

Ban Lashkar front Jamaat-ud-Dawa, India tells UN

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India late on Tuesday raised the Mumbai terror attack at the United Nations and demanded that the world body ban Pakistan-based Jamaat-ud-Dawa, the front organisation of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) blamed for the carnage, and other such organisations and impose effective sanctions against them.

Emphasising that the November 26 attacks in Mumbai that left 179 persons dead marked a "qualitatively new and dangerous escalation of terrorism," the Minister of State for External Affairs E Ahamed in a veiled reference to Pakistan said raising dust to confuse the trail so that the "merchants of terror can hide" is not acceptable.

Stressing that India has been target of terrorist attacks sponsored from across the border for the last two decades, Ahamed asserted that when terrorist groups are used to serve the political interest of States, a deadly combination emerges and a terror machine is created.

"India has had experience of such machines which need to be eliminated," Ahamed said, adding that the nexus between State--or elements within the State--and terror outfits must be broken and groups or individuals that indoctrinate, organise, plan and finance terror have to be uprooted along with other measures.

Ahamed while intervening in the debate on terrorism in the Security Council said the UN and international community must send a message to perpetrators of terrorist acts who must be brought to the book.

"Their (JuD) country of origin need to take urgent steps to stop their functioning," Ahamed said in an apparent reference to Pakistan. India, Ahamed told the Council, would act to "safeguard and protect" its people from such heinous attacks, howsoever long or difficult task that may be.

New Delhi, he said, has acted with restraint in the face of international terrorist attacks. But "we must do our duty by our people and take all actions as we deem fit to defend and protect them," he said, adding that the Charter of the United Nations and provisions of international law, including the right of self-defense, gives it the framework to fulfill these responsibilities.

"Our people ask the international community to determinedly pursue and eliminate terrorist organisations. The world needs to act decisively and in a coordinated manner to prevent further attacks," he added.

Giving details of the Mumbai attacks, Ahamed said it was conducted like a commando operation indicating that the perpetrators had received professional training both generally as well as specifically regarding this attack itself.

"They were indoctrinated with ruthlessness and barbarity - innocent passengers including women and children were indiscriminately sprayed with bullets at the railway station and public places; hostages were taken in the hotels who were subsequently massacred," he said, adding that "It is significant that this was the first terrorist attack in India where foreigners were specifically segregated and targeted. Terrorism, he said, does not happen by chance or at random.

"Terrorism is planned; terrorism is financed; it requires meticulous organization; it needs arms; and requires safe havens," he told the Council.

Stating that when a terror attack occurs, the world is shocked, he said, "What is not easily visible is the back-stream of terrorist acts." Mumbai's case, he said, is clear.

"The back-trail is marked and definite, but in cases where terrorists' acts are aided and abetted to cover their tracks, all of us separately and together must ensure that they are discovered and the terrorists are brought to justice." Nothing, no religious grievance, dispute, or ideology, can be used as a *raison d'etre*, by anyone, to justify terrorism.

"This is totally unacceptable." Practical measures at the global and national level, he said, need to be immediately put in place to see that the menace of terror is uprooted and the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism that India tabled in 1996 needs to be adopted immediately to provide a framework of international law.

The convention is held up because of failure of the member States to agree on the definition of terrorism but Ahamed said it cannot be held hostage to definitions while terrorists continue to take innocent lives.