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Islamist Militants in Pakistan Use Drones to Strike Security Forces

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Islamist militants in northwest Pakistan have started using commercially available quadcopter drones to launch explosive attacks on security forces, escalating the threat in an already volatile region. The attacks have taken place in and around Bannu district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Authorities report at least eight drone incidents since May 2025, targeting police and security personnel. In one July attack, two drones dropped explosives on a police station, killing a woman and injuring three children in a nearby residence. In a separate incident, a drone believed to be armed with a mortar shell was shot down by police using small arms.

Officials say the militants are still refining the tactic, but even inaccuracy in drone targeting poses a significant threat. The devices are often loaded with improvised explosive devices packed with ball bearings or metal fragments, taking advantage of the limited resources available to local law enforcement.

Senior police officials have acknowledged that the police lack the necessary equipment to counter drone threats effectively, and that militants appear to be better equipped in this regard.

While no group has officially claimed responsibility for the drone attacks, the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is suspected of involvement. However, the group has denied responsibility, while indicating an interest in acquiring drone technology for future operations.

Nationwide, militant violence remains a serious concern. In 2024, over 300 attacks were recorded, resulting in more than 500 fatalities. The surge in violence, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, has led to public protests and growing fears of military operations, with memories of past displacement still fresh in affected communities.

In response to the evolving threat, provincial authorities have begun acquiring anti-drone technology designed to detect and neutralize hostile

drones. These systems are expected to be deployed soon to enhance the protection of sensitive locations and law enforcement personnel.