

# Muslim protestors killed, end to violent weekend

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP) — Gunmen with automatic weapons fired on two Sunni Muslim crowds Sunday, killing at least 21 people and wounding 26 in a burst of sectarian violence in this troubled city.

It was one of Pakistan's bloodiest days in recent years and raised questions about whether Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's government can control the streets of the nation's biggest metropolis.

Police said they suspected Shiite Muslims carried out Sunday's attacks in retaliation for a series of Saturday night shootings in Karachi that left 12 men dead, most of them Shiites.

The increasingly bitter Sunni-Shiite feud is one of several running battles in Karachi, a city of 10 million convulsed by ethnic, political and religious violence in recent years.

In the first attack Sunday, four

gunmen in a car sprayed bullets at people near a street stall set up by Harakat-ul-Ansar, a group of Sunni religious students, police said.

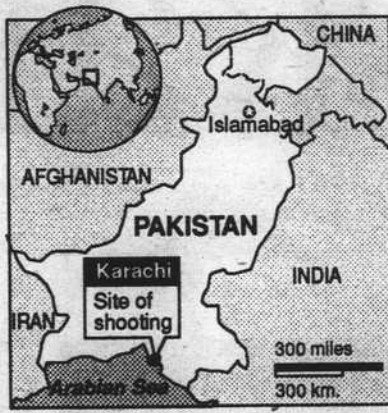
Twelve people were killed, including a 12-year-old boy, and 13 were wounded, several of them seriously.

Harakat-ul-Ansar hasn't been involved in previous sectarian violence, and it appeared the gunmen were simply targeting Sunnis.

Raees Ahmed, a policeman at the scene, said he was at his station when the officers heard heavy gunfire. By the time they arrived, the assailants had sped away.

Several hours later, there was a second drive-by shooting, this time outside the Babul Islam Mosque, where Sunnis were praying. Nine men were killed and 13 wounded, police said.

All of the weekend attacks took place in central Karachi, the frequent scene of gun battles in recent



months.

The violence clouded what was supposed to be a peaceful day of protest.

Ms. Bhutto had called a nationwide strike Sunday to show solidarity with Muslims seeking to secede from India in the disputed Himalayan state of Kashmir.

# Neighboring countries take Chechen refugees

NAZRAN, Russia (AP) — Refugees fleeing the war in Chechnya have caused a near crisis in neighboring Ingushetia, where the population has swelled by half, and more arrived Sunday in battered buses, packed cars and canvas-covered trucks.

About 10,000 people have been arriving in this Caucasus republic from Chechnya each week since Russian troops invaded the republic on Dec. 11 to suppress its claim to independence.

Some refugees have gone on to neighboring North Ossetia, Dagestan or elsewhere in Russia.

But most stay in tiny Ingushetia, crammed into emergency housing or squeezed into private homes and putting tremendous new strains on the already battered economy.

There are now more than 140,000 refugees, the majority of them from Chechnya, in addition to the 260,000 permanent residents. With an area of roughly 2,400 square miles, Ingushetia is only a third the size of Chechnya — slightly larger than the state of Delaware.

"Soon there may be a deficit of food, beds and medicine here," said Nazir Doskiyev, head of the Ingush immigration office. "If the refugees stay until summer, there may also be an epidemic."

The refugees continued to arrive Sunday amid reports of heavy new shelling in Grozny and a Russian ground attack on a village west of the capital.

"People in Grozny are dying under destroyed houses — old women and children are dying of hunger," said Murat Gazdiyev, 59, who holed up in the besieged capital for weeks with his wife and six-year-old son before heading to the Ingush capital of Nazran.

"It's impossible to live there," he said.

*"People in Grozny are dying under destroyed houses ... It's impossible to live there."*

**MURAT GAZDIYEV**

Chechen refugee

Entering the sixth week of their siege of the capital, Russian forces pounded two neighborhoods in southern Grozny on Sunday, Ingush officials said.

Stepped-up Russian attacks around Grozny are expected to exacerbate the refugee crisis. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which has distributed aid and supplies worth over \$1 million in the region, says more than 400,000 people have been displaced by the fighting in Chechnya.

"It's becoming worse every day," said Helena Baer, of the UNHCR emergency office in Vladikavkaz, in the neighboring region of North Ossetia. "Their needs are becoming greater and greater," she said.

In Nazran, several thousand refugees occupy railroad cars on sidings, a school and other emergency housing.

Each refugee is given free housing, blankets, some food and \$5 by the Russian government — the very force that bombed them out of their homes.

Thousands of civilians have been killed since President Boris Yeltsin sent troops eight weeks ago into the small, mostly Muslim region to put a stop to Chechnya's independence drive.

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