

RISING KASHMIR, Srinagar, Kashmir, 22 April 2010

Police foils Hafiz Saeed's audio speech in Srinagar; 5 held

Salahuddin, Hameed Gul, Masood Azhar were to speak via phone

Ishfaq Ahmad Shah (Rising Kashmir)

Srinagar, April 21: The organizer of a seminar, who was allegedly planning to play out recorded speech of Lashkar-e-Toiba chief Hafiz Muhammad Saeed besides the tele-address of Jaish-e-Muhammad founder Moulana Masood Azhar, United Jihad Council supremo Syed Salahuddin and former ISI chief Hameed Gul, was arrested along with senior resistance leaders here at Lal Chowk on Wednesday.

Scores of policemen raided Hotel Taj at Lal Chowk and arrested the organiser of the seminar, Muhammad Ahsan Antoo who heads a local human rights body 'Human Rights Forum' besides senior vice chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (R) Javaid Ahmad Mir and senior leader of Peoples League Mukthar Ahmed Sofi, the guests at the seminar and two more organisers.

The chairmen of both factions of the Hurriyat Conference, Syed Ali Geelani and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front chairman Yasin Malik were also invited to the seminar.

Talking to Rising Kashmir, Inspector General of Police, Farooq Ahmad said police had no objections with the seminar but the participation of people like Saeed and other militant leaders forced police to foil the proceedings. "We had no objection with the seminar but Antoo had already leaked to some media organisations that he will be playing a taped speech of Hafiz Saeed."

The IGP said: "If he (Antoo) is a human rights activist, how can he involve people like Saeed, Salahuddin and Moulana Masood Azhar."

According to reports, in the audio tape Saeed had drawn parallels between the 'resistance struggles' in Afghanistan and Kashmir and sought their simultaneous resolution.

Meanwhile, separatist leaders castigated police for the "undemocratic action" and strongly condemned the arrest of Antoo and other leaders.

Veteran separatist leader, Syed Ali Geelani termed the police action as "worst form of barbarism".

"This is an undemocratic move. I condemn it in strong words," he said. "Such acts speak volumes about the barbarism that authorities are perpetuating here."

Commenting on the incident, chairman of Hurriyat (M) Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said: "It is really

unfortunate that authorities don't allow us to conduct democratic activities here in the State.”

Terming the incident as “rape of the democracy”, spokesman of Jamaat-e-Islami, Zahid Ali alleged authorities of curbing the fundamental rights of Kashmiris.

“We had come to discuss the role of our leaders in the present Kashmir situation but the arrest of organisers and sabotaging the seminar is like raping the democracy,” he said.

(The original link to the article in the RISING KASHMIR has been deleted by the newspaper from its archives.)

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