

Senate panel slams FATF for discriminating against Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: A Senate panel has slammed the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) for discriminating against Pakistan and according preferential treatment to India by ignoring substantial evidence about New Delhi's involvement in terror financing.

The Senate Standing Committee on Interior, which met here on Tuesday with Rehman Malik in the chair, regretted that India continued enjoying an undeclared immunity as no action was being taken against it despite all evidence of terror financing.

Mr Malik said he had written a letter to FATF President Marshall Billingslea on Feb 14, seeking action against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for protecting international fugitives involved in the biggest-ever credit fraud and money laundering. He said he had sent the letter with all evidences proving that Prime Minister Modi was involved in money laundering and terror financing as he was supporting the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) — the biggest terrorist organisation.

Accuses global watchdog of according preferential treatment to India despite evidence about its involvement in terror financing

And in his response, he added, Mr Billingslea said the FATF was not an investigative or prosecutorial body. Rejecting the plea, Mr Malik contended that if the FATF could not open a case against PM Modi for terror financing and money laundering then how it was taking up a case against Pakistan and had put it on 'grey list'. He disclosed that he had written another letter to the FATF president, explaining how it was legal to take stern action against PM Modi.

In his letter to the FATF president, Senator Malik wrote: "I thankfully acknowledging receipt of your response to my letter dated 14th February 2019 (copy enclosed). In your response, you have intimated that holding any formal inquiry/investigation on a complaint does not fall within the mandate of the FATF."

In the fresh letter, Mr Malik has pointed out that a formal inquiry against Pakistan was initiated based on a complaint from the United States alleging Pakistan's involvement in terror funding and money laundering, and consequently the FATF placed Pakistan on the 'grey list'. "Therefore, the stance taken by the FATF vis-à-vis my complaint against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was not based on facts and practice of the FATF."

Retired Justice Fazalur Rehman, a senior member of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances, informed the Senate committee that the statements of all missing persons after their recovery happened to be identical — "plain-clothes persons come, take them blindfolded, keep them at an undisclosed location and leave them at some deserted place". He said the people approached the commission when police refused to lodge an FIR.

The committee chairman decided to summon the four provincial home secretaries and inspectors general to get a briefing on missing persons. Mr Malik observed that the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances had a very limited jurisdiction and stressed the need for empowering it legally and financially. He said the commission should also have suo motu powers.

Taking notice of an increase in incidents of targeted killings in Dera Ismail Khan, the committee expressed alarm over the killing of around two dozen people over the past two months alone in the district. Mr Malik directed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police to bring to an end the ongoing targeted killings and take concrete actions against the terrorists and organisations involved in these horrific incidents.

He said that in the next meeting of the committee, religious scholars from different schools of thought, political representatives, families of the martyrs and notables of the area would also be invited to discuss the issue and find out a permanent solution.

The KP police informed the committee that there was a nexus between sectarian and terrorist organisations in D.I. Khan. It was told that police had launched a crackdown on a terrorist organisation. “We have arrested Iqbal Kalia and others belonging to his organisation, while some others have been killed,” a representative of the KP police said.

Iftikhar A. Khan