

## **‘Police strength too low to control vast urban territory’**

### HASAN MANSOOR

KARACHI: A senior police official, who heads a premier local investigation organisation in the province, said on Wednesday that the strength of the police in the city was too low, ‘almost non-existent’, to control a vast urban territory, commandeered by mafias, gangs and killers.

“We are almost non-existent in Karachi. Our strength is too little to match the minimum satisfactory standards,” said Zafar Abbas Bukhari, deputy inspector general of the crime investigation department of the Sindh police.

He was speaking at a seminar organised by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) in collaboration with the German organisation for international cooperation (GIZ) at a hotel.

“In a city where mafias are rampant and lethal gangs are innumerable, the police force is highly insufficient,” he said while discussing the figures of a total of 34,000 police personnel in the city.

“Some 6,000 of the policemen are deputed on various duties and 28,000 policemen are available, of whom at a given time we can utilise 18,000 effectively in a city of more than 18 million people.”

He said Mumbai had a policeman for 250 citizens and close to those figures were maintained elsewhere, Karachi’s more than 1,000 people were guarded by just a single ill-equipped policeman with unquestionably least capacity.

He said it was time to boost the morale of the force with concrete steps, the foremost of which was to take care of their well-being, substantially increase their salaries, educate their children and enhance their capacity-building through modern gadgets, training and guarantees that their tenures were secured.

He referred to a study conducted during the Pervez Musharraf regime, which showed the tenure of a station house officer of Karachi’s police stations was close to three months; while the situation elsewhere in Sindh was worse, where heads of police stations were transferred even in less than a month.

He said the government was taking certain steps in the right direction to strengthen the capability of the force which included plans to recruit 200 inspectors for law and order and as many for investigation having qualification in criminology and law. He suggested recruitment of more qualified constables to make the force sensitised to certain social issues.

Senator Saeed Ghani of the Pakistan Peoples Party brushed aside an allegation hurled by a business community leader earlier, accusing the PPP of supporting and sheltering the gangs in Lyari. “As a matter of fact, we are the party which is a loser because of the situation in Lyari. We are being eradicated there and our workers cannot freely work there,” he said. “The PPP has no militant wing at all. We are the party with zero tolerance for extortionists.”

He said there were 18,000 paramilitary Rangers in Sindh, who did not come under the provincial government. He said the Rangers were not working ‘the way they should be’. He proposed the repatriation of the Rangers’ hierarchy to Islamabad and the force’s amalgamation with the provincial police so that it could be controlled by the Sindh government.

“Give them any title, for example an elite force of our police, but they should come under the control of the provincial government,” he said.

He said despite all sorts of allegations against the police, the force was doing wonders with whatever limited resources it had.

“They are sacrificing their lives for us and playing as the first line of defence to guard us. They should be fully supported financially. Our actions should give them the confidence that their families were in good hands even after their death,” he said.

Khwaja Izharul Hasan, deputy parliamentary leader of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement in the Sindh assembly, said the police had to be an independent institution to maintain the rule of law in society who acknowledge no pressures from influential quarters. “Pakistani police are the best in the world if they are independent,” he said.

He said society lacked merit and encouraged corruption, which called for a system to evaluate performance through independently run entities.

Imtiaz Gul, director of the CRSS, said some 166 policemen were reportedly killed in Karachi last year and 350 in Peshawar.

He said the seminar was part of a concerted effort to package recommendations for evolving better relations between police and citizens.

Asif Chamdia of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry said the business community was immensely terrified with increasing violent acts and threatening calls it received from extortionists and gun-wielding gangsters.

Zafar Ahmad Farooqi, a retired police official, and lawyer Akhtar Hussain, said how controversial and flawed was the police order 2002 introduced by retired Gen Musharraf. It offered police safety commissions, which could have been a cornerstone for better policing in society.

Mr Farooqi said around 25 committees had been formed since 1999 for police reforms, whose efforts culminated into the 2002 police order, which too was reasonably flawed and later became controversial for being introduced by a military ruler. For him the good features of the order included empowering the inspector general and emphasising the significance of investigations. However, a ‘good’ dossier promised little tools to the policemen to get ample benefit from.

## **Karachi's problem — too many people, too few cops**

*Tehmina Qureshi*

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From Print Edition

### **Karachi**

For every 2,500 people in the city, there is only one highly-stressed policeman for their security.

That policeman, who is already worried about making ends meet within the bounds of his meagre salary, is also expected to put his life on the line for the public's security.

This was the general consensus among speakers at a public meeting organised by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) on Wednesday in collaboration with GIZ, a German organisation working worldwide in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development.

The purpose of the meeting, titled "Rule of Law — Perception and Reality", was to discuss police reforms to enable better security for the force and the people.

CID DIG Zafar Bukhari said the city's sanctioned police force comprised 34,000 officers of which 28,000 were present at any given time.

After subtracting 10,000 officials deployed on VIP security duties, only around 18,000 officers are left to look out for Karachi's population of over 20 million.

"During the previous government's time, the average tenure of an SHO in Sindh was 28 days, while in Punjab it was three months," he said.

"The policemen are awaiting transfers before they begin serving at one place and financially insecure. On top of that, they are expected to form the frontline in the fight against terror at all costs. Understandably all they would do is to please their bosses so that they get paid on time even if they can't do any good in their areas."

Giving recommendations for improving the performance of the police force, DIG Bukhari said the force needed to be professionally and socially trained and then compartmentalised for various specialities.

"There is also a need to secure the tenures of police officers. When they know they have to stay in one area, they would start working and showing results themselves," he said.

"A criterion has to be fixed for hiring a constable who in most cases has only passed matric. What you put in the system, is what you get out of the system."

Discussing the pros and cons of the 2002 Police Order introduced by former president Gen (retd) Pervez Musharraf, retired AIG Zafar Farooqui said though the order had become highly controversial due to the opposition from within police ranks and political parties, but it did have its advantages.

He said before 2002, around 24 committees had deliberated on the need for police reforms but nothing had come out of it.

“One disadvantage was that the 2002 Police Order merged urban and rural police which was impractical,” he said. “However, the good aspect of it was that investigation and policing were separated and made independent.”

Referring to politicisation of the police force, on which every speaker touched upon in one way or the other, the former AIG said though the 2002 order could have shown results, it was rendered impractical by “political amendments” incorporated in it later.

He said the total strength of the police force in Karachi needed to be at least 70,000, especially in the wake of the increase in criminal and terrorist activities. There are only 34,000 officers on paper which are insufficient to be effectively deployed in 112 police stations across the city.

Talking about the CRSS project, which began on January 8 this year, its director Imtiaz Gul said it was part of an effort for the capacity building of the police force, which formed the first line of defence in any unfortunate event.

He said collaboration involved providing them with professional, social and IT training, besides building their intellectual organisational capacity.

“In the rest of the world, the police are the first to respond and come in contact with the people in case of a disaster, but in Pakistan, the situation is the opposite due to the presence of paramilitary forces.”

Gul said it was important to take the input of police officials before passing any legislation regarding them. “They don’t operate in a vacuum,” said Gul. “They too are part of the society.”

Akhtar Hussain, the vice chairman of the Pakistan Bar Council, also spoke on the occasion. He said the police could not achieve results by themselves without political conviction by those in power.

He said the lack of political will reflected in every organisation of the country, be it the lawmaking bodies or the judiciary. He termed the current policing laws in Pakistan as colonial laws put in place to control the people. “What we actually need are parental laws so that people don’t fear approaching the law enforcement officers,” Hussain said.

He called for revisiting the 2002 Police Order and stressed the need for social training of police officers, along with professional capacity building.

Other speakers included Asif Chamdia, the chairman of law and order committee of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Muttahida Qaumi Movement deputy parliamentary leader Khawaja Izhar-ul-Hasan and Pakistan People’s Party’s Senator Saeed Ghani.



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