



Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 - Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

Publisher [United States Department of State](#)

Publication Date 19 September 2018

Cite as United States Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 - Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan*, 19 September 2018, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5bcf1f424.html> [accessed 5 December 2018]

Disclaimer This is not a UNHCR publication. UNHCR is not responsible for, nor does it necessarily endorse, its content. Any views expressed are solely those of the author or publisher and do not necessarily reflect those of UNHCR, the United Nations or its Member States.

aka IMU

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on September 25, 2000, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) seeks to overthrow the Uzbek government and establish an Islamic state. For most of the past decade, however, the group has recruited members from other Central Asian states and Europe. Despite its objective to set up an Islamic state in Uzbekistan, the group operates primarily along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and in northern Afghanistan, where it fights against international forces. Several IMU members are also suspected of having traveled to Syria to fight with terrorist groups.

The IMU has had a decade-long relationship with al-Qa'ida (AQ), the Taliban, and Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Top IMU leaders have integrated themselves into the Taliban's shadow government in Afghanistan's northern provinces.

In August 2015, IMU leader Usman Ghazi publicly announced the group's shift of allegiance to ISIS. Numerous IMU members, including possibly Ghazi himself, were subsequently reported to have been killed as a result of hostilities between ISIS and its former Taliban allies.

Activities: Since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom, the IMU has predominantly been focused on attacks against international forces in Afghanistan. In late 2009, NATO forces reported an increase in IMU-affiliated foreign terrorist fighters in Afghanistan. In 2010, the IMU claimed responsibility for the September 19 ambush that killed 25 Tajik troops in Tajikistan. On June 8,

2014, IMU claimed responsibility for an attack on Karachi's international airport that resulted in the deaths of at least 39 people.

Throughout 2015, the IMU actively threatened the Afghan government, specifically in the northern part of the country. In April, the group released a video showing IMU members beheading an individual they claimed to be an Afghan soldier and threatened to behead Hazara (a historically persecuted ethnic group in Afghanistan) hostages, in supposed retaliation for the Afghan security forces capture of several female members of IMU. Also in 2015, Uzbek refugee Fazliddin Kurbanov was convicted and sentenced by a U.S. federal court to 25 years in prison for planning a bomb attack in Idaho. Kurbanov had been in contact with members of IMU online, seeking advice on how to make explosives and discussing attacking U.S. military bases.

In June 2016, a faction of IMU announced its continued commitment to the Taliban and AQ, marking a split with its leader Ghazi and the rest of the group, which announced its loyalty to ISIS in 2015 and has since cooperated with Islamic State's Khorasan Province.

Strength: 200 to 300 members.

Location/Area of Operation: Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan.

Funding and External Aid: The IMU receives support from a large Uzbek diaspora, terrorist organizations, and donors from Europe, Central and South Asia, and the Middle East.

Search Refworld

by keyword
and / or country
Clear Search
[Advanced Search](#) | [Search Tips](#)

Countries

- [Afghanistan](#)
- [Iran, Islamic Republic of](#)
- [Pakistan](#)

Topics

- [Armed groups / Militias / Paramilitary forces / Resistance movements](#)
- [Terrorism](#)