

June
2012

Khar, Bajaur Agency, Pakistan: Suicide Bombing, 4 May 2012



[TRADOC G-2 Intelligence Support Activity
\(TRISA\)](#)

Complex Operational Environment and
Threat Integration Directorate (CTID)





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Purpose

- To inform the Army training community of the 04 May 2012 suicide bombing in Khar, Bajaur Agency, Pakistan.
- To identify the key targets of the Khar attack.
- To provide information about the Bajaur Agency.

Executive Summary

- Bajaur Agency is key terrain for the Pakistani and Afghan Taliban as it borders Pakistan's Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa¹ and Afghanistan's thinly defended Kunar Province.
- The Pakistani Army has consistently declared the Bajaur Agency cleared of militants.
- The 04 May 2012 suicide bombing was the first major attack by militants in Bajaur Agency since December 2010.
- The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility for the bombing in response to the Pakistani security forces' killing of Sheik Marwan.
- Successful targets of the 04 May 2012 attack were Major Javed Khan Bajauri Shaheed, Chief of Bajaur Levies (police) and Subedar Fazl-e-Rabbi Khan Bajauri Shaheed, Deputy Chief and Quarter Master of the Bajaur Levies (police).

Cover photo: Suicide Bombing in Bajaur Agency, Pakistan, 04 May 2012.

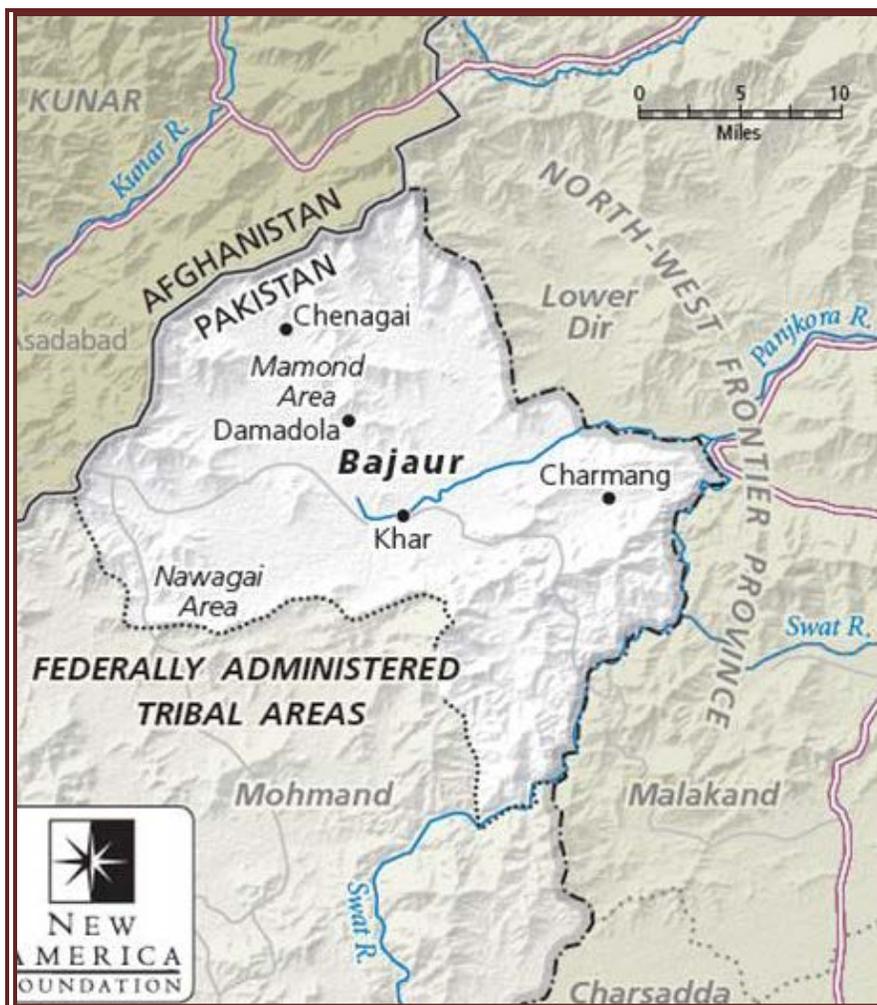
¹ The Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) has been renamed Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa.



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Map of the Bajaur Agency



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Introduction

On 04 May 2012, the first major attack on security forces in the Bajaur Agency since December 2010 occurred in the city of Khar. This Threat Report explores the context in which this suicide attack happened by providing background information on the volatile and strategically important transit area of the Bajaur Agency, threat organizations and individuals operating in Bajaur, and a short history of major events since 2001. The Threat Report concludes with a description of the 04 May 2012 bombing in Khar.

Operational Environment

The Bajaur Agency is the smallest political district in the remote area known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Bajaur borders the volatile Afghan Kunar Province and the Pakistani ungoverned area known as the Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa Province. Bajaur, sandwiched between these two volatile provinces, is key terrain for both Taliban insurgents and the Pakistani government.

Major issues in Bajaur include poverty, illiteracy, insufficient health facilities, and unemployment. The FATA, generally, has been ignored by the Pakistani government resulting in, among other things, 60 percent of the population living below the poverty line. These critical and under-addressed social problems are contributing factors that enable militants to find willing recruits to fight against the Pakistani government.

Major Events within the Bajaur Agency

- ❑ 2001
 - Based on the *Pashtunwali* code, Bajaur became a major reception area for the retreating Afghan Taliban. This support of fighters from Afghanistan has continued, often incorporating inter-marriages between fighters and local Bajauris.
 - Sufi Muhammad, founder of the group **Tehrik-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat-i-Mohammadi (TNSM)**, led 10,000 fighters, including hundreds from Bajaur, into Afghanistan via



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the Ghali Pass into Afghanistan's Kunar Province. Some estimates state that as many as half of those fighters were either killed or are still in Afghan jails.

- ❑ 2002
 - Further Talibanization of Bajaur occurred when Pakistan president Musharraf threw his support behind the U.S. anti-Taliban fight.
 - Sufi Muhammad and his son-in-law, Maulana Fazlullah, were arrested for recruiting forces to fight against the U.S., angering people in Bajaur.
 - Anger over the arrests of Muhammad and Fazlullah fueled the leadership rise of Maulvi Faqir who was able to recruit 4,000 – 5,000 fighters from Bajaur.
- ❑ January 2006 – Suspected drone strike targeting Ayman al-Zawahiri destroyed a house in Damadola, northwest of Khar, and killed as many as 22 people, to include Zawahiri's son-in-law, reputedly involved with al-Qaeda's media arm and Abu Obaidah al-Masri, al-Qaeda operations chief for Afghanistan's Kunar province.
- ❑ October 2006
 - Attack on a madrassa in Chenagai, Mamond area, reportedly by Pakistani helicopters but widely believed to be a drone attack, killed more than 80 suspected militants, though local villagers claimed the dead were students in the madrassa.
 - 3,000 militants rallied in Sadiq Abad, west of Khar, chanting support for Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar.
- ❑ November 2006 – Taliban fighters, in retaliation for airstrikes in Bajaur, carried out a suicide attack against an Army base in Dargai, north of Peshawar, killing at least 40 soldiers and wounding 22. The operation was believed to be carried out by fighters trained in Bajaur madrassas by Maulvi Liaqat and Maulvi Farqir.
- ❑ 2007 – Maulvi Faqir was one of the founders of the **Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)**, an umbrella organization formed to unite the various factions of the Pakistani Taliban.²
- ❑ 2007-2008 – Bajaur was mostly under the control of the Taliban, to include about 150 military outposts.

² For more information on the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, refer to TRISA Threat Report "Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)," TRADOC Intelligence Support Activity (TRISA) – Threats, 16 March 2012.



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- ❑ 2008
 - May – Drone attack in Damadola killed Algerian al-Qaeda planner Abu Sulayman al-Jazairi and 12 others.
 - August – Pakistani Army began Operation *Sherdil* (Lion Heart) to take back control of Bajaur and slow the flow of militants into Afghanistan from Pakistan, with about 8,000 Pakistani Army troops facing 2,500-3,000 militants.
 - September – Pakistani officials claimed to have killed 1,000 militants.
 - October – Drone attack targeted Maulvi Faqir, who minutes before had left the house, but killed Faqir’s nephew, son-in-law, and about 30 others.
- ❑ 2009
 - February – Maulvi Faqir declared a unilateral cease-fire after displacing 500,000 Bajauris and destroying 5,000 homes. This deal with Pakistan’s government continues to be the cause of tension between Faqir and other militants who believed he had given in too easily to the Pakistani government.
 - March – Pakistani Army declared victory, signing a treaty with the leading Mamond tribe and later the Tarkani and Utman Khel tribes, requiring surrender of key TTP leaders, giving up their arms, and ceasing to support the militants.
 - August – Maulvi Omar, Taliban spokesman and Faqir deputy, was captured after reputedly planning several suicide bombings and attacks against security forces.
 - October – Alleged drone strike killed 27 Taliban and al-Qaeda militants in Damadolla, to include Faqir Mohammed’s nephew and son-in-law.
- ❑ 2010
 - January – Pakistani military began a new offensive in Bajaur with 4,000 troops facing 2,000 Taliban fighters and resulting in the capture of Faqir’s hometown of Damadolla. According to the Pakistani army, security forces controlled 90-95 percent of Bajaur and killed 50-60 militants at a cost of 10 security personnel.
 - December – suicide bombing in Khar killed 40 people.



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Other Threat Groups Operating in Bajaur

- ❑ **Jaish-i-Islami (JI)**, led by Waliur Rahman from the Yusuf Khel tribe of the Loi Mamond tehsil.³ Rehman was previously a security guard for Faqir and an outspoken critic of Faqir's lack of resolve in the face of the Pakistani Army offensive into Bajaur, causing continued tension between their organizations.
- ❑ **Harkatul Jihadul Islami (HUJI)**, a Punjabi militant organization once headed by Qari Saifullah Akhtar. Intelligence suggests involvement in the September 2008 bombing of the Islamabad Marriott Hotel and numerous suicide bombings across Pakistan, to include the October 2007 attack on Benazir Bhutto's convoy in Karachi.

Commanders Operating and/or Influencing Operations in Bajaur

- ❑ **Maulvi Faqir Mohammed** – Leader of the Taliban movement in Bajaur. Led forces that defeated the Pakistani army in two offensives in 2008 and fought security forces to a stalemate in 2009. Effectively used the radio as a means of getting his message out. Faqir has found refuge in Kunar Province due to pressure from Pakistan security forces.
- ❑ **Pervez** – Controls Nawagai tehsil, west of Khar.
- ❑ **Zia ur-Rehman** – An Afghan, he controls the Charmang area along the Afghan border.
- ❑ **Maulana Ismail** – Controls Taliban activities in Chenagai and Damadolla.
- ❑ **Maulvi Abdullah** – Supervises the Taliban organization in the Banda region in Salarzai tehsil.
- ❑ **Waliur Rahman** – Controls the Irab area of



Faqir Mohammed

³ Pakistan's Administrative levels of government in order from top to bottom are: Federal, Province (or Agency), Division, District, Tehsil (or town), Union Council.



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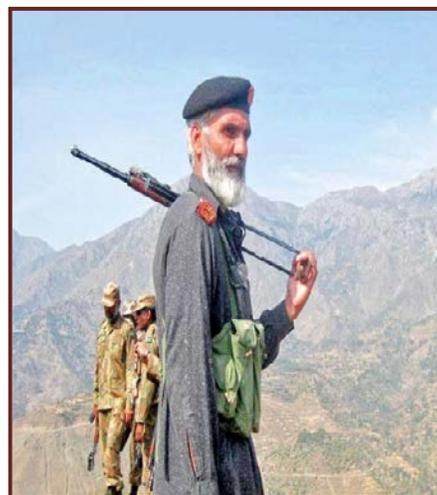
the Loi Mamond tehsil and leads the Taliban sub group, Jais-i-Islami (JI).

Attack Targets

The 04 May 2012 attack targeted two leaders of the local police (Levies): Major Javed Khan Bajauri Shaheed, Chief of the Bajaur Police force, and Subedar Fazl-e-Rabbi Khan Bajauri Shaheed, Deputy Chief of the Bajaur Police force. Additionally, at least two other police were killed in the suicide bombing. The total number reported killed and injured varies, but the civilian and police death toll climbed to at least 29 with as many as 75 injured in the blast.



**Major Javed Khan Bajauri
Shaheed (Chief of Bajaur Levies)**



**Subedar Fazl-e-Rabbi Khan
Bajauri Shaheed (Quarter Master
Bajaur Levies)**

The Attack

On 04 May 2012, a suicide bomber attacked a police checkpoint at an intersection adjacent to a busy market in the major city of Khar in Bajaur Agency, Pakistan. Due to intelligence intercepts, the Bajauri police were on at a heightened level of alert. This was due, in part, to fear of anticipated reprisal attacks surrounding the first anniversary of the killing of Osama bin Laden.



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Major Javed Khan Bajauri Shaheed and Subedar Fazl-e-Rabbi Khan Bajauri Shaheed were conducting inspections of the checkpoint in response to threat reports.

The attack was calculated for maximum effect. At 8:00 a.m. local time on the morning of 04 May 2012, markets were just beginning to open. The police checkpoint was located at an intersection next to a Khar market. The bomber, described as a teenage boy, walked to the police checkpoint where Major Shaheed and Subedar Shaheed were inspecting their policemen, and detonated an explosive vest. The explosion destroyed more than a dozen shops in the market, leaving debris and bodies in its wake.

The Pakistani Taliban spokesman, Ihsanullah Ihsan, claimed Taliban responsibility for the attack and stated their intent to continue to attack government security forces and militias. The police are generally made up of local Pashtun tribesmen who are not necessarily loyal to the Taliban. Ihsan claimed the reason for the attack was in retaliation for the death of Sheik Marwan, an al-Qaeda commander killed by security forces in Bajaur in 2011.

This attack in Bajaur was the first major attack since December 2010 when a suicide bomber killed at least 40 people in Khar. Pakistani security forces have claimed consistently that, after multiple offensives into the transit area of Bajaur, the government is securely in control of the Bajaur Agency. The 04 May 2012 suicide bombing, as a one-off event, may not be damaging; however, as a prelude to another attempt by the Pakistan Taliban to reassert itself in Bajaur it is troubling. Increased use of drone attacks with associated collateral civilian deaths and injuries in the Bajaur area may provide the public relations fodder needed for another attempt by the Pakistani Taliban to occupy the strategically significant Bajaur Agency.

Training Implications

- Significantly large numbers of civilian casualties from bombing attacks are exploitable for information operations for both militants and Pakistan's government.
- The inevitability of attacks on security forces requires some distance between checkpoints and major civilian gathering places to avoid large civilian casualty rates.
- External events, such as the anniversary of the death of bin Laden and the death of other local and regional leaders, will trigger local attacks.
- Bajaur has a context and a history that drives events. Understanding those historical tribal, religious, cultural, and social variables mitigates surprise.



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- Bajaur is a transit area by virtue of location, geography, and social associations, therefore complete control will never be possible despite public proclamations to the contrary.

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