



# MILITANT LEADERSHIP MONITOR

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### **Mudzrimar ‘Mundi’ Sawadjaan: A Post-Mortem of Abu Sayyaf’s Most Wanted Militant**

*Jacob Zenn*

#### **Executive Summary**

- Mudzrimar “Mundi” Sawadjaan was killed in December 2023, dealing another major blow to Abu Sayyaf’s struggling leadership. His elimination removes one of the few individuals who might have had the ability to inspire the group to regain its former strength.
- Mundi was the mastermind behind the sophisticated 2020 Jolo bombings, and led a 2022 kidnapping in Malaysia before Philippine forces killed him while he was fleeing Basilan Island.

Twin suicide blasts near a church in Jolo in 2020 remain etched in the memories of

Philippine citizens, especially those who live in Mindanao. The attacks killed 14 people and were carried out by two female suicide bombers. One of these individuals was the widowed Indonesian wife of a Filipino Abu Sayyaf member, himself the first Filipino suicide bomber, who attacked a military base in Sulu in 2019. The two-part suicide bombing also demonstrated an unusual level of sophistication, with the second blast occurring a few minutes after the first, just after emergency rescue teams had arrived ([Al Jazeera](#), August 25, 2020).

Several months after the Jolo suicide bombings, the operation’s mastermind, Mudzrimar “Mundi” Sawadjaan, became known to the public. This occurred when another Indonesian wife of an Abu Sayyaf member was arrested and revealed additional details about the Jolo suicide bombings, including Mundi’s role ([Minda News](#), December 3). It had previously been believed that Mundi was killed not long after the suicide bombings in May 2021, but less than one year later the Philippine Western Mindanao Command (WESTMINCOM) acknowledged that he was still alive ([The Star](#) [Malaysia], January 30, 2022).

WESTMINCOM placed Mundi on a “most wanted” list in early 2022 right after a kidnapping occurred in Sabah, Malaysia, which Mundi allegedly masterminded. This brought his name to the fore again ([astro AWANI](#), January 30, 2022). Mundi managed to evade being captured or killed in a Philippine army operation in April 2021. While Mundi escaped, the military succeeded in killing two of his nephews, including the leader of the pro-Islamic State (IS) faction within Abu Sayyaf, Hatib Hajan ([Benar News](#), April 23, 2021). The prospect that Mundi would eventually be killed was made more likely when his own brother, Mujafal “Jhapz” Sawadjaan, was also reportedly killed in Sulu in that same month ([Rappler](#), April 21, 2021). After this, Mundi appeared on Malaysia’s Eastern Sabah Security Command’s (Esscom) most wanted terrorist list, while also still being wanted in the Philippines ([The Star](#) [Malaysia], January 30, 2022).

By December 2023, Mundi was on the run and had been unable to carry out any major attacks since the 2022 kidnapping in Sabah. A special intelligence operation was carried out by Philippine security forces in Basilan to capture or kill Mundi while he was attempting to flee the island ([The Star](#) [Malaysia], December 3, 2023). It was successful, and Mundi was eliminated. The Philippine military forces subsequently used his killing to send a message to any remaining Abu Sayyaf fighters, encouraging them to take advantage of the military’s amnesty program—or else face the same fate as Mundi ([GMA News](#), December 3, 2023). Whether or not Abu Sayyaf loses more fighters to the amnesty program or further counter-terrorism operations, it remains a group that is struggling to survive. The death of Mundi will only further damage Abu Sayyaf’s core leadership. Beyond this, Mundi’s death makes it less likely that anyone can inspire the group to regain the strength and influence it had at its peak, before Abu Sayyaf’s defeat at the hands of the Philippine military during the siege of Marawi in 2017.

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## **Mohammad Bazzi: West Africa-Based Hezbollah Money Launderer Arrested and Extradited**

*Jacob Weiss*

### **Executive Summary**

- Mohammad Ibrahim Bazzi is a prominent Hezbollah financier who operated money laundering schemes across Europe, West Africa, and the Middle East. He was arrested in Romania in February 2023 and subsequently extradited to the United States. The arrest of Bazzi and several other major Hezbollah financiers cuts into one of the group's key sources of funding.
- As The Gambia's honorary consul to Lebanon from 2005–2017, Bazzi established close ties with the then-president of Gambia and exploited his diplomatic position to secure lucrative telecom and fuel contracts that enabled him to transfer more than \$100 million to Hezbollah.

Mohammad Ibrahim Bazzi is an influential Hezbollah financier who has operated in Europe, West Africa, and the Middle East. Born in Bint Jbeil, Lebanon on August 10, 1964, Bazzi has held passports from at least five different countries: Lebanon, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia ([Rewards for Justice](#), 2018).

Bazzi ran extensive money laundering operations to fund Hezbollah in Belgium, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, and Lebanon. These operations funneled millions of dollars to Hezbollah. Bazzi's business activities included import/export, petroleum products, energy products, financial services, and investment. Further, he engaged in business with the Ayman Joumaa Organization, a South America-based Hezbollah drug trafficking network ([US Department of the Treasury](#), May 2018).

In May 2018, the US Department of the Treasury identified Bazzi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) for providing financial support to Hezbollah. Bazzi was detained by Romanian authorities in February 2023, and has since been extradited to the United States. Bazzi was one of the most prominent Hezbollah financiers wanted by the United States.

### **The Gambian Connection**

Bazzi's work in The Gambia reveals much about Hezbollah's presence and intentions in West Africa. Bazzi had been deported from Sierra Leone, where his family had business ties, for trading in "blood diamonds" and interfering in the country's domestic politics. He later moved to The Gambia in 2000 or 2001, where his most important work for Hezbollah occurred ([Foroyaa](#), September 2019).

Bazzi was provided with the opportunity to gain significant influence in The Gambia in 2005, when he was appointed as that country's honorary consul for Lebanon. For 12 years, Bazzi exploited this position to further Hezbollah's interests in the country. As honorary consul, he established a close relationship with then-Gambian President Yahya Jammeh, which allowed Hezbollah to benefit from Gambian taxpayer funds. Bazzi's companies were awarded contracts that were paid for using withdrawals from the Central Bank of the Gambia ([AP News](#), March 2019).

Through Bazzi's influence in The Gambia, Hezbollah was able to indirectly dominate Gambia's fuel sector through Bazzi's Global Trading Group and Euro African Group companies. While accurate estimations of Hezbollah funding from Gambian sources are hard to determine, contracts with The Gambia's telecommunications industry alone saw over \$100 million transferred to Hezbollah ([OCCRP](#), March 2019). It was not only funding for Hezbollah that Bazzi could gain through his position, however, because his diplomatic activities also benefitted Hezbollah's patron, Iran. In 2011, Bazzi coordinated between Iran and then-President Jammeh to re-establish diplomatic ties between Gambia and Tehran just one year after they had been severed ([Iran Focus](#), November 23, 2010).

Hezbollah's exploitation of diplomatic positions is a common tactic. Ali Saade, Lebanon's honorary consul to Guinea, has also worked to fund Hezbollah by transferring money from that country ([OCCRP](#), January 12). Honorary consulship aids Hezbollah's expansion into third countries: Consuls can operate under the protection of international law, which, among other benefits, means that a consul's correspondence cannot be seized. The use of the West African-Lebanese diaspora allows Hezbollah to launder the estimated *billions* of dollars of profit the group earns from its South American drug trade. This is done primarily through businesses set up by Lebanese expats ([European Foundation for Democracy](#), August 2022).

### **Bazzi's Arrest and Its Implications**

Romanian law enforcement arrested Bazzi in Bucharest on February 24, 2023. He was extradited to the United States in April 2023 and is now awaiting trial. He is currently charged with conspiring to induce an American to liquidate their interest in real estate assets in Michigan and subsequently transfer the proceeds to Bazzi in Lebanon through fictitious purchases in China, Lebanon, and Kuwait ([Arab News](#), February 25). Bazzi's arrest

marks a significant success for the United States. Bazzi had been part of a ring of key Hezbollah drug traffickers and money launderers; this circle includes Joumaa, al-Din, and Adham Tabaja, who were all targeted by the US Drug Enforcement Agency's "Project Cassandra" as far back as 2008 ([Daraj](#), December 2022).

Bazzi's case sends the message that Hezbollah financiers will eventually be caught, no matter how long it takes. While Iran has provided—and will continue to provide—the majority of Hezbollah's funding, financiers such as Bazzi represent an important diversification of the group's source of income. As such, money laundering on the scale performed by Bazzi and others reduces the effectiveness of US sanctions on the Iranian economy, as well as their intended second-level impact on Tehran's funding to Hezbollah.

## Conclusion

The carelessness showcased by Bazzi in the events leading to his arrest is remarkable. Bazzi attempted to launder money through a US citizen, which made him vulnerable to arrest. Bazzi surely should have known that a terrorist suspect operating in the United States would be extremely risky to transact with due to the ease of phone tapping and other forms of surveillance. Additionally, the risk of the operation far outweighed its benefits, with only hundreds of thousands of dollars at stake ([Iran International](#), February 25).

Bazzi is not the only Hezbollah financier to have been arrested for attempting to operate in the United States. Kassim Tajideen, a similarly prominent Hezbollah financier in The Gambia, was arrested in 2017 after he had attempted to purchase frozen poultry from US companies. If Hezbollah financiers wish to continue operating in a meaningful way for the group, then they will need to become more evasive.

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## Mikhail 'Pitbull' Turkanov: The Rise of Russian Soccer Hooligan Unit 'Española' in Ukraine

*Peter Smith and Lucas Webber*

### Executive Summary

- Mikhail "Pitbull" Turkanov is a prominent commander in the Española volunteer brigade, a former MMA fighter, and a Zenit Football Club hooligan with tattoos that include neo-Nazi imagery. Charismatic propaganda figures like Turkanov are able to appeal to highly nationalistic soccer hooligans who might otherwise be skeptical of Moscow.
- This potentially offers the Kremlin a route through which it can attract recruits to irregular militias, with the goal of manning the front without conducting a politically fraught mobilization during an election year.
- Española is composed of around 600 individuals—mostly former soccer hooligans—fighting in Ukraine, using propaganda to promote support for the war among ultra-nationalist communities in Russia.

When Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the beginning of the "Special Military Operation" in Ukraine in February 2022, he asserted that the Russian military

would carry out the “demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine” ([TASS](#), February 24, 2022). The latter part of the statement referred to the elimination of extreme right-wing factions in the Ukrainian government and its armed forces, including the Azov Regiment, Freikorps, and Right Sector ([Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), April 19, 2023). International media and netizens were quick to point out that Russia has its own far-right radicals, such as the “Rusich,” the Russian Imperial Movement (RIM), and the soccer hooligan volunteer militia “Española.”

Española plays a key role in appealing to and drawing recruits from Russia’s “ultra-hooligan” communities and promotes support for the war in Ukraine among them ([Meduza](#), April 28, 2023). It is a powerful force in the Russian far-right military ecosystem and is distinct from, yet supportive of, the neo-Nazi Rusich group and the hard-line Orthodox RIM. Española leverages its robust online propaganda apparatus and real-world domestic networks, while also taking part in community programs and humanitarian work inside occupied regions of Ukraine to boost its profile and grow its ranks.

The most visible Española figure is the former mixed martial arts (MMA) fighter and Saint Petersburg-based Zenit Football Club hooligan Mikhail “Pitbull” Turkanov. Turkanov has a large online presence, was wounded twice in combat in the Zaporizhzhia region and Bakhmut, and has received some of the Russian military’s highest awards. He has also helped propel Española into the Russian mainstream by appearing on cable television and being profiled in the media ([Pitbull’s Telegram](#), December 10, 2023).

## **Española**

Española is a volunteer brigade that exists independently of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and the forces of the Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR). Recent recruitment to the group has been handled through the private military company

Redut ([Metro](#), March 15, 2023). Primarily made up of former soccer hooligans, Española claims to have around 600 soldiers under its command, including artillery and anti-aircraft details, sniper teams, and drone operators ([Радио Озоди](#), November 29, 2023; [Española’s VK page](#), December 4, 2023).

Founded by Stanislav Orlov, a member of the Red-Blue Warriors hooligan group (supporters of CSKA Moscow), the Española unit’s title is derived from his call sign, “Spaniard.” Orlov was previously known for leading Skull and Bones, a reconnaissance company in the DPR in 2014, and he was also the personal assistant to the commander of the DPR’s Horlivka militia ([Ridus](#), April 12). Many members of Española choose to hide their faces and not appear in the many public images released by the unit on its VKontakte page, Telegram channel, and other Russian media. Several others besides Turkanov also post to Telegram on their own pages, sometimes anonymously ([Española’s Telegram](#), May 29, 2023). Others display their faces while using call signs, rather than their real names ([Mexican Española’s Telegram](#), December 7, 2023). Taking on a role on the front lines of the propaganda war, with figures like Turkanov at the center, Española presents a patriotic message from soccer fanatics who have set aside previous differences in exchange for a new nationalist unity. In that sense, the Española hooligan unit has been a bulwark in the public face of the war. This is a far cry from 2018, when Putin enacted penalties to stamp out bands of violent soccer fans ahead of hosting the World Cup ([France24](#), June 27, 2023).

The over 50,000 followers of the Española Telegram channel—and Turkanov’s own 20,000-plus followers on the same platform—are presented with a stark but filtered image of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, alongside Turkanov’s personal video messages and combat footage. Española and Turkanov’s channels have both been used to call out specific members and units of pro-Ukraine forces,



including the Russia Volunteer Corps ([Pitbull's Telegram](#), March 2, 2023). Other times Turkanov has shared edited compilations of clashes ([Pitbull's Telegram](#), March 4, 2023).

Despite its prominence, Española has continued to lionize the late founder of the Wagner Group, Yevgeny Prigozhin ([Española's Telegram](#), September 4). When the Wagner mutiny occurred, Rusich, Española, and Turkanov himself levied criticism at Russia's Ministry of Defense (MoD). The failed Russian assault on Vuhledar, which Española participated in, has become important lore and a major grievance in the Russian far-right militarist sphere ([The Moscow Times](#), April 3, 2023). Española and RIM asserted that their men fought much harder than the Russian regular army during the battle. The groups likewise expressed anger over the post-mutiny policy of requiring irregular and volunteer units to sign contracts with the MoD in an attempt by the state and military to consolidate control over these units.

### **Profiling 'Pitbull'**

Turkanov is a 36-year-old former mixed martial arts fighter born in then-Leningrad in 1987 ([Sherdog](#), July 24). He has most recently been seen fighting in Ukraine for Russia as part of the Española unit. Allegedly the former leader of a support crew for the Zenit Football Club, he joined Española sometime around February 2023 after transferring from another unit. Posts on Telegram from the unit's official channel indicate he is a commander of Española's anti-aircraft battery ([Española's Telegram](#), March 5, 2023).

As an MMA fighter, Turkanov initially gained attention on small amateur fight circuits whose videos were shared across social media. He was the subject of a brief amount of publicity in English-language sports media after the announcement in 2021 that he had been signed for a professional match with AMC Fight Night Global, an MMA promoter that mostly organizes events in Russia and Eastern

Europe ([Sherdog](#), February 23, 2023). While he only had one fight with AMC, the prominent swastika, *sonnenrad* (literally "sun wheel," a common far right symbol), and other tattoos that used national socialist imagery immediately led to criticism of AMC Fight Night for allowing him to appear on the card. Turkanov told an interviewer in October 2023 that his tattoos are pagan symbols ([Фонтанка.ру](#), October 18, 2023).

Despite a record of seven wins and four losses at the time, Turkanov lost the AMC fight in Sochi in under three minutes. According to his Sherdog fighter profile, he fought one more pro match in St. Petersburg, but lost by submission in the first round ([Sherdog](#), July 24). Prior to these matches, Turkanov had served five years in prison after he was convicted in 2013 for kidnapping and extortion. Turkanov and three other men allegedly forced a victim into a vehicle and coerced him into taking a loan ([Фонтанка.ру](#), October 18, 2023).

### **Since the Russian War in Ukraine**

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Turkanov has risen to hold a high place within the Española unit, which is comprised of a collection of members from different soccer hooligan groups. Turkanov, who has repurposed his MMA moniker "Pitbull" into a *nom du guerre*, has reportedly been awarded the Russian Order of Courage twice. The first instance was in the Zaporizhzhia area, where he saved a heavily injured commander by dragging him safely through a minefield ([Pitbull's Telegram](#), December 24, 2023). The second time was for carrying a wounded soldier, by his telling, for "several kilometers" up a winding road while avoiding fire from Ukrainian drones and artillery by hiding in tall grass ([lenta.ru](#), August 20, 2023).

Turkanov has taken on an unusual role as equal-parts soldier and social media influencer. His public persona revolves around fighting against Ukrainian forces,

taking media interviews, and regularly posting footage from the front. Amid all of this, Turkanov has found the time to promote the health supplement company attached to the paramilitary group Rusich, with which Española also has ties. Turkanov also posed for photos with Rusich leader Alexey Milchakov, and his channels often share Rusich's Telegram posts ([Rasich Labs Telegram](#), October 21; [Pitbull's Telegram](#), August 27, 2023). When a Rusich co-founder, Yan Petrovsky, was arrested in Finland in August 2023, Turkanov stood up for him, personally threatening the Finnish government to refrain from extraditing Petrovsky to Ukraine ([Anti-Fascist Europe](#), August 31, 2023).

## Conclusion

As the war in Ukraine increasingly tips in Russia's strategic favor and with presidential elections approaching in Russia, the government is relying on increased military recruitment in order to maintain the advantage in Ukraine while delaying another official public round of mobilization (to read more on the complicated situation on the front, see Eurasia Daily Monitor, [November 20](#), [December 18](#), [December 20](#), [December 21](#)). All signals point to Russia gearing up for a long war of attrition in Ukraine, and it will be vital to attract new recruits to the regular military, private military companies, and irregular volunteer militias like Española ([Le Monde](#), September 26, 2023). Thus, charismatic propaganda figures like Turkanov will continue to play a critical role in recruitment, as Española spearheads the effort to appeal to a sizable base of Russian soccer hooligans. These individuals are skeptical of Moscow's political elite, but are highly nationalistic and are motivated to fight for their nation and the Russian people.

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## Abdul Bari: Mastermind Behind ISKP's Massacre of Hazara Shias Finally Arrested

*Farhan Zahid*

### Executive Summary

- Abdul Bari, an Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) commander, was arrested in early September 2023 near Quetta, Pakistan after masterminding numerous attacks, including the massacre of 11 Hazara Shia miners in 2021.
- Bari has killed or had a part in killing over 40 members of the Hazara Shia community across various attacks over the years, such as the murder of 14 Shia Hazara bus passengers near Quetta in 2011. Bari was behind some of the most heinous terrorist attacks in Balochistan, before relocating to Afghanistan in 2015 to fight US and allied forces there.

Immediately after the fall of Mosul in June 2014 and the subsequent declaration of a "caliphate" in Iraq and Syria, Islamic State (IS) reached out to Islamist terrorist networks, cultivated contacts, and developed franchises in South Asia and Afghanistan. IS's caliph, Abubakar al-Baghdadi, demanded all Islamist militant groups pledge allegiance to himself. IS was

able to establish a presence in Pakistan and Afghanistan, with a number of smaller Islamist cells developing in India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. These groups succeeded in perpetrating scores of terrorist attacks.

Pakistan, with its abundance of jihadist activity, was heavily affected by the number of Islamist terrorist groups that pledged fealty to al-Baghdadi. Although IS had established cells across Pakistan, the western provinces of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan were the most affected by the group's activities. To this day, despite years of counter-terrorism operations in Balochistan, IS's branch there remains active and continues to launch terrorist attacks both in the province itself and neighboring Sindh.

Abdul Bari is a commander of Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) and was arrested near Quetta in Balochistan in early September 2023. Given Bari's activities in the region, this was a significant achievement for law enforcement and security forces. He was involved in perpetrating some of the most heinous attacks in Balochistan and Sindh Province. Most important among those attacks was the massacre of 11 Hazara Shia miners in 2021, an event which made Bari one of the most notorious jihadists in Pakistan ([Khaama News](#), September 7).

### **The Mach Massacre**

In January 2021, ISKP launched a major attack in the Mach area of Bolan District, where 11 miners from the ethnic Shia Hazara community were killed. Mach is a coal mining town 50 kilometers from Quetta. Laborers from across Pakistan live and work in the area, a significant number which are Shia-Hazara. This is why ISKP targeted Mach's miners, who were kidnapped and taken to mountains in the Bolan area and then killed in a hut. A video of their bodies was also released by ISKP, appearing to show the miners' corpses with their hands tied ([Dawn](#), January 3, 2021; [BBC Asia](#), January 3, 2021).

The attack ignited widespread protests and a six-day sit-in near the parliament building by the Shia-Hazara community in Quetta, Balochistan's provincial capital. The protestors blocked the main city street, demanding that then-Prime Minister Imran Khan visit Quetta and form an independent judicial committee. Until he met with them, they refused to bury the deceased ([Al Jazeera](#), January 4, 2021).

### **The Mastermind**

Following an investigation, Pakistan's intelligence and law enforcement bodies found that the mastermind of the Mach killings was ISKP's Abdul Bari. Hailing from the Mastung District of Balochistan, Bari is the son of a government employee and is an ethnic Barahvi. While Mastung is known to have an ISKP presence, it is also the main base of recruitment for sectarian militant organization Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) in Balochistan ([News International](#), September 6). In 2017, for example, an ISKP training camp was discovered in the area by the Balochistan police's Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) (see [Terrorism Monitor](#), January 27, 2017).

Bari studied at religious seminaries in Karachi and Rahim Yar Khan District and started his jihadi career with LeJ in Balochistan. He had also fought with the Afghan Taliban in Afghanistan for almost a decade, finding safe havens in Afghanistan when Pakistani security forces pursued LeJ cells in Balochistan. He subsequently moved to Afghanistan in 2015 and participated in operations against US and Afghan government forces alongside the Afghan Taliban. Bari worked as an Islamist recruiter of Baloch youth and sent many of them to Afghanistan, where they also received training at camps run by the Afghan Taliban. Despite being in Afghanistan, Bari maintained contacts with LeJ cells in Balochistan. Bari's primary focus, however, was planning terrorist attacks against the Hazara Shia community, which he despised and considered non-Muslim. Altogether, he killed over 40 members of the Hazara Shia



community in a number of different terrorist attacks. [1]

Before relocating to Afghanistan, Bari and his LeJ network perpetrated a number of high-profile terrorist attacks in Sindh and Balochistan provinces. He also orchestrated the Abdullah Shah Ghazi Mazar attack in Karachi in October 2010, which injured many and killed ten. He also masterminded the killing of 14 Shia Hazara bus passengers near Quetta in October 2011. In April 2013, Bari and three other LeJ militants targeted Hazaras working at a store in Quetta, killing six people and injuring three others. Finally, in December 2017, he planned and executed a terrorist attack on a Catholic Church in Quetta, resulting in nine deaths and 56 injuries ([News International](#), September 6).

### **Finally Arrested**

Bari eventually joined ISKP in 2016 after the group launched a branch in Pakistan. Since then, ISKP has had a particular focus on attacking the Hazara Shia community based in Quetta. ISKP has also incited sectarian violence between the other groups and the Hazara, leading to tensions and unrest within the province. After joining ISKP, he collected funds from drug traffickers and affluent businessmen in Quetta by capitalizing on his old associations with the Afghan Taliban. He then used these funds to execute terrorist attacks in Balochistan, including the Mach attack in 2020. The attack in Mach occurred after an ISKP commander in Afghanistan, Qari Ubaid Ullah, alerted Bari to the fact that there were many Hazara Shias living there. Bari, Qari Ubaid Ullah, and other ISKP militants held a meeting in Quetta to plan and execute the attack. [2]

The havoc Bari created led to a concerted effort by the Pakistani security apparatus in Balochistan to arrest him. The federal Intelligence Bureau (IB) also played a pivotal role in Bari's arrest. Working together, the IB and Balochistan police were able to gather critical intelligence

regarding Bari's movements near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. [3]

It became known that Bari frequently moved back and forth from Spin Boldak (an Afghan border town) to Quetta, mostly staying in rural areas along the border. His movements were continuously tracked by IB operatives, who prepared for his arrival in Pakistan. Bari was surprised by the ambush and was finally arrested in a joint operation led by the IB.

### **Conclusion**

ISKP's presence in Balochistan is of concern to Pakistani law enforcement organizations. Bari's arrest, however, marks a significant victory in the ongoing fight against terrorism. His arrest underscores the relentless efforts of law enforcement agencies and intelligence services in tracking him down and serves as a reminder of the importance of cooperation among multiple security, intelligence, and law enforcement organizations. While Bari's capture is a notable achievement, it also highlights the need for continued vigilance and proactive measures to prevent the radicalization of individuals and the recruitment of new militants to ISKP and its partner militant groups.

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### **Notes:**

[1] From discussions with a senior law enforcement officer on September 22, 2023.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.