[**The people suffer**](https://www.dawn.com/news/1650786/the-people-suffer)

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BALOCHISTAN Chief Minister Jam Kamal Alyani is in danger, and the threat isn’t an external one. His own Balochistan Awami Party members, led by speaker Quddus Bizenjo, want him to [give up his post](https://www.dawn.com/news/1650568/balochistan-crisis-deepens-as-three-ministers-two-advisers-resign). Opposition members submitted a [no-confidence motion](https://www.dawn.com/news/1646374) against him last month. However, Senate chairman Sadiq Sanjrani, also in BAP, is trying to save him and has flown to Quetta twice for the purpose. It seems when politicians aren’t bound by ideology and are members of a party created overnight by another ‘party’, they do not stand with each other in testing times. Jam Kamal Alyani is fighting to retain his position as chief minister but has lost support from all sides. Several ministers have handed in their resignations after his refusal to step down.

Jam Kamal doesn’t have much to lose and can change his loyalties, coming back as a federal or provincial minister after the next election. The real fight is being fought by the people of Balochistan for their rights and dignity. Fighting a lone battle, for them everything is at stake. Every day, a new name is added to the list of targeted killings, a new hashtag calling for justice trends on Twitter, and young Baloch men disappear. On Sept 21, Taj Bibi was killed allegedly by the Frontier Corps in Turbat. A bullet hit her forehead inside the car she was travelling in before she could even introduce herself at the check post. The outrage on social media has been so huge that for the first time a picture of a dead Baloch woman has been tweeted and retweeted several times. In a society, where living women don’t post their pictures on social media, the photo of a dead woman without a dupatta or chador is being shared. The victim’s family desperately wants justice, and through this picture want to tell the world about the extent of the state brutality that people suffer in Balochistan.

Another [victim](https://www.dawn.com/news/1650354) of an alleged extrajudicial killing by police was a 10-year-old boy Ramiz Khalil. His family protested with his dead body in front of Governor House in Quetta. A year ago, Ramiz himself was holding a placard, asking for justice for someone else. Today, people are holding placards inscribed with his name. Unfortunately, as in death, during his short life Ramiz was unable to divert the attention of the rulers to the injustice towards his people. The provincial government seems to have given up on its responsibility of safeguarding the right to life. There is a situation in which crime and lawlessness are rampant, and no one feels safe. Panjgur district is one example of chaos and bloodshed. Since July, more than 10 murders per month are being reported from Panjgur.

**Read:** [*Protest against targeted killings in Panjgur*](https://www.dawn.com/news/1646066)

For the people of Balochistan, everything is at stake.

Even in the district with ostensibly the brightest chances for development — Gwadar — life is difficult. The livelihoods of fishermen in the port city are under threat. Reportedly, Chinese trawlers are fishing in provincial waters without licences, which has caused a deep sense of [anxiety](https://www.dawn.com/news/1629558) among the coastal people, who fear illegal fishing would put an end to their decades-old means of livelihood. Their anxiety is legitimate as they are already not allowed to fish in their traditional fishing spots due to security reasons. Now, they fear the limited space left for fishing will be lost to big Chinese trawlers. In July, five Chinese trawlers were detained by Pakistani officials over these concerns. The resentment and anger of the fishermen and local residents against the government were clearly visible at a massive protest rally arranged by Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman of the Jamaat-i-Islami last week. The government has lost the trust of the fishermen — the promise of job creation for the local people through CPEC is like an empty slogan. Instead, old ways of survival are under threat in the name of development. The mega development project, has so far not been able to provide either jobs or basic necessities, including drinking water and electricity, to the people of Gwadar. That people are coming out in large numbers to protest supports this view.

Jam Kamal Alyani might have to step down, but he has already lost the trust of the people. In his three years, there has been no relief. Not only do lives and livelihoods remain unprotected, the right to free speech and protest are also in peril. Students in Balochistan have faced repression and maltreatment in his tenure. Police jailed dozens of protesting students in Quetta recently. Rather than the authorities hearing out their concerns regarding the MDCAT exams, they were baton-charged. Peaceful protest is every Pakistani’s constitutional right. The Quetta police should be ashamed of denying the youth, the future of Balochistan, their right to peaceful assembly and of using force against them. Whether Jam Kamal goes or stays, the real question is whether the right to life, to a means of dignified livelihood, and to free speech will be guaranteed to the people of Balochistan.

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