

Jamiat ul-Ansar (JuA)

(Also known as: Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HuM), Movement of Holy Warriors, Harakat ul-Mujaheddin, Harakat ul-Mujahedeem, Islamic Freedom Fighters Movement, Islamic Freedom Fighters Group, Harakat ul-Mujahidin, Harakat ul-Mujahedin, Harkat ul-Mujahideen, Harakat Mujahideen (HM), Harakat-ul-Ansar (HuA), Harkat ul-Ansar, Al-Faran, Al-Hadid, Al-Hadith

The following information is based on publicly available details about Jamiat ul-Ansar (JuA). These details have been corroborated by material from intelligence investigations into the activities of JuA and from official reporting. ASIO assesses that the details set out below are accurate and reliable.

The JuA is listed in the United Nations 1267 Committee's consolidated list and by the governments of Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Pakistan.

Current status of JuA

JuA is a Sunni Islamic extremist organisation based in Pakistan that operates primarily in Indian Administered Kashmir (IAK). Founded in 1985 as the Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HuM), JuA was initially formed with support from the Pakistan government to participate in the war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, JuA concentrated its efforts on the disputed territories of Kashmir and Jammu, where it has conducted numerous attacks against Indian troops, civilians, and tourists. Using the alternative name, al-Faran, in order to mask its activities, JuA has also kidnapped, and in some cases murdered, a number of foreigners.

JuA is aligned politically with Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam Fazul Rehman faction (JUI-F), a prominent radical Islamic party in Pakistan and Kashmir. Funding for JuA is received through charitable donations collected from sympathisers in Pakistan and Kashmir and through Islamic charities in the United Kingdom and the Persian Gulf states. JuA has cooperated with other Islamist militant groups operating in Afghanistan, Kashmir and Pakistan such as the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), Jaish e-Muhammad (JeM), and the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP).

In 1993 the JuA (then known as HuM) merged with another Kashmir-focused terrorist group, the Harakat-ul-Jehad-al-Islami (HuJI), to form the Harkat-ul-Ansar (HuA). As a consequence of reports linking the group to al-Qa'ida, HuA was proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the United States in 1997. The group immediately re-adopted the name Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HuM) to escape the ramifications of the proscription. In 1998, the group's leader Fazlur Rehman Khalil signed Usama bin Laden's fatwa calling for attacks on the US and its allies. In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, HuM was declared a terrorist organisation by the United States for its extensive links with Usama bin Laden. HuM was also banned by the Pakistan government in November 2001. Following the ban, the HuM again renamed and is now operating under its present name of Jamiat ul-Ansar (JuA). JuA was also subsequently banned by Pakistan in November 2003.

Individuals trained at HuM/JuA facilities have engaged in terrorist operations in other places where Islamist resistances have arisen including Tajikistan and Bosnia, and also Afghanistan to participate in the post-Taliban insurgency. On 19 June 2005 several JuA trained individuals were arrested in Afghanistan preparing to carry out acts of terrorism.

Following his release from an Indian prison in 1999, JuA member Maulana Masood Azhar established the Jaish-e Muhammad (JeM) as a splinter group with almost identical aims as the JuA. This led to a large number of JuA operatives defecting to JeM, including a number of experienced field commanders, which has impacted on JuA's operational capabilities.

While attacks claimed by JuA, or those that can be reliably attributed to the group, have declined since 2002 it remains active in IAK. For example, JuA claimed responsibility for the assassination of a political party worker in Kashmir on 7 October 2004, and joint responsibility with JeM for the 25 October 2004 attack on the motorcade of the Divisional Commissioner for the Muslim-Majority Kashmir Valley. Operating in conjunction with HM, JuA is reported to have been responsible for multiple attacks directed at a range of security and civilian targets in and around Jammu and Kashmir on 13 June 2005 resulting in 15 deaths, including two school children. The 1 January 2006 exchange of gunfire with Indian Security Forces in Indian administered Kashmir is further evidence of their ongoing activity.

JuA operates a number of camps in Pakistan which provide both religious instruction and military style guerrilla training and support, not only to JuA members, but also to other associated terrorist organisations and individual jihadists from all over the world. The group also operated terrorist training camps in eastern Afghanistan prior to their destruction by coalition air strikes in 2001. Some JuA training facilities are less conspicuous and focused on preparing jihadists for more low intensity, hit and run type operations or suicide attacks. In 2004, several members of a JuA-trained splinter group were arrested for their involvement in separate suicide car-bomb attacks outside the US Consulate and the Sheraton Hotel in Karachi in May and June 2002, and a failed attempt to assassinate Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf with a remote-controlled car-bomb in April 2002. As members of a previously unknown group "Jundallah," JuA trained members were among a number of militants drawn from several Pakistani extremist groups responsible for the twin car-bomb attack near the US Consulate in Karachi on 26 May 2004. On 9 June 2004, the same terrorist cell was involved in a terrorist attack against a heavily-armed military convoy carrying Karachi's military commander resulting in seven deaths.

Objectives

JuA is a group that uses violence in pursuit of its stated objective of uniting Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan under a radical interpretation of Islamic law.

Leadership and membership

The leader of JuA is Fazlur Rehman (sometimes Rahman) Khalil, (aka Maulana Farzul Ahmed Khalil, Maulana Ahmed Khalil). Reporting indicates that the JuA has a strength of no more than a few hundred, but exact membership numbers cannot be accurately

determined. The majority of JuA's membership consists of jihadists from Pakistan, Kashmir, and Afghanistan. JuA has also attracted new recruits drawn from around the world, including Bangladesh and Southeast Asia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

JuA engagement in terrorist activities

JuA has been involved in a number of terrorist activities, including hijacking, bombings, abductions, and training.

Terrorist activities for which responsibility has been claimed by, or reliably attributed to, JuA, over the past 7 years include:

- Dec 1999: An Indian airliner was hijacked en route from Nepal to India, one passenger was stabbed to death.
- Nov 2000: Thirty Indian soldiers were fatally shot at two army posts in Kashmir.
- 23 Jan 2002: US journalist Daniel Pearl was abducted and subsequently murdered on this date. Four people, including JuA member Ahmed Omar Sheikh, were convicted of Pearl's murder;
- 14 June 2002: JuA trained militants were responsible for the suicide car-bomb attack outside the US Consulate in Karachi which killed 11 persons;
- April 2003: 3 Indian troops were fatally shot in Kashmir;
- 7 Oct 2004: A politically party worker was assassinated in Kashmir;
- 19 June 2005: several JuA trained individuals were arrested in Afghanistan preparing to carry out acts of terrorism;
- June 2005: two American citizens were arrested for suspected participation in an al-Qa'ida plot to attack the US. Both claimed to have attended a terrorist training camp run by JuA leader Fazlur Rehman Khalil.

Conclusion

The Criminal Code provides that for an organisation to be listed as a terrorist organisation, the Attorney-General must be satisfied that:

- (i) the organisation is directly or indirectly engaged in, preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur); or
- (ii) the organisation advocates the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur).

On the basis of the above information, ASIO assesses that JuA involvement in terrorist activity has declined since 2002. However, ASIO assess JuA remain active and is directly preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of terrorist acts. It is submitted that the acts attributable to the JuA are terrorist acts as they:

- (i) are done with the intention of advancing a political cause, namely, the uniting of Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan under Islamic law;
- (ii) are intended to coerce or influence by intimidation the government of a foreign country, namely India, and/or intimidate a section of the Indian public; and

(iii) constitute acts which cause serious physical harm to persons, including death, as well as serious damage to property.

This assessment is corroborated by information provided by reliable and credible intelligence sources.