



Q09566. Bangladesh – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 18 March 2009

Information on the Islamic fundamentalist group Harkat Ul Jihad

Paragraph 12.09 of the of the September 2008 *UK Home Office* Country of Origin Information Report for Bangladesh under the heading ‘Harkat-ul-Jihad-al Islami (alternatively known as HuJI or Harkatul Jihad), states:

“According to a *Daily Star* report of 28 August 2005, Harkatul Jihad was established in the early-1990s apparently with assistance from Osama bin Laden. Many of its founders fought with the Mujahideen in Afghanistan in the 1980s. [38ac] The current leader is Shawkat Osman, alias ‘Sheikh Farid’. HuJI apparently has training camps in Chittagong division. (South Asia Terrorism Portal – SATP). [59c] HuJI has been accused of plotting to assassinate Sheikh Hasina when she was Prime Minister. [38ac] On 28 April 2006 a HuJI leader was charged with involvement in this assassination plot. [59c] Police interrogations of arrested HuJI cadres in 2000 reportedly revealed plans to kill 28 prominent intellectuals. [38ac] On 17 October 2005 the Government banned Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami, describing it as a “self-confessed terrorist group”. (SATP) “ (ibid, p.73)

Page 166 of the same report, under the heading ‘2005’, states:

“October: Bomb attacks inside law court buildings in three districts killed two people and injured dozens; Jumatul Mujahedin Bangladesh (JMB) were believed responsible. The Islamist group Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI) was banned.” (ibid. p.166)

Finally, under the heading ‘Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (alternatively known as HuJI or Harkatul Jihad)’, page 172 of the same report states:

“According to a *Daily Star* report of 28 August 2005, Harkatul Jihad was established in the early-1990s apparently with assistance from Osama bin Laden; its ideals were also inspired by the Taliban in Afghanistan. Many of its founders fought with the Mujahideen in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Current leader is said to be Shawkat Osman, alias ‘Sheikh Farid’; Imtiaz Quddus is apparently general secretary. HuJI mainly operates in the southern coastal belt and apparently has training camps in Chittagong division. It is said to have around 15,000 members in Bangladesh. HuJI has been accused of plotting to assassinate Sheikh Hasina when she was Prime Minister. [38ac] BBC News reported on 17 October 2005 that the Government had banned Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI), describing it as a terrorist organisation. [20bk] According to Keesing’s, members of HuJI held a rally in Dhaka on 18 August 2006 under the banner of Sachetan Islami Janata (SIJ). According to an organiser of the rally, HuJI leaders had been holding discussions with the

government in an attempt to persuade it that the group was not a terrorist organisation. Keesing's reported that an article in the newspaper *Jai Jai Din*, on 22 August 2006, had stated that HuJI was planning to adopt the name Islami Gondolo Andolon (IGA – Islamic People's Movement)." (ibid, p.172)

Footnote number 273 on page 32 of an April 2008 *International Crisis Group* report states:

"The Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI) was established in 1992, reportedly with assistance from Osama bin Laden's International Islamic Front. The HuJI was outlawed by the government in October 2005. In 2006 members of the banned organisation formed a political party, Islami Gono Andolan. The party allegedly has a seven-member steering committee led by a self-proclaimed HuJI member, Maulana Abdus Salam. Party members have been meeting as recently as March 2008. "Huji operating in Bogra in new name", The Daily Star, 9 March 2008. See also the JMB, JMJB and HuJI sections, South Asia Terrorism Portal, at www.satp.org." (International Crisis Group (ICG) (28 April 2008) - *Restoring Democracy in Bangladesh*)

An October 2005 *BBC News* article states:

"A statement issued by the Home Ministry said all activities of the group - Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami - were affected by the order.

The group is the third Islamic party to be banned.

The government action came after a series of bombings in Bangladesh in recent months, which killed at least four people and injured many others.

Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami, which is better known as Huji, is the third Islamic group banned by the authorities in Bangladesh this year." (BBC News (17 October 2005) - *Dhaka outlaws third Islamic group*)

A July 2007 *United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants* survey for Bangladesh, under the heading 'Detention/Access to Courts', states:

"The Rohingya Solidarity Organization, the largest Rohingya group in Bangladesh, reportedly had ties to Jamaat-e-Islami, Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami, and other militant Islamic groups. In the first half of the year, law enforcement agencies arrested the ringleaders of Harkat Ul Jihad al-Islami, most of whom courts sentenced to death. None, however, belonged to Rohingya refugee groups. Nevertheless, law enforcement agencies were reportedly searching members of the RSO, accusing them of involvement in criminal and terrorist activities. Local law enforcement also alleged infiltration among the refugee population of militants linked to arms smuggling and international fundamentalist organizations." (United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) (11 July 2007) - *U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants World Refugee Survey 2007 – Bangladesh*)

References:

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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.

Sources Consulted:

Amnesty International

BBC News

ECOI: European Country of Origin Information Network

Freedom House

Human Rights Watch

International Crisis Group (ICG)

IRB: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

IRIN News

Lexis Nexis

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

United Kingdom: Home Office

UNHCR Refworld

United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)

United States Department of State

