

Mumbai attacks: Warning over danger posed by Pakistan-based terrorists

America's top military officer has warned that the Mumbai attacks indicate Pakistan-based terror groups pose a greater global threat than was previously estimated.

By Damien McElroy in Calcutta

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Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, said members of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and other Pakistan groups were able to operate at a "much higher level."

The warning came as messages flooded al-Qaeda linked websites praising the "heroes" to the attacks, which killed 171 people. The Washington-based SITE Intelligence Group said the US, UK and Israel were being lumped with India as enemies that should be made to suffer.

Security officials worldwide have sounded the alarm about copy-cat attacks. David Cohen, the head of intelligence for the New York Police Department, told the Wall Street Journal that Mumbai showed that propaganda was translating into direct action. He said: "It puts us on notice in a much more clear and direct way."

Mohammed Ajmal Amir Iman, the surviving member of the 10-man terrorist group, was due to appear before a magistrate to have his remand extended, officials said.

Mumbai crime branch chief Rakesh Maria, said he would not be shifted from the secret location where he is being interrogated. "We have asked the magistrate to come to the crime branch in view of the security situation," he said.

Charges against Iman include "making war against the country, murder, attempted murder and other charges under the arms and explosives act."

The gunman was arrested on the first evening of the attacks, which transformed Mumbai into a battle zone from late on November 26 until November 29.

The United Nations Security Council issued formal sanctions notices on four members of L-e-T and named an Islamic charity as one of its front organisations.

Zaki ur-Rehman Lakhvi, identified by India as the senior plotter of the attack, and Lashkar's founder Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, were among the four men listed for sanctions, including an

asset freeze and travel ban, according to the U.S. State Department.

The Security Council's al-Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Committee, acting after requests from India and the U.S., described the Pakistan-based charity Jamaat ud-Dawa as an alias for Lashkar-e-Taiba.

"These actions will limit the ability of known terrorists to travel, acquire weapons, plan, carry out, or raise funds for new terrorist attacks," the US State Department said.

Lakhvi was arrested by Pakistani authorities earlier this week.

Haji Muhammad Ashraf, the group's finance chief, and Mahmoud Mohammad Ahmed Bahaziq, a fundraiser, were also listed for sanctions.

The UN sanctions committee also listed aliases for the Al Rashid and Al Akhtar Trusts, which have raised funds for Lashkar.

Jamaat ud-Dawa, which means Society of the Call, was spun off from Lashkar as a religious foundation when the guerrilla group was banned by Pakistan's government in 2002.

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