

Refugee Review Tribunal

AUSTRALIA

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: PAK17504
Country: Pakistan
Date: 21 September 2005

Keywords: Pakistan – JKLF – Activities – Student-wing

This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

Questions

1. Please provide information on the nature and activities of JKLF within Pakistan.
2. Do the JKLF have a student wing and if so can you provide information on this?

List of Sources Consulted

RESPONSE

1. Please provide information on the nature and activities of JKLF within Pakistan?

The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) is one of the oldest of the Kashmiri separatist organisation. Formed originally in 1977 in England but becoming an effective organisation in Jammu and Kashmir in 1988-89, the JKLF fought a militant insurgency against Indian security forces. The JKLF has since split into two separate factions one led by Amanullah Khan (Pakistan-based) and the other by Yasin Malik (Indian-based). The Malik faction has officially renounced violence and is a member of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) which is a collection of over twenty Kashmiri separatist groups (For information on the APHC see ('All Parties Hurriyat Conference', *South Asia Terrorist Portal* (SATP) website, Undated –

http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/Hurriyat.htm – Attachment 1; 'All-Parties Hurriyat Conference', GlobalSecurity.org, last modified 27/4/05 – <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/pakistan/aphc.htm> – Attachment 2). From time to time both Malik and Khan have been subjected to detention and other restrictions by both Indian and Pakistani authorities. ('Kashmir separatist remanded', 2002, *BBC* online, 26 March – Accessed 19 September 2005 – http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1894090.stm – Attachment 3; Gilani, I., 2003, 'Yasin Malik released from Indian prison', *Daily Times*, 19 July – Accessed 15 September 2005 –

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_19-7-2003_pg7_8 – Attachment 4; ‘JKLF leader discovers his name is on ECL’, 2003, *Daily Times*, 19 July – Accessed 15 September 2005 – http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_19-7-2003_pg7_39 – Attachment 5).

According to the *South Asia Terrorist Portal* (SATP) there are two distinct outfits which identify themselves by the name ‘Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front’:

There are two distinct outfits, each of which identifies itself by the name Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). Amanullah Khan heads the first while Yasin Malik, who parted ways with Amanullah Khan and formed another JKLF, heads the other. In May 1994, Yasin Malik who was released from jail (after his arrest in August 1990) declared that his faction would renounce violence as a tool to achieve the goal of ‘independence’. In March 1996, the last surviving members of the Amanullah faction who were based in J&K under the leadership of Shabbir Siddiqui were killed in two encounters.

Both the Fronts trace their origin to the Jammu and Kashmir National Liberation Front (JKNLF). The JKNLF was an offshoot of the Plebiscite Front, a forum allegedly launched at the behest of the late Sheikh Abdullah, who was Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir and President of the National Conference, at a time when he was at loggerheads with India’s Union Government. After the Sheikh-Indira Accord was signed, militant, pro-independence elements within the Plebiscite Front walked out to continue with the movement to secede from India.

The JKLF was set up in the United Kingdom, in May 1977, by one of the co-founders of the JKNLF, Amanullah Khan, after most of his JKNLF colleagues were either killed or captured by Indian security forces. The outfit is reportedly supported by expatriates of the Mirpur community that belongs to Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK). Another JKLF, a splinter group headed by Yasin Malik, was founded in September 1995, after Malik split from Khan over differences on the strategy to be pursued to achieve perceived goals.

While both the JKLFs share a common goal, self-determination for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, the Yasin Malik faction has renounced the use of violence to attain this goal. It lays emphasis on adopting non-violent means and mobilising public opinion in India and Pakistan in favour of its objectives. It is a constituent of the All Party Huriyat Conference.

Amanullah Khan’s JKLF promotes itself as an outfit conducting the struggle on three fronts — political, which implies mobilisation of public opinion; diplomatic, which implies lobbying with third countries; and armed struggle against Indian security forces in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K).

In the Seventies and early Eighties, the JKLF operated mostly from London and PoK, with Amanullah Khan and Hashim Qureshi directing from London unit and Farooq Haider and Mohammed Muzzafar holding fort in PoK. Their activities were, in large measure, confined to propagating the cause of a plebiscite in J&K and mobilising international support for this objective.

Even before the inception of JKLF, its leaders under various other banners had indulged in terrorist activities. One such instance was the hijacking of an Indian Airlines aircraft in 1971; Altaf and Hashim Qureshi, two prominent leaders, hijacked the plane. Maqbul Butt, one of the co-founders of the outfit and who had escaped from an Indian jail in December 1968, was reportedly involved in planning the

hijacking.

Later, in 1976, Butt returned to India, only to be arrested the same year. In 1980, he was sentenced to death for killing a police officer in 1968. The sentence was, however, kept in abeyance. On February 3, 1984, as the JKLF puts it, “some JKLF enthusiastic activists who without approval, and even knowledge of their leadership, kidnapped Indian Deputy High Commission in Birmingham”, Ravindra Mahtre, and demanded Butt’s release. The demand was turned down and Mahtre was killed on February 6. The death sentence against Butt was revived and implemented on February 11. The abductors of Mahtre, who were JKLF members had floated the Kashmir Liberation Army to carry out the act.

A British court acquitted Amanullah Khan in the Mahtre killing case, but the government served a deportation notice on him. Khan reached Pakistan and assumed leadership of the JKLF. Reportedly, he had established contacts with Pakistan’s Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) for building a network of training camps in Pakistan, encouraging youth from J&K to cross the Line of Control (LoC) and receive training.

After elections were held to the State Legislature in 1987, which were allegedly rigged, several youth crossed the LoC and received arms training. Simultaneously, the JKLF established its network in Srinagar and, in 1988, initiated the present phase of armed insurgency in the State with two bomb blasts in the capital city of Srinagar.

All through its history the JKLF has demanded conducting a plebiscite in J&K, but has made no effort to conceal its preference for an independent, sovereign State. This latter position is in direct conflict with Pakistan’s contention, that Kashmir in its entirety belongs to it, made apparent by a consistent refusal for a third option in the plebiscite that has been demanded (the other options are: accession to either India or Pakistan). Another cause of friction between the JKLF and its mentors is the status of Gilgit-Baltistan. While JKLF maintains that this region is a part of J&K, Pakistan’s hold that this region is separate from the State and its accession to Pakistan is final and irrevocable.

These differences never faded but came to the fore at various points of time. As a result, Pakistan was, on occasion, hostile towards the JKLF. For instance, when Maqbool Butt escaped from an Indian jail in 1968 and crossed over to Pakistan, he was jailed for a few months.

Analysts hold that, despite these, the ISI had to depend upon the JKLF in the initial stages of the insurgency as it lacked its own network in J&K. Once the JKLF began bringing in people for training, the ISI gradually weaned away a considerable section of them from the JKLF. Using money and weapon supplies as baits, the ISI bought the loyalty of several militants. By 1991, with ISI’s help the pro-Pakistan Hizb-ul-Mujahideen gained greater terror potential as compared to the JKLF. Moreover, the formation of Harkat-ul-Ansar, Lashkar-e-Toiba and numerous other smaller outfits contributed to the marginalisation of JKLF. Besides this, JKLF has been directly targeted by the ISI and the outfits that were controlled by it with armed attacks. For instance, the ISI attempted to forcibly shut down a JKLF training camp in Kotli district, PoK, on February 11 and 12, 1998. In another incident, Hizb militants killed two JKLF cadres on July 13, 1997, in Muzaffarabad, the capital of PoK.

Internal factors, too, contributed to the decline of the JKLF as a militant outfit. As mentioned earlier, Yasin Malik, who was then heading the outfit in J&K, walked out in 1995. His successor, Shabbir Siddiqui and 37 remaining members of the Amanullah Khan faction were killed in two incidents in Hazratbal, in March 1996; 11

had been killed on March 24 and the other 26, including Shabbir Siddiqui, on March 29. After this, the JKLF failed to resurrect itself as a terrorist outfit. Its presence is restricted to the participation of Yasin Malik's faction in the Huriyat.

The PoK unit of the JKLF under Amanullah Khan's leadership has conducted three marches with a view to crossing across the LoC into India. Fearing international repercussions, Pakistan used force to halt these marches and, in the process, killed several JKLF members and supporters. The first two attempts to cross the LoC were made in 1992, the first on February 12, and the second on October 24. Seven persons were killed in the first instance and one in the second attempt to cross the LoC, when Pakistani security forces opened fire on the marchers. The third attempt was made on October 5, 199(sic). This time round, there were no casualties when the group was stopped. ('Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front', *South Asia Terrorist Portal* (SATP) website, Undated –

http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/jammu_&kashmir_liberation_front.htm – Attachment 6)

A GlobalSecurity.org document repeats basically the same information. ('Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF)', GlobalSecurity.org, last modified 17/4/05 – <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/jklf.htm> – Attachment 7)

Again the latest UK Home Office states that:

JAMMU AND KASHMIR LIBERATION FRONT (JKLF)

There were two organisations with this name, both traceable to the Jammu and Kashmir National Liberation Front (JKNLF). One was set up in the UK in May 1977 by Amanullah Khan, a co-founder of the JKNLF, the other in September 1995 after its leader, Yasin Malik, split from Khan over differences in strategy. The latter favoured non-violent means, and became a constituent of the All Party Huriyat [Hurriyat] Conference. [36e] Khan's JKLF was one of the most active militant groups, but in 2000 it was thought to have a dwindling membership and less military power. [35l] (p2) (UK Home Office (Country Information & Policy Unit), 2005, *Pakistan Country Report*, April – Attachment 8)

Recent reports indicate that since June 2005 both factions have re-united. However, media reports from Pakistan indicate that there is far from agreement on the tactics adopted in relation to Kashmir with Amanullah Khan still eschewing from the moderate views prevalent in the APHC as supported by Yasin Malik. ('Kashmiri separatist group unites', 2005, 9 June – Accessed 19 September 2005 – http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4077122.stm – Attachment 9; Shaheen, H, 2005, 'India wants Kashmiris to surrender: Amanullah', 9 September – Accessed 20 September 2005 – <http://pakobserver.net/200509/09/news/islamabad02.asp> – Attachment 10)

As the Khan faction which is based in Rawalpindi continues to advocate an independent Kashmir they are unable to contest provincial elections in Pakistan. (US Department of State, 2005, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2004 – Pakistan*, 28 February – Attachment 11) This does not prevent Khan's faction (or Malik's) from participating in public life such as organising demonstrations or meetings and Khan and Malik are regularly interviewed in the Indian and Pakistan press. (See for example Attachment 10. See also 'Activists call strike in Kashmir', 2004, *BBC* online, 11 February – Accessed 19 September 2005 – http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3479555.stm – Attachment 12)

2. Do the JKLF have a student wing and if so can you provide information on this?

The JKLF do have an active student wing the Jammu and Kashmir Students Liberation Front (JKSLF). As with its parent organisation it too has divided between the Khan faction and the Malik faction. As with the parent organisation the JKLF the student wing has moderated from actively militant and violent organisation in the early 1990s to a more mainstream organisation organising demonstrations and other propaganda advocating an independent Kashmir. The JKSLF is active around Rawalpindi with a number of media articles reporting activities from demonstrations to seminars and public meetings. ('Our Student Wing – JKSLF', JKLF homepage, undated – <http://shell.comsats.net.pk/~jklf/iii4.htm> – Attachment 13; 'Students' hold protest demo against HR violations', 2005, *PakTribune*, 19 May – Accessed 16 September 2005 – <http://paktribune.com/news/index.php?id=65423> – Attachment 14)

No reports were found indicating how the respective student wings of the two JKLF factions have reacted to the reported *rapprochement* between Khan and Malik.

Internet Sources:

Google search engine. Sources specifically referred to include:

The South Asia Terrorist Portal (SATP) – www.satp.org

GlobalSecurity.org – www.globalsecurity.org

BBC online – www.news.bbc.co.uk

Daily Times – www.dailytimes.com.pk

Pakobserver – www.pakobserver.net

Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) homepage – www.shell.comsats.net.pk

PakTribune – www.paktribune.com

UNHCR	<i>REFWORLD</i>	UNHCR Refugee Information Online
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Databases:

Public	<i>FACTIVA</i>	Reuters Business Briefing
DIMIA	<i>BACIS</i>	Country Information
	<i>REFINFO</i>	IRBDC Research Responses (Canada)
RRT	<i>ISYS</i>	RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State <i>Country Reports on Human Rights Practices</i> .
RRT Library	<i>FIRST</i>	RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. 'All Parties Hurriyat Conference', *South Asia Terrorist Portal* (SATP) website, Undated – http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/Hurriyat.htm
2. 'All-Parties Hurriyat Conference', GlobalSecurity.org, last modified 27/4/05 – <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/pakistan/aphc.htm>

3. 'Kashmir separatist remanded', 2002, *BBC* online, 26 March – Accessed 19 September 2005 – http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1894090.stm
4. Gilani, I., 2003, 'Yasin Malik released from Indian prison', *Daily Times*, 19 July – Accessed 15 September 2005 – http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_19-7-2003_pg7_8
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11. US Department of State, 2005, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2004 – Pakistan*, 28 February
12. 'Activists call strike in Kashmir', 2004, *BBC* online, 11 February – Accessed 19 September 2005 – http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3479555.stm
13. 'Our Student Wing – JKSLF', JKLF homepage, undated – <http://shell.comsats.net.pk/~jklf/iii4.htm>
14. 'Students' hold protest demo against HR violations', 2005, *PakTribune*, 19 May – Accessed 16 September 2005 – <http://paktribune.com/news/index.php?id=65423>