

## **Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT/LT)**

**Also known as: Lashkar-e-Taiba, Lashkar-e-Toiba, Lashkar-i-Toiba, Lashkar-Tayyiba, Lashkar-i-Tayyaba, Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, the Army of the Righteous, Army of the Pure, Army of the Pure and Righteous, Soldiers of the Pure, Army of Medina, Jama'at ul-Da'awa, JuD, Jamaat-ud-Dawa, JUD, Jama'at al-Dawa, Jamaat ud-Daawa, Jamaat ul-Dawah, Jamaat-ul-Dawa, Jama'at-i-Dawat, Jama'iat-ud-Dawa, Jama'at-ud- Da'awah, Jama'at-ud-Da'awa, Jamaati-ud-Dawa, and Idara Khidmat-e-Khalq, the Party of Preachers, Party of the Calling, al Mansoorian, al Mansooreen, Paasban-e-Kashmir, Paasban-i-Ahle- Hadith, Pasban-e-Kashmir, Pasban-e-Ahle-Hadith, Paasban-e-Ahle-Hadis.**

The following information is based on publicly available details about Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT). These details have been corroborated by material from intelligence investigations into the activities of the LeT. ASIO assesses that the details set out below are accurate and reliable.

LeT is listed in the United Nations 1267 Committee's consolidated list and as a proscribed terrorist organisation by the governments of Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, Pakistan and India.

### ***Current status of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba***

LeT is a Sunni Islamic extremist organisation based in Pakistan. LeT was formed circa 1989 as the military wing of the Pakistan-based Islamic fundamentalist movement Markaz al-Dawa wal Irshad (MDI – Centre for Religious Learning and Propagation; also known as the Jamaat al-Daawa). Originally formed to wage militant jihad against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, LeT shifted its focus to the insurgency in Indian administered Kashmir (IAK) when Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan in the early 1990s. LeT is one of the largest and most brutal of the Pakistan-based militant groups active in Kashmir. LeT has conducted numerous attacks, including bombings, assassinations and kidnappings against Indian security forces (military and police), government, transport and civilians in IAK, as well as in India. The group is also credited with introducing the use of suicide squads to the conflict in IAK. In 2002, LeT was banned by the Pakistan government but the group continues to operate in Pakistan under the alias Jamaat ud-Dawa (JuD). Ostensibly created as a charitable organisation by LeT founder Hafiz Muhammad Saeed immediately prior to LeT being banned, JuD is an LeT front organisation, masking its activities and soliciting its funds.

LeT subscribes to a Salafist interpretation of Islam which has similarities to the Wahhabi form of Islam associated with al-Qa'ida and the Taliban. LeT receives funding from donors in the Middle-East (mainly Saudi Arabia), and through charitable donations collected from sympathisers in Pakistan, Kashmir, the United Kingdom and Persian Gulf states. LeT maintains links to the Taliban and al-Qa'ida, and to several domestic Islamic extremist groups, including the Kashmir focused terrorist group, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and the sectarian group Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ). LeT is reported to have been involved with mujahideen in other places where Islamist conflicts have arisen including Bosnia, Chechnya and Kosovo. LeT has also participated in the post-Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan. In 2004, several LeT operatives were captured by British forces in Iraq.

Indian and Pakistani initiatives to resolve the conflict in Kashmir have led to an overall reduction in the level of LeT infiltration and insurgent activity since 2002. However, LeT continues its attacks against Indian civilians and security forces. While LeT does not claim responsibility for its attacks on civilians, several recent attacks in IAK have been attributed to the group by Indian authorities, including the massacre of over thirty Hindus in two separate attacks in the Doda and Udhampur districts on 1 May 2006. The attacks occurred two days prior to peace talks between the Indian government and Kashmiri separatist groups, and were condemned by India as an attempt by LeT to sabotage the Kashmir peace process. LeT is also widely held to have been responsible for a number of significant attacks in India in recent years, including the 29 October 2005 serial explosions at marketplaces in New Delhi, and the 11 July 2006 serial bombings on trains in Mumbai, which killed more than 240 people in total. While two little known groups claimed responsibility for each of the Mumbai and New Delhi attacks, subsequent investigations have led Indian authorities to conclude that LeT was behind both attacks.

While IAK and Indian interests remain LeT's primary focus, some elements within LeT want to re-focus their activities and bring them more into line with Usama bin Laden's 'global jihad' against the US and Israel, and their allies. As members of a previously unknown group "Jundallah," LeT 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. In October 2006, LeT issued its own fatwa asking the Muslim community to kill Pope Benedict XVI, in response to a speech delivered by the Pope on 12 September 2006.

LeT operates a number of camps in Pakistan which provide both religious instruction and military style guerrilla training and support. Since being proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the Pakistan government in 2002, some LeT training facilities are now smaller in scale, some of which are mobile, and focused on preparing jihadists for either low intensity, hit and run type operations or suicide attacks.

Reporting indicates LeT may also be helping to facilitate training of foreigners who are possibly intending to conduct terrorism related activities in their countries of origin. Investigations indicate one of the British-born suicide bombers responsible for the 7 July 2005 attacks in London, Shehzad Tanweer, may have received training at a LeT camp in Pakistan. LeT is also suspected of providing some funding and logistical support to the disrupted British trans-Atlantic plane bombing plot in August 2006 using JuD as a cover. Several individuals with links to LeT have been arrested in Australia, the US, and Canada since 2003 for allegedly planning terrorist activities. In March 2007, a French court convicted French national, Willie Brigitte, of planning terrorist attacks in Australia in 2003 in conjunction with suspected LeT Chief for overseas operations, Sajid Mir. In June 2006, Brigitte's associate in Sydney, Faheem Khalid Lodhi, was convicted by a New South Wales Supreme Court jury of planning acts of terrorism (Mr Lodhi has appealed against his conviction). Aside from facilitating training, it is not clear whether the terrorist activities of any of these foreign born individuals have been sanctioned by LeT or are self-directed.

### ***Objectives***

LeT is a group that uses violence in pursuit of its stated objective to unite IAK with Pakistan under a radical interpretation of Islamic law. LeT's broader objectives include the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate across the Indian subcontinent. To this end, LeT intends to pursue the 'liberation,' not only of the Muslim-majority in Kashmir, but of all of India's Muslim population, even in areas where they do not form a majority. LeT has declared democracy to be antithetical to Islamic law and that LeT's jihad requires it to work toward turning Pakistan into a purely Islamic state.

### ***Leadership and membership***

The leader of LeT is Hafiz Muhammad Saeed (sometimes rendered Hafiz Mohd Saeed). Saeed has been detained and subsequently released, by Pakistani authorities on several occasions. He was arrested in February 2006, for leading violent protests in response to the Danish cartoon controversy and again in August 2006, in the wake of the disrupted British airliner bombing plot.

LeT's estimated strength is reported to include several hundred trained militants. The majority of LeT's membership consists of jihadists from Pakistan and Afghanistan.

### ***Lashkar-e-Tayyiba engagement in terrorist activities***

LeT conducts attacks in IAK on a monthly basis, primarily targeting Indian security forces but also non-Muslim civilians. Other significant attacks for which responsibility has been claimed by, or reliably attributed to, the LeT include:

- November 2005: Car bomb attack near the main entrance of the J&K Bank Corporate Headquarters in Srinagar which killed four civilians and injured 72;
- October 2005: Coordinated bomb attacks at marketplaces and on a bus in New Delhi, killing over 60 persons;
- May 2006: Massacre of Hindu civilians in Doda and Udhampur districts, Jammu & Kashmir, killing 34 civilians;
- May 2006: Attack on a Youth Congress rally at Sher-e-Kashmir Park in Srinagar, killing three political activists and two police officers;
- June 2006: Joint responsibility with Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM) for the kidnap and killing of seven Nepalese civilians and one Indian civilian in Kulgam, Jammu & Kashmir;
- July 2006: Serial bombings on trains in Mumbai, killing more than 200 persons; and
- February 2007: Attack on a Central Reserve Police Forces (CRPF) patrol party, killing two CRPF officers.

### ***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 LeT is directly preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of terrorist acts. It is submitted that the acts attributable to LeT are terrorist acts as they:

- (i) are done with the intention of advancing a political cause, namely, 'liberating' Muslims in Indian-administered Kashmir and the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate across the Indian subcontinent.
- (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.