

SECURITY

By C Christine Fair

COLLECTIVE INSECURITY

When Nawaz Sharif became Prime Minister following the May 2013 general election, he faced an electorate that was divided about critical challenges confronting the state, ranging from managing the deepening threat from the Pakistani Taliban, soaring sectarian and communal violence, to reigning in extensive supreme court activism and contending with an army seemingly ever-ready to interfere in the management of the state.

Similarly, the electorate was ambivalent about the kinds of relations that Pakistan should have with its challenging neighbours (India, Afghanistan), with its key security partners (the US and China) and even with other countries in the Muslim world such as Saudi Arabia and Iran.

More than a year has passed since Sharif became Prime Minister. Since then, Pakistan continued to irk the West with its refusal to turn its back on long-cultivated Islamist militant proxies such as the Afghan Taliban, the Jalaluddin Haqqani Network and groups such as Jamaat-ud-Dawa, referred to by some as Lashkar-e-Taiba. Even China has become wary of Pakistan's support for such groups as they fuel its own domestic Islamist militants that imperil China's vast investments in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan's sectarian violence shows no sign of abatement, with Hazara Shias appearing most at risk. Pakistan's Taliban are no closer to the negotiating table than they were a year ago and have even conducted some

spectacular attacks such as the June attack on Jinnah International Airport in Karachi. Despite Sharif's enthusiasm for better economic ties with India, Pakistan has done little to fulfil its commitment to grant India the status of Non-discriminatory Market Access to facilitate and expand bilateral trade, from which Pakistan stands to gain immensely. India granted Pakistan Most-Favoured Nation status in the 1990s.

While Nawaz Sharif does not truly own the foreign policy portfolio, which is still controlled by the army, his government has chipped away at the military's untouchable status by having the temerity to charge former dictator, General (retd) Pervez Musharraf, with treason. For this reason, the army has done all that it can to halt this process. Nonetheless, the events thus far will make any future army chief think twice before taking control of the government — even if

Musharraf escapes prosecution and punishment.

Amidst this backdrop of deteriorating internal security, turbulence in civil-military relations and lingering challenges for Pakistan's international relations, the *Herald* undertook an extensive survey to assess public opinion on an array of domestic security and foreign policy issues. Across the range of questions posed to survey participants addressed in this essay, there were few large differences in views expressed across age and gender. For that matter, on most issues respondents in rural and urban localities gave similar responses. Neither income nor educational attainments were consistent predictors of beliefs in many cases, with variations in views on key issues across all categories of respondent. For almost all survey items discussed here, province of residence and ethnicity (proxied by mother tongue) were the biggest source of differences in attitudes expressed.

First, this essay discusses the results of the survey



Illustration by Samya Art

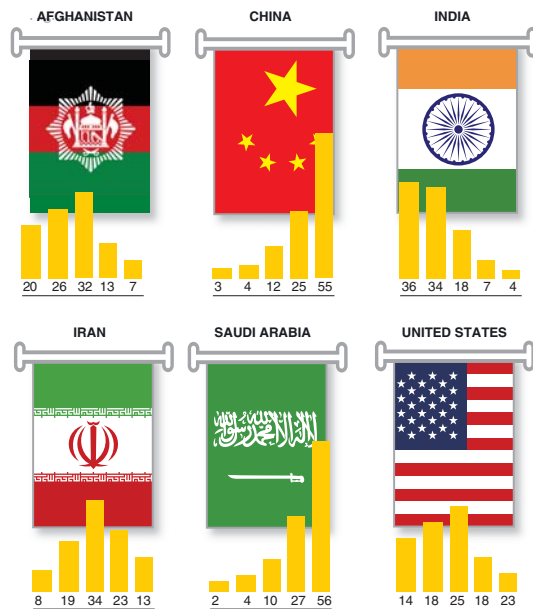
Note: All statistics are in percentages, rounded to the nearest whole number

pertaining to law and order issues. Secondly, it turns to questions that address civil-military affairs and division of power across the government. Lastly, the six most important countries in Pakistan's portfolio of foreign relations are discussed and then the essay concludes with the implications of these findings.

Home-grown threats

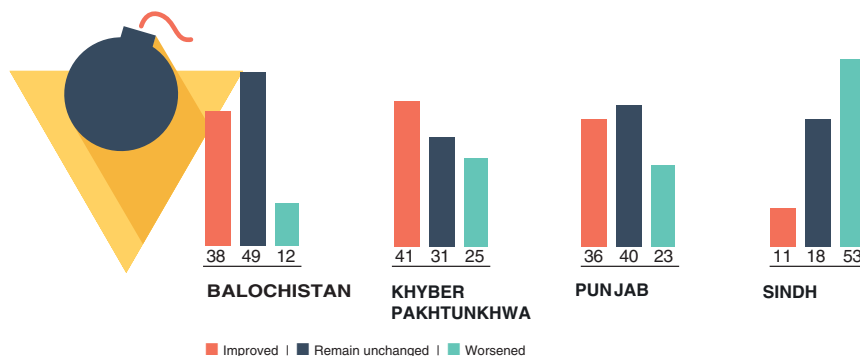
Pakistan's internal security situation is perilous. Challenges range from sectarian and communal killings, political violence between armed thugs associated with various political parties, ethnic conflict and the war that the Pakistani Taliban has waged against the state and its democratic institutions. These challenges are worsened by Pakistan's shambolic law enforcement agencies, rampant judicial failures and excessive reliance upon the army to manage internal security challenges. The consequences have been sanguinary. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan reports that in 2013 nearly 700 Shias were killed and more than 1,000 were injured in over 200 sectarian attacks. Since the beginning of 2000, nearly 4,000 people have

Rate the **government's relations** with the following **countries**.*

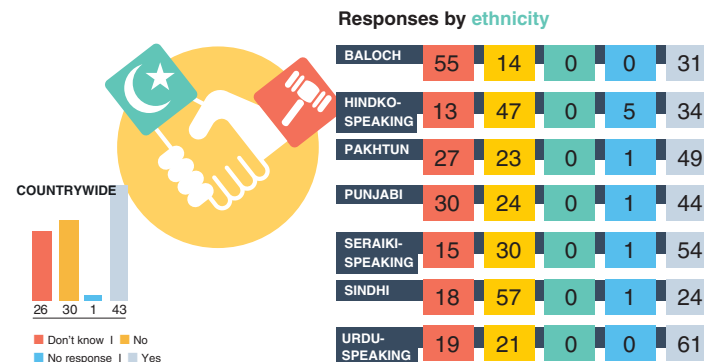


*On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the least and 5 is the most

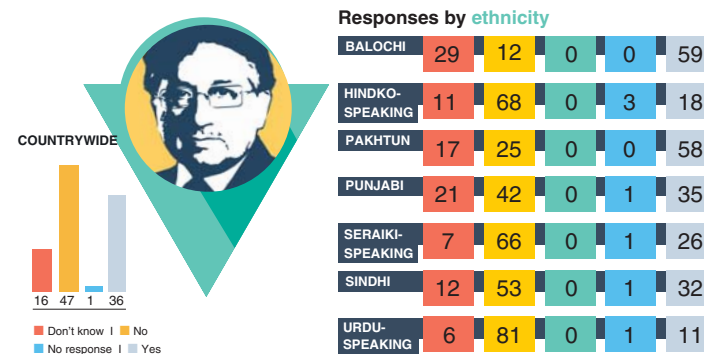
How has the **law and order** situation in your province fared under the **provincial government**?



Have relations between the **government** and the **judiciary** improved under the current federal government?



Do you approve of the **government's decision** to try **General (ret'd) Pervez Musharraf**?



been killed and 6,800 injured. Balochistan, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continue to witness ethnic, sectarian and insurgent violence that has killed combatants, civilians, armed forces, as well as personnel from the provincial and federal governments.

When Herald asked survey participants about the law and order situation across the country under the federal government, most respondents say that it has worsened or remained unchanged, with 32 per cent and 39 per cent respectively (see page 19). Less than one in three thinks it has improved. However, there are substantive differences between provinces

(see page 29). While about 45 per cent of those from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa express positive change only 15 per cent from Sindh did so. These provincial differences mapped onto ethnic differences with Pakhtuns being more likely to express improvements, while Sindhis were less likely to express positive change. Those who were most educated (MPhil/PhD) were more likely to see a better law and order situation (47 per cent) than those with no education (22 per cent).

Overall, respondents were equally underwhelmed when asked about the law and order situation of their province (see page 30). A large number (38 per cent

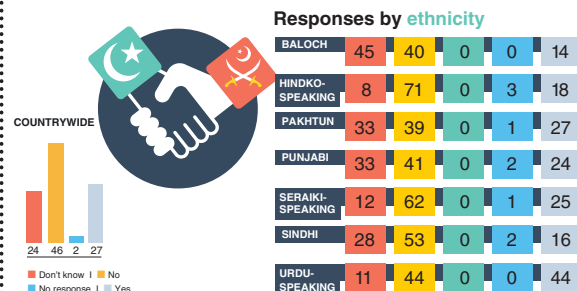
say their provincial situation remained unchanged compared to nearly equal numbers who say it has improved (31 per cent) or worsened (30 per cent). People living in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab were equally likely to say it had improved (39 per cent, 41 per cent, and 37 per cent respectively) while those in Sindh were least likely to say things have improved (11 per cent). Those in Sindh were also most likely to say that their provincial law and order situation has deteriorated (54 per cent). These provincial differences also tracked with ethnic divides with about 10 per cent of Sindhis observing a positive change (above average) and 62 per cent observing change for the worse (below average). Urdu speakers were also less likely than most to express improvement (11 per cent); however, they were less pessimistic than Sindhis as most Urdu speakers (57 per cent) thought it had remained unchanged. The experience with provincial law and order varied considerably by income and education levels.

The Herald also wanted to know what Pakistanis thought about Sharif's efforts to tackle sectarian violence (see page 28). Across the country, roughly an equal number said that it was average or below average ('poor' and 'very poor'). Only one in five rated the provincial government's efforts as 'good', 'very good', or 'excellent'. Those in Sindh were the least likely to rate it as 'good' or 'excellent' (12 per cent), compared to those in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where respondents were most likely to do so (26 per cent). Those in Sindh were also the most likely to grade its performance below average at 59 per cent, compared to 32 per cent in both Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. There were considerable differences among ethnic groups with a majority of Hindko speakers rating the government's response to sectarian violence as below average (76 per cent), compared to only 24 per cent of Pakhtuns who did so. While there were important subsets of respondents willing to be critical of the government's efforts, a small

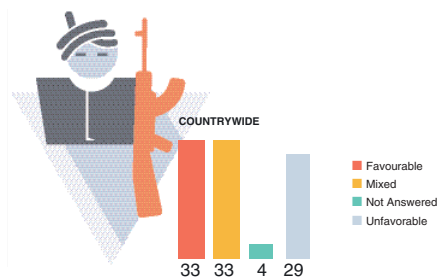
group of respondents across all categories gave the federal government a positive assessment. Even in groups that were least critical, most people within these groups graded the Sharif government's performance as 'average', reflecting more ambivalence than anything else (see page 18). While dissatisfaction was evident amongst most income groups, those in the richest category were most likely to positively assess the government's performance, with 30 per cent rating it above average.

Ethnic violence has long been an issue in Pakistan, particularly in Balochistan and Sindh. Not surprisingly, when Herald asked respondents to evaluate the Sharif government's efforts in tackling ethnic violence, the plurality thought it was 'average' (see page 33). Only 18 per cent thought it had done a 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent' job, in contrast to 36 per cent who assessed it as 'poor' or 'very poor'. Those in Sindh were most critical with a majority (59 per cent) giving it a poor rating and least likely (10 per cent) to rate it favourably. Those in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were more likely to rate the government as doing a good job compared to those in other provinces (25 per cent compared

Have civil-military relations improved in the past year?



What is your opinion of the government's mode of engagement with the Taliban?*



*This question was posed before the military operation in June 2014

to the overall average of 18 per cent). A majority of Hindko speakers (74 per cent) and Sindhi speakers (68 per cent) thought the government did a 'poor' or 'very poor job', while Pakhtuns were more likely than others to assess the performance favourably (28 per cent compared to the mean of 18 per cent). Wealthier respondents were less likely to be as critical as poorer respondents and more likely to positively judge the government's performance. Some 43 per cent of those in the highest income bracket praised the government compared to only 16 per cent of those in the lowest bracket. They were also least critical with 28 per cent of the richest respondents being critical compared to 37 per cent of the poorest.

Pakistan's human rights groups have long decried the separate and unequal status of non-Muslims in Pakistan and the various types of social and political violence they suffer with no viable recourse to law. The Herald wanted to ascertain whether or not Pakistanis believed that conditions for non-Muslims have improved under the PMLN government (see page 20). A large portion of those surveyed (44 per cent) said 'no'. However, about one in four people thought conditions have improved, while slightly fewer than one in three said that they 'don't know'. Respondents from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were most likely to think conditions were better (39 per cent) compared to those in Balochistan, who were least likely to do so (8 per cent). Residents of Sindh were most likely to say that conditions have not improved (56 per cent) compared to those in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (32 per cent). Respondents exhibited great variation depending on ethnicity. Seventy per cent of Sindhis and 67 per cent of Seraiki speakers thought the situation had not improved for minorities, while only 29 per cent of Pakhtuns held this view. Conversely, 42 per cent of Pakhtuns thought the situation had improved compared to 8 per cent of Baloch people and 11 per cent of Hindko speakers. The wealthiest respondents were more likely than lower income groups to believe that conditions have improved for minorities in Pakistan (31 per cent and 17 per cent respectively).

Since 2009, various Pakistani civilian and military entities have sought to engage the Pakistani Taliban in 'peace talks'. Despite numerous deals that have been inked with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), none have brought peace. Yet Sharif campaigned on negotiating with the Pakistani Taliban, even though the TTP have repeatedly said that they do not accept Pakistan's Constitution and that they will accept no negotiation process that does not put constitutional change on the table. Given the salience of this issue, the Herald wanted to know whether or not Pakistanis support government efforts to deal with the TTP. Over all, respondents were deeply split with 34 per cent having a 'favourable' view of the government's 'current mode of engagement', 29 per cent 'unfavourable', and 33 per cent having a 'mixed' view. Such ambivalence is not new. Numerous surveys conducted over the years have reached similar conclusions. Respondents in Punjab and Balochistan were most favourably inclined towards the policy (close to

40 per cent) while those in Sindh were most opposed (45 per cent). Wealthier respondents were generally more supportive than poorer. Oddly those with no education and those with advanced degrees were more supportive than those with educational attainment levels that lie in between.

State of imbalance

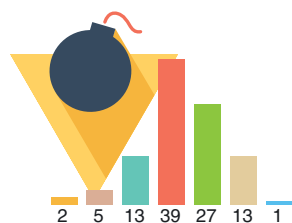
Pakistan's governance has long been bedeviled by army dominance. During their campaigns for the 2013 general election, both Sharif and his chief rival, Imran Khan, promised that they would bring the army under civilian control. One year later, the Herald wanted to assess the public's views on several issues pertaining to civil-military relations and the government's relationship with the courts (see page 26).

Respondents were asked whether they believed civil-military relations have improved during the tenure of the Sharif government. Forty-six per



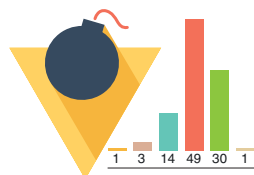
Illustration by Samya Arif

Rate the federal government's efforts to tackle sectarian violence

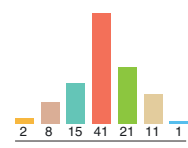


COUNTRYWIDE

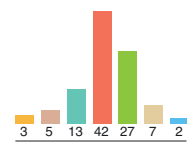
Excellent | Very good | Good | Average | Poor | Very poor | No response



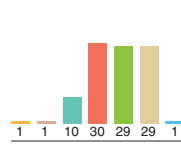
BALUCHISTAN



KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

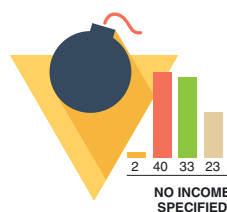


PUNJAB

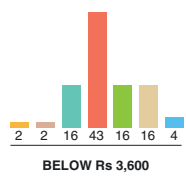


SINDH

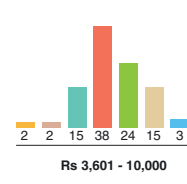
Responses by income level



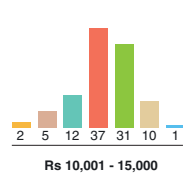
NO INCOME SPECIFIED



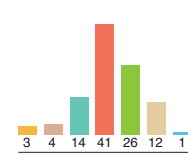
BELOW Rs 3,600



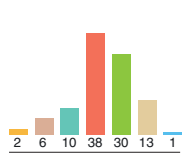
Rs 3,601 - 10,000



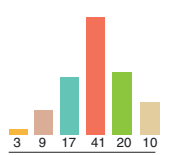
Rs 10,001 - 15,000



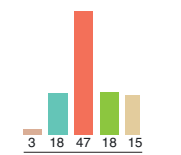
Rs 15,001 - 30,000



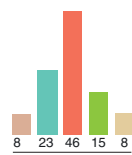
Rs 30,001 - 65,000



Rs 65,001 - 100,000



Rs 100,001 - 250,000



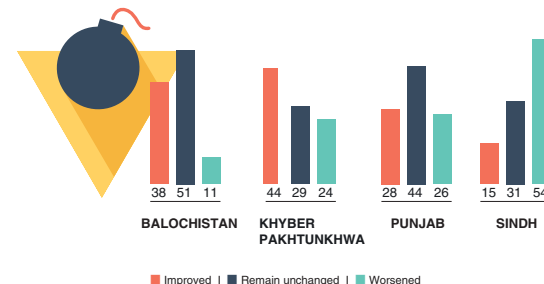
ABOVE Rs 250,000

AFP



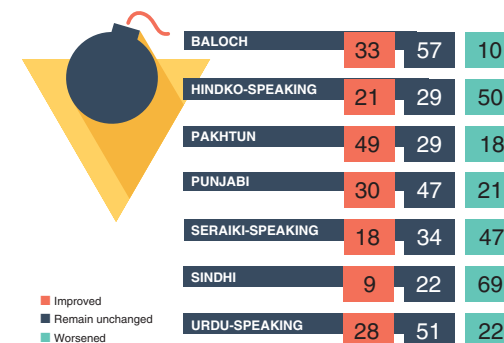
Hazara Shias protest against target killings in Quetta

How has law and order in the country fared under the federal government?



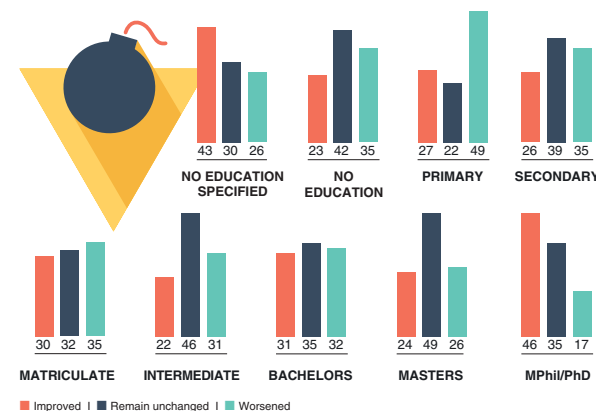
Improved | Remain unchanged | Worsened

Responses by ethnicity



Improved
Remain unchanged
Worsened

Responses by education



Improved | Remain unchanged | Worsened

cent said that they had not improved, compared to 24 per cent who said they have. A larger number (28 per cent) said they did not know. While there was little variation across provinces in those who thought there have been improvements, respondents in Sindh (50 per cent) were more likely than others to say that there had been no change compared to 38 per cent in Balochistan who said the same. Strong differences of opinion were evident among ethnic groups with 44 per cent of Urdu speakers seeing positive change in civil-military relations, compared to only 14 per cent of Baloch and 16 per cent of Sindhis. Considerable variation in views existed across income groups and levels of education.

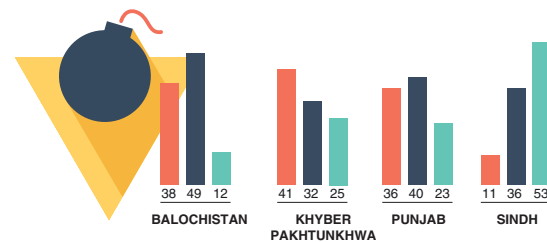
Tensions between the court, under the leadership of former chief justice of Pakistan, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, and the outgoing PPP-led government was a constant feature in domestic politics with many suspecting that the army was lurking behind the obstreperous court. Given the new government and a new chief justice, survey participants were asked about relations between the government and the judiciary during Sharif's tenure. Forty-three per cent believed relations had 'improved', compared to 30 per cent who believed they had not (see page 25). About 26 per cent indicated they did not know. Those in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (45 per cent) and Punjab (46 per cent) were most positive in their assessment compared to those in Sindh (35 per cent) and those in Balochistan (38 per cent). Sindh residents were the most negative in their assessment with 46 per cent believing things had not improved compared to 14 per cent in Balochistan. There was considerable difference of opinion across income groups with no consistent patterns. However, the lowest income group was the least likely to see improvement (31 per cent) and the wealthiest respondents were the most likely to see a positive change (62 per cent) in government-judiciary relations. Generally, people with lower

education qualifications were less likely to express improvement compared to ones who were better educated. Twenty per cent of uneducated people saw improvement and 48 per cent of the most educated shared this view. While few questions elicited extreme differences between men and women, this question did. Fifty-one per cent of men expressed improvement in government-judiciary relations while only 35 per cent of women were of this opinion. Similarly, rural and urban respondents had very different views on this subject, with 50 per cent of city participants expressing an improvement compared to 39 per cent of rural participants.

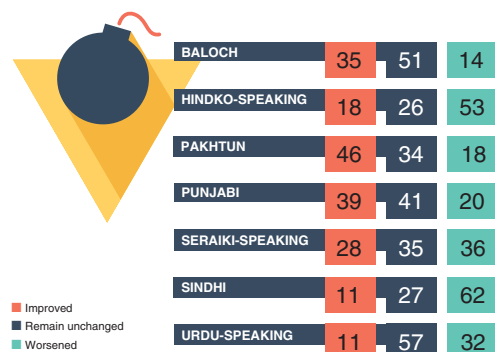
When Musharraf finally stepped down as president in 2008, he did so under threat of impeachment. He had previously retired from his position of army chief in the fall of 2007. No previous military dictator had come so close to impeachment. The army's senior leaders, fearing that the institution of the army was under indictment, encouraged Musharraf to step down to avoid impeachment. They also encouraged him to leave the country. Against the advice of his former colleagues in uniform, Musharraf returned to Pakistan to contest the 2013 general election. He was beset by numerous legal challenges, including a putative role in former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's murder and in the 2007 military raid on Islamabad's Lal Masjid, which had been overtaken by terrorists. Soon, treason was added to the accumulating charges against the former general and leader of Pakistan. The government's insistence upon trying him has been a major source of tension between the government and the army, which fears what such a trial would mean for the ability of any future army chief to illegally seize the government — as has been the case on four occasions in Pakistan's short history.

Respondents were asked what they thought about this controversial and historically unprecedented development (see page 2). It should be noted that the

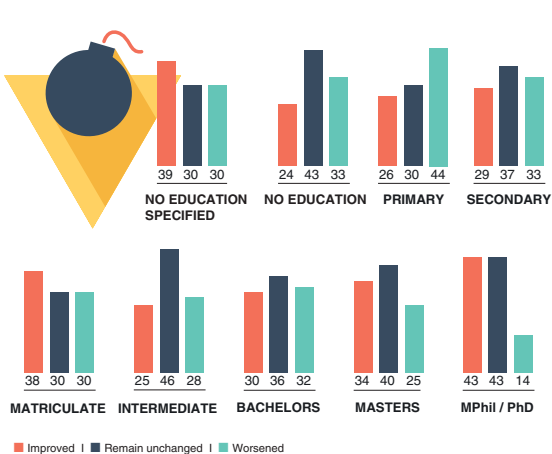
How has **law and order** in your province fared under the provincial government?



Responses by **ethnicity**



Responses by **education**

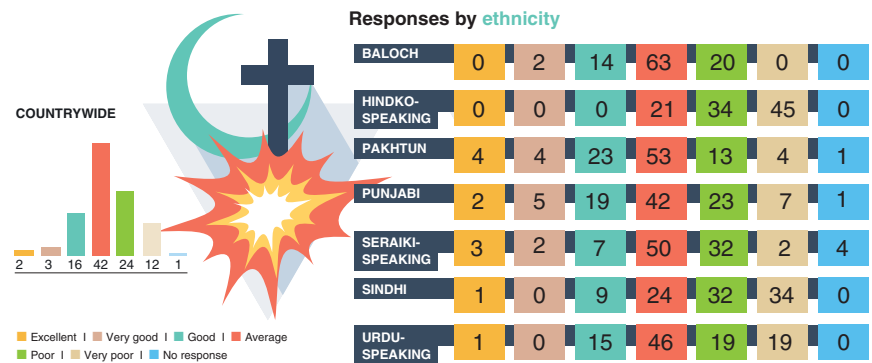


Christians protest against the bombing at a church in Peshawar in September 2013

Responses by **income level**



Rate the federal government's efforts to tackle **religious violence**:



question did not state 'treason' specifically and thus could be interpreted more generally. A large number of respondents (47 per cent) did not 'approve' of Musharraf's trial compared to 36 per cent who did. While other questions elicited a relatively high percentage of respondents who offered the 'don't know' answer, this question triggered a fairly low percentage of such responses (16 per cent). Support for the decision was highest in Balochistan (57 per cent) and lowest in Sindh (26 per cent). Similarly, opposition was greatest in Sindh (62 per cent opposed the decision) compared to only 17 per cent in Balochistan. These trends followed a similar pattern with ethnic variation. The Baloch were most supportive (59 per cent) compared to 11 per cent of Urdu speakers. The latter were the ethnic group most opposed to the decision (81 per cent) compared to Baloch respondents (12 per cent). Those in the highest income group were most supportive of this decision to try Musharraf (54 per cent) compared to those in the other classes, which were all below 40 per cent. Support for this decision varied considerably by educational attainment with no clear pattern in evidence.

Fragile friends, robust rivals

Pakistan has long had complicated relations with neighbours, India and Afghanistan. It has fought wars with India in 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999 and failed to win any of them. Pakistan started three of these wars (1947, 1965 and 1999) in an effort to rest Kashmir from India. In 1971, India intervened in the ongoing civil war in East Pakistan, resulting in its liberation and the emergence of Bangladesh. Pakistan's problems with Afghanistan began as early as 1947 when the latter opposed the former's admission into the United Nations. Afghanistan has long rejected the Durand Line, negotiated by Mortimer Durand and King Abdur Rehman in the 19th Century, as the international border, even though Afghanistan's position has no support in international law. Pakistan has long feared that Afghanistan – either on its own or with Indian collusion – will interfere in its restless border areas.

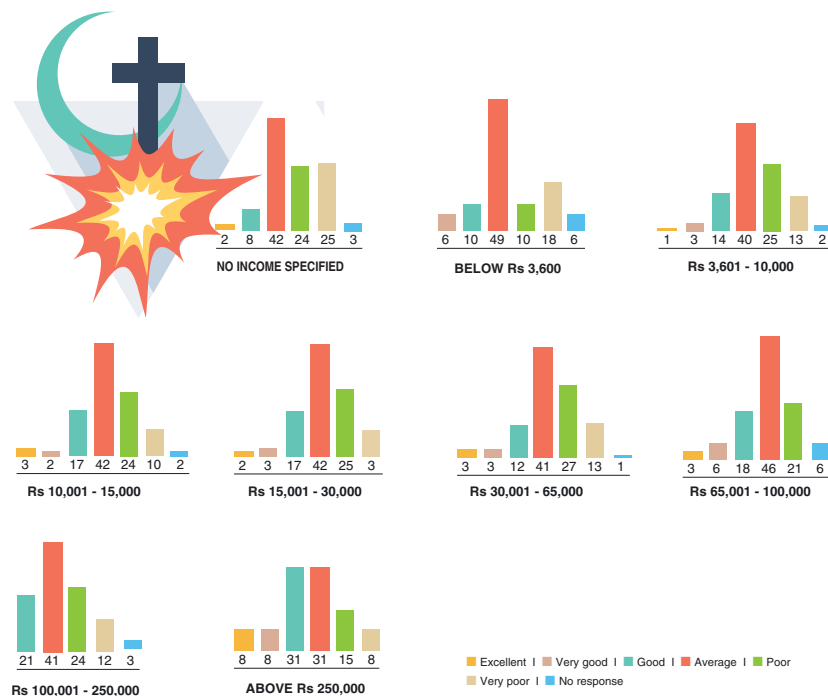
Pakistan has ties with two other states that are rooted in security and economic assistance, the US and China. Many Pakistanis view the US as a perfidious ally that uses Pakistan for its own goals and then discards it

when it wishes, often leaving Pakistan to manage the resultant fallout of the cooperation on its own. In contrast, Pakistanis tend to view China as an all-weather friend who supports the country when in need. In truth, neither of these caricatures is accurate.

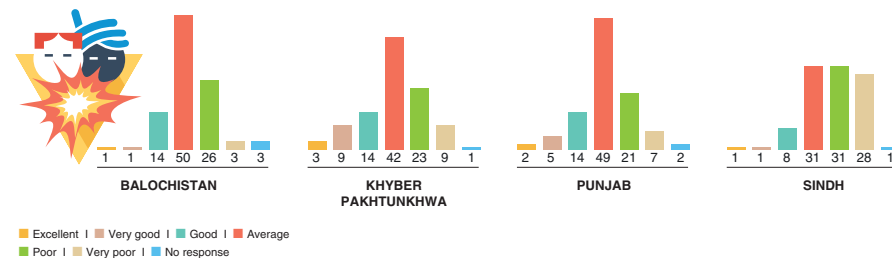
Pakistan also has important, but less transparent, relations with Iran and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan's relations with the former have long been tense. Iran is a Shia country that had, in the past, interfered in Pakistan's domestic affairs to support Pakistan's beleaguered Shias during Ziaul Haq's Sunni Islamisation efforts. Iran supported Pakistan's Shia community and even Shia militant groups. Soon Iraq, Saudi Arabia and others threw their support behind Pakistan's Sunni militias. While Shia violence against Sunnis has long since disappeared, Deobandi violence on Shias and others (including but not limited to Ahmedis) remains. Many in Pakistan and beyond suspect that Saudi Arabia and its citizens support these militant groups.

Pakistan's relations with each of these countries offer opportunities but also real dangers. Respondents were

Responses by income level



Rate the current federal government's efforts to tackle ethnic violence



Responses by ethnicity

BALUCH	0	2	12	55	22	4	4
HINDKO-SPEAKING	3	5	0	16	34	39	3
PAKHTUN	3	8	17	47	22	3	0
PUNJABI	2	6	16	47	20	8	2
SERAIKI-SPEAKING	3	1	7	56	26	3	5
SINDHI	1	0	10	20	36	31	0
URDU-SPEAKING	1	1	4	55	21	19	0

asked to rank these relations on a scale of one to five. Not surprisingly, a majority ranked Pakistan's relations with both China (55 per cent) and Saudi Arabia (56 per cent) as five, the highest available ranking.

Of the six, India fared the worst with 36 per cent giving the relationship a rank of one and another 34 per cent a rank of two. While respondents were not quite as dubious about Afghanistan as India, one in five ranked relations with the former as one and another 27 per cent gave it a ranking of two. Surprisingly, the US fared better than both with only 14 per cent giving it a one and another 18 per cent indicating a two.

In contrast to highly ranked China and Saudi Arabia and to lowly ranked India, Afghanistan and the US, Pakistanis were more ambivalent about Iran with 27 per cent giving it either a one or a two, 34 per cent giving it a three, 17 per cent giving it a four or five.

A crisis of consensus

Despite the importance of the issues raised through the survey's questions, respondents were surprisingly ambivalent, with large numbers of people expressing 'mixed views' or indicating that they 'did not know.' This ambivalence was a problem during previous military and civilian governments in the last decade

and demonstrates, at least to this writer, a failure by government elites to create consensus about important issues facing their country.

When respondents were not ambivalent about key issues, they tended to be deeply divided depending upon the province of residence and their ethnicity. In some cases, differences of opinion arose across income group and levels of educational attainment. This suggests that there are significant experiential differences across Pakistan's variegated communities. That variation was generally not large or significant between men and women suggesting that these attitudes are driven by structural determinants (such as ethnic group, class, education). Curiously, these variables exhibited little variation between rural and urban residents, despite the considerable attention that the so-called rural/urban divide enjoys. At least with the issues analysed here, locality and ethnicity seem to be the most important factors driving opinion formation.

Given that Sharif's party does not have anything resembling equal standing across provinces and ethnic groups in Pakistan, these differences may be very difficult for his government to reconcile. In this case, he will likely fare no better or no worse than many governments that came and went before him. ■