

KARACHI: An angry mob burned a local transport bus in Karachi, Pakistan, earlier in the week. A total of 11 people were reported killed yesterday. The violence comes as Muslims began observing Ramadan, the holy month-long fasting period. Authorities called in

paramilitary soldiers and police to quell political and criminal violence in Pakistan's largest city after 34 people were killed there in two days, officials said.

Violence in Karachi, a sprawling port city of 18 million, has added to the political instability in the region and provided another distraction for the government as it fights a Taliban-led movement being a strong US-ally.

Police have found bodies scattered across different parts of the city since Monday morning, said Sharufuddin Memon, the security adviser to the chief minister of Sindh Province. Much of the fighting is blamed on gangs allegedly thought to be affiliated with the city's main political parties.

Memon said 11 people were gunned down yesterday, and 23 were killed the day before. The killings fit into a broader pattern of violence in Karachi that claimed the lives of more than 300 people in July, he said.

Authorities have called in 1,000 paramilitary troops from the Frontier Corps and also police from the Frontier Constabulary, Memon said.

Paramilitary forces have been ordered to take target action, while being given police powers, other reports said.

Anyone identifying a target killer would now get a reward of 5 million Pak Rupees (\$57,000).

Rehman Malik Warns

Federal Interior Minister Rehman Malik, who arrived in Karachi, warned that terrorists had tested the government enough and ordered aerial surveillance of the city. "Everything has a limit, enough is enough, we are going to take extraordinary measures to restore peace and normalcy in Karachi," the INVAB media quoted him as saying.

Malik warned the underworld operating in Karachi that no one can any longer come to the rescue of their gang leaders.

Prime Minister's Response

According to media - Prime Minister of Pakistan Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, speaking in the National Assembly, rejected any suggestion the leadership of the ruling Pakistan People's Party planned a division of Karachi along ethnic lines.

Violence

The cosmopolitan city has been hit by ethnic, political and targeted killing for months. The violence has largely involved members and supporters of the Urdu-speaking Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and the ANP representing ethnic Pashtuns, with each side blaming the other for the killings.

Credits: Karachi Correspondent and News Agencies