

**Joint India-Pakistan Trade Unions' Statement on
Terrorism in South Asia: A Challenge for Democracy
6 July 2009**

India and Pakistan have witnessed many attacks of terrorism and have taken them all in their stride. The most recent attack in Mumbai on 26th November 2008 and in Lahore on 3rd March, 2009 has shaken the subcontinent and the world.

We condemn terrorism in all its manifestations.

It is understandable that people become furious and outraged in face of such acts. They have the right to be so when such attacks terrorise and kill innocent citizens who are not accountable for the acts of the state. There is a growing expressing of anger and horror by people over such incidents in many different ways. But, it is to the credit of the people of India and Pakistan, that they have not been provoked and drawn into sectarianism, national chauvinism or war mongering. We welcome this spirit of the people of India and Pakistan. We also believe that time is right for democratic debate on the nature of terrorism and the context of its emergence, in the region, which all progressive forces should engage in, with a sense of historical responsibility.

We believe that this context of rising terrorism is being used by the ruling elite to shift public opinion towards an internal security doctrine that is undemocratic, chauvinistic and anti-people. They are redefining internal governing structures to suit the new internal security doctrine and integrating it into U.S. sponsored '*global war against terror*'.

Working people of India and Pakistan must unite to fight terrorism.

We express our indignation on the growing dependence on US agencies to exchange information and intelligence, and for backhand diplomacy, between the two countries. This undermines sovereignty of each country and allows the US to influence, prevail and intervene in our mutual relationship.

We believe that both governments are reluctantly coming to realise that the best policy to deal with cross-border terrorism, is cooperation. These are positive approaches in these difficult times. Any mature response to the situation has to respect the sovereignty of the states of India and Pakistan and develop credible and cooperative mechanisms to deal with non-state actors. But, there are strong forces in each of our countries that are opposed to this policy.

We call upon the governments of India and Pakistan to overcome mutual suspicions and build mutual trust by:

1. Exchange of information and intelligence without any misgivings and reservation
2. Providing access for interrogation of arrested persons
3. Ensure legal rights and assistance to the arrested persons in accordance with international human right standards

South Asia out of the U.S. Area of Influence

The partition of Indian sub-continent had never really settled down to mutual co-existence, let alone to cooperation and a peaceful relationship. The unresolved Kashmir dispute has remained a festering wound in preventing any peace initiatives. The U.S. intervention in the

subcontinent, particularly its support for military regimes and use of extremist groups as per political exigencies has weakened the democratisation of societies and peaceful coexistence and development in the region

The emergence of terrorism in sub- continent has to be viewed in the context of international politics, wherein U.S. imperialism has been both using religious extremism for its military policy, and now, demonising the people of Islamic faith into a global enemy, in order to oppress and control Muslim nations and their oil wealth. Imperialism can opt for such policy because of the still surviving domestic ground of landlordism, and in general medievalism. This has led to formation of non-state actors fighting a global war of terrorism against U.S. imperialism and its allies. As in all war, it has resulted in major collateral damages and immense killing of innocent people who are not accountable for the acts of their States.

Both, terrorism and the response of the state have always led to undermining of democracy. Historical experience has shown that the cycle of terrorism and state terrorism never eliminates terrorism. In fact, it is the people's movement that can cut this nexus through a struggle for democratisation, equality and equity for all. In building this movement, the working class across borders have to play crucial role. The millions strong Trade Unions in both countries have to coordinate and converge to fulfil this historic responsibility.

No war between India and Pakistan

The people of India and Pakistan are witnessing the militarisation of state and society. The dominance of militarist thinking in the two governments: the doctrine of preventive intervention and terrorism as a State policy has prevented the strengthening of the fraternity of the people, consolidation of the political constituency for peaceful resolution of conflict and build a common identity for South Asian people.

The reduction of tensions between India and Pakistan means the reduction of defence budgets in both countries. This will have a major and meaningful impact on the well being of each country's citizens. We demand:

- Reduce the influence and control of the military and make it accountable and subordinate to the elected governments.
- Stop militarising society by developing the doctrine of internal security, as extensions of war concepts into society, and creating armed forces for internal war.

Terrorism Weakens the Unity of the People of the sub-continent and the Struggle against Imperialism

We therefore call upon the people of India, Pakistan and South Asia to deepen the process of democracy, contend ideologically and politically with all forms of regressive and chauvinistic viewpoints and ideologies, and build a secular framework for peaceful co-existence.

We believe that terrorism finds fertile ground when society and state demonises, deprives and oppresses a large section of people and can be addressed by:

- Creating a democratic ground where even extreme ideologies are compelled to defend their views, policies, and action in open public space and thereby limiting the politics of terrorism;

- Isolating extremism within society by defeating their views through an ideological and political battle within a democratic framework of nation building process.

We understand that the present situation demands a protracted, flexible and sensitive approach to deal with terrorism, which finds its justification in primordial loyalties and ideologies, like religion which has a wider social resonance. We respect and appreciate that, in the last decade, in India, Pakistan and abroad, many theologians, institutions and ordinary religious people have campaigned against terrorism and joined forces to build a tolerant and peaceful society

Fight against terrorism! Defend and deepen a tolerant, secular and democratic society in India and Pakistan!

1. Nabi Ahmed, Senior Vice-President, Muttahida Labour Federation Pakistan;
2. Mohammad Hanif Jhangiri President, Pakistan Workers' Federation, Balochistan;
3. Abdul Salaam, Chairman, Pakistan Workers' Federation Balochistan;
4. Jaffar Khan, Deputy General Secretary, Muttahida Labour Federation Pakistan;
5. Sajjad Hussain, General Secretary, Allied Bank Staff Union of Pakistan;
6. Anwar Habib President, Allied Bank Staff Union of Pakistan;
7. Manzoor, General Secretary, Muttahida Labour Federation, Balochistan;
8. Shaukat Ali Chaudhury, Vice-President Railway Workers' Union Collective Bargaining Authority Workshops, Pakistan;
9. Fazal-e-Wahid, General Secretary, Railway Workers' Union Collective Bargaining Authority Workshops, Pakistan, and President All Pakistan Trade Union Federation;
10. Ashiq Jhangiri Deputy General Secretary, Railway and Workers' Union Collective Bargaining Authority Workshops' Pakistan;
11. Chaudhury Ashiq Ali, President, Railway Workers' Union Open Line, Pakistan;
12. Gulzar Ahmed Chaudhury, General Secretary, All Pakistan Trade Union Federation, Pakistan;
13. Rubina Jamil, President, Working Women Organisation, Pakistan.
14. Ashim Roy, General Secretar, New Trade Union Initiative
15. Anuradha Talwar, President, Paschim Banga Khet Mazdoor Samiti, India
16. Swapan Ganguly, Agricultural Workers Alliance
17. D. Thankappan, President, Kamani Employees Union, India
18. Ashok Chowdhury, National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers, India
19. V. B. Cherian, President, Cochin Shipyard Employees Union
20. Chandrashekhar, CTU Punjab & Chandigarh General Workers Union
21. Guatam Mody, Working People Trade Union Council, India
22. Mohan Kothekar, Vidharbha Heavy Vehicle & Truck Chalak Sangathan
23. Suajata Mody, Penn Thozilalargal Sangam
24. D.C. Gohain, Jharkhand Krantikaari Mazdoor Union
25. Milind Ranade, Kachra Vahatuk Shramik Sangathan
26. M. A. Patil, Maharashtra Anganwadi Karamchari Sangh
27. M. A. Parray, Jammu & Kashmir Trade Union Council
28. Mohd. Shafi Khan, All Jammu & Kashmir Trade Union Centre
29. Nisar Ali Mir, All Jammu & Kashmir Trade Union Centre
30. M. Subbu, Tamil Maanila Kattida Thozilalar Sangham
31. N. Vasudevan, Blue Star Workers Union

32. K. P. Vishwavalsalan, Kerala Samsthana Kasuandi Thozhilai Union
33. P.T. John, Plantation Working Class Union
34. Chandan Sanyal, All West Bengal Sales Representatives Union
35. Sailen Bhattacharya, ECL & ICML Shramik Union
36. S. P. Vansadia, Chemical Mazdoor Panchayat
37. Himanshu Banker, Gramin Mazdoor Sabha
38. Rohit Prajapati, Jyoti Karamchhari Mazdoor Union
39. Bhagmal Rana, Federation of Union Territory Chandigarh Employees and Workers