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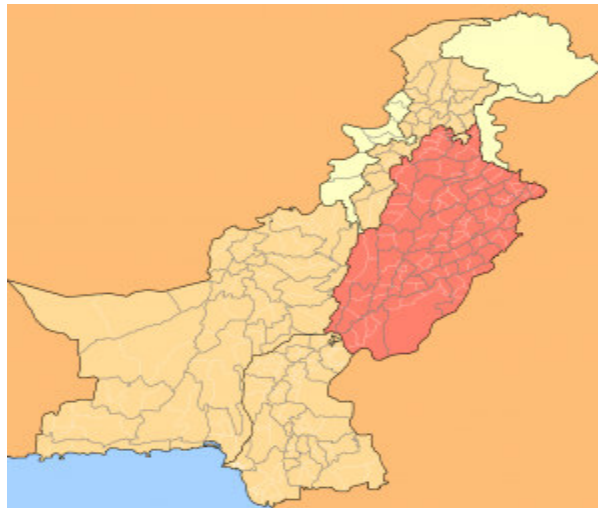
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Punjabi Provincial Govt Shelters Militant Groups

Posted By [Jason Ditz](#)

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Despite repeated efforts by the Pakistani national government to get them to do something about it, the Punjabi Provincial government, led by Shahbaz Sharif, [has openly refused to take on major banned militant groups based in its territory.](#)



On the one hand, the provincial government has made efforts to move against the TTP and other Taliban-styled groups, but it has left the [Jaish-e Mohammed](#) (JeM) and the [Lashkar-e Taiba](#) (LeT) essentially alone, a piece of political expediency which is becoming a major embarrassment.

Both the JeM and the LeT have been mentioned as possible organizers of the Times Square attack, both are banned as terrorist groups, but for many Punjab residents the groups are popular, [heroic freedom fighters that are working to liberate Kashmir from India](#).

The government, which depends largely on conservative Sunni voters, can ill afford to move against these groups. It has largely gotten around this problem by drawing a line between the groups fighting in the tribal north and the Kashmiri separatist factions.

Increasingly, however, the Kashmiri separatist groups are expanding their business, and if it turns out one of these groups is responsible for the Times Square attack, it will leave the Sharif government scrambling for political cover.