**FATF: From technical to political forum**

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The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) was established in 1989 during the G7 meeting in Paris to develop policies against money laundering. Its aim was to identity the vulnerabilities of a country with the objective of protecting the international financial system from misuse. After 9/11 its role was expanded and Terror Financing (TF) was also included. In 1991, its members were 28 and in 2000, they rose to 31. Presently, they are at 37 with two organisations G7 and GCC and 8 associate members. It is also enjoys an observer status to organisations like the UN, IMF and World Bank.

FATF has a set of 40 recommendations which are taken as standard on Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Combatting Financing of Terrorism (CFT). Pakistan’s first encounter with FATF was in February 2008 when Pakistan was placed on the grey list and was advised to improve its financial system. Pakistan was kept in the grey list from 2012 to 2015 for non-compliance of the UNSC 1267 resolution. After the latest session held virtually in June, Pakistan has been put on the grey list again despite its sincere efforts in addressing 26 out of the 27 items. This was the fifth time when FATF reviewed Pakistan’s performance and placed it on the grey list on issues related to AML and CFT mechanisms. This implies that FATF wants increased monitoring in Pakistan. Accordingly, foreign banks, like the World Bank and ADB, might avoid working with Pakistani banks. The IMF may hold its loans and may force Pakistan to further devalue the rupee which will lead to price hikes.

[Vince, Gregory excel as England whitewash Pakistan in ODI series](https://nation.com.pk/14-Jul-2021/vince-gregory-excel-as-england-whitewash-pakistan-in-odi-series)

India in particular is using the forum for political purposes by lobbying and pressurising the FATF member countries to keep Pakistan on the grey list. Instead, India deserves to be blacklisted by the FATF; the arrest of Kulbhushan Jadhav from Balochistan and his confession that he carried out terrorist activities in Balochistan and Karachi proves terror financing. The UN report on terrorism has warned that a significant number of ISIS terrorist are in two states of India, namely Kerala and Karnataka. 44 Indians banks have also been reported in Suspicious Activities Reports (SARS).

Pakistan has already provided the UNSC, western countries and OIC irrefutable evidence of Indian terrorism in Pakistan through abetting, planning, financing and the execution of terrorist activities. In 2019, a European non-governmental organisation, EU Disinfo Lab, uncovered a network of 265 fake outlets in more than 65 countries by an Indian network to influence the EU and UN with content critical of Pakistan. Again in 2020, the same EU Disinfo Lab exposed more details.

[Pakistan stands with Kabul for peaceful, united Afghanistan: FM](https://nation.com.pk/14-Jul-2021/pakistan-stands-with-kabul-for-peaceful-united-afghanistan-fm)

According to the Lab, the Indian disinformation group comprised of 750 fake media outlets and 10 zombie NGOs operating since 2005 while producing content critical of Pakistan. All the servers of these fake media outlets were based in India with more than 550 domains belonging to Srivastavas Groups, a New Delhi based group of RAW. Recently, there were two incidents of smuggling of highly rich radioactive uranium in India. It seems as though it is failing to protect its highly rich radioactive material from falling into the wrong hands. When the president of FATF was asked about the smuggling of uranium, he brushed aside the question. India is a classic case for black listing but unfortunately it is not possible since the system is not fair and based on hypocrisy. The question then is, why Pakistan’s still on the grey list and what does this have to do with technical matters or with world politics.

An impression has developed that the FATF is not a neutral forum but rather, it has become a political forum to pressurise countries for personal gains. It is hypocrisy that creates a trust deficit. Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, has made it clear that FATF is a technical forum and a political one and that it was being used to serve political motives”. In an interview, Qureshi said that some powers desired to keep Pakistan in the FATF’s grey list and whether the global forum is being used for political purpose is something that needs to be looked at. In September 2020, Pakistan’s parliament amended 14 laws relating to the legal system to comply with FATF requirements. The State Bank of Pakistan also amended anti-money laundering provisions and combatting the financing of terrorism. Pakistan’s better than Tajikistan, Mali, Sierra Leone and Panama, but none is on the monitoring list. Shockingly Pakistan has been placed with countries like Ethiopia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Sri Lanka, Serbia, Tunisia, Trinidad and Tobago. Pakistan has already taken concrete steps and actions as asked by the FATF and yet Pakistan is retained in grey list every single time. Some of the developing and developed countries are even below Pakistan as per the criteria of the FATF, yet they are not in any list. The issue is more political than financial, the FATF has become a tool in the hands of powerful countries to pressurise Pakistan. It is beyond any doubt that Pakistan’s name is there due to political reasons and pressure from major power like US and other major financers of the FATF.

[Jill Biden leading US delegation at Tokyo Olympics opening ceremony](https://nation.com.pk/13-Jul-2021/jill-biden-leading-us-delegation-at-tokyo-olympics-opening-ceremony)

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