

## **Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed's house arrest sparks protests in Pakistan**

01/02/2017 22:04 by admin

**Islamabad:** The house arrest of Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeeds sparked a huge protest across Pakistan as his supporters hit the streets claiming that the action against Jamaat-ud-Dawah chief was taken under pressure from the US and India.

### **Supporters of Hafiz Saeed shout slogans against his arrest**

Saeed and four other JuD leaders were put under house arrest after order of detention was issued by Punjab Provinces Interior Ministry yesterday in pursuance to a directive from the Federal Interior Ministry on January 27.

His aides - Abdullah Ubaid, Zafar Iqbal, Abdur Rehman Abid and Qazi Kashif Niaz - were detained and placed under house arrest in Chauburji near JuDs Lahore headquarters.

The provincial authorities have also started to remove the banners of Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) from the roads of Lahore.

National flags have been hoisted at the JuD offices in Lahore, instead of party flags, on the directives of the provincial home department.

Hundreds of supporters of Hafiz Saeed staged protests across major cities of Pakistan, including Lahore and Islamabad, against the government's action. Slogans against India and the US were also raised during the demonstrations.

Demonstrations were held in different cities including Lahore, Multan, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta to protest against Saeeds arrest.

The protesters accused Nawaz Sharif government of succumbing to the wishes of the US, which has offered a USD 10 million reward for information leading to Saeeds arrest.

"This government has buckled under the pressure," JuD spokesperson Nadeem Awan said, who also accused India of pressurising the government.

Another spokesperson, Farooq Azam, announced protests in Karachi by "different religious and Kashmiri leaders".

"Everyone knows here that the Nawaz government succumbs to the pressure of the Trump administration and took action against Saeed, JuD and FIF," JuD leader Hafiz Abdul Majid Bhatti said while addressing a gathering in Lahore.

"We will continue protesting the governments action against our leaders and organisations," he vowed.

JuD is the front for the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror outfit which is responsible for numerous terror attacks in India, including the Mumbai terror strike of November 26,2008, which was masterminded by Saeed.

JuD has already been declared as a foreign terrorist organisation by the United States in June 2014.

It said that the 2008 Mumbai attack brought Pakistan and India to the brink of war.

Saeed has denied any role in the attack and has distanced himself from LeT, while leading his charity JuD.

"The detention of Hafiz Saeed could help ease tensions between nuclear-armed foes Pakistan and India, although New Delhi has not yet responded," Express Tribune commented.

The paper said a senior Pakistani defence ministry official said Islamabad had not been contacted by the new administration of US President Donald Trump but had been feeling US pressure on the issue.

"Trump is taking hard decisions against Muslim countries, there is open talk of actions against Pakistan also. So yes, this was a consideration," said the official.

Saeed was put under house arrest after the Mumbai attack, but was released six months later after a court order.

- (With PTI inputs)