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Pakistan Rejects US Terror Designation as Kashmir Attack Probe Remains Open

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Pakistan has pushed back against U.S. claims linking a militant group to a deadly April attack on tourists in Indian-administered Kashmir, calling the investigation “inconclusive” and accusing India of politicising counterterrorism for global image management. The development follows the U.S. State Department’s recent decision to designate The Resistance Front (TRF) also known as Kashmir Resistance as a foreign terrorist organisation, citing ties to the outlawed Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), a Pakistan-based group already sanctioned under U.S. law.

The U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated that TRF had initially claimed responsibility for the April 22 assault in Pahalgam, which left 26 dead, before later retracting the statement. He described TRF as a “front and proxy” for LeT, adding that the designation aims to disrupt the group’s global reach and financing. However, Islamabad swiftly rejected the premise, reiterating its “zero tolerance” for militancy and asserting that Lashkar-e-Taiba is a defunct group which remains banned within Pakistan’s borders. The Pakistani Foreign Office maintained that the ongoing investigation into the incident which occurred in what it calls Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) has not yielded any definitive conclusions.

Pakistan’s response highlighted its broader security policy, pointing to steps it has taken to dismantle extremist networks. These include arrests of group leaders, court prosecution and deradicalisation initiatives targeting former militants. Officials stressed that equating TRF’s activities to Pakistani state policy was not only inaccurate but also counterproductive to regional peace efforts. Moreover, the Foreign Office accused India of exploiting international terror listings to mask its own record of human rights violations in Kashmir, a longstanding flashpoint between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.

This episode underscores growing tensions in the diplomatic narrative surrounding Kashmir, with the U.S. decision adding another layer to an already complex geopolitical rivalry. While Pakistan continues to deny involvement in cross-border militancy, it remains under scrutiny due to historic affiliations and lingering perceptions. Meanwhile, Islamabad’s criticism of India’s “selective” use of global counterterrorism mechanisms reflects a broader frustration among countries that feel marginalized in international forums. With investigations still ongoing, the true nature of the April attack remains uncertain but what is clear is that Kashmir continues to be not only a humanitarian and territorial issue, but also a stage for global influence and narrative control.