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LYARI GANG WARS - II

POLICE – DEFEATED & RETREATED:

After Rehman Dakait's [encountered] death in August 2009, the Peoples' Amn Committee [PAC] was taken over by his first cousin and alleged partner in crime *Uzair Jan Baloch* - an ardent enemy of MQM. After several targeted killings, the sitting PPP came under pressure from the MQM and disbanded the PAC. Despite being officially defunct, the organization continued to function de facto on ground. The government finally issued a formal notification on 11th October 2011 to ban it.

With the passage of time, Uzair Jan Baloch became a serious liability for the PPP. A member of his gang, Saqib alias Sakhi, was killed in police encounter on 1st April 2012. Uzair Jan and many of his colleagues were also booked by the police for the murder of policemen. Rival gangs felt courage to kill his men. Uzair Jan felt betrayed and blamed the then PPP politicians of Lyari; MNA Nabeel Gabol and MPA Saleem Hingoro for such appalling and dreadful defeat.

In early 2012, the PAC sabotaged a planned photo opportunity in Lyari's hospital by firing off weapons near the area just as the President Zardari was about to leave the Bilawal House. MNA Gabol held that:

"The Amn Committee people did not want to let him enter because they wanted to show they had the power over Lyari. Uzair Jan Baloch had decided to take on his erstwhile benefactor – the PPP."

The gulf between the PAC and PPP widened because Uzair Baloch had shocked the PPP high command by organising a rally to which rival parties were invited and in which the normally omnipresent PPP posters and Bhutto photos were noticeably absent. That episode convinced Zardari that the PAC needed to be answered with force.

On 26th April 2012; Malik Mohammad Khan, a long-time PPP activist gathered the party's supporters together for a protest demonstration

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against the conviction of the then prime minister Yousuf Raza Gilani for contempt of court. Early in that afternoon, the protesters reached the settled starting point where armed men riding motorcycles tried to disperse them; some came right in front of Malik Khan who was leading the protesters. He was pushed into a corner and shot dead.

It was a declaration of autonomy and rebellion, a blood-soaked warning message to the ruling PPP that its efforts to disband the PAC were to face a stiff resistance from well-resourced Lyari gang. Enraged, the government ordered an immediate crackdown against Uzair Baloch and his men. A day after Khan's killing; the police raided Uzair Baloch's home - they could not find him.

The Sindh government then sent in nearly 3000 police personnel in bullet proof vests [and in] armoured personnel carriers. For the next week or so, this huge law enforcement contingent, headed by brave SSP Chaudhry Aslam, remained mired in street battles with gun-wielding gangsters on one hand and stone-throwing young protesters on the other. Every time they tried to step out of their armoured personnel carriers to capture the pickets manned by gunmen, the police had to suffer a hasty retreat due to heavy gunfire.

Next day, on 27th April 2012, the Lyari Operation commenced. Uzair's house was raided, with the criminal eluding capture; MPA Sania Baloch condemned the raid. When police moved forward, stiff resistance caused high casualties on all sides, resulting in 48-hour suspension.

The resulting *eight-day 'operation'* by police in April 2012 turned Lyari into a war zone, with security forces and gang members trading fire with machine guns, rockets and grenades. *Twenty-six people died and none of the targeted PAC leaders were apprehended.*

Police had to retreat back feeling ashamed - it was a disaster in fact.

The Inspector General [IG] of Sindh police Mushtaq Shah addressed a press conference at Central Police Office in Karachi stating that the Lyari operation was in its final stages and that the Taliban along with other criminals had also jumped and involved in Lyari clashes.

The said operation of April-May 2012 was abruptly halted when PML[N]'s Nawaz Sharif intervened, to cash in on the conflict between the rivals and to win the votes of people of Lyari. PML[N]'s Raja Saeed met with Uzair Baloch and also expressed solidarity with the people of Lyari. It was pre-

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dominantly a police led operation but only succeeded in arresting a minority of gangsters.

On 4th May 2012; *the operation was called off*; five policemen had lost their lives along with many civilians caught in the crossfire.

[As siege of Lyari entered 5th day, the question arose that who was really responsible for Lyari Operation? Who sent the ill equipped Police force in, rather than ordering the resourceful Rangers to do the task?

Those who knew the who's who of Pakistan's politics were aware of the director of this show of brute force. The person, responsible for Lyari Operation, was Owais Tappi, no one else.]

Meanwhile; Uzair Baloch established contacts with the PML[N] which was eager to make electoral inroads into Lyari, and Sindhi nationalist parties, particularly Ayaz Latif Palijo's *Awami Tehreek* which believed its anti-PPP politics would gain traction among the disgruntled Sindhi and Baloch residents of Lyari. They planned a series of what they called *Mohabbat e Sindh* [Love for Sindh] events.

Uzair Baloch also made an attempt to be on the right side of the military establishment which, in early 2012, was deeply displeased with the PPP and its government over the so-called Memo scandal. Graffiti supporting the Rangers, Pak-Army and the army chief was suddenly appeared everywhere in gangland Lyari. He also offered to hand himself over to the Rangers, provided the PPP government stayed away.

"There were marches, graffiti and banners supporting the Pakistan Army. Uzair Baloch's pictures adorned all that publicity material," Lyari-based magazine Sada e Lyari of those days is referred.

But the Rangers had decided to stay out of the April - May 2012 police operation in the neighbourhood; they didn't want to drag themselves into party politics without any apparent result or gain for the people.

On 22nd May 2012; Uzair Baloch, took out a public rally from Lea Market Karachi. Having quit the PPP a few months earlier, he invited the chief of the Sindhi nationalist *Awami Tehreek*, Ayaz Latif Palijo, to co-lead the rally with him.

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The public purpose of that event was to convey a political message — *all of Sindh belongs to all Sindhis*; there should be no no-go areas anywhere. Its participants were ostensibly there to oppose demands for a separate *Mohajir* province and to convey to the MQM that all the commercial areas falling between Empress Market and Lea Market were an open playing field: anyone should be able to collect protection money here.

As the participants of the rally stepped out of Lea Market, some gunmen allegedly linked to the MQM opened indiscriminate fire from adjacent lanes; 12 people lost their lives.

After more than a year of gangs-friction and political turmoil, on 8th August 2013; a place marked at the junction of Chakiwara Road and Mewa Shah Road in Lyari, known as Bizenjo Chowk wrote a new chapter of gang wars in Karachi. It all started at a late-night football game.

As people were preparing their pre-dawn meal one day in Ramzan, a stadium next to Bizenjo Chowk was festively lit up. Two teams of Lyari youngsters were pitched against each other; they owed allegiance to the same patron — one was named as *Baba Ladla-92* and other *Baba Ladla-99*.

Baba Ladla was, indeed, the chief guest at the game; as was Javed Nagori, a PPP provincial minister elected from Lyari. As the winners were celebrating, everything suddenly went upside down. A huge explosion killed 11 people, including 16 year old Abdul Basit, the captain of the winning team, and six of his players.

The police claimed the explosion was carried out through a planted device and was meant to kill Baba Ladla, then in-charge of Uzair Baloch's criminal operations. Ladla's supporters alleged the explosion was masterminded by Zafar Baloch, a former PPP office-bearer in Lyari who had been serving as the public and political face of the then defunct PAC.

Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Memon claimed that the attack was apparently targeted at his fellow minister Nagori, who had come to hand out prizes at the stadium. Nagori also endorsed Memon. Police investigators, however, also included the possible involvement of the Baloch insurgent group '*Balochistan Liberation Army*' [BLA] or sectarian extremist organisation *Lashkar e Jhangvi*.

A senior investigator pointed out a weird similarity between that blast and the bomb attack at a PPP corner meeting in Lyari during the run-up to the 11th May elections. *"The same modus operandi was used in both attacks.*

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And interestingly, Javed Nagori was present near the locations of both attacks," the police held.

According to Bomb Disposal Squad experts, the explosive device weighed five to six kgs and was rigged a huge quantity of ball bearings to inflict maximum casualties.

PAC vs LYARI's DEVELOPMENT:

After Rehman Dakait's death in a pronounced police encounter, Uzair Jan Baloch headed the *Peoples Amn Committee* [PAC] and told the media that the cases against Rehman were all cooked up; while adding that:

"He [Rehman Dakait] did not commit a single robbery or kidnaping. More than a decade ago one of his cousins was murdered. He took his revenge in line with the tribal tradition and that was all.

But the police framed him in dozens of cases. They [the police] have even framed 19 cases against me."

During Uzair Baloch's days, millions of rupees were poured into the same streets where a gang war raged a few months ago. Lyari's floodlit stadiums and parks surpassed those of upscale neighbourhoods, and once it also played host to a football match between the Pakistan and Palestine teams. But not everyone was benefited in Lyari. Scores of residents had fallen prey to the spate of 'target killings', unemployment, poor education and depleted health provisions.

Despite years of neglect by the PPP and other governments, Lyari remained PPP's stronghold, over 40 years after it first swore allegiance to the party's founder – Z A Bhutto; and the PPP also kept its ties with the PAC intact. Opponents alleged that criminal gangs were in charge of Lyari, the real power remained in the hands of whoever developed it.

During Uzair Baloch's days, Lyari finally got drinking water; the poor peoples' very old demand. It is an over-populated area and is at the tail end of every supply system thus special schemes were introduced for Lyari to see the area at par.

The *Lyari Development Project* — focusing on education, health, roads and parks — was worth hundreds of millions of rupees; at least

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70pc of the work was completed during Dr Zulfikar Mirza's ministerial slot. Rs:660 million was allocated for it in the Sindh 2010-11 budget but no significant development work there after.

In Lyari, development has always been associated with the Bhuttos. The concrete houses in the neighbourhood were there but without any government help or loans from the House Building Finance Corporation. Those houses had been built because most families in Lyari had their members working in the Gulf - Bhutto had arranged jobs for them. During Gen Musharraf's regime, the development was done in all the MQM areas but not in Lyari; here it only happened during PPP governments.

Uzair Baloch once told the media that Lyari has an entry into the area through the ports. The MQM wanted money from the Lyari Development Package because they had projects for Lyari on paper [only]. However, in PPP's regime of 2008-13, the schools were refurbished under the watchful eye of the committee's men; some upgraded with computer labs and well-manicured lawns but very few new schools were on cards.

PAC's members continued to insist till late that they were 'always' part of the PPP, wilfully ignoring the reasons why they created a separate group in the first place. Its opponents [MQM] described it as a criminal group. When Dr Mirza publicly owned the PAC, the backlash and pressure from the MQM led the PPP to disband it. However, for all intents and purposes, its power structure remained intact.

PAC's social projects continued with a new name — the *Lyari Resource Centre* after its official ban in October 2011. However, the MQM continued to pronounce its old allegations that the PAC was involved in target killings, extortion and fuelling the drug and land mafias - all charges they denied.

MQM leader Dr Farooq Sattar held that: "*....the PAC workers went on a vengeance spree after it was disbanded. They took their revenge on MQM workers and supporters.*" Thus target killings continued to take place — on both sides.

On 23rd July 2012; President Asif Ali Zardari called for expediting the pace of developmental work on various ongoing schemes in Lyari and in other parts of Karachi to provide maximum possible facilities to the people. The president was chairing a briefing on the Lyari Development Package at Bilawal House.

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The president was informed that the old water supply lines in most of the areas of Lyari had been replaced which ensured better supply of clean drinking water. The meeting also discussed the sewerage schemes, road repairs and improvement in education facilities.

The president was also briefed about the progress made till then in electrification, development of play grounds, parks, and other recreational and sport facilities such as boxing clubs, a football house and the Kakri Ground. However, Uzair Baloch opined that all show was an eye-wash; nothing had been done in past four years of the PPP's rule.

ARSHAD PAPPU ETC KILLED:

On 16th March 2013; alleged Lyari gangster Arshad Pappu, his brother Yasir Arafat and ten-year-old son, and their confidant Juma Sher had gone to attend a friend's party in Defense Housing Authority Karachi during evening hours.

Arshad Pappu's son returned home at midnight and disclosed that the three men were abducted. Later, the three were allegedly killed after severe torture and their mutilated, beheaded bodies were seen burnt in Lyari. Arshad Pappu himself was a top gangster – but what happens with such terrors sooner or later – see below.

French scholar *Laurent Gayer*, in his recent book, *Karachi: Ordered Disorder and the Struggle for the City* wrote:

“Following the capture of Arshad Pappu [by Uzair Baloch's men in March 2013], the population of Lyari was invited through the loud-speakers of local mosques to take part in his “punishment”.

Pappu was then tied to a car, dragged naked, beheaded, dismembered and finally burnt. This gruesome performance culminated with young armed men ... playing football with his severed head.”

When the rivalry between Arshad Pappu and Rehman Dakait first became public in around 2008, the MQM reportedly started patronising Pappu to weaken Rehman and, thereby, loosen PPP's political grip over Lyari - its last remaining stronghold in Karachi.

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Local press, however, held that the corpses of Arshad Pappu and his brother were paraded on a donkey cart before being hacked and burnt, but it was an exaggeration because during night times, the 'donkey-cart parade' was of no effect. Finally, their ashes were dumped in a sewer. This was Baloch's balancing, exacting & revenge method because Pappu's father Haji Lalu, had killed Uzair's father Faiz Muhammad, some years earlier.

On the Supreme Court's order, a murder case was registered by the Kalakot police under Sections 302, 365, 297, 392, 109 and 34 of the PPC read with Section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997 against Uzair Baloch, MNA Shahjehan Baloch, Zubair Baloch, Zakir Dada, Habib Jan, Abdul Rehman, Yousuf Baloch and others.

On 24th April 2013; nearly 300 Rangers personnel conducted a raid at the nominated residences as part of the operation against target killings in routine but could not succeed. Meanwhile, the Police had started action against Uzair Baloch, Habib Jan, Noor Muhammad alias Baba Ladla, his brother Zahid Ladla, Asif Kana, Faisal Pathan, Yasir Pathan along with Chand Khan Niazi and Javed Baloch – the then Station House Officers [SHO] of Chakiwara and Kalakot police stations.

One of Karachi's Anti-Terrorism Courts on 23rd July instant had ordered police to initiate procedure for proclamation of Uzair Baloch, PPP's MNA Shahjehan Baloch, Zubair Baloch, Zakir Dada, Abdul Rehman and a policeman Yousuf Baloch, who had been charged in the triple murder case. Police were also ordered to seize their properties.

The trial court ATC declared them as proclaimed offenders after they failed to turn up on their own despite issuance of repeated notices and the *law enforcers failed to track down them. However, a day after his proclamation, Uzair Baloch hosted a large iftaar for journalists and others in Lyari.*

Two days later, the Chief Justice Sindh High Court [SHC] Mushir Alam took notice of the law enforcers' failure to arrest the nominated accused persons who were reportedly there around but the police was not feeling courage to handle them.

On 26th July 2013; the Chief Justice SHC took *suo motu* notice of police's failure to arrest Uzair Jan Baloch, the chairperson of defunct Peoples *Amn* Committee [PAC], in the alleged murder of Lyari gangster Arshad Pappu. Baloch was still out of the police reach after more than four months of Pappu's murder.

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Next day on 27th July 2013; following the Sindh High Court's order to arrest Uzair Baloch, police officials conducted an unsuccessful raid at Uzair's house in Lyari. He was able to flee from the scene, leaving the police visibly frustrated and embarrassed. To show that work had been done, police officials threw furniture around in Baloch's house despite his absence and performed similar gimmicks as an eye wash drama.

According to MPA Javed Nagori, a police officer had already warned Uzair Baloch of the raid before it took place. Following news of the raid, residents of the area assembled outside Baloch's house and chanted slogans against police officials.

The spokesperson for Uzair Baloch, Mr Gulab, misled the police and the media team that Uzair Baloch had already travelled abroad for 'business' purposes before the police raid. *"He is out of the country and has been informed about the raid,"* claimed Gulab, but when asked to specify the date of travel and destination, he preferred to keep things vague.

Mr Gulab, however, alleged that the police misbehaved with Uzair Baloch's family members and other residents of Lyari outside Baloch's residence and questioned that:

"Why is the court only interested in taking up those cases which defame [Uzair] Baloch's political career? Why are our petitions not being heard? Pappu was not killed in Lyari."

Police officials were of the view that Uzair Baloch had not left Pakistan till then at least; he was believed to be still in Karachi. The police team clarified that *'Baloch could escape to Gwadar, Balochistan but we will also conduct raids to arrest the other men wanted in the Arshad Pappu case.'* Soon after the raid, residents of the area protested against the police.

Meanwhile, tension prevailed in *Agra Taj* after two unknown men tried to kidnap a teenage boy from Al-Falah Road. The men reportedly opened fire on residents when some of the shopkeepers and others tried to stop the kidnapping. Zubeida, 45, died on the spot while her daughter, Sania, 17, was wounded. Following the incident, two hand grenade attacks took place in the vicinity, injuring four others.

Lyari police informed the court [ATC] on 3rd August 2015; that they were unable to trace the whereabouts of the murdered gangster Arshad Pappu's wife and his son. Pappu's wife was the complainant and her son was an important eyewitness in the case. The latter, according to the FIR, saw some armed men abducting his father, uncle and their friend from an

apartment in Defence Housing Authority [DHA] where they had reportedly gone to attend a party on 16th March 2013.

Since the case was at the evidence stage, the judge Akhlaq Hussain Larak had asked the police to present the complainant and her son before the court to record their statements. Inspector Abid Ansari, however, submitted a report stating that the duo could not be traced as they had moved out of the city. The report stated that several attempts were made to reach the witnesses at their given addresses, but in vain. It added that they had shifted somewhere in Sakran, Balochistan.

The triple murder case was being tried for the past two years during which a number of witnesses had turned hostile and many had been killed. In April 2015, two police constables, believed to be key witnesses, deviated from their previous statements before the judge.

They had identified the arrested suspects as kidnappers and deposed before a South district magistrate that police officers, Javed Baloch, Yusuf Baloch and Chand Khan Niazi, had picked up Pappu, his younger brother Yasir Arafat and aide Jumma Shera from DHA. The trio was driven to Lyari where the police officers handed them over to their rivals, Uzair Baloch and Baba Ladla.

The court was doing its best to decide the case at the earliest. Five accused – PPP's MNA Shahjehan Baloch, Zakir Baloch, Zubair alias Dada and police officers Javed and Yusuf – were in jail on judicial remand.

Arshad Pappu, the son of drug lord Haji Lalu, was also booked in a number of cases pertaining to murder, attempted murder, kidnapping, extortion, drugs, possession of illicit weapons and explosives but was never convicted due to lack of evidence.

In 2012, before his murder, Pappu was acquitted in the murder case of Faiz Muhammad alias Mama Faizu, the father of Uzair Baloch. Perhaps that was the reason Uzair Baloch had planned to take revenge of his father's brutal murder because the state had failed to provide him due justice through Pakistan's worldly known corrupt and lethargic criminal justice system of mid 1860's.

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For two years, Kutchhi commune in Lyari lived under threat; *nearly 200 members of the community had lost their lives, including 11 just in the first week of July 2013*, in attacks by local criminal gangs, allegedly controlled by the Peoples' Amn Committee [PAC].

Kutchhi Muslims alleged that PAC, despite being banned by the government in October 2011, continued to get the support and shelter of the local administration. Lyari's local gangsters and militias attacked the homes and businesses of Kutchhis in the area with rocket launchers, automatic rifles and hand grenades. The local police did not have any control over these goons; sitting PPP's government gave shelter to them.

Lyari — one of the 18 constituent towns of Karachi — was a battleground for supremacy. Local mafia wanted to control the economy which was controlled by Kutchhi Muslims; out of the total population of 1.5 million in the town, 60 percent were having their roots in Kutchh district of Balochistan.

In 2012, its leader Abdul Rasheed and his four associates were killed in a firing. But his assailants were never arrested. Kutchhis' main businesses comprised fishing and port management services; also involved in construction and transportation businesses.

The situation was not always bad for the people of Lyari. There were local gangs but they operated on a smaller scale; each gang had its own area and there was hardly one attack a year on the migrants - the whole scenario changed in 2008 when the PPP appeared in the government in Sindh and the centre. Since then, each gang started its expansion while engaging in robbery, extortion, kidnapping and demanding ransom. Scores of people died in the ensuing gang rivalry.

Earlier in 2009, most gangs decided to put an end to all hostilities and, in the name of peace, gathered under a new umbrella organisation named as Peoples' *Amn* Committee [PAC] under the leadership of Sardar Abdur Rehman Baloch, the biggest don amongst them and better known as Rehman Dakait. The PAC started harassing innocent people of Lyari and Kutchhi became their prime target.

During 2011-12, another threat to PPP's vote bank appeared in Lyari, Hussain Haroon, backed the PAC's rival group, the *Katchhi Raabta Committee* [KRC] which also held the PAC responsible for crime. However, their community could not prove their worth in May 2013's general elections and otherwise could not glorify itself at social arena.

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This was the major cause in the background that outlawed PAC's activists started a new reign of terror and killing in that Kutchhi community areas of Lyari.

[On 3rd July 2013; just two blocks away from the KRC office, a 23-years lady was killed in a firing by unidentified men. Two others suffered bullet injuries. The situation was very bad as there was complete anarchy around.]

On 6th July 2013; tensions escalated when several Kutchhi men and women tried to take the body of a deceased to the Sindh's CM House. Besides on Mauripur Road, several protests were also held in other parts of city by the Kutchhi community and it was the sixth consecutive day.

The Kutchhi community had evacuated nearly half of their areas following five more deaths and several injured. Several houses were also damaged in attacks with rockets and grenades.]

On 5th July 2013; armed men from both groups – *Kutchhi Rabita Committee* and outlawed *Peoples Amn Committee* [PAC] – took positions on their rooftops in parts of Lyari and the police had taken positions on the ground in Shah Abdul Latif Bhattai Road, which was at the outskirts of the main town. The intense fighting was only a bullet away from either side to start the bloodshed; a third party was waiting to take advantage of the situation.

For the families of Lyari, homecoming was bittersweet to say the least, as the joy of coming back home was marred by reports of violence echoing in the neighbourhood. The most-affected areas included Agra Taj, Bihar Colony, Hungor-abad, Jumma Baloch Goth, Al-Falah Road and Mandara Mohalla. Meanwhile, armed men from both groups had also established '*morchas*' [bunkers] within their areas.

The incidents of violence started again in Lyari and its neighbourhood area a day before but it escalated on that night before the arrival of the internally displaced people [IDPs] belonging to the Kutchhi community, who had migrated to Badin, Thatta and other parts of Sindh due to the worsening law and order situation. Next day, four people were found seriously injured; they were shifted to Karachi Civil Hospital.

PAC people had openly announced that they would kill the returning Kutchhis - nobody was there to assure their life. On the other hand, residents belonging to the Baloch community welcomed the arrival of the

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Kutchhi community. Baloch and Kutchhi were brothers – the fight was between the armed men of both sides for their personal ulterior motives.

On 24th August 2013; a rally of around 5,000 persons had brought back the displaced families from the different areas they had sought refuge. The mass rally was supported by the *Kutchi Rabita Committee* [KRC] and nationalist parties, including *Jeay Sindh Tehreek* [JST], *Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz* [JSQM] and *Jeay Sindh Mahaz* [JSM]. Kutchhis were forced out of their homes during first week of July instant.

The rally came to halt at the Karachi Press Club, where the protesters put forward their demand of ensuring complete security in the area; they could block *Shahra-e-Faisal* for an indefinite period instead.

As the IDPs left Badin and Thatta for Karachi, Bihar Colony residents were seen leaving Lyari because of intense firing that started a night before. The displacement was likely to continue as armed men were moving freely around the border areas of Kutchhi and Baloch communities. Several IDP families had taken shelter in different parts of Karachi city also, the area included Saddar, Ibrahim Haidery and Khokhrapar, while others moved to rural areas of the province.

Around 1,000 persons, including women and children, had been living at Dargah Abdul Haque Shah *alias* Shah Gurio since early July that year. They chose not to return home despite the assurance of the provincial government. They were right as the law and order situation was not in the police control. However, dozens of buses, cars and motorcycles from parts of Karachi, including Lyari, Saddar, Ibrahim Haidery and Khokhrapar, arrived at Shah Gurio to show solidarity with the families.

The families were guaranteed support by the KRC leadership and they had started packing amid slogans of unity and self defence. Akhtar Kutchhi, one of the leaders of the KRC held that *"We'll protect our own people now because appropriate measures hadn't taken place by the state or government since the displacement."*

Former Pakistan's ambassador to the United Nations, Abdullah Hussain Haroon, the caretaker of the Shah Abdul Latif Bhattai shrine, Syed Waqar Shah, JST's Dr Safdar Sarki, JSM's Riaz Chandio and notables from parts of the province also reached Shah Gurio. The rally of the IDPs was given a private and a police protocol from Badin to Lyari and after few stopovers on their way; they finally reached Lyari next day evening, *the 25th August 2013*. Hussain Haroon told the rally outside the Badin Press Club at start that:

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"It is a conspiracy against the original people of Karachi; Kutchhis are Sindhis and the conspiracy against them wouldn't be tolerated. The PPP government has handed over Lyari to criminals. We won't allow them to continue the massacre of Sindhis."

Meanwhile, Sindh government had blamed a 'third force' for Lyari violence. Sindh Law Minister Dr Sikandar Mandhro joined the rally at Bhambhore for two hours. He asked the KRC leadership and elders of the Kutchhis to hold a meeting with him to discuss the issues.

On 26th August 2013, only a day after the IDPs of the Kutchhi community returned to their homes, explosions and gunshots were once again heard in the neighbourhood. Around two dozen people, including 15 women and children, were injured in rocket attacks and intense firing which started late night between the two groups and continued till early morning hours. The residents only got a few hours of respite as the rocket attacks resumed on next night; five people were wounded and two MQM workers were killed.

MQM Chief Altaf Hussain's demand for army in Karachi "to protect the life and property of the Kutchhi community" appeared immediately after which created waves in the political sphere and as well as in Lyari. Zafar Baloch termed it as "a pre-planned game by the MQM," while opposing Altaf Hussain's demand. Zafar Baloch added:

"There was a time when the MQM vehemently opposed presence of army in Karachi, saying that the force should be all over Pakistan and not only one city. What has happened suddenly for them to change their mind?"

Zafar Baloch's PAC also accused the MQM of trying to use the Supreme Court's Karachi law and order *suo motu* implementation proceedings, set to begin that day wherein Lyari was also included. The PPP wasn't far behind in making its own accusations separately while making an open reference to MQM:

"The recent wave of violence in Karachi, especially in Lyari, began after the provincial government approved the Sindh Local Government Ordinance.

We believe that the violence does not only exist in Lyari, but also other parts of the city, especially Orangi Town where our workers are being killed. The media, however, is only focusing on Lyari."

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The MQM, on the other hand, felt proud and completely justified in calling for the army since *“the Rangers and police have failed to restore peace”*, nothing was wrong with MQM's demand.

Earlier, several parties had also asked for the army to step in. There was no improvement seen in the law and order situation – at least the army was free to decide who the miscreants were. *“We will accept the army's decisions even if they arrest our people who are found guilty,”* MQM was loud and clear.

Violence continued in Lyari and the atmosphere in the area was extremely tense, confining residents to their homes. Bodies of three abducted men, later identified, were also found from different parts of Lyari. The police had the view that both the Kutchhi and Baloch community were behind the violence; thus were given *shoot-on-sight orders*. SP Lyari Javed Iqbal Bhatti told the media:

“We are facing armed men from both groups and are answering their bullets with our own. Shoot-on-sight orders have been issued but we have been unable to target the armed men as they open fire and launch rocket attacks from their hideouts, roof-tops and bunkers.”

Meanwhile, on 27th August 2013, PPP lawmakers Javed Nagori and Sania Naz, along with their PPP supporters, launched a protest at the Aath Chowk in Lyari against the delayed response of Rangers and police to the violence.

Analysing the above unrest and clashes during July-August 2013 in Lyari, between the PAC and members of the *Kutchhi ethnic community*, allegedly MQM supported the Kutchhi people. The Kutchhi community denied any formal link to the MQM, however, Hussain Kutchhi, head of the *Kutchhi Rabta Committee* [KRC], said *‘the MQM offered moral support only’*. Kutchhi community was being forced to flee Lyari in those days as a result of the violence.

The fighting was the result of a struggle to control a handful of roads that led to the port. It was a transit route for cargo, for the NATO trucks and the PAC wanted to control those vehicles. Hussain Kutchhi, a community leader of the tribe alleged that PAC gangsters had weapons they used to loot NATO containers in the past. The Kutchhis were reluctant to provide easy access to Mauripur Road because they feared they would lose their areas and would be forced to squeeze further.

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The access to Mauripur Road, which heads directly to the port, was the main reason why violence continued unabated.

The PAC, however, denied those allegations and blamed a 'third force'. *"We own Lyari. How can we disturb our own neighbourhood?"* said PAC leader Zafar Baloch. The Rangers and the high officials of police held that the situation could have stayed in control had political parties withdrawn their backing.

See Andrew Buncombe's observation through a script from the UK's 'Independent' dated 1st September 2013;

"The vast port city, home to as many as 25m people from across Pakistan and beyond its borders, has long been rocked by violence that has its roots in a deadly combination of ethnicity, political affiliation and a battle for Karachi's resources. But the targeted killings and bomb attacks have spread in the last few years.

The violence has grown. The political people are ruining the peace of the city. None of the political parties are sincere about the city - it is all about personal interest. If the government wanted to stop this, it could do so in a day."

Fresh wave of violence since mid 2013 had disturbed the new government of the PML[N] thus a security operation was ready for Karachi to target criminal gangs and armed political groups which had been bleeding Pakistan's largest city. There were demands to call the army to control the city.

The front-page of one Friday's edition of daily '*Janbaaz*' contained the faces of nine men who had been killed the day before; all the images had been taken in the mortuary and the men's faces were broken and blood-stained. It listed their names – Arshad, Noshad ...and claimed six were members of political parties. *"People liked to look and see which people were killed and which political party they were linked to,"* an odd trend in social fabrics was being seen all around Karachi.

An owner of a tea trolley at a road's corner told the media that *'...every month he hands over Rs:5,000 [£30 then] to two politically affiliated gangs which they demand through a slip; if I did not pay, they would kill me.'*

When asked why he did not turn to the police, he said: *'The police are just spectators. I want the military to come and take control. A military operation would rid us of the extortionists and criminals.'*

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The major political parties including the ruling PPP were patrons of some type of groups or gangs but all were denying it. The city had its fair share of sectarian violence and killings carried out by Taliban militants but most killings were directly linked to mainstream political groups. While speaking at a special hearing of the Pakistan Supreme Court;

Maj Gen Rizwan Akhter stated: *'the killings were the handiwork of the militant wings of political parties'*.

The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry claimed:

"...a single shutdown of the city could result in losses of an extraordinary £2.5bn. During the last five years, the markets have not been able to stay open all the time. There have been more than 50 such strikes. Around 30 per cent of the city's neighbourhoods are affected by the violence."

Among the areas that had been the focus of violence was Lyari and among the organisations blamed for the violence in Lyari included the PAC. However, local leader Zafar Baloch maintained that the PAC had been disbanded and that it was only a charitable group – but still there was intensive fighting. Zafar Baloch put it in simple words: *"The MQM wants my land. I want my rights."*

However, Rangers' officials were not working in haste; PM Nawaz Sharif promised to restore peace in Karachi by 2018 - that was their deadline. In his paper *The Gangs of Lyari: From Criminal Brokerage to Political Patronage*, Gayer writes:

"At this point, the terrain is ripe for a renegotiation of the contract between political patrons and their criminal protégés."

The success of this renegotiation is however conditioned to the goodwill of law-enforcement agencies, which are the only ones that can translate these ambitions into acts by dismantling the unofficial power structures set up by these criminals."