

PAKISTAN: KARACHI'S MADRASAS AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

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PAKISTAN: KARACHI'S MADRASAS AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

More than five years after President Pervez Musharraf declared his intention to crack down on violent sectarian and jihadi groups and to regulate the network of madrasas (religious schools) on which they depend, his government's reform program is in shambles. Banned sectarian and jihadi groups, supported by networks of mosques and madrasas, continue to operate openly in Pakistan's largest city, Karachi, and elsewhere. The international community needs to press President Musharraf to fulfil his commitments, in particular to enforce genuine controls on the madrasas and allow free and fair national elections in 2007. It should also shift the focus of its donor aid from helping the government's ineffectual efforts to reform the religious schools to improving the very weak public school sector.

Karachi's madrasas, which have trained and dispatched jihadi fighters to Afghanistan and Indian-administered Kashmir, offer a valuable case study of government failures and consequences for internal stability and regional and international security. In 2006, the city was rocked by high-profile acts of political violence. In three separate attacks, suicide bombers killed a U.S. diplomat, assassinated the head of the most prominent Shia political group and wiped out the entire leadership of a Sunni militant group locked in a struggle for control over mosques with its Sunni rivals.

Not all madrasas in the city are active centres of jihadi militancy but even those without direct links to violence promote an ideology that provides religious justification for such attacks. Exploiting Karachi's rapid, unplanned and unregulated urbanisation and its masses of young, disaffected and impoverished citizens, the madrasa sector has grown at an explosive rate over the past two decades. Given the government's half-hearted reform efforts, these unregulated madrasas contribute to Karachi's climate of lawlessness in numerous ways – from illegal land encroachment and criminality to violent clashes between rival militant groups and use of the pulpit to spread calls for sectarian and jihadi violence.

The Pakistan government has yet to take any of the overdue and necessary steps to control religious extremism in Karachi and the rest of the country.

Musharraf's periodic declarations of tough action, given in response to international events and pressure, are invariably followed by retreat. Primarily responsible for the half-hearted efforts is his dependence on the religious right, particularly his coalition partner in the Balochistan government, the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), which runs the largest network of Deobandi madrasas. He needs these allies to counter his civilian opposition, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), which dominated politics during the democratic interlude of the 1990s.

Plans are announced with much fanfare and then abandoned. As a result, madrasas remain either unregistered or registered under laws that have no effective implementation. The sectarian, jihadi content of the madrasa curriculum is untouched, and there is no meaningful control over money flows into and through madrasas and other religious institutions. The absence of a single agency, under parliamentary control and with the requisite authority to regulate the madrasa sector, has empowered opponents of reform. Powers are scattered among multiple ministries and levels of government. Attempts to "mainstream" madrasa curricula through introduction of a range of non-religious classes have also proved futile, with most madrasas refusing to cooperate with very modest government reforms. In any case, the introduction of secular courses would only be of slight value unless there were also deep changes in the religious curriculum to end the promotion of violent sectarianism and jihad.

Government efforts, and donors' money, should instead go towards increased support and reform of the public school system, including removal of the sectarian, pro-jihad, and anti-minority portions of its curriculum. Donors must monitor the reform of that public school curriculum closely and make sure that it is implemented with the requisite long-term commitment.

Exploiting the military government's weakness, the religious parties and madrasa unions have countered all attempts to regulate the madrasa sector. By backtracking, the government has further emboldened sectarian and extremist forces, resulting in a significant contribution to the violence that plagues Karachi and indeed the rest

of the country. The prospects for breaking the links between the madrasa sector and violent extremism would increase if the national elections this year are democratic, free and fair. If they are, it is likely that the religious parties will be marginalised and the national-level moderate parties – with much greater political will to enact meaningful reforms – returned to power.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Government of Pakistan:

1. Adopt an effective, mandatory and madrasa-specific registration law that, in conformity with international conventions on terrorism and extremism:
 - (a) bars jihadi and violent sectarian teachings from madrasa syllabi;
 - (b) requires the disclosure and documentation of income and expenditure based on an annual, independent and external financial audit;
 - (c) requires the documentation of students and their areas of origin and monitors living conditions of students in madrasas; and
 - (d) establishes controls over financing from domestic and foreign sources, accompanied by regular and proactive monitoring.
2. Establish a single Madrasa Regulatory Authority, headed by the interior minister, operating under parliamentary oversight and with the necessary resources and powers to:
 - (a) suspend registration of madrasas until such a new law is in force that also includes a new, mandatory registration regime and contains meaningful financial and curricular regulations; and
 - (b) commission an independent, comprehensive survey to obtain authentic data on the number of madrasas and the size of the student body.
3. Do not treat madrasa certificates as the equivalent of degrees issued by recognised boards of education and universities.
4. Take effective action against all extremist groups and parties, in particular by:
 - (a) disbanding, pursuant to Article 256 of the constitution, all private militias, including those organised for sectarian and jihadi causes;

- (b) dismantling the infrastructure of groups banned under the Anti-Terrorism Law by making public the evidence for which the groups were proscribed, prosecuting their leaders and preventing members from regrouping and reorganising under new identities;
 - (c) closing all madrasas affiliated with banned organisations or with other sectarian and jihadi organisations;
 - (d) taking legal action against the administration of any mosque or madrasa whose leader calls for internal or external jihad;
 - (e) taking legal action against the administration of any mosque or madrasa or religious leader responsible for issuing an apostasy *fatwa*, whether verbal or written;
 - (f) cancelling the print declarations (licences) of jihadi and sectarian publications and prosecuting publishers;
 - (g) blocking the circulation of audio/video cassettes and CDs propagating jihad and sectarian ideologies by prosecuting those responsible for producing and/or selling them;
 - (h) enforcing existing laws against hate-speech and incitement of communal violence; and
 - (i) signing immediately the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.
5. Improve the quality of life for urban residents and prevent the misuse of mosques and madrasas by:
 - (a) clearing mosques and madrasas encroaching on state land and dismantling those occupying public parks in Karachi and other cities;
 - (b) establishing zoning regulations that restrict establishment of madrasas with hostels in residential neighbourhoods; and
 - (c) enforcing strictly the ban on loudspeakers used in mosques for anything other than permitted religious activities.
 6. Reform the public education system by purging material that promotes religious hatred, sectarian bias or historical accounts that justify jihad.

To the International Community:

7. Demand that the Pakistan government honour its commitments to madrasa reform, and in particular urge it to:

- (a) close immediately all madrasas linked to banned extremist organisations and all other jihadi and sectarian groups;
 - (b) establish a Madrasa Regulatory Authority under the ministry of interior and parliamentary oversight and with sufficient powers to enforce meaningful madrasa regulation; and
 - (c) institute curriculum reform and financial control mechanisms.
8. Give financial support solely for reform of the public school system instead of aiding government attempts to “mainstream” madrasa curricula.
 9. Monitor strictly evangelical preachers who work with expatriate Muslim communities in European Union countries and North America.
 10. Make diplomatic and financial support to the Pakistan government contingent on the holding of free, fair and democratic national elections.

Islamabad/Brussels, 29 March 2007

PAKISTAN: KARACHI'S MADRASAS AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

I. INTRODUCTION

Karachi witnessed a particularly deadly year in 2006. Despite repeated promises by the Musharraf government to rein in the sectarian and jihadi groups that undermine Pakistan's stability and threaten regional and international security, the city remains a haven for violent extremism.¹ Much of this violence has its roots in Karachi's thousands of unregulated religious seminaries, known as madrasas.² Suicide bombings against a range of targets, foreign and domestic, have further destabilised a city already unhinged from years of political, sectarian, and jihadi violence. Attacks against U.S. diplomats and religious leaders of various Islamic sects are only the most visible expression of the violence and insecurity that plague Pakistan's largest city and commercial capital.³

¹ For Crisis Group analysis on the links between the madrasa sector and violent extremism in Pakistan, see Crisis Group Asia Reports N°36, *Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military*, 29 July 2002; N°49, *Pakistan: The Mullahs and the Military*, 20 March 2003; N°73, *Unfulfilled Promises: Pakistan's Failure to Tackle Extremism*, 16 January 2004; N°84, *Pakistan: Reforming the Education Sector*, 7 October 2004; and N°95, *The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*, 18 April 2005. For other useful discussions of the history and present state of religious schools in the country, see Mumtaz Ahmad, "Continuity and Change in the Traditional System of Islamic Education: The Case of Pakistan" in Craig Baxter and Charles H. Kennedy (eds.), *Pakistan 2000* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 182-194; Christopher Candland, "Pakistan's Recent Experience in Reforming Islamic Education" in "Education Reform in Pakistan: Building for the Future", Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington DC, 2005, pp. 151-165; and C. Christine Fair, "Islamic Education in Pakistan", United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC, 2006.

² Madrasa is the Urdu word for a school from grades one through ten (plural form *madaris* in that language, though Crisis Group uses *madrasas*); in everyday speech, however, it is generally used only to refer to religious schools, for which the proper Urdu phrase is *deeni madaris*. Religious study at the equivalent of grades eleven and twelve is at *darul ulooms* (abodes of knowledge). The religious equivalent of a college or university is called a *jamia*. In this report, as in most policy-oriented discussions of religious education in Pakistan, "madrasa" is used to refer to all three levels of Islamic schooling.

³ Karachi, the capital of Sindh province, has the country's largest concentrations of both rich and poor, high crime rates and a long history of political violence.

It is five years since President Musharraf's nationwide address of January 2002 in which he promised to dismantle jihadi and violent sectarian groups and regulate the madrasa system that helps sustain them.⁴ His reform plan, as this report details, lies in shambles. Some key events in Karachi in 2006 demonstrate the nature, extent and costs of this failure.

The 21 July 2006 suicide attack, which killed Allama Hasan Turabi, President of the Pakistan Islami Tehreek, the country's largest Shia political party, was the latest in a long series of assassinations of prominent Shia leaders in Karachi.⁵ After surviving an earlier attempt on 6 April, Turabi had publicly named the Sunni Deobandi militant group Sipah Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and its branch, the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LJ), as his likely attackers.⁶ His killing sparked two days of violent protests, which virtually shut down the metropolis.

Violent sectarianism in Karachi is not limited to attacks between Sunni-Deobandi and Shia militant groups.⁷

⁴ Jihad is a complicated doctrine with multiple meanings. What is sometimes called "greater jihad" is generally understood as internal struggle, an effort at self-cleansing. So-called "lesser jihad" is roughly understood as holy struggle or even war. The term is used in this report to refer to jihad involving at least the prospect of violence and covers all three main variants of Islamic armed struggle today: internal (combating nominally Muslim regimes considered impious); irredentist (fighting to redeem land ruled by non-Muslims or under occupation); and global (combating the West). For a detailed analysis of contemporary forms of violent jihad, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°37, *Understanding Islamism*, 2 March 2005.

⁵ "Sectarian blowback continues to inflict pain on Pakistan", *Daily Times*, editorial, 16 July 2006; Ammara Durrani, "Insecure times", *The News*, 23 July 2006.

⁶ "Allama Turabi escapes unhurt in bomb blast", *The News*, 7 April 2006. The police believe that LJ was behind Turabi's murder. The SSP has denied involvement in either attack. See "Police arrest 3 in Turabi case", *The News*, 26 July 2006; Behroz Khan and Munawar Afridi, "Turabi's alleged killer dies in a mysterious blast", *The News*, 10 September 2006.

⁷ In addition to the better known divisions between the Sunni majority and Shia minority, Pakistan's Sunnis are themselves divided into four broad categories: Deobandis, Barelvis, Alhe Hadith (Salafi), and revivalist modernist movements such as the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI). The first three Sunni subsects emerged as religious educational movements in the nineteenth century

Bloody clashes between Deobandi and Barelvi activists for control of Sunni mosques occur regularly.⁸ On 11 April, in the worst massacre of its kind in Pakistan's history, 47 people were killed and over 100 injured when a suicide bomber attacked an outdoor religious gathering held by Sunni Barelvi groups in Nishtar Park. The congregation was celebrating Eid Milad-un-Nabi, which commemorates the birth of the Prophet Mohammed, a custom that Deobandis considered un-Islamic. The Deobandi groups, the SSP and LJ were again the chief suspects, since those killed included the three main leaders of Sunni Tehrik (ST), their fiercest rival, and the most prominent Sunni Barelvi militant group.⁹ Sunni Tehrik's previous leadership had been assassinated in 2001 in attacks that were linked to the SSP.

On 2 March a suicide attack near the U.S. consulate killed an American diplomat, his Pakistani colleague and a guard.¹⁰ No group took public responsibility, though the two young Pakistanis now on trial are accused of links to Karachi-based, al-Qaeda-linked jihadi groups, who in turn had ties with the city's network of extremist mosques and madrasas.¹¹ On 30 September, a suicide bomber killed twelve civilians outside a government building in Kabul. According to Afghan intelligence sources, the attacker and three other colleagues (whose planned attacks were thwarted) were trained at the madrasa attached to the Masjid-e-Noor, a mosque in Masehra Colony, in north-eastern Karachi. According to one of the men now in detention in Afghanistan and awaiting trial, they were sent on their suicide mission by Maulvi Abdul Shakoor Khairpur, then in charge of the Masjid-e-Noor madrasa and who is, according to the suspect, a member of the banned jihadi group, Harkat-ul-Mujahidin.¹²

The latest wave of violence in Karachi came at a time when the Musharraf government's plans to register madrasas and reform their curricula were collapsing. Five years after it was inaugurated, the Madrasa Reform Project (MRP), aimed at moderating the institution by introducing mainstream subjects in its curriculum, has become a victim of madrasa resistance and official ambivalence. This is best demonstrated in Sindh Province and its capital, Karachi. After three years of efforts by the Sindh Education Department to help "mainstream" the province's madrasas by including secular education in them, Islamabad asked provincial education authorities in mid-2006 to return more than \$100 million in unspent federal money.¹³ Minus meaningful change of their religious curriculum, regulation of their finances and dismantlement of their links with sectarian and other jihadi groups, Karachi's madrasas will remain a source of violence and instability.

The city, which has seen years of deadly sectarian conflict, has been the site of a particularly striking and unchecked expansion of the religious seminaries. It offers a compelling case study of the costs – political and social – of the government's failure to regulate and monitor the madrasa sector. This report examines the linkages between Karachi's share of that sector and violent extremism, including the nexus between madrasas and mosques and terror groups banned by the Musharraf government but which still continue to operate freely.¹⁴ It also analyses the objectives, and quality, of the education offered by Karachi's seminaries and highlights a host of non-educational functions that they perform, including unlawful activities that undermine the already poor quality of life of the city's residents.

during British rule in India. The JI came into being in the 1940s. Each sect and subsect has militant groups that claim to defend – with violence – their group's interest or particular brand of religious truth. Each sect and subsect also has political parties that do the same through the formal political system. The lines between a sect's militant groups and political parties are often both blurred and porous. For more detailed analysis of sectarian groups, see Crisis Group Report, *The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*, op. cit., pp. 2-5.

⁸ "Karachi mosques and sectarianism", *Daily Times*, 20 April 2006; Syed Shoaib Hasan, "Two hurt, vehicles burnt in mosque dispute", *Dawn*, 15 April 2006.

⁹ "Sunni Tehreek takes a hit", *Daily Times*, editorial, 13 April 2006.

¹⁰ "U.S. Consulate employees killed in bomb blast at U.S. Consulate in Karachi", press release, U.S. embassy, 2 March 2006, islamabad.usembassy.gov/pakistan/h06030201.html.

¹¹ "Three more prosecution witnesses examined: U.S. diplomat killing case", *Dawn*, 14 December 2006; "Two witnesses examined in diplomat case", *Dawn*, 27 January 2007.

¹² Carlotta Gall, "Pakistan link seen in rise in Afghan suicide attacks", *The New York Times*, 14 November 2006.

¹³ Mukhtar Alam, "Sindh to surrender [Pakistan rupees] Rs. 65 million in lapsed fund", *Dawn*, 29 August 2006.

¹⁴ An influential national daily said: "Many extremist militias stand outlawed, but the ban is only in theory, for in practice they exist underground and are able to strike wherever they wish". "A horrific atrocity", *Dawn*, editorial, 13 April 2006.

II. MAPPING KARACHI'S CENTRES OF EXTREMISM

A. POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Karachi is Pakistan's largest and most populous city and the lifeline of the national economy.¹⁵ Every major Pakistani linguistic and ethnic group has a sizeable presence in this Arabian Sea port.¹⁶ Nearly half of its population are Mohajirs – Urdu-speaking refugees and migrants from India.¹⁷

Language is critical in Karachi's politics. Before the arrival of the Urdu-speaking migrants, Karachi and other cities in Sindh were predominantly Sindhi. With the Mohajir influx, the Sindhis became a minority in the urban centres of their homeland.¹⁸ Before the federal capital moved to Islamabad, Karachi was selected as Pakistan's first capital and separated from Sindh, creating resentment among the Sindhis and leading to a permanent ethno-political division in the province. Over the course of three major waves of integral migration, Pashtun and Punjabi workers, followed later by Bengali, Bihari, and

¹⁵ Karachi's population is between 14 and 15 million, though official census figures are disputed. It is Pakistan's only major port and contains most of its major industries and businesses. Karachi's stock exchange accounts for 80-90 per cent of Pakistan's capital market. Sindh generates almost 70 per cent of income tax and 62 per cent of sales tax collected by the federal government, 94 per cent of which is collected in Karachi alone. See Arif Hasan and Masooma Habib, "The Case of Karachi, Pakistan" in *The Challenge of Slums: Case Studies for UN Habitat Global Report on Human Settlements 2003* (London, 2003); Arif Hasan, Akbar Zaidi, and Muhammad Younus, *Understanding Karachi: Planning and Reform for the Future* (Karachi, 2002).

¹⁶ According to the 1998 census, the linguistic breakdown of the city was Urdu-speaking (Mohajir) 48.52 per cent; Punjabi 13.94 per cent; Sindhi 7.22 per cent; Pashto 11.42 per cent; Balochi 4.34 per cent; Seraiki 2.11 per cent; others 12.4 per cent, including Balochi, Kashmiri, Bengali, Gujarati, Memon, and Burmese. There has been a considerable influx of Pashtun and Punjabi migrants since that census but there is no recent reliable statistical data.

¹⁷ While the 1951 census defines Mohajir as "a person who has moved into Pakistan as a result of Partition (of British India) or for fear of disturbances connected therewith", the term commonly refers to Urdu-speaking refugees or migrants. Of the eight million people who migrated to Pakistan's west wing from India, about one and a half million, almost all Urdu-speaking, settled in Sindh province. Of these, more than 600,000 ended up in Karachi. Most refused to assimilate, resulting in tensions with the local Sindhi-speaking population. See Feroz Ahmed, *Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan* (Karachi, 1998), p. 91.

¹⁸ Hasan, Zaidi, Younus, op.cit.

Afghan refugees flooded the city, swelling its population and giving rise to multiple ethnic conflicts.

After Pakistan's independence, Karachi also became the focal point of its industrial and commercial growth. In 2007, it is paradoxically Pakistan's richest city and the poorest and most violent. The civil-military bureaucratic elite and other wealthy sections of society live in the six cantonment areas and old South district.¹⁹ Much of the rest of the city is divided into clusters of residential colonies and slums, some of which are ethnically homogenous and have distinct ethnic titles.²⁰ Unplanned squatter dwellings, *katchi abadis*, have spread uncontrollably. Almost half the population lives in these unplanned settlements, which often lack electricity, sewers and running water.²¹ An estimated 350,000 persons still move to Karachi every year, further straining its already inadequate infrastructure. The state's failure to provide basic public amenities, combined with widespread unemployment,²² leads to struggles over resources, jobs, and educational opportunities, which at times explode into violence.

The military's political manipulations are also responsible for ethnic and religious violence. The city became the hub of religious politics soon after Pakistan's inception and the influx of Mohajirs, who were represented by their religious parties, the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) and the Barvelvi Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP). The military quickly developed institutional ties to the JI, which the party repaid by, for instance, the active involvement of its vigilante groups in the bloody suppression of Bengali dissent during the civil war that culminated in Pakistan's dismemberment and Bangladesh's independence. Under General Zia-ul-Haq, the military's patronage permitted

¹⁹ Karachi has eighteen towns and six cantonment boards (areas managed by the military but with many private homeowners). The latter are the most affluent areas of the city. Increasingly isolated from the rest of the city, the cantonments have developed their own sports facilities, shopping centres, entertainment activities, libraries and educational institutions.

²⁰ Some Mohajir-majority areas, for instance, reflect their places of origin such as Bihar Colony.

²¹ According to officials of the Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority, over 50 per cent of Karachi's population resides in more than 1,293 informal settlements, mainly on government land illegally occupied by developers with the support of officials and protected through bribes to the police. A number of these settlements have residents' organisations that lobby government agencies for infrastructure and security of tenure. *Katchi abadis* also include original Sindhi-majority villages that are now surrounded by the ever-expanding city. Crisis Group interviews, officials, Karachi, September 2005. See also "Housing", Urban Resource Centre, Karachi, www.urckarachi.org/housing.htm.

²² The 1998 census put Karachi's unemployment rate at 17.5 per cent, although experts estimate that nearly 30 per cent of the male workforce may be unemployed. Crisis Group interview, Abbas Noorani, Karachi, July 2005.

the JI to become the dominant political force in Karachi. In the mid-1980s, the Zia government shifted its backing to a new Mohajir force, the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), which was used to counter the military's main civilian adversary, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), still the most popular party in Sindh.²³

Under Musharraf, the military still backs the MQM²⁴ to counter the PPP. In return, the MQM supports the military government in Sindh and in Islamabad. While the party has reaped benefits,²⁵ it is now involved in a bloody feud with an increasingly resentful JI, with both sides accusing the other of terrorism.²⁶ This rivalry is understandably a concern for the military government, since the JI is one of the two major parties in the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA), the six-party religious alliance that has supported Musharraf in the centre and is a coalition partner in the Balochistan government. Maulana Fazlur Rehman's Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F), the other and largest MMA component, has a limited, mainly Pashtun, constituency in Karachi.²⁷

Although the JI-MQM rivalry has resulted in occasional clashes between their student wings, the Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba (IJT) and the Mohajir Students Movement, sectarian and religious violence has been far more pervasive and dangerous in Karachi, with its madrasa network acting as a catalyst.

B. MADRASA TERRAIN

Mosques and madrasas have multiplied in Karachi at a rapid pace since the mid-1980s, the heyday of the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan. While many residents believe

there are already more than enough religious institutions in their neighbourhood, the clergy thinks otherwise. According to a Karachi neighbourhood activist, "the construction of mosques in residential areas is seen as a divine right, and any attempt to question this right is seen as a challenge to divine law".²⁸

Responding to questions about building mosques without official permission, an MMA leader in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) provincial legislature said: "Pakistan is an Islamic country. This practice [seeking government permission] existed only in the British or Sikh Rajs".²⁹ In February 2007, faced by protesting women students of a militant madrasa, Jamia Hafsa, in Islamabad, the government backed down on its decision to demolish mosques and madrasas built illegally on state land. The list of 81 illegally-constructed mosques and madrasas in the federal capital included Jamia Hafsa. Justifying the students' protests about the demolition of one mosque on the list, Abdul Rashid Ghazi, the head of Lal Masjid complex, which houses Jamia Hafsa, declared: "The government has committed a sin in trying to destroy this mosque".³⁰

This unregulated expansion of madrasas and mosques is fuelling sectarian hatred and violence. Commenting on the impact on Karachi, a human rights activist said: "One mosque should be enough to cater to the religious needs of one residential area". Yet, single-mosque communities are increasingly rare. "Every sect wants to have its own mosque, fuelling sectarian competition and causing tensions and insecurity among people", said Akhtar Baloch of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP).³¹

Nor do a madrasa and a mosque come alone. HRCP's Baloch described how an entire street in his neighbourhood was taken over within a few years of the establishment of a new madrasa. In addition to shops, the madrasa administration now runs and owns a female madrasa, an English-medium Islamic school, a medical clinic, a restaurant and a computer centre. "All families living in the street have shifted to other areas", said Baloch, who believes the number of madrasas in Karachi surpasses official estimates, and their impact on citizens is profound.³²

²³ See Crisis Group Report, *The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*, op. cit.

²⁴ The initials now stand for a new name: Muttahida Qaumi Movement.

²⁵ Although the PPP won the largest number of seats in the provincial legislature during the 2002 elections, it was not allowed to form the government. Instead, Musharraf's party, the Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid-i-Azam), or PML-Q, formed a coalition government, giving its MQM ally many prize posts, including that of Sindh Governor.

²⁶ "Loya Jirga awaits government's response, MQM alleges JI behind violence", *Daily Times*, 18 December 2006; "Karachi: JI's concern over lawlessness", *Dawn*, 7 January 2007.

²⁷ The MMA is composed of six parties: the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI); the Jamiat Ahle Hadith (JAH)-Ahle Hadith/Salafi; the Barelvi Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP); the Shia Tehrik-e-Islami Pakistan (TIP) and two factions of the Deobandi Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, led by Fazlur Rehman (JUI-F) and Samiul Haq (JUI-S). The bulk of MMA members in the federal legislature belong to the JUI-F, which also is also the dominant MMA actor in the NWFP and Balochistan governments. The two JUI factions also run the largest network of madrasas countrywide.

²⁸ Crisis Group interview, Amber Alibhai, Karachi, 23 November 2006.

²⁹ Zakir Hassnain, "No choppers, no hasba, we need relief", *Daily Times*, 15 November 2005.

³⁰ Declan Walsh, "Musharraf confronts militants in standoff over religious school", *The Guardian*, 13 February 2007; "Seminary students say they are willing to die to protect mosques", *Daily Times*, 7 February 2007.

³¹ Crisis Group interview, Karachi, August 2005.

³² Crisis Group interview, Karachi, August 2005.

Spread across the city without any planning and working without governmental oversight, mosques and madrasas particularly exploit the lack of regulation in poor and working-class neighbourhoods. As a result, they pose problems at multiple levels of governance and social life. Their establishment is accompanied by the illegal encroachment of public land, unregulated business activity and noise pollution, as competing sects use loudspeakers to preach their message. Their presence also increases the danger of innocent bystanders being caught in the crossfire of sectarian attacks and clashes between rival sects for control of mosques. Most important of all, as detailed below, many madrasas continue to house and train militants of banned extremist groups.

1. Counting Karachi's madrasas

Nobody agrees on figures about mosques and madrasas in Karachi. Because they are still not subject to any systematic and rigorous registration or regulation, there are no reliable official estimates. Statistics compiled by the police and intelligence agencies are often misleading and are routinely disputed by NGOs and city residents. Despite the need for reliable statistical data, no independent agency, government body or even the clergy-run madrasa board has yet conducted a thorough and transparent survey of the madrasa sector.

Even countrywide figures are disputed. According to Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao, there are a total of 13,500 madrasas,³³ of which 12,006 are registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860.³⁴ Well-founded estimates, however, put the number at about 20,000.³⁵ Qari Hanif Jallandhry, secretary-general of the Ittehad Tanzimat Madaris Dinia (TMD), who teaches at Karachi's Jamia Binoria madrasa, agrees and adds: "The government is lying when it says there are fewer than 1,000 madrasas in Karachi".³⁶

The ministry of education's 2004 directory listed 979 Karachi madrasas;³⁷ two years later the Sindh police claimed there were 970.³⁸ Yet in 2004, the Deobandi Wafaq al-Madaris (madrasa federation) insisted it had some 1,500 of its own in the city.³⁹ Non-Deobandi madrasa administrators claimed that Karachi had roughly 300 Bareilvi madrasas, 36 Shia and 36 Ahle Hadith, bringing the total to around 1,800.⁴⁰

Local experts believe that an impartial count in Karachi would yield a much higher figure. "The government projects low numbers to reduce the level of threat perception, especially in the West, and to make the world believe that the problem is manageable. If we take government statistics to be true, then it means each of Karachi's *katchi abadis* has no more than one or two madrasas, which I as a resident of a *katchi abadi* myself find absolutely incredible", said Abdul Waheed Khan of the Bright Educational Society, which runs a pioneering madrasa reform project in Karachi's Pashtun-dominated Qasba Colony and other *katchi abadis*. He added: "We have been directly engaged in supplementary educational projects in 350 madrasas, and we cover only a fraction of the city. I am certain that 35-40 new madrasas appear every year".⁴¹

The complexities of the registration process are responsible for much of this confusion, a religious leader explained. "If a trust is registered under either the 1860 (Societies) Act or any other law, and it runs a chain of twenty madrasas, in government files it would be counted as one institution". On the other hand, he said, seminaries that teach only a part of the madrasa curriculum or are registered as welfare or charity organisations are sometimes counted as full-fledged madrasas.⁴²

The numbers game, however, can divert attention from the real challenge: the role of madrasas in spreading extremism and inciting sectarian terrorism in Karachi

³³ "18 Jehadi outfits banned: Sherpao", *The News*, 17 January 2007. According to Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, 95 per cent of Pakistan's supposed 13,000 madrasas have been registered. "Most madrasas now registered, says Aziz", *Daily Times*, 15 February 2007.

³⁴ Discussed in greater detail later, the Societies Registration Act of 1860, a colonial-era law used to register and regulate charities, arts, civic, and other non-governmental organisations is now the primary means for registering and regulating the madrasa sector.

³⁵ See, for instance, Candland, op.cit., pp. 152-153.

³⁶ Crisis Group interview, 22 November 2006. *Wafaq* is Arabic for federation or union. There are five loose umbrella organisations of madrasas which represent each of the five major sects of Islam in Pakistan: Wafaq al-Madaris al-Arabiya (Sunni Deobandi); Tanzim al Madaris al-Arabiya (Sunni Bareilvi); Wafaq al-Madaris al-Shia (Shia); Wafaq al-Madraris Al-Salafiya

(Alhe-Hadith/Salafi); and Rabita al-Madaris al-Arabiya of the Jamaat-i-Islami. Together they are organised as the Ittehad Tanzimat Madaris Dinia (ITMD), which acts as the united front for the otherwise divided *ulema*.

³⁷ Directory of Deeni Madaris, curriculum wing, ministry of education, Islamabad, August 2004. The total number of madrasas in the country, according to this directory, was 10,430.

³⁸ Documents made available to Crisis Group by the police department, Karachi, November 2006.

³⁹ See Monthly *Wafaq al-Madaris*, August 2004, p. 63; also Crisis Group Report, *Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military*, op. cit.

⁴⁰ Crisis Group interviews, representatives of madrasa unions, August 2005.

⁴¹ Crisis Group interview, Abdul Waheed Khan, Karachi, September 2005.

⁴² Crisis Group interview, Tayyab Rizvi, Karachi, August 2005.

and countrywide. In the words of Zulfiqar Shah, author of a report on the topic, “[even] if we accept that there are 970 (unmonitored) madrasas in Karachi, as the government sources assert, that itself should be a cause for worry”.⁴³

III. THE ACTORS

A. THE DEOBANDI-PASHTUN NEXUS

As the following sect-by-sect survey of Karachi madrasas and militant groups makes clear, a powerful subset of madrasas continues to house members of formally banned militant groups, which continue to operate freely and actively support jihadi violence, in a clear violation of Article 256 of the 1973 constitution, which forbids private armies.⁴⁴

1. Deobandi madrasas

Other than a handful of JI and Ahle Hadith⁴⁵ seminaries, the vast majority of Karachi's sectarian, jihadi madrasas follow the Deobandi sect and are associated with the Wafaq al-Madaris al-Arabiya, the Deobandi madrasa union, which is consistent with the nationwide trend. The two factions of the Deobandi political parties, JUI-Fazlur Rehman and JUI-Samiul Haq, run over 65 per cent of all madrasas in Pakistan.⁴⁶ JUI's leadership is predominantly Pashtun. Most of the students and teachers in Karachi's Deobandi madrasas are Pashtuns, Pakistani and Afghan.

An expert explains the Pashtun-Deobandi link as “an accident of history”:

The leadership of the Islamic movement has fallen to the Pashtuns as they had resisted the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan successfully. Then, the Pashtun Taliban triumphed [in Afghanistan]. During Zia's days (the Pashtuns) also consolidated their armed control over Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP)...and extended their activity throughout Pakistan. Since the madrasas had played a prominent role in the anti-Soviet jihad,

⁴³ Crisis Group interview, Islamabad, October 2005. See also Zulfiqar Shah, “Sectarian Violence in Karachi: 1994-2002”, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2003.

⁴⁴ In 2001 the Musharraf government announced a ban on the Sunni Deobandi militant group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LJ) and the Shia militant organisation Sipah-e-Mohammed Pakistan (SMP). In January 2002 it also banned their respective parent political organisations, the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and Tehrik-e-Jafaria Pakistan (TJP). Bans on other militant groups have followed in subsequent years. But most militant groups continue to operate freely, under changed names. See Crisis Group Report, *The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*, op. cit., pp. 23-29.

⁴⁵ The Ahle Hadith is an ultra-orthodox, puritanical, Sunni sect inspired by Saudi Wahabism. The Jamiat Ahle Hadith represents it in the MMA.

⁴⁶ Crisis Group Report, *Pakistan: The Mullahs and the Military*, op. cit., p. 12.

they acquired a reputation both as recruiting grounds for mujahidin and as centres of learning.⁴⁷

Consistent with this analysis, almost all of Karachi's leading sectarian and jihadi madrasas were established during General Zia-ul-Haq's eleven years, a period when the moderate political parties such as the PPP and others were consistently targeted.

The most prominent Karachi-based Deobandi madrasas include:⁴⁸

Jamia Uloom Islamia, Binori Town. Commonly known as the Binori Town madrasa, it is the fountainhead of Deobandi militancy countrywide. A generation of former students has spread a web of similar jihadi madrasas across Karachi and beyond that pay allegiance to the Binori Town madrasa and seek its guidance and support.

One of the earliest madrasas in the city, the Binori Town has carried the mantle of jihadi leadership there since the days of the anti-Soviet jihad.⁴⁹ It also boasts close ties with the Taliban. When Musharraf's military government tried to persuade its Taliban allies to hand over Osama bin Laden to forestall U.S. military action in October 2001, Binori Town madrasa leader Nizamuddin Shamzai was asked to head a delegation to Kabul. The madrasa is also at the heart of anti-Shia and anti-Barelvi violence, and has thus provoked retaliation. In the last nine years, Shia and Barelvi militants have killed at least four leading scholars of this madrasa in reprisal attacks.

The madrasa has played a major role in helping to establish and sustain a number of jihadi organisations, including the JI-affiliated Harkat-ul-Mujahidin (HUM), one of the first Kashmiri jihadi groups. Abdul Rasheed, Binori Town graduate and founder of the Al-Rasheed Trust, and Binori Town leaders Shamzai and Yusuf Ludhianvi helped established the Jaish-e-Mohammed in 2000, which is headed by Masood Azhar, a former Binori Town student and teacher.⁵⁰ Jaish, one of the

most prominent jihadi organisations in Indian-administrated Kashmir, remains a major beneficiary of Binori Town's support and continues to derive its manpower from the madrasa.⁵¹ Sipah Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), the Deobandi militant organisation which pioneered organised sectarian militancy countrywide, is also backed by the Binori Town madrasa. According to a madrasa expert, such support is particularly important since it translates into the support of the Deobandi sect countrywide.⁵² Crisis Group requests for interviews were turned down by the Binori Town administration.

Jamia Binoria, SITE Town. Because of its name, this madrasa is often confused with the more prominent and powerful Binori Town madrasa. Established in 1978 by Mufti Naeem, a Binori Town graduate, the SITE Town madrasa has eighteen branches in the city and one in Queens, New York, also known as Jamia Binoria Inc.⁵³

The administrators of the SITE Town madrasa, as well as Jamia Islamia in Clifton, which is run by Maulana Abu Haraira, depict their institutions as moderate and modern. Yet their leaders have publicly adopted a pro-jihadi, anti-Western stance. The SITE Town madrasa, moreover, is a perfect example of how the mullahs exploit the business potential of the madrasa sector. The madrasa administration runs a female madrasa as well as an extended network of shops and other commercial concerns.

Jamia Darul Uloom Karachi, Korangi. Located in Korangi Town, with well-manicured lawns and a vast residential and educational complex, Darul Uloom is among the most modern and affluent of Deobandi educational institutes. Science, computer technology, economics and Islamic banking are taught, with separate departments for these subjects up to the Ph.D. level. Run by Mohammed Taqi Usmani whose elder brother, Maulana Mohammed Rafi Usmani is the president of the madrasa as well as the chief Deobandi mufti in Pakistan, it has some two dozen branches in Karachi. The second largest is located in Jamia Masjid Baitul

⁴⁷ Crisis Group interview, Mohammed Ali Siddiqi, February 2006.

⁴⁸ Information gathered by Crisis Group visits to madrasas, interviews with journalists Amir Rana and Celia Mercier and from madrasa administrations. For a further list of Karachi-based Deobandi sectarian and jihadi madrasas, see Appendix B below.

⁴⁹ Mumtaz Ahmad, "Continuity and Change in the Traditional System of Islamic Education: The Case of Pakistan" in Baxter and Kennedy, op. cit., p. 191.

⁵⁰ Ludhianvi was assassinated in 2000. Al Rasheed Trust, on Pakistan's terrorist watchlist and listed as well by the UN Sanctions Committee under Security Council Resolution 1267 (2001), had been allowed to operate freely until the government, concerned about the imposition of UN sanctions, enforced a

ban on its activities on 18 February 2007. It is too early to judge if that ban will be enforced. "Al-Rashid, Al-Akhtar trusts banned: 100s held", *The Nation*, 19 February 2007; "Action taken under UN resolution: government: Offices of two charities sealed", *Dawn*, 19 February 2007. See also Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°46, *Pakistan: Political Impact of the Earthquake*, 15 March 2006, pp. 9-10.

⁵¹ Banned by the Musharraf government and listed as a terrorist organisation by the UN Sanctions Committee, the Jaish operates openly under a new name, Khuddamul Islam, *ibid*, p. 9.

⁵² Crisis Group interview, Amir Rana, Islamabad, February 2006. Rana is the author of *A-Z of Jihadi Organisations in Pakistan* (Lahore, 2004).

⁵³ See www.binoria.org/TheJamia/binoria_usa.asp.

Mukarram in Gulshan-e-Iqbal Town. Maulana Rafi and Maulana Taqi are also members of the Board of Al Baraka Islamic Bank.

Darul Uloom holds weekly public meetings in Korangi and Nanakwarah and in Jamia Masjid, Baitul Mukarram. "Students are encouraged to go on *Tableegh* (proselytising missions) during vacations, and students who undertake this task are given special stipends", said a teacher.⁵⁴ While the madrasa, on the surface, appears a model for other less educationally-endowed seminaries, the Darul Uloom also plays a role in promoting violent jihad. Both Usmani brothers have given practical help to jihadi organisations, which are allowed to preach and collect donations from the madrasa's mosques and branches. "Students are not permitted to participate in jihad while they are studying, though they can do so after completing their studies", said a madrasa teacher.⁵⁵

Darul Uloom Hanafia, Orangi Town. Established in 1982, its patron and founder is Faizullah Azad, also a graduate of the Binori Town madrasa and a leading figure of the JUI-F's Sindh chapter. There is a separate madrasa for women, the Jamia Hanafia Al Binnat. Azad denies Darul Uloom has links with militancy. "You will not find even a knife, much less mortar and gunpowder, in our madrasa". However, its jihadi outlook is evident in the thinking of its pupils. A senior student, for instance, explained: "It is the responsibility of the Amir [the leader of the Muslims] to wage and order jihad. If for any reason or weakness, the ruler is not performing this duty of jihad, then it becomes the duty of every Muslim in the descending order of importance – the rich provide money and resources, the poor provide men. Not everyone is bound to go fighting for jihad. But every Muslim is duty bound to participate according to his capacity".⁵⁶

2. Deobandi jihadi organisations and the madrasa sector

Sipahe Sahaba Pakistan (SSP). Established in 1985 in Jhang (Punjab) by Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, it was the first overtly anti-Shia party in Pakistan.⁵⁷ Banned in 2001 and renamed Millat-e-Islami, SSP continues to target Shias and Barelvis. In Karachi it has a wide network of offices, usually in mosques, as well as organised units. According to Qari Shafiq Rehman, the Karachi spokesman, who also runs a madrasa, the SSP fielded 190

candidates in Sindh's 2005 local government elections, 90 in Karachi alone.⁵⁸

The SSP's umbilical link with Karachi's jihadi madrasas remains intact, their teachers and students its main strength. All SSP leaders, including Jhangvi and Azam Tariq, have been madrasa graduates. Azam Tariq graduated from the Binori Town madrasa. A disciple of Binori Town cleric Yusuf Ludhianvi, he honed his oratorical skills at central Karachi's Siddiq-e-Akbar mosque, where the SSP established its roots in the city. When Azam Tariq left Karachi for Jhang after SSP's second chief, Maulana Israr, was assassinated in 1990, Qari Saeed led the party. He was assassinated in 1994.⁵⁹

Contrary to official insistence that banned terrorist organisations have been dismembered, SSP's organisational structure, financial resources, and networking are intact and gaining in strength, inciting its followers to violently confront Shia rivals. The group provides monthly stipends to the families of "*shaheeds*" (those martyred in the cause of jihad) and also pays for the education and weddings of their survivors.

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LJ). "Whatever their leaders may say, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and SSP is one and the same thing", a veteran observer insisted.⁶⁰ Indeed, it is widely accepted that LJ is a branch of the SSP. While the SSP disowns the LJ and insists it has no connection with its anti-Shia terrorist activities, it also justifies LJ's existence. The SSP leadership argues that some of their activists were compelled to take up arms because of the government's failure to act after the assassination of SSP leaders. According to Qari Shafiq Rehman, the Karachi spokesman, SSP activists would not have formed the more militant LJ if those who murdered Maulana Jhangvi in January 1990 had been arrested.⁶¹

Forced out of Punjab province after the government crackdown, following an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 1999, the LJ turned Karachi into its central headquarters. It also found refuge in Afghanistan after the Taliban's rise to

⁵⁴ Crisis Group interview, Noorul Haq, Karachi, September 2005.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Crisis Group interviews, Karachi, September 2005.

⁵⁷ For details of the SSP, see Crisis Group Report, *The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*, op. cit., pp. 14-16.

⁵⁸ The party's strongholds are in Malir, Landhi, Korangi and Nagan Chorangi. Other main offices are in North Karachi, Liaquatabad, Korangi, Landhi, Shah Faisal Colony, Malir, the Pakistan Cooperative Housing Society, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Old Golimar, Baldia Town, Khokhrapar, Malir, Model Colony, Korangi and the Korangi Mill area.

⁵⁹ Since 1998, Abdul Ghafoor Nadeem and Ilyas Zubair have served as SSP's president and general-secretary respectively. Both have faced murder charges and are implicated in other criminal cases.

⁶⁰ Crisis Group interview, veteran Karachi-based journalist Shoaib Hasan, December 2006.

⁶¹ Zulfikar Shah, op. cit., p. 20.

power, establishing training camps for recruits in areas under Taliban control. After the Taliban's ouster, the police believe these camps were relocated to NWFP, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the Northern Areas.

After the killing of LJ founder Riaz Basra by police and the arrest of its top leaders, Akram Lahori and Asif Ramzi, in Karachi in 2004, some believed that the Lashkar had lost its fangs. The temporary lull in its public activities was, however, broken by high-profile attacks against senior Shia leaders and military officials in Karachi. Acquitted in late 2005 by an anti-terrorism court after being sentenced to death for the murder of a Shia doctor, LJ leader Lahori claimed that more than 100 LJ militants were still active in Karachi.⁶² The 2006 assassination of Shia leader Turabi and the attack on the Barelvi gathering in Nishtar Park are evidence that LJ is alive and well.

B. THE AHLE HADITH CONNECTION

Madrasas of this Salafi sect have a small but significant presence in Karachi. Almost all the 36 Ahle Hadith madrasas in Karachi were established after the anti-Soviet jihad began in Afghanistan.⁶³ Since Saudi Wahabism inspires the sect, Ahle Hadith madrasas are the main recipients of Arab funds.

Jamia Abu Bakr al-Islamia is the leading Ahle Hadith madrasa in Karachi, located in Gulshan-e-Iqbal Town. Maulana Suleman, its founder, was also the chief of Jamaat-ul-Mujahidin, a jihadi group that took part in the Afghan jihad. These Afghan jihad veterans also formed the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LT), the militant Ahle Hadith organisation, in 1990. The LT is the armed faction of the Markaz al-Dawa al-Irshad, an Ahle Hadith organisation based in Muridke, Punjab. While it mainly focuses on the jihad in Indian-administered Kashmir, it maintains close links with other anti-Shia groups.⁶⁴ It was renamed Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JD) after the Musharraf government banned it in 2002.

Prior to the government's curbs on foreign student presence in Pakistani madrasas (see below), almost half of Jamia Abu Bakar's student body was foreign, mainly from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. In the absence of reliable data, it is impossible to ascertain the exact numbers of foreign students still enrolled in Jamia Abu Bakar and other Ahle Hadith madrasas.

⁶² "Activist acquitted", *Dawn*, 1 December 2005.

⁶³ The 1979 "Report on Deeni Madaris" compiled by the ministry of religious affairs noted only one Ahle Hadith seminary in Karachi.

⁶⁴ See Crisis Group Report, *Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military*, op. cit.

Jamia Abu Bakar gained international prominence in September 2003, when an Indonesian student, Gun Gun Rusman Gunawan, was arrested from its compound. His brother, Riduan Isamuddin, alias Hambali, leads Indonesia's Jemaah Islamiyah, which was behind the Bali bombings of October 2002. The administrator of the madrasa, Abdullah Ghazi, denied that any student with that name or credentials was on its roll.⁶⁵ Residents of the area, however, say that Gunawan was enrolled under the pseudonym of Abdul Hadi, and it is speculated that he was in Pakistan on a government-sponsored educational scholarship.⁶⁶

Gunawan's detention was followed by the arrest of nineteen Indonesian and Malaysian students from another Ahle Hadith madrasa, Darsatul Islamia, in the same area. That madrasa is run by the Jamaat-ud-Dawa, the renamed LT, whose leader, Hafiz Mohammed Saeed, holds his public gatherings there. A police official disclosed that Hafiz Saeed was addressing a gathering in the same hall when security agencies raided Darsatul Islamia to make the arrests.⁶⁷ But Saeed was not arrested nor was the madrasa shut down.

Although Ahle Hadith is perceived as the most orthodox and radical Sunni sect, its leaders were among the first to recognise the importance of modernising their madrasas' educational content. They were the first, as far back as the 1980s, to add English, general science, mathematics and Pakistan studies to the traditional *Dars-e-Nizami* curriculum.⁶⁸ "We receive international students, especially from South East Asia and the Arab world, and English as well as other modern subjects are important for communication and education", said Sattar Rehmani, a teacher at Darul Hadith, Landhi Town.⁶⁹ With their generous foreign donors, living conditions in the hostels of Ahle Hadith madrasas are in far better shape than their Deobandi counterparts.

C. THE SHIA RESPONSE

According to the provincial registrar of the Sindh government, there are 132 licensed *Imambargahs* (mosques) and related Shia bodies in Karachi, 36 of

⁶⁵ Hasan Mansoor, "Foreign religious students on the run", *Friday Times*, 26 September 2003.

⁶⁶ Crisis Group interviews, Karachi, August 2005.

⁶⁷ Crisis Group interview, Karachi, August 2005.

⁶⁸ *Dars-e-Nizami*, originally developed in the eighteenth century, is the basic curriculum of all non-Shia madrasas, although each sect modifies and supplements it with courses suited to its brand of Islam.

⁶⁹ Crisis Group interview, Karachi, August 2005.

which have traditional madrasas.⁷⁰ Schools of the main Shia educational institution in Karachi, Mehfil-e-Murtaza, are affiliated with the Aga Khan Educational Board and follow a modern curriculum.

The first Shia political party, the Tehrik Nifaz-e-Fiqh Jafria, was formed during General Zia-ul-Haq's rule in reaction to the military government's patronage of Sunni sects, particularly the Deobandis, the Alhe Hadith and the JI.⁷¹ Renamed Tehreek-e-Jafria Pakistan (TJP) and then again Tehreek-e-Islami (TIP) after Musharraf banned the TJP in 2002, the party was led in Karachi by Allama Hassan Turabi until his assassination in July 2006. Its main office in the city is attached to Shah-e-Khorasan Mosque in Soldier Bazar. The party receives moral and financial support from Shia businessmen and industrialists.

The Deobandi SSP's Shia counterpart, the Sipah-e-Mohammed Pakistan (SMP), was formed in the early 1990s in Lahore in reaction to the anti-Shia Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. Like the SSP's leadership, the TJP's claims that some of its members, unhappy with its moderate approach, established a more militant wing, the SMP. It was strongest in 1993-1994, when its militants carried out a number of terrorist attacks against the SSP leadership. It suffered a severe blow in 1996 with the death of its president, Allama Yazdan.

The Shia militant group is far more active in Punjab and the Northern Areas than in Karachi. Even at the height of anti-Shia violence in Karachi during the late 1990s, the SMP did not have a major presence in the city's Shia madrasas. SMP activists came to Karachi to defend their Shia brethren from the Northern Areas and Punjab.

D. JAMAAT-I-ISLAMI AND JIHADI NETWORKS

JI madrasas, organised under the Tanzim Rabita al-Madaris, have long maintained links with jihadi organisations. According to party officials, there are 97 Rabita madrasas with over 8,000 students in Karachi. JI madrasas, such as Markaz Uloom-e-Deeniya's Alfalah Academy in Sarjani Town, Jamiatul Ikhwan madrasa in New Karachi, and Jamia Darul Islam in Gizri Town, have provided recruits for the Hizbul Mujahidin. These madrasas boast of their "mujahid" students martyred in Afghanistan, Kashmir,

and Bosnia.⁷² The manpower for the JI's jihad ventures has come from disparate sources. According to Wajihul Siddiqui, a leader of the JI's student wing Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba (IJT), "the jihadi movement of the 1980s had found more recruits from colleges and universities than madrasas". He added: "Almost all our Mohajir mujahidin have had formal education, not madrasa education".⁷³ Because of its reliance on educated Mohajirs to conduct the jihad in Kashmir and Afghanistan, the JI has far fewer madrasas in Karachi than the Deobandis and Barevlis.⁷⁴ Moreover, because of the JI's role in the Afghan jihad, most of its madrasas are in NWFP's tribal belt.

The links between the JI and international terrorist networks have come into the limelight largely because of the arrests of a number of high profile al-Qaeda operatives in the homes of JI workers. In January 2003, two were arrested in the house of a leader of the Jamaat's women wing in Karachi. The same year, two key Pakistani supporters of al-Qaeda were arrested at the home of a senior Jamaat leader in Lahore. Al-Qaeda's operations chief, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, was arrested at the house of a Jamaat-i-Islami woman activist in Rawalpindi.⁷⁵

There are also close links between some Jamaat Afghan war veterans and Arab fighters. These former JI mujahidin and activists have set up new al-Qaeda-linked terrorist groups in Karachi. These include a group headed by Attaur Rehman, a graduate of Karachi University who was arrested in June 2004 for masterminding a series of terrorist attacks in the city. Associated with the JI's student wing, the IJT, Rehman had recruited group members who were well-educated professionals.⁷⁶

JI leaders deny any links with al-Qaeda or other terrorist organisations but where their sympathies lie is evident. "Jamaat-i-Islami Pakistan does not allow its members to enter into any illegal activity.... All its members are bound to work within the precincts of the constitution and according to the law of the land", says Jamaat Amir Qazi Hussain Ahmed. While he denies any knowledge of al-Qaeda, he adds: "Al-Qaeda is used as a pretext to promote the vested interests of certain countries, groups and individuals".⁷⁷ Warning Pakistanis "about the plans and conspiracies that are being hatched by the West"

⁷⁰ Data provided to Crisis Group by Sindh provincial registrar, August 2005. Informed sources told Crisis Group that the 2005 figures still hold for Shia mosques and madrasas in Karachi. Crisis Group interview, February 2007.

⁷¹ See Crisis Group Report, *The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*, op. cit., p. 10.

⁷² Crisis Group interviews, Jamaat-i-Islami officials, Karachi, September 2005.

⁷³ Crisis Group interview, Karachi, July 2005.

⁷⁴ The IJT's dominance of higher educational institutions in Punjab is another major source of jihadi recruitment.

⁷⁵ Zahid Hussain, "Closing in?", *Newsline*, March 2003.

⁷⁶ Zahid Hussain, "Al-Qaeda's new face", *Newsline*, August 2004.

⁷⁷ Samina Ibrahim, "The Jamaat-i-Islami has no knowledge about al-Qaeda: Qazi Hussain Ahmed, Amir Jamaat-i-Islami", *Newsline*, March 2003.

against the Muslim *Ummah* (community), the JI deputy leader, Prof. Khurshid Ahmed, warns that this “multi-faceted war” is aimed at checking “the growth of Islamic revivalism... Islam-phobia in the Western nations or the state terrorism on Muslims under the excuse of suppressing extremism all are but different facets and fronts of the same war”.⁷⁸

Despite its public opposition to Musharraf for his role in the U.S.-proclaimed war on terror, the JI has had little compunction in working with his military government. As a senior MMA partner, it is a coalition partner of Musharraf's ruling party in the Balochistan government.⁷⁹ Despite JI's links with jihadi organisations, the military government is willing to work with it and its other MMA partners to counter its main civilian adversaries, the moderate mainstream parties.

E. BARELVI MADRASAS

The head office of the Tanzim al-Madaris, the Barelvi madrasa board, is in Karachi. The Tanzim is the second largest madrasa board in Pakistan, after the Deobandi Wafaq al-Madaris. Its president, Munibur Rehman, is a leading figure in the Ittehad Tanzimat Madaris Dinia (ITMD), the organisation which encompasses the five loose umbrella groupings of madrasas representing the major sects of Islam in Pakistan,⁸⁰ and also heads Madrasa Naeemia, one of the leading Barelvi institutions, located in the Karachi township known as the Federal B Area. The preeminent Barelvi institution in Karachi, Darul Uloom Amjadia, was established in 1949 and has produced many leading Barelvi scholars who now run their own madrasas.

Tanzim leaders say that Barelvi curriculum and teaching practices do not promote violent jihad, and they do not find it difficult to comply with the government's madrasa reform prescriptions. However, Barelvi mullahs are no less sectarian and orthodox than Deobandis and those from other sects. Nor are all Barelvis and their madrasas devoid of militancy. The Faizan-e-Madina chain, for instance, run by Dawat-e-Islami, is certainly militant in its approach. Barelvi hostility is directed more toward the Deobandis and Ahle Hadith than Shias.

The Sunni Tehrik (ST) is an offshoot of Dawat-e-Islami. Before its emergence in the mid-1990s, no prominent Barelvi organisation had indulged in organised sectarian violence. The ST is a unique sectarian group in that it does not share the Afghan jihad background of Karachi's other sectarian militants. It was established by Barelvi Mohajir youth who “could no longer tolerate the occupation of Sunni mosques by Deobandis”.⁸¹ Citing governmental patronage of the Deobandis, the ST challenges Deobandi dominance and seeks its share in ministries and *auqaf* administration.⁸² In Karachi, it is violently battling its Deobandi rivals for the control of mosques.⁸³

After the attack on the Barelvi religious gathering in Karachi in April 2006, which wiped out the senior ST leadership, the city's political landscape has changed radically. In the words of a long-time observer of Karachi politics:

Nishtar Park effectively destroyed the Sunni Tehreek as a party and has thus done two things. It has cleared away the main obstacle to the domination of the Deobandi parties in Karachi, and it has set the stage for a confrontation between them and the MQM for the first time. So the status quo has definitely changed and may change even more if the Deobandis encroach on the territory of the Muttahida (Qaumi Movement).⁸⁴

While the Deobandi militants, SSP and LJ, are considered the likeliest suspects in the Nishtar Park attack, there has been little progress in establishing responsibility.⁸⁵

⁷⁸ Prof. Khurshid Ahmed, “Pakistan: Crises and the way out”, www.jamaat.org/issues/crisesWayOut.html.

⁷⁹ See Crisis Group Asia Report N°119, *Pakistan: The Worsening Conflict in Balochistan*, 14 September 2006; Crisis Group Asia Report N°125, *Pakistan's Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants*, 11 December 2006.

⁸⁰ See fn. 36 above.

⁸¹ Crisis Group interview, Reza Mustafa, October 2005.

⁸² Zulfiqar Shah, op. cit., p. 12. For *auqaf*, see Appendix C below.

⁸³ Syed Shoab Hasan, “Two hurt, vehicles burnt in mosque dispute”, *Dawn*, 15 April 2006; “Karachi mosques and sectarianism”, *Daily Times*, 20 April 2006.

⁸⁴ Crisis Group interview, Karachi-based journalist Shoab Hasan, December 2006.

⁸⁵ Crisis Group interview, senior police official, Karachi, November 2006.

IV. THE MANY FACETS OF KARACHI'S MADRASAS

A. MYTHS OF MADRASA EDUCATION

By no means all madrasas in Karachi, or the rest of the country, are directly responsible for violence, yet the links between some madrasas and sectarian and jihadi violence are not mere aberrations. Indeed, as a national daily points out, “the madrasa landscape in Pakistan is still scary not because some are directly involved in creating terrorists but because they all create a particular mindset in which – under certain conditions – terrorism can easily take root”.⁸⁶ As Karachi shows, unregulated madrasas pose serious threats to social and political stability.

Madrasas present themselves as repositories as well as producers of classical theological and legal literature. Preparing religious scholars and functionaries is their rationale for existence. A retired judge of the Federal Shariat Court says: “The formal education system is almost secular. Had it not been for our madrasas, it would have been impossible to educate people to be true Muslims”.⁸⁷ Such comparisons with regular schools allow madrasas to claim the same status as non-religious educational institutions. However, an educator goes so far as to argue: “We must not consider what goes on in madrasas as education. The two systems are in no way comparable. The Pakistan government as well as the donors will have to adjust their conceptual lenses and recognise that glorifying sectarian indoctrination and training in religious sophistry – which is what madrasas teach – is not education”.⁸⁸

Most madrasas do not teach their students the basic skills of language, math, science and even critical thinking that all young people should acquire in school. At the same time, madrasas perform numerous functions not within the domain of secular education. The religious and ideological training that takes place in many of them also plays a crucial role in expanding the networks of religious extremists in Pakistan.

1. Pakistan's three-tiered system of schooling

To understand their role, madrasas need to be seen in the context of Pakistan's hierarchical and dysfunctional

educational system.⁸⁹ Pakistani educational institutions can be divided into three broad categories: English-medium, Urdu/vernacular schools and Arabic-medium madrasas of various sects. This division is based on language and class. Most English-medium schools are expensive and beyond the reach of all but a few, whereas the state-run Urdu/vernacular schools are subsidised and affordable for most. Madrasas are for the poorest and the displaced, as well as a smaller number of ideologically committed.

This linguistic divide – English in private and army-run schools, Urdu and Sindhi in government-run schools, and, in theory, Arabic in madrasas – produces three different types of literate classes, each with widely different job opportunities. “Before the colonial impact, one function of language was to differentiate the educated elites from ordinary people.... This function is served by English and Urdu, in that order, in Pakistan. Class supremacy is maintained by denying people an educational system which gives them as much control of the language (and thus) power as the elite”.⁹⁰

While elite schools in Karachi have every possible facility and can match their counterparts in the West, the city's state-run system of Urdu/Sindhi schools is in poor shape. These schools have poorly-trained teachers and inadequate infrastructure; some 10 per cent are even without buildings. In the words of a professional educator working in a private school there:

The problem is that public schools are simply not producing employable young men and women. Most people, particularly those who are poor and also have large families, feel that sending their sons to madrasas is a much better economic proposition than to a public school. Madrasas provide religious education, thereby ensuring the student's salvation in the Hereafter, and at no financial cost. They provide free accommodation and meals, which, for those parents living below the poverty line, and with large families to boot, is a great blessing. The state thus leaves them with no other option than to send their sons to a madrasa.⁹¹

While the infrastructure and facilities of most madrasas in Karachi are no better, their main attractions certainly are free instruction, accommodation and food. “The

⁸⁶ “Government's cultivated ambivalence on madrasa reform doesn't bode well”, editorial, *Daily Times*, 21 August 2006.

⁸⁷ Crisis Group interview, Taqi Usmani, Darul Uloom Karachi, August 2005.

⁸⁸ Crisis Group interview, researcher Arif Hasan, Karachi, August 2005.

⁸⁹ For an extensive analysis of the unequal and failing education system, see Crisis Group Report, *Pakistan: Reforming the Education Sector*, op. cit.

⁹⁰ Tariq Rahman, *Language, Ideology and Power: Language Learning Among Muslims of Pakistan and Northern India* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 42-43.

⁹¹ Crisis Group interview, senior private educator, Karachi, 22 November 2006.

madrasa students are, after all, rejectees of the system. They either opt out because the state is still an alien entity for them, or, as is more often the case, are too poor to survive in the state system which does not provide free food, lodging, books, clothes, and shelter".⁹² Absent state oversight, many of these children are housed in abysmal conditions, particularly in the smaller madrasas, in buildings that often lack basic amenities and where "students and adults live crowded together, exposing a huge number of these children to sexual abuse".⁹³ While these issues are neglected in the larger political debates, domestic and international, over madrasa policy, the inhuman living conditions of many madrasa students in Karachi are glaringly obvious to even the casual observer.

Abandoning the children of the poor to the madrasa sector bears social costs not just in the form of exposure to abuse and diminished educational opportunities, but also in increased intolerance and militancy. A comparative survey by Dr. Tariq Rahman, based on a sample that included students from Karachi, shows that of the three categories of students, those from madrasas "for reasons which they consider justified according to their interpretation of religion, are the least tolerant".⁹⁴ Moreover, madrasa students are taught to view everything Western as a threat. A madrasa teacher explained the need to teach his students English on these grounds: "Western ideologies cannot be countered unless the thoughts and plans of the enemy are understood. Hence, there is an urgent need to understand the language of our opponents and their sciences so that their poison can be combated".⁹⁵

2. "Community" schools?

Madrasas are often mistakenly described as community-based educational institutions. Yet most madrasas, particularly in Karachi but also in other cities, do not draw most of their students from nearby households.

⁹² Rahman, *Language, Ideology and Power*, op. cit., p. 544.

⁹³ Crisis Group interview, madrasa expert Abdul Waheed Khan, Islamabad, December 2005.

⁹⁴ When asked to list the priorities for Pakistan, 99.2 per cent of madrasa students answered conquering Kashmir, 97.7 per cent implementation of Sharia law, 96.1 per cent developing nuclear weapons, and 87.7 per cent strengthening the army. Over 73 per cent of madrasa students opposed equal rights for women, 81.6 per cent opposed equal rights for Ahmedis, and 71.7 per cent were against Christians and Hindus. Nearly half said democracy was not a priority, and more than 76 per cent were against freedoms for the electronic media. Rahman, *Language, Ideology and Power*, op. cit., appendices 14.4, 14.6 and 14.7, pp. 583-591. See also Tariq Rahman, *Denizens of Alien Worlds* (Oxford, 2004), p. 35.

⁹⁵ Crisis Group interview, Maulvi Noorul Haq, Karachi, September 2005.

In fact, interviews with madrasa administrators in Karachi support the observation that a core function is to accommodate students from other areas.⁹⁶ Neighbourhood children usually come for early religious orientation to read the Koran and memorise parts of it for prayers. The resident student body, however, especially in the higher grades, is predominantly students from outside Karachi.⁹⁷ No recent data is available on the places of origin but the tradition that students travel long distances to receive religious education in urban madrasas is a well-documented fact.⁹⁸

No major departure from the century-old tradition is visible. According to the 1988 directory of the ministry of education, Sindh's 291 madrasas had 30,469 students from outside the province, including 870 foreign students, 19,477 from NWFP, 5,758 from Punjab, 2,859 from Balochistan, 275 from Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and 1,230 from other areas of Pakistan.⁹⁹ In 2005, Darul Uloom Karachi awarded certificates to 383 new *ulema* (religious scholars and authorities), of whom 124 were from NWFP, 23 from Kashmir and the Northern Areas, seven from Afghanistan, two each from Saudi Arabia and Burma, and one from South Africa.¹⁰⁰ In Karachi most madrasa students and staff still come from northern Pakistan, mainly NWFP, FATA, the Northern Areas and Kashmir, as well as southern Punjab's Seraiki-speaking belt. Promising youth are sent to Karachi. Trained mullahs go back to their areas of origin. Students, teachers and *ulema* also travel countrywide and abroad on *tableeghi* (evangelical) drives, exhorting participation in religious causes and seeking to convince people to enrol their children in their madrasas. Some of these evangelical preachers attempt to find recruits for violent jihad among Muslim communities in Europe and North America.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ There is no age limit for admission. A 30-year old man is as likely to be admitted as a five-year-old child. A survey, partially conducted in Karachi, found that the average age of madrasa students was five years more than those in comparative grades in English- and Urdu-medium schools. Hence, any comparison of madrasas with schools where admission criterion is strictly based on an applicant's age and also on area of residence is misplaced. Rahman, *Denizens of Alien Worlds*, op. cit., p. 35.

⁹⁷ Crisis Group interviews, madrasa administrators Zahoor Alam Siddiqui, Jamal Uddin Chishti and others, Karachi, January 2006.

⁹⁸ In her seminal work on the history of Deoband, Barbara Metcalf noted that that even during the initial phase of the Deobandi movement, most of its students came from Pashto-speaking areas. *Islamic Revival in British India* (Oxford, 2005), p. 111.

⁹⁹ "Deeni Madaris Pakistan ki Jamay Report-1988", ministry of education, Government of Pakistan, October 1988, p. 17.

¹⁰⁰ Figures provided to Crisis Group by the administration of the Darul Uloom.

¹⁰¹ "Documentary reveals clerics 'preaching hate' in UK mosques", *Daily Times*, 15 January 2007.

The clergy takes pride in “enrolment” of students from other countries and of all ages. “Since the establishment of the first Darul Uloom, students from all over the subcontinent and overseas countries have been received at our madrasas with open arms. Through them the teachings of Islam have spread to every nook and corner of the world, and they are an asset for Islamic movements”, said Ehteramul Haq Thanvi. The Thanvi family’s Jamia Ehteshamia in the Jacob Lines neighbourhood of Jamshed Town, he recalled, has had students from Burma, Thailand, Indonesia and other countries “since its inception”.¹⁰²

3. Utility of the madrasa curriculum

There is a common misperception that *Dars-e-Nizami*, officially the standard madrasa curriculum for over 200 years, still exists as a uniform set of teachings across madrasas of all sects. In fact, it no longer exists in spirit or content. Every madrasa has its own variant, with each of the five madrasa unions using syllabi that are mutually conflicting and essentially sectarian. The prescribed readings of Deobandi and Barelvi madrasas show how much these two Sunni-Hanafi sects differ in interpretation of the Sunni texts their madrasas teach.¹⁰³ Shias and the Ahle Hadith have their own exclusive texts, whereas the JI’s madrasas follow the approach of the Makkah Conference of 1977, which led to the establishment of a chain of “modern” International Islamic Universities.¹⁰⁴

Arabic is the medium of instruction, signalled by the suffix “al-Arabiya” that is included in the name of every sect’s madrasa union. Yet the Arabic (and Persian) texts in the *Dars-e-Nizami* are memorised, not learned. Since Arabic grammar and the interpretation of Islamic texts is also memorised, with the repetitive recital of Arabic texts forming the core activity of most madrasas, it is oral discourse rather than the Arabic syllabi that shapes the religious and sectarian mindset of madrasa students.

No modern subject, such as geography, astronomy, biology or information technology, is taught without reference to a particular sectarian interpretation of Islam. Samples of Islamic sciences, some of which are already taught at high-profile madrasas, show that such attempts to synchronise religious texts with scientific facts distort both.¹⁰⁵

The government’s reform efforts seem to focus on countering Islamic radicalism by “mainstreaming” the madrasa, introducing modern subjects into the curriculum. However, it is far from clear that madrasa graduates would be more tolerant and non-violent if taught modern subjects. “The ability to operate a computer does not change one’s attitude to life. If one is a militant, then the computer only makes one more well-equipped; it does not make one a pacifist. This point needs to be understood”, stressed a well-informed observer.¹⁰⁶ By simply adding new courses to the syllabus without addressing the ideological and political context within which madrasas operate, as well as their jihadi networks, significant change is unlikely.

B. UNDERSTANDING THE LARGER CONTEXT

1. The politics of the madrasa

While only a few madrasas offer their students a useful and enriching education, the vast majority pursue highly political activities that set them apart from non-religious schools. In fact, unlike formal private and public schools, politics is intrinsic to the institution of the madrasa. Based on their sectarian orientation, most madrasas are linked to one or another religio-political party and one or more religious movements. Previous Crisis Group reports have discussed the political dimension of madrasas in detail.¹⁰⁷ In Karachi, for instance, JUI leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman is the chief patron of Deobandi madrasas and the final authority in disputes among Deobandi madrasa leaders. Although religious parties have yet to undercut the vote base of the PPP in rural Sindh and of the MQM in the province’s urban centres, their followers, including madrasa students, are frequently mobilised in public campaigns, also violent demonstrations, to further their agendas.¹⁰⁸

2. The business of *fatwas*

The madrasa’s role in issuing *Darul Iftas* – religious edicts for individuals and organisations seeking legal opinion or Islamic legitimacy for their actions – also

¹⁰² Crisis Group interview, Karachi, September 2005.

¹⁰³ Syllabi of five types of madrasas listed in Saleem Mansoor Khalid, *Deeni Madaris mein Taleem: Kefiat, Masaail or Imakanat* [Education in Religious Seminaries: Conditions, Problems and Possibilities], Institute of Policy Studies (Islamabad, 2002), pp. 388–423.

¹⁰⁴ The first Islamic Educational World Conference was held in Makkah in 1977 to formulate an international Islamic education policy.

¹⁰⁵ For examples of how the clerics view modern sciences, see

articles on Islamic geography in the publications of Al-Rasheed Trust’s daily *Islam* and weekly *Zarb-e-Momin*. For a detailed academic study of science’s treatment by Islamists and samples of Islamic science, see Pervez Hoodbhoy, *Islam and Science: Religious Orthodoxy and the Battle for Rationality* (London, 1991).

¹⁰⁶ Crisis Group interview, February 2006.

¹⁰⁷ See, for instance, Crisis Group Reports, *Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military*, op. cit., *Pakistan: The Mullahs and the Military*, op. cit., and *The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*, op. cit.

¹⁰⁸ See, for instance, “Anti-WPA [Women Protection Act] strike in Karachi partially successful”, *Daily Times*, 23 December 2006.

fuels sectarian tension. While some requests for opinions pertain to personal matters, such as marriage and inheritance issues, most relate to matters of sect and creed. The Darul Uloom Korangi, for instance, receives 30-40 such public queries every day. "If someone asks about another person's actions and beliefs and seeks our verdict on its Islamic justification or otherwise, it is our duty to give an opinion in the light of the Koran and *Sunnah*.¹⁰⁹ For example, if a person insults the companion of the Prophet or his wives and someone approaches us on this matter, we will issue a *fatwa*¹¹⁰ of heresy because such a person cannot be a Muslim".¹¹¹ Some madrasas in Karachi compile and publish their *fatwas*, including those that declare one sect or another as infidel. Wealthy madrasas also maintain online *fatwa* services, a reading of which reveals what is often a medieval mindset of clerics of all sects. In other ways, too, mullahs have taken to the internet, and maintain websites that offer religious opinion on subjects ranging from politics to matters of faith.¹¹² Since Karachi-based madrasas, like those countrywide, complete to win over members of rival sects, this intense inter-madrasa competition fuels socio-political conflicts even within families and neighbourhoods in the city.

3. Producing and disseminating hate material

In addition to the syllabi used by Karachi's madrasas that include material denouncing other sects and religions, the seminal works of their clerics reinforce messages of hate and militancy. Yusuf Ludhianvi of the Binori Town madrasa is perhaps the most widely read writer in Karachi's Deobandi fraternity. His landmark work, *Ikhtilaf-e-Ummat aur Sirat-e-Mustaqeem* (Dissent in the Ummah and the Right Path), a critique of Barelvi, Shia, Ahle Hadith, Salafi and JI's Maulana Maududi's religious creed, is considered a masterpiece of Deobandi theology and is widely used. After examining Shia literature, Ludhianvi concludes: "There is no doubt about the infidelity of Shias, and they are excluded from Islam. Shia-ism is a religion contrary to Islam".¹¹³ In fact, he propounds the same opinion about all Islamic sects other than the Deobandi. The Sunni extremist Sipah Sahaba Pakistan and Laskhar-e-Jhangvi revere Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, whose fiery speeches are an integral part of every activist's collection.

¹⁰⁹ *Sunnah*, based on the way the prophet lived his life, is the second source of Islamic jurisprudence.

¹¹⁰ A *fatwa* is an Islamic edit issued by a cleric or religious lawyer on a specific issue.

¹¹¹ Crisis Group interview, Maulvi Noorul Haq, Karachi, July 2005.

¹¹² See Gary Bunt, *Islam in the Digital Age: E-Jihad, Online Fatwas, and Cyber Islamic Environments* (London, 2003).

¹¹³ Yusuf Ludhianvi, *Ikhtilaf-e-Ummat aur Sirat-e-Mustaqeem* (Maktaba Ludhianvi, Binori Town, Karachi, 1995).

Provocative Shia religious messages are disseminated more through oral discourse than print. Audiocassettes of speeches by Shia *zakirs* (orators) are available at every Shia shop in Karachi.

The material published by different sectarian organisations such as books, pamphlets, audio and videocassettes is widely available at madrasas. Many madrasas have also developed their own print and electronic media outlets. Examining the roots of sectarianism in Karachi, a report by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan describes this material as "poisonous and the single major source of increasing sectarianism in the country".¹¹⁴ The jihadi media is also popular in madrasas. Summing up the contents of this material, a Karachi-based journalist commented:

Death, crusaders, infidels, Zionists, Muslims, jihad, martyrdom...these are some of the key words used like the staccato beat of a war drum through the text. A medieval worldview that divides people on the basis of religion (Muslims are further sifted into "good" and "bad" categories) forms the cornerstone of editorial policy, and rambling accounts of famous historical battles from which Muslims emerged as victors...are offered as inspiration to the latter-day mujahid.¹¹⁵

In August 2005 the Sindh government banned the weekly *Zarb-e-Momin*, a mouthpiece of the Al-Rasheed Trust, and some other jihadi papers. Like all government bans, it meant little in practical terms, and the weekly remained in circulation. The ban was lifted by a court order in February 2006. With its sister paper, the daily *Islam*, *Zarb-e-Momin* leads the pro-jihad media in Karachi.

No medium, print or electronic, matches the effectiveness and outreach of the loudspeaker. No mosque is without one. The public address system is used to relay the competing messages of the mullahs. Since there is hardly a single-mosque community left in Karachi, calls for prayers on loudspeaker rise from many directions, often within seconds of each other, a source of noise pollution for residents. Because of poor police enforcement of regulations against the use of loudspeakers for other than calls to prayer, preaching through loudspeakers remains common.¹¹⁶ Proceedings of religious congregations are aired to unwilling listeners in homes and the market place. People rarely complain, concerned about retaliation. Nor do most people have the courage to take on the mullahs as they compete for converts through the mosque

¹¹⁴ Zulfikar Shah, op. cit., p. 14.

¹¹⁵ Nazihah Syed Ali, "A call to arms", *Newsline*, December 2001.

¹¹⁶ "Misuse of loudspeakers", *The News*, 7 January 2007.

and the madrasa in a competition that is not merely ideological but also economic.

C. THE BUSINESS OF SECTARIANISM

1. Fundraising

Collections made at prayers in this city of more than 14 million, especially on Fridays, and individual philanthropy are regular sources of income for mosques and madrasas. Madrasa students are also recipients of household charity in cash and kind, including food. However, madrasas and mosques do not solely rely on the community for their income. Successful fund-raising campaigns by the clergy have resulted in long-term support from Karachi's big business houses and even multinationals. A large number of businesses in the city contribute to one religious cause or another as a matter of public philanthropy and religious piety.¹¹⁷ Transparency and accountability in the collection of funds is resisted by the madrasa managers as well as donors, the latter on the grounds of religious injunction. Nor does the madrasa registration law address this issue. All it requires is a copy of the income-expenditure audit report for charitable donations.

2. Lure of the land

Madrasa and mosque managers also generate income through other means, particularly the illegal occupation of state and private land in a city where land mafias, big and small, flourish. These mafias are composed of real estate developers, politicians, traders, and construction companies, in league with police and other officials.¹¹⁸ In fact, many madrasas are extensions of mosques first built on encroached state land.

According to the land and revenue department, no land has been allotted for new madrasas since 1992, when a ban was imposed on the discretionary allotment of plots. Acknowledging that building a mosque, which is frequently followed by a madrasa, is one of the easiest ways of occupying state land, a senior official of Karachi's land survey department said: "Our department can only identify the illegally occupied land or illegal constructions. It is up to the city administration, its building authority and

law-enforcement agencies to get them vacated".¹¹⁹ Amber Alibhai, who works with Shehri, an NGO opposed to land encroachment and illegal construction in Karachi, is more emphatic in her condemnation of city authorities: "It is a security and environmental hazard. Police and city administration are afraid of the mullahs' power that comes not only from madrasa students. They all seem to have political connections as well as arms".¹²⁰

Commercial advantages are clearly a significant motivating factor behind the construction of new mosques. There is hardly a mosque or madrasa without a number of shops attached to it. In some locations, fully-fledged markets have appeared that are linked to places of worship and religious learning. In residential areas and even in state land earmarked for public parks where shops are not allowed, a madrasa may be established overnight and soon have a cluster of shops attached that become a source of income for it.

Because such properties are a lucrative source of income, the possession and ownership of Sunni mosques has unsurprisingly become a major factor of intra-Sunni conflict in Karachi.¹²¹ The Barelvi militant group Sunni Tehrik, for instance, has fought for control over Deobandi and Wahhabi-run mosques. Many Ahle Hadith mosques have also come under attack from rival Sunni factions for similar reasons.¹²²

Taking note of increasing complaints from citizens and NGOs like Shehri, the Sindh cabinet decided in July 2005 that no mosque would be allowed without a no-objection certificate from the government. However, no mention was made of those mosques and madrasas that already violate land use and building codes. Given the government's dismal record of following up on decisions regarding religious institutions, it is little surprise the ban is ineffectual.

¹¹⁷ Crisis Group interviews, madrasa administrators and businessmen, Karachi, August 2005-November 2006.

¹¹⁸ With property prices soaring in Karachi and real estate also used to launder black money, these land mafias use extortion, bribery and influence to occupy state land or to bypass building and planning regulations and rules. S. Raza Hassan, "Karachi: Land mafia has free hand in government quarters", *Dawn*, 14 February 2007.

¹¹⁹ Crisis Group interview, Asif Memon, survey superintendent of Karachi, August 2005.

¹²⁰ Crisis Group interview, Karachi, August 2005.

¹²¹ Syed Shoab Hasan, "Two hurt, vehicles burnt in mosque dispute", *Dawn*, 15 April 2006; "Karachi mosques and sectarianism", *Daily Times*, 20 April 2006. For a more general analysis of the Sunni Tehrik and Deobandi struggles over mosques, see Khaled Ahmed, "Deobandi-Barelvi war amid clerical lying", *Daily Times*, 23 May 2006.

¹²² Khalid Ahmed, op. cit.

V. REFORMS PERPETUALLY DELAYED

Any reform of Karachi's madrasa sector can only be viewed within the context of national reform. As far back as 12 January 2002, President Musharraf committed himself to ending the "abuse of mosques and madaris", and preventing them "from spreading political and sectarian prejudices". Issuing his madrasa reform agenda, he said that the functioning of madrasas would be regulated by the state; all would be registered; their curriculum would be modernised to bring their students into the mainstream. He warned: "If any madrasa is found indulging in extremism, subversion, militant activity or possessing any types of weapons, it will be closed down".¹²³ In February 2007, this reform program is in shambles.

Since its first report on the subject in July 2002, Crisis Group has argued that any credible program to tackle the madrasa issue and the threat of violent extremism must, at the very least, include the following:¹²⁴

- ❑ mandatory registration and classification of madrasas;
- ❑ mandatory and transparent financial reporting by madrasas;
- ❑ effective action against extremist groups and the madrasas to which they are linked (including legal bans and closures, prosecutions of top leadership, restrictions on foreign students and enforcement of laws against sectarian and pro-jihad propaganda);
- ❑ removal from the curriculum of teachings in support of violent sectarianism and jihad;
- ❑ establishment of a single regulatory agency, with the necessary powers and political influence, to monitor and control the activities of madrasas; and
- ❑ increased support to public sector education and elimination of sectarian and pro-jihadi teachings from the public school curriculum.

There has been no real progress on any of these fronts. Instead, Musharraf's reliance on the mullahs to counter the moderate regional and national-level parties has empowered the religious parties and their affiliated

madrasa unions, effectively stalling any movement towards tangible reform.¹²⁵

As the violence in Karachi starkly demonstrates, banned groups continue to operate openly under new names and use Karachi's mosques and madrasas for recruitment and operational support. The Societies Act registration regime places no obstacles on militant organisations and the madrasas linked to them. Despite laws and government declarations, jihadi and virulently sectarian literature continues to be freely available at many of the city's mosques, and elsewhere.¹²⁶

A. ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

1. Registration

Confusion marks the government's registration policy and its implementation. Four years after the madrasa lobby rejected Musharraf's first proposal for voluntary regulation,¹²⁷ there are still no reliable statistics on the total number of madrasas or the total numbers registered; no coherent or widely understood process of registration; and no clear picture of what goes on within the madrasa sector.

Over 2006, government ministers and spokesmen and representatives of the madrasa unions periodically announced new registration totals, with the most recent figure just over 12,000.¹²⁸ But this is misleading since it combines numbers derived from multiple forms of registration and is based to a large degree on the self-reporting of the madrasa unions. And those unions of the five sects, despite their bitter theological differences, function as one to defend what they see as their common interests. Organised as the ITMD, they have successfully fought against any registration scheme that would involve rigorous monitoring and oversight.

¹²⁵ "Seminaries refuse to provide details", *Gulf Times*, 23 December 2006.

¹²⁶ "Provinces asked to curb sectarianism", *Dawn*, 25 July 2006; "Curbing sectarianism", *Dawn*, editorial, 26 July 2006.

¹²⁷ Known as the "Deeni Madaris [Voluntary Registration and Regulation] Ordinance 2002", the draft law would have established an entirely voluntary system of registration under the auspices of the Pakistan Madrasa Education Board (PMEB). The full text is at www.hvk.org/articles/0702/26.html. For detailed analysis of the draft, see Crisis Group Reports, *Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military*, op. cit., pp. 25-27, and *The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

¹²⁸ The ministry of religious affairs yearbook for 2005-2006 lists 12,176 madrasas registered by the middle of 2006, pakistan.gov.pk/divisions/ContentInfo.jsp?DivID+31&cPath+380_385&ContentID+4490.

¹²³ "President of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf's Address to the Nation", 12 January 2002, www.presidentofpakistan.gov.pk/.

¹²⁴ Crisis Group Report, *Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military*, op. cit., p. ii; Crisis Group Report, *Unfulfilled Promises*, op. cit., p. ii.

The present regulations for registering madrasas came into effect in December 2005, when Musharraf formalised the ad hoc arrangements by amending the Societies' Registration Act of 1860. In the face of resistance by madrasa managers, the Act was amended twice. Section 21, specifically tailored for the madrasa sector, was first enacted in August 2005 but the ITMD refused to abide by it. After lengthy negotiations with the ministry of religious affairs, Section 21 was further revised to satisfy the ITMD.

The Societies Registration Act is more a cosmetic measure to address international concern about Pakistan's religious schools than a mechanism to regulate their functioning. It makes registration mandatory and requires each madrasa to submit an "annual report of its educational activities" and an audit of its accounts to the appropriate government registrar. It also states that no madrasa "shall teach or publish any literature which promotes militancy or spreads sectarianism or religious hatred".¹²⁹ But these requirements are so riddled with loopholes and exceptions that the law is essentially meaningless. With respect to registration procedures, for instance:

- ❑ Madrasas already registered under the earlier, pre-Section 21 Societies Act do not need to do so again,¹³⁰
- ❑ the Registrar of each provincial directorate of labour and industries oversees registration under the Societies Act of those madrasas that are not part of the ITMD but registration of ITMD-affiliated madrasas is handled through the madrasa board of each sect, while the ITMD simply presents its data to the government, which has no means to verify its accuracy;¹³¹
- ❑ registration is not a prerequisite to opening a new madrasa, which can be set up without rules of incorporation or initiation procedures for one year;¹³²
- ❑ non-residential madrasas are not obliged to apply for registration;¹³³
- ❑ a madrasa with more than one campus need only register once.¹³⁴ Since most registered madrasas are welfare trusts and charities, and many operate more than one branch, this defeats a correct count;

- ❑ madrasas are required to submit an annual report only on their "educational activities", not their activities as a whole;¹³⁵ and
- ❑ there are no serious sanctions for non-compliance.

This system thus does nothing to clarify the real number of madrasas. It fails to generate any useful information about what goes on within their walls. If the point of registration is to provide the government and public with better information to understand and regulate the activities of madrasas, the present system clearly is a failure.

2. Foreign students

Despite bans and restrictions, the enrolment of foreign students is also insufficiently regulated. After 11 September 2001, the government imposed restrictions on expatriate students and tightened enrolment procedures. Students were required to obtain valid student visas and security clearances, as well as No-Objection Certificates (NOCs) from their parent country. Together with Western governments' campaigns to deter expatriates from joining Pakistani madrasas, this resulted in a decrease in the numbers of foreign seminarians. But given the absence of reliable data, it is nearly impossible to ascertain the exact number of foreign students who are still enrolled. Moreover, the uncertain citizenship status of thousands of Bengalis, Biharis and Burmese migrants and their descendents, and the difficulties in distinguishing between Afghan and Pakistani Pashtun students make it even more difficult to ascertain the actual number of foreigners.

Musharraf had stated there were some 1,400 foreigners in Pakistani madrasas when announcing his July 2005 decision to expel them.¹³⁶ Previous estimates had placed as many as 35,000 foreign students in those seminaries or working with Islamic charities or NGOs.¹³⁷ In 2003 the Karachi police reported 10,905 foreign students.¹³⁸

The Musharraf government came under renewed pressure after the 7 July 2005 bombings in London, which involved three British citizens of Pakistani descent who were believed to have briefly stayed in Pakistani madrasas. At the end of that month, President Musharraf said all foreigners were to be removed from the religious schools,

¹²⁹ Text of the law reproduced in *The News*, 2 December 2005.

¹³⁰ Ali Waqar, "1,672 madrassas registered in Punjab till November", *Daily Times*, 5 December 2005.

¹³¹ "Alliance of seminaries agrees to registration", *The News*, 23 December 2005.

¹³² Societies Registration (Second Amendment) Ordinance, 2005, Sec. 2 (1) (ii).

¹³³ *Ibid.*, Sec. 2 (4).

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, Sec. 2 (1) (ii).

¹³⁵ Amjad Mahmood, "Madressahs: govt to introduce new law", *Dawn*, 23 December 2005.

¹³⁶ "Foreigners will have to leave madressahs: law to be adopted soon: Musharraf", *Dawn*, 30 July 2005.

¹³⁷ Masood Haider, "Pakistan to expel Arab, Afghan students", *Dawn*, 8 March 2002, p.1. See also Crisis Group Report, *Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military*, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

¹³⁸ "11,000 foreigners in Sindh madaris", *Dawn*, 16 January 2003.

and a law would be made to ban them.¹³⁹ However, pressured by the madrasa lobby, he backtracked in February 2006. In return, the ITMD refrained from joining protests on the Danish cartoon issue.¹⁴⁰ Six months later, however, when the interior ministry announced it would no longer accept foreign students in madrasas and would not extend the visas of those already in the country, the ITMD called this a violation of the February agreement and called on its madrasas not to register or cooperate with the government until that agreement was honored.¹⁴¹ According to Karachi police, the current policy requires foreign students to obtain a valid Pakistani visa and a NOC from their home governments.¹⁴²

By end-2005, ITMD leaders said there were only 800 foreign students left.¹⁴³ In August 2006, the government estimated that some 700 foreign students were still in Pakistan, and of these half were without the required NOCs from their home countries and thus liable to be expelled. While a senior police official in Karachi maintained that most foreign students without required documents had been deported in 2006, figures provided by the city police show that 343 of 400 students slated for deportation were still in Pakistan.¹⁴⁴ Senior officials in the ministry of religious affairs now maintain that all foreign students without NOCs have been repatriated and that those with such certificates would be sent back to their countries as they completed studies.¹⁴⁵ But a top ITMD official and teacher at Jamia Binoria madrasa insists that, "more foreign students are coming into Jamia Binoria than ever before".¹⁴⁶

B. FINANCIAL REPORTING AND CONTROLS

Crisis Group had pointed out in earlier reports that the pre-Section 21 version of the Societies Registration Act required only the most minimal financial disclosure and provided for no oversight mechanisms of the funding

¹³⁹ "Foreigners will have to leave madressahs: law to be adopted soon: Musharraf", *Dawn*, 30 July 2005.

¹⁴⁰ Mohammad Imran, "Foreign students won't be repatriated, Musharraf assures ITMD", *Daily Times*, 28 February 2006.

¹⁴¹ Mohammad Imran, "ITMD tells seminaries not to register with government", *Daily Times*, 7 August 2006; "700 foreign students in seminaries without NOC", *Dawn*, 9 August 2006.

¹⁴² Crisis Group interview, senior police official, Karachi, November 2006.

¹⁴³ Crisis Group interview, Hanif Jallandhry, Islamabad, December 2005.

¹⁴⁴ Crisis Group interview, Karachi, November 2006; "Consolidated Progress Reports on Sectarianism/Extremism – Sindh", (updated 20 November 2006), made available to Crisis Group by the Sindh Police, Karachi, November 2006.

¹⁴⁵ Crisis Group interview, Islamabad, February 2007.

¹⁴⁶ Crisis Group interview, Hanif Jallandhry, Karachi, November 2006.

or other financial information submitted by registered madrasas.¹⁴⁷ Under the new regime established by Section 21, madrasas must now give the provincial registrar annual audits of their accounts but these do not need to include information about donors or details of what money was spent on.¹⁴⁸ The government will also accept the audit reports prepared by madrasas' chosen auditors without any independent inspection.¹⁴⁹ Such audits mean little since they do not reveal the sources of funding.

Moreover, Pakistan has yet to sign the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. In its report to the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee in July 2005, the government argued there was no need to do so, given the adequacy of existing Pakistani laws and the Anti-Money Laundering Bill, which was to be tabled in parliament.¹⁵⁰ However, the National Assembly has yet to pass the bill, which in any case fails to comply with the standards established by the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering.¹⁵¹

C. CURRICULUM REFORM

As a central part of its Madrasa Reform Project (MRP), first announced in June 2002, the government had pledged not only to encourage registration but to also modernise curricula by adding new courses of English language, mathematics, Pakistan studies, social studies and general science at various levels. The professed aim was to bring madrasas into the mainstream of formal education. With a \$100 million (Rs.5.7 billion) budget, the MRP would cover the costs of books and additional teachers for non-religious subjects, teacher training, library materials, computers and other supplies. This assistance would be available to any madrasa registered under the Societies Registration Act.

¹⁴⁷ Crisis Group Report, *Unfulfilled Promises*, op. cit., pp. 7-9.

¹⁴⁸ "Is the deal with the madrasas now final?", *Daily Times*, editorial, 5 December 2005.

¹⁴⁹ Although financial reporting standards have been watered down in response to ITMD resistance, many madrasas still reject these minimal requirements. Hasan Mansoor, "Madrasas set up trusts in face of investigations into their income sources", *Daily Times*, 14 June 2006.

¹⁵⁰ "Letter to the Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee from Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations" (S/2005/524), 25 July 2005, at www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1373/p.htm.

¹⁵¹ The Financial Action Task Force is an inter-governmental body whose purpose is the development and promotion of national and international policies to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. "Money laundering bill severely flawed, say experts", *Dawn*, 20 January 2007. See also the Anti-Money Laundering Forum of the International Bar Association, www.anti-moneylaundering.org/countrydetail.asp?countryid=208.

Financing reform has since run aground. Although financial support was not made contingent on any meaningful regulation of finances or sectarian teachings, the MRP was unable to fund more than a handful of madrasas. In mid-2006, the government took back the unspent funds it had transferred to provincial education departments for disbursement to madrasas.¹⁵² In a June 2006 statement to the National Assembly, the education minister announced that no further government money would be given to madrasas for curricular reforms and related supplies until the madrasa boards signed an agreement with the government to abide by the stipulated terms.¹⁵³ These included law enforcement vetting of madrasas applying for assistance and registration forms that revealed more operational information than most madrasas were comfortable with. However, financial support did not require change in the religious part of the curriculum, and funding was even available for madrasas that had registered under the old version of the Societies Act.¹⁵⁴

Under the government's initial reform plans, the Pakistan Madrasa Education Board (PMEB) was to design and implement new standard syllabi. Because of IMTD resistance, few madrasas signed on or adopted this curriculum. The Board's three model madrasas (including one in Karachi), whose curricula were meant to inspire reform elsewhere, are inadequately funded and supported. Instead of attracting others, they are primarily models of government neglect.¹⁵⁵

An Inter-Madrasa Board, developed in consultation with the madrasa unions, has now been tasked with developing a new, uniform madrasa curriculum that would remove disparities between religious and public schools.¹⁵⁶ The board will include the secretaries of the interior, education and religious affairs ministries and prominent educators, and work under the supervision of the ministry of religious affairs. "Through the board, the government will have centralised data on madrasas and their students, and the ministry of religious affairs would coordinate the working of the seminaries with the help of *ulema*", a

ministry official explained.¹⁵⁷ It is unclear how the new board relates to PMEB, whose purpose was to oversee system-wide curriculum mainstreaming. According to a senior official involved in managing one of the model madrasas, the board has yet even to meet.¹⁵⁸ In any case, adoption of a new "mainstream" curriculum remains entirely voluntary and hence dependent on ITMD cooperation and acceptance.

Even if the MRP, an Inter-Madrasa Board or some other means of adding non-religious courses in madrasas succeeds, it would do little to address the real challenge of reforming the sectarian, jihadi content of the religious curriculum. The Societies Act does nothing to achieve this. While Section 21 states that no madrasa "shall teach or publish any literature, which promotes militancy or spreads sectarianism or religious hatred", it immediately qualifies this by adding: "Provided that nothing contained herein shall bar the comparative study of various religions or schools of thought or the study of any other subject covered by the Holy Koran, *Sunnah* or the Islamic jurisprudence".¹⁵⁹ It was only after this was included that the ITMD consented to the new registration procedures. But this concession allows madrasas to produce and teach material that refutes the beliefs of other sects and religions, transmit their own sectarian ideologies, and train students in polemical debates with other sects of Islam and other major religions.¹⁶⁰

Adding modern and more useful courses might sound promising but will do little to reform the madrasa sector, since teaching modern subjects is not necessarily inconsistent with militant sectarian and jihadi teachings. The inclusion of sectarian, pro-jihad and anti-minority teaching material has even subverted the generally modern curriculum of the public school sector.¹⁶¹

Successful introduction of an expanded, modern curriculum in an otherwise unchanged and unregulated system of religious schooling would run the additional risk of being used to justify one of the madrasa lobby's chief objectives: to ensure that madrasa certificates and degrees are granted

¹⁵² James Rupert, "Falling on the road to reform", *Newsday*, 24 September 2006; Mukhtar Alam, op. cit.

¹⁵³ Shahzad Raza, "No funds given to seminaries in 2005-2006, Qazi tells NA", *Daily Times*, 19 June 2006.

¹⁵⁴ Mukhtar Alam, op. cit.

¹⁵⁵ Candland, op. cit., pp. 158-159. According to the 2005-2006 yearbook of the ministry of religious affairs, the three model madrasas have altogether just under 700 students. Sources involved in their management confirm that promotions for teachers and officials have been delayed because the PMEB has not met since January 2004. Crisis Group interview, December 2006.

¹⁵⁶ "Madressahs won't be closed, says Minister", *Dawn*, 23 July 2006.

¹⁵⁷ Ali Waqar, "9,271 seminaries registered", *Dawn*, 21 February 2006.

¹⁵⁸ Crisis Group interview, December 2006. According to ITMD officials, the details of the board have been finalised but will not be announced until other contentious issues of Islamic functioning are resolved. Mohammad Imran, "Inter-Madrasa Board: ITMD-Govt talks after WPA [Women Protection Act] issue settled", *Daily Times*, 27 December 2006.

¹⁵⁹ Societies Registration (Second Amendment) Ordinance, 2005, Sec. 2 (4).

¹⁶⁰ Amjad Mahmood, "Madressahs: govt to introduce new law", *Dawn*, 23 December 2005.

¹⁶¹ See Crisis Group Report, *Reforming the Education Sector*, op cit., pp. 16-17.

the same legal status as matriculation, bachelor's and master's degrees. In negotiations with the government and direct meetings with Musharraf, ITMD leaders have repeatedly raised the equivalence issue as a condition for abiding by the registration act.¹⁶² Musharraf and his ministers have dangled degree equivalence as an incentive to encourage cooperation. Government ministers and officials have implied that formal equivalence for madrasa degrees is merely a matter of time.¹⁶³

The most recent attempt by the Musharraf government to offer degree equivalence was struck down by the Supreme Court,¹⁶⁴ which disqualified candidates of religious parties who had been made eligible for local elections after the government declared mid-level madrasa certificates the equivalent of matriculation degrees. It ruled that no madrasa certificates of any level could be recognised as an educational qualification. The judgment noted that madrasas were being "run or managed by the private sector without any statutory sanction, having no affiliation with any university or the board of intermediate and secondary education".¹⁶⁵ Given the unregulated madrasa sector's many flaws, the government would do well to abide by this judgement.

D. COORDINATING REFORM

Meaningful and sustained madrasa reform also badly needs a central, coordinating and regulatory authority, with all necessary powers but under parliamentary oversight.¹⁶⁶ At present, multiple federal ministries, including education, religious affairs and interior, deal with different aspects of madrasa reform, but all meaningful decisions are initiated by the president and his advisers,¹⁶⁷ either through ordinances or provincial parliament enactments with little debate.

Crisis Group has argued that effective madrasa reform "requires new procedures that minimise the role of the military and intelligence agencies. Information and policy on madrasas should not be the monopoly of the state's security arm".¹⁶⁸ Instead, the national parliament should help shape and guide reform, while a single madrasa regulatory authority should be established and tasked with monitoring registration, assisting in implementation and monitoring of curriculum and financing reform; coordinating the government departments involved in the process; and acting as a focal point for liaison with clergy, donors, law-enforcement agencies and international organisations.

¹⁶² "Madressahs agree to audit of accounts", *Dawn*, 4 December 2005.

¹⁶³ Reports indicate, for instance, that the government continues to consider a plan for "bringing madrasas under the control of existing education boards". See Rao Khalid, "Govt. lost over mainstreaming of Madaris", *The Nation*, 22 August 2006; "Madressahs won't be closed, says Minister", *Dawn*, 23 July 2006.

¹⁶⁴ "Sanaullah Khan and others vs. DRO Mianwali and others", PLD 2005 SC 858.

¹⁶⁵ "Detailed SC verdict on sanad issue", *Dawn*, 30 August 2005.

¹⁶⁶ Crisis Group Reports, *Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military*, op. cit., pp. ii, 28; *Unfulfilled Promises*, op. cit., p. ii.

¹⁶⁷ An official in the ministry of religious affairs, for instance, admitted that "big decisionmakers ask us for our opinion, we provide it, but we can only implement policy the way they want us to", Crisis Group interview, Islamabad, February 2007.

¹⁶⁸ Crisis Group Report, *Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military*, op. cit., p. 27.

VI. CONCLUSION

If the government's inaction has allowed well-financed networks of madrasas, sectarian parties and militant groups to flourish in Karachi and elsewhere in Pakistan, these now pose a significant threat not only to the city's residents but also to domestic stability and regional and international security. The madrasa sector is thriving because of a mix of factors including poverty and lack of job opportunities; deplorable public schools; the sectarian tilt of state institutions; and the military government's reliance for political survival on the religious parties and its attempts to marginalise moderate voices and forces.

For madrasa reform to succeed, the government must:

- close extremist and jihadi madrasas and effectively enforce existing bans on sectarian and jihadi groups;
- regulate madrasas effectively, including by monitoring teachers and students, financial flows and expenditures;
- reform the curriculum's religious content to exclude sectarian and pro-jihad teachings, instead of attempting to mainstream madrasas; and
- enforce existing laws that ban hate speech and incitement to violence, prevent the use of madrasas for sectarian and violent propaganda and regulate the use of public lands.

Instead of financially supporting the MRP or related projects, donors should support the reform of the public school sector. This would be far more effective in neutralising the mass appeal of madrasas and their sectarian messages. The capacity and quality of public education, which is woefully lacking in resources, should be developed, and reforms undertaken to ensure that it can provide an education that leads to gainful employment.

The government's pledges to substantially increase spending on education have yet to materialise. At 2.7 per cent of GDP, it remains far below the 4 per cent UNESCO recommends. In December 2005, Education Minister Javed Ashraf Qazi promised to raise the education budget from 2.7 per cent of GDP to 4 per cent in the next year's budget. In January 2007, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and his cabinet again vowed that the education budget would be raised to 4 per cent of GDP.¹⁶⁹ The dropout rate is

¹⁶⁹ Some educators believe that expenditure on education does not exceed 2.4 per cent of GDP. See Abbas Rashid, "Walking the talk on education", *Daily Times*, 9 December 2006; "4 percent of GDP will be reserved for education in next budget: Javed", *Daily Times*, 31 December 2005; "Education to get 4

unacceptably high, reflecting the poor quality of the education.¹⁷⁰ The government has taken some steps to change the national curriculum and textbooks¹⁷¹ but the reform's future is uncertain, since President Musharraf could succumb once again to the pressure of his religious allies. In fact, MMA-controlled assemblies in NWFP and Balochistan have threatened to block introduction of the new textbooks, unless they are allowed to revise them according to their own interpretation of "enlightened moderation".¹⁷²

So long as the military continues to rely on the mullahs to retain power, madrasas and the violent extremism they encourage are likely to become even more powerful in Pakistani society, undermining the security of the state and beyond. Real reform – of the education system and madrasas alike – will only be possible through the strengthening of the country's moderate parties and forces, with free and fair national elections an essential precondition and first step.

Islamabad/Brussels, 29 March 2007

per cent of GDP: Cabinet wants cement price reduced", *Dawn*, 15 February 2007.

¹⁷⁰ The "gross enrolment rate at primary level is 89 per cent and dropout rate is around 40 per cent" in Pakistan, Mustafa Kamal Pasha, "Scope of technical & vocational training in Punjab", *The Nation*, 15 January 2007.

¹⁷¹ Ali Waqar, "A new curriculum for a new Pakistan", *Daily Times*, 25 December 2006.

¹⁷² "NWFP and Balochistan allowed extra Islamiat curriculum chapters", *Daily Times*, 25 January 2007.

APPENDIX A

MAP OF PAKISTAN



APPENDIX B

KARACHI'S DEOBANDI MADRASAS

Jamia Yusufia Binoria: Located in Ashrafabad, the madrasa is named after the founder of the Binori Town madrasa. Most teachers of this madrasa are associated with banned organisations such as Jaishe Mohammad and Sipah Sahaba.

Jamiatul Rasheed Ehsanabad: Closely linked to the Sipah Sahaba, most of the teachers of the madrasa are graduates of Binori Town and Darul Uloom Hanafia.

Jamia Ehsanul Uloom: Located in Gulshan-e-Iqbal Town, and headed by Maulana Zar Wali Khan, a JUI leader, the madrasa has a separate women's wing. It is linked to Sipah Sahaba Pakistan and other Deobandi jihadi groups such as Jaishe Mohammad.

Jamia Etheshamia, Jacob Lines: Founded by Maulana Ehteshamul Haq Thanvi and currently run by his son, Tanveerul Haq, the madrasa managers prohibit their students from participating in violent jihad but turn a blind eye when they do.

Jamia Ashraful Madaris, Nazimabad: Run by Maulana Hakim Mohammad Mazhar, the son of Al Akhtar Trust's founder, Hakim Mohammed Akbar, the madrasa also has a branch in Gulshan-e-Jauhar Town, which functions as the examination centre for the Deobandi Wafaq al-Madaris.

Jamia Farooqia, Shah Faisal Colony: It is run by the president of the Deobandi Wafaq, Maulana Saleemullah Khan. The madrasa administrators deny any link with jihadi and sectarian organisations but many graduates are now prominent members of such organisations.

Jamia Anwarul Quran, Adam Town: Founded by JUI's Abdullah Darkhwasti in 1980, the madrasa had links with the Harkat-ul-Mujahidin and other jihadi groups.

Madrasa Khalid Bin Walid, Korangi: Headed by Maulana Abdul Rehman Mujahid, the madrasa maintains ties with Harkatul Jihad-i-Islami.

Darul Uloom Rehmania, Burma Colony, Landhi: Also linked to the Harkat Jihad-i-Islami, and run by Maulana Nazir Ahmed, the madrasa follows the curriculum of the Binori Town madrasa.

APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND TERMS

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- Auqaf** Plural of *Waqf*, religious endowment, usually arable land, buildings, shops belonging to mosques, shrines, madrasas or other religious institutions. These assets are non-transferable and have legal protection. The government partially nationalised this sector in 1960, but *auqaf* income can only be spent on mosques and the religious institution they belong to. The *Auqaf* Department does not cover all madrasas, mosques or shrines.
- Dars-e-Nizami** The basic curriculum of all non-Shia madrasas, though each sect modifies and supplements it with courses to suit its own brand of Islam. *Dars-e-Nizami* was originally developed in the eighteenth century but includes many texts from the medieval period.
- FATA** Federally Administered Tribal Areas, seven semi-autonomous agencies or administrative districts located along Pakistan's north-western border with Afghanistan.
- Harkat-ul-Mujahidin (HUM)** Born out of Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami inspired by the Afghan jihadi leader Nabi Muhammadi. After the split, Harkat-ul-Mujahidin entered the Afghan jihad in 1984. Following the end of the Afghan war, it entered the Kashmir jihad in 1991. It worked in competition with Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami and sometimes clashed with it until Samiul Haq and Yusuf Ludhianvi (murdered in 2000) merged them and renamed the new organisation Harkat-ul-Ansar. Presently led by Fazlur Rehman Khaleel, the HUM was banned by the Musharraf regime in 2002.
- Imambargah** A Shia mosque or congregation hall for prayers and other devotional activities.
- ITMD** Ittehad Tanzimat Madaris Dinia, the federation of the madrasa unions (*Wafaqs*) from all five sects and subjects, it lobbies the government on madrasa policies.
- Ji** Jamaat-e-Islami, the vanguard of modernist Islam and the most organised religious party in the country. Its madrasas are run by the Rabita al-Madaris al-Arabiya and are considered the pioneers of jihad. The student wing of the Ji, the Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba (IJT), is known for the use of political violence in mainstream colleges and universities where it is a dominant group.
- Jaishe Mohammad** A Deobandi jihadi group operating in Kashmir, an offshoot of HUM and Harkat-ul-Ansar, whose manpower comes from Sipah Sahaba cadres and JUI madrasas. The Pakistan government has banned the group but it continues to operate openly under a new name, Tehrik al-Forqan.
- JUI** Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, the main Sunni-Deobandi political party and successor in Pakistan to the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Hind in pre-partition India, is divided into three factions, denoted by the initials of their leaders: JUI-Samiul Haq (S), JUI-Fazlur Rahman (F), and JUI-Ajmal Qadri (Q). JUI-F is the chief religious partner for the Musharraf government. Together the three factions control most Pakistani madrasas. JUI madrasas were also the main supply line for Afghan jihadis in the 1980s.
- JUP** Jamiat Ulama-e-Pakistan, the Barelvi component of the MMA and chief rival of the Deobandi school, has not been particularly active since the death of its leader, Shah Ahmed Noorani, in December 2003.
- LJ** Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, an offshoot of the Sipah Sahaba Pakistan and more militant in its actions against the Shias, LJ has had strong contacts with the Taliban and training camps inside Afghanistan. It has been banned, and its leader, Riaz Basra, was killed by the police in May 2002. Since then, LJ has bred many smaller terrorist factions.
- LT** Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, formed in 1990, is the military wing of the Markaz-ud-Dawa-wal-Irshad (MDI), an Ahle Hadith organisation based in Muridke, in the Punjab. The LT runs training camps in Punjab and Pakistani Kashmir, mainly in areas along the Line of Control. It operates in Indian Kashmir and has

close links with the anti-Shia militant parties. Since being banned in 2002, LT has taken the name Jamaat-ud-Dawa.

- MMA** Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal, Urdu for United Action Front, an alliance of six major religio-political parties dominated by the JUI-F and the JI that runs the NWFP provincial government and is the major partner in the pro-Musharraf ruling coalition in Balochistan.
- MQM** Muttahida Qaumi Movement (United National Movement), a political party founded and led by Altaf Hussain, originated in Karachi in 1978 as a Mohajir student organisation but has developed into the most powerful party in urban areas of Sindh. It currently runs the Sindh government and supports Musharraf's ruling party in Islamabad.
- MRP** The Madrasa Reforms Project was launched by the federal ministry of education in 2002 to encourage madrasa registration and introduce new curricula but has since run aground.
- PML** Pakistan Muslim League, the founder party of the country, was originally called the All India Muslim League. Many politicians claim to be leaders of the "real" Muslim League in Pakistan and have their own factions. Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, now in exile, heads the Muslim League's largest grouping, PML-N. Musharraf's ruling party is known as PML-Q (Quaid-i-Azam).
- PMEB** The Pakistan Madrasa Education Board was established to run model madrasas and encourage wider curriculum reform among affiliated madrasas.
- PPP** The Pakistan People's Party was founded by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1967 with a socialist, egalitarian agenda and is now headed by his daughter, Benazir Bhutto, twice prime minister and currently in exile.
- SMP** Sipah-e-Muhammad Pakistan, the banned Shia militant organisation, has engaged in tit-for-tat attacks on Sunni targets.
- SSP** Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, a Deobandi militant organisation and an offshoot of the JUI, has pioneered sectarian militancy in the country. Its stronghold is the city of Jhang in the Punjab, and it contests elections. After being banned in 2002, it changed its name to Millat-e-Islami.
- ST** Sunni Tehrik, a Barelvi militant group founded in the 1990s to defend Barelvi mosques and interests against take-overs and intimidation by Deobandi groups, was held responsible by many for the killing of Deobandi leader Yusuf Ludhianvi in 2000. It was effectively neutralised by the murders of its main leaders in the 2006 Nishtar Park bombing in Karachi.
- Tableeghi Jamaat** A Muslim missionary and revivalist movement that originated in British India in the 1920s and has since spread to 150 countries, its name in Urdu means "Proselytizing Group". It has an active following estimated to be between 70 and 80 million. It neither has a formal organisational structure nor publishes details about the scope of its activities, its membership or its finances.
- TIP** Tehrik-e-Islami Pakistan, the Shia component of the MMA, earlier known as the Tehrik-e-Jafaria Pakistan (TJP), originated in 1979 as the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Fiqha Jaafria (TNFJ), a movement for the implementation of Shia laws in predominantly Sunni Pakistan.
- Wafaq al-Madaris** The name is Arabic for a federation or union of religious seminaries. These are loose umbrella organisations of madrasas, of which there are five in Pakistan: Wafaq al-Madaris al-Arabiya (Sunni-Deobandi); Tanzim al-Madaris al-Arabiya (Sunni Barelvi); Wafaq al-Madaris al-Shia (Shia); Wafaq al-Madaris al-Salafiya (Ahle Hadith) (Salafi); and Rabita al-Madaris al-Arabiya of the Jammat-e-Islami. For political lobbying they are united under the umbrella of the Ittehad Tanzimat Madaris Dinia (ITMD).