

'The World Needs To Act Decisively'

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(Statement by the minister of state for external affairs at the UN Security Council on Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts)

At the outset, let me express my deep gratitude for the strong condemnation and condolences expressed by the Members of this august body over the heinous attacks in Mumbai.

The terror attack in Mumbai from November 26 to 29 marked a qualitatively new and dangerous escalation of the terrorism that India has faced for over two decades. Through this period, as in the Mumbai attack, major terrorist acts in India have been sponsored and organized by groups and forces from across our borders. The Mumbai attack also made it clear that terrorism is a direct threat to international peace and security.



Let me briefly recall what our investigations have revealed so far about the attack.

A group of ten terrorists from the global terrorist organization Lashkar-e-Toiba reached Mumbai in the evening of 26th November 2008. The group divided themselves into four smaller groups and proceeded to pre-selected targets which included a café, popular with Indian and foreign tourists and two major hotels. Each terrorist was armed and equipped with AK rifles, pistols, grenades, explosives and communications. The terrorist attack 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. It is significant that this was the first terrorist attack in India where foreigners were specifically segregated and targeted.

Nine terrorists were killed in the action taken by our security forces while one of them was apprehended. His interrogation has revealed that they were trained in Pakistan and were launched from a ship from Karachi. They traveled into Indian waters, took control of an Indian boat, killing the crew. Thereafter, they came to Mumbai to cause mayhem and murder.

179 persons, including 26 foreigners lost their lives while 296 persons including 22 foreigners suffered injuries in the attack, which was designed to kill and maim as many people as possible.

Other Indian cities, including Jaipur, Delhi and Ahmedabad, have also been the victims of terrorist attacks.

We have requested the Security Council to proscribe Pakistani group Jammāt-ud-Dawa since it is a terrorist outfit and should be proscribed under Security Council Resolution 1267. All those who were in any way responsible for the Mumbai terrorist attacks, wherever they may be, should be brought to justice.

The fight against terrorism demands effective international cooperation so that those who are responsible, wherever they may be, are brought to book. The organizers, financiers and logistical providers of these terrorist attacks have to be punished. Those who give ideological and moral support to this evil phenomenon must also be brought to justice.

Terrorism 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. When it occurs, the world is shocked. What is not easily visible is the back-stream of terrorist acts. Mumbai's case 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. Raising dust to confuse the trail so that the merchants of terror can hide is not acceptable; not to us, not to any civilized society.

Terrorists are the enemy of the people. When actions of terrorist groups are used to serve the political interests of States, a deadly combination emerges. A terror machine is created. India has had experience of such machines which need to be eliminated. The nexus between State--or elements within the State--and terror outfits must be broken and groups or individuals that indoctrinate, organize, plan and finance terror have to be uprooted along with other measures.

Therefore, in the context of this discussion, we call for the following actions by the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the international community:

- The Jamaat-ud-Dawa and other such organizations need to be proscribed internationally and effective sanctions imposed against them. Their country of origin needs to take urgent steps to stop their functioning. A message must also go out that perpetrators of terrorist acts must be brought to book and not given sanctuaries in some states.
- Practical measures at the global and national level need to be immediately put in place to see that the menace of terror is uprooted.
- The Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism that India tabled in 1996 needs to be adopted immediately to provide a framework of international law against terrorism. This cannot be held hostage to definitions while terrorists continue to take innocent lives.

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

India will act to safeguard and protect its people from such heinous attacks; however long and difficult that task may be. We have acted with restraint in the face of terrorist attacks. We must do our duty by our people and take all actions as we deem fit to defend and protect them. The Charter of the United Nations and provisions of international law, including the right of self-defense, gives us the framework to fulfill these responsibilities.

This is the message to the Security Council that I bring from my Government and my people.