

Pakistan Rangers

The Pakistan Rangers date back to 1942 when British government established a similar police/military unit. After gaining independence and throughout the second part of the 20th century, the unit has been restructured, reshaped and renamed a couple of times. The Pakistan Rangers, as we know them today, were formed in the late 80s, as an answer to the growing riots in the province of Sindh. The unit was created to counter the riots and growing banditry in the province which was becoming rampant, while operating under the guidance of the Ministry of Interior. During the nineties the force was divided into two different units stationed in Punjab and Sindh.

Pakistan's state structure is weak, riddled with corruption and crime. Increasing criminal and extremist activities are becoming serious problem for the security forces across the country. Over the years, the military provided security against these challenges. However, as the overall situation in the country is deteriorating, military check-points and blockades are no longer sufficient. Main hot-spots for criminal, terrorist and separatist activities in Pakistan are the provinces of Punjab and Sindh.¹ In both of these provinces the Pakistan Rangers have proven invaluable, especially combating the ethnic conflicts in Karachi. One of the biggest failures of the Pakistani government is the lack of the overall Pakistani national identity, in other words the Pakistan state hasn't been able to build a strong national identity through culture and education over the years.

According to the Ordinance 1959 the Pakistan Rangers were created to protect and maintain order in the border areas. Headquarters members as well as the Director General and other leading officers of the force are appointed by the federal government. The force is in charge of the following:²

- Protecting individuals and property in the border areas
- Apprehending individuals who were unlawfully entering or leaving the country
- Organizing village defenses
- Preventing all types of smuggling
- Collecting intelligence and cooperating with the local police and other civil agencies
- The Pakistan Rangers are also obliged to assist the police force in fighting crime and reinforce police efforts in maintaining law and order in the region

¹ *Pakistan Cultural Intelligence Studies*, Cultural Intelligence for Military Operations, November 2011 p.3 (<https://info.publicintelligence.net/MCIA-PakistanMilitaryCulture.pdf>)

² *Pakistan Ranger Ordinance 1959*, p.5 (http://ankltd.com/Download_s/Rules/PAKISTAN_RANGERS_ORDINANCE_1959.pdf)

Although the main task of the Pakistan Rangers is to protect the border with India (912km in Sindh and 1200km in Punjab), certain duties are also divided between the Punjab and the Sindh branches of the force. The Punjab Rangers can be employed on internal security duties in Gilgit, Islamabad Capital Territory, Tarbela, Rajanpur and Kashmir. While the Sindh branch of the force is in charge of patrolling and protecting the Indus river area, national highways, Katcha areas and hill areas where regular police forces cannot operate properly. The Pakistan Rangers have also been a part of the international peacekeeping missions, mainly United Nations missions, which include: peacekeeping mission in Kosovo, Haiti, Cote d'Ivoire, Timor Leste and Sudan.

The force participated in Indo-Pakistan wars in 1965 and 1971, but the general purpose of the Pakistan Rangers is internal security. The force has around 40,000 personnel deployed in Punjab and Sindh, however, this may prove insufficient if the relations with India continue to deteriorate and if certain radical factions gain momentum in the country.

Even though the Rangers are following a military doctrine they are still classified as a paramilitary force. Beside the Pakistan Rangers, there are also Pakistan National Guard, Frontier Corps and other paramilitary forces employed in addition to the regular police forces to provide security. Country such as Pakistan needs units which can perform police duties but on a higher level. Paramilitary forces are often seen in countries which have a complex configuration in terms of geography, ethnicity, security and economy combined with a rather weak state apparatus.

IGOR PEJIC, graduated Political Science Foreign Affairs Department at the Faculty of Political Science and MA in Terrorism, Security and Organized Crime at the University of Belgrade, Serbia.

The article has been edited by Jovana Ljubic