

# The New Baloch Militancy: Drivers and Dynamics

India Quarterly  
77(3) 479–500, 2021  
© 2021 Indian Council  
of World Affairs (ICWA)  
Reprints and permissions:  
[in.sagepub.com/journals-permissions-india](http://in.sagepub.com/journals-permissions-india)  
DOI: 10.1177/09749284211027253  
[journals.sagepub.com/home/iqq](http://journals.sagepub.com/home/iqq)



**Shakoor Ahmad Wani**

## Abstract

Since the early 2000, Balochistan is yet again embroiled in a cobweb of violence after a hiatus of more than two decades. The Baloch nationalist militancy began to reinvigorate after the seizure of power by General Pervez Musharraf in 1999. Musharraf marginalised the moderate Baloch nationalists and repressed dissident voices. The differences over power and resource sharing escalated quickly into a full-blown armed struggle once Musharraf used indiscriminate force to subdue opposition against his regime. This article examines the proximate and long-term structural factors that led to the resurgence of armed militancy at the turn of the twenty-first century. It analyses the new drivers and dynamics of the present conflict that make it more virulent and lend it a distinctive character.

## Keywords

Insurgency, CPEC, deprivation, Gwadar Port, separatism, demography

A decade-long tryst with democracy in Pakistan came to an abrupt halt in 1999 after General Pervez Musharraf overthrew the civilian government in a military coup. Musharraf's assumption of power coincided with the revival of militant nationalist politics in the province of Balochistan. Baloch nationalists had waged several armed rebellions against Islamabad since Kalat was incorporated in the state of Pakistan in 1948.<sup>1</sup> The most protracted and violent insurgency erupted in 1973 following the dismissal by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of the province's first popularly elected government led by Sardar Ataullah Mengal. The confrontation between government forces and armed rebels lasted for four years and ended with the overthrow of Bhutto by General Zia-ul-Haq in 1977. From this period onwards, the Baloch national movement underwent a steady decline until Pakistan relapsed into direct military authoritarianism in 1999.

---

## Corresponding author:

Shakoor Ahmad.

E-mail: [Shakoor.ahmad@live.in](mailto:Shakoor.ahmad@live.in)