

## Scenario 136

### KARACHI: GANG CRIME SPECIALTY

#### **'BHATTA' & 'BORI-BAND' TERMS:**

Various theories for deteriorating situation in Karachi has been coined by the think tanks; the problems have gone multi-dimensional. Three decades back when MQM surfaced in Karachi the local administrative affairs started moving into their hands and *Jama't e Islami* [JI] vacated the slots for them because their students wing *Jamiat e Talba* could not stand before *Mohajir* community's APMSO. In those days the *Pakhtun* community was there but confined to the labour and lower supervisory positions, not having and political orientation.

**'Bhatta' mafia** [**extortionists**] developed rapidly in Karachi; might not be actually belonging to MQM or MQM-H, but the mafia groups and individuals used their names and pressures to twist high level business tycoons. By and by the *'Bhatta'* mafia people spread their arms and tens of groups were seen with a specific task performing in 'allocated zones'.

This was the root through which concept of *'bori-band'* [**dead bodies in bags**] developed; when the desired *'bhatta'* was refused or betrayed or even agitated, the concerned person was abducted in a clandestine way and after two three days, his dead body was found some where in the near vicinity in bag so that people should not dare to refuse *'bhatta'* demand.

When Afghan war ended in late 1980s, most of the imported *Mujahideen* travelled to Karachi for a settled life and hundreds of other unemployed people from Khyber PK and tribal areas also accompanied them. They all had brought a lot of unused ammunition with them. They all were welcome by the already settled *Pakhtun* community, mostly transporters.

The in-coming crowds were initially made to stay in **Sohrab Goth** area of Karachi and around. For employment they preferred to approach different religious and sectarian *'madrassas'*, who were otherwise needing warrior people to overcome the opponent sects. This phenomenon gave birth to another continuing wave of sectarian violence in Karachi.

**Yet another factor:** Balochistan was being maltreated since long, at least from first stint of PPP's rule in 1970s as alleged in political literature. Z A Bhutto had used army to settle down his political scores here. Later during two army governments of Gen Ziaul Haq and Gen Musharraf, Pakistan Army continued operations in Balochistan on one pretext or the other, some more devastating like Akbar Bugti's sad demise.

The situation continued deteriorating from inside in family lives. The day to day sufferings at the hands of feudal *Sardars* from one corner and army from the other, the middle class unemployed youth preferred to take refuge in Karachi. These displaced migrants were welcome by the already settled Sindhis & Balochis in Lyari areas.

During the last two decades, most Sindhi youth travelled from rural Sindh to Karachi to have better employment and fruit of development. A sizable number preferred to settle in Lyari and Malir along with Baloch community and some clans scattered in the whole Karachi. It is normally believed that '*bhatta or Qabza*' groups belonging to Lyari and around were generally headed by *Sindhis* but the active operating staffs were *Baluchis*.

With the migration of new classes mentioned above, the scenarios developed like:

- Firstly; to settle down the new *Pashto* speaking people from the north of Pakistan; and to settle down the *Balochi & Sindhi* youth, the *Pakhtun* community of *Sohrab Goth* and *Balochi* community of Lyari respectively needed new space, additional lands and resources to accommodate their migrants. This gave birth to various groups of **Qabza Mafias** fighting each other for lands around their sphere of influence.
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- Secondly; when the new *Pakhtuns* and new *Sindhis + Balochis* got added in the earlier settled communities and their volumes grew respectively, some of their businessmen resisted to the '*bhatta*' which was coming as routine expenditure since two decades. The old '*Bhatta mafia*' [extortionists] took it as revolt - a challenge to their authority as well as attack on their 'business income'.
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- Thirdly, with the grown up new communities and voluminous population, some new '*bhatta groups*' [extortionists] surfaced from their own communities taking it as a right on the pretext of providing security to them. This new class of '*bhatta groups*' [extortionists] were soon found at daggers drawn within their own spheres and

collectively they are still having '*jurisdiction issues*' with the old '*bhatta groups*' of the metropolis all around.

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- Fourthly; All the above mentioned '*bhatta groups*' [extortionists] and '*Qabza mafias*', who belong to various communities new and old, had taken shelters of various political parties in power. The old settlers were allegedly attached with MQM and MQM-H in their respective areas of influence; *Balochis and Sindhis* of Lyari were attached with PPP; *Pashto* speaking people, new or old, were attached with ANP or Taliban [TTP] and all the three political parties were coalition partners in governments and Assemblies both.
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- It is now proved beyond doubt that these '*bhatta groups*' and '*Qabza mafias*' had been drawing their strength from these governing political parties, being backed by them or the groups & mafias were using the names of their respective political parties simply being their workers.
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- Fifthly; another class is of the **drug & gun cartels**. Mostly they belong to Afghani community apparently living with *Pakhtuns* due to same *Pashto* language, but by objectives they are totally different. They manage to bring required consignments of drugs, guns and other ammunition from Pak-Afghan borders and sell to all who need them, belonging to whichever political party or ethnic group or religious sect.
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- The Afghani origin people started their living from *Sohrab Goth* but soon moved out in posh areas like defence keeping their contacts with all. Soon they developed contacts with 'some' consulates in Karachi and started managing their guns & ammunition through their diplomatic consignments and, in turn, some times extended them services like community intelligence, mass killing and suicidal bombing while becoming '**foreign passport holders.**'
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- Lastly; *Punjabis* and *Memons* are holding businesses and factories in Karachi since more than four decades. They do not have their own '*bhatta or Qabza*' groups nor do they belong to any. They are subjected to pressures and tortures of various kinds from respective '*bhatta groups*' of the area in which they have their concerns. Skilled and other workers in these business and industrial units are mostly Punjabi.
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- *Punjabi* and *Memon* people are normally not selected for target killings because they pay '*bhatta*' regularly as their business expenditure. Some people, however, got killed where due to duplicate ju-

risdictions the payments to one group were delayed or refused or questioned.

It may not be out of place to mention that:

**.....since early 1990s, Punjabis have been continuously avoiding to make any fresh investment in Karachi; no new business, no production unit and no financial enterprise whatsoever.**

Normal *Punjabis* have not opted to go there for settlement, or to seek employment (except those administered by army or competitive examinations of superior services) or for labour job etc since at least 1990 when there was a first spill of ethnic riots.

Most of the *Punjabis* preferred to take their capital to Dubai, UK, Jakarta or Bangladesh to make investments in real estate business, though were once beaten miserably by a subsequent financial crunch in Emirates but it was a temporary spill of a year or two – at least they were safe there.

A little glimpse of those days:

Daily '**The Nation**' dated **3rd April 2011** told that at least 436 people were killed in the first quarter of 2011 during a terrific ongoing wave of target killings and armed clashes among different ethnic, religious, political and mafia groups in Karachi. Day to day death counting showed that only in March, deaths over 190 were reported. Karachi police surprisingly, hiding the original figures, estimated the counting of killed persons at only 109 from January to March.

Karachi had a long history of ethnic, religious and sectarian disputes and political violence '**where street thugs and ethnic gangs have been used by political parties as foot soldiers,**' a general perception prevailed amongst the Karachiites.

Astonishingly, the MQM and ANP, the major stakeholders in Karachi politics, had also called for army intervention. The PPP and army both hesitated to involve the military in Karachi, as it was be a serious blow to their credibility. The army had once warned the PPP to control over the ethnic and political killings in Karachi after 300 people were killed in the previous month of July [2011].

**On 1<sup>st</sup> August 2011;** the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan [HRCP] completed a fact-finding mission in Karachi to ascertain the causes of the then prevailing wave of violence in Karachi in which heavy losses of life and property were being caused since about 100 days spill during the year. The Commission comprised of representatives from Karachi, Balochistan, Khyber PK and Sindh including many others.

The members of the HRCP held detailed discussions with leading members of political parties, lawyers, media persons, police officials, businessmen, teachers and intellectuals, hospital and medico-legal authorities and also visited some of the worst affected areas like Katti Pahari. By way of interim observation, the HRCP held that:

*"Karachi was in the grip of a multi-sided wave of insecurity-driven political, ethnic and sectarian polarization that has greatly undermined its tradition of tolerance and good-neighbourhood.*

*Gangs of Qabza mafias and drug cartels have tried to exploit the breakdown of law and order but powerful political groups hold the key to peace. Practically all factions called for de-weaponisation of Karachi and offered to join efforts to recover weapons, including the licensed ones.*

*Urgent attention needed to remove the shortcomings of police force to give them a little hope of peace and security at least."*

In total, some 800 people were killed in Karachi in seven months of 2011; translating into about 113 people a month and were only the police figures. The people rightly apprehended that the police registered only about 10% cases of such killings because **'they had to ask from the area commanders'** before they bring the 'complaint' on record.

**On 19<sup>th</sup> August 2011;** Khalid Tawab, vice president of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry [FPCCI] Karachi loudly told the government that they were closing their businesses and industry till the law & order situation be attended in Karachi. To media he said:

*"There is law in Karachi but there is no order, everything is going from bad to worse. The police have failed to restore peace, and now we need the army to come in and do that, and bring to an end the sufferings of the people of Karachi.*

*In the commercial hub of Karachi at least 65 people were killed in a surge of gang and political violence over the past three days and the government is not moved."*

Khalid Tawab was joined by office bearers of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry, and all the trade associations. Fighting erupted three days earlier in Lyari, hub of battles between rival gangs and a stronghold of PPP, before spreading to the whole Karachi in which 65 deaths were reported within two days including six police officers shot dead and 40 injured during a planned ambush over a police carrying vehicle.

Various theories for deteriorating situation in Karachi were being coined by the think tanks. PPP local leadership held that ***'the PPP did not kill anyone because his party did not want to occupy Karachi.'***

PML[N]'s Kh Saad Rafiq openly told the media that the PPP's wished to remain in power - was the reason behind the poor law and order situation in Karachi. When the Awami National Party [ANP] and MQM agreed to 'de-weaponise' Karachi, then why did the PPP government show reluctance in this respect, it was generally said and believed.

Karachi had given shelter, employment and better business to Muhajirs, Punjabis, Sindhis, Balochis, Pakhtunes, Afghanis and many more sects and clans but all these people could not give Karachi Pakistaniyyat, neither individually nor collectively. The sand kept on moving away beneath their feet; still those dark nights are swaying over the shoulders of poor Karachiites.

{Some extracts were published at *pakspectator.com* on **22<sup>nd</sup> August 2011** under title **'Karachi is still burning'**}

### **SINDH GOVT's SHOCKING REPORT:**

**On 10<sup>th</sup> April 2011;** an official report, prepared by Sindh Home Department under the supervision of Dr Zulfikar Mirza, former Home Minister Sindh, was released. It was based on the joint interrogations [*jointly prepared by the ISI, IB, CID Karachi, Special Branch, Pakistan Rangers, CID Sindh, Citizen Police Liaison Committee (CPLC), Karachi Police and Military Intelligence*] of the 26 accused arrested and probed in 2010 in Karachi's target killing cases.

**[Out of 26 suspects, Fourteen were alleged to be associated with MQM, three were linked with the MQM-H, five with *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* [LeJ], two with SSP and one each with the ANP and *Sipah-e-Muhammad*.]**

The alleged target killers arrested had revealed before the Joint Interrogation Team [JIT] dreadful stories of murder, rape and looting common citizens on the basis of affiliation, revenge and profiling based on the colour of their skin. The arrested accused told the investigators whom they killed on the orders of the high-ups; who had provided them weapons and how they used to return the arms after commission of the offence.

The killers had also disclosed that girls were being used to identify targets and how mother of a person was raped as revenge because the said person had developed illicit relations with mother of the rapist, when he was in jail in connection with a similar offence.

The said horrific report of 26 accused contained the statements, confessions, revelations and crime history of the arrested alleged target killers, including those having South African connections.

During 1991-92's army operation in Karachi, many hardcore MQM affiliated workers and militants ran to South Africa, and allegedly they were controlling most of the target killings in Karachi from South Africa; might be the situation changed later.

The disclosures of these high profile suspects caused a shiver in the spine as each and every page of the voluminous report was full of tales where a large number of people were killed ruthlessly in a callous manner and merely on the whims and wishes of a few high ups in political hierarchy.

However, astonishingly the report did not talk of even a single killer having any connection or affiliation with the ruling PPP.

**[....how was it possible, by the way. It was understandable because the said report was got prepared by Dr Z Mirza, the PPP's Home Minister].**

Thus, Dr Mirza had been accusing the MQM of being involved in the target killings, whereas Altaf Hussain's MQM always rejected those allegations and instead blamed the *Amn* [Peace] Committees [PCs] of the PPP and ANP of alleged involvement in target killings and extortion. The reason was simple

that in PPP's tenure of government ***not a single PPP affiliated person was caught in the target killing.***

Though no comment was made in the report about the failure of the police, prosecution and the intelligence agencies, the mere reading of details of the crimes reflected on serious inefficiency of the law enforcing agencies and the criminal justice system. It reflected that not only the hardened criminals were released because of lack of evidence but also let loose without any surveillance of the intelligence agencies. The police was allowed to continue committing crime without any fear and in a reckless manner.

***Disclosures by some accused persons contained serious allegations against some of the political entities too.***

The official report reflected on three categories of target killings:

- First category included crimes committed on the alleged order of the high command of a particular party or group.
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- Second category included such criminals, who for their vested interest and in violation of the party or group's discipline carried out such killings.
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- Third category included small group of criminals, belonging to a sectarian or ethnic group, who because of their own conviction selected their targets for killing.

Except one affiliated with MQM named Murad Siddiqui, almost all other accused were graded as "black" for their alleged involvement in heinous crimes like killing, looting, etc. Murad Siddiqui was never been involved in any crime in the past and was even found innocent in the murder case in which he was apprehended.

***No PPP man was named in Joint Team's report on Karachi target killings, which made the report suspected as biased in the eyes of many.***

A few scripts from the released reports:

***Ikramullah, a target killer, disclosed to have murdered a boy of a political party on the orders of **Shaukat Bhai unit in-charge 108**, Shah Faisal Colony. He along with Atif Rasheed, Imran, Irfan and Zain, also killed two persons Fayyaz Kala (President Youth Wing SF Colony) and Amjad (PPI) at***

*Rashid Minhas Road near Alladin Park on 13th July 2010. He also confessed putting a shoe store on fire after murdering an MPA.*

**Syed Abu Irfan** alias Irfi confessed having killed DSP Nawaz Ranjha on the orders of Ishtiaq Policewala and Agha Sahib. Agha used to get instructions from London, he told the investigators. He did not know the reason of killing DSP but he only got orders and fired six bullets into the body of DSP.

On 04-01-2010 **Saad Siddiqui** asked them to commit acts of terrorism on the orders of high command under the prevailing situation of the city to create an atmosphere of fear and harassment. He along with other members went to Liaquat Market and killed an unknown person.

One **Habib-Ur-Rehman**, on the directions of Saad Siddiqui, killed a person of Nazimabad who used to give donation (Chanda) to the organization but had stopped. Nadeem Bihari, Zubair Kala and Danish also accompanied him in this murder. Earlier, on 22-06-2009 Abdullah, a member of a political party was killed on the orders of Saad Siddiqui by him.

Another accused **target killer Muhammad Sultan alias Couple** was involved in six events of target killing. One Aamir Pundit was killed in January 2010. Pundit was killed on suspicion of being a police informer.

**Muhammad Yasin**, another alleged target killer, explained before the investigators his acts of dakaity, murders and rape. He was wanted in twelve FIRs of murder and illicit weapons at the time of his arrest.

He along with co-accused Abu Huraira killed drugs dealer Noorul Ameen in 2009 by firing with a Kalashnikov. After killing the said person, he went to safe house while Abu Huraira took Kalashnikov to unit no 76 as the same belonged to the said unit. He also disclosed to have opened fire on Pathan labourers in a brick kiln.

**Amir Topi, Rashid and Pappo Kania** picked up Zia-ur-Rehman from the area of Ibrahim Hyderi and brought him to Unit 76 in the Cultus car of Amir Topi. Zia was kept in the unit for whole day during which the boys of the unit obtained different information and also tortured him. Then Zia was killed and his dead body was thrown at the beach of Ibrahim Hyderi. Zia was killed because he had created his own group in the area and was creating problems.

Another alleged **killer Imran Ali alias Lamba Irfan** disclosed that he was leader of the killer squad in Unit 66-B. That on the orders of the high-ups to kill Pathans he opened fire at three persons looking to be pathan near Imam Bargah Mehdi Akhar-uz-Zaman Gulistan-e-Johar. "Directions were received from unit office to kill Pathans".

**Lamba Irfan** also opened fire on two gate-keepers that resulted in killing of a Pathan and a Seraiki. He was also involved in dacoity at Haleem Ghar, Iqra Complex, Johar Chowrangi, Gulistan-e-Johar. The accused disclosed that he took assistance of Adnan and his girl friends, Misal of Drigh Road and Komal of flats near Allah Din Park, in target killing.

**MQM Denied Allegations: On 11<sup>th</sup> April 2011;** just next day, MQM denied existence of any militant wing. In a press conference, after the above contents and material appeared in press, MQM's Faisal Sabzwari had categorically stated that:

*'The Muttahida does not have any militant wing and made it clear that his party would not offer any kind of support to any criminal, including the target killers, even if such a person had blood relations with any leader of the party.*

*We have nothing to do with violence. Politics and violence can't go together; **the suspect target killers, who are shown to have been associated with the MQM, should be tried and punished as per law of the land.***

*We believe in accountability and would not offer political support to anyone, even amongst our party-men, who is accused of having been involved in any criminal activity.'*

When asked about the confession of different accused persons, including Ishtiaq alias Salman Policewala, in which they blamed the MQM of having been involved in the target killings in Karachi, Mr Sabzwari said:

***'...confessions and disclosures do not mean anything unless such serious allegations are proved in the court of law.'***

Mr Sabzwari, was considered close associate of Altaf Bhai but was inflexible rather than stern on organisational matters of the party. ***'He would never allow anyone to be above the rules of the party,'*** Sabzwari said.

On a question that only a recent report of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan [HRCP] said that 75% of those killed by the target killers belonged to the MQM in the past. Sabzwari hinted that the MQM was being negatively portrayed after it took a principled decision on the issue of NRO; adding that:

*"Altaf Bhai lost his real brother and a nephew. I lost my real uncle, who was brutally tortured and savagely murdered not for any of his crimes but because of his views."*

Astonishingly this time Faisal Sabzwari was much soft spoken. One could recall his address of a year before to the media when MQM leader Raza Haider was assassinated in Karachi and at least 45 people were killed in reprisal attacks in about a day. Given the MQM's political strength in the city and the province of Sindh, plus its reputation of fomenting strikes and violence, there could have been more bloodshed and Karachi sinking into economic paralysis.

Then Mr Sabzwari had openly accused the rival and largely ethnically *Pash-tun Awami* National Party [ANP] of responsibility, claiming that it was in league with what he called "extremist elements," an implied reference to the Taliban perhaps. MQM's MNA and Federal Ports and Shipping Minister Babar Ghauri had said that **"...every MQM activist will now be looking to pay back the people involved in this heinous act."**

The two MQM leaders emphasized that MQM had suspended or expelled almost 6,000 workers during the last seven to eight years because of similar reasons and the MQM, being the mass's party, can't afford to pursue violence. The documentary record, however, was contrary.

**On 19<sup>th</sup> August 2011;** target killings of the *Baloch* and the *Pashtuns* in Karachi were also echoed in the Balochistan Assembly when the legislators demanded deployment of army to tackle the issue of law & order situation in the economic hub of Pakistan. Speaking on a point of order, ANP leader Engineer Zamarak Khan expressed his serious concern over the killing of innocent people in Karachi. A collective voice echoed:

*"We have received several dead bodies of the Pashtuns and the Balochis who had gone to Karachi to earn their livelihood but they were killed by culprits belonging to 'that' party."*

PML[Q]'s Jaffar Khan Mandokhail supported the point of ANP leader saying that the *Baloch* were real dwellers of Karachi and later the people belonging to other nationalities came and settled there. However, a specific group

[pointing to MQM] was trying to force other nationalities to quit Karachi and it was also involved in the killing of innocent people.

PMA Mandokhail specifically mentioned that ***'if responsible people were not punished they would not hesitate to announce their independence in Karachi.'***

#### **FIGHTING FACTIONS IN KARACHI:**

**On 25<sup>th</sup> March 2010;** Karachi police nabbed a high - profile Taliban leader, considered close to *Tehreek-e-Taliban* chief Mullah Omar and believed to have masterminded a number of assaults on US and NATO forces in Afghanistan. Abdul Haji Salik was arrested along with an associate from the Sohrab Goth area on the outskirts of Karachi, CID official Umar Khatab told the media reporters with pride.

The area-wise details of gang-wars going on then in Karachi were:

***'Katti Pahari - Urdu speaking Vs Pathan; Qasba Colony - Urdu speaking Vs Pathan; Sharafi Goth - Urdu speaking Vs Baloch; Banaras Chowk - Urdu speaking Vs Pathan; Quidabad - Urdu speaking Vs Sunni Tehreek; New Karachi - Sunni Tehreek Vs Sipah-e-Sahaba; Sachal - Urdu speaking Vs Afghanis; Surjani Town - Pathan Vs Seraiki speaking; Malir City - Urdu speaking Vs Baloch; Landhi - Urdu speaking Vs Pathan; Al-Falah - Urdu speaking Vs Baloch; Korangi (Chakra Goth) - Urdu speaking Vs Sindh, Khokharpar & Saudabad - Urdu Speaking Vs Sindh.'***

But this detail did not reflect the complete picture as many areas in Karachi were being subjected to violent battles between two factions of the Urdu speaking people, the MQM of Altaf Hussain and the MQM-H of Aafaq Ahmed. The IG police had not mentioned these intra-MQM fights at all.

However, the Supreme Court analysed the comprehensive picture of Karachi and declared that there was also turf wars between different groups having their own political and economic considerations and interests.

***[The most important was that PPP activists or People's Amn Committees [PACs] were not named who were equally responsible for the whole chaos in Lyari.***

***Their mention was purposefully ignored because the PPP was the government in power then and the poor IG was its docile employee.]***

DG Ranger's statement in the Supreme Court had presented a dismal picture of extreme fear and hatred. The DG at one point revealed that the situation in Karachi had reached such a stage where even the health sector was divided on ethnic and parochial lines; saying that:

*'A patient or injured person of one community is refused admission or medical treatment by a hospital under influence of another community. The problem can only be solved through application of special means as well as 'requesting' political leadership to eliminate militancy from their wings.'*

**On 2nd August 2011;** MQM Parliamentarians staged a walkout from the National Assembly over the law & order situation in Karachi. Later PML[N]'s member Rana Tanvir expressed concerns on the statements of Interior Minister Rehman Malik for poor law and order situation in Karachi, and demanded him to stop giving non-serious, immature and irresponsible statements. MNA Rana added:

***"Why did not the government change his portfolio as they (the PPP government) can complete their five year's term without him."***

Even PPP's Abdul Qadir Patel [from Karachi] went worried because his own government was losing its writ in Karachi. Altaf Hussain's MQM never admitted that if MQM-H really existed in Karachi but Mr Patel first time announced on the Parliament's floor that:

*'Other political parties should also admit the Haqiqi party's presence in city if the situation had to be controlled in Karachi. No one can deny its [MQM-H] presence there.'*

*'We should also bring it in for discussions to improve the situation. All stakeholders, including the Jamaat-e-Islami [JI] will have to sit together to bring peace in Karachi.'*

Referring to **the 'Daily Times' of 9<sup>th</sup> August 2011** that most non-partisan *Karachiites* were stunned at how their leaders could mingle and embrace each other smilingly when just a couple of days back their speeches had led to so many killings; the killers unknown to the people -

killing unknown persons. To claim persecution, political parties were quick to own the dead but nobody claimed responsibility for those killings.

Perhaps because those killed were low level party workers or random ethnic and sectarian victims. The killing extravaganza was kept alive even by shooting at a teenage hunter who was collecting garbage on a Karachi's street. Why so – just to create and keep an atmosphere of terror in the town – was he not human being.

Meanwhile, four police officers, dressed in plain clothes, shot dead and 40 injured during a planned ambush over a police carrying vehicle.

Those policemen were in a van going on a raid on a tip-off when they were intercepted by armed men who started firing. The police returned fire and one attacker was killed. Security remained tight in Karachi, residents were nervous and the bloodshed continued. Much of the fighting took place in and around Lyari, where fights between rival gangs had intensified.

It was not the kind of fighting that was seen a month earlier; this was more of a gang war but the killings were directly related to gang warfare conducted with the patronage of the country's political elite. Security officials held that the killers were being protected by senior politicians for political gains and the criminal gangs were pampered to fight for big chunks of collections.

Starting from **17<sup>th</sup> August 2011**, firing, hand grenades and rocket attacks were commonly seen in Tariq Road, Saddar, Soldier Bazaar, Kharadar and the Old City areas of Karachi. **Sixteen including a former PPP MNA, Waja Karim Dad were killed** while 20 others were injured.

***On 18<sup>th</sup> August 2011***, terrorists kidnapped and killed 30 people belonging to different areas of the city. Their bodies were recovered from the Old City area, Lyari, Pak Colony, Sher Shah and other areas of the city. Many of the victims had been decapitated. Violence continued on 19<sup>th</sup> August, and ***despite the presence of Interior Minister Rehman Malik in the town, 26 people were killed and 46 were injured.***

***'Everything boils down to politics,'*** said ***Al-Jazeera news of 20<sup>th</sup> August 2011***. About 300 people were killed in July [2011] alone, making it one of the most deadly months in almost two decades.

As stated in earlier paragraphs, President Zardari and the Army Chief Gen Kyani's had collectively planned NOT to involve the military in Karachi, a

serious blow to the credibility of both could be apprehended. The army had only orally warned the PPP to control over the ethnic and political violence after July 2011's mass killings – **but 'thuss'...**

Karachi has a long history of ethnic, religious and sectarian disputes and political violence *'where street thugs and ethnic gangs have been used by political parties as foot soldiers,'* a general perception prevails.

Shaheen Sehbai opined *in 'The News' of 20<sup>th</sup> August 2011*, that:

*'The warring gangs belonging to all the parties, including the PPP, MQM and ANP, already have a "bank" of hostages in Karachi, people who have been kidnapped and are slaughtered or killed, bagged and "presented" to the other party as a tit-for-tat response, and this turf war is not going to end, whether the MQM enters the coalition or not.'*

Thus the Karachi situation was a cooked up affair, a political war of nerves which was being played out between the government coalition partners but in the process the entire city had been paralysed and the economy of the country held hostage.

In this context when Interior Minister Rehman Malik claimed that **'target killings will stop at 2am in the morning'**, it became obvious that either he had control over the triggers or he was just bluffing. Either way, the result was negative for the PPP and for the whole nation because very harmful and depressing picture was being painted on global canvas.

In a **live TV program of 21<sup>st</sup> August 2011**, a media stalwart told that:

*'Whenever Rehman Malik is sent to Karachi, he is not sent to control the situation. He is sent to inform the related groups about the time of police raids and routs & strategy of raids so that they should get lost from there for a day or two.'*

As per gangster's whim, in four days of violence, about 77 people lost their lives. This spill of violence erupted in Karachi after the kidnapping and ***kill-ing of five people belonging to Lyari. They were kidnapped, their eyes were pierced, legs drilled, main bodies mutilated and were left at various places as 'bori band' [tied in bags] dead bodies.***

An Edhi ambulance was also attacked in *Orangi* and three staff members injured. Mini buses were attacked in *Korangi* and *Sorhab Goth*. The car of DIG Police [East] was also targeted in *Korangi* but without loss of life.

**On 28<sup>th</sup> August 2011;** the Sindh Police released a report to selective media-men about the ethnic divide in different regions of Karachi where those groups used to fight and exercise arms against one and another.

**On 8<sup>th</sup> September 2011;** breaking news bulletin of '**Dunya News**' TV told that heavy quantity of sophisticated weapons were recovered by the Rangers from sixty [60] suspects nabbed from various areas of Karachi.

Rangers' personnel broke barriers and hideouts of miscreants in *Gulstan e Johar*. It also raided the office of a political party [MQM] and arrested six suspects. During operation in Banaris, it also held five accused allegedly involved in various incidents of target killings along with heavy ammunition.

The Rangers Company Commander also formed different teams which simultaneously raided Yousaf Plaza and Baldia Town in Federal B Area with the help of anti-terrorism squad and trained lady commandoes and apprehended more than a dozen accused along with heavy quantity of weapons.

Talking about the law and order situation in Karachi, one could mention Orangi area, for instance, which had become a 'focal point of violence' where all kinds of organized crime occurred but seldom reported.

The gangsters from all ethnic, linguistic, political and religious factions having stakes in Karachi would always be there to contribute towards lawlessness, and there the blood goes cheaper than water. When the political parties joined hands as a coalition government, the blames were placed on the shoulders of '**unseen hands**' or '**agencies**' meaning thereby that ISI and IB were playing mischief. Another way to fool the poor populace!

Another point; revival of the decades old **Commissionerate System** in Sindh by the PPP after the desperate dissociation of MQM from the sitting PPP government was another rising issue those days.

During PPP's highly trumpeted 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, *Article 140A introduced in Gen Musharraf's era in the Constitution of Pakistan under which each province was required to transform her own system of 'Local Government'* was kept in tact but suddenly, to cut MQM's street power, the PPP government decided to discard the Local Government Law of 2001 & Police Order of

2002 and implemented back the Police Act of 1861 while pushing back the whole nation in the dark ages; astonishing it was.

The higher courts were waiting for a writ petition from some person to challenge this reversal but nothing surfaced. MQM had preferred a deal of compromise instead. Even the opposition, PML[N], did not bother to move the issue though there was every possibility of approval from the courts.

In fact, the PPP had followed Punjab where the Local Government system was not revived since early 2008 while the PML[N]'s Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif preferred to rule Punjab through the team of their rogue and corrupt but beloved bureaucrats.

It was a clear violation of the Pakistan's Constitution but the superior courts never bothered to take notice of this day-light robbery-drama being continuously played since a decade in the name of democracy.

*[It was a general impression prevailing in the public at large that the superior courts would not generally go beyond PML[N]'s whims and wishes. Since 2006, the judicial history of Pakistan kept enough documentary evidence in that regard.]*

### **PPP & MQM vs GANGSTERS:**

*"In 2013, Karachi recorded nearly 3,000 murders, more than any other city in the world. It hadn't always been that way — in 2003, the official number of homicides was seventy-six. The stunning rise in violence came in the past decade, when the PPP challenged the MQM for control of the city."*

[Referred to Matthieu Aikin's essay appeared in ***Internet Magazine Harper's of September 2015.***]

With the support of Gen Musharraf, a military ruler during 1999-2007, who was himself of *mohajir* origin, the party took over the municipal government, which led to the relative peace in 2003; but Karachi, one of the world's fastest - growing mega-cities, its demographics kept changing.

Year after year, hundreds of thousands of migrants came to Karachi from the villages of Sindh and from Pakistan's mountainous tribal areas. The newly arrived Balochis, Punjabis, Sindhis, and Pashtuns gravitated to the

MQM's rivals, most notably the PPP but also to a host of smaller ethnic and religious parties. These parties, in turn, followed the MQM's lead and seized whole neighbourhoods with armed militias.

Then everyone participated in Karachi's lucrative *bhatta* economy, the system of extortion, racketeering, protection payments, and "voluntary" donations that had gone inseparable from the city's political life. It was this connection between politics and the criminal economy that distinguished Karachi's gangs from their no less violent but far more clandestine counterparts in places like Latin America.

In Lyari, the PPP had long worked with the neighbourhood gangs to defeat political rivals and to help corral voters on Election Day. But in 2003, the neighbourhood was divided by a brutal turf war between two rival groups, one led by Arshad Pappu, and the other by Rehman Dakait.

Uzair joined Rehman's crew shortly after the war with Pappu began. Uzair's father, Faizu, was a wealthy transporter and local notable. Faizu was also related to Rehman, and he allegedly used to collect *bhatta* payments from the other transporters on his behalf.

Then, late one night, Pappu and his men kidnapped Faizu off the street. A few hours later, his bullet - riddled body was found stuffed in a gunnysack. Uzair vowed revenge, and quickly rose to become Rehman's right-hand man. Rehman had plenty of brave street commanders, but he needed someone like Uzair, with his education and wealthy background, to help him enter politics.

In 2007, Gen Musharraf bowed to mounting pressure and agreed to hold the country's first free elections in a decade. Benazir Bhutto returned from exile to lead the PPP's campaign. In Lyari, however, the incumbent Member of Parliament from the PPP, Nabil Gabol, was facing an insurrection from Lyari's locals [allegedly, he used to visit Lyari only during elections], who were also fed up with his corruption.

During May 2013's elections, the residents of Lyari fielded their own candidate from Baloch tribe, named Shahjehan and won the seat for him.

After the general elections, Rehman looked for a way to settle the gang war. Arshad Pappu was in prison; he had gotten himself arrested in order to avoid being killed. In summer 2008, People's *Amm* Committee [PAC] was formed to go smooth with the sitting PPP government and Rehman Dakait headed it.

At first, the PPP saw the PAC as a way to roll back the MQM but they couldn't take on the MQM's militant wing openly. Besides, they were fearful of creating a situation where there was enough chaos because they had created their own militant wing.

**On 9<sup>th</sup> August 2009;** Rehman Dakait was assassinated in an alleged police encounter — likely because his political ambitions were threatening the PPP leadership. The next day, Uzair Baloch was appointed as the new leader of the *Amn* Committee. However, it proved to be PPP's miscalculation.

In the summer of 2011, Uzair Baloch met with Owais Muzaffar Tappi, a PPP official and half - brother of President Zardari, at the Bilawal House in Karachi. The two men clashed over Uzair's refusal to accept political direction from the party. Uzair Baloch later told the press:

*"I was offered contracts worth Rs:250 million but I told Tappi that I didn't need money and instead wanted Lyari's problems to be solved. He called me stubborn and inflexible; then I left."*

Tappi, however, denied any such deal offering.

Shortly afterward, the PPP denounced and de-notified the [PAC] *Amn* Committee. The Sindh government charged Uzair Baloch and his companions in several murder cases, and the police mounted an invasion of Lyari; Uzair Baloch was also ready. The PAC fought back with machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades, and the outgunned cops soon bogged down in Lyari's reticular streets; Lyari's history from 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012 to 5<sup>th</sup> May is witness; in next pages, the details are available.

The Pakistani media and TV channels covered it around the clock; it was like a war. Uzair Baloch's PAC had taken up fighting positions in all the frontline buildings and was coordinating with each other over their radios.

Uzair's men brought food and water to Lyari's besieged residents. The Rangers were not called by the provincial government. After a week of fighting, the government called off the siege. Thirty-eight people, many of them civilians, had been killed. Uzair Baloch was hailed as a hero while the local residents blamed the PPP for their suffering; tactless ruling party since 2008 with no acumen and far-sightedness.

By the beginning of 2013, with the national and provincial elections approaching, the PPP faced the possibility that Uzair could take Lyari's seats

to the rival party MQM; thus chose a humiliating reversal instead. Zafar Baloch, the defunct PAC's General Secretary came up with demands:

- *".....firstly, that the cases against Uzair Baloch and his companions be withdrawn.*
- 
- *Second that the government should agree to compensate the victims of the operation.*
- 
- *Third, that candidates for the election should be locals from Lyari and the defunct PAC would nominate them."*

The PPP leadership had to accept all the demands.

**On 16<sup>th</sup> March 2013;** Arshad Pappu, who had been released from prison ahead of the police operation, was picked up, along with his younger brother Yasar Arafat and one other companion, from a flat in Defence Housing Authority by the Lyari's police and handed over to Uzair Baloch. They tortured the three to death, bodies brought to Lyari, cut into pieces and played football with their heads – then burnt the three bodies to ashes.

That was the end of the vendetta with Arshad Pappu gang and score balancing for Uzair's father Faiz Baloch. Pappu's gang cronies fled Lyari, and Uzair Baloch and his companion Baba Ladla were left unopposed; another era of tribal governance within a posh mega-city started.