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## JUI-F Slams Bajaur Operation as Misguided Use of Force

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Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) condemned the ongoing counterterrorism operation in Bajaur, calling it a flawed approach that threatens regional stability.

On July 29, 2025, JUI-F's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa leader, Maulana Atta-ur-Rehman, held a press conference in Peshawar to criticize the Pakistan Army's current operation in Bajaur. He argued that repeated reliance on military force has failed to curb terrorism and instead alienates local communities. Citing the July 30, 2023, suicide bombing at a JUI-F convention in Bajaur, which left 54 dead and over 100 injured, he asserted that the government's counterterrorism policies remain ineffective. The attack, attributed to Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), highlighted the persistent threat in the region despite years of military operations.

The operation, initiated on July 15, 2025, by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), targeted ISKP hideouts based on intelligence of imminent attacks. While ISPR reported the deaths of 12 militants and the seizure of explosives, JUI-F claimed that approximately 3,500 families have been displaced due to the military activity. Atta-ur-Rehman noted that JUI-F members have endured repeated violence in Bajaur, including the 2022 assassination of Maulana Shafiullah and nearly two dozen attacks since 2019. He argued that such incidents show the ineffectiveness of force in dismantling militant networks.

Atta-ur-Rehman called on the government to shift from a military-first strategy to one that includes engagement with tribal elders and investment in development. He stressed the importance of addressing poverty, unemployment, and education gaps that contribute to radicalization. Referring to a 2023 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) report warning of increasing ties between Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Al-Qaeda, he warned that intensified military campaigns could worsen the security situation.

He also criticized the provincial government for repeated security failures, stating that militants continue to operate freely while local populations suffer the consequences.

JUI-F's opposition to the Bajaur operation follows its criticism of similar campaigns in Balochistan, particularly those that it claims targeted religious seminaries without due cause. The party continues to advocate for dialogue-driven strategies, positioning itself as a voice for political solutions over military action in Pakistan's tribal and conflict-prone areas.