



Pakistan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Wednesday 6 March 2019

Information on Lashkar - e Jhangvi/LeJ including: presence/activities in Lahore/nationwide; treatment of Shia Muslims; & speaking out against minorities/Western powers/and accused of hate speech

A document issued by the *South Asia Terrorism Portal* states that:

“The LeJ aims to transform Pakistan into a Sunni state, primarily through violent means. The Lashkar-e-Jhangvi is part of the broader Deoband movement” (South Asia Terrorism Portal (undated) *Lashkar-e- Jhangvi (LeJ)*, p.1).

This document also points out that:

“The entire leadership of the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi consists of Jihadis who fought against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. A majority of its cadres are drawn from the numerous Sunni madrassas (seminaries) in Pakistan” (ibid, p.2).

This report also states:

“Media reports indicate that the LeJ is an amalgam of loosely co-ordinated sub-units in various parts of Pakistan, particularly in the districts of Punjab with autonomous chiefs for each sub-unit” (ibid, p.2).

This report also states that:

“The LeJ's chief area of operation is within Pakistan, where it has admitted responsibility for numerous massacres of Shias and targeted killings of Shia religious and community leaders” (ibid, p.5).

In June 2018 *Minority Rights Group International* states that:

“...publicly [the LeJ has] called for the killing of Shi'a in Pakistan and conducted a number of violent attacks against them.” (Minority Rights Group International (June 2018) *Pakistan, Shi'a and Hazaras*, p.2).

In September 2018 the *United States Department of State* notes in a report that:

“LJ specializes in armed attacks and bombings and has admitted to numerous killings of Shia religious and community leaders in Pakistan” (United States Department of State (19 September 2018) *Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 - Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Lashkar I Jhangvi*).

This report also notes that:

“This group is primarily based in Pakistan's Punjab province, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Karachi, and Balochistan” (ibid).

In October 2018 the *European Asylum Support Office* notes in a report that:

“LeJ is a Deobandi militant group founded in 1996, when a number of militants led by Riaz Basra, Akram Lahori and Malik Ishaq broke away from Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan. LeJ is not a political party but a purely paramilitary organisation. Some claim that its creation was prompted by the 1994 establishment of Sipah-e-Mohammed Pakistan (SMP), a Shia militant group that targeted leaders of SSP. USDOS writes that LeJ was formed as the militant wing of SSP to attack the Shia community and that it became independent when it gained more proficiency...LeJ became a strong militant organisation, responsible for 350 armed attacks prior to 2001. USDOS stated that LeJ has ‘cordial relations’ with JeM and the TTP...LeJ was openly supported by the ISI, who used the group as a proxy in Afghanistan and India as well as to counter Shia militant groups...LeJ was banned by the Pakistan Government in 2001 and was placed on the US terrorist list in 2003...Its underground violent activities continued, especially against Shias and members of the Hazara community in Quetta...Although most of the violence of LeJ targets Shias, the organisation also cultivates a radical stance against Christians, Ahmadi and Sufi Muslims...A substantial number of the leadership of LeJ have either been killed in 2015, including Malik Ishaq...or captured in 2016, including Naeem Bukhari (216). On 19 January 2017, LeJ’s Commander Asif Chuto was killed in an encounter with law enforcement agencies...In May 2018, security forces killed the Head of LeJ’s Balochistan Chapter Salman Badeni...According to PIPS, LeJ was responsible for 10 ‘terrorist attacks’ in 2017 in Pakistan, compared to 17 of these attacks in 2016...Its main areas of operation are the province of Punjab, the FATA, Karachi and the province of Balochistan...”(European Asylum Support Office (October 2018) *Pakistan Security Situation*, p.29).

In November 2018 the *South Asia Terrorism Portal* notes in a report that:

“In Pakistan’s sectarianism-riddled society, Shias are the primary targets, with the second largest population (estimated at 20 to 30 per cent of the total) in the Sunni dominated nation. The primary players in this sectarian violence have been TTP and LeJ, which aim to transform Pakistan into a Sunni state, primarily through violence” (South Asia Terrorism Portal (26 November 2018) *Pakistan: Sectarian Savagery*, p.2).

A report issued in February 2019 by the *Centre for Research & Security Studies* commenting on conflict in recent years lists in a table claimants of sectarian violence by group which includes the LeJ (Centre for Research & Security Studies (28 February 2019) *CRSS Annual Security Report, A comprehensive look at Pakistan’s security situation from 2013 to 2018*, p.61).

A report published by the *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia* in February 2019 notes that:

“Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), a Sunni paramilitary terrorist group, conducted seven terrorist attacks in 2018...LeJ primarily targets Shi’a, especially the Hazara community in Quetta, and also acts against Christians, Ahmadis and Sufi Muslims. In total, the two groups were responsible for killing 132 people” (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia (20 February 2019) *DFAT Country Information Report Pakistan*, p.21).

This document also states that:

“Sectarian violence in Pakistan has historically targeted individuals, places of worship, shrines and religious schools, however Shi’a traditionally represented a higher proportion of the casualties...Shi’a continue to face a threat from anti-Shi’a militant groups, including LeJ, Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), also known as Ahl-e-Sunnat-Wal-Jamaat (ASWJ), LeJ al-Alami, and other factions of the TTP. The LeJ’s objective is to establish an Islamist Sunni state in Pakistan and seeks to have Shi’a declared ‘non-believers’ or apostates, and to eliminate other religious groups such as Jews, Christians and Hindus. The LeJ...has claimed several attacks on Shi’a in recent years, particularly Hazaras in Quetta...and other Shi’a groups in the former FATA and Karachi” (ibid, p.36).

References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre 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. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted

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