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Haqqani Network Blacklisted by UN

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The UN Security Council (SC) has added Haqqani Network to its blacklist. The sanctions include ban on travel, arms embargo and asset freezing. The SC's Taliban sanctions committee says Haqqani Network has been responsible for high profile attacks in Afghanistan killing Afghan and foreign civilians. The UN decision will require all member states to implement the travel ban and assets freeze.

The US Secretary of State has also designated Qari Zakir, the chief of Haqqani Network suicide operations as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist. According to the US State Department statement, Zakir approached Haqqani Network leader Sirajuddin Haqqani in 2008, requesting financial assistance in exchange for expanding the group's influence and operations into northern Afghanistan, and has become a trusted associate and confidant of Sirajuddin.

He has been involved in many of the Haqqani Network's high-profile suicide attacks and is partially responsible for making some of the final determinations on whether or not to proceed with large-scale attacks planned by local district-level commanders.

Attacks using personnel selected from Zakir's training program include the 2010 attacks on coalition force bases Salerno and Chapman; the June 2011 attack on the Intercontinental Hotel, which killed 11 civilians and two Afghan policemen; and the September 2011 attack on the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, which killed 16 Afghans, including at least six children.

Previously, the Haqqani Network was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist entity by the US Treasury Department in September.

The designation of Haqqani Network in the global terror list has been vague. It will not make big difference by putting names of individual commanders, unless a strict ban comes against the organization and its leadership. Previously under an Executive Order 13224, Abdul Aziz Abbasin, said to be a key Haqqani Network commander and Taliban's shadow governor of Orgun District in Paktika, was listed. Another individual include Haji Faizullah Noorzai, a Taliban commander responsible for moving suicide bombers from Pakistan to Afghanistan. His brother, Haji Malik Noorzai is responsible for Taliban fundraising.

With the UN blacklisting, now Pakistan needs to launch a military operation in North Waziristan and expel the Haqqani leadership from their safe havens across the Durand Line. North Waziristan is said to be a haven for international terrorists. It is believed that hundreds of suicide bombers are being trained by Badruddin Haqqani in Waziristan.

Now Kabul and Washington should seriously demand Islamabad for action against Haqqanis. The insurgency in Afghanistan will never be weakened or defeated until they enjoy the safe havens in North and South Waziristans and other tribal areas of Pakistan. Afghan and NATO intelligence officials have long been accusing Pakistani military of supporting the Haqqanis covertly. If the US is serious about turning the war in Afghanistan into victory, the militant hideouts and training centers in Pakistan need to be stopped.