**Police reform**

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The Police Service of Paki­stan (PSP) is a federal ap­pointment that is carried out through the Federal Pub­lic Service Commission (FPSC). Officers of this service are then as­signed to the provinc­es for the maintenance of law and order. As a colonial arm of con­trol, the force was not created to serve. Under the PSP officers, the rank and file of the force are recruited by the department itself. Police sta­tions are controlled by the Sta­tion House Officers (SHOs) who at one time lived in-house, but not anymore. FIRs (First Intelli­gence Reports) and other com­plaints are lodged with the area stations. The SHOs enjoy unlim­ited powers which, despite sev­eral reviews and reform recom­mendations, have never been curtailed in the last 75 years. In the famous Cornelius Commis­sion Report, the unlimited au­thority of the SHOs was covered at length for a transition from a colonial to a democratic state-order law enforcement agency. Unfortunately, the coercive ap­proach prevails till today, call­ing for major reforms.

[Pakistan ranks second in number of Umrah pilgrims](https://www.nation.com.pk/15-Nov-2022/pakistan-ranks-second-in-number-of-umrah-pilgrims)

To make matters worse, mili­tary dictators relied on force to extend their support which did not exist in the public. The po­lice became a mistress of pow­er brokers which started to work against the interests of the public. It was ‘Madre Millat’ Fatima Jinnah who first chal­lenged the coercive state appa­ratus of the dictatorial regime in the presidential elections of 1965, followed by students in 1968 when the usurper started to celebrate his decade of prog­ress. By March 1969, he was gone to be replaced by his ap­pointed Army Chief Agha Mu­hammad Yayha Khan. After the elections in 1970 followed by the break-up of Jinnah’s Paki­stan in 1971, Zulfiqar Ali Bhut­to (ZAB) came into power in the Western Wing. In his open­ing speech, ZAB warned the po­lice force to behave and give up their coercion methods, which had left marks on his back. In­stead of reforms to serve in a democratic set-up, the police decided to go on strike in Pun­jab and KP (NWFP then). The two young governors (Khar and Sherpao) rejected their blackmail and threatened them with mass dismissals. The Awa­mi Hukumat as it was called, in­troduced reforms to control the police, and PSP was restored to a great extent.

[Oil prices down on stronger dollar, uncertainty over China COVID surge](https://www.nation.com.pk/15-Nov-2022/oil-prices-down-on-stronger-dollar-uncertainty-over-china-covid-surge)

With the return of the third usurper in July 1977, the coer­cive force was restored. To re­store PSP a major purge is re­quired starting from the Police Act of 1861 that remains in vogue today in the Islamic Re­public of Pakistan. The police cannot refuse to register an FIR. It can then investigate and remove names of individuals falsely accused. It’s a constitu­tional guarantee that cannot be overruled. Ahmed Raza Kasuri registered an FIR against the murder of his father in which the PM was accused. ZAB was sent to the gallows based on this FIR. Imran Khan (IK), ar­guably the most popular lead­er of his times and former PM, has not been able to file FIR on the attempt on his life in the November 03, 2022 ambush at Wazirabad. It was not only a serious security lapse but the resistance to register an FIR against the accused indicates disrespect for the constitution and rule of law.

The largest province of the republic has the worst track record of relief to the public. While IK succeeded in intro­ducing major reforms in the po­lice force in KP it could not ap­ply the same reforms formula in Punjab. Ex-IG Nasir Durrani was given the task to reform the Punjab Police as they are called but the resistance was over­whelming. He had to step down. Earlier Abbas Khan, another up­right officer of the force, held a press conference while serving as IG Punjab in which he high­lighted the inclusion of crim­inals in the law enforcement agency. According to him, out­laws were tasked with law en­forcement. At the time of par­tition, we inherited a corrupt force, today, the public has to deal with criminals in uniform. Nasir Durrani is not amongst us today, I am sure Abbas Khan can be called in to clean the mess that he had identified during his tenure as IG Pun­jab. Now that first-hand lessons have been learned, hopefully, IK will go for major reforms in the administrative structure of the country once he is back in the corridors of power.