



February 19, 2019

The Honorable Sam Brownback
Ambassador-at-Large
Office of International Religious Freedom
United States State Department
(delivered in person)

RE: STATEMENT AT THE INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ROUNDTABLE

Dear Ambassador Brownback,

Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) "*Army of Mohammad*", a Pakistan based Islamic terrorist group led by Islamist cleric Masood Azhar, has claimed responsibility for the suicide bombing on February 14th, 2019 in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, at Pulwama.¹

46 peace keeping soldiers died in this attack perpetrated by a radicalized 19 year old, making it the single largest attack in the region since 1989, when such terrorists drove out the minority Hindu population, better known as Kashmiri Pandits, out of Kashmir.²

The aim of JeM is to foment an Islamist insurgency within Kashmir at the behest of Pakistan through terrorist sponsored activities. These activities include mass killings, raping women and girls, as well as plundering villages and homes of religious minorities (i.e. non-Muslims of the state). JeM's forces also carry out mass indoctrination of Kashmiris into the violent Wahhabi Islamic strain imported from Saudi Arabia, which is at odds with the more peaceful traditions indigenous to the region. Azhar is also a prominently published anti-Semitic author.³

JeM is designated a terror organization by India, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the United Nations (UN).⁴ Since the group has taken various names since being officially banned in Pakistan, **efforts to sanction Azhar as a global terrorist by the UN Security Council have been thwarted by China**, which provides diplomatic cover to Pakistan for JeM's previous nefarious attacks towards India including:

- December 2001: attack on the Indian parliament killing 14 civilians;
- November 2008: attack on Mumbai (26/11) killing 169 civilians, including 6 Americans;
- January 2016: Pathankot Air Force Base attack killing 17 Indian personnel; and
- September 2016: Uri Army Base attack killing 19 Indian personnel.

¹ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/37-crpf-jawans-martyred-in-ied-blast-in-jks-pulwama/articleshow/67992189.cms>

² https://www.hafsite.org/sites/default/files/HAF_16_Kashmir_V4.pdf

³ <https://www.memri.org/reports/forty-diseases-jews-%E2%80%93-pakistan-army-backed-jihadi-commander-maulana-masood-azhars-book-says>

⁴ https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267/faq_sanctions_list/summaries/entity/jaish-i-mohammed

Since 1989, Islamic terrorist groups operating in Kashmir such as JeM, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), all supported by Pakistan's Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) agencies, have left hundreds of Hindus in Kashmir dead, while practically the entire surviving population of this minority, numbering more than 350,000, were forced to flee their ancestral homeland. Since three decades, Kashmiri Pandits have lived as internally displaced people, and many still continue to languish in refugee camps in the Jammu region and in Delhi.

We call upon the U.S. government to condemn in all international fora the role played by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and China in providing physical and diplomatic cover to armed Islamic terrorists like Masood Azhar that have wreaked havoc in Kashmir. We will also request the U.S. Congress to urgently convene special hearings to examine the international terror nexus plaguing Kashmir and India, especially on the plight of minorities who have fallen victim to ISI sponsored *Jihadi* terrorist groups operating in Kashmir since 1989. Relevant US State Department, Defense Department, and intelligence agency reports should then reflect these findings.

Thank you,

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