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Responses to Information Requests

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19 June 2017

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Pakistan: The Jammu Kashmir National Awami Party (JKNAP), including history, structure, areas of operation, and activities; incidents of violence committed by party members; treatment of party members by authorities (2004-2016)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. History

Information on the Jammu Kashmir National Awami Party (JKNAP) was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

A May 2009 post published on the Jammu Kashmir National Awami Party - JKNSF - IC JKNAP blog managed by Nadeem Aslam, the spokesman of the International Council of JKNAP (ICJKNAP), and written by its coordinator, Javed Inayat, indicates that JKNAP was formed in 1995 after the leaders of the Jammu Kashmir National Students Federation (JKNSF) started a dialog in the early 90s among "pro-independence political groups" (JKNAP 11 May 2009). Another post published on 20 July 2009 on the same blog by Nayyer N. Khan, a representative of ICJKNAP US, explains that JKNAP was founded on 22 July 1995 by the JKNSF with "nationalists and leftists of [Pakistani Occupied Kashmir]" (JKNAP 20 July 2009).

In his book *Azad Kashmir and British Kashmiri Diaspora: History of Kashmiri Independence Politics and Diaspora Identity Formation*, Shams Rehman [1] explains that the JKNSF, in its advocacy for independence, engaged in "relatively peaceful unarmed protest actions with strong socialist rhetoric" that was aimed at challenging Pakistan's hold over Kashmir, and mainly the Pakistani Occupied Kashmir (Rehman 25 July 2011, 158). A 27 July 2009 post published on the JKNAP blog by ICJKNAP similarly explains that "[b]oth JKNAP and JKNSF are democratic, secular, progressive and non-violent political organizations of the State of Jammu Kashmir, advocating the reunification of all the divided parts of Jammu Kashmir and its complete independence through political and non[-]violent means" and that they advocate the institution of "a system of governance based on secular democracy, equality, rule of law and social justice" (JKNAP 27 July 2009).

2. Treatment by Authorities

According to Freedom House's 2016 report *Freedom in the World* for Pakistani Kashmir, Pakistan's Jammu Kashmir [or Azad Jammu Kashmir] adopted an interim constitution in 1974 that "bans political parties that do not endorse the territory's eventual accession to Pakistan" (Freedom House 2016). Similarly, a 2016 article by Deutsche Welle (DW), a German international broadcaster, cites a US-based Pakistan and Islamism expert as saying that "[t]he Election Commission in [Pakistani Occupied Kashmir] is ... comprised of members that are acceptable to the Pakistani officials. At the same time, any political group demanding independence for Pakistani Kashmir is not allowed to take part in elections" (DW 21 July 2016). The same source cites the same expert as saying that "[i]t is unlawful to rally for an independent Kashmir during election

campaigns" (DW 21 July 2016). In his book on Azad Kashmir and British Kashmiri Diaspora, Rehman explains that JKNAP is listed among the 7 parties or "pressure groups" not allowed to take part in elections "because they propagate the politics of independent Kashmir" (Rehman 25 July 2011, 14).

3. Leaders and Structure of JKNAP

Information on the current and previous leaders of the JKNAP was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources provide the following information regarding current and previous leaders of JKNAP:

- A 2002 article in *Dawn*, a Pakistani English-language daily newspaper, indicates that Sardar Anwar Khan was the president of JKNAP (*Dawn* 8 Sept. 2002).
- According to the May 2009 post published on JKNAP blog, JKNAP's first president was Sardar Anwar Khan (JKNAP 11 May 2009).
- According to a 2017 article by Asian News International (ANI), South Asian "multimedia news agency with over 100 bureaus in India, South Asia and across the globe" (ANI n.d.), Liaquat Hayat is president of the JKNAP (ANI 25 May 2017).
- In 2009, sources describe [Sadar] Liaquat Hayat as JKNAP's "Central President" (JKNAP 27 July 2009; AHRC 31 July 2009).
- A post published in October 2009 on JKNAP blog states that JKNAP's Secretary General is Abdual Sattar Khan (JKNAP 28 Oct. 2009).

The May 2009 post published on the JKNAP blog indicates that JKNAP's leadership "decided to expand its organizational structure abroad, where half of [the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir] population lives" and the party's National Council "decided to form the JKNAP international council [ICJKNAP]" (JKNAP 11 May 2009). The 20 July 2009 post published on the same blog explains that the ICJKNAP was formed on 16 June 2007 at Rawalpindi (JKNAP 20 July 2009). The same source indicates that it has branches "and party cadre in UK, Western Europe, Middle East, North America, Asia Pacific, South Africa and Australia" (JKNAP 20 July 2009).

The October 2009 post on the same blog further states the following regarding the leaders' positions:

President JKNAP (UK) Professor Sajjad Raja, Senior Vice President Ikram Mir, Vice President Zaheer Ahmed Ghori, General Secretary Shahid Hashmi, Deputy General Secretary Waheed Ahmed Malik, Joint Secretary Sardar Zameer, Chairman

Media Board Nadeem Aslam, Chairman Finance Board Mohsan Qureshi, Deputy Chief Organiser Asghar Malik and Chief Organiser Mohammad Azad Raja. (JKNAP 28 Oct. 2009)

A 2010 post published on the same blog states that Ikram Mir is the President of the JKNAP UK (JKNAP 4 Oct. 2010).

A 2014 article published on the website of Pakistan's Awami Workers Party (AWP), a party formed in November 2012 in an effort to "build a genuine [l]eft alternative to mainstream political forces in Pakistan" (AWP n.d.), indicates that JKNAP was among the participants of a "consultation process" hosted in Islamabad in December 2014, during which the participants spoke of the "critical need to form an alliance between progressive and nationalist in the country" to challenge the "growing menace of violent extremism and the authoritarian response being put forth as the only viable solution" (AWP 30 Dec. 2014). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Ground Report, a news platform that provides on-the-ground news coverage by journalism students and non-profit reporters (The Huffington Post n.d.), indicates that JKNAP belongs to the Jammu Kashmir National Independence Alliance (JKNIA), along with other parties (Ground Report 29 Mars 2017). Sources describe JKNIA as a "UK based alliance of Kashmiri [n]ationalist parties" (*Early Times* 2 Nov. 2014; *The Economic Times* 31 Oct. 2014).

4. Protest Involvement and Treatment by Authorities

The Committee for a Worker's International (CWI), a "global organisation" that fights "exploitation and discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation or race, [as well as] national oppression" (CWI n.d.), reports that the Kotli branch of JKNAP organized a demonstration that was held on 22 March 2011 against the war in Iraq (CWI 9 Apr. 2011). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources report that Liaquat Hayat and other political activists were arrested in Pakistani Occupied Kashmir without warrants on 19 July 2009 (JKNAP 27 July 2009; AHRC 30 July 2009). The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), a non-governmental body founded in 1984 by jurists and human rights activists in Asia

and which aims to promote awareness and realization of human rights in the Asian region (AHRC n.d.), further explains that Liaquat Hayat and the activists were arrested while "protesting against the call by the prime minister of Kashmir to annex Kashmir with Pakistan" (AHRC 30 July 2009). The ICJKNAP's post published on 27 July 2009 on the JKNAP blog indicates that the "[Pakistan Occupied Kashmir] administration has lodged [a First Information Report] against more than [a] hundred activists of JKNAP and JKNSF and police is creating an atmosphere of harassment for the families and friends of the activists of JKNAP and JKNSF" (JKNAP 27 July 2009).

On 14 April 2014, Asian News International (ANI) reported that protests were held in the Pakistani Occupied Kashmir over "discriminatory practices" in local youth employment (ANI 14 Apr. 2016). The same source further states that approximately 100 individuals from JKNSF and "some members of [JKNAP]" carried out a demonstration "condemning the oppressive rule [by] Pakistani authorities and the local [Pakistani Occupied Kashmir] government" (ANI 14 Apr. 2016). According to the article, demonstrators chanted anti-Pakistan slogans, which led to a crackdown by the police (ANI 14 Apr. 2016).

In May 2017, ANI reports that JKNAP held rallies on 24 May 2017 in Rawalakot, Muzaffarabad, Kotli and other parts of Pakistani's Occupied Kashmir and "raised anti-Pakistan slogans" in protest "against Islamabad's oppressive policies and grave human rights violation in the region" (ANI 25 May 2017). The same source indicates that "protestors also raised the issue of illegal imprisonment of top political leaders" (ANI 25 May 2017). Corroborating information on the 2016 and 2017 protests could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Further information on the treatment of JKNAP members by authorities could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. Information on JKNAP involvement in incidents of violence could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

Note

[1] Shams Rehman is currently a Research Assistant for the Rochdale Kashmiri Research Project Team at the University of Manchester (University of Manchester N.d.).

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Internet sites, including: Amnesty International; Associated Press of Pakistan; Azad Jammu and Kashmir – AJ&K Portal; *DailyTimes* ; The Friday Times; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan; International Crisis Watch; International Federation for Human Rights; *Jane's Intelligence Review* ; Kashmir Development Foundation; *The Kashmir Monitor* ; *The Nation* ; *The News International* ; Pakistan News Releases; *Pakistan Observer* ; *Pakistan Today* ; The Patriot ; United Nations – Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Refworld; Transparency International.

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