



Appendix C – Statement of Reasons – Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)

(Also known as: **IMU, Islamic Movement of Turkestan, Islamic Party of Turkestan**)

The following information is based on publicly available details about the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. To the Australian Government's knowledge, these details are accurate and reliable and have been corroborated by classified information.

Basis for listing a terrorist organisation

Division 102 of the *Criminal Code* provides that for an organisation to be listed as a terrorist organisation, the Attorney-General must be satisfied on reasonable grounds that the organisation:

- (a) is directly or indirectly engaged in, preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur); or
- (b) advocates the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur).

Details of the organisation

Objectives

The origins of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) date from the early 1990s, when Juma Namangani, a former Soviet Army soldier who fought in Afghanistan joined forces with Tahir Yuldashav (variant Yuldosh), an unofficial mullah and head of the Adolat (Justice) Party, with the aim to implement Sharia law in the city of Namangan in Uzbekistan's part of the Ferghana Valley.

Alarmed by Adolat's demands to transform Uzbekistan into an Islamist state, the government banned the Adolat Party in March 1992. A period of repression followed, forcing many Islamic militants to flee the Ferghana Valley. Namangani fled to Tajikistan, where he participated in the Tajik Civil War and established a base for his fighters in that country. Yuldashev travelled to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, establishing links to other Islamic militants. He also made clandestine trips to Uzbekistan, maintaining contact with his supporters and setting up underground cells. By the late 1990s, the IMU was officially formed.

The IMU's stated goal, as posted on the internet in August 1999, is the 'establishment of an Islamic state with the application of the Shariah' in Uzbekistan.

The IMU expanded its territorial focus to encompass an area stretching from the Caucasus to China's western province of Xinjiang, under the new banners of the Islamic Party of Turkestan in April 2001 and the Islamic Movement of Turkestan in May 2001. Despite the name changes, the group's name continues to be reported as the IMU, and it is listed under this name by the US Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism as a foreign terrorist organisation.

By the end of the 1990s, the IMU had relocated to Afghanistan, due to the lack of support for the movement in Uzbekistan and the measures taken against it by the Uzbek government.

Leadership

The former chief and co-founder of the IMU, Tahir Yuldashev, was killed in a US drone strike in South Waziristan, Pakistan, on 27 August 2009. Yuldashev’s death was confirmed by the IMU in August 2010. The new IMU leader, Usmon Odil, is a long time associate of Yuldashev and was named as successor before Yuldashev’s death.

Membership

The IMU has attracted supporters from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, principally Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Tajiks, Chechens and Uighurs. The IMU's recruitment efforts have also been aimed at Germans, with a German member of the group, in a video released in 2010, inviting entire families to leave Germany to join the IMU in Pakistan’s tribal areas.

The IMU continues to recruit fighters, and IMU members fight alongside the Taliban and al-Qa’ida against Coalition forces in Afghanistan and Pakistani forces in Pakistan. The Ferghana Valley, where the Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Tajik borders converge, is a fertile recruiting ground for the IMU, which has successfully exploited the widespread poverty in the region in its recruitment strategy.

The IMU’s losses in Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as the defection of fighters to a splinter group, the Islamic Jihad Union, have not diminished the group’s capability and intent to conduct terrorist attacks.

During the latter part of 2009, the IMU claimed that its fighters had been engaged in four months of severe fighting in four northern provinces of Afghanistan and in northwest Pakistan, and that the ranks of the IMU were being filled on a daily basis by new volunteers.

Funding

Sources of funding for the IMU have included Uzbeks who migrated to Islamic countries in the 1920s, in particular Saudi Arabia's Uzbek diaspora which numbers 300,000 people. Funds also come from a number of Turkish foundations and Islamist and pan-Turkic organisations, the Taliban, al-Qa'ida and sympathetic foundations and banks throughout the Arab world.

The IMU also generates funds through drug trafficking, racketeering and solicitation of donations abroad. In May 2008, French, German and Dutch authorities detained ten individuals suspected of running a network to funnel money to the IMU in Uzbekistan.

Terrorist activity of the organisation

Directly or indirectly engaged in the doing of terrorist acts

Terrorist attacks for which the IMU has claimed responsibility, or which have been reliably attributed to the IMU include:

- 19 September 2010: the IMU claimed responsibility for an ambush of Tajik troops in the Rasht Valley, east of Dushanbe, Tajikistan, killing 25 soldiers and wounding 20 others;
- 3 September 2010: the Tajik government blamed the IMU for a suicide car bombing outside the office of the anti-organised crime police unit in Khujand, Tajikistan, killing two police officers and wounding 25 others;
- 22 August 2010: six guards were killed during a prison break in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, during which 25 alleged IMU militants escaped;
- 14 August 2010: IMU fighters attacked Ali Abad District police headquarters in Kunduz Province, Afghanistan, killing one policeman;
- 9 August 2009: according to Uzbek authorities, a cell linked to senior IMU figure Shaukat Makhmudov murdered Hasan Asadov, an Uzbek Interior Ministry anti-terrorism and anti-corruption officer;
- 31 July 2009: according to Uzbek authorities, a cell linked to senior IMU figure Shaukat Makhmudov murdered the chief Imam of the Kukeldash Mosque in Tashkent, Uzbekistan;

- 20 July 2009: five IMU fighters were killed when they attacked a remote military checkpoint in Tajikistan near the Afghan border;
- 16 July 2009: according to Uzbek authorities, a cell linked to senior IMU figure Shaukat Makhmudov murdered an assistant at the Kukeldash Mosque in Tashkent, Uzbekistan;
- April 2009: the IMU claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing in North Waziristan, Pakistan, that killed a Pakistani soldier and seven civilians;
- 5 September 2008: according to Tajik authorities, an unidentified IMU member shot and wounded a police officer in Isfara, Tajikistan;
- 28 August 2008: according to Tajik authorities, IMU elements fired upon two police officers in Isfara, Tajikistan;
- May 2008: two IMU members in possession of explosives and hand grenades were arrested in Afghanistan. The two admitted to planting mines on a road and providing a base for militant activities;
- Mid-2007: seven IMU militants were arrested while planting a mine on a road used by Coalition patrols in northern Afghanistan. The group admitted to carrying out rocket attacks, suicide missions and recruitment activities;
- 27 September 2006: according to Tajik authorities, the IMU launched an attack against a vehicle carrying supporters of the Tajik President in Isfara, Tajikistan, wounding two civilians;
- 12 May 2006: the IMU attacked border and customs posts in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan;
- 25 January 2006: the IMU attacked a pre-trial detention centre in Kairakum, Tajikistan, killing the centre’s chief;
- 31 January and 13 June 2005: the IMU exploded bombs outside the Ministry of Emergency Situations in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, killing one person and wounding at least 12 others;
- 8 May 2003: the IMU bombed a currency exchange office in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, killing one person;
- 27 December 2002: the IMU bombed a market in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, killing six people and wounding 40 others;
- 12 August 2000: the IMU kidnapped four US mountain climbers;
- 21 August 1999: the IMU kidnapped four Japanese geologists, their interpreter and the head of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Interior troops; and
- 16 February 1999: the IMU exploded five car bombs in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, killing at least 16 people and wounding over 130 in an apparent attempt to assassinate President Karimov.

Directly or indirectly preparing and/or planning the doing of terrorist acts

On 10 March 2011, an alleged IMU commander was detained along with an unspecified number of suspected militants in Balkh Province, Afghanistan, while in the final stages of planning a suicide attack in Mazar-e Sharif.

On 23 July 2009, three IMU members were detained for planning an attack in eastern Tajikistan.

On 11 September 2006, the IMU leadership renewed its commitment to attack the governments of Central Asia and issued personal threats against the Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Tajik Presidents. This statement reinforced the IMU leadership's commitment to al-Qaida's ideology of global jihad and anti-Western and anti-Israeli rhetoric.

Directly or indirectly assisting in the doing of terrorist acts

Western European Muslims have been trained by the IMU in camps in North Waziristan, Pakistan. German nationals of Turkish and Moroccan origin have been trained in IMU camps and have made threats against Germany.

In September 2009, Pakistani investigators discovered a 'village' of German insurgents, including Muslim converts, who were being trained in a camp controlled by the IMU in the Waziristan area of Pakistan. A number of Swedish converts were also located there.

Directly or indirectly fostering the doing of terrorist acts

The IMU maintains a media wing, known as Jundallah Studio, through which it releases video and audio statements. The IMU also has distributed video and audio tapes and propaganda documents to sympathetic communities in the Ferghana Valley.

On 17 March 2011, the IMU released a 21-minute video recording apparently showing a series of attacks on Coalition forces in July-August 2010 in the Chahar Dara District of Afghanistan's Kunduz Province.

By late August 2010, Jundallah Studio had produced a 51-minute video compilation containing footage of operations and attacks conducted by militants, including Germans, from April to June 2010. These videos contained German introductions and German subtitles.

In December 2009, the IMU released English and German-subtitled videos showing a meeting between its former chief, Tahir Yuldashev, and the leader of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Hakimullah Mahsud. The video shows Tahir and Mahsud talking with each other, walking together and taking turns firing a gun. The video also shows Tahir reading a eulogy for slain TTP leader Baitullah Mahsud, stressing that jihad will not cease with the death of its leaders.

Conclusion

In view of the above information, ASIO assesses the IMU is directly engaged in preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of terrorist acts. It is assessed that the acts attributable to the IMU are terrorist acts as they:

- are done with the intention of advancing a political cause, namely, establishing of a radical Islamist caliphate across Central Asia;
- are intended to coerce or influence by intimidation the governments of foreign countries, namely the states of Central Asia, as well as member countries of the Coalition forces in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and/or intimidate a section(s) of the public; and
- constitute acts which cause serious physical harm to persons, including death, as well as serious damage to property.

Other relevant information

Links to other terrorist groups or networks

The IMU has close ties with al-Qa'ida, the Taliban and other militant groups in the Afghanistan/Pakistan theatre. Senior IMU leaders have held positions in the al-Qa'ida hierarchy. Current IMU chief Odil appeared in an October 2009 video with TTP leader Hakimullah Mahsud, shortly after both groups lost their leaders in US drone strikes.

Proscription by the UN and other countries

The IMU has been listed in the United Nations 1267 Committee's consolidated list and as a proscribed terrorist organisation by the governments of the United Kingdom, United States and Canada.