

FULCRUM GLOBAL



*The publishing arm of the Society for Defense and Strategic Studies (SDSS)
at American Military University (APUS)*

INTELLIGENCE BRIEF #7

PRIMARY ANALYST: Dustin Oaks

SUBJECT: The LeT Terrorist Organization and their Pakistani Ties

COUNTRY/REGION: Global/South Asia

BACKGROUND OF SUBJECT:

The organization known as LeT (also known as Lashkar-e Tayyiba, Lashkar-e-Tayyeba or Lashkar-e-Taiba), has a very strong connection and ties with the Pakistani government. LeT has been directly tied to every terror attack conducted against Indian interests within India and their Consulates and Embassies in Afghanistan. They are considered one of the most prolific and well-funded organizations but no one really knows much about them. In fact, many just assume that they are a defunct organization. However, LeT has set forth many guidelines that precedes Al Qaeda (AQ) and their tactics, and it is because of three individuals that more is known about AQ than LeT. This organization not only has ties to the Pakistani government but also relations with the Inter Service Intelligence (ISI). Their recruiting and execution tactics as well as end goal are not as many would expect, because they prefer fidayeen attacks. These are attacks where the actual attackers survive their missions, then return back to their training grounds and expand their knowledge, tactics, techniques and practices (TTPs). LeT's recruiting techniques was and still remains highly educated individuals that are of Pakistani decent or has a connection with Pakistan as a nation.

CUSTOMER QUESTIONS:

1. Who and What are the origins of LeT?
2. Who leads the organization?
3. How do they differ from typical Terror organizations?
4. What kind of Influence do they have?
5. What ties to other organizations do they have?

CURRENT ASSESSMENT:

LeT evolved around 1990 in Kunar Province, Afghanistan. It was founded by Hafez Mohammed Saeed, Professor Zafar Iqbal, and Abdul Rehmann-Makki. In addition, there is a

report that suggests a Palestinian by the name of Sheikh Abdullah Azzam a.k.a. Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, (religious mentor to Usama bin Laden) and connected to the Muslim Brotherhood was another founder of the group.¹ Currently, LeT has been officially banned as an organization within Pakistan to maintain funding from the United States under the umbrella of combatting militants within its borders. The end result is that the organization expanded their operations against the Indians, and began to directly target Americans and coalition forces in neighboring Afghanistan as well as training suicide bombers for ISIS in Iraq and Syria, while changing the name of the entity.

However, LeT maintained the same leadership and affiliations within the Pakistani government. Currently they operate under the cover of a charity organization known as Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation (FIF), and before that was the *Markaz-ud-Dawa-wal-Irsha* (MDI) registered under the name of *Idara Khidmat-e-Khlaq* (Organization for Serving Humanity). The organization operated under the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JD) as the political front before being pressured to change and currently operates as *Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek* (AAT) under the *Milli Muslim League* (MML) umbrella and is currently protesting elections throughout Pakistan.

FIF maintains a charitable front as a Relief and Social Welfare organization, where they operate in areas of Pakistan and along the border of Afghanistan where natural disasters strike and they are able to provide faster care than the Pakistani government. This allows them to channel funding to LeT operatives. This also allows them to recruit more individuals and expand their reach. Funding comes from the Eid ul-Fitr holiday to raise funds which is accomplished by: printing flyers and website postings with posted listing prices that claim to fund humanitarian efforts, pay for the *suhoor* (pre-fast meal) and the *iftaar* (break of the daily fast) meals for those unable to afford them, while diverting portions of those funds to LeT for training and operations.

LeT/JD differentiates themselves because their recruits go through various stages of boot camp and identify those that are capable of moving into more specialized training provided by Pakistani military officers and members of the ISI with more sophisticated technology. This occurs not only in the disputed Kashmir region or within India, but they have carried out attacks on Indian interests throughout Afghanistan as well as the Indian consulate in Herat City, Herat Province, Afghanistan on numerous occasions. Their different tactics are what distinguishes them since they train in 2-4 man teams to enhance their abilities to succeed in conducting sabotage operations on a more advanced level. Operatives would travel across the border in a minibus wearing burqas to prevent being stopped due to religious and ethnic beliefs of the region. This means that they are able to move freely around their targeted areas because of less logistical needs and smaller footprint. They also are continuously trained on utilization of computer applications, and covert communications.²

LeT KEY LEADERSHIP:

1.) Hafez Mohammed Saeed

Saeed was a professor at the University of Engineering and Technology in Lahore, Pakistan. He received his master's degree in Islamic Studies and Arabic in Saudi Arabia. Saudi clerics urged Saeed to meet Professor Zafar Iqbal, whom was also at the University of

Engineering and Technology in Lahore, Pakistan. The two formed JD before establishing the armed wing known as LeT. Saeed taught both Arabic and engineering at the university. It was presumed that he was the mastermind behind the 2008 Mumbai attacks which killed 166 people and 6 of them were Americans.³ Hafeez Saeed had been confined to house arrest in Pakistan. In 2017 he was released and has since threatened to retaliate against Pakistan for the U.S. interfering and pursuing his charges for targeting and killing Indian and American citizens.

2.) Professor Zafar Iqbal

(a.k.a. *Zaftar Iqbal, Malik Zafar Iqbal Shehbaz, Malik Zafar, to name a few*)

His responsibilities with the organization included being in charge of the Finance Department for LeT/JD, Director of Education Department, and directly involved with the recruiting activities while developing curriculum for the schools ran by LeT/JD. He was also the President of the Medical Wing, and Secretary of a LeT/JD university trust created by the organization. Prof. Iqbal was also directly connected to Al Qaeda (AQ) by assisting with their financing, planning, facilitation, preparation, and perpetrating activities between LeT and AQ.⁴

3.) Dr. Abdullah Azzam

Azzam was a Professor at the International Islamic University in Islamabad and a mentor to Usama bin Laden. Dr. Azzam has been described as the ideologue for Hamas, a Palestinian militant group. Dr. Azzam joined the Muslim Brotherhood in 1969 when his family moved to Jordan. In 1973, he had his doctorate with distinction in “The Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence” from the religious al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. Dr. Azzam resigned from teaching in 1984 from the Islamic University in Islamabad, Pakistan and moved to Peshwar. This is where Dr. Azzam and Usama bin Laden jointly created the Office of Services for the Mujahideen (*Maktab Khadamat al-Mujahideen*, MAK).⁵ Dr. Azzam is of Palestinian descent and is directly connected with both the Muslim Brotherhood and Usama bin Laden, creating a connection on three continents.

The typical attack methodology for LeT is that of a *fidayeen* attack, (where the attackers at least have a chance to survive the attack). *Fidayeen* translated as “those who sacrifice themselves in order to redeem themselves”, has been subject to lengthy arguments from within the Islamic community because Islam forbids Suicide. However, Hafez Abdul Rehman Makki (top deputy and brother-in-law of LeT chief Mohammed Saeed) has argued that it is justified because the attackers would die at the hands of their enemy and not by their own hand. Makki has referenced examples from *Companions of the Prophet of Muhammad* as using *fidayeen* tactics and therefore in his eye it is legitimate, while the same techniques have been adopted by Hamas and Hezbollah.⁶ These tactics are important to the recruitment of LeT because it allows them to publish their exploits when they return to Pakistan and then help train the new recruits on their tactics that worked.

LeT is one of the first organizations to actively recruit westerners to join their ranks. David Coleman “Charles” Headley was actually born Daood Sayed Gilani on 30 June 1960 in Washington, D.C. His father was a Pakistani Diplomat and broadcaster while his mother, whom was an American national, was a prominent figure in Philadelphia high society while working as a Secretary at the Pakistani Embassy in Washington, D.C. Headley’s half-brother Danyal Gilani

served as the spokesperson for Pakistani PM Yousaf Raza Gilani and currently serves as the Pakistani Press Attache in Beijing.⁷ Headley was working as a Confidential Informant for the DEA in 1998, and attributed to the seizure of 2 ½ kilos of heroin and five arrests. Headley was recruited because of his Pakistani connections and ties and was living in the Chicago area when contacted. He was connected to scouting out the targets for the 2008 Mumbai Nightclub attacks.

ANALYSIS OF ASSESSMENT:

Their original recruitment is that of educated Pakistani's from around the world. These tactics were first utilized by LeT before being adopted by AQ, Hamas and Hezbollah. They keep in touch on a global front with their electronic newsletters that are published online in Urdu, English and Arabic. They also maintain Facebook pages for their organizational fronts as well. Many of their leadership continue to be directly connected with Al Qaeda core leadership to help facilitate global needs of the organization. They have recently sworn allegiance to ISIS, which poses a threat to the U.S. and Coalition forces in Afghanistan, by training a new batch of suicide attackers to target U.S. and Coalition forces in Syria and Iraq. As a result, their targets have expanded to U.S. and Coalition forces just like when the Russians were in Afghanistan and they will side with adversaries for the sake of waging *jihad* against the Americans and invaders.

AFFILIATIONS:

LeT/JD's key affiliations are Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), AQ Core Leadership, ISIS, MDI, FIF, United Jihad Council (UJC), Milli Muslim League (MML), Tehreek-e-Azadi-e-Kashmir (TAK), Al-Muhammadia Students- Student Org. for LeT in Sudan, Jamaat Jabligh, NIA (also directly affiliated with AQIS), Al-Kifah Refugee Center in New York⁸

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FINAL DATE OF ANALYSIS AND SUBMISSION:

September 25, 2018

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