3.2.1. The Pakistan armed forces

COMMON ANALYSIS
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Pakistan’s armed forces are the country’s largest military institution, with an overall basin of about 1.71 million and roughly 650 000 – 660 000 active-duty members, including around 550 000 in the army. They consist of the army, navy and air force, each headed by its own chief of staff.

Since the 27th Constitutional Amendment of November 2025, the serving army chief —currently General Asim Munir — automatically also holds the post of Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), granting him primacy and direct operational authority over the heads of the navy and air force. The reform also strengthened the army chief’s institutional position within the state structure. The military is capable of operating throughout Pakistan. Counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations are concentrated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

In these areas, the army has been accused of serious human rights abuses against civilians, including extrajudicial killings, torture, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary detention. Reports also refer to targeted actions against activists and critical voices, as well as violent repression of protests, including the use of lethal force against demonstrators.

Additionally, in May 2025, the Supreme Court of Pakistan validated the conduct of military trials for civilians accused of involvement in the May 2023 unrest. As military court proceedings are conducted by serving military officers, and the military is therefore directly involved in the adjudication process, any allegations of due process violations, as well as any rights abuses associated with the conduct of such trials and the sentences imposed, may engage the responsibility of military authorities.

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