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Title: Regarding incident of killings of 16 persons by militants in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir.

13.07 hrs

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): On 27th July, 1998 at about 2230 hours about 10-15 militants descended upon a small hamlet Horna which is located at about 1 km. from village Thakrai to the North-West of Kishtwar in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir. The militants, some of whom were wearing combat dress while others were in 'Salwar Kameez', fired indiscriminately on three houses of a particular community killing eight persons (six male and two female) on the spot and causing injuries to three others.

In another incident, during the same night (early hours of 28.7.98) presumably the same group of militants killed eight persons and injured two others in a similar outrage at village Saranwa which is located at a distance of 9 kms. from village Horna.

The entire Doda district including the area where the incident occurred is under operational control of the Army. It is a vast area and the terrain is hilly and extremely difficult. In fact, Doda district is as large an area as the entire Kashmir Valley.

Both these incidents are tragic and reprehensible. These militants have chosen soft targets of innocent persons in isolated habitations for their desperate and inhuman acts. I am sure that the whole House will join me in condemning these incidents and also in expressing our condolences to the members of the bereaved families.

The Security Forces have been put on alert and joint operations have been launched by the State Police and the Security Forces to intercept the fleeing militants and nab them. The militants dispersed in different directions - according to our information, in two groups - but the pursuing Security Forces were able to kill two of them. Efforts are continuing to apprehend the others. Additional forces had been immediately inducted into the specific area to strengthen the joint operations. Some more forces are being sent to the area to strengthen the existing forces. The Jammu and Kashmir Minister for Transport and the Minister of State for Home visited Kishtwar on 28th July, 1998.

The Union Home Secretary, accompanied by DG BSF, Additional DGMO Army Headquarters and Chief Secretary and DGP, J & K also visited the area on the 29 July 1998 and reviewed the security arrangements in the area. As the killings had evoked some sharp reactions from the local people, indefinite curfew has been imposed at Kishtwar and Bhadarwah to avoid any law and order problem. The Union Home Secretary and the team accompanying him found the morale of the local people high with people showing a determination to fight militancy.

All the injured persons have been air-lifted to Jammu for treatment.

As the hon. Members are aware, the situation in Jammu & Kashmir has been gradually improving and the tourist inflows are also picking up. This has obviously disturbed the terrorists and their mentors from across the border, who have intensified their efforts and have been able to succeed in hitting some soft targets in their desperation. They have been trying to concentrate in the Jammu Division, particularly in areas like Doda, Udhampur, Rajouri, Poonch, etc. which have a mixed population apparently with a view to creating a communal divide. Government is vigilant and the security forces are also achieving some successes. While, during the month of June 1998, 76 militants were killed, in the first fortnight of July 1998, 78 militants have been killed. Upto 15 July 1998, 388 militants in all have been killed during the current calendar year, including 65 foreign mercenaries. 545 militants were apprehended during the current year. Of course, this has not been without a cost, as 96 security personnel have lost their lives during 1998.

As the hon. Members are aware, militancy in J & K is sponsored, aided and abetted by Pakistan, and thus it requires sustained and systematic efforts to tackle it. I assure the august House that this Government is determined to take all possible steps to deal with this problem effectively.

सभापति महोदय माननीय मंत्री जी के वक्तव्य के बाद नियम में स्पष्टीकरण की कोई गुंजाइश नहीं है।

... (व्यवधान)

श्री चमन लाल गुप्त (ऊधमपुर): यह मसला मेरी कांस्टीट्यूट से ताल्लुक रखता है।

... (व्यवधान)

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">SHRI PRAMOTHES MUKHERJEE (BERHAMPORE) (WB): Sir, this is such an unfortunate incident that I condemn the incident of killing. But at the same time, I demand that a full discussion on the internal security scenario be held in ">this House.

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श्री चमन लाल गुप्त: मैं माननीय गृह मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूँ कि वहाँ जिन लोगों की मृत्यु हुई है या जखमी हुए हैं, उनको क्या आपने एक्सप्रेसिया ग्रांट दी है या नहीं? दूसरा, आज पेपरों के अंदर ऐसी रिपोर्ट्स हैं कि अभी तक वहाँ लाशें नहीं उठाई गई हैं। इस बारे में वस्तुस्थिति क्या है, यह हमें पता चलना चाहिए।

तीसरा, जब तक वहाँ के लोकल लोगों को तैयार नहीं किया जाता, उनको आप बकायदा कुछ आर्मस नहीं देंगे, कुछ आर्थिक सहायता नहीं देंगे तब तक मिलिटैसी से कोई नहीं लड़ सकता। आप वहाँ जो भी फोर्स भेज रहे हैं, वे सब वहाँ से ३० किलोमीटर की दूरी पर सड़कों पर बैठते हैं। इसलिए मिलिटैसी से लड़ने के लिए जरूरी है कि आप वहाँ के लोकल लोगों को राइफल्स दी जायें, मार्टन वैपन्स दिये जायें और आर्थिक सहायता पूरी तरह से पहुँचाई जाये।

अंत में, मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि एक्सप्रेसिया ग्रांट के बारे में होम मिनिस्टर साहब का क्या कहना है?

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">SHRI P.C. CHACKO (IDUKKI): Sir, this being a very important thing, the hon. Home Minister knows that a high power delegation of the Congress Party met the hon. Home Minister. We made a request that the paramilitary forces in that area are not sufficient. The hon. Home Minister also agreed.

Sir, the people are in a mood to fight the militancy. But as said by the hon. Member that the presence of the paramilitary force was insufficient and the Government had not taken any steps to compensate that. This is a matter of worry. We are happy that the Home Secretary visited that area and steps have been taken. But what about the presence of the paramilitary forces, which is sufficient to curb this kind of disturbances? The Government may assure this House about that also.

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">DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY (MADURAI): Sir, this is an issue which I had raised first. The Kashmiri Pundits have been demanding Panun Kashmir from the Home Ministry for a long time. I would like to know has the Home Ministry applied its mind on it.

I want to know whether it is a feasible proposal or not. That is what the Pandits want. ...(Interruptions)

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">SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): Nothing is spoken about the Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir. If he is abroad, he may be asked to reach Kashmir at the earliest. His absence is very much felt in the State. That is my view. So, the hon. Home Minister may please get in touch with the Chief Minister and he may be asked to reach Kashmir at the earliest because his presence in the State would be useful in bringing normalcy there. ...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJESH PILOT (DAUSA): Mr. Chairman, the hon. Home Minister is willing to react. ...(Interruptions)

सभापति महोदय : सब माननीय सदस्यों की बात उन्होंने सुन ली है, वे देखेंगे।

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Sir, the hon. Home Minister is willing to react after everybody has spoken. ... (Interruptions)

सभापति महोदय : मंत्री जी रीएक्ट करेंगे तो कोई हर्ज नहीं है।

">SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Sir, let me share my views before the hon. Home Minister reacts.

As my hon. colleague has pointed out, when we called on the hon. Prime Minister, we shared some information. ...(Interruptions)

प्रो. जोगेन्द्र कवाडे : आदरणीय मंत्री महोदय बताएंगे तो अच्छा होगा। ... (व्यवधान)

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SHRI RAJESH PILOT (DAUSA): When we called on the hon. Prime Minister, the hon. Home Minister was there. We had some discussion with him. We still maintain -the hon. Home Minister has himself said this in his statement -- this is the first time that Rajouri, Poonch and Udhampur sector is being affected. From 1990-94, in fact I will go up to 1996, this sector was not being affected as much as being affected today. There were incidents in Doda. I am not saying that there were no incidents but the amount of frequency has increased in Rajouri, Poonch and Udhampur. Shri Chaman Lal Gupta will bear with me that this is the first time that this sector - Rajouri, Poonch and Udhampur - is being affected.

When I visited this area, I got the information that coordination was not proper. Today we read in the newspaper that Rashtriya Rifles has done a very good job. I am told that they are reviewing that also,

राष्ट्रीय राईफल फोर्स रखी है या नहीं रखी।

Today the hon. Home Minister has said that the Army has officially taken over Doda district. Could the hon. Home Minister clarify whether the Unified Command is meeting regularly or not?

My information -- I got this information in Jammu -- is that during the last five or six months, the Unified Command has met only once. If coordination is so poor, then the Action Plan cannot be as effective as the hon. Home Minister has said. Could the Home Minister tell us as to what Pro-active Plan he has made; whether the policies of the previous Government are being followed or not?

My information is that Shri Javed Shah, MLC of the National Conference has decided to resign his Membership of the Legislative Council and would be picking up the gun in the national interest. He has said: 'I will pick up the gun for the national forces'. If this is the morale of the people, then the statement of the hon. Home Minister is not right. The morale of the people is very high. I would like to know from the hon. Home Minister whether the morale of the people is really very high or not; whether the MLC is resigning and picking up the gun; and also about Coordination. These are my two questions.

श्री चमन लाल गुप्त : कमांड के चेयरमैन तो लंदन बैठे हुए हैं।

... (व्यवधान)

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श्री लालू प्रसाद (मधेपुरा) : माननीय गृह मंत्री जी ने वहां की स्थिति के विषय में पढ़कर सुनाया कि कंडीशन इम्प्रूव कर रही है। भारत के गृह मंत्री जम्मू और कश्मीर के प्रभारी हैं, आप वहां के डायरेक्ट इन्चार्ज हैं। जहां तक मुझे स्मरण है, जब से आप प्रभारी बने हैं, आपकी देख-रेख में यह चौथी घटना घटी है। इससे पहले इस तरह की घटनाओं में कमी आई थी। हमें उन कारणों को जानना चाहिए, आपको भी समझना चाहिए।

माननीय सदस्य बता रहे हैं कि राईफल्स देनी चाहिए। हम उनके सुझाव का खंडन नहीं करना चाहते लेकिन जब ग्रामीणों को राईफल देने लगेंगे तो ऐसा न हो कि सारे राईफल्स फिर मिलिटेंट्स के हाथ में चली जाएं - ऐसी गलती भी नहीं करनी चाहिए। जम्मू कश्मीर के सवाल का और कोई रास्ता कैसे निकाला जाए, वहां की मिलिटेंसी से कैसे डील किया जाए, इसके लिए आपको और उपाय भी सोचना चाहिए।

... (व्यवधान)

सभापति महोदय : अब नियम १९३ के अधीन बहस शुरू होती है।

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श्री कृष्ण लाल शर्मा (बाहरी दिल्ली) : गृह मंत्री जी ने इतनी बातें कही हैं। श्रीनगर, राजौरी और पुंछ आज भी डिस्टर्बड एरिया है। क्या होम मिनिस्ट्री की ऐसी कोई योजना है कि डोडा को भी मिलिटेंसी से बचाने के लिए पूरे डोडा एरिया को डिस्टर्बड एरिया घोषित किया जाए?

तभी इस समस्या का हल होगा और इसकी दरफ दुर्लक्ष करना ठीक नहीं होगा, इस पर भी गवर्नमेंट विचार करे।

सभापति महोदय : अब नियम १९३ के तहत बहस शुरू होती है। श्री तपन सिकदर।

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Sir, you have to ask him. He might react. He is ready to react..(Interruptions) Let him answer some questions. (Interruptions)

SHRI AJAY CHAKRABORTY (BASIRHAT): The Home Minister is ready to react.

सभापति महोदय : नियमों में स्पष्टीकरण की गुंजाइश नहीं है। फिर भी माननीय सदस्यों, नेताओं की भावना को देखते हुए उनको सदन ने सुन लिया। माननीय गृह मंत्री जी उस पर देखेंगे, विचार करेंगे और सभी तरह के उपाय करेंगे ताकि डोडा की तरह फिर से घटना न दोहराई जाये।

... (व्यवधान)

SHRI AJAY CHAKRABORTY : He is ready to react.

श्री राजेश पायलट : आपने हमको एज ए स्पेशल केस सवाल पूछने की इजाजत दी।

सभापति महोदय : आपने अपने सुझाव और अपनी चिन्ता बता दी।

श्री राजेश पायलट : आप उनसे पूछें तो सही, वे मना करें तो कोई बात नहीं है।

सभापति महोदय : उसमें आसन से सरकार को बाध्य नहीं किया जा सकता।

श्री राजेश पायलट (दौसा) : किया जा सकता है।

... (व्यवधान)

SHRI AJAY CHAKRABORTY : I think he is ready to react. ..(व्यवधान)