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Pakistani Army Officer Killed in Clash with Alleged India-Backed Militants in Balochistan

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A Pakistani army officer lost his life in a fierce clash with suspected India-linked militants in Balochistan's Awaran district, escalating tensions in a region long plagued by insurgency. This article examines the incident, Pakistan's claims of Indian interference, and the broader security challenges facing the province.

On July 15, 2025, Major Syed Gillani was killed during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) targeting militants identified as “Fitna al Hindustan” by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the Pakistan Army’s media wing. The operation in Awaran resulted in the deaths of three insurgents, whom Pakistan accuses of being Indian proxies. Islamabad has consistently alleged Indian involvement in fomenting unrest in Balochistan, a charge New Delhi denies.

The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), a separatist group designated as a terrorist organization by Pakistan, the United States, and the United Kingdom, claimed responsibility for numerous attacks, reporting 284 incidents in 2025 that resulted in the deaths of 668 security personnel. The BLA operates primarily from Afghanistan’s border regions and targets security forces and ethnic Punjabis, accusing the Pakistani government of exploiting Balochistan’s natural resources.

Balochistan, Pakistan’s largest but poorest province, remains a hotspot for separatist violence. Recent attacks, including a train hijacking in March 2025 that killed 26 people, underscore the insurgency’s intensity. While Pakistan’s claims of Indian support for insurgents have yet to be supported by publicly available concrete evidence, these allegations continue to strain diplomatic relations, especially following the brief air conflict with India in May 2025.

Major Gillani’s death highlights the ongoing security crisis in Pakistan. With over 200 security personnel killed in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during 2025, the government faces mounting pressure to restore stability. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has vowed retaliation, but experts caution that a primarily militarized response risks alienating local

populations if underlying issues such as poverty and political grievances remain unaddressed.

To effectively curb the insurgency and counter external interference, Pakistan must enhance its intelligence capabilities, improve regional cooperation, and address the socio-economic challenges that fuel unrest in Balochistan.