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Abu Jundal retracts confession before Mumbai court

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Mumbai: LeT operative Zabiuddin Ansari, alias Abu Jundal, an accused in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks and several other cases, on Friday orally retracted his confession, claiming before a MCOCA court here that he has been falsely implicated and his signature obtained under duress.

Jundal told the designated Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) judge



DELHI

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MS Modak, hearing the 2006 Aurangabad arms haul case, that his signature was "forcibly" taken on the confessional statement and he had not given it voluntarily.

Appearing through a video conference from Delhi's Tihar jail, Jundal also told the court that his name was Zabiuddin Ansari and not Abu Jundal. The alias Abu Jundal mentioned in the confessional statement was incorrect.

The court, however, told him to first appoint a lawyer and instruct him accordingly so that his statement can be taken on record at the next hearing.

Following this, Advocate Ejaz Naqvi appeared on behalf of Jundal and filed a 'vakalatnama' and the hearing was adjourned till December 15.

Earlier in the day, the state unit of Jamiat-e-Ulama, a prominent Muslim NGO, which has given free legal aid to over 300 Muslim youths facing terrorism charges in 34 different cases across the country, refused to offer help to Jundal in the 2006 Aurangabad arms haul case.

21 other accused in the case are already being given legal assistance by the organisation.

Gulzar Azmi, legal secretary of Jamiat-e-Ulama's state unit, said the decision was communicated to Jundal by its lawyers Ansar Tamboli and Shahid Nadeem Ansari when

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the accused was produced today before the MCOCA Court.

Jundal is alleged to be one of the handlers of the 10 Pakistani terrorists who had unleashed an orgy of violence on 26 November 2008.

Jundal, who taught Hindi to the perpetrators, was present in the LeT "control room" in Karachi from where he gave directions to the terrorists. "Jundal`s family had sent an application seeking legal aid to defend him in Aurangabad Arms haul case. We rejected the application and will not be defending him," Gulzar Azmi said.

"As a policy, we do not provide assistance to any person with a criminal background. We offered legal aid to Faheem Ansari and Sabauddin in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack case as we felt they were innocent. The court acquitted them and even the Supreme Court upheld the decision," he said.

However, in the case of Jundal, the NGO`s legal team was not convinced of his innocence and it was decided to reject his family`s plea, Azmi added.

On May 08, 2006, a Maharashtra Anti-Terror Squad team had chased a Tata Sumo and an Indica car on Chandwad-Manmad highway near Aurangabad and arrested three terror suspects and seized 30 kg of RDX, 10 AK-47 assault rifles and 3,200 bullets.

The Indica was allegedly driven by Jundal who managed to give police the slip. Hailing from Beed district of Maharashtra, Jundal then allegedly drove to Malegaon and handed over the vehicle to an acquaintance.

In May 2006, he had escaped to Bangladesh from where he went to Pakistan on a fake

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passport obtained with the help of LeT operatives, according to the crime branch which probed the case.

PTI

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