

Bangladesh-Balochistan: Divided by Distance, United by Struggle

By [Dimitra Staikou](#)

Asia-Pacific Research, April 10, 2025

Region: [South Asia](#)

Theme: [Justice](#), [Politics](#)

The international community is sounding the alarm about the situation in Balochistan, where incidents of violence against intellectuals and activists are reminiscent of the persecutions faced by people of spirit in Bangladesh. According to a United Nations report on March 21, 2025, the police in Quetta attacked a peaceful protest by the BYC (a network advocating for the interests of the Baloch minority) in front of the University of Balochistan, demanding the release of prisoners and forcibly disappeared activists. Three people are reported to have been shot and killed, while others were injured and dozens more were arrested.

Experts have expressed concern over a series of escalating actions by the Pakistani police against the Baloch Unity Committee (BYC).

These actions intensified following a terrorist attack by Baloch separatists on a passenger train on March 11, 2025, after which several prominent human rights defenders from the Baloch Unity Committee (BYC) were reportedly arrested by Pakistan's Counter-Terrorism Department or forcibly disappeared.

The only way to attempt to understand the deeper causes of these events both in Bangladesh and in Balochistan is to remove the blinders from our eyes and dive into the essence of the region's history. The answer is complex as cultural and political parameters, and most importantly, religious parameters, enter into the geography of each area. Often, Western eyes do not see the significance of religious differences in Eastern countries as they are under the false illusion that all religions are the same. We do not see how Islam is used as a social form of gender-based violence covered under the veil of faith, up to an extreme means of political pressure, since its main purpose is the suppression of infidels and dissenters. The masses who do not have access to education and a broader framework of thought believe in the doctrines controlled by the governments, and when they cannot control them through legal political means, they unleash the extreme religious groups that until recently they promised to have firmly put in place.

History often creates unpredictable parallels between different places, connecting them through common trials and resistance. Bangladesh and Balochistan, although separated by extensive geography, different languages, distinct ethnicities, and unique cultural fabrics, are inextricably linked by a grim similarity—the relentless persecution they have suffered at the hands of Pakistan, which repeatedly employs extremist organizations acting extrajudicially but receiving financial support from the Pakistani state.

Their most significant difference is that while Bangladesh emerged triumphantly after a

bloody war in 1971, Balochistan remains in a state of permanent subjugation with its aspirations for self-determination being fiercely suppressed.

Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan, is a land of fertile plains and rivers, steeped in a rich Bengali cultural and literary heritage that predates the founding of Pakistan. In contrast, Balochistan is an extensive, arid region characterized by imposing mountains and a stark desert landscape, with its ethos deeply rooted in a tradition of tribal dominance. Their linguistic identities, Bengali, an Indo-Aryan language, and Balochi, a Northwestern Iranian language, have no historical or structural affinity.

Despite these vast differences, both regions have suffered from the same oppressive machinations of the Pakistani state, which range from the systematic marginalization of a large part of the population, economic exploitation, and military repression.

A pivotal year in the history of Bangladesh is 1971. For years, the people of East Pakistan suffered from political deprivation and economic subjugation while their calls for autonomy were met with ridicule. The situation escalated to catastrophic proportions on March 25, 1971, when Pakistan launched Operation Searchlight, an organized genocide designed to eliminate Bengali nationalism. Intellectuals were executed immediately, women suffered unimaginable sexual violence, and entire villages were razed to the ground. The subsequent war, filled with immense human suffering, resulted in the independence of Bangladesh with the decisive intervention of India. The cost of freedom was overwhelming, with a toll of three million lives lost, millions more displaced, and a nation born from the ashes of unparalleled barbarity. Bangladesh may have gained independence in 1971, but the situation has been in turmoil since mid-2024, when student protests against corruption and rising inequality swept the country. The unrest claimed the lives of 870 people, according to provisional government figures, and forced Sheikh Hasina to resign after more than a decade in power.

The protests also targeted journalists. Many journalists were attacked while covering demonstrations, and two lost their lives. Many others, especially those considered favorable to Hasina's government, now face politically motivated charges, arrests, or exile.

In contrast, Balochistan was annexed by Pakistan overnight in 1948 despite the opposition of the indigenous people. The province became embroiled in continuous uprisings, each of which was violently suppressed by military operations. The Pakistani state covertly implemented the same draconian strategies it had applied in Bangladesh, such as enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions, for the systematic suppression of dissent.



Balochistan region in pink (Public Domain)

In contrast to Bangladesh, the quest for the sovereignty of Balochistan remains unfulfilled. Thousands of activists, journalists, and citizens have disappeared, their fate shrouded under the iron grip of the state machinery. Despite being endowed with immense natural wealth—gold, gas, and minerals—Balochistan is mired in extreme poverty, its resources siphoned off to enrich the Pakistani elite while its people remain homeless.

Bangladesh was looted for jute tea leaves and other commodities, just as the minerals of Balochistan are exported without benefiting the indigenous population.

Of course, the now-autonomous Bangladesh, freed from the grip of Pakistan, is in much better shape than Balochistan as it has emerged as an economic giant, with strong infrastructure and a developing industrial sector, particularly in the garment industry.

In stark contrast, Balochistan remains an open wound, simmering under the oppressive weight of a relentless security apparatus. Enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and relentless military raids have turned the region into a dystopian landscape of fear and despair. Calls for international intervention are becoming increasingly urgent, but tangible action remains elusive.

Bangladesh and Balochistan stand as distant yet interconnected chapters of history—one a tale of liberation, the other a poignant narrative of relentless oppression. One country was liberated, the other still bleeds. Yet, history has an immutable lesson: tyranny has an expiration date, and the will of an oppressed people cannot be extinguished forever. In my

personal opinion, because at the end of the day, our economic actions are political acts, the oppressed people of Balochistan can emulate the example of the students in Turkey who, after the arrest of Istanbul **Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu**, and the call by CHP leader **Özgür Özel** for a targeted boycott, engaged in a 24-hour economic abstention as they collectively decided not to buy or sell anything on April 2. When all other means of pressure are not accepted, do small consumer actions carry political weight?

*

Click the share button below to email/forward this article. Follow us on [Instagram](#) and [X](#) and subscribe to our [Telegram Channel](#). Feel free to repost Global Research articles with proper attribution.

Staikou Dimitra writes articles for Greece's largest Newspaper *PROTO THEMA*. Dimitra graduated from Law School, a profession she never practiced, and has a master's degree in theater and is involved in writing in all its forms, books, plays, and scripts for TV series.

Featured image is from the author

Global Research is a reader-funded media. We do not accept any funding from corporations or governments. Help us stay afloat. Click the image below to make a one-time or recurring donation.



The original source of this article is Asia-Pacific Research
Copyright © [Dimitra Staikou](#), Asia-Pacific Research, 2025

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Dimitra Staikou](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). Asia-Pacific Research will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. Asia-Pacific Research grants permission to cross-post Asia-Pacific Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Asia-Pacific Research article. For publication of Asia-Pacific Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: editors@asia-pacificresearch.com

www.asia-pacificresearch.com contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: editors@asia-pacificresearch.com