

The Expansion of Sectarian Conflict in Kurram Agency, 1979-1996

Syed Muhammad Yasir^a

Abstract

Since the 1980s, Kurram Agency, which is now District Kurram and merged into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa following the 18th amendment to the Pakistani constitution, has remained a focal point of sectarian strife for many years. The study examines how sectarianism spread during that interval and how both internal and external factors contributed to its growth in Kurram Agency. It also highlights the three major events that occurred in the 1970s: the Iranian Revolution, the Saur Revolution, and martial law in Pakistan, and how they shaped the sectarian violence in Kurram Agency in the 1980s. In the midst of these events, Arif Hussain Al Hussaini, a religious leader from Parachinar, met with Ruhollah Khomeini in Najaf. He then returned to Parachinar and began his political career in Pakistan by founding the Tahrik-i Nifaz-i Fiqh-i Ja'fariya (TNFJ) organization. The study exposes the impacts of Hussaini's presence in Pakistani politics on the Shias of Parachinar and Zia-ul-Haq's retaliation against them in the 1980s. Additionally, this paper explains how the Sunnis in Kurram Agency became interested in Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), an anti-Shia organization founded in Jhang in 1984. The paper also elaborates on the role of Afghan refugees in sectarian conflict in Kurram Agency who entered the agency in the 1980s. The sectarian violence in Kurram Agency during the 1980s and 1990s is thoroughly examined in this research, along with how these conflicts laid the groundwork for future bloodshed in the region. The conclusion has been reached by consulting reports, interviews, and primary and secondary sources. Both descriptive and analytical methods have been used to develop an argument.

Keywords: Parachinar, Fiqh-i-Ja'fariya, Sunnification, Afghan refugees, Kafir, Taghuti

Article history:

Received on: July 23, 2025

Revised on: September 23, 2025

Accepted on: September 24, 2025

Published on: September 30, 2025

^a Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad – Pakistan | email: smyasir600@gmail.com

How to Cite

Yasir, S. M. (2025). The Expansion of Sectarian Conflict in Kurram Agency, 1979-1996. *Journal of History and Social Sciences*, 16(3), 158–167. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17298056>

INTRODUCTION

In the 1970s, many events took place in Pakistan as well as in neighboring countries. General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq usurped power and imposed martial law in Pakistan on July 5, 1977. Ex-Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, along with other politicians, was taken into custody ("Martial Law is Proclaimed: Election in October Next," 1977). On April 4, 1979, Bhutto was hanged in Rawalpindi by Zia's regime ("Bhutto Hanged in Pindi Jail," 1979). In February 1979, Rohullah Khomeini's triumphant return displaced his rival Muhammad Reza Pahlvi (1919-1980) and created the Islamic Republic (Takeyh, 2009, p.22). Political turbulence was also at its height in Afghanistan, where civil wars and political assassinations had severely crippled the nation. On December 24, 1979, on Christmas Eve, the Soviet Union deployed nearly 4000 troops to Kabul for an invasion. Three days later, they assassinated President Hafizullah Amin on December 27, 1979. (Girardet, 1985, p.12) The majority of the people left Afghanistan due to the political unrest and uncertainty in the country, and many of them stayed in Kurram Agency.

The years 1978-1979 also marked the beginning of a new era of Shia communalism, not just in Parachinar but throughout the entire country. General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq's attempts to "Islamize" the legal system (which were heavily influenced by his political alliance with some Sunni religious lobbyists) became the greatest threat to the Shias' legal status in Pakistan (Rieck, 2015, p.197). Furthermore, a well-known cleric named Syed Arif Hussain Al Hussaini, who was born in 1946 in the Parachinar town of Pekar, had also been returned to Parachinar from Najaf until 1978. While studying in Najaf in the 1970s, he met Ruhollah Khomeini in Iraq (Yasir, 2024, p.57), who inspired him with his Islamic philosophy. After finishing his Islamic studies, he returned to Pakistan with a new, fervent vision. Parachinar became the hometown of one of Khomeini's chief representatives in Pakistan (Vatanka, 2015, p.176).

A movement for the enforcement of Ja'fari (Shia) jurisprudence started in April 1979 at a large convention in Bhakkar, Punjab. The movement was known as Tahrik-i Nifaz-i Fiqh-i-Ja'fariya (TNFJ) and was proclaimed after Shias fiercely protested in response to Zia's first ordinances, which were issued in February 1979. In these ordinances, Zia wanted to implement Shari'a law in Pakistan according to the Quran and Sunnah. Zia's Islamized rules were based on the Hanafi school of thought. The Sunni interpretation of laws was unacceptable to Shias in Pakistan. Mufti Jaffar Hussain became the president of TNFJ until his death in 1983 (Rieck, 2015, p. 333). Arif Hussain Al Hussaini was also one of the founding members of TNFJ. Shias of Parachinar believed that Hussaini would raise their voice in Pakistan due to his relations with Iran. The hope turned into despair in the 1980s when the situation got worse in Afghanistan as well as in Pakistan (Yasir, 2024, p. 58).

Sectarian Violence in Kurram Agency and the Afghan Refugees' Role in the 1980s

Shias in Parachinar were concerned about Afghanistan's future in the 1980s. The geographic location of Parachinar, which is bordered by Afghanistan on three sides (Paktika, Khost, and Nangarhar), was the cause of the Shias' anxiety. Since ancient times, the social and political culture of Parachinar has been similarly disrupted by events in Afghanistan. In the summer of 1979, the situation in Afghanistan worsened following the arrival of Russian forces. In that social disruption in Afghanistan, around 20,000 Afghan refugees fled to Pakistan. By the middle of the 1980s, the toll reached nearly 700,000 refugees (Ahmed, 2017, p. 173). The number of Afghan refugees

fleeing to Kurram was at its climax when sectarian strife broke out in Sadda (a city in Lower Kurram) in 1982 due to the slaughter of Shias there. Sixty-eight Shia households relocated to Parachinar during this conflict. The issue was settled in 1990 by a Jirga, and it was decided that Shia displaced families would go back to their houses in Sadda; however, the decision was never carried out. Shias claimed that Afghan refugees assisted local Sunnis in fighting back against them during this conflict (Zahab, 2020, p. 150). Kurram Agency saw a massive influx of Afghan refugees, which caused issues for the Shias living there. Akbar S. Ahmad argues that the disputes in Kurram Agency were in some ways related to the economy. In Kurram Agency, Shias were more educated and occupied better lands. Shias in Kurram Agency were worried by the inflow of Afghan Jajis (Sunnis), who already made up the majority. They realized that the Afghan refugees would tilt the balance in favor of the Sunnis in Kurram Agency. Many refugees migrated to Peshawar as a result of this fear, which disrupted the situation in Kurram Agency (Ahmad, 2017, p. 183).

In the 1980s, Shias in Kurram Agency were engaged in a two-front conflict: one against the local Sunnis and Afghan refugees and another against the policies of General Zia-ul-Haq, a conservative Sunni who was heavily influenced by Islamic fundamentalism. His objective was to "Islamize" Pakistan by establishing an Islamic state from the top down that would reflect the views of the Sunni fundamentalist parties. On the other hand, Khomeini's ascent to power in Iran encouraged many Shias in Pakistan to oppose the army-sponsored new Sunni laws, pointing out that what was initially thought to be Islamization was actually "Sunnification." In July 1980, nearly 25,000 Shias gathered in Islamabad to resist the Islamization laws (Nasr, 2006, p. 160-161). When it came to protesting Zia policies in Pakistan, TNFJ was leading the front. Following the death of Mufti Jaffar Hussain, Hussaini became an official agent of Khomeini in Pakistan in 1985, making TNFJ a threat to the Shias of Kurram (Vatanka, 2015, p. 177). While his hometown was engulfed in sectarian violence, he was fighting to bring about a revolution in Pakistan. Bringing Pakistan into line with the Iranian system was his prime objective.



Fig. 1. Shia and Sunnis are offering prayer behind Arif Hussain Al Hussaini in Kurram Agency circa 1983. The Exact date is unknown

Source: Shafaqna: Shia News Association, <https://pakistan.shafaqna.com/EN/84467>

Sipah-e-Sahab: A New Challenge to the Shias of Kurram Agency

Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi became the most well-known person in Jhang in the 1980s. He started out in politics as an anti-Shia religious figure and quickly garnered a lot of support due to his outstanding speeches in Jhang (Yasir, 2024, p. 62). He became well-liked in Pakistan after making vehement remarks about Shias and demeaning them in his speech. He specifically called Shias heretics in his catchphrases: *Kafir Kafir Shai Kafir* (Shias are heretics, non-believers). His followers started putting the same catchphrases on walls and shouting them out at public events (Rieck, 2015, p. 233). Jhangvi founded an organization, the Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (Army of the Companions of Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H.), in 1985. The Sipah-i-Sahaba (SSP) got some help from the intelligence services of Pakistan because Zai wanted to teach a lesson to the Shias of Jhang for opposing his zakat regulations (Ahmed 2011, p. 32).

Jhangvi used to mobilize people with his oratory skills. In his every speech, his purpose was to make the people realize that Shias are not Muslims. In one of his speeches, he mentioned that Shia's Kalma was already wrong and was limited to the name of Hazrat Ali (the fourth Caliph of Islam) before the arrival of the Iranian Revolution. After the revolution, the Shia added the name Khomeini to their Kalma. (Taunsvi, p. 294). Because they all adhere to the Deoband School of Thought, the Sunnis of Kurram Agency accepted the SSP narrative. Jhangvi sought to bring all Sunnis in Pakistan together under a single banner against Shias, and the Shias of Parachinar gained popularity as a result of Arif Hussain Al Hussaini's leadership in TNFJ. In 1986, as the apostatizing fatwas were being compiled against Shia, Zia allowed the Sunni Mujahideen, who were fighting the Soviet troops in Afghanistan, to attack Parachinar. At that time, it was reported that Shias were departing for military training in Iran (Ahmed, 2011, p. 35).

Amid those accusations, the situation deteriorated in Kurram Agency. Now Afghan Mujahidin also intervened in the battlefield. In 1986, the first large-scale attack took place in Parachinar when the Turis blocked the way for Sunni mujahidin to pass through to Afghanistan. General Zia-ul-Haq permitted the Afghan mujahidin, with the assistance of the local Sunni community, to remove the Turis (Zahab, 2009, p. 3). On July 24, 1987, another prolonged conflict between the Mangals (Sunnis) and Turis (Shais) began in Kurram Agency. At least two villages were destroyed, hundreds of people were wounded, and many others were slain. Both sides used heavy weapons against one another during the conflict. According to the reports, the number of dead reached eighty-six in just two days. At Parachinar, a curfew was imposed with no exception in order to maintain order. Afghan refugees were allegedly involved in the sectarian violence, according to Shias. The Shia population left their villages before the Mangals (a Sunni Afghan tribe in Kurram) attacked, and the Mangals destroyed two Shia villages by fire.

The conflict was intensifying, so the residents of a few villages moved their women and children to the mountains for protection. People questioned why the political leadership didn't act sooner to bring the situation under control. Eight people were killed in the conflict, including two women and children, and thirteen houses in the Sadda city were damaged. Shias were severely affected in Sadda at that time because it was a Sunni-majority city in Kurram Agency. To manage the situation in Kurram Agency, a curfew was enforced in Parachinar ("Parachinar Placed Under Curfew," 1987). In addition to Sadda, there was a serious dispute over the possession of the property in Bushera, a village in Parachinar, upper Kurram. According to Bushera Shias, the Mengals took control of the area with the aid of Afghan migrants, whose numbers in Kurram Agency outnumbered all of the locals. On July 26, Parachinar was placed under curfew. The political agent

held a jirga to address the issue, but it didn't work ("Parachinar Placed Under Curfew," 1987). In this war, every Shia family was forced to leave their ancestral lands in Sadda and never return to their villages. After this conflict, not a single Shia family was left in Sadda; their houses were burned down, and their agricultural lands turned into deserts after their forced expulsion. According to one report, the conflict lasted until August 3, 1987, during which 52 Shia and 120 Sunnis lost their lives and many villages were destroyed (Rieck, 2015, p. 229).

Who Was Blamed?

The chairman of the Tehrik-i-Istiqlal, Air Marshal (retired) Asghar Khan, said during a public gathering in Mansehra on July 31, 1987, that the government's actions have caused the country to be split into sects, which has led to sectarian conflicts. He told the gathering that the sectarian tensions in Kurram Agency were directly caused by the government's divide and rule policy. He claimed that in order to exacerbate the sectarian conflict, the Sunnis engaged Shias in combat in Kurram Agency with the help of the Afghan Mujahideen ("Governor Urges Shias, Sunnis to Forge Unity," 1987). TNFJ protested against the armed conflicts in Parachinar and other parts of Kurram Agency on July 31 in Karachi. The demonstrators chanted anti-government slogans. They accused the NWFP government, particularly the political agent of the Kurram Agency (Masood Rehman), of being biased in the conflict. They declared that the political agent Kurram had encouraged Afghan agents to join in the clashes. The TNJ leaders called for strong action against the instigators and insisted that Afghan refugees be restricted to their camps. They stated that Afghan refugees should not be allowed to meddle in the country's internal affairs. ("Governor Urges Shias, Sunnis to Forge Unity," 1987).

Iftikhar Gilani, a member of the Pakistan Bar Council and the Central Executive of the Pakistan Peoples Party, charged that the United States is the architect behind the sectarian conflicts in the Kurram Agency. He clarified that in order to establish bases there, the US wants to acquire local territory through the agency. According to Gillani, due to the geopolitical importance of the agency, the US wanted to seize the land. He held US and Afghan Mujahideen leaders responsible for escalating the unrest in the Kurram Agency ("Governor Urges Shias, Sunnis to Forge Unity," 1987). Shia leader Arif Hussain Al-Husaini blamed the political authorities for failing to control the situation. He asked for the immediate dismissal of the officers who had failed to do their duty. The Pakistan Peoples Party, Kohat, also condemned the sectarian clashes, appealed to both communities to cease fire, and demanded immediate intervention by the authorities. Hussaini, as well as the Pakistan People Party Kohat, demanded the removal of the political agent and assistant political agent of the agency ("Toori Mangal fighting intensifies," 1987). In 1987, the Pakistani government intended to establish a permanent base for Afghan mujahidin at the expense of the Shia population in Kurram Agency. For the first time, some Turis felt that they were pushed to the walls by their enemies in 1987 and therefore sought assistance from the Soviet-supported Afghan government (Rieck, 2015, p. 229).

Amid instability in Kurram Agency, TNFJ arranged a Koran and Sunna conference in Lahore on July 6, 1987, in which Hussaini decided to convert their struggle into active politics in Pakistan (Lodhi, 1988, p. 807). In an interview with Maleeha Lodhi, Hussaini clarified that foreign intrigue intensified the sectarian conflicts in Pakistan. He further explained that they incite people in the name of religion from either side. He used the word *Taghuti* (evil) for those powers that are behind the troubles at Kurram Agency (Lodhi, 1988, p. 814). Hussaini's political struggle paved the way to his death. On August 5, 1988, he was assassinated in Peshawar. ("Allama Arif Hussain

Assassinated,” 1988). Shias of Parachinar held Zia responsible for Hussaini’s assassination (Ahmad, 2001, p. 31). After Hussaini’s assassination, situations at Kurram Agency got worse. The militia and Levy troops began patrolling the city and the surroundings of Parachinar in an effort to maintain control of the situation. In order to keep the calm in the area, forces took on the duty of monitoring the route and preventing the entry of nominated people to Parachinar. Naseem Aheer, the interior minister, claimed that foreign powers wanted to weaken Pakistan and therefore were blamed for Hussaini’s death (“Allama Al Hussaini K Qatl Mei Ghair Mulki Hath Hai” 1988).

In a few days, General Zia-ul-Haq also died in a plane crash on August 17, 1988, along with American diplomat Arnold Lewis Raphel (“Zia Dies in Plane Crash”, 1988). In Parachinar, a procession was held in which Shias celebrated Zia’s death with aerial firing. The celebration could deteriorate the situation in Parachinar once again. Assistant Political Agent Kurram arrested more than 100 people for disturbing the situation in Parachinar (“Parachinar Mei Sau (100) se Za’ed Afrad Giraftar,” Jang). Shia wanted to punish the people who were involved in the assassination of Hussaini. On September 21, 1991, TNFJ organized a conference in Minar-i-Pakistan, Lahore. Shia started slogans against General Fazle Haq, then governor of N.W.F.P. (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). He was blamed for assassinating Hussaini at America’s behest (Tariq, 1988, p. 78). He was also arrested on July 22, 1989, on suspicion of being involved in Hussaini’s murder. On October 3, 1991, an unknown gunman killed him in Peshawar (“Fazle Haq Shot Dead Near His,” 1991). Fazle Haq’s sons blamed Tehrik-i-Jafria for their father’s assassination, while Azam Tariq criticized the Pakistan government and said that because of Iran support, no single Shia leader was arrested for the assassination of Fazle Haq (Tariq, 1988, p. 78).

Insanity in Parachinar

On September 10, 1996, sectarian conflict broke out once again in Parachinar in a local high school between students belonging to the two sects. The headmaster of the high school who tried to solve the dispute lost his life in a crossfire and became the first victim of the war (“Madness in Parachinar,” 1996). It is stated that some of the high school students wrote derogatory remarks against Shia on the classroom blackboard. Shia students went to the headmaster to report the matter. The headmaster, Israr Hussain, then forwarded the case to Assistant Political Agent (APA) Parachinar. The headmaster, Israr Hussain, then forwarded the case to Assistant Political Agent (APA) Parachinar. The APA initially recommended closing the school in order to settle the dispute but eventually suggested remaining open. On September 10, 1996, the dissatisfied students of both sects got into a fight. The headmaster attempted to defuse the situation when unidentified individuals opened fire at the school. The conflict then started in Parachinar, resulting in significant losses in terms of both lives and wealth for both parties... (Farmanullah, Shahbaz Khan, Syed Jafar, Muhammad Ayaz, Irfan Ullah, 2023, p. 7632).

After the murder of the headmaster of the high school, more than 200 people from both communities were killed in this confrontation... (Zahab, 2009, p. 3). Jirga was established to resolve the conflict between Shias and Sunnis in Parachinar. On September 12, 1996, then Interior Minister Naseerullah Babar announced in the National Assembly that the NWFP governor would also visit Parachinar on Saturday or Sunday to discuss the issue with the authorities. He clarified that misconceptions among the students at the school were the root cause of the bloody conflict in Parachinar (“Jirga Convened in Parachinar,” 1996). The war lasted for nine days, taking more than 200 lives and causing many injuries (“Kurram Limping Back to Peace,” 1996). On September 14, the Army launched a clean-up operation in Parachinar to recover arms from the local people. The

army recovered illegal arms and ammunition during the operation in Parachinar (“Arms recovers illegal Arms in Kurram,” 1996).

Residents complained about the mistreatment by law enforcement during the search and expressed their disapproval with the operation. To discuss the answer to the search operation, a tribal jirga was convened on the outskirts of Parachinar. They made the decision to voice their concerns about the ongoing militia operation in their area to higher federal authorities. The jirga agreed to send telegrams to the prime minister's office, the interior ministry, the defense ministry, and the chief of army staff asking them to take notice of the degrading behaviors of the militia members. The jirga also warned the authorities that the tribesmen would start a violent struggle against the militia force in the agency if the operation against them was not stopped (“5 Killed in during clean-up operation in Parachinar,” 1996).

A representative jirga of elders of the lower Kurram was held at Sadda. In order to look into the reasons behind the violent conflicts between two factions, the members of the Jirga asked that the government form an impartial commission. They received assurances from the Kohat Division Commissioner and other political leaders that total peace will be restored within the following several days. The political authorities made a few arrests on Wednesday (“Kurram Limping Back to Peace,” 1996). The governor of NWFP, Khurshid Ali Khan, reached Parachinar on September 20, 1996, on a two-day visit. He was discussing the conflict with two separate jirgas of elders of the Upper (Parachinar) and Lower (Sadda) Kurram. He announced that a reconciliatory jirga of elders of both sects would be formed. He explained that the purpose of the jirga would be to inquire into the main reasons for sectarian conflicts in the agency. He assured the local elders that the government would take appropriate measures according to the recommendations of the Jirga to cease the sectarian violence in the agency (“Commission to Probe Kurram Agency Crisis,” 1996). While the NWFP government established an inquiry committee, notables and bureaucrats from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) established a reconciliatory jirga on September 26. They were tasked with identifying the causes of the Kurram Agency's 1996 sectarian violence.

The inquiry committee was given thirty days to complete its findings. The committee's members included Senator Malik Faridullah Khan Wazir, Malik Aslam Khan Afridi (MNA), Mian Shah Jehan Utmankhel from Bajaur Agency, Malik Wasil Khan from Orakzai Agency, Col. (retired) Gul Yousuf from Kohat district, Prince Abbas Khan (director general of LG&RDD), Zafar Iqbal (FC Brigadier), Syed Asif Shah (education secretary), and Islam Bahadur Khan (member of the NWFP Public Service Commission) (“Kurram Violence: Inquiry Committee, Jirga Constituted,” 1996). An inquiry committee was made, but the local people were blaming one another for the incident. On October 9, a representative jirga of Ahl-e-Sunnat Wal Jama'at demanded President Farooq Ahmad Laghari in a press conference take action against Senator Jawad Hadi for his involvement in the sectarian violence in the agency. They held Senator Jawad Hadi responsible for the sectarian clashes and denied reports of the involvement of the Taliban and Afghan refugees in the conflicts (“Action against Senator Urged,” 1996). Since 1986, the sectarian conflict started in Kurram Agency, and Shias complained to the political agent about the involvement of Afghan refugees in the sectarian clashes along with the local Sunnis. The fundamental point that needs explanation is why the Zia regime was neglecting the Shia's uncertainty about the involvement of Afghan refugees. In an International Crisis Group report, it is mentioned that:

“Parachinar had no tradition of organized violence until Pakistan's interventionist policies in Afghanistan resulted in the influx of Afghan Islamist extremists and a flourishing trade in drugs and arms. "It [sectarian conflict] first happened in 1986 when Afghan fighters

were brought into this area to attack Turi Shias because the Zia government did not want any Shia pockets on the weapon supply route from Pakistan to Afghanistan.” (International Crisis Group Asia Report, 2005, p. 18).

In the 1990s the unipolar world emerged when George H. W. Bush and Boris Yeltsin declared an end to the Cold War in 1991, (“Bush and Yeltsin declare formal end to cold war: Agree to Exchange Visit,” 1992) due to which the world entered a new phase. Power struggles in Afghanistan as well as in Pakistan were at their zenith. In Afghanistan, power slipped into the Taliban’s hands on September 25, 1996, and they hanged former Afghan President Dr. Najibullah publicly (“Najibullah hanged Publicly,” 1996). In the 1990s, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif were engaged in a power struggle, and the rest of the country was plunged into the flames of conflicts and political crises. The political rivalries in Pakistan played a key role in the 1990s downfall of shaky but at least democratic civilian governments, and the decade ended with General Parvez Musharraf’s military coup (Nasr, 2006 p. 166). On October 12, 1999, Chief of Army Staff General Parvez Musharraf dismissed the Nawaz Sharif government (“Nawaz Got Dismissed,” 1999). When Musharraf seized power, a new era began with a new dimension of sectarian conflicts in Kurram Agency.

CONCLUSION

The Kurram Agency faced wars, bloodshed, and devastation at the inauspicious beginning of 1980. Shias in Kurram Agency were threatened by the influx of Afghani people throughout this decade, which made them fearful for their survival. Many Shai families were compelled to flee their ancestral lands when conflict in Sadda broke out in 1982. Another fight broke out in 1986, which prepared the ground for the Kurram Agency sectarian conflicts in 1987 and 1996. In 1996, conflict started in a local high school in Parachinar, and its flames dispersed throughout Parachinar. The school headmaster sacrificed his life to save the Sunni students in high school. For this bravery, the school’s name changed to Israr Shaheed High School Parachinar after him. “What were the local religious leaders doing? Had they followed the example of the headmaster, this tragedy might not have happened.” (“Madness in Parachinar,” 1996).

During a press conference, the Sunni alleged that Jawad Hadi, the Shia religious leader in Parachinar, was complicit in the sectarian disputes. The Jirga was established to analyze the sectarian problem in Parachinar rather than to find a solution following the sectarian violence in 1987. Similarly, decisions were made after the 1961, 1986, 1897, and 1996 conflicts but were only carried out in Jirga halls, and the decisions were never put into action. The fundamental point is: why could the government implement its decisions in the rest of Pakistan but not in Kurram? Rather than being indigenous to Kurram, sectarianism was brought to the area in the 1980s. There were multiple factors at play, including those who supported jihad and adhered to the objectives of Islamization and the Iranian Revolution. The 20th century ended with the military coup of General Parvez Musharraf, and a new wave of sectarian conflicts started in Kurram Agency with a new kind of violence.

Competing Interests

The authors declared no known competing interests.

REFERENCES

- 5 killed during clean-up operation in Parachinar, (1996, September 19). DAWN
- Action against Senator Urged. (1996, October 10). DAWN.
- Ahmad, Akbar S. (2017). Pakistan Society: Islam, Ethnicity and Leadership in South Asia. Peace Publication.
- Ahmed, Khaled. (2011). Sectarian War: Pakistan's Sunni-Shia Violence and its Links to the Middle East. Oxford University Press.
- Allama Al Hussaini K Qatl Mei Ghair Mulki Hath Hai. (1988, August 6.). Roznama Jang. Rawalpindi.
- Allama Arif Assassinated. (1988, August 6). DAWN.
- Arms recovers Illegal Arms in Kurram Agency. (1996, September 15). DAWN.
- Bhutto Hanged in Pindi Jail. (1979, April 5). DAWN.
- Bush and Yeltsin declare formal end to cold war: Agree to Exchange Visit", The New York Times, February 2, 1992. The New York Times. (1992, February 2).
- Commission to Probe Kurram Agency Crisis. (1996, September 21). DAWN.
- Farmanullah, Shahbaz Khan, Syed Jafar, Muhammad Ayaz, Irfan Ullah. (2021). Sunni-Shia Conflict in Kurram, Pakistan: Genesis, Factor and Remedies. Elementary Education Online, 20, (5), 7629- 7640. <https://www.bibliomed.org/mnsfulltext/218/218-1622180930.pdf?1702046159>
- Fazle Haq Shot Dead Near His House. (1991, October 4). DAWN.
- Girardet, Edward R. (1985). Afghanistan: The Soviet War. Croom Helm Ltd.
- Governor Urges Shias, Sunnis to Forge Unity. (1987, August 1). DAWN.
- International Crisis Group Asia Report No. 95 (2005). The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/28410/095_the_state_of_sectarianism_in_pakistan.pdf
- Jirga Convened in Parachinar, Babar Tells NA. (1996, September 13). DAWN.
- Kurram Limping Back to Peace. (1996, September 19). DAWN
- Kurram Violence: Inquiry Committee, Jirga Constituted. (1996, September 27). DAWN
- Lodhi, Maleeha. (1988). Pakistan's Shia Movement: An Interview with Arif Hussaini. Third World Quarterly, 10, (2), 806-817. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3992668>
- Madness in Parachinar. (1996, September 12). DAWN
- Martial Law is Proclaimed: Election in October Next. (1977, July 6). DAWN

- Najibullah hanged Publicly. (1996, September 26). DAWN
- Nasr, Vali. (2006). *Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Shape the Future*. W. W. Norton & Company
- Nawaz Got Dismissed. (1999, October 13). DAWN.
- Parachinar Mei Sau (100) se Za'ed Afrad Girafatar, (Rawalpindi). (1988, August 19). *Roznama Jang*
- Parachinar Placed Under Curfew. (July 27, 1987). DAWN
- Rieck, Andrew, T. (2015). *Shias of Pakistan: An Assertive and Beleaguered Minority*. Oxford University Press
- Takeyh, Ray, (2009), *Guardians of the Revolution: Iran and the World in the Age of Ayatollahs*. Oxford University Press
- Tariq, Muhammad Azam Tariq. (1988), *Mera Juram Kiya Hai*. Moulana Sana Ullah Saad Shuja Abadi
- Taunsvi, Rahmatullah. (n.d.) *Jawahir-ul-Haq: Ba Unwan-i-Azmat-i-Sahaba*. Darul Ulum Siddiqah, n.d.), 294
- Vatanka, Alex. (2015). *Iran and Pakistan: Security, Diplomacy and American Influence*. I. B. Tuaris & Co. Ltd
- Yasir, Syed Muhammad. (2024). *The Historical Dimensions of the Shia-Sunni Conflict in the Kurram Agency* (M.Phil. Thesis, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan). <http://dspace.qau.edu.pk:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/29283/1/HIS%20439.pdf>
- Zahab, Abou Mariam. (2020). *Pakistan: A Kaleidoscope of Islam*. Oxford University Press
- Zahab, Mariam Abou. (2009, June). *Unholy Nexus: Talibanism and Sectarianism in Pakistan's Tribal Areas*. SciencesPo. CNRS., 1-7. https://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr.ceri/files/nart_mz.pdf
- Zia Dies in Plane Crash. (1988, August 18). DAWN