

## Compensating Civilian Victims of Conflict & Terrorism: Policy and Practice in Punjab

Since 2006, Punjab has been facing the challenge of increasing conflict and terrorism. A review of the data on the incidents of bomb blasts, and religious and sectarian violence from 2006 to 2015 indicates a decrease in 2010 and 2011; however, these incidents are again on the rise since then. In most of the instances, the target of such incidents are civilians and thus the number of civilians losing their lives or getting injured is considerably higher than the personnel of Law Enforcement Agencies.

### Conflict and Terrorism: Civilian Harm in Punjab 2006-2015

Year	Number of Incidents	Civilians Killed	Injured
2006	41	12	49
2007	44	38	126
2008	47	131	271
2009	54	236	814
2010	24	223	616
2011	33	97	374
2012	37	53	173
2013	53	29	170
2014	53	78	244
2015	57	69	252

It is encouraging to note that the Government of Punjab has been proactively taking measures to respond to the challenge of redressing the loss of civilian victims of sectarian conflict and terrorism. The Government of Punjab notified compensation regime for such civilian victims for the first time in 1999. The increased militancy and terrorist attacks in recent years resulted in revision and increase of the standards for the compensation in 2014. The compensation for death in case of conflict and terrorism has been increased to Rs. 1,000,000. Similarly the compensation for grievous and substantial injury has been increased to 500,000 and 100,000 respectively. The revision has also introduced a provision, which allows assessing the compensation award in case of incapacitation or permanent damage. The existing policy also provides for the facility

*Since 2006, 966 Civilians have lost their lives and 3,089 have been injured in incidents of conflict and terrorism in Punjab.*

of free treatment to all injured persons.

### Process for Award of Compensation

The payment of compensation to civilian victims of conflict and terrorism in Punjab involves multiple departments. Following any incident resulting in civilian casualties, such as bomb blast, suicide attack or any terrorist act, the relevant District Coordination Officer (DCO) is responsible for processing the cases for award of compensation. The summary with recommendations of compensation amount for deceased and injured is sent to the Home Department through the office of the Divisional Commissioner. Home Department, after review, forwards it to the Finance Department. The summary is then submitted to the Chief Minister (CM) for approval. Following CM's approval, the funds are transferred to Special Drawing Account (SDA) of District Coordination Officer (DCO)/ District Government through the supplementary grant. On receipt of funds, the relevant District Government issues cheques to the victim(s).

### Compensation for Civilian Victims of Conflict and Terrorism

Nature of Loss	Compensation
Loss of Life	1,000,000
Grievous Injury	500,000
Substantial Injury	100,000

### Key Challenges

- The present legal and administrative framework does not elaborate on definition of civilian victims, categories of injured, process of identification and verification of victims, roles and responsibilities of different departments, and time for dispensing the award to victims and their families. The gaps in the existing framework necessitate a comprehensive policy and legislation for compensation of civilian victims.
- In the absence of a dedicated budget line for compensation grants to civilian victims, the award of compensation is made from multiple heads of account, decreasing transparency and delaying the process.

<sup>1</sup> NCMC, Ministry of Interior, Government of Pakistan

- Except for a political expediency, the process of award for compensation is complex and time consuming, involving a number of offices at the district as well as provincial levels.
- Political variables play a significant role at every stage of the process. Terrorist incidents in politically important constituencies are likely to be responded to in a more efficient manner than incidents in peripheral areas.
- The existing framework does not facilitate public access to information and mechanisms to track and monitor compensation. Additionally, without a mechanism to track the compensation process or inform victims and their families of the status of their claims, most are unaware of when or whether they will ever receive the promised assistance.
- The present framework for award of compensation does not offer a mechanism for redress of grievances of the victims.
- The Government of Punjab needs to formulate a comprehensive policy and legal framework to compensate civilian victims of conflict and terrorism.
- A separate civilian victims fund needs to be created within the Provincial Consolidated Fund for timely payments of grants to the civilian victims.
- A scheme for rehabilitation of civilian victims and their family members, needs to be introduced which would ensure continued health care, education of dependent children, and provision of livelihood.
- There should be a mechanism that would allow civilian victims to track the status of compensation awarded to them.
- A legal mechanism should be in place to redress of grievances of the victims.

## Looking Ahead

Following proposed policy measures can help strengthen the existing framework for compensating civilian victims of conflict and terrorism in Punjab: