



**Interactive Dialogue Series**

# **Governance Failure and Violent Extremism**

**Position Paper No.3**

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**SOCIAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE**

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## **Interactive Dialogue Series**

**Position Paper No. 3**

# **Governance Failure and Violent Extremism**

The views expressed in this paper are primarily based on discussion held in the Interactive Dialogue conducted by Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC) and cannot be attributed to SPDC.

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# Introduction

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Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC) is undertaking a series of informed and interactive dialogues, on various topics covering a range of the drivers of violent extremism (VE) in Pakistan. The aim of the project is to increase understanding of violent extremism related issues among government representatives and different stakeholders, besides increasing the capacity of civil society to organize and advocate for countering violent extremism (CVE).

One strategy for doing so is bridging the gap between practitioners who grapple with its ubiquitous manifestations, and analysts who theorize societal trends without necessarily interacting with those engaged in VE. Such interactions provide the otherwise infrequent opportunity for civil society stakeholders to network and develop linkages, which necessarily precede developing a shared understanding and consensus on related issues.

The project involves holding four interactive dialogues and develop position papers on the following topics:

1. Nexus between intolerance and violent extremism
2. Unemployment, youth and violent extremism
3. Institutional/governance failure and violent extremism
4. Linkage between corruption, elite impunity and violent extremism

Each of the four dialogues will lead to a follow-up meeting with relevant stakeholders and dissemination of key findings by publishing position papers on all four identified topics. The project culminates with the convening of a provincial level conference where policy recommendations for CVE will be presented.

SPDC previously hosted two interactive dialogues. The first dialogue focused on the nexus between violent extremism and intolerance and it was asserted that violent extremism cannot be addressed within narrow security and law and order frameworks without looking at the wider societal and political structures that generate and embed violence. Examining both, state and non-state actors to be vectors of different kinds of intolerance, it was suggested that promoting plural viewpoints, teaching constitutionalism and developing an interactive public culture were the strategic ways forward, for which student unions, institutes of higher education and media were the best modes of outreach.

The second interactive dialogue examined the difficulty of establishing causality between unemployment, youth and violent extremism, given conflicting evidence. It highlighted the need for a deeper understanding of the political economy of violence attuned to local contexts, since in the general environment of informality and resource grabbing, violence also becomes a way of mediating claims to scarce resources. It underlines broadening the employment metric to livable wages and dignified work, and suggested outreach to not just marginalized youth, but also to youth previously involved in VE, iterating the need for developing consensus on political and sociological solutions for them.

This position paper is based on the third interactive dialogue on “Governance Failure and Violent Extremism” held in Karachi on March 11, 2020. The participants included experts of the field and representatives from youth and civil society organizations. Some of the questions meant to lead the discussion were:

- a) Is there a link between crises of governance and people turning to VE? How should we understand it?
- b) How have people’s interactions with state institutions changed? Who are emerging actors brokering the interface?
- c) Who are people turning to for resolving their problems with governance? What forms of redress are available?
- d) Are there links between service gaps, criminal elements/mafias and VE actors? (Such as housing/ land mafias, water, electricity connections etc.)

While this paper focuses on specific aspects of governance, namely service delivery, law and order and justice, and communication; governance is understood to be a wide-ranging field in which piece-meal interventions cannot work. This paper intends to outline specific areas of governance which need urgent attention, while underscoring the need for holistic approaches which target governance neither as a law and order problem, nor as only administrative capacity function – but a people-centric prerequisite for human security and fulfilment of human rights for which states are ultimately responsible.

## **Governance and Violent Extremism**

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The UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism states, “Violent extremism tends to thrive in an environment characterized by poor governance, democracy deficits, corruption and a culture of impunity for unlawful behaviour engaged in by the State or its agents. When poor governance is combined with repressive policies and practices which violate

human rights and the rule of law, the potency of the lure of violent extremism tends to be heightened ... Violent extremists also actively seek to exploit state repression and other grievances in their fight against the state.”<sup>1</sup>

Discrimination by authorities between various demographic groups, arbitrary use of laws and selective implementation, heavy-handed security responses, piled up grievances with authorities and lack of redress mechanisms foster resentment and create a disconnect between the governed and the governors and erode trust in public institutions. Extremist groups can thrive in such asymmetric and unjust landscapes.

UNDP identifies connections between governance and VE, noting the two forms of governance failures particularly conducive to the spread of violent extremism: failure to deliver basic public services; and a breakdown in law, order and justice. The UNDP report on preventing violent extremism in Pakistan notes, “Failures or inefficiencies in the justice dispensation mechanisms erodes trust in the state, and allows violent extremist groups to setup alternative options for dispensing justice; often through violence and miscarriages of justice principles. Similarly, the inability of a state to provide security and establish law and order creates the physical space for violent extremist groups to operate freely, impose their own order, and incentivize individuals to join such groups as the most effective and powerful actor.”<sup>2</sup>

The deficit of justice poised by issues of the judiciary clearly forms part of the landscape of dysfunctions. The SPDC 2010 report on the Social Impact of the Security Crisis notes, “The failure of the judicial system in strengthening the 'rule of law' in the country and its politicization such as political appointments of judges in the high courts and supreme courts caused a culture of power-confinement. As a result, the judicial system of Pakistan was unable to protect a large number of vulnerable and disenfranchised people.”<sup>3</sup>

In a sharp critical analysis Osama Siddiqui (2011) notes the deep structural malaise, “The vital linkages and inter-dependencies between formal legal rights and actual economic and political conditions necessary for their actualization have been consistently ignored... As a result, this discourse [on judicial reform] is largely superficial; process focused rather than engaging with substantive issues of justice; about foreground institutions rather than background norms; and, therefore, socially and politically de-contextualized.”<sup>4</sup>

*The inability of a state to provide security and establish law and order creates the physical space for violent extremist groups to operate*

This has tangible, ubiquitous manifestations. The World Justice Project (2017) in its survey on the rule of law in Pakistan<sup>5</sup> found 82% of respondents had experienced a legal problem in preceding two years, of which only 14% turned to a third party to adjudicate, mediate or resolve the problem. This shows the low level of confidence people have in justice institutions of Pakistan. In assessing why, the National Judicial Policy has not been implemented, Sara, Ansari and Jabeen<sup>6</sup> trace the issues down to “Lack of stakeholders’ ownership, deficient political will, corruption at all levels, lack of proper implementation planning, lapses in evaluation, and apathetic corporate culture.”

Researchers at RUSI<sup>7</sup> tested all prevalent hypotheses on violent extremism against empirical evidence and weighted the following hypotheses related to governance:

1. Government’s failure to provide basic services allows extremist groups to meet these needs and build support: They found this to have strong empirical support. Where VE groups deliver services like health, education and welfare, they gain support at the cost of state and government legitimacy. Government failure creates a vacuum which such groups fill, such as the LTTE in Sri Lanka, Hamas, Hezbollah and Gama’a Islamiyya in Egypt.
2. Failure of the state to provide security and justice, and people’s experience of predatory and oppressive security sector institutions are influential drivers towards extremism: this was found to have mixed evidence. Lack of state provision of justice and security was an influential but not a necessary factor since VE groups also function in states which provide both effectively. On one hand, such deficits create grievances and delegitimize the state – for instance ensuring people’s support for the Taliban in Afghanistan is interlinked to the context of insecurity that prevailed in the country before them. Experiencing humiliation and injustice by state forces helps extremists recruit members and attract sympathy. On the other hand, developed, stable democracies of the west have also experienced such groups, such as Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) in Spain and Irish Republican Army (IRA) in the UK.
3. In the absence of peace and security, populations are often ready to accept any entity that offers stability. The researchers found strong evidence for this. In anarchy and state failure, people turn to whoever offers stability, at least in the short term. Boko Haram in Nigeria and ISIS in Syria are clear examples of this, as is many people supporting warlords in Afghanistan.

*Government’s failure to provide basic services allows extremist groups to meet these needs and build support.*

The need to closely examine local context including all variations across geographic and demographic units is well established. A study by Khalil and Zeuthen (2014) reflect those across a range of CVE interventions that programming decisions would benefit from a more comprehensive and differentiated understanding of VE in local contexts. In Kenya for instance, it notes, “Subsets of the population more narrowly ‘at-risk’ of being attracted to VE should have been identified and targeted (potentially including teenagers, members of specific clans, ex-convicts etc.) and a greater focus should have been placed upon... individual-level drivers.”<sup>8</sup>

*In the absence of peace and security, populations are often ready to accept any entity that offers stability.*

A former police official who participated in the dialogue shared that based on interrogations of terrorists and their sympathizers, the Sindh police has separated push factors and pull factors for violent extremism. It finds the push factors are socio-economic conditions like poverty, unemployment and sense of deprivation. Socio-political factors include disenchantment and disconnect from political systems and lack of inclusiveness. Political systems such as a lack of legitimate political government and deteriorating law and order all propel people towards finding alternate solutions through violent extremism. These are acted upon by pull factors, like extremists offering financial incentives. They advertise this through their social media platforms. TTP for instance paid its members, ISIS also had a defined payment structure. Joining such groups becomes a pathway to power for ordinary men, and it also elevates their social status. The promise of heavenly rewards is the icing on top.

In a 2015 survey, 500 security officials of Pakistan were asked to rank risk factors of terrorism – the factors given the most importance were related to poor governance – namely; dishonest leadership, unjust and unfair accountability system and corruption<sup>9</sup>. In contrast, the International Centre for Religion and Diplomacy published findings of a survey of Pakistani experts ranking importance of drivers of extremism, showing local religious leaders to be given highest importance and anger against the state to be ranked very low<sup>10</sup>. While there may be varying methodological approaches and different schools of thought on causality and linear connections, there is cross board acceptance of the role governance plays in VE, whether as its trigger or as a means of responding to it.

Based on the Interactive Dialogue, the three main areas of governance examined in this brief are service delivery, law and order and justice, and the function of communication.

## **Service Delivery**

Through the War against Terrorism, the Pakistan state, its army and its government remained a solid on-ground presence even when under severe attack. The country did not become a 'failed state' as was predicted and did not degenerate into anarchy. There have been pockets where VE groups were able to substitute the state for a limited time, for instance the takeover of Swat from 2007 to 2009, or where charity wings of VE groups act as philanthropic service providers but at no point was the state institutions' control and governance at risk. However, people listed their grievances against the state, including lack of justice and inadequate provision of services.

Pakistan faces contradictory trends – on one hand the state's outreach has increased institutionally, as well as geographically to peripheries – it has the structural architecture through NADRA offices, police stations and check-posts, passport offices, lower courts and such across the breadth of Pakistan. But at the same time its ability to implement is curtailed because of lack of financial and human resources and capacity gaps. This thinning out manifests as a decrease of the writ of state.

The discussions in SPDC's Interactive Dialogue on governance mirrored the discussion held by the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) on governance issues in Punjab with reference to VE<sup>11</sup>. They found that the link between ill governance and extremism was not linear in that people did not take up arms against the state because the state neglected them. Instead, weak governance meant the state did not have the capacity to check the rise of militant groups or carry out effective de-weaponization, nor could it display a responsive criminal justice system that could deter extremists from violence. The PIPs deliberations concluded that areas 'excluded' from governance and outside the mainstream, whether erstwhile FATA or Balochistan's 'B Areas' or south Punjab, provided not just physical but also ideological havens.

In some parts of the country, Sindh province in specific, right-wing religious political parties and extremists are addressing what the government cannot – they are providing money as stipends and forms of employment. While there is no longer overt recruitment for VE groups, many extremist organizations are attractive for people since they offer philanthropic services. For instance, Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD) has been running charitable and religious operations in Thar Desert area, where there is a high number of minorities and areas with no prior record of religious extremist presence<sup>12</sup>.

As an illustration of policy confusion, in January 2015, the federal government froze the bank accounts of JuD under its UN obligations<sup>13</sup>. In September 2018, the Supreme Court licensed JuD to carry on its social welfare activities, despite the federal government asking for them to be restrained<sup>14</sup>. However, in March 2019, the central government formally banned JuD and its charitable arm, FIF (Falahi Insaniyat Foundation) and the Sindh government took over 56 facilities run by JuD in Sindh<sup>15</sup>. It was announced that the services they provide would continue but funded and managed by the provincial government.

The currently on-going coronavirus outbreak had laid bare the state's incapacity for providing life-saving services for citizens. Though the provincial and federal government are scrambling to provide health facilities in an emergency on a war footing, the paucity of pre-existing infrastructure remains an indictment of the kind of priority basic service provision is given.

Experts note that people will flock to whichever organization or institution that provides relief in times of acute distress. After the Taliban's temporary takeover of Swat, their ability to provide quick and cheap justice was frequently cited as one of the reasons people turned to them. Police officials point out that it was not very different to people in Karachi turning to headquarters of a political party for the same – not for political solutions but because the party in question, the MQM, was known to use violence to resolve problems quickly and efficiently if and when they wanted. Increasing number of unemployed people and shrinking of income opportunities increase the attraction of organizations that provide relief.

## **Policing**

Police is a critical institution for governance, hence a main focus in the Interactive Dialogue. Zoha Waseem (2019) documents the organizational limitations that the Karachi police operates within, citing “Political patronage, financial weaknesses, corruption, poor training, legal frameworks entrenched in colonial thought and practices, unimplemented reforms, and a general lack of faith in the courts,”<sup>16</sup> within the larger context of grave multiple security threats.

On one hand, the police represent a coercive force for people. Some participants were of the view that the law enforcement apparatus has lost its credibility before people. Stories about their corruption is legion – from high level officers being bankrolled by political parties or mafia bosses, to low-level officers demanding bribes to register FIRs and extorting money from poor people on the roads and in markets. According to open source data

compiled by Zoha Waseem<sup>17</sup>, in Karachi over 3,000 civilians were killed by the police in 'encounters' between 2011 and 2018. In one particularly notorious case, Sindh's 'encounter specialist', SP Rao Anwar reported to have killed 444 people in 745 encounters in which not a single policeman was injured or killed – nor did the official in question face any inquiries<sup>18</sup>.

On the other hand, the police itself operate in a high stress environment, weighed down by limitations. Over seven thousand policemen have been killed in the line of duty across the country<sup>19</sup>. In November 2014, BBC headlined Karachi as a 'City at War' where on average a police officer was killed every day<sup>20</sup>. Police officers point out that the targeting and killing of law enforcement personnel indicates a collapse of the system.

A police officer, who attended the previous dialogue,<sup>21</sup> while sharing his experiences stated that almost half of the police force has medical problems such as high blood pressure. They are overworked with 12-hour long shifts; severely stressed and underpaid. Additionally, the police have to contend with a perpetually hostile media – officials say that at any misstep the media come down on the police so hard that they back off completely, at times, compromising security aims. The inefficiency caused by this situation may have a detrimental effect on the desired outcome of CVE efforts.

### ***Wider Security Context***

The wider security context in which police operates includes the functioning of the army, intelligence agencies and departments, paramilitary forces, area commissioners and magistrates. On VE issues, all related agencies are meant to act in sync, through integrated approaches such as those outlined in the National Action Plan (NAP), introduced as a comprehensive program for eliminating terrorism. There were germane problems from its conceptualization – experts pointed out that it was not an action plan in the first place, but more of a guideline for general directions. NAP had no apportioned budget or allocations for specific issues, no timelines, next steps, strategies, or nodes for intelligence gathering. Experts at the Dialogue concluded it was more of an accumulation of good intentions. For example, although hate speech was included in the National Action Plan, efforts to clamp down were uneven from the start, and now have increasingly tapered off, illustrated in the lag of implementation of the Fourth Schedule.

The police force remains confused by the conflicting signals it occasionally gets from the rest of the security apparatus and from the elected government. As a result, local police stations do not monitor mosques and leave hate speech surveillance to the Special Branch. Instead of making police stations the nerve centre of anti-VE actions, parallel forces were

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created through policy decisions, such as the Dolphin force, Counter Terrorism Department and so on. The need for streamlining operations becomes all the more important in the context of violent extremism.

The National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) provides an illustration of how good ideas and initiatives get stalled and rendered ineffective because of systemic barriers.

### **NACTA: A Case Study**

After Pakistan enlisted in the US-led War on Terror in 2001, it took seven years to form NACTA (2008), and twelve years for the National Counter Terrorism Authority Act to be passed in 2013. It wasn't until the massacre of school children at the Army Public School in Peshawar, that the 20-point National Action Plan was devised and approved. According to Ilhan Niaz (2017), "These two facts alone betray the lack of political will to mobilize civilian institutions and public opinion to roll back terrorism and radicalization in Pakistan."<sup>22</sup>

In 2014, a ruling by the Islamabad High Court placed NACTA's command directly under the Prime Minister, yet it continued to function under the Ministry of Interior. There is no National Registry at NACTA where the details of 4th Schedulers could be passed on to. There was meant to be a centralized Intelligence Directorate at NACTA but it was never made. No quarterly meetings as envisioned, no chief coordinator appointed. Its role has primarily been to get information from provinces and relay it to the State Bank to freeze assets of listed persons. NACTA does not have legal powers to compel the police Counter Terrorism Departments (CTDs) to do anything. According to Saddam Hussain, "In the absence of any operational and coordination roles, NACTA can merely act as a think tank... It has been caught up in bureaucratic strife, lack of collaboration, scarcity of resources and vague direction or purpose."<sup>23</sup>

Prime Minister Imran Khan in 2018 expressed dissatisfaction with the "Incapacitated" institution while chairing the first-ever meeting of the Board of Governors of NACTA and formed a special committee to make it functional.<sup>24</sup> In 2019, Imran Khan approved an amendment to the NACTA Act to formally place it back under the Interior Ministry and increased its budget allocation by over 60%.

### **Judiciary**

The problems inherent in the justice system have been well established, and acknowledged many times by the judiciary itself. Despite the National Judicial Policy, the issues persist. The judicial system is slow and backlogged; it is inaccessible to common people because of prohibitive costs and because of incomprehensible legal procedures and proceedings; it is maneuvered by the powerful to the detriment of the marginalized – whether by class, gender or religion; and the system is resistant to change.

The judicial system has not been a deterrent to VE, in fact, in many cases has provided a buffer. There is no certainty of punishment; loopholes and escape clauses allow militants to go free, who in turn become a threat to arresting officers. Power wielders also intervene and get cases squashed by personal contacts; witnesses can be terrified into silence; bail can be arranged; prosecution collapse can be engineered; judges can refuse to convict based on lack of evidence, or be too scared to announce punishment. The point of introducing military courts with a sunset clause was to give the judicial system two years to fix its issues, clear backlogs, create safeguards for trials of VE actors and develop witness protection programs – however, none of these were instituted, and now military courts have lapsed. Power brokers can assure VE recruits that they can provide them safe passage. Experts observed that it is generally the poor and resource-less who stay within institutional boundaries and get punished by the criminal justice system because they have no protectors.

There have been attempts at fixing the system. In 2001, the military regime of General Pervez Musharraf negotiated \$350 million from Asian Development Bank for judicial governance reforms called the ‘Access to Justice Programme’. By the time the programme ended in 2008, Pakistan didn’t have a judiciary left – the President threw out the Chief Justice, some other judges resigned and there was a lawyers’ movement for restoration of the judiciary.

More recently, there have been streamlining efforts spearheaded by the judiciary itself. In November 2019, the Supreme Court launched an app and a call center to enable cause list, roster search and judgment queries, case search and judgment search and process related queries. The Sindh High Court has made all this material available on its website in English, Urdu and Sindhi, including developing a case flow management system down to district level.

While these efforts need to be tracked and evaluated, they should not eclipse the larger context of everyday struggles for justice, which require, as Osama Siddiqui observes, “To transfer the gaze from the courtrooms to the disputant themselves.”<sup>25</sup>

### **Communication**

The SPDC dialogue process reiterated that extremist ideas and ideologies get space whenever the government cedes – people need to make sense of their lives, and when the leadership does not provide them a framework for it, they come up with their own, which is often based on conspiracy theories.

Narratives play a significant role – in the case of Swat, the cleric Fazlullah appealed to women, telling them how they can save their families and country by exhorting their men to turn to the Taliban version of religion. Therefore, the army first had to close down the radio stations through which they sermonized and set up army operated radio stations to promote their own counter-narrative, before launching a military operation. The necessity of the state having its own narrative, framework, and the ability to communicate it, remains critical.

The Pakistani state has of late attempted to contest and create narratives. Paigham-e-Pakistan was a milestone document signed in January 2018 by over eighteen hundred religious scholars belonging to all mainstream sects in the country. It declared suicide attacks, sectarianism, spreading anarchy, using force to impose Sharia, and issuing call to jihad without state consent to be un-Islamic<sup>26</sup>. A previous such attempt was made in 2015 when 200 ulema issued a decree against suicide bombings, but the recent initiative was more wide-ranging. In a conference at Air University in Islamabad, a joint session of Ulema and Vice Chancellors agreed to incorporate key points of the Paigham-e-Pakistan document in the curricula and syllabi of schools, colleges and universities<sup>27</sup>. However, like the National Action Plan, this initiative seems to have run out of steam.

Part of the counter-narrative initiative has been the media wing of Pakistan's army – ISPR, moving into film production and financing. It is one of the largest media houses in Pakistan currently and has produced large budget cinematic releases. While some have done well at the box office and some have not, there has been no serious published assessment and analysis of its efficacy and impact of these beyond film reviews.

Beyond constructing narratives, participants of the interactive dialogue underscored that there must be wide ranging communication between state institutions and citizens. Following Article 19A of the Constitution of Pakistan, people must be given real and timely information, which in effect builds trust in the state. Partial truths and fudging by the government on some issues leads to people distrusting the government on all issues. A lack of trust in government institutions has been cited as a potential driver of violent extremism and remains a key challenge. Kessels and Nemr (2016) note that it deters development actors from engaging with institutions which may bring their impartiality into question, and have serious concerns about securitization of development<sup>28</sup>. As rights-based organizations advocate oppositional or critical beliefs regarding the government and its policies, distrust of the government strains relationships and hinders collaboration.

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## Future Directions

Through the dialogue process, capacity gaps and misplaced priorities were identified, showing that while new laws, regulations and infrastructure maybe required, the implementation of existing provisions could resolve majority of governance concerns. Security is a basic constitutional right, fundamental and prior to anything else but remains a distant dream for many citizens.

Solutions were also debated, outlined in this section. But participants reiterated that over a decade into the VE problem and CVE initiatives in Pakistan, most of us are still working with broad brush strokes without localized, nuanced approaches. It is important to note that the solution in Karachi will not work in Balochistan and what works in Gilgit will not work in South Punjab. The demographics, underlying conditions such as poverty and education profile, cultural responses, family and community dynamics, kinship structures and livelihood options vary, as does the government machinery and state-citizen relations.

The thrust for solutions tends to converge in practicalities and short-term answers. It is also critical to find ways to allow social scientists, public intellectuals and thought leaders to collectively reflect on entrenched systemic issues that undergird practical problems. It has become formulaic to suggest holistic thinking but interventions are needed to develop nuanced ideas on how to interweave structural analysis and take gradual steps towards their dismantling.

### Service Delivery

There is no alternative for empowered local governments to ensure efficient service delivery at the grass roots level. Not having functional and effective local governments is a significant limitation of interface as it is the basic node of interaction between citizens and the state. While local governments were instituted, they were not fully empowered, and with each consecutive round, their power dissipated and now has almost disappeared. In previous attempts, local governments were given responsibilities without corresponding fiscal devolution – this will obstruct the vision of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to Constitution of Pakistan. Districts need to have systems of accountability and transparency of budgets, monitored by those who have the highest stakes in administrative efficiency – the local residents of districts.

*Not having functional and effective local governments is a significant limitation of interface as it is the basic node of interaction between citizens and the state.*

Taking the holistic approach to governance further, service delivery should not be limited to health and education, though those remain the critical backbone of government's provision of fundamental services. Sindh, like the rest of Pakistan has a youth bulge. While education rates have increased incrementally, majority of literate young people have not had access to quality education, in addition to those who have had no schooling. As more of them join the workforce every year, a crucial feature of government outreach should be reaching out to young people to enable them to find dignified livelihoods. In all probability this would require retraining and capacity building, but equally importantly, demand creation for such jobs. Focusing on only improving supply side quality is not going to close the doors on the lure of VE groups.

### **Policing**

Policing Karachi remains a perennial problem. Globally, metropolitan cities have their own police commissioners or police chiefs independent of the province's political system or bureaucracy. Whether that is a good option for Karachi or not, there is an urgent need for wider dialogue on policing options. The participants suggested revisiting the Police Order 2002 to see what went wrong. The former police official acknowledged the shortcomings and underscored the need for public participation in policing, stating policies elsewhere are made in consultation with communities and are fixed over years of trial and error. Since people do not feel connected to the police, initiating a public conversation while considering reform pathways is the way forward – more so since the Prime Minister has announced a public service reforms initiative.

### **Judicial Processes**

As people increasingly turn to the state to resolve their problems, reflected in the increasing number of cases filed across all courts and the lessening hold of traditional decision-making and arbitration systems, citizen's grievances with the formal judicial process will continue to intensify. Many interventions for redress have been initiated, but their effectiveness has not been studied in the wider context. A deeper understanding should be sought of how people's expectations and experiences of the state are being shaped with regard to judicial institutions and how perceptions of what constitutes justice are changing. The Sindh judicial academy is an important institution for engagement.

### **Communications**

Experts point out the need for the government to be more open in communication to gain people's trust, which is critical political capital for elected governments. Even where government has instituted redress

mechanisms, they are not well known. For instance, the Pakistan Citizen Portal, with its grievance registration system is not well known. According to January 2020 data, 132,161 were complaints about human rights violations and 101,153 were about law and order<sup>29</sup>. Another such redress mechanism is the Ombudsperson's office where people can lodge complaints against the system and challenge authorities to respond, which again is not publicized by any government and remains under-utilized. Such mechanisms need broader publicity and accessibility.

Research about behaviour change should guide the state's outreach efforts to reduce VE. The inclination to suspect people, brand people as agents or anti-Pakistan, equate criticism of state institutions with opposing the existence of the country is unhelpful, and alienates people even more. Teaching citizenship and critical thinking through school curricula and opening channels for participation will enhance people's ownership of state institutions, distance them from groups which promote single dimensional thought, and solidify public trust.

## NOTES

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- <sup>21</sup> SPDC conducted 2<sup>nd</sup> Interactive Dialogue on Unemployment, Youth and VE in Karachi on January 15, 2020. It is important to mention that this police officer was not counted as a beneficiary and was not invited by SPDC as a panelist.
- <sup>22</sup> Ilhan Niaz, 'Pakistan's Crisis of Governance and the Resurgence of Terrorist Violence Since August 2016,' *Asian Affairs*, 48(2), 2017.
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