

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 1, 2019

Ambassador Nathan Sales
Coordinator for Counterterrorism
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Ambassador Sales:

We write to you today concerning an issue vital to the U.S. and our allies, particularly those in the South Asia region, such as India and Bangladesh. Specifically, I write about the threat from Jamaat-e-Islami and their international network of proxy groups and associates, and significant evidence that these networks and proxy groups are linked to promoting extremist ideology and terror finance.

As you may know, Jamaat-e-Islami was founded by Abul A'la Maududi, in India in 1941, prior to partition of the Indian sub-Continent. Maududi believed that Islam was a "non-conventional religion," and instead was "a revolutionary ideology," that called for an "international revolutionary party," which he then established. It has driven conflict and violence and preached radical ideology in South Asia ever since.

In recent decades, Jamaat-e-Islami has repeatedly acted in accordance with its theocratic views, including acting as a paramilitary wing of Pakistan's intelligence agencies during the Bangladeshi War of Independence in which countless Bangladeshi freedom fighters and civilians alike were murdered. The war crimes tribunals continue to this day. Additionally, various wings of Jamaat-e-Islami, such as Hizbul Mujahideen, which was founded as the "militant wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami,"¹ is a U.S. designated foreign terrorist organization.² Jamaat-e-Islami's student wing in Bangladesh, Islami Chhatra Shibir, was named the 3rd most violent non-state armed group in the world in 2015.³ More recently, Jamaat-e-Islami was banned in India controlled Kashmir for driving terrorism in the region.⁴

Unfortunately, Jamaat-e-Islami's affiliates and proxy groups are not limited to South Asia, and extends to other areas of Asia and Europe, and even extend even here to the United States. This is unsurprising, given that Maududi explicitly stated that "(W)herever you are, in whichever country you live, you must strive to change the wrong basis of government, and seize all powers to the rule and make laws from those who do not fear God."⁵

¹ "Hizbul Mujahideen: A Profile," The Times of India, May 20, 2003. Available at:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/Hizbul-Mujahideen-A-profile/articleshow/46956242.cms>

² "Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO)," Congressional Research Services, Updated January 15, 2019. Available at: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/IFI0613.pdf>

³ "Shibir 3rd among top non-state armed groups," The Daily Star, March 8, 2015. Available at:

<https://www.thedailystar.net/shibir-3rd-among-top-non-state-armed-groups-12937>

⁴ "Jamaat-e-Islami brain behind Hizbul Mujahideen and Hurriyat," Hindustan Times, March 1, 2019. Available at:

<https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/newsindia/jamaat-e-islami-brain-behind-hizbul-mujahideen-and-hurriyat/ar-BBUgfh>

⁵ "Let Us Be Muslims," By: Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi and Khurram Murad, First Published 1940.

Specifically of concern are the innocuous sounding organization, Helping Hands for Relief and Development (HHRD) and their "sister organization," the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA).⁶ While they sell themselves as innocuous Muslim civic society organizations, they are, in fact, arms of one of the most radical networks in the world.

There is no serious doubt that ICNA and HHRD are part of Jamaat-e-Islami's international network. Indeed, the evidence is overwhelming and extensive.⁷ Vali Nasr of Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced and International Studies names ICNA as one of the most important branches of Jamaat-e-Islami in the world.⁸ Regrettably, there is significant evidence that Helping Hands for Relief and Development and ICNA are directly involved in terror finance. Indeed, Helping Hands for Relief and Development, under the guise of international aid, has openly worked with U.S. designated terrorist organizations in the disputed region of Kashmir.

In December 2017, HHRD organized a conference in Pakistan. Other organizations sponsoring the event included the Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation, the charitable wing of the Pakistani terrorist organization, Lashkar-e-Taiba.⁹ In 2016, the U.S. Treasury Department designated the Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation as a terrorist organization.¹⁰ But that's just one example. Another sponsor of the conference was a Pakistani charity named Al-Khidmat, which is the main charitable wing of Jamaat-e-Islami. Al-Khidmat support the aforementioned Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Jamaat-e-Islami's armed wing, a U.S. designated terrorist group, and works on projects that are run by Hizb-ul-Mujahideen.¹¹ But Al-Khidmat's ties to terror finance don't end only with other Jamaat-e-Islami affiliated groups. In 2006, Jamaat-e-Islami announced that Al-Khidmat sent 6 million rupees (\$100,000) to Hamas, another U.S. designated terrorist group, for their "just Jihad."¹² Moreover, HHRD's partnership with Al-Khidmat is not relegated to this one conference. Indeed, according to HHRD's 2017 report, HHRD had done 214 different projects with Al-Khidmat.¹³

Further troubling is an ongoing trial in Connecticut, which suggests the problem may be far deeper. According to news stories, Fareed Ahmed Khan, a Pakistani-American (naturalized in the early 2000's) is accused of lying to the FBI multiple times, in connection with a terror finance investigation. According to one recent story, Khan is charged with falsely claiming that "(H)e wasn't Further troubling are recent events in Connecticut, which suggests the problem may be far deeper. According to news stories, Fareed Ahmed Khan, a Pakistani-American (naturalized in the early 2000's) is accused of lying to the FBI multiple times, in connection with a terror finance

⁶ "American Islamist Charity Openly Partners with Designated Terrorists," By: Sam Westrop, January 4, 2018, Rabwah Times. Available at: <https://www.meforum.org/7144/american-islamist-charity-partners-with-terrorists>

⁷ "IPT Investigative Report: Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA): Origins in and Ties to the Jamaat-e-Islami," Pg. 15-35. Available at: <https://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/misc/1058.pdf>

⁸ "The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan," Pg. 78, By Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr of Johns Hopkins University. Originally Published 1994.

⁹ "Pakistani Islamism Flourishes in America," By: Sam Westrop, National Review, January 24, 2018. Available at: <https://www.meforum.org/7181/pakistani-islamism-flourishes-in-america>

¹⁰ Counter-Terrorism Designations, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Specifically Designated Nationals List Update, U.S. Department of the Treasury. Available at: <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/OFAC-Enforcement/Pages/20161228.aspx>

¹¹ "American Islamist Charity Openly Partners with Designated Terrorists," By: Sam Westrop, January 4, 2018, Rabwah Times. Available at: <https://www.meforum.org/7144/american-islamist-charity-partners-with-terrorists>

¹² "Pakistani Islamism Flourishes in America," By: Sam Westrop, National Review, January 24, 2018. Available at: <https://www.meforum.org/7181/pakistani-islamism-flourishes-in-america>


¹³ Celebrating a Decade of Service: Water and Sanitation. A Decade of Service to Humanity 10 Years 2005-2015, Pg. 50. Available at: www.hhrd.org/pdf/wfl/2017-WFL-WASH-WhatTheyEntail.pdf

investigation. According to one recent story, Khan is charged with falsely claiming that "(H)e wasn't associated with the Islamic Circle of North America, a related charity called ICNA Relief, or two other organizations, Helping Hands and Helping Hand for Relief and Development... He is also accused of saying falsely that the only packages he had sent to Pakistan contained clothing and went to his brother and sister."¹⁴ When, in fact, Khan was "(I)n charge of all money collections and had been in charge for a long time," for the New England branch of ICNA.¹⁵ Further court filings show that his brother openly solicited funds for the Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation, the U.S. designated terrorist organization and arm of Lashkar-e-Taiba.¹⁶ Very recently, Khan was found guilty of lying to law enforcement during the investigation.¹⁷ While it is possible that Khan was a rogue ICNA member, given further ties between ICNA and Falah-e-Insaniat and other U.S. and UN Security Council designated terror groups, that should not be assumed.

We believe the documented facts above would give a reasonable person good reason to investigate just how extensive and systemic these ties are. The nexus of charitable networks and terrorist groups is well known and pernicious. This is particularly important to investigate, as ICNA has received over ten million dollars in government grants, even from the current Administration.¹⁸

The ongoing tension and violence in Kashmir is a threat to peace and stability for both India and Pakistan. It is clearly in the best interests of the U.S. to keep peace in the region and not fan the flames of war. It is thus vital that the U.S. do whatever it can to stop the flow of any and all funds that we can to terrorist organizations operating in the region. Thus, we ask that you use the full powers of your office to further investigate the potential terror finance links between groups like ICNA and HHRD, and U.S. and UN Security Council designated terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Hizbul Mujahedeen.

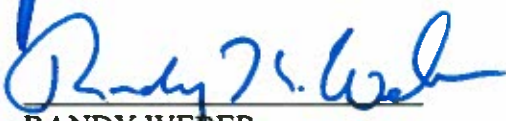
Sincerely,



JIM BANKS
Member of Congress



CHUCK FLEISCHMANN
Member of Congress



RANDY WEBER
Member of Congress

¹⁴ "Manchester mechanic's cash questioned in terrorism probe," By: Alex Wood. The Journal Inquirer. September 19, 2018. Available at: https://www.journalinquirer.com/crime_and_courts/manchester-mechanic-s-cash-questioned-in-terrorism-probe/article_a5da2092-hc1c-11e8-8286-f33c1064fe4a.html

¹⁵ "Likely Terror-Finance Case in Connecticut," By: Oren Litwin, Islamist Watch, September 14, 2018. Available at: <https://www.meforum.org/islamist-watch/55344/likely-terror-finance-case-in-connecticut>

¹⁶ US. vs. Khan, US. Dis. Ct. Connecticut, Government's Omnibus Opposition to Defense Motions In Limine And Supplemental Briefing As To Government's Motions In Limine, August 9, 2019

¹⁷ "Manchester Man Guilty of Lying to Federal Law Enforcement During Interview," US Attorney's Office, District of Columbia, September 19, 2019. Available at: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ct/pr/manchester-man-guilty-lying-federal-law-enforcement-during-interview>

¹⁸ "New Research Uncovers \$41 Million of U.S.-Taxpayer-Subsidized Islamism," By: Sam Westrop, The Daily Wire, May 1, 2019. Available at: <https://www.meforum.org/58381/41-million-us-taxpayer-subsidized-islamism>