



Harkat-ul-Mujahideen



Ideology:

Harkat-ul-Mujahideen-al-Islami (abbreviated HUM) is a Pakistan-based Islamic militant group operating primarily in Kashmir. The group have been considered as having links to Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda and the group has been designated as a terrorist organization by the United Nations, the United Kingdom and the United States. In response the organization changed its name to Harkat-ul-Mujahideen. The group splintered from Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI), a Pakistani group formed in 1980 to fight the Soviet military in Afghanistan.

Post Soviet - Afghan War:

Harkat-ul-Mujahideen was originally formed as a splinter group of Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami in 1985. In 1989, at the end of Soviet-Afghan war, the group entered Kashmiri politics by use of militants under the leadership of

Sajjad Afghani and Muzaffar Ahmad Baba Alias Mukhtar. In 1993 the group merged with Harkat-ul-Jehad-al-Islami to form Harkat-ul-Ansar.

Immediately following the merger India arrested three senior members: Nasrullah Mansur Langaryal, chief of the former Harkat-ul Mujahideen in November 1993; Maulana Masood Azhar, General Secretary in February 1994, and Sajjad Afghani (Sajjad Sajid) in the same month in Srinagar. Muzaffar Ahmad Baba was killed in an encounter at Pandan Nowhatta with the BSF in January 1994.

As a response the group carried out several kidnappings in an attempt to free their leaders, all of which failed. It was linked to the Kashmiri group al-Faran that kidnapped five Western tourists in Kashmir in July 1995; one, Hans Christian Ostrø, was killed in August 1995 and the other four reportedly were killed in December of the same year.

In 1997 the United States designated Harkat-ul-Ansar as terrorist organization in response it renamed itself to Harkat-ul-Mujahideen.

In 1999 Sajjad was killed during a jailbreak which led to the hijacking, by the group, of Indian Airlines Flight 814 in December, which led to the release of Maulana Masood Azhar, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh and Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar by the Indian Government. Azhar did not, however, return to the HUM, choosing instead to form the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM), a rival militant group expressing a more radical line than the HUM, in early 2000.

Post 9/11 Attacks:

The group again came to the attention of the US after the 9/11 attacks, leading President George W. Bush to ban the group, this time under its Harkat-ul-Mujahideen moniker, on September 25, 2001.

Long-time leader of the group, Fazlur Rehman Khalil, in mid-February 2000 stepped down as HUM emir, turning the reins over to the popular Kashmiri commander and his second-in-command, Farooq Kashmiri. Khalil assumed the position of HUM Secretary General.

HUM is thought to have several thousand armed supporters located in Pakistani Kashmir, and India's southern Kashmir and Doda regions. It uses light and heavy machineguns, assault rifles, mortars, explosives, and rockets. HUM lost some of its membership due to defections to the Jaish-e-Mohammed.

The group is based in Muzaffarabad, Rawalpindi, and several other towns in Pakistan and Afghanistan, but members conduct insurgent and militant activities primarily in Kashmir.

The group's current leader, Fazlur Rehman Khalil, lives openly in the Islamabad suburb of Golra Sharif. He has denied having any contact with Osama bin Laden.

According to The New York Times, Osama Bin Laden's seized cellphones attest Harkat-ul-Mujahideen's continued contact with Osama Bin Laden and its bases and fighters shared with the Taliban over the years following the war in Afghanistan.

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