

NO CHANGE: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON PAKISTAN AND TERROR FINANCING

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: FATF

In a repetition of its decisions over the past three years, the [Financial Action Task Force \(FATF\)](#) said that members of the 39-member grouping voted to [retain Pakistan on its 'grey list'](#) of jurisdictions under increased monitoring. The FATF, which evaluates countries on efforts to check terror financing and money laundering, also placed Turkey on the grey list and cleared Mauritius from it. The FATF found that Pakistan had cleared 30 of a total of 34 tasks assigned in two batches, and would face another review in February 2022. In particular, the FATF President, Marcus Pleyer, said that Pakistan had failed to resolve the single task that remains from the first batch, of demonstrating that effective investigations and prosecutions are being pursued against the senior leadership of United Nations-designated terror groups. From New Delhi's perspective, the most significant of these are Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief Masood Azhar, Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) chief Hafiz Saeed, Dawood Ibrahim and other command and control chiefs of terror groups that target India, that have yet to be brought to justice for the 26/11 Mumbai attacks in 2008, the IC-814 hijacking in 1999 and several major attacks and bombings in Jammu and Kashmir. It is indeed disappointing that the increased monitoring by the FATF of Pakistan — from 2008-2009, 2012-2015, and 2018-2021 — has failed to ensure that while some of these leaders have been tried and convicted for terror financing charges in Pakistani courts, none of them has been effectively prosecuted for violence in India. These much-delayed outcomes speak as much to Pakistan's lack of credibility on terrorism as to the FATF's own lack of effectiveness.

Despite Pakistan's failure to fulfill its task list, the FATF President has made it clear that they are not considering placing Pakistan on the 'black list', as they say it "continues to cooperate". On the other hand, the FATF has also said that it will not remove Pakistan from the grey list, despite the country completing 26/27 of the original tasks it was assigned. The actions open the world body to accusations of 'politicising' the process, both from those who would like to see tough action for non-compliance by Pakistan, and from Pakistan itself, which has accused India of turning the technical process into a political one by "targeting" Pakistan. As a result, the FATF must stop kicking the proverbial can down the road. It must ensure that the investigation of Pakistan is not an open-ended process, and is brought to a credible and effective conclusion at the earliest. In light of the developments in Afghanistan, and concerns over the growth of transnational terror groups such as al-Qaeda and ISIL, as well as JeM and LeT taking advantage of the Taliban takeover to build new safe havens and financing networks, it is particularly important that the FATF keep its commitment from 2001 (when it added terror financing to its mandate) to prevent all terror groups from accessing these funding networks.

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