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JUI-F Leader Kidnapped and Murdered in Bannu

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Dr. Syed Wali Khan, a former leader of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F), was abducted and brutally killed in Bannu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), on July 26, 2025, highlighting the escalating violence in Pakistan's northwest. The attack underscores the region's fragile security and the targeting of political figures. This article explores the incident, its implications, and the urgent need for robust counter-terrorism measures.

Dr. Syed Wali Khan, once the General Secretary of JUI-F's Wazir Subdivision, had relocated from Bannu due to ongoing militant threats but returned briefly for personal matters. Armed assailants surrounded him, abducted him, and took him to his vacant home in Dragai, where he was shot dead, according to posts on X. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police have launched an investigation, but no group has claimed

responsibility, per Dawn News. This killing follows a pattern of attacks on JUI-F leaders, with the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) claiming prior assaults in Bajaur, including a 2023 suicide bombing that killed 56 party workers, as reported by Dawn. Local resident Imran Mahir, a JUI-F leader, called the incident “catastrophic,” reflecting the community’s grief and fear.

Bannu’s security has deteriorated, with recent attacks including a March 2025 twin suicide bombing at a military base that killed 18, claimed by a Pakistani Taliban affiliate, per AP News. The region’s proximity to North Waziristan, a militant stronghold, amplifies risks. The JUI-F, known for its democratic stance and rejection of violent jihad, has been repeatedly targeted by groups like ISKP for its perceived alignment with the Afghan Taliban, according to Dawn. This violence exposes Pakistan’s struggle to curb militancy despite military operations.

The government’s response, reactive operations and condolences, falls short. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the Bannu base attack, but such rhetoric does little without systemic change. Decades of inconsistent policies and porous borders have emboldened militants. Pakistan needs stronger intelligence, border security, and deradicalization programs to protect its citizens and political leaders. Dr. Syed Wali’s murder is a stark reminder: without decisive action, the cycle of violence will persist, eroding trust in governance and stability.