

Terrorism Monitor

In-depth analysis of the War on Terror

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Myanmar Faces Arakan Army Attacks in Rakhine State

Jacob Zenn

Since intelligence agencies began observing ties between certain, albeit possibly peripheral, Rakhine [Arakan] militant groups and Islamic State (IS), jihadism has often been the focus of analyses on the Rakhine state insurgency in Myanmar (theweek.in, November 21, 2020). There was a pledge from Katiba al-Mahdi Fi Bilad al-Arakan to IS in November 2020. However, neither that group nor any other IS-loyal Rohingya groups have endured to the present that have any

relevance ([Twitter/@natsecjeff](https://twitter.com/natsecjeff), November 9, 2021).

During the current phase of the insurgency against the Myanmar junta, moreover, another group, the Arakan Army (AA), is proving more operationally effective than any IS-loyal group. In early September, for example, the AA conducted a bombing of junta soldiers, which killed two of them, at a government office in Maebon (narinjara.com, September 8). As this was the first attack in Maebon during the insurgency, it led to a rapid and large-scale deployment of government soldiers to the town.

While Maebon lies along the southern edge of the coastal Rakhine, the state's north is also seeing increasing hostilities between the militants and Myanmar's army. The state's border with Bangladesh, for example, has been exploited by AA to launch attacks against the army. This, in turn, prompted the Myanmar Air Force (MAF) to cross into Bangladeshi territory to target the AA's hideouts (bdnews.com, September 10).

Bangladesh has accordingly lodged complaints with Myanmar concerning the MAF's unauthorized flights into Bangladeshi air space. Bangladesh, however, is also wary of being provoked by Myanmar into a confrontation that could exacerbate bilateral relations (dhakatribune.com, September 3). Although Myanmar is ostensibly inadvertently trespassing into Bangladeshi air space, the military government of Myanmar may also be sending a message to Bangladesh to avoid supporting the AA.

In January, the AA publicly expressed the desire to improve relations with Bangladesh and called upon Bangladesh to be more proactive in supporting the AA (dhakatribune.com, January 19). Whereas IS-loyal groups desire an Islamic state, which is at odds with both the Bangladeshi and Myanmar governments as well as other separatist Rakhine militant groups, the AA has taken a more pragmatic approach. It demands autonomy for the Rohingyas in Rakhine State, but is willing to exist in some modified form of the Federal Union of Myanmar. This not only makes it more palatable for foreign countries like Bangladesh to support the AA, but also allows the AA to show its goals are consistent with other ethnic and regional militias that oppose the Myanmar junta.

The Myanmar military government, meanwhile, has been reinforcing relations with Russia, including face to face meetings between regime leader Min Aung Hlaing and Vladimir Putin. They met in Vladivostok at the Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) in August (aljazeera.com, September 7). Further, Myanmar has been purchasing Russian fuel, which otherwise is barred by many of the same Western countries that are currently sanctioning the junta (themoscowtimes.com, September 7). Yet, with Russia struggling, if not failing, militarily in Ukraine and becoming only more isolated internationally, Myanmar's junta may find itself not only embattled with the AA and other insurgent groups throughout the country, but also in conflict with Bangladesh and the West. This could be a harbinger for a more tenuous grasp on the levers of power within Myanmar itself and for an increasing number of insurgent military victories.

Jacob Zenn is the Editor of Terrorism Monitor.

Is the Anti-Taliban Resistance in Afghanistan Regrouping in Panjshir?

Jacob Zenn

After the Taliban captured Kabul in August 2021, the two primary militant groups in opposition to the Taliban were Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) and the National Resistance Front (NRF). The latter was significantly more palatable than ISKP to international audiences because it is led by legendary anti-Soviet mujahedeen Ahmad Shah Massoud's son, Ahmad Massoud, who currently calls for a democratic Afghanistan that respects

minority rights. In contrast, ISKP continues to attack foreign interests in South Asia as well as the Taliban itself ([Terrorism Monitor](#), September 7, 2021).

Since the NRF's emergence, the group has not come anywhere close to militarily contesting the Taliban and, in fact, it suffered a major setback when the Taliban took control of its headquarters in Panjshir in September 2021 ([aljazeera.com](#), September 6, 2021). There is, however, some preliminary evidence that suggests this is changing. In June, the NRF indicated it still maintained a presence in Panjshir by claiming to have shot down a Taliban helicopter and captured four Taliban fighters ([theprint.in](#), June 18). Two months later, just as the Taliban was celebrating the one-year anniversary of its re-conquest of Afghanistan, the NRF announced that it captured another five Taliban fighters in Panjshir ([business-standard.com](#), August 16). However, the largest claim from the NRF came earlier this month when on September 11 it announced that it killed 32 Taliban fighters while repelling Taliban attacks on several of its bases throughout Panjshir ([khaama.com](#), September 11). In this same month, the Taliban launched an offensive to root out NRF insurgents throughout Panjshir, which testifies to the growing impact of NRF operations ([etilaatroz.com](#), August 20).

The NRF has every incentive to embellish its victories against the Taliban in Afghanistan in order to show that it remains relevant, if not also to counter Taliban propaganda by issuing NRF announcements on the Taliban's one-year anniversary and on 9/11. Beyond claiming NRF attacks against the Taliban, Ahmad Massoud is countering the Taliban's claims that it is moderate and that it governs according to international and Islamic

norms. Rather, Massoud has been busy publicly asserting that the Taliban is bringing Afghanistan "back to the dark ages" just like its rule before 9/11 ([indianexpress.com](#), September 5).

The sustainability of the NRF will depend not only on its media efforts and ability to attack the Taliban, but also on its ability to maintain and garner foreign backing. Its most important regional backer so far has been Tajikistan, which has been experiencing rifts with the Taliban as a result of its communications with the NRF ([rferl.org](#), May 19). Although the Taliban has threatened to host anti-Tajik government militants if the Tajik government continues to back the NRF, the two governments have not clashed outside of the negotiating table. Moreover, to assuage Tajikistan's claims that the Taliban is oppressing ethnic Tajiks and other minorities in Afghanistan, the Taliban maintains an official position that its government is "inclusive" ([tolonews.com](#), August 13).

As late as July, Massoud had indicated there was the possibility the NRF may hold talks with the Taliban in Dushanbe ([khaama.com](#), July 7). Thus far, however, the only known talks with the Taliban occurred in Iran in January 2022 ([alarabiya.net](#), January 10). Given the recent spate of NRF attacks against the Taliban, it is unlikely the Taliban will meet with Massoud, but if the NRF is conducting serious attacks against the Taliban in Panjshir, then further Taliban "counter-insurgency" operations against the NRF are more than expected.

Jacob Zenn is the Editor of Terrorism Monitor.

Islamic State in Khurasan Province Exploits Tajik Martyrs to Recruit in Central Asia

Lucas Webber

On June 18, Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) militants attacked a Sikh place of worship, or *gurdwara*, in Kabul, killing two people, although Islamic State (IS) touted a much higher casualty total ([The Hindu](#), June 19). IS formally claimed the operation through its Amaq News Agency outlet and stated the raid against the “temple for Hindu and Sikh polytheists” was intended to avenge the Prophet Muhammad following recent blasphemous comments made by Indian politicians ([Twitter/@Minalami](#), June 18). These comments about India drew considerable attention. However, there was another prong to the IS media strategy in revealing the attacker as “Abu Muhammad al-Tajiki,” which received much less commentary ([NDTV](#), June 20).

In 2022, ISKP has ramped up its outreach efforts to target potential supporters in Tajik communities throughout Afghanistan and the broader region ([Caravanserai](#), May 9). IS and its supporters have accordingly expanded propaganda production in the Tajik language and have framed the Taliban as Pashtun-centric and hostile towards Afghanistan’s other ethnic groups. This involves specifically noting the Taliban’s oppression of and violence against Tajiks, while presenting ISKP as the vehicle for smashing Central Asia’s arbitrarily drawn borders, destroying the Tajik government, and forming an IS province in Transoxiana ([Jihadology](#), June 22, 2020). ISKP matched words with action on May 8 when a volley of rockets was fired at Tajikistan that galvanized supporters online ([Twitter/LucasADWebber](#), May 11). Moreover, ISKP has made it a point to highlight martyrs of Tajik ethnicity, who are extolled as examples of courage, devotion, and self-sacrifice to the IS cause.

ISKP’s History of Revering Tajik Martyrs

ISKP has a history of touting the presence of Tajik fighters among its ranks and celebrating their sacrifice in carrying out martyrdom operations. This kind of ethno-linguistic signaling, however, is not exclusive to ISKP or to Tajik militants ([Deccan Herald](#), November 10, 2021). For instance, ISKP often reveals the *kunyas* of militants to indicate their Baloch, Uzbek, Uighur, Indian, or other ethnic, linguistic, and national backgrounds ([OpIndia](#), October 9, 2021; [Hindustan Times](#), March 12). Yet, ISKP’s Tajik-targeted media efforts feature prominently and provide a human connection by creating Tajik jihadist role models for sympathizers. Such role models have included:

- Abu Bakr al-Tajiki, who conducted a suicide bombing outside the Afghan Supreme Court in Kabul in 2017;
- Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Tajiki and Ibrahim al-Tajiki, who were part of a five-man force that assaulted the Daud Khan Hospital in Kabul in 2017; and
- Abu Aisha al-Tajiki, who raided a TV station in Kabul, also in 2017 ([Twitter/@Rita_Katz](#), February 8, 2017; [Jihadology](#), March 9, 2017; [Twitter/@WarObserver97](#), November 8, 2017).

Meanwhile, in 2020, Ahmed al-Tajiki and another operative killed scores of people at a gathering in Kabul, and that same year Ahmad Tajik, Abu Bakr Tajik, Ismail Tajik, and Idris Tajik were among a large team that attacked Jalalabad prison ([Twitter/@NatSecJeff](#), March 6, 2020; [India Today](#), August 4, 2020). The latter operation was featured in the fourth installment of IS’s “Makers of Epic Battles” video series, which profiled ISKP. The series also spotlighted a Tajik insurgent who threatened the government in Dushanbe and called out President

Emomali Rahmon by name ([Jihadology](#), July 20).

Abu Muhammad al-Tajiki and ISKP's Expanded Tajik Media Apparatus

The ISKP-aligned Tajik media and communications space became abuzz when the Amaq News Agency released the name and photo of Abu Muhammad al-Tajiki. The Tajik language pro-ISKP online ecosystem produced an array of visual and audio propaganda praising him and calling for others to follow his lead. The Al Azaim Tajiki media outlet, which translates official IS media into Tajik, further published its own claim of responsibility in Tajik Cyrillic. [1] In addition to this, translations of the claims in IS's standard Amaq format were circulated through tens of channels and bots that publish precise Tajik language translations of official IS media statements, which seem to be provided by I'llam Media Foundation. [2]

The Life of Khurasan group, which provides supporters with regular inside information and updates from IS-K militants and recruits for ISKP, also superimposed its logo over the photo of al-Tajiki and even made it the display image for the group's Telegram channel. [3] Further exemplifying the importance of a Tajik ISKP fighter conducting such an operation, some Telegram channels, such as Al Azaim Tajik and Sadoi Shaykh, had al-Tajiki's photo and the claim as their 'pinned message' for days.

The Sadoi Shaykh network even produced a 14-minute-long audio statement about the operation featuring a photo of al-Tajiki. [4] The audio was shared widely by Tajik Telegram channels, including Al Azaim Tajik, Ummah of Muhammad, and Sadoi Shaykh. The Movarounnahr Telegram channel also released a version of the audio seemingly by Yusuf Tajiki, who was a well-known ISKP member and propagandist, with a custom-made image celebrating Abu Muhammad al-Tajiki.

Conclusion

Abu Muhammad al-Tajiki's photo was featured prominently on two different pages in the June 23 issue of IS's official al-Naba newsletter ([Jihadology](#), June 23). This is yet another instance where Tajik fighters have received multiple rounds of promotion from the IS's central media apparatus to ISKP's own propaganda outlets, and then to Tajik-language networks under the Al Azaim umbrella and a number of other media groups in the Tajik IS milieu. Given ISKP's increased efforts to broaden its appeal with Tajiks, it is likely the group will continue to use Tajik and other ethnic militants to conduct high-profile attacks, produce propaganda, and recruit fighters from these non-Pashtun ethnicities.

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Notes

[1] Al Tajiki Group on Telegram, June 19.

[2] Al Azaim TJ on Telegram, June 20.

[3] Life of Khurasan on Telegram, June 21.

[4] Sadoi Shaykh on Telegram and YouTube, June 20.

[5] Movarounnahr on Telegram, June 22.

Baluch Militancy's Newest and Most Lethal Phase in Pakistan

Kiyya Baloch

The Baluch separatist insurgency in Pakistan's southwestern Baluchistan province has entered a crucial new phase. Despite Pakistan's intensive crackdown on Baluch rebels launched in August 2006, the insurgency has not waned in more than 15

years ([Dawn](#), August 27, 2006). Instead, since 2018, the insurgency's lethality has only dramatically increased. As a result, more lethal attacks, such as suicide bombings, high-profile targeted attacks, and kidnappings of high-ranked army officials, are now shaping the course of the nearly two-decade-long Baluch separatist insurgency.

New Trends in Baluch Militancy

Although low-level hit-and-run attacks are less practiced and are mostly limited to southern Baluchistan districts, organized violent and lethal attacks are increasingly happening elsewhere inside (as well as outside) Baluchistan province. In 2022, a remarkable shift in the strategy of Baluch militants has been evident. The year started with a large-scale attack in January on a security checkpoint in Baluchistan's Kech region that borders Iran. Pakistani officials stated that ten soldiers were killed ([Dawn](#), January 27).

Less than a week later, on February 2, Baluch separatist militants from the Baluch Liberation Army (BLA) suicide wing (the Majeed Brigade) stormed two security camps in Baluchistan's Nushki and Panjgur districts. According to official reports, they killed at least ten soldiers again ([Dawn](#), February 3). However, the Majeed Brigade claimed it killed as many as 195 Pakistani soldiers ([Twitter/@bashirgwakh](#), February 6).

Most of the time, figures provided by the military and militants are difficult to verify, but the latest string of organized attacks have undoubtedly rocked Baluchistan. Days after the February 2 attack in which 16 suicide attackers were killed, Pakistani government officials claimed that they had found American weaponry in the possession of slain insurgents, which were left behind from the U.S withdrawal from Afghanistan and evidently improved the militants' capabilities. It was reported that BLA militants had more modern weapons than even Pakistan's paramilitary frontier corps ([Asia Times](#), February 23).

Pakistan's then interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed acknowledged that Baluch rebels used U.S and NATO-made weapons in the attacks in Baluchistan on February 2 ([BBC Urdu](#), February 5).

Sudden Changes in Tactics

In April, the BLA's first female suicide bomber, who had pursued an academic life, attacked China's Confucius Institute in the southern port city of Karachi, killing four, including three Chinese nationals. This was a dramatic shift in the strategy of Baluch rebels, but hardly the only recent one ([Express Tribune](#), April 27). With time, the BLA may have adopted the fighting tactics of Tehreek-E-Taliban Pakistan (TTP, or Pakistani Taliban), if not other regional armed groups. However, the BLA's new leader Bashir Zaib, a former student leader, a mechanical engineer, and the son of a doctor, is adamant that the BLA always had the capacity to carry out such lethal attacks and added that the group's actions were a reaction to a brutal crackdown on Baluch activists and students ([Newscom World](#), February 13). The 40-years old old Zaib succeeded Aslam Baluch, known as Ustad Achu, after he was killed in Kandahar, Afghanistan ([Express Tribune](#), December 26, 2018).

Another new tactic was seen in mid-July when a Pakistani army Lieutenant Colonel was kidnapped by the BLA's Special Tactical Operations Squad while on a pleasure trip in the hill station of Ziarat in Baluchistan. After this, the Pakistan army carried out immediate strikes against the kidnappers. The military could not release its kidnapped officer before he was killed, but claimed to have killed nine insurgents during the operation, despite BLA's denials of the military's claims ([Twitter/@TBPEnglish](#), July 16).

From BLA's complex operations, one thing is clear: the group operates on two levels. A faction of the group is well trained and utilizes an organized network of informers inside the government to conduct sophisticated attacks, such as the

kidnapping in Ziarat. In contrast, a second faction of the group carries out smaller and less sophisticated, but more frequent, attacks, such as IED bombings or targeted shootings and grenade attacks.

Differences Between Then and Now

In contrast to the latest phase of militancy, throughout much of 2021 and into 2022 other Baluch separatist groups, such as Baluchistan Liberation Front (BLF), Baluch Republican Guards (BRG), United Baluch Army, and several little-known groups, had been lying low and rarely carrying out any significant attacks. However, an unprecedented claim in the first week of August shocked Pakistan. A spokesperson for Baluch Raaji Aajoi Sangar (BRAS), an umbrella group of four separatist Baluch groups of which BLA and BLF are part, claimed it shot down a Pakistani military chopper in Baluchistan's Lasbela district as it was en route to Karachi for a relief operation ([Twitter/ @Bras Media03](#), August 2). The helicopter carried the Corps Commander of Baluchistan, which is the province's senior-most military general, known as commander XII corps.

Officials from Baluchistan dismissed the claims and announced that the separatists had been pushed out of Baluchistan. The officials further claimed guerrillas operated outside of Pakistan in the Iranian part of Sistan-Baluchistan and in southern Afghanistan ([Terrorism Monitor](#), March 25). An advisor to the Baluchistan government told local media that the Baluch separatists were attempting to exaggerate their presence in media because their sanctuaries were eliminated in Baluchistan ([Arab News](#), August 2). It remains difficult to verify BRAS's and the Pakistani government's claims, however, and it is possible the chopper went down due to bad weather.

Conclusion

Amid contradictory statements by officials and insurgents, the new trends in Baluch militant tactics suggest the violence is

nowhere near over. The periodic suicide attacks also indicate that the militants believe new methods and tactics will cause maximum damage and create more media coverage and hype for their cause. One can also assume there are bigger plans in store from these Baluch militants, especially in terms of targeting Chinese interests.

The leader of BLF, Dr. Allah Nazar Baluch, in a video released in late July threatened harsher attacks on China and warned of launching assaults in the future on Canadian mining firm Barrick Gold, which has signed a deal to mine in the Chagai district of Baluchistan Province ([Nikkei Asia](#), August 7). With the lack of will or inability by Islamabad to resolve the Baluch conflict via dialogue and with the increasingly lethal attacks by Baluch armed groups, it is evident that Baluch militants are enthusiastic about their new tactics and believe they will exert greater pressure on the Pakistani state. This, in turn, will change the overall discourse and eventually escalate the conflict to a more acute level.

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Indian Security Agencies Target Popular Front of India

Soumya Awasthi

On September 22, an India-wide crackdown on the neo-radical Islamic movement, Popular Front of India (PFI), was conducted by the National Investigative Agency (NIA), Enforcement Directorate (ED), and various state police agencies. The raids led to the arrests of more than 100 top leaders of PFI from across eleven states and Union Territories. For example, PFI leaders, including its

Chairman, OMA Salam, Delhi head Parvez Ahmed, Kerala head, CP Mohammed Basheer, national secretary, VP Nazarudheen, and national council member, Professor P Koya, were all arrested ([India Today](#), September 22).

The raid on PFI began soon after some members were pressuring young women into wearing hijab to educational institutions. This occurred after the Indian state declared it mandatory to follow the uniform system strictly to ensure "religious neutrality". Therefore, it was alleged that this hijab controversy was an orchestrated conspiracy by PFI to instigate social unrest ([The Hindu](#), September 22). During the raids, the police found PFI members in possession of some weapons and homemade explosive devices and more than 200 mobile phones, 100 laptops, and other evidence like papers, vision records, enrollment applications, and bank details were seized ([India TV News](#), September 22).

In the past, PFI has been alleged to be involved in unlawful activities that created animosity between Muslims and Hindus. It had also declared a direct war against the ruling Indian government and resorted to anti-national activities. The Indian security agencies had registered cases under the Indian Penal Code and the infamous Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), but the most recent trigger of unrest is related to events in Udaipur in the northern Indian state of Rajasthan ([Telegraph](#), September 22).

PFI's Unrest in Udaipur and Beyond

On July 13, PFI members were suspected of killing a Hindu tailor in Udaipur. Through social media, the tailor had supported former National Spokesperson of the ruling

party Ms. Nupur Sharma's blasphemous statements about the Prophet Mohammad ([Hindustan Times](#), July 10). In another similar incident, a chemist, Umesh Prahladrao Kolhe, was killed in Amravati, Maharashtra by other suspected PFI cadres ([Twitter/ANI](#), July 13). Further, in 2021, a member of PFI was also arrested and is currently being investigated for murdering an activist protesting against PFI *Dawah* activities ([nia.gov](#), 2021; [OpIndia](#), July 29, 2022). [1]

These incidents shined a spotlight on the PFI, which has emerged as an organization championing the cause of Indian Muslims over issues such as Ram Mandir, [2] Triple Talaq, [3] Hijab Ban, [4] Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 [5] and, most recently, the comments made by the right-wing politician Nupur Sharma. Headquartered in New Delhi, the organization has an especially strong foothold in Kerala due to the significant migration between Kerala and Gulf countries, which influenced Kerala's Muslim community to become more religiously conservative. PFI has also expanded nationally by including in its fold like-minded groups, such as the Tamil Nadu-based Manitha Neethu Pasarai and the Karnataka Forum for Dignity. Given PFI's rapid expansion and ability to directly attack and vocalize its agendas, India is facing a hybrid threat, which is neither completely terrorist in nature nor entirely activist.

Indian security agencies also suspect PFI's involvement in several trans-national terror activities and criminal incidents in India ([vifindia.org](#), 2022). Its cadres, for example, have been suspected of playing a role in the 2010 German bakery blast in Pune, whose case is being arbitrated by the Anti-Terror Squad, and the Maharashtra

and Delhi Riots of 2019 ([The Hindu](#) December 4, 2010; [Press Release Enforcement Directorate](#), June 1, 2022). Police have also arrested PFI members from Telangana who were providing weapons training and running militant camps ([Twitter/ANI](#), July 7). In addition, security agencies suspect PFI's involvement in several political killings and forced religious conversions ([Times Now](#), May 4). The same agencies have also claimed that the PFI sent youth from Kerala to Afghanistan, Syria and Turkey to join Islamic State (IS). Most claims of PFI violence rely on Indian security sources, which PFI denies.

PFI's objectives were revealed during a security operation by the police in Bihar during a raid on PFI members, which led to the recovery of an eight-page document titled "India Vision 2047" ([OpIndia](#), July 14). This document mentioned terms like "coward Hindus" of India and emphasized the goal of PFI: to promote Islamic rule in India. This involves holding full-scale armed riots with the support of Turkey and Gulf countries as well as China due to its anti-India stand on several other diplomatic platforms. To achieve this, the PFI established training centers in Gulf cities and states such as Abu Dhabi, Jeddah, and Kuwait, where physical combat training was provided ([The Daily Guardian](#), June 3). Although the recent extra judicial killings attributed to PFI point toward the group's violent intentions, the legal evidence to support such PFI goals is still mixed.

PFI's Trajectory and India's Responses

In the future, PFI aims to expand its activities by mobilizing the Indian Muslim youth. It wants to underscore that the

Indian government is against Muslims and the only way to counter the government is by going on the offensive. The organization also aims to have one member at a minimum in every Muslim household. Given these plans, the PFI is emerging as a hybrid organization, combining elements of both militancy and religious activism.

The Indian government is contemplating a ban on the PFI, but the organization reinvents itself in response to government counter actions. In the past, it evolved from the Student's Islamic Movement of India to an offshoot called Campus Front of India ([South Asia Democratic Forum](#), 2020). While the Indian government mulls its moves against the PFI, several state governments like Jharkhand and Karnataka have proscribed the group, while the Sufi Khanqah Association of Uttar Pradesh has appealed to the Home Ministry to ban PFI ([Republic World](#), May 22). On July 31, 2022, an Interfaith Conference was conducted by the All India Sufi Sajjadanashin Council (AISSC) in Delhi to again demand a ban on PFI ([The Indian Express](#), July 31).

Therefore, a political agreement appears to be emerging to address the PFI situation. Political and social leaders from all sides of the Indian political spectrum have realized that this organization's many offshoots have grown far too widely and have had an impact that goes far beyond regular politics. Despite the raids on PFI, these measures are seen as transitory and only partial because PFI members work on numerous fronts and in different independent capacities.

Conclusion

If the accusations made against the PFI are true, the Indian government's goals of

outlawing or cracking down on the organization have certainly been unsuccessful. Further, if the government is planning to impose a ban on PFI, it must ensure that it is effective. An embargo on paper is unlikely to dissuade the individuals in PFI who serve important roles in the organization from continuing their activities even under another group name or independently. Unless the state targets PFI members in a manner that undermines their networks, resources, political will, and ability to regroup, the country is likely to find itself back at square one in dealing with PFI or its offshoots. The most likely next step, however, is still more legislative changes under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 (under which the PFI is registered). This could ensure that PFI does not reincarnate again, but it would likely be insufficient to mitigate the activities of its members whether they conduct activities in the name of PFI or in some other form.

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Notes:

[1] *Dawah* is an Islamic practice of conveying the message of Islam sometimes to the extent of converting non-Muslims into Islam.

[2] Ram Mandir is a Hindu Temple in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh. The site was under dispute between Hindus and Muslims.

[3] The Supreme Court of India declared the divorce-related practice of Triple Talaq as illegal and null and void under the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019. This was considered an anti-Islamic ruling by certain Muslim leaders.

[4] In 2022, an educational institution denied entry to women students wearing Hijab by alleging it was not part of the school dress code, which led to statewide protests supported by the PFI.

[5] Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 was passed to include offering Indian citizenship to the persecuted minorities in Muslim countries in South Asia. However, certain communal groups, including PFI, opposed it and engaged in political unrest.