# **PART 7: SEMINARIES**

**NAP POINT 10:** Registration and regulation of religious seminaries.

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# **Part 7: Seminaries**

### 7.1 Introduction

The seventh theme looks at the controversial topic of seminaries or madrassas, as addressed by the tenth point in the National Action Plan (NAP). This point pertains to the registration and regulation of religious seminaries.

The goals of the government, as explained by the National Security Advisor (NSA) Lt. Gen. (retd.) Naseer Janjua Khan, involve: a) registration of seminaries b) updating the curriculum c) equivalence certificates, and d) to have wifaqs registered as examination boards.

The government has yet to finalize a process for collecting data on and registering seminaries. Regulation reform can only take place further down the line once the initial process is streamlined and Pakistani authorities have a better sense of the number and scope of seminaries operating in the country.

The findings of the Quetta Commission Enquiry Report<sup>3</sup> state that there are 26,465 seminaries in the country. However, only 11,852 seminaries are registered. Even if the government and Ittehad-e-Tanzeemat-e-Madaris Pakistan (ITMP<sup>4</sup> – the coalition of wifaqs) agreed to undertake madrassa reforms, the decision would have to be implemented both in letter and spirit. As will be discussed later in the chapter, the four provinces have completed the process of geo-tagging religious seminaries but that is far from what is actually required under NAP.

### 7.2 Seminaries in Pakistan

#### **7.2.1 Number of Seminaries**

NACTA's former National Coordinator's statement about Pakistan's inability to determine the exact number of seminaries has some merit. Since seminaries are religious institutions that work independently of government control, the exact number of seminaries that operate in Pakistan is unclear and this is one of the biggest obstacles as regards their regulation.

The estimated number of countrywide seminaries is more than 35,000.<sup>5</sup> After writing letters to the five wifags of seminaries, the Quetta Commission Enquiry Report found out that 26,465 were affiliated

with wifags. <sup>6</sup> The details of seminaries affiliated with each board are as follows:

Table 7.1 - Number of Registered Seminaries by Wifaq	
Wifaq	Seminaries
Wifaq-ul-Madaris Alshia Pakistan	470
Wifaq-ul-Madaris Al-Salfia	695
Rabita-ul-Madaris Al-Islamia Pakistan	1,500
Tanzeem-ul-Madaris Ahle Sunnat Pakistan	9,210
Wifaq-ul-Madaris Al-Arabia	14,950
Total	26,825

Graph 7.1 Number of Registered Seminaries by Wifaq<sup>5</sup>



The NAP Tracker, 2016 - The Center for Research and Security Studies, 2017

#### 7.2.2 Geo-tagging and Registration

As far as data about registered seminaries is concerned, the same commission sought information from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony. The Ministry informed the Commission that a total of 11,852 seminaries were registered barring data from the Wifaq-ul-Madaris-al-Arabia, which was still awaited. The implication is that there are around 14,613 seminaries that have yet to be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Iqbal, Nasir. (2016, December 18). Qazi Isa commission decries lack of reliable data about seminaries. Retrieved on December 28, 2016, from <a href="http://www.dawn.com/news/1303026">http://www.dawn.com/news/1303026</a>.

registered. Around 40% or 1,208 out of 3,028 seminaries in KP are registered. Punjab has geo-tagged 13,849 seminaries. Similarly, in Sindh there are 10,031 seminaries with 1,148 yet to be registered.

However, data provided by the NSA, presents a different story. According to the NSA, the number of seminaries in Sindh is 10,033. Of those seminaries, 2,309 have been closed and 7,724 have coordinated with ITMP for regulation. Overall, Sindh has fared relatively well. To register existing and newly established madaris, the Sindh government drafted a law titled the "Sindh Deeni Madaris Act 2016" and sent it to the law ministry for the approval of the provincial assembly in May but the provincial government could not pass the bill on account of opposition from several religious groups. In December, a report of the Sindh Home Ministry claimed that the government had sealed 2,309 seminaries that were either unregistered or being run 'illegally', and geo-tagged all the remaining madrassas. 11

In Punjab, though the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) completed the geo-tagging the details of this have not been made public so far. <sup>12</sup> Punjab has not only geo-tagged 13,788 seminaries but has also tagged 62,676 mosques and 3,925 minorities' places of worship. <sup>1</sup>

KP (excluding FATA) has 3,306 seminaries which have been monitored under the following three categories: a) 76 b) 196 c) 3,034. Seminaries under the first two categories are being monitored. The KP government also carried out the process of registration for religious seminaries. According to the Auqaf Department Peshawar, there are 3,028 seminaries and only 1,208 of them are registered. In a highly controversial move, the KP government allocated Rs. 300 million for the Darul-Uloom Haqqania. Some of the students of this seminary have been accused of being involved in the murder of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. The decision of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was criticized by some political parties including the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Awami National Party (ANP). In response, Imran Khan, chairman PTI, defended his government's decision by saying that the financial assistance will help assimilate the students of the seminary with the mainstream and keep them away from radicalization. This argument can be considered untenable on two counts. Firstly, it stands at a striking variance from the national agenda of NAP and secondly PTI's justification for funding is not

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Iqbal, Nasir. (2016, December 18). Qazi Isa commission decries lack of reliable data about seminaries. Retrieved on December 28, 2016, from <a href="http://www.dawn.com/news/1303026">http://www.dawn.com/news/1303026</a>>.

from < http://tribune.com.pk/story/1176154/geotagging-7724-madrassas-completed-sindh/>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Ali, Usman. (2016, February 15). 56 geo-tagged seminaries suspected of terrorist links. Retrieved on December 28, 2016, from <a href="http://tribune.com.pk/story/1047029/national-action-plan-56-geo-tagged-seminaries-suspected-of-terrorist-links/">http://tribune.com.pk/story/1047029/national-action-plan-56-geo-tagged-seminaries-suspected-of-terrorist-links/</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Sarki, Mushtaq. (2016, September 5). Geotagging of 7,724 madrassas in Sindh completed. Retrieved on December 28, 2016, from <a href="http://tribune.com.pk/story/1176154/geotagging-7724-madrassas-completed-sindh/">http://tribune.com.pk/story/1176154/geotagging-7724-madrassas-completed-sindh/</a>>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Perwaiz, Salis bin. (2016, May 15). Draft of proposed law submitted to lawn department. Retrieved on December 29, 2016, from <a href="https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/119997-Draft-of-proposed-law-to-regulate-madrasas-submitted-to-law-dept">https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/119997-Draft-of-proposed-law-to-regulate-madrasas-submitted-to-law-dept</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Mansoor, Hasan. (2016, December 24). Over 23 pc seminaries in Sindh found to be illegal. Retrieved on December 29, 2016, from <a href="https://www.dawn.com/news/1304103/over-23pc-seminaries-in-sindh-found-to-be-illegal">https://www.dawn.com/news/1304103/over-23pc-seminaries-in-sindh-found-to-be-illegal</a>.

 $<sup>^{\</sup>mbox{\tiny 12}}$  Asghar, M. (2016). Geo-tagging of seminaries in Punjab. Retrieved January 03, 2017, from

<sup>&</sup>lt;a href="http://www.dawn.com/news/1288563">http://www.dawn.com/news/1288563>.</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Shahid, Shamim. (2016, June 29). 40% of 3,028 seminaries in KP registered. Retrieved on December 28, 2016, from <a href="http://tribune.com.pk/story/1132622/40-3028-seminaries-k-p-registered/">http://tribune.com.pk/story/1132622/40-3028-seminaries-k-p-registered/</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Kheshgi, Khalid. (2016, June 17). Rs300m allocated for madrassa in KP budget, assembly told. Retrieved December 30, 2016, from <a href="fromto://www.thenews.com.pk/print/128443-Rs300m-allocated-for-madrassa-in-KP-budget-assembly-told">fromto://www.thenews.com.pk/print/128443-Rs300m-allocated-for-madrassa-in-KP-budget-assembly-told</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Bhatti, H. (2015). Darul Uloom Haqqania students involved in killing of Benazir. Retrieved December 30, 2016, from <a href="http://www.dawn.com/news/1166084">http://www.dawn.com/news/1166084</a>>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Dawn.com. (2016). Imran defends KP govt's Rs300m grant for Darul Uloom Haqqania. Retrieved December 30, 2016, from <a href="http://www.dawn.com/news/1266524">http://www.dawn.com/news/1266524</a>>.

backed by any specific plan of how this money is going to lead towards the achievement of that goal.

In Balochistan, there are 3,290 seminaries (3,264 from the Sunni sect and 26 from the Shia sect) of which 518 are unregistered. These seminaries are primarily funded by donations also known as sadqa, zakat and khairaat. There are 3,910 foreign students and 160,000 local students in these seminaries. The Balochistan government has cancelled the visas of 3,552 foreign students and set up a District Coordinating Committee (DCC). Seminaries hold meetings at the DCC level for the purposes of monitoring and regulation. The process of mapping and surveying the seminaries has been on-going. Balochistan has also completed the process of geo-tagging.<sup>17</sup>

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has formulated a comprehensive legal framework and set up an exclusive department to register and monitor seminaries. It completed the mapping of seminaries but the total number of seminaries is not available. Obtaining a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for opening new seminaries has been made mandatory.<sup>1</sup>

Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) also completed the geo-tagging of seminaries. The Charity Bill has been sent to the GB cabinet for enactment. All 145 seminaries have been registered in. 1

According to the NSA, the geo-tagging of madrassas in all four provinces has been completed and 90% of the seminaries have agreed to register.

As may be evident, this is a monumental task, and with new seminaries being opened every day, as well as non-uniform, inconsistent action against seminaries, it remains one of the toughest tasks in the National Action Plan.<sup>1</sup>

Codifying the mechanism for the registration and documentation of seminaries is a necessary first step, before any regulation and reform can occur. It is also important to understand why 3.5 million children in Pakistan attend seminaries, and the history of seminary reform.

#### **7.2.3 Government Progress**

NACTA has been working on the task of streamlining seminaries but no major headway has been made thus far. In June 2015, the former National Coordinator of NACTA Hamid Ali Khan declared that the government had failed to determine the exact number of religious seminaries in the country. <sup>18</sup> This has since changed, as nearly all seminaries have been geo-tagged across Pakistan.

The Ministry of Interior and Narcotics Control presented a report in the National Assembly in January, 2016. According to that report a uniform registration and data form had been developed and finalized jointly by NACTA and the ITMP. Under the proposed form, the seminaries would provide the government with data including the number of enrolled students, faculties, bank account details and other vital information. This form was dispatched to the relevant provincial and federal security institutions, to canvass their opinion. With provincial approval having been obtained it now awaits the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Mansoor, Hasan. (2016, December 24). Over 23 pc seminaries in Sindh found to be illegal. Retrieved on January 3, 2017, from <a href="https://www.dawn.com/news/1304103/over-23pc-seminaries-in-sindh-found-to-be-illegal">https://www.dawn.com/news/1304103/over-23pc-seminaries-in-sindh-found-to-be-illegal</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Khan, A. (2015, June 02). Fresh revelations: Anti-terror plan fails to achieve goals - The Express Tribune. Retrieved March 23, 2016, from <a href="http://tribune.com.pk/story/895997/fresh-revelations-anti-terror-plan-fails-to-achieve-goals/">http://tribune.com.pk/story/895997/fresh-revelations-anti-terror-plan-fails-to-achieve-goals/</a>.

approval of the Prime Minister.20

In an exclusive interview with CRSS, the NSA noted that after the 18th amendment, the onus of implementing seminary registration and lies primarily with the provincial governments and that under this amendment considerable power had been delegated from the center to the provinces.<sup>1</sup>

In order to oversee and improve the educational systems in seminaries, an Islamic Education Commission was set up by the Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony in August, 2015. <sup>21</sup>To ensure that the NAP was correctly executed, the government also conducted a meeting with the leaders of religious madrassas of different sects in September, 2015. The highlights of the meeting were:

- The Prime Minister requested officials to support the registration and regulation of seminaries.
- A consensus was reached amongst the government and clergy over seminary reform.
- The Interior Minister pledged that the government would formulate a strategy to deal with funding coming in from overseas.
- The presence of the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) in the meeting was noted and appreciated.
- Religious scholars criticized the government for its scrutiny of madrassas and declared that there was no difference between madrassas and formal educational institutes.

The government and delegates of the seminaries mutually decided that the seminaries would maintain their financial dealings via banks. The seminaries agreed to include modern O/A level subjects in their syllabus. A committee was established under the control of the Interior Minister comprising of education ministries from the federal and provincial level and the ITMP.<sup>23</sup>

In July 2016, a deal was struck between the government and ITMP regarding the registration of seminaries and curriculum reforms. <sup>24</sup> Though it was mutually decided by the Interior Minister Chaudry Nisar Ali Khan and ITMP that two separate committees (one for registration and other for curriculum reform) would be formed for this purpose, no progress could be made on that understanding. In order to oversee the financial transactions of seminaries, the government of Punjab decided to pass an ordinance. A draft of the Proposed Charities Act 2015 was set up, which requires all transactions to be conducted through a bank. <sup>25</sup>

According to a NACTA official, around Rs. 101 million of suspicious funds belonging to 177 seminaries were frozen in over three dozen banks. <sup>26</sup> The government is said to have closed 254 unregistered and suspicious madrassas in the country. <sup>27</sup> Of those seminaries, 239 were in Sindh, 13 in KP and 2 in Punjab.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Tanoli, Qadeer. (2016, March 14). Madrasa data form drafted. Retrieved on December 29, 2016, from

<sup>&</sup>lt;a href="http://tribune.com.pk/story/1065236/security-issues-madrassas-data-forms-drafted/">http://tribune.com.pk/story/1065236/security-issues-madrassas-data-forms-drafted/</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Tanoli, Qadeer. (2016, September 2). Provinces give go-ahead: Pro forma for seminaries finalised. Retrieved on December 29, 2016, from <a href="http://tribune.com.pk/story/1174582/provinces-give-go-ahead-pro-forma-seminaries-finalised/">http://tribune.com.pk/story/1174582/provinces-give-go-ahead-pro-forma-seminaries-finalised/</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Ali, K. (2015, August 13). Education commission proposed to reform seminaries. Retrieved March 23, 2016, from <a href="http://www.dawn.com/news/1200180">http://www.dawn.com/news/1200180</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Abrar, M. (2015, September 08). With army chief on table, PM brings clergy on board. Retrieved March 23, 2016, from <a href="http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/09/08/national/with-army-chief-on-table-pm-brings-clergy-on-board/">http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/09/08/national/with-army-chief-on-table-pm-brings-clergy-on-board/</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Mukhtar, I. (2015, September 08). Madrassas agree on funds through banks. Retrieved March 23, 2016, from

<sup>&</sup>lt;a href="http://nation.com.pk/editors-picks/08-Sep-2015/madrasas-agree-on-funds-thru-banks">http://nation.com.pk/editors-picks/08-Sep-2015/madrasas-agree-on-funds-thru-banks>...</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Aalam, Iftikhar. (2016, July 14). Accord on Madrassa reforms struck. Retrieved on December 28, 2016, from <a href="http://nation.com.pk/national/14-Jul-2016/accord-on-madrassa-reforms-struck">http://nation.com.pk/national/14-Jul-2016/accord-on-madrassa-reforms-struck</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> The News. (2015, September 18). Punjab to bring law for regulating funding of seminaries, NGOs. Retrieved March 23, 2016, from <a href="http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-39733-Punjab-to-bring-law-for-regulating-funding-of-seminaries-NGOs">http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-39733-Punjab-to-bring-law-for-regulating-funding-of-seminaries-NGOs>.

All this shows that government has been far from successful in implementing reforms in the madrassa sector. The efforts to streamline seminaries are not well-coordinated and seem to be more adhoc in nature.

## 7.3 Understanding Seminaries

#### 7.3.1 Schools of Thought

As mentioned in Table 7.1 above, there are five schools of thoughts that have formed loose coalitions of seminaries. Each of these offers a school of thought that varies along a few key parameters. However, data suggests that those attend seminaries in Pakistan primarily do so for economic reasons, not religious ones.<sup>26</sup>

#### 7.3.2 A Brief History

Initially, madrassas were centers of education, both religious and secular. They earned the title of "trust institutions" over time, as they provided social services to poor families, such as food, shelter, clothing and free education. Part of the reason for the rise in seminary education and housing was the state's failure to address the basic needs of the population. Parents, who made less than two dollars per day, started seeing madrassas as a beacon of hope, a way to help the family survive, where their children could learn to read and write, be clothed and fed, and have a roof over their heads.

This is the central argument upon which rests the severe backlash from the religious right, whenever the state of Pakistan attempts to regulate seminaries. This harsh reality has allowed the scope and scale of madrassas to grow and morph over time.

Over the course of time, funding became an issue as madrassas expanded. Religious seminaries have enjoyed overt financial backing from various Muslim states. A Wiki Leaks cable suggests that an estimated \$100 million makes its way annually from the Gulf States to seminaries in Pakistan. Ostensibly, this is to support continued religious education and social services. But analysts have long suspected that some part of these finances make their way to funding militancy.

#### 7.3.3 Militant Connection?

The idea that madrassas are "incubators of violent extremism" took hold after 9/11, and the US pressured General Pervaiz Musharraf to take some action over the schools. While numerous reports, including the Annual Status of Education Report Pakistan, claim that there is no connection between

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Gishkori, Zahid. (2016, September 26). Accounts of over 8,400 terror-financing suspects being frozen. Retrieved n December 29, 2016, from <a href="https://www.geo.tv/latest/115831-Accounts-of-over-8400-terror-financing-suspects-being-frozen">https://www.geo.tv/latest/115831-Accounts-of-over-8400-terror-financing-suspects-being-frozen</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Haq, Riazul. (2016, February 25). Over 250 madrassas shut down countrywide. Retrieved January 02, 2017, from <a href="http://tribune.com.pk/story/1053991/national-action-plan-over-250-madrassas-shut-down-countrywide">http://tribune.com.pk/story/1053991/national-action-plan-over-250-madrassas-shut-down-countrywide</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Shabir, G., Abbasi, S. M., & Khan, A. (2012). Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences, 32(1), 2012th ser., 147-156. Retrieved March 23, 2016, from <a href="https://www.bzu.edu.pk/PJSS/Vol32No12012/Fi-nal\_PJSS-32-1-11.pdf">https://www.bzu.edu.pk/PJSS/Vol32No12012/Fi-nal\_PJSS-32-1-11.pdf</a>.

seminaries and militancy, several facts work against this notion. The most overt and public display of the strength of madrassas was the Red Mosque standoff in 2007, where armed students engaged in a hostile and bloody standoff with state authorities for several days. Further, both the NAP and the NISP call for the registration, regulation and reform of madrassas, a tacit acceptance that a problem exists.

Further, a Brookings Institute research report in 2010 claimed that 82% of students in Deobandi seminaries see the Taliban as role models. Another Brookings Institute report claims that the real problem lies in a handful of hardline seminaries.<sup>29</sup> Finally, the government has disclosed that nearly 80 working seminaries in Pakistan are receiving foreign monetary aid of up to three hundred million rupees.<sup>30</sup>

## 7.4 History of Seminary Reforms

Previously, many madrassas were registered under the Societies Act 1860. Later in 1994, the registration of madrassa was prohibited in the regime of Benazir Bhutto. The "Model Deeni Madrassa Ordinance" was issued following the Musharraf regime in 2001, post 9/11, but it was rejected by the overarching body for the five schools of thoughts. The "Madrassa Regulatory Ordinance" was issued by the government next, and a ban on madrassa registration was ultimately raised under the notification No#40/30/99/P11-20.11

All things considered, this is not the first time Pakistan has attempted to register seminaries, and the backlash is nothing new.

# 7.5 Funding / Financing of Seminaries

A handful of Pakistan's madrassas have been exploited by internal and external actors for their own regional, religious or regulatory interests.

To review the implementation of the NAP, a meeting was organized in January, 2015. The principle discussion was the scrutiny of foreign funding for religious seminaries explicitly coming from Middle Eastern countries.<sup>31</sup> It has emerged that Muslim countries had been providing financial support to nearly 234 madrassas in the province of Balochistan alone until February, 2015.<sup>32</sup> In March, 147 seminaries of Punjab were reported to have accepted foreign financial funding.<sup>33</sup>

Up until December, 2015, only 23 religious seminaries were reported as receiving foreign funding in the provinces of KP, Sindh and Balochistan. The province of Punjab was excluded upon the denial of Inspector General of Punjab Police (IGP).<sup>34</sup>

Winthrop, R., & Graff, C. (2010, June). Beyond Madrasas: Assessing The Links Between Education And Militancy In Pakistan. Retrieved February 23, 2016, from <a href="https://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2010/6/pakistan-education-winthrop/06\_pakistan\_education\_winthrop.pdf">https://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2010/6/pakistan-education-winthrop.pdf</a>.

Ghiskori, Z. (2015, January 29). Year 2013-14: 80 seminaries received Rs300m in foreign aid - The Express Tribune. Retrieved February 23, 2016, from <a href="http://tribune.com.pk/story/829407/year-2013-14-80-seminaries-received-rs300m-in-foreign-aid/">http://tribune.com.pk/story/829407/year-2013-14-80-seminaries-received-rs300m-in-foreign-aid/</a>.
Ghumman, K. (2015, January 14). Govt ponders over issue of madressah financing. Retrieved March 23, 2016, from <a href="http://www.dawn.com/news/1156907">http://www.dawn.com/news/1156907</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Ghiskori, Z. (2015, February 20). 234 madrassas in Balochistan receive foreign cash: Official - The Express Tribune. Retrieved March 23, 2016, from <a href="http://tribune.com.pk/story/841298/counter-ing-extremism-in-balochistan-234-madrassas-receive-foreign-cash-official/">http://tribune.com.pk/story/841298/counter-ing-extremism-in-balochistan-234-madrassas-receive-foreign-cash-official/</a>.

The financing system of madrassas added to the troublesomeness of proposed reforms. The country has a large shadow economy, and the madrassas are just a part of it. They function through cash couriers and charity seeking initiatives, rather than making transactions through banks. The Financial Monitoring Unit (FMU) is an entity authorized with scrutinizing possible cases of money laundering and terror financing.

Please see Section 3.3.8 Terror Financing – Steps.

#### 7.6 Obstacles

The International Crisis Group (ICG) presented a report in this respect called Un-fulfilled Promises. The report indicated that the intolerance and religious prejudice in Pakistan is a result of the government's reluctance to act against the wishes of its political associates among religious groups.<sup>35</sup>

This politicization and political affiliation of seminaries is another reason why the state is often compelled to delay or suspend attempts at reform.

It may also be difficult to tackle the matter seriously when prominent politicians from the most populated province, housing the largest number of unregulated and unregistered seminaries, wholeheartedly believe that there is absolutely no connection between seminaries and militancy,<sup>36</sup> especially when it is revealed that the bomber responsible for the carnage in Gulshan-e-Iqbal Park in Lahore in late March, had been a seminary teacher for eight years.<sup>37</sup>

In March 2015, former Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), Chairman Dr. Khalid Masud found mistrust among religious seminaries and the government as the foremost obstacle to seminary reform.<sup>38</sup>

#### 7.7 Conclusion

There has been some moderate progress on seminaries, specifically regarding their geo-tagging. The government is taking its time to bring every stakeholder on board, and in the long-term that is the correct strategy.

However pressure from the religious right and internal finger-pointing all serve to delay and derail the process. Additionally, seemingly haphazard and inconsistent implementation of the NAP points (financing, regulation, curriculums, and hate speech) as they pertain to seminaries also creates

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Haider, I. (2015, March 04). IGP report reveals 147 foreign-funded seminaries in Punjab. Re-trieved February 16, 2016, from <a href="http://www.dawn.com/news/1167339">http://www.dawn.com/news/1167339</a>>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Bhatti, M. W. (2015, December 09). Rangers have to seek Sindh CM's nod before political arrests. Retrieved March 23, 2016, from <a href="http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/80719-Rangers-have-to-seek-Sindh-CMs-nod-before-political-arrests">http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/80719-Rangers-have-to-seek-Sindh-CMs-nod-before-political-arrests</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> ICG. (2004, January 16). Unfulfilled Promises: Pakistan's Failure to Tackle Extremism. Retrieved February 23, 2016, from <a href="http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/pakistan/073-un-fulfilled-promises-pakistans-failure-to-tackle-extremism.aspx">http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/pakistan/073-un-fulfilled-promises-pakistans-failure-to-tackle-extremism.aspx</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> APP. (2015, April 25). No militancy in Punjab seminaries: RanaSanaullah. Retrieved March 23, 2016, from <a href="http://www.dawn.com/news/1202771">http://www.dawn.com/news/1202771</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> News Desk. (2016, March 28). Police arrests three brothers of Lahore suicide bomber. Pakistan Today. Retrieved March 26, 2017, from <a href="http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2016/03/28/police-arrests-three-brothers-of-lahore-suicide-bomber/">http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2016/03/28/police-arrests-three-brothers-of-lahore-suicide-bomber/</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> News Desk. (2015, March 24). Mainstreaming madrassas: Call for registration of seminaries with education departments - The Express Tribune. Retrieved March 23, 2016, from <a href="http://tribune.com">http://tribune.com</a>. pk/story/858401/mainstreaming-madrassas-call-for-registration-of-seminaries-with-education-de-partments/>.

loopholes in the system. Pakistan has still not begun the process of inclusion of sciences, English and other subjects in the seminary curriculum.

All things considered, the registration, regulation and reform of madrassas is a direct result of state ineptitude when it comes to free public education. This inability of the Pakistani government to provide free education, access to basic social services, and employment opportunities upon graduation will continue to plague Pakistan, leading to the proliferation of parallel education systems.

## 7.8 Excerpt from Interview with NSA, Lt. Gen. (retd.) Naseer Khan Janjua 39

Zeeshan Salahuddin (ZS): How about seminary reform: is that another sensitive area?

Lt. Gen. (retd.) Naseer Khan Janjua (NSA): Madrasas fill a gap, particularly for poor people and their children from certain quarters in Pakistan, and I am cognizant of the good work they do. Students of madrasas are the children of Pakistan, and as such they are equal and important as anyone else. This is certainly a sensitive area, but I think the onus is on the state to provide equal opportunity and treatment, particularly to those considered unequal. The state should, and will, provide certain measures and incentives to madrasas and their students to embrace them in the mainstream of the overall education system of the country. If we can afford them all existing opportunities equally, we can absorb these sons and daughters of Pakistan as the strength of the nation. After due diligence and rigorous deliberations with relevant ministries, particularly with the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Religious Affairs, and other institutions, my office is preparing a package of incentives for the mainstreaming of madrasas. The final decision will be taken after the necessary consensus is evolved through collective wisdom of wafaqs [an umbrella body for all seminaries from a particular school of thought], scholars, ulemas (clerics), mashaikhs, and national level leadership. On this front, we will soon give you some very good news.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Salahuddin, Z. (2017, Apr 07). Pakistan's National Security Adviser on Counterterrorism. Retrieved April 12, 2017, from <a href="http://thediplomat.com/2017/04/pakistans-national-security-adviser-on-counterterrorism/">http://thediplomat.com/2017/04/pakistans-national-security-adviser-on-counterterrorism/</a>.