



3.1.3. Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)

The Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI), established in 1948,²⁰⁸ is the country's largest intelligence agency and has often exerted a strong influence on government policy.²⁰⁹ Sources described it as a military²¹⁰/military-run²¹¹ organisation, with no specific law or formalised oversight process regulating its activities.²¹² Externally, the ISI engages in the collection of foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence activities,²¹³ while in the domestic realm, it is known as an actor of repression in Balochistan and against individuals voicing dissent against the country's military leaders.²¹⁴ The ISI has internal and external wings²¹⁵ and a number of specialised sections,²¹⁶ with sources from late 2025 reportedly indicating that the organisation was shifting away from human-intelligence centred approaches towards data-driven monitoring.²¹⁷

The ISI is headed by a Director-General who holds the rank of three-star army general.²¹⁸ Since September 2024, this position has been held by Muhammad Asim Malik, who was additionally appointed to the post of National Security Adviser in April 2025.²¹⁹ Both the ISI's directorate board²²⁰ and its core staff are composed of military officers. Meanwhile, the organisation also employs civil servants for administrative and analytical roles, as well as other civilians operating as informants and surveillance personnel.²²¹ While no precise data was available of the overall size of the ISI,²²² the New Delhi-based South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP)²²³ in mid-2025 estimated the agency's strength at around 25 000.²²⁴ The ISI has been involved in multiple enforced disappearances²²⁵ and extrajudicial killings in Balochistan.²²⁶

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