

# Major Islamist Militant Groups in Pakistan

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Islamist militant groups operating on and from Pakistani territory are of five broad types:

- **Globally-oriented** militants, primarily “core” Al Qaeda\* (unknown strength, likely in the hundreds) operating since 2001 from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and likely in the megacity of Karachi, led by former Osama bin Laden deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri;
- **Afghanistan-oriented** militants, including the Quetta Shura Taliban (QST, approximately 20,000 armed Afghan militants) of Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar and his deputy, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar (the latter currently in Pakistani government detention), with leadership believed to operate from the Baluchistan provincial capital of Quetta, as well as Karachi; the Haqqani Network\* (approximately 10,000 armed militants) run by Jalaluddin Haqqani and his son Sirajuddin in the North Waziristan and Kurram tribal agencies; and the Hizb-i-Islami (HiG, approximately 1,000 fighters) party of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, operating further north from the Bajaur tribal agency and Dir district of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province;
- **India- and Kashmir-oriented** militants, especially the Lashkar-e-Taiba\* (LeT, several thousand members) led by Hafiz Saeed, more recently fronted as the ostensibly charitable Jamaat-ud-Dawa; the Jaish-e-Mohammed\* (JeM, several hundred armed supporters) led by Masood Azhar; and the Harakat ul-Mujahadeen\* (HuM, several hundred armed supporters), formerly led by bin Laden ally Fazlur Rehman Khalil, later operating as Jamiat ul-Ansar; all based in both Punjab and in Pakistan-held Kashmir;
- **Sectarian** militants, in particular the anti-Shia Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP, 3,000-6,000 “trained activists”) and its offshoot, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi\* (LeJ, membership in the low hundreds), the latter closely associated with Al Qaeda, both operating mainly in the FATA, Punjab, Balochistan, and Karachi; and
- **Domestically-oriented**, largely ethnic Pashtun militants who in 2007 unified under the leadership of now-deceased Baitullah Mehsud as the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan\* (TTP, membership of several thousand), then based in the South Waziristan tribal agency, with representatives from each of Pakistan’s seven FATA agencies, currently led by Hakimullah Mehsud, later to incorporate the Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM, unknown strength, likely no more than a few thousand) founded by Maulana Sufi Mohammed and currently led by Mullah Fazalullah in the northwestern Malakand and Swat districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, as well as in the northern FATA and border areas of eastern Afghanistan.

\* Indicates designation as Foreign Terrorist Organization under U.S. law

**Sources:** U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2011*; “South Asia Terrorism Portal,” Institute for Conflict Management (New Delhi)

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