

Brief

Seven Years after Pulwama Terrorist Attack

Global Responses

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Brief

Seven Years after Pulwama
Terrorist Attack: Global Responses

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Table of Content

I. Executive Summary	1
II. Synopsis	3
III. Jaish-e-Mohammed Factsheet	4
IV. Global Responses to Jaish-e-Mohammed post Pulwama	10
V. India's Domestic Measures	14
References	17

A Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) suicide bomber killed 40 Indian CRPF personnel in Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir, India. JeM immediately claimed responsibility, escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, as the Pakistan Army and its intelligence agency, the ISI, remain its primary ideological and financial patrons.

JeM is a Pakistan-based Deobandi jihadist terrorist group founded in 2000 by Masood Azhar, following his release from an Indian prison in 1999. It claims to 'liberate' Jammu and Kashmir by purging the region of Hindus, other religious communities, and the Indian presence. JeM's leadership and ideology are rooted in radical Islamist objectives, supported by trained cadres, suicide bombers, and foreign (Pakistani and Afghan) fighters.



I. Executive Summary

JeM has repeatedly carried out terrorist attacks notably the Oct 2001 Srinagar assembly bombing (31 killed); the Dec 2001 Indian Parliament attack (9 killed); the Jan 2016 Pathankot airbase attack (7 killed); the Sep 2016 Uri brigade headquarters attack (17 killed); and the Feb 2019 Pulwama suicide bombing (40 killed). These high-profile terror incidents have repeatedly escalated India-Pakistan crises.

The attack in Pulwama drew “strong condemnation” globally. The UN, US, EU and UK explicitly denounced the Pulwama suicide bombing and called for action. FATF and the international community emphasised on Pakistan's terror-financing failures.

India struck back with a non-military air strike on JeM camps in Balakot, Pakistan (26 Feb 2019). Domestically, the NIA filed charge-sheets against JeM operatives (including Azhar) for Pulwama. India reiterated JeM's UAPA proscription and in Jan 2023 banned its Pakistani proxy PAFF. Legal mechanisms and investigations were fast-tracked against JeM networks.

In May 2019, the UN's 1267 Committee designated Masood Azhar as a global terrorist (overcoming China's earlier objections). India leveraged UNSC Resolutions and CT conventions to push for accountability. International treaties (UN anti-terrorism conventions, FATF recommendations) were invoked to pressure Pakistan on JeM's leaders and financing.

The FATF kept Pakistan on an “increased monitoring” list (grey-list) from 2018-2022 due to terror-financing concerns. Pakistan's belated bans (e.g. Azhar under its ATA) were widely viewed as nominal, with JeM's infrastructure largely intact. Global sanctions (US/EU/UN lists) targeted JeM charities and individuals, but enforcement gaps persist.

Pulwama sharpened focus on cross-border terrorism. India highlighted the incident to rally diplomatic backing and to highlight the need for cooperation on CT. It strained India-Pakistan ties and highlighted fragility in South Asia's security environment especially putting the focus back on Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK). Key allies reaffirmed commitments to counter terror cooperation.

Despite measures, JeM and allied terrorist outfits continue sporadic strikes (e.g. Nagrota, 2021) and promote instability. Pakistan's reluctance to fully dismantle JeM leaves a safe haven. We note gaps: incomplete prosecution of JeM financiers and proxies, and the challenge of deradicalisation. We recommend stepped-up intelligence-sharing, unified sanctions enforcement, and sustained diplomatic pressure to deny terrorists safe havens.

Pulwama highlighted the intersection of terrorism and geopolitics: military responses deter groups tactically, but long-term stability requires dismantling networks and addressing localised Islamist radicalisation. The need for international coordination, from UN resolutions to FATF enforcement remains acute. We emphasise that confronting terrorism must be global and sustained, as terrorism has no place in a rules-based world.

II. Synopsis

The 14 Feb 2019 Pulwama suicide terrorist attack (40 Indian Central Reserve Police Force martyred) was claimed by Pakistan-based and backed terrorist outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and shattered whatever remaining India-Pakistan relations. India received broad international sympathy and condemnation for the attack, and pressed Pakistan to act against JeM. Key outcomes included: a retaliatory Indian air strike at JeM camps in Pakistan (Balakot, 26 Feb 2019); renewed global efforts to sanction JeM and its leaders; and new Indian counter-terror measures and legal designations. This report analyses JeM's origins, leadership, ideology, capabilities, attacks, funding, geography, designations and reviews international and Indian responses to JeM and the Pulwama attack. It draws on official sources and reputable analysis. It summarises JeM data and compares responses.

III. Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) Factsheet

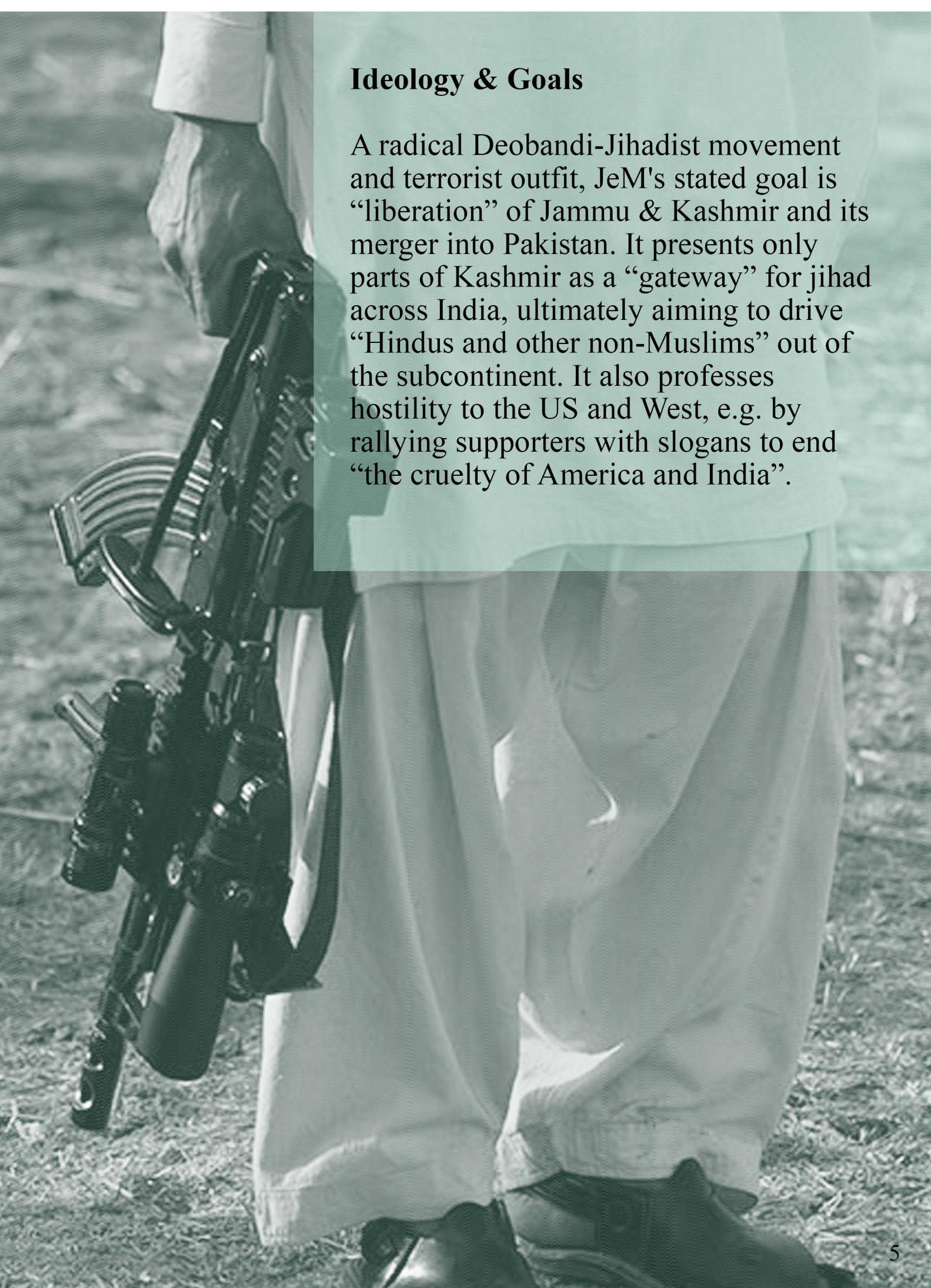
Origin & Leadership

Founded in late 2000 by Maulana Masood Azhar after his release from an Indian jail. Azhar (now Pakistan-based) remains emir; his brother Abdul Rauf Asghar (ex-IC814 hijacker) is a senior commander and intelligence chief. JeM grew from remnants of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and allied with Al-Qaeda and other terrorist networks. (Azhar was specially designated a “global Islamic terrorist” by the US Treasury in 2010.) The organisation functions with ideological and financial support from Pakistan Army and its foreign intelligence wing, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).



Ideology & Goals

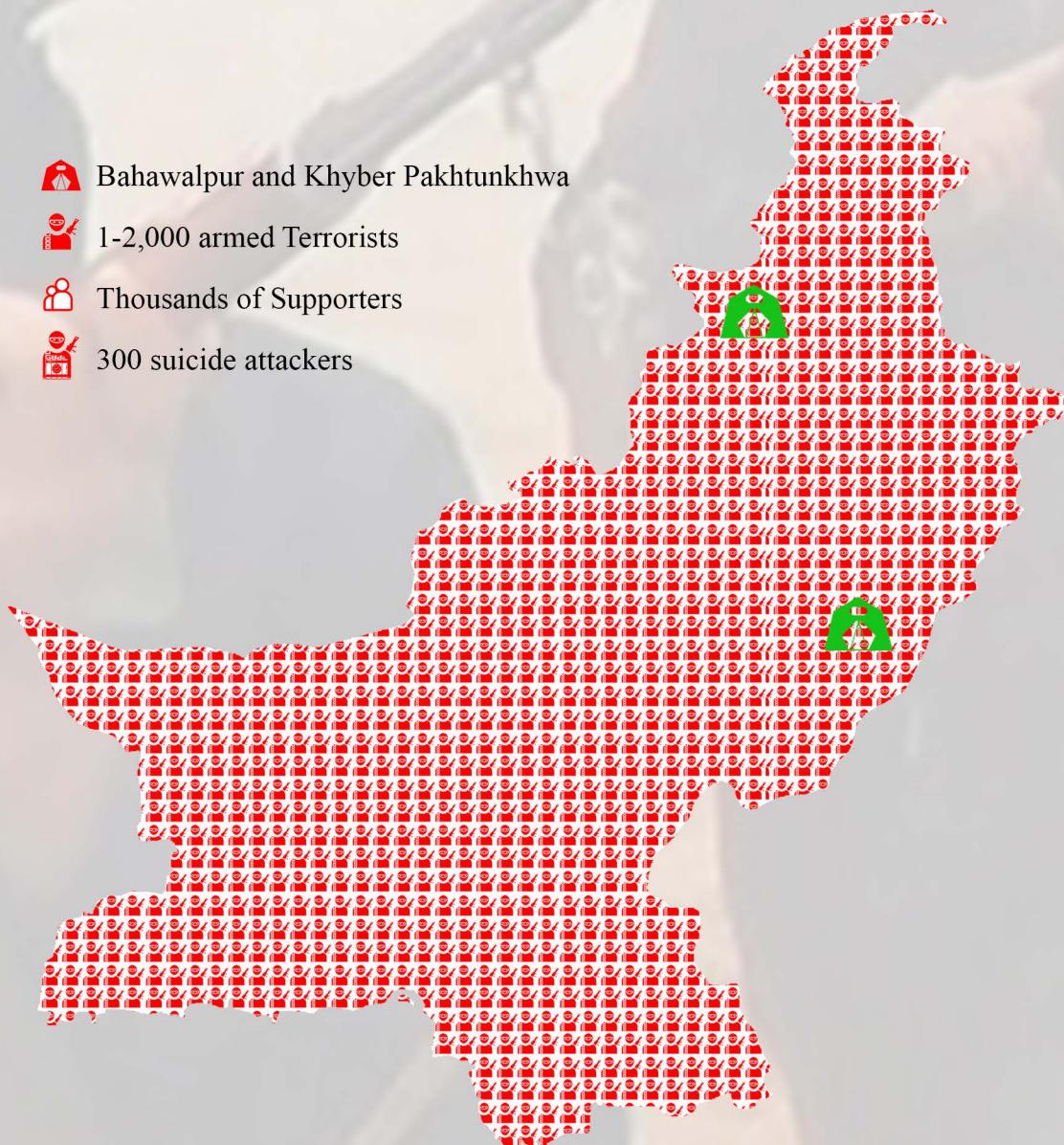
A radical Deobandi-Jihadist movement and terrorist outfit, JeM's stated goal is "liberation" of Jammu & Kashmir and its merger into Pakistan. It presents only parts of Kashmir as a "gateway" for jihad across India, ultimately aiming to drive "Hindus and other non-Muslims" out of the subcontinent. It also professes hostility to the US and West, e.g. by rallying supporters with slogans to end "the cruelty of America and India".



Capabilities

JeM operates training camps (now based in Bahawalpur and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan) with perhaps 1-2,000 armed terrorist cadres and thousands of radicalised Islamist supporters. It has trained suicide bombers, conducted bombings and assaults, and fielded foot-soldiers in Kashmir and Afghanistan. Azhar has claimed JeM controls “300 suicide attackers”. Funding reportedly comes from charities and supporters: for example, the UN listed JeM's Al-Akhtar Trust (Pakistan) as a front for funding Al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters. JeM's recruits are largely Pakistani (especially Punjab) and local Kashmiri, with some Afghan and Arab terrorists.

- 📍 Bahawalpur and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- 🔫 1-2,000 armed Terrorists
- 👤 Thousands of Supporters
- 💣 300 suicide attackers



Major Attacks until Pulwama Terrorist Attacks

JeM has been linked to several major terrorist attacks. For example, on 1 October 2001 it claimed responsibility for a suicide car-bomb outside the Jammu & Kashmir legislative assembly in Srinagar (killing about 31 people). On 13 December 2001 JeM (with Lashkar-i-Taiba) was implicated in the storming of the Indian Parliament in New Delhi (9 killed). In February 2002 US journalist Daniel Pearl was abducted and murdered in Karachi by Islamist terrorists. In February 2007 the Samjhauta Express (Delhi-Lahore train) was bombed (68 killed). More recently, JeM terrorists attacked the Indian Air Force base at Pathankot on 2 January 2016 (7 security personnel killed) and the army brigade headquarters at Uri on 18 September 2016 (17 soldiers killed). Finally, on 14 February 2019 a JeM suicide bomber struck a CRPF convoy in Pulwama, Kashmir, killing 40 (India's deadliest terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir).



Funding & Network

JeM and its affiliates have raised funds via underground networks, charities, extortion and Pakistani state patronage, specifically ideological and financial support from Pakistan Army and ISI. It is recorded to use front charities (e.g. Al-Akhtar Trust until 2003) and hawala. Pakistani intelligence support is widely known, even as Pakistan officially bans some JeM-linked groups. JeM branches (real or nominal) have surfaced in parts of Pakistan, and activists operate openly in Pakistan and terror modules operate in Jammu & Kashmir, Afghanistan and beyond.



Designation Status

JeM is designated as terrorist by most major countries and bodies. The U.S. designated JeM as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2001 (Shortly after the Indian Parliament attack). The UN Security Council's 1267 Committee listed Masood Azhar (JeM chief) as a global terrorist on 1 May 2019. The UK proscribed JeM (and its splinter Khuddam ul-Islam) under the Terrorism Act in March 2001. The EU includes JeM under its counter-terror sanctions (as an Al-Qaeda affiliate after Azhar's listing). FATF has repeatedly cited Pakistan's failure to curb JeM when grey-listing Pakistan (e.g. June 2018). India has banned JeM under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) since 2001; in 2023 India also added JeM's alleged Pakistani proxy "People's Anti-Fascist Front" (PAFF) to its terror list.

Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) Profile

Origin

Formed late 2000 after Indian release of Maulana Masood Azhar (spokesperson of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen). Established in Pakistan with ISI support.

Capabilities

Maintains combat camps (Bahawalpur, KP, etc.) with perhaps 1-2k fighters and thousands of supporters. Trains suicide attackers, IED bombers, infantry units.

Funding Sources

2001 (Oct): Srinagar J&K Assembly bombing; Dec 2001: Parliament attack; Feb 2002: journalist Daniel Pearl kidnapped/murdered; Jan 2016: Pathankot AFB attack; Sep 2016: Uri camp attack; Feb 2019: Pulwama suicide bombing. (Plus other attacks/plots, e.g. 2007 Samjhauta train bombing.)

Funding Sources

Funded via charities and hawala networks. Ran Al-Akhtar Trust (Karachi) to funnel funds to Al-Qaeda and JeM causes before 2003. Receives donations from supporters in Gulf and Pakistan with ISI and Pakistan Army backing.

Geographic Presence

Based in Pakistani Punjab and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (Pakistan Occupied terror ties of Jammu and Kashmir); training camps in Balakot, Bahawalpur, Muzaffarabad. Operatives active in Jammu and Kashmir and Afghanistan. Some recruitment/links with other jihadi groups in region.



Leadership

Emir Masood Azhar (founded JeM 2000); Senior commanders include his brother Abdul Rauf Asghar (ex-IC814 hijacker, Azhar's deputy).

Ideology

Hardline Deobandi jihadism; aims to unite Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan and drive Hindus/others out of India. Anti-Western ("expel US and Western forces").

Major Attacks

2001 (Oct): Srinagar J&K Assembly bombing; Dec 2001: Parliament attack; Feb 2002: journalist Daniel Pearl kidnapped/murdered; Jan 2016: Pathankot AFB attack; Sep 2016: Uri camp attack; Feb 2019: Pulwama suicide bombing. (Plus other attacks/plots, e.g. 2007 Samjhauta train bombing.)

Designation Status

India: Banned under UAPA (since 2001). UN: Leader Masood Azhar listed (2019) under ISIL/AQ sanctions (group itself covered by Azhar's listing). US: FTO and SDN (2001). UK: Proscribed organization (2001). EU: Sanctioned via UNSC listings. FATF: Pakistan's grey-listing cites JeM activities.

IV. Global Responses to Jaish-e-Mohammed post Pulwama

After Pulwama, most major states and bodies issued strong condemnations of terrorism, repeatedly calling for action against JeM and its sponsors. Many explicitly named JeM or Azhar, and promised cooperation with India. Key responses:

United Nations: The UN Secretary-General António Guterres strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Pulwama and urged bringing perpetrators to justice. On 28 Feb 2019 the UN Security Council issued a unanimous Press Statement specifically noting JeM's claim of responsibility and calling on all states to hold “perpetrators, organisers, financiers and sponsors of terrorism” accountable. (UN 1267 Sanctions Committee moved to designate Azhar as Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT). China blocked the designation but ultimately dropped its hold and Azhar was listed as a SDGT on 1 May 2019.



UN Security Council (20 Feb 2019) *Diplomatic condemnation, call for justice*

Specific Actions / Measures

Issued unanimous Press Statement condemning Pulwama, noted JeM's claim, urged accountability.

Public Statements / Notes

UNSG Guterres “strongly condemn[ed]” attack; called for restraint by India/Pakistan.

Follow-up

No military action; reiterated demands under Res.1373; member reports.



United States (Feb-Mar 2019) *Condemnation; diplomatic support*

Specific Actions / Measures

Bolton-Doval call: US “fully support[s]” India's right to self-defence. Pushed Pakistan to “crack down” on JeM. USAID/FBI cooperated with India on investigation.

Public Statements / Notes

Bolton called Pulwama “reprehensible terrorist attack”; State Dept press release supported resolution of 2019 strikes.

Follow-up

Sanctions: U.S. Treasury SDN for JeM associates (pre-2019); exploring new sanctions/tour bans.

European Union: The EU expressed “deep sadness and condolences” and reaffirmed “full solidarity” with India. An EU spokesperson said “terrorism can never be justified” and warned of strengthening cooperation against cross-border terrorism. French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian “utterly condemn[ed]” the Pulwama attack, offered condolences, and urged all states to block terrorist networks and funding (explicitly naming JeM).



**European Union (Feb 2019)
Condemnation; solidarity**

Specific Actions / Measures

EU Spokesperson condemned “terrorist attack” and reaffirmed solidarity with India. Called for stronger anti-terror cooperation

Public Statements / Notes

“Terrorism can never be justified... The EU stands by India”.

Follow-up

Continuation of counter-terror dialogue with India; monitoring funds.

United Kingdom: London unequivocally condemned the Pulwama attack and welcomed Azhar's UN listing. A UK Foreign Office statement (May 2019) “strongly supports” Azhar's UN proscription and credited UK efforts in achieving it. It recalled that JeM was proscribed in Britain (2001), and said the UK “will work tirelessly” against the threats such groups pose to international security. The British PM and Foreign Secretary offered condolences and emphasized common commitment against terrorism (notably, the UK had placed financial sanctions on JeM-related individuals for years, and in 2019 banned two JeM groups out of Jammu and Kashmir).



**United Kingdom (Feb-May 2019)
Condemnation; sanctions pressure**

Specific Actions / Measures

Expressed “utter[most] condemnation” of Pulwama; supported India's self-defence. Pressured Pak on JeM.

Public Statements / Notes

FCO hailed UN listing of Azhar (May 2019) and “welcomed the unity”; noted JeM was proscribed in UK (2001).

Follow-up

JeM remains proscribed; UK assessed Pakistan's commitments on JeM enforcement

Others: France, Germany, Australia, Canada, Japan etc all condemned the attack “in the strongest terms” and offered support to India. Russia sent condolences (President Putin expressed sympathy to India’s leaders, and the Foreign Ministry offered sincere condolences to families of the slain). China (unusually) issued a carefully worded statement expressing “deep condolences” and “firmly oppose[ing] all forms of terrorism” (China did not explicitly name any group or nation, but called for regional cooperation). Afghanistan condemned the bombing and said it stood “united” with India against terrorism. Smaller neighbours (Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Maldives) likewise condemned Pulwama and offered assistance or condolences.



China (Feb 2019)
Cautious condemnation

Specific Actions / Measures

VOA: China said it “deeply condemn[ed] all forms of terrorism”. (Initially asked for “objective verification” of allegations.)

Public Statements / Notes

MFA “strongly condemn[ed]” attack; urged “relevant regional countries [to] cooperate” against terrorism.

Follow-up

China had earlier blocked Azhar’s listing (2008-2018); after listing in May 2019 acquiesced.



Pakistan (Mar 2019)
Denial/Deflection; claimed action

Specific Actions / Measures

Pakistan Foreign Office denied JeM presence; said alleged associates arrested. Amended Anti-Terror Act to list Masood Azhar under UN schedule (2019).

Public Statements / Notes

Initial statements: “jeISh-e-Mohammed does not exist” (Armed Forces spokesman). PM Imran Khan called Pulwama “terrible” but blamed India.

Follow-up

Ongoing: Pakistan’s failure to prosecute JeM has kept it under international pressure (FATF, UNSC).



Financial Sanctions & FATF:

International financial bodies also singled out JeM's base. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the global anti-terror financing watchdog - kept Pakistan under "grey list" monitoring (since June 2018) due to its failure to curb terror finance. Pakistan had been given a 27-point action plan including measures against organizations like LeT, JuD and JeM. The UN Office of Counter-Terrorism and other forums urged member states to freeze JeM assets and cut its funding networks.

FATF (APG) (Jun 2018)

Financial sanctions (grey-listing)

Specific Actions / Measures

Placed Pakistan in 'increased monitoring' list for terror-finance deficiencies. Demand for action against JeM, LeT financing.

Public Statements / Notes

Warned that Pakistan's "strategic AML/CFT deficiencies" include failure to curb UN-proscribed groups.

Follow-up

Pakistan remained grey-listed until Oct 2022; JeM terrorist financing remained a key concern.

Diplomatic Measures: Many governments raised Pakistan's harbouring of JeM at multilateral fora. India called for JeM's global proscription; countries like the US, France, UK and Japan formally backed listing Azhar. In early 2019 India pressed for UN action; when China finally allowed Azhar's listing in May 2019, the UK and others heralded it as a signal of global resolve against state-sponsored terrorism. Meanwhile, India pushed for FATF action - Pakistan remained on FATF's increased-monitoring list (through 2022) partly due to continued concerns about JeM's fundraising.

V. India's Domestic Measures

In parallel, India reinforced its anti-terror apparatus. Immediately after Pulwama, New Delhi labelled JeM “Pakistan-based and UN-proscribed” and publicly blamed Pakistan’s failure to act on Azhar and JeM networks. India convened emergency cabinet meetings, beefed up military deployments along the Line of Control, and accelerated pre-existing anti-terror programs. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) filed an extensive charge sheet (Aug 2020) implicating 19 people (including Masood Azhar and his brother) for Pulwama. India also joined hands with the US and others to fast-track Azhar’s global designation, succeeded in May 2019.

Legislatively, India had long proscribed JeM under the UAPA. It has continued to amend laws to punish terrorism more severely (e.g. the 2019 UAPA amendments making bail harder for accused terrorists). In January 2023, India explicitly banned the People’s Anti-Fascist Front (PAFF), describing it as a JeM proxy and designating it a terror organization under UAPA. Indian banks and agencies increased scrutiny of JeM financing: charities linked to JeM have been banned and listed individuals’ assets frozen. Intelligence agencies stepped up monitoring of cross-border infiltration routes, while police in Kashmir arrested dozens of terrorists tied to JeM or its affiliates.

Legally, India has pursued JeM leadership via international courts: India formally extradited cases against Azhar to the UN sanctions committee, and repeatedly pressed Interpol for Red Notices. Domestically, India tightened defense and policing (for example, creating new force structures in Jammu & Kashmir post-2019). While India’s military strike at Balakot was a key retaliatory move, it was part of a larger counter-terrorism strategy including diplomacy (seeking Pakistan’s accountability under UN resolutions), intelligence-sharing with partners, and financial action.



India (Govt) (Feb 2019)

Military action; diplomatic, legal steps

Specific Actions / Measures

Balakot air strikes (26 Feb 2019) targeted JeM camps. List of measures: tightened border security, air defense deployment. NIA investigated Pulwama (charge-sheeted 19 including Azhar et al. in Aug 2020).

Public Statements / Notes

MEA spokesperson condemned JeM as “Pakistan-based, UN-proscribed”. India demanded Pakistan act on terrorism (PM Modi to global leaders).

Follow-up

Domestic bans: Affirmed JeM banned; in Jan 2023 banned JeM front PAFF. Strengthened UAPA (2019 amendments) and changed policy on trials of foreign terrorists. (Parliament invoked Pulwama/Balakot in 2019 elections rhetoric.)

Regional Security and Counter-terrorism Implications

The Pulwama terrorist attack highlighted the continued threat of Pakistan-sheltered proxies. Internationally, it galvanized many governments to publicly isolate Pakistan for harboring JeM, even as Pakistan equivocated on actual enforcement. The UN resolution listing Azhar, after China's decade-long block, was a diplomatic victory for India and a signal that global counterterrorism regimes can eventually prevail. However, China's role and Pakistan's minimal compliance highlight limits in multilateral law enforcement - a point India emphasizes in forums from FATF to the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee.

Indo-Pacific partners (US, Japan, Australia, France) strengthened counter-terror cooperation with India after Pulwama. For instance, the US announced joint intelligence efforts on cross-border terror funding. On the ground, India doubled down on defensive measures in Kashmir, including revoking J&K's special status (2019) partly to cut off terrorism infrastructure (though that move pre-dated Pulwama). India also ramped up surveillance and human intelligence in Kashmir to identify JeM cells.

The Pulwama attack and aftermath reaffirmed the need for collective action. The public statements by scores of nations and the UN demand for accountability reinforce the norm against cross-border terrorism. Yet Pakistan's continued denial and tactical bans (e.g. of Azhar) show the fragility of progress. For India, Pulwama led to a more aggressive policy stance: insisting that any country hosting or tolerating JeM would be seen as complicit. The global community's strong reaction, however, also demonstrated India's success in framing JeM-Pakistan nexus as an international security issue, not merely a bilateral one.



Concluding Observations

Over the past seven years even as JeM has lost many cadres to Indian counter-terror operations, attacks (e.g. Nagrota 2021, Srinagar 2021) underline that the threat endures. Indian security forces have severely degraded JeM's capacity inside India, but the group continues to operate with relative impunity in Pakistan, serving as part of Pakistan's asymmetric strategy against India. We conclude that only a combined approach – relentless security measures alongside international legal and financial action – can constrain JeM. Ultimately, we reaffirm that terrorism has no place in the world and must be fought unconditionally.

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