

## **Jamaat-ud-Dawah activists leaving group to join ISIS in Pak; 8 arrested**

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**Lahore:** Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed-led Jamaat-ud-Dawah's activists are joining ISIS and eight of them were arrested by intelligence agencies who raided a hideout of the terror group in Pakistan's Punjab province.

"The arrested ISIS militants were earlier the activists of Hafiz Saeed's Jamaat-ud-Dawah," Dawn newspaper reported, citing intelligence reports and officials.

A team of personnel from intelligence agencies and Punjab Counter-Terrorism Department raided a house on a tip off on the outskirts of Sialkot, some 120 kms from here, in wee hours yesterday and arrested eight members of ISIS which has yet to "openly" declare its presence in Pakistan, officials said.

"The suspects could not offer any resistance as the commandos did not give them a chance," a CTD source said. He said a good quantity of weapons and explosives, and hate literature have been recovered from the house.

The suspects - who belong to different parts of Punjab - got militant training and vowed to overthrow democracy and introduce Caliphate in Pakistan, officials said.

"The suspects had taken an oath to overthrow democracy and introduce Caliphate in Pakistan through armed struggle. Originally the suspects belonged to Jamaat-ud Dawah, but later joined hands with the ISIS.

They used to communicate with one another through social media and Skype to avoid arrests," an intelligence official was quoted as saying by the paper. "The suspects were trying to extend their network to other parts of Punjab.

Initial investigations reveal the suspects were also involved in recruitment and collection of funds for the group. The suspects dislike democracy in Pakistan and hate police and Pakistan Army," officials said. "The prime objective of the ISIS men was to fan hatred against the country's law enforcement agencies," they said.

"The suspects had sworn allegiance to al-Baghdadi and joined ISIS in Daska tehsil of Sialkot district in June." One of the recruiters - Abu Akasha - had facilitated contacts between the suspects and Pakistan national Abu Muavia Salfi, who was in charge of Pakistani militants in Syria, according to the report.

They said Waqas aka Rizwan, also member of the ISIS from Sialkot, had been killed in clashes with the Syrian forces. Interrogations have revealed that ISIS chief Abu-Bakr Baghdadi had appointed Hafiz Saeed Khan as the group's Emir in "Khorasan" (areas comprising Iran and some parts of Afghanistan) and proposed him as Emir for Pakistan too.

Earlier, there were reports that Saeed Khan got killed. JuD has denied the report of its members joining ISIS, saying it has no links with the Middle Eastern group and it was against the outfit's philosophy.

"We strongly deny that any of our current or former member is associated with the ISIS. It seems to be conspiracy to link JuD with the ISIS," JuD spokesman Yahya Mujahid said.

- PTI