



Bangladesh - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 4 and 6 July 2012

Information on an organisation called Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen including history, aims, objectives, leadership. What options are available to someone fearing this group?

A report published in March 2010 by the *International Crisis Group* states:

“Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), a terrorist organisation, remains active and dangerous despite the decimation of its ranks over the last five years” (International Crisis Group (1 March 2010) *The threat from Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh*, p.i).

This report also states:

“JMB, like many other jihadi organisations, is constantly evolving and mutating; past actions are not necessarily indicative of future ones. It seems to have changed from mass to elite recruitment, restricted its rural activities and altered its funding base” (ibid, p.1).

This report also points out:

“JMB was founded in 1998 by Shaikh Abdur Rahman out of his desire for a more militant jihadi organisation than then existed in Bangladesh” (ibid, p.2).

It is also noted in this report that:

“From the beginning, JMB’s objective was to establish Islamic rule in Bangladesh” (ibid, p.2).

This document also notes:

“JMB’s strongest network remains around Ahle Hadith mosques in the north west” (ibid, p.16).

This publication also points out that:

“The relative success of the most recent crackdown on JMB and other militant groups has demonstrated a stronger commitment by post-BNP governments to counter-terrorism” (ibid, p.23).

A profile of the organisation issued in 2012 by the *South Asia Terrorism Portal* points out that:

“The Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) is reported to have been formed in 1998 in the Jamalpur district. While the exact origin is shrouded in mystery, its existence came to notice on May 20, 2002 with the arrest of eight Islamist militants at Parbatipur in the Dinajpur district along with 25 petrol

bombs and documents detailing the outfit's activities. Subsequently, on February 13, 2003, the JMB is reported to have carried out seven bomb explosions in the Chhoto Gurgola area of Dinajpur town in which three persons were wounded. Some reports suggest that it is the youth front of the Al Mujahideen, an organisation allegedly formed in the mid-1990s but whose existence is still ambiguous, whereas others indicate that the JMB is another name for the vigilante Islamist group the Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB). The JMB was proscribed by the Government on February 23, 2005" (South Asia Terrorism Portal (2012) *Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB)*).

This report also states:

"The Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (Party of the Mujahideen) aims at establishing the rule of Islam in Bangladesh through an armed struggle. The outfit is opposed to the establishment of democracy and calls for the conduct of government under Islamic law" (ibid).

It is also noted in this document that:

"An analysis of the seizures from JMB cadres and their hideouts indicate that the outfit uses or has access to time bombs, detonators, petrol bombs and RDX explosives. Militants of the JMB are known to receive extensive training in the explosive making" (ibid).

In October 2011 *Jane's* states:

"The Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) is likely to have been founded in 1998 - possibly as a front organisation for a lesser known radical Islamic group, the Al Mujahideen - but details of its origins remain obscure. While some sources claim it was founded in Palampur in Dhaka division by one Sabir Qazi, most sources claim the JMB was founded in Jamalpur in Dhaka division by Sheikh Abdur Rahman, a former member of Ahle Hadith Jamaat, who went on to lead the JMB during its first phase. Bangladeshi media reports have alleged that Rahman founded the JMB with the support of Muhammad Asadullah Ghalib - an Arabic language scholar at the Rajshahi University and the founder of the Islamic radical organisation Ahle Hadith Andolan Bangladesh (AHAB)" (Jane's (14 October 2011) *Jamaat ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB)*).

This report also notes:

"The primary goal of the JMB is to establish an Islamic state in Bangladesh, and to impose its radical interpretation of sharia law. To this end, the group calls for the unification of Islamist forces in the country in order to oust the secular democratic establishment, and to overthrow the existing taguti [infidel] judicial system" (ibid).

A report issued in November 2011 by the *Combating Terrorism Center At West Point* notes:

"Jamaatul Mujahidin Bangladesh (JMB), an indigenous terrorist group founded in 1998 [1] and committed to establishing an Islamic state in Bangladesh through violence, stormed onto South Asia's jihadist scene with a

synchronized, country-wide bomb assault on August 17, 2005” (Combating Terrorism Center at West Point (30 November 2011) *Jamaatul Mujahidin Bangladesh: Weakened, But Not Destroyed*).

This document also states:

“Today, six years after the audacious terrorist attacks of 2005, Bangladesh's elite counterterrorism agency, the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), claims to have neutralized JMB's core and substantially reduced the risk it poses... Yet the JMB threat to Bangladesh has not been eliminated. While the group has been dramatically weakened, there are new concerns that it is attempting to reconstitute itself, especially in Bangladesh's northeastern districts” (ibid).

This report also points out that:

“JMB's actual cadre strength is unknown. After the 2005 serial blasts, Bangladeshi law enforcement agencies identified 8,096 JMB members, of which 2,000 were allegedly part of the group's ‘suicide squad.’... As of January 2011, authorities had arrested more than 1,500 JMB members, along with a few top leaders... Based on this assessment, there could still be thousands of JMB members operational” (ibid).

It is also stated in this report that:

“Today, JMB continues to recruit new members. Before the 2005 crackdown, JMB appeared to mostly recruit from madrasas and mosques in the country. Yet this has become more difficult due to police monitoring. Therefore, JMB has been using the internet and social networking forums to recruit new members online, luring university students to its fold.” (ibid).

This document also points out:

“The Rapid Action Battalion has yet to tackle JMB's jihadist ideology and grassroots support, which has helped the organization survive against the ongoing security offensives and investigations” (ibid).

In March 2010 a report issued by the *Heritage Foundation* states:

“On August 17, 2005, the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh staged a spectacular series of coordinated bombings across the nation, detonating approximately 400 devices within the space of 45 minutes in 63 of the country's 64 districts, but killing only three people. The JMB apparently believed that this dramatic action would usher in the rise of a revolutionary Islamist insurgency. Sporadic terrorist operations followed the August bombings, further demonstrating the JMB's goals in the country. The language that the JMB used to justify its attacks was sharp, unyielding, and consistent with global jihadist discourse. The JMB argued that the Bangladesh government was corrupt and that its democratic system should be rejected... The military-backed government of 2007-2008 tried the JMB ringleaders in court and eventually executed them without taking special legal measures. Vigorous enforcement against the JMB seems to have largely curtailed the group's operations, although Bangladeshi authorities discovered a JMB-connected bomb factory in an Islamic school in the Bhola district in the spring of 2009. Local villagers had noticed suspicious activity at the school

and alerted the authorities...The JMB has thus far shown little ability to penetrate social environments in Bangladesh that could be tapped to sustain an insurgency. Yet the JMB's possible revival into a renewed threat to the Bangladeshi state and society cannot be ruled out, especially with international players seeking a foothold in murky Bangladeshi politics. The spectacular character of the JMB's 'baptism of fire,' the series of coordinated bombings, seems also to have created a well-known brand name for the group among international extremist networks, as evidenced by the group's technologically savvy presence on the Internet. Sources in the Bangladesh government have indicated that many operational aspects of the synchronized bombings were outsourced to other insurgent groups, such as a hard-line communist insurgency that operates in Bangladeshi rural areas. However, this should be viewed as a strength, not a weakness, of the JMB. In fact, the JMB has demonstrated sophistication in its Web presence, elusive networks, and associations with unlikely partners" (Heritage Foundation (15 March 201) *Bangladesh: Checking Islamist Extremism in a Pivotal Democracy*).

A report published in June 2010 by the *South Asia Terrorism Portal* notes:

"The Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), believed to have weakened in recent years, still has around 400 full-time cadres across the country and a military wing capable of launching major attacks. The Islamist outfit also has huge cache of explosives, handmade bombs and grenades stashed at different dens, according to state agencies" (South Asia Terrorism Portal (14 June 201) *JMB capable of launching major attacks*).

In August 2010 *BBC News* states:

"A court in Bangladesh has sentenced five members of a banned Islamist militant group, Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh, to life imprisonment. They were convicted in connection with a series of bombings in the northern district of Bogra in 2005. The bombings were part of a nationwide series of attacks" (BBC News (10 August 2010) *Five Bangladeshi militants sentenced to life in jail*).

This report also notes:

"The JMB wanted to overthrow the democratically elected government and replace it with a Shariah-based Islamic state, in what is a traditionally secular country. Six senior leaders of the group were later arrested and executed in 2007 for their role in separate bomb attacks. In recent years, the security forces have arrested scores of suspected members of the JMB. They are being tried in courts across the country for their alleged involvement in various violent incidents" (ibid).

Citing another source, the *Refugee Review Tribunal of the Government of Australia* in July 2011 notes:

"The South Asia Terrorism Portal's profile of JMB states that the group 'is known to maintain 10,000 fulltime and 100,000 part-time cadres', although this information is identical to that provided in the same version of this profile in 2006" (Refugee Review Tribunal of the Government of Australia (28 July

2011) *Bangladesh – BGD38871 – Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) – Generation Society*).

The *Daily Star* in August 2011 points out that:

“Law enforcers believe outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh, which came to the limelight for its synchronised bombing across the country six years ago, has almost no strength left to carry out any subversive activities. The network of the militant outfit has totally collapsed with the arrests of its members of all tiers in massive crackdowns and its strength has almost waned, say officials of police and Rapid Action Battalion. They however add JMB still has its roots, but there is hardly any chance of rearing their heads since they are under strong vigilance” (Daily Star (17 August 2011) *JMB neutralised*).

A publication in August 2011 by the *United States Department of State* notes that:

“The government has made numerous well-publicized seizures and arrests of persons alleged to be associated with terrorist organizations including HUJI-B, LeT, Jama'at-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh, and Hizb-ut Towhid. Few convictions appeared to have resulted from those arrests, however, as the judiciary has continued to work slowly on cases involving terrorism due to a lack of prosecutorial capacity and requisite legal provisions” (United States Department of State (18 August 2011) *Country Reports on Terrorism 2010, Chapter 2. Country Reports: South and Central Asia Overview*).

The *South Asia Terrorism Portal* in August 2011 states:

“Law enforcers believe outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), which came to the limelight for its synchronised bombing across the country on August 17, 2005, has almost no strength left to carry out any subversive activities. The network of the militant outfit has totally collapsed with the arrests of its members of all tiers in massive crackdowns and its strength has almost waned” (South Asia Terrorism Portal (22 August 2011) *JMB neutralized, believe law enforcers*).

The *Financial Express* in January 2012 notes:

“Rapid Action Battalion ((RAB) personnel arrested a son of detained Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Saidur Rahman from bordering Bohorampur area of Rajshahi early Sunday, reports UNB. The arrestee was identified as Tanha Md Fahim Bashar. Fahim was brought to Dhaka RAB headquarters at 4 am Sunday. Police arrested JMB chief Maulana Saidur Rahman, his wife and three other top leaders of the banned Islamist outfit on May 24, 2010. Saidur took over as JMB boss in February 2006, shortly after the arrest of Shaekh Abdur Rahman, the then JMB supremo” (Financial Express (9 January 2012) *JMB chief Saidur's son held in Rajshahi*).

The *Daily Star* in January 2012 points out that:

“Leaders and activists of banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) were trying to reorganise giving priority to collecting funds from their

wellwishers and building communication with grassroots activists” (Daily Star (11 January 2012) *JMB trying to reorganise*).

In February 2012 *Inter Press Service* states:

“Soon after taking office for the second time in January 2009, the Hasina government banned 12 religion-based organisations suspected to have strong militant bases across the country. Among them was Jamaat-ul Mujahideen, Bangladesh (JMB), the second largest Islamist organisation and one that is believed to have links to the banned Pakistani terrorist group Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT). After the JMB carried out 500 synchronized bombing attacks in almost all the 64 districts of the country on August 17, 2005, police have arrested over 200 of its members. Many of its leaders have been executed, including its founder - Shaikh Abdur Rahman and the man known to be second in command, Siddiqui Islam, popularly known as ' Bangla Bhai'. But, the arrest of about 100 JMB activists since October 2008 and the unearthing of huge caches of firearms, explosives and ammunition demonstrated the JMB's ability to regroup, recruit and reorganise” (Inter Press Service (2 February 2012) *Bangladesh: Coup Bid Reveals Extremism Within Army*).

The *Daily Star* in March 2012 states:

“Rapid Action Battalion [RAB] arrested two leaders and a member of the banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) outfit from different parts of the capital on Monday [5 March]. The elite force members also seized several JMB publications and leaflets from the possession of the arrestees...” (Daily Star (7 March 2012) *Three banned group members arrested in Bangladesh capital*).

A publication issued in April 2012 by the *Daily Star* notes:

“Police recovered the severed head of a member of banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) from Gomastapur upazila of Chapainawabganj Sunday morning. The beheaded body of the JMB men was recovered on Friday, reports our Chapainawabganj correspondent. Two JMB men including a brother-in-law of the deceased were arrested Saturday night after the beheaded body was recovered. The victim was identified as Ruhul Amin Salman, 28, a resident of Dhanmondi in the capital” (Daily Star (29 April 2012) *Severed head of JMB man found in C'nawabganj*).

This document also states:

“Police suspected that Salman might have been killed over an intra-clash of the militant organisation centring taking leadership of the outfit” (ibid).

In June 2012 the *Daily Star* notes:

“A leader of the banned Islamist outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and his wife were sentenced to 37 years in prison on Sunday on charge of possessing weapons and bullets” (Daily Star (3 June 2012) *JMB couple jailed for 37 yrs*).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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