

Mumbai Terror Mastermind Released in Pakistan

From [*The Telegraph*](#):

India reacted with anger and dismay on Friday after a Pakistani court released the suspected mastermind behind the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, in which 166 were killed in a three-day massacre.

Zaki ur-Rehman Lakhvi, who is believed to be military commander of the Lashkar e Taiba terrorist group, was released on bail by the Lahore High Court after the Pakistan government failed to provide sufficient evidence for his continued detention.

His release from Rawalpindi's high-security Adiala Jail was denounced by India as an "insult" to Mumbai's victims while its home minister, Rajnath Singh, said it was a setback for the prospects of peace talks.

"India wants talks with Pakistan but the present development is unfortunate and disappointing," he said.

His lawyer however welcomed his release as a "triumph for law and justice".

A spokesman for Jamat-ud-Dawa, a charity linked to Lakhvi's Lashkar e Taiba, confirmed he is "free now and in a secure place."

Lakhvi was one of seven men arrested in Pakistan in 2009 on suspicion of directing the terror attack from a remote control room. Ten heavily-armed, commando-style "fedayeen"

– guerrilla – terrorists had taken detailed instructions from controllers in Pakistan by phone, as they gunned down guests at the Taj Mahal and Oberoi hotels, commuters at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus railway station, and attacked the Leopold café and a Jewish centre.

Tape recordings of telephone intercepts which appeared to feature Lakhvi's voice in the control room were passed to Pakistan's investigators to boost their chances of bringing those responsible to justice.

The Pakistan government hailed the arrest of Lakhvi and his alleged collaborators as evidence that it was seriously tackling terrorism – but India remained sceptical. Its then-prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh accused elements of Pakistan's security services of involvement in the plot, while senior Indian intelligence figures said they believed Lakhvi would eventually be released because any trial would expose links between its Inter-Service Intelligence agency and terror groups it sponsors.

“They won't be brought to justice. They fear this will come back to Islamabad, where it was planned or approved, and expose the links between the Lashkar e Taiba and the Pakistan government,” Vikram Sood, former head of India's Research and Analysis Wing intelligence agency, told The Telegraph in 2009.

On Friday he said Lakhvi's release had been inevitable and hopes of justice were “just dreams”.

Pakistan had arrested Lakhvi and the other suspects “because they wanted to look like they were doing something, they were under pressure from the United States, they were playing for time”, he said.