothers of their sons, wives of their husbands, sisters of their brothers, and daughters of their fathers, it is madness,” Nasreen Bibi told CRSS reporter Ms Sameena Naz.

Whenever we pass through the market for shopping, Raheel's memories bounce back to haunt us, said the

distressed mother. Fortunately, she explained, two of her daughters are married. But she still must take care of another three, who are all going to school.

That is why Nasreen Bibi usually avoids revisiting the Meena Bazar.

Now this lady is mostly dependent on her sons-in-law for financial assistance, something she accepts entirely out of compulsion.

“Receiving hand-outs from a son-in-law is not a socially laudable norm in the Pakhtun society, but we have no other option,” explained Nasreen Bibi.

“I wish nobody else goes through what I am enduring as a resourceless and financially dependent widow.” I wish it were just a nightmarish dream. But, alas, it is a bitter reality we have to live with,” remarked Nasreen Bibi while wiping off the streaming tears with her shawl.

(Report : Ms Sameena Naz, in programme Hujra , aired 17.04.2013)

Deadly Drones - Crippling and Killing Innocents !

Haji Noor Khan sustained serious injuries in one of the scores of CIA-operated Drone strikes on a suspected target in South Waziristan. His trauma in fact goes beyond personal physical wounds because in this attack he lost eight close relatives, beside many friends.

*“We were attending a funeral prayer when the Drone fired (Hellfire missiles), killing dozens of inhabitants in an instant and wounding dozens of other people. I received multiple injuries on several parts of my body. Some bodies were badly damaged and could not be recognized. Among slain inhabitants, eight (8) were my cousins,” Khan, 60, told CRSS reporter **Jamshed Mehsud**.*



This Drone attack killed almost three dozen Ahmedzai Wazir tribesmen who had gathered to offer the funeral prayers of one of their tribal fellows.

The debate around the illegal drone attacks have raged ever since the Obama Administration ramped up the use of these pilotless vehicles, subjecting border communities, particularly in the South and North Waziristan agencies. The primary target of these strikes are 'Al-Qaeda' operatives nestled in these wily regions; yet many innocent civilians also become the unintended victims of the Drones.

Khan's is a story that explains another kind of tragedy, that is human suffering caused by the controversial US intelligence outfit the Central Investigation Agency (CIA). In all, unmanned aerial vehicles known as Predators and Drones killed at least 2,514 people in 371 strikes between 2004 – July 31 2013. The agency carried out about 20 (twenty) such attacks during the first nine months of 2013. Beside those who perish in such strikes,

the painful cases are of those who end up as permanently disabled persons.

A similar strike in January 2009 left a suspected target in Ladha, South Waziristan, left Rahmatullah, a resident from Ladha, crippled for life, like many other innocent victims of a tool deployed by a state-actor.

“It was a huge, intense explosion that tore humans into pieces instantly. My son, who was badly injured in the attack, is also paralyzed now. I do not know why innocents are being targeted and slain,” asked Rahmatullah.

Another Ladha resident Iqbal Wazir, disabled for life following fatal injuries in one of the Drone strikes, is also going through a lot of pain.

“Drones have killed even many women and children. This has been an agony for hundreds of families, with little hope of an end to this brutal warfare,” remarked Wazir when recalling several drone attacks in areas such as Ladha, Makeen, Sararogha of South Waziristan.

(Report: Jamshed Mehsud, Program Jarga Maraca aired on 12.11.2012)

Mother's Dreams Shattered



Violence kills and maims. But it entails devastating psychological consequences as well, turning living humans into scared souls, haunted by hallucinations of all kinds. Young Sultan Mehmood is one such soul with deep-sitting post-traumatic stress disorders. Hounded by the looming specter of terrorists or trigger-free, intimidating militants, Sultan locks himself in the room after the sunset almost daily.

Sultan has lost his mental health as a result of unending shelling, exchange of heavy gun fire,

and the unusual military activity.

The mother said that the sounds of explosions have affected her son mentally to the extent that he often gets frightened by any sound.

“All my dreams (about a bright future for Sultan) are shattered and life has become miserable and meaningless for me,” Sultan's hapless mother told CRSS reporter Sidra Ali. So traumatized is the mother that she even refused to give her name. All she said was, “the mother of Sultan Mehmood.” This, too, sounded like a denial of her own existence of person now forced to permanently nurse a mentally upset son, like a guard.

Her face betrays the pain of all those poor parents who know nowhere to go once they lose their future i.e. sons to a conflict or to an incurable disease. State institutions' apathy and the inconvenience caused by extreme security precautions further aggravate their pain.

“We are really caught in dilemma whether to buy bread or to get him medicine?” she asked in a direct reference to the family's financial adversity, adding that routine raids in the hunt for militants, and road blocks have made their life even more miserable.

Bajaur agency borders Afghanistan's Kunar province, a region suspected to be 'Al Qaeda' leader Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri's hideout. TTP militants led by Mulla Fazlullah also use Bajaur as staging post for their attacks on the Pakistani security forces from across the border. This has compelled the forces to react in a way that often amounts to inconvenience to local residents.

Heavy shelling by Pakistan military gunship helicopters on suspected hideouts and bunkers of the militants in Cheenar, Kohi, Hashim and Babarha areas of Bajaur Agency became the order of the day since August 2008, when the army launched the “Sherdil Operation” there. The use of mortars became frequent, with fierce battles between the security forces and militants became a routine affair.

The conflict continues to take its toll, not only killing people but also affecting the mental health of the people, especially of the children and youth in the region. According to the survey by polio department, almost 85 % of people in Bajaur Agency were psychologically affected.

The psychologists are of the view that youngsters and children are more prone to such disorders due to their impressionable age and any such catastrophe can leave a permanent impact on their brain.

(Report by Sidra Ali in Program Hujra 25-01-2012)

Caught between the rock and deep sea

Bakht Buland lost several family members in a terrorist attack in the summer of 2007, when the Taliban were in ascendency near Mingora, the administrative headquarter of Swat. The blast deprived many of his friends of body limbs, maiming them for life.

“I lost three of my close relatives in a violent attack on us when we were on way to attend a wedding ceremony,” Buland told CRSS reporter Shah Nawaz Khan.

“The dead included my elder son who left behind his widow and two daughters and the responsibility for taking care of them rests on my shoulders,” said the distraught survivor before breaking down in tears. His tale of miseries did not end there.



“One of my daughters has lost her legs while the other daughters sustained critical injuries when a bomb (improvised explosive device planted on the roadside) hit our vehicle, killing 13 and seriously injuring most of the passengers,” he recalled.

What is even more gruesome is that the blast rendered all three daughters practically crippled. Two lost their eyes and the eardrum and the other her legs.

Another most heart-rending story in the poorly governaned region is Buland's extremely poor financial situation. Like many other victims of the conflict, Bulanad, too, is hard pressed for finances. Although the local

economy has picked up a little, yet the meager resources Buland can generate from his small kiosk are hardly enough to take care of a big family.

“I am living a life like a beggar asking for charity of people I know,” Buland said complaining that while the government announced a three lac rupees (\$ 3000) compensation for blast victims he received only one lac rupees (\$ 1000)”.

This tragic incident took place on 22 February 2008. Most of the victims were women and children. Bukhat Bulanad wonders why the terrorists continue targeting innocent women and children, depriving them of life and of their shelter (father, brother). Why, he kept asking during the interview.

(Report by Shah Nawaz Khan in Nomawaryy Pakhtuna program 27-04-2012)

Vanished in the line of duty

Jamal Shah embodies the zeal of those thousands of soldiers and policemen who have led the fight against terrorists from the front. He also exemplifies those who suffered physically but are still unflinching in their resolve against militants.

Shah, a daring police officer, had sustained severe injuries when militants launched a surprise attack on their post in the troubled area of Kooz Dir, Talaash in early 2009. Shah's father, also a police officer, had valiantly died



during a police raid on suspects in the year 1998.

Shah's uncle, Said Afzal Khan, was also a police inspector in the police force, killed in a suicide attack in Swat in 2009. One of his cousins Mukhtiar was another victim of violence. Mukhtiar died in a terrorist strike in the market of Wana, the administrative headquarters of the embattled South Waziristan region.

“Despite all these losses, and currently facing extreme financial hardships my faith in the country, the craving for peace and determination to defeat terrorism remains unflinching,” Shah said in a passionate tone while talking to CRSS reporter Afzal Mohmand in 'Nomawary Pakhtuna' show.

Shah had joined police force to continue his father's mission forward. The loss of father and uncle never deterred him from his duty, he says, but the cost has paid for this is heavy i.e. physical disability.

“My family has always been determined to fight with terrorists and to defend our motherland till the last drop of blood in our body,” Shah said “Despite facing extreme financial hardships after the death of my father, my yearning to serve my motherland never got diminished,” Shah said in a determined and passionate voice.

“It is the result of such sacrifices that the people of Swat could be freed from the clutches of Taliban terrorists (in May 2009), Shah said but also questioned the tactics militants often use to cause death and destruction.

What is the use of killing innocent people in mosques, schools and at funerals, he asked.

(Report: Afzal Mohmand in program 'Nomawary Pakhtuna' 04.05.2012)

You too, Brutus!



Counter-insurgency brings with it its own unintended consequences i.e. collateral damage.

What happened to Zubair Khan is a brute reminder of this collateral damage that results from what many critics call Pakistan army's reckless counter-insurgent operations which have deeply hurt innocent civilians too. A missile fired off a military jet reduced Zubair Khan's modest house to rubble, and killed many family members, including his father.

“On that fateful day, a military jet appeared in the sky from nowhere with a thundering noise. We were sitting in an open area of our house and saw the jet taking a few rounds over our village. Some of us grew suspicious that it may be looking for a target in our area,” Khan recalled while talking to CRSS reporter Afzal Mohmand. Some of us tried to scramble for safety and were about to run off when my father told us to take it easy, their suspicion may be misplaced.

“My father had hardly finished his words when the jet fired a missile which hit our home within seconds, killing the father on the spot and injuring many others,” Zubair recalled. It was like a hell broken loose on us, he said.

“I received head injuries, beside losing two teeth, a broken right hand, and a fractured left,” said Zubair, who is now a pauper, dependent on hand-outs from others in a State where support for conflict victims is not part of

the mainstream discourse. Poor post-trauma medical assistance to victims represents an additional issue that aggrieved families have to live with.

The unfortunate Zubair and his 18 year old elder brother now have to take care of their four younger brothers and one sister – all a huge burden for these poor young men, partially also dependent on Zubair's uncle who is a cobbler by profession. “He does whatever he can to look after us but he himself is a poor man with a lot of liabilities on his shoulder.”

What is our fault, why the army did had to hit innocent people it is supposed to defend and protect, he asked.

Report by Afzal Mohmand in 'Da Aman Awaz', aired on March 19, 2013)



Gul Bibi's story resounds the pang and agony of internal displacement - yet another curse born off conflict and threat of violence.

Early in 2013, CRSS reporter Inamullah came across Gul Bibi on the road from Kohat, a southern district, to Peshawar. The entire family was fleeing intermittent violence and raids by Taliban militants in the home town of Parachinar, Kurram agency that borders the embattled Waziristan region.

"We are totally at the mercy of God. We have lost whatever little assets we had, and I can already feel endless miseries lie ahead," Gul Bibi told reporter Inamullah.

Led by her *25 years old son Wadam Khel, the entire family comprising ten, which also included nieces and nephews, walked for almost nine* hours before they could get hold of a cramped bus in the Mishtai area. They had to cough up thrice the usual fare just because no other transportation means were available.

Hundreds of families have already left Maidan, he said. It was raining when we left home in the darkness of the night, pretty rough time, particularly for children, Wadam Khel recalled, resonating stories of tens of

thousands of families, forced out of homes by the perennial state of conflict and insecurity particularly since May 2009, when a military crackdown on Taliban militants in Swat displaced almost two million innocent citizens, throwing them out in shabby tent settlements in the scorching plains of Mardan, Peshawar and smaller towns. Similar military action against terrorists in FATA regions forced over two million locals to leave homes. Today, over a million inhabitants of the militancy and terror-hit northwestern regions, live in other areas as internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The IDP crisis in fact represents a travesty of history indeed; Pakistan once hosted more than 3.5 million Afghan refugees – driven out by the Soviet-Russian occupation followed by various phases of civil war among various factions. It still hosts 1.7 Afghans (according to UNHCR estimates) with another 1.5 million Afghans almost permanently settled in various parts of Pakistan.

CRSS radio team has been covering the internal forced migration from these regions, primarily because of the surreptitious movements of militants, clashes with security forces and targeted attacks on persons and groups these militants abhor. These IDPs from Waziristan, Khyber, Bajaur and Kurram are often forced to camp around bigger towns such as Peshawar, Mardan or Dera Ismail Khan, many have been out there since mid 2009, when the militants intensified their terror campaign and the military responded with big operations across Swat and South Waziristan.

(Report: Inamullah, Program Koraorozgar, 2.03.2013)

Lost To IED But Not Defeated



Hashmat Ali, a resident of Lower Dir, (Maidan Lal Kalah) used to chase football and at times outrun rivals. He had a burning ambition of studying medicine and serving humanity as a doctor. Today, Ali can only watch others chase the ball. An improvised explosive device (IED) brought an abrupt end to his sports.

“I don't know who is responsible for my disability but I appeal to the

people involved in making (improvised explosive devices) to please stop this violence now!! Look at me, my life has been ruined without any sin of mine,” Ali, 14, told CRSS reporter Afzal Mohmand.

Ali 's present ordeal began with what he had taken to be a toy. One day, on way back from school, he spotted a toy and picked it up.

“I was unaware of the real nature of the device, and after offering the evening prayers, I began playing with it and it went off with a big bang. When I returned to sense I found out that I had lost both of my arms,” said Ali while recalling the horrific experience when the toy – in fact an improvised explosive device- IED) blew up.

It took Ali a while to compromise with the reality of having lost his arms. The shock is too strong to get over even today.

“I used to play football when I was healthy but now I can only watch my friends like a spectator play foot ball in the ground. I cannot play the game, because I cannot keep balance of my body during the game,” a visibly depressed Ali exclaimed with grief and pain discernible in his voice.

But, to the surprise of his family, Ali remains determined to become a medical doctor. Currently, he is a Grade 10 student, with keen interest for science subjects.

“I want to be a doctor and would serve the people particularly those who are handicapped like me,” Ali said in a determined voice, saying he would not allow his physical disability come in the way of becoming a doctor..

Ali's tragedy reflects another bitter reality of conflict zones, where IEDs are often the most frequently deployed weapons in insurgencies, more so against security forces. The death of Major General Sanaullah Khan Niazi,

along with two officers in Upper Dir (Swat) region, in September 2013 also was the result of a remote-controlled IED.

But as Ali's case testifies, IEDs take lives indiscriminately, thus killing and maiming non-combatant civilians, too.

Ali, however, also stands out as a symbol of courage and resolve, reflected in his radio message;

I would appeal and urge all those with physical disabilities not to lose courage and acquire knowledge. This is the only way to survive and defeat inhuman terrorists. (Report: Afzal Mohmand: Program 'Nomawaryy Pakhtuna', aired on 13.4.2012)

Orphaned but Fighting



Reshma, aged nine, sells bread at a local market of Mohmand Agency. A suicide bombing at a busy village centre in Ghalanai, in summer 2010 killed many. Among the victims was Ghufraan Khan, father of five.

The tragedy brought an abrupt end to Reshma's school, and forced her into selling the bread to support the big family of ten, i.e. mother, three brothers and five sisters.

“I am eager for education but our current circumstances do not allow me go back to school. I must work as much as my mother does to feed our family,” Reshma told CRSS reporter Aftab Mohmand.

Reshma's story represents a double tragedy: only weeks before her father's death in the suicide bombing, her elder brother, a bus driver, was mistakenly shot dead by a member of the Aman (Peace) Committee Baizo, Mohmand Agency. Now, her ailing mother bakes the bread which Reshma takes out to sell at the market.

Their story, life, too underscores the resilience and the courage that they need to survive.

“Once the family elder fell to the act of terror, I began preparing a special kind of bread containing flour, oil, porridge, backing powder and sodium etc. It is sold for rupees 20. The younger daughters collect trash and waste and sell it to the junk shop,” explained the mother in the CRSS interview, without giving her name. She said collectively, they have managed to survive, though not really enough to properly feed and clothe all family members (In extremely conservative Pashtoon tribes, women do not like their names to be known to strangers).

The mother of nine remembers her husband Ghufraan. “They (children) miss their father too much. He would bring clothes, toys, toffees, shoes and food items, etc. for children, but now these are tales of the past; the life is not like it was when he was alive,” said the lady with a deep tinge of nostalgia. She is suffering from stomach ulcers and doctors have advised some sort of balanced diet. “But how is it possible for me with these meager resources. I can not afford bare minimum medicine for myself, what to speak of proper diet,” she asked. *But she swiftly moved to point out that she is not alone in this suffering.*

“I am not the only victim, there are many other families, experiencing similar fate – people whose parents and relatives have been killed in violent incidents. You can see the consequences of headless terrorism all over.”

(Report: Aftab Mohmand, Programme Kor ao Rozgar, 28-02-2013)