

US Declares The Resistance Front as Global Terror Group: What It Means

July 19, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



The Resistance Front

The Resistance Front Latest News

- The United States designated **The Resistance Front (TRF)** as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT).
- TRF, an offshoot of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), had claimed responsibility for the April 22 Pahalgam attack in South Kashmir, which killed 26 people.
- The designation strengthens efforts to isolate the group globally by freezing its assets and restricting its international operations.

The Resistance Front: A Shadow Outfit of Lashkar-e-Taiba in Kashmir

- The Resistance Front (TRF) is a terrorist group believed to be a proxy of Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), formed shortly after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019.

- Announcing its existence via Telegram on October 12, 2019, TRF claims to be an “indigenous resistance group” operating in Jammu and Kashmir.
- While trying to project itself as secular and locally driven—steering clear of overt Islamic imagery—the group seeks to fight against what it calls the “settler colonial occupation” of the region.
- Its current chief is Sheikh Sajjad Gul, with Ahmad Khalid as its spokesperson, while its founder Muhammad Abbas Sheikh was killed in 2021.

Links to LeT

- TRF is a rebranded front of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), operating under the direction of Pakistan’s army and ISI.
 - The rebranding helps it evade scrutiny from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and appear as an indigenous movement.
- TRF relies heavily on LeT’s operational, logistical, and financial support, with its leadership and bases located in Pakistan.

Modus Operandi

- Active in various districts of Jammu and Kashmir—especially Srinagar—TRF has been involved in several high-profile terror attacks.
- These include:
 - the April 2025 Pahalgam attack that killed 26 tourists,
 - the October 2024 Ganderbal killings of seven civilians,
 - a June 2024 bus attack in Reasi, and
 - a 2020 attack in Srinagar’s Lal Chowk that claimed six lives.
- Despite its effort to rebrand militancy as a local movement, TRF remains deeply intertwined with Pakistan-backed terror infrastructure.

Digital Warfare and Propaganda

- TRF runs a sophisticated digital propaganda arm, including the portal **KashmirFight**, which spreads separatist narratives and claims responsibility for attacks.
- Although disguised as a human rights blog, it promotes terrorism and operates on various platforms.
- It also collaborates with Jhelum Media House (JMH), another TRF-linked propaganda outlet.
- These platforms are used for recruitment, coordination, and psychological operations.

India’s Crackdown on TRF

- India officially banned TRF in January 2023, under the **Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), 1967**, recognizing it as a serious threat to national security.
- The Ministry of External Affairs has consistently highlighted TRF’s role as a front for Pakistan-based terror groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM).

- In its biannual reports submitted to the **UN's 1267 Sanctions Committee** in May and November 2024, India provided detailed inputs on TRF's operations and affiliations.
 - The UN's 1267 Sanctions Committee, officially the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, is a UN Security Council body.
 - It is responsible for enforcing sanctions—such as travel bans, asset freezes, and arms embargoes—on individuals and entities linked to ISIL and Al-Qaida.
 - Established in 1999 through Resolution 1267, it was initially focused on targeting the Taliban and Al-Qaida.

Implications of US Designation of TRF as a Terror Group

- The United States designates foreign groups as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) under **Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act** to curb their operations and funding.
- This designation makes it illegal for any US-based individual or entity to offer material support to the group.
- Additionally, American financial institutions must block any transactions or assets linked to the group.
- The US Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) may further classify such groups as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs), leading to asset freezes and prohibitions on any financial dealings with them.
- These measures aim to isolate and weaken the group globally, and can also result in secondary sanctions on foreign individuals or companies that continue to support or conduct business with the designated group.

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