

MAC



LETTER

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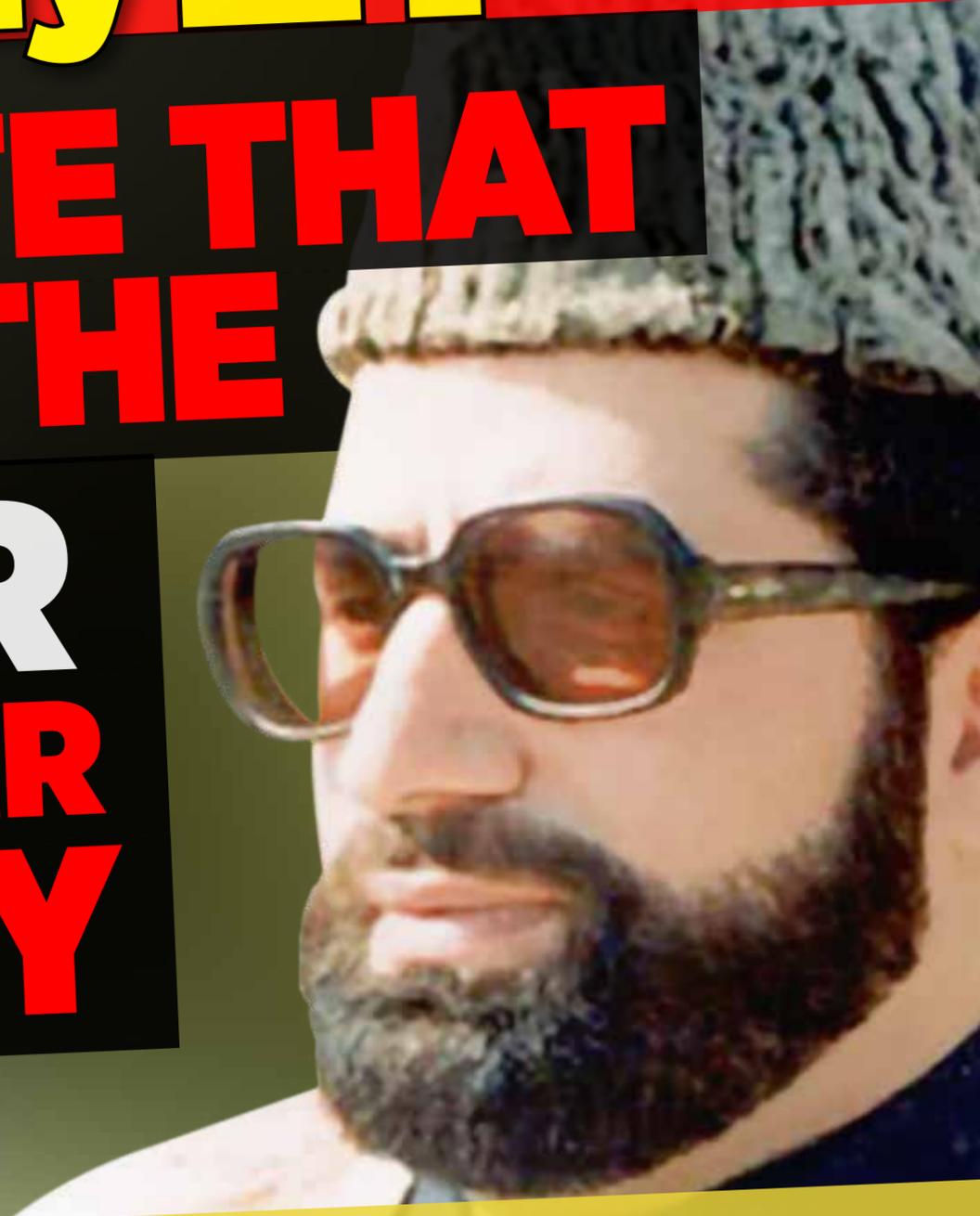
Media Analysis Center, Kashmir

- The free flow of negative content on Kashmir and its wide circulation on social media is damaging Indian interests locally, nationally and internationally. There is urgent need to counter this content in an organized and efficient manner.
- **Media Analysis Center, Srinagar** - a civil society initiative of Lehar Foundation - is an organized initiative to counter negative propaganda and content on Kashmir locally, nationally and internationally.
- Media Analysis Center (MAC) shall generate content which shall aggressively counter the lies being peddled regarding Kashmir in the domestic, national and international media.
- The content produced by MAC shall include news reports, features, videos and documentaries.
- The purpose is to break the toxic plot that keeps feeding malicious, negative news on Kashmir and circulating the same to deepen stereotypes of oppression and alienation. The attempt is to bring in a reality check on Kashmir and refresh the narrative in a positive, inclusive direction.
- MAC shall also provide a platform to bring together positive and happy voices of aspirational Kashmir youth, within Kashmir or outside. The Kashmiri voices of positivity and growth within India shall act as a force multiplier for the youth within Kashmir.

May 21

THE DATE THAT HOLDS THE

MIRROR TO KASHMIR SOCIETY



THE DAY

MIRWAIZ MOHD FAROOQ AND

MODERATE SEPARATIST ABDUL GANI LONE WERE KILLED

NAME THE KILLERS

END THE AMBIGUITY OF UNIDENTIFIED GUNMEN

Why are our intellectuals, thought leaders systematically killed & silenced?



■ BASHIR ASSAD

Once again, Kashmir has crossed May 21 on the calendar. This year marks the 31st anniversary of the assassination of Mirwaiz Moulvi Mohammad Farooq Shah. This day in 1990, the Mirwaiz, a highly loved and respected religious leader of Kashmir, fell to the terrorists' bullets at his Nigeen Lake residence. Twelve years later, moderate Kashmiri separatist leader Khwaja Abdul Gani Lone was killed while observing the death anniversary of Mirwaiz Farooq at Eidgah in 2002.

Some dates in history hold the mirror to a society. Kashmiris must take a hard look into this mirror of time. Why are we today a society where our intellectuals and thought leaders are systematically killed and silenced? Why are we as a society reduced to commemorating the killing of our brightest minds? Everyone in Kashmir knows that Hizbul Mujahideen killed Kashmir's loved leader Mirwaiz Moulvi Farooq at the behest of the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), Pakistan. Even today, Moulvi Farooq's son Mirwaiz Umer Farooq claims his father's death remains a mystery.

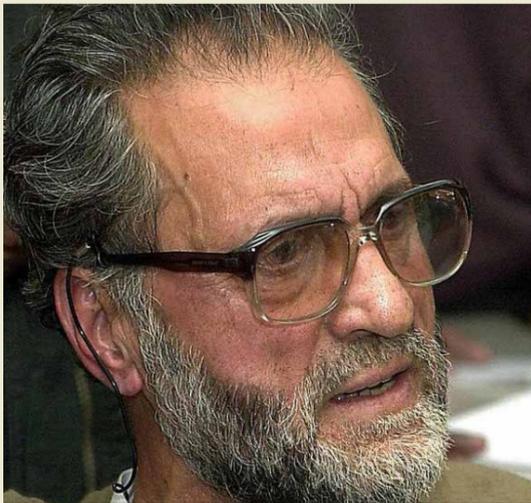
Why does Mirwaiz Umer Farooq spin this lie of obscurity over his father's killers? He fears being targeted in the same way by Pakistan. In a society gripped by violence, truth is among the first casualties. Even the Mirwaiz cannot speak truth to the power that flows from the barrel of the gun. Hence facts are replaced by fiction.

Kashmir: Pakistan's proxy battlefield

Kashmir is Pakistan's proxy battlefield. Year after year, decade after decade, Kashmiris are being used as cannon fodder by Pakistan for its proxy war against India. Tilak Devasher, author of three seminal books on Pakistan, wrote in a recent article that for 30 years, Pakistan has eliminated the thinkers and opinion leaders of Kashmir the way it eliminated the tribal leaders of erstwhile FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas), Pashtuns and Baloch. "The only tactic in Pakistan's playbook is assassination to deal with intellectuals, moderates and those who articulate a point of view conflicting with its own," writes Devasher.

This is the Pakistan that the terror ecosystem of Kashmir advocates.

How long are we going to blind ourselves to truth? We Kashmiris have lived through extreme violence, which has altered our thought and action. We have lived through decades of our wise men



Moderate Separatist Abdul Gani Lone

being killed or silenced. For decades, Pakistan's objective has been to force an extremist narrative in Kashmir society through violence, and by using the blood of the Kashmiris. With the killing of Mirwaiz Mohd Farooq in 1990, Pakistan-sponsored terrorists successfully silenced the voices of sanity and reason.

Mirwaiz Umer Farooq was only 17 when he was made Chairman of the Hurriyat Conference. Why would Geelani, an autocrat, accept a minor on this important position?

The unprecedented public sentiment in favour of the assassinated Mirwaiz forced Geelani to make this tactical retreat.

Some Eminent Kashmiris Killed by Unidentified Gunmen

I am producing here the list of some prominent and popular political and opinion leaders whose killers are known to all in Kashmir. Nevertheless, the killings are credited to the account of unidentified gunmen.

Mushtaq Ahnadh Lone (MoS Home), September 2002; **Ab Aziz Mir** (MLA), December 2002; **Gh Hassan Bhat** (MoS Power), May 2000; **Farooq Ahmad Kuchay** (NC Leader), **Mirwaiz Molvi Farooq** (Mirwaiz Kashmir), May 1990; **Qazi Nisar Ahmad** (Mirwaiz South), June 1989; **Ab Gani Lone** (Chairman JKPC, Kupwara), May 2002; **Shujaat Bukhari** (Editor Rising Kashmir), June 2018; **Hisan ud din Banday**, (MLA Hazaratbal); **Gh Nabi Lone** (MoS Education), Oct 2005; **Wali Mohd Itoo** (Speaker, Legislative Assembly), Dec 1992; **Gh Nabi Dar** (NC Leader), July 2006; **Ab Sattar Ranjoor** (JKCPI Leader), Mar 1990; **Ab Majeed Banday** (Ex MLA), 1998; **Sheikh Mohd Mansoor** (Ex MLA); H N Wanchoo, Dec 1992; **Adv Mohd Sultan Bhat** (famously known as Apostle of Peace), Aug 1996; **Mushtaq Ali** (Photo journalist), Sept 1995; **Adv Prem Nath Bhat**, **P N Handoo** (AIR Information Department), Mar 1990; **Mohd Shaban Vakeel**, (Editor in Chief, Alsafa), Mar 1991; **Parvaiz Mohd Sultan** (Journalist), Jan 2003; **Ab Majid Bhat**, brother of Prof Ab Gani Bhat, May 2004; **Moulana Showket Ahmed Shah** (President, Jamiat Ahlihaadees), Aug 2011; **Hisan ud din Banday** (MLA Hazaratbal); **Tika Lal Taploo**, September; 1989; **Dr Ab Ahad Goroo**, Apr 1993; **Gh Qadir Wani**, Nov 1998, **Prof Ab Ahad Wani**, Dec 1993; **Lassa Koul** (Director DDK Srinagar), Feb 1999.

Pakistan had no other option but to put its weight behind Mirwaiz Umer Farooq.

The apathy in Kashmir to such killings may appear shocking to outsiders. After all political killings, the blame has conveniently been shifted to the state. It has always been easy to lay the blame on India's door. Mirwaiz Mohd Farooq dared to question Pakistan's hegemony in Kashmir. Hizbul Mujahideen assassinated him. Abdul Gani Lone, the moderate separatist leader, told Pakistan's President Musharraf that Kashmiris were tired of conflict. They had suffered enough. Lone Saheb had also expressed his interest to participate in the electoral process in Kashmir. He was assassinated.

Hurriyat Leader Prof Bhat Revealed The Truth

Till 2011, Hurriyat and the allies of Pakistan blamed India for the killing of Mirwaiz and Prof Lone. In 2011, Hurriyat leader Prof Abdul Gani Bhat revealed the truth. Prof Bhat was speaking in a seminar titled Role of Intellectuals in Kashmir Movement, organised by JKLF in a local hotel in Lal Chowk at Srinagar. Prof Bhat admitted that the killing of many Kashmiri leaders including the Mirwaiz, Abdul Gani Lone, his own brother Mohammad Bhat and Professor Wani was the handiwork of terrorists. He

said, “Lone sahib, Mirwaiz Farooq and Prof Wani were not killed by the army or the police. They were targeted by our own people.” After Prof Bhat, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, son of Late Mirwaiz Farooq Shah and Sajad Gani Lone, son of Late Prof. Abdul Gani Lone also spoke at the seminar. They did not refute the statement of Prof Bhat. This proves that Pakistan has always sought to destabilize Kashmir and unleash a reign of terror upon common Kashmiris.

Following Prof Bhat’s revelation, Maulana Shaukat Ahmed, a popular religious leader, demanded an enquiry into the killing of Mirwaiz Farooq and Abdul Gani Lone. Maulana Shaukat Ahmed also denounced stone-pelting as un-Islamic and issued a fatwa against it. He was killed by unidentified gunmen.

Anger Tsunami Over Mirwaiz Farooq Assassination

As soon as the Mirwaiz fell to the bullets, there was not even an iota of doubt among the Kashmiris that the plan was orchestrated in Pakistan and executed by Hizbul Mujahideen, with the tacit support of Jamaat e Islami. Typical of its style, even at that time Jamaat e Islami did not make space for the legitimacy of any other school of thought in Kashmir. Jamaat e Islami labeled all Kashmiris who were non-Jamaatis – whether militant or civilian – as unreliable.

Mirwaiz was a major irritant for both Jamaat e Islami and Pakistan. This is because he was the only leader after Sheikh Mohd Abdullah who enjoyed enviable clout among the majority Sunni sect in Kashmir. His political views of reconciliation with New Delhi were antithetical to what Pakistan wanted.

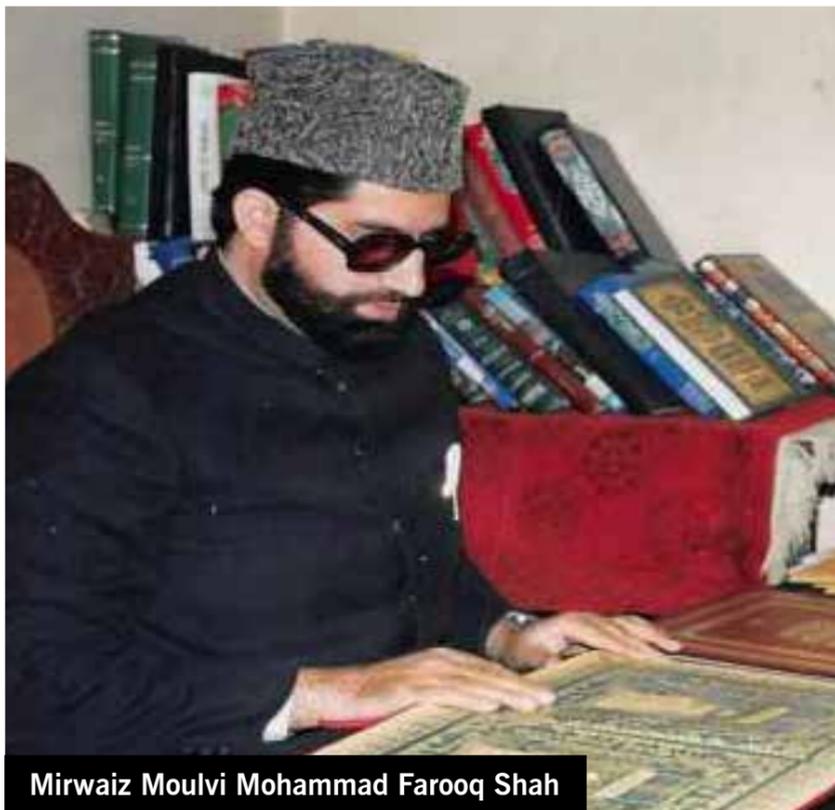
Pained by the killing of the Mirwaiz, hundreds and thousands of mourners in Kashmir filled the streets chanting slogans against Pakistan and Jamaat e Islami. Even some non-Hizbul militants were seen mourning the assassination of the Mirwaiz, and were part of his funeral procession.

With emotions running high, the militants present in the procession fired several rounds of ammunition into the air as a mark of respect and salute to the assassinated leader. The wailing brother-in-law of Mirwaiz Farooq, Maulvi Mushtaq and a close aide Yaqoob Wakeel, alongside hundreds of Awami Action Committee workers were shouting slogans against Pakistan and its ideological extension Jamaat e Islami.

Public anger was high. There was a strong likelihood of the repetition of April 4, 1979. That day, angered by the hanging of former Pakistan PM Zulfikar Ali Bhutto by Zia Ul Haq, thousands of Kashmiris had hunted down the Jamaatis and set their properties on fire.

Hearing the gunshots fired by the militants, the CRPF men deployed at Gawkadal panicked. In a highly unfortunate development, the CRPF men indiscriminately fired upon the mourners, leading to multiple casualties.

The tables turned. Public anger got channeled towards the security forces. Kashmir lost yet another opportunity which could have changed its destiny.



Mirwaiz Moulvi Mohammad Farooq Shah

We All Know These Unidentified Gunmen

What is this monster of Unidentified Gunmen that Kashmiris have allowed to flourish? We all are aware that the killing of the sane voices of Kashmir is orchestrated by Pakistan. After the killings, the conspiracy theories are manufactured in Srinagar. Year after year, no media outlet is ready to identify the killers. The blame is always on the Indian state, and on Unidentified Gunmen. This duplicity equips terror apologists with ammunition to blame Indian security and intelligence agencies for all that they find wrong in Kashmir.

Headlines about unidentified gunmen have permanently hogged in Kashmir’s mainstream media since 1990, when militancy engulfed the region. For three decades now, unidentified gunmen have been blamed for killing a staggering number of civilians – political workers, media persons, police informers, former legislators, former militants – so on and



so forth. Targeting Kashmiris with a nationalistic outlook has been a pattern of terrorism-related casualties since 1990, after Pakistan-sponsored armed insurgency broke out in the Valley. Hundreds of civilians, mostly political workers, have been killed.

The identity of the unidentified gunmen of Kashmir is known. They have killed thousands of innocent people for their political affiliation or on mere suspicion.

Helping The Terrorists

Terror apologists used the term unidentified gunmen so that they could conveniently avoid holding terrorists responsible for the heinous act, and also instill fear in the minds of the people. The Kashmir media commercialized the term *namaloom bandook bardar*. This trick has worked for the terrorists. Terrorists kill Kashmiris on mere suspicion, for personal animosity, as a mafia act, ideological differences etc, but no one holds them accountable for the killing. The so-called human rights watchdogs of Kashmir are silent on all killings by terrorists. They continue to use the term unidentified gunmen in their reporting on Kashmir.

The term unidentified gunmen has been legitimized in Kashmir. Even the terms terrorists or militants are not used for the killers, giving them the benefit of doubt. From 1990-to 2000, in particular, unidentified gunmen wreaked havoc on the local population. Thousands of mainstream political workers were killed. Nobody would name the killers, creating paranoia among people. Children were terrified by the ghost of unidentified gunmen, leading to large scale psychological disorders. Government data reveals that 4,910 civilians were killed from 1993-1997. They were mostly political workers.

Again from 1999 to 2003, 4519 civilians – mostly political workers – were killed by unidentified gunmen. In 2001 alone, 996 civilians were killed by *namaloom bandook bardar*.

There was a brief lull from 2004 to 2013. The menace of unidentified gunmen declined. Although not on the

same scale as in the 1990s or early 2000s, civilian deaths at the hands of unidentified gunmen resurged after 2014. The barrel of the gun again targeted civilians, mostly political workers.

New Phase of Terrorism

The new phase of terrorism in Kashmir represents the theological version of the jihadist movement, which runs counter to genuine Islamic scholarship. It is nevertheless constructed carefully and articulated jingoistically. The homogeneous Kashmir society largely grants it social sanction. Killing of unarmed civilians on the basis of their political affiliation and ideas is no more condemnable.

Terror apologists attempt to bail out the terrorists by invoking the historical perspective of the problem over and over again. From the first killing in December 1990 of Prem Nath Bhat, the veteran lawmaker from Anantnag, to the killing of journalist Shujaat Bukhari in 2018 and



Babar Qadri in September 2020, the identified killers remain unidentified.

Law-enforcing agencies identify the killers sooner or later. But the entrenched narrative of unidentified gunmen is powerful and ruthless. It stays forever. Jammu and Kashmir Police unmask the perpetrators with the support of technical inputs or physical evidence. But terror apologists remain undaunted in their task of raising doubts and creating distrust. Abdul Majid Zargar, one of the terror apologists of Kashmir, wrote the following in a write-up in 2020: “The fresh style of killing in Kashmir is not exactly new.....Killing through covert operations has remained an instrument of state policy for India in Kashmir. Translated into execution, it allows it to adopt the smoke screen of plausible deniability, wherein the action itself may be visible and verifiable but its links are concealed, so that it can easily deny any involvement. Unidentified gunmen have remained a principal character of these operations. These apologists have willingly created a thick smokescreen of deniability but blame the other side.”

The artists of the likes of Zargar coined this term of *namaloom bandook bardar* and use it vehemently. So much, that even after the killers are identified, they remain unidentified. The biggest tragedy of Kashmir is that perpetrators play victims, and the victims are socially, politically and economically discredited. So powerful is the victimhood card. There is no condemnation from terror apologists, political and opinion leaders when someone falls to the bullets of unidentified gunmen. Like Babar Qadri. This deliberate silence is sufficient to identify the killers. Kashmir must name them and hold them accountable for the barbarism in the Valley.

HOW PAKISTAN PLANNED THE KILLING OF MIRWAIZ MOHD FAROOQ



■ WASEEM GUL

Kashmir has seen deep unrest for decades. In order to keep the Kashmir pot boiling, Pakistan brutally suppressed nationalist voices in Kashmir Valley and killed thousands of innocent people to fulfill their diabolical designs.

Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq Shah, father of separatist leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, was the Mirwaiz of Kashmir and chairman of All Jammu and Kashmir Awami Action Committee. On May 21, 1990, the Mirwaiz was killed by Pakistani terrorist Mohammad Ayoub Dar of Hizbul Mujahideen.

By 1990, Mirwaiz Farooq Shah had realized that Pakistan was using him for their evil designs in Kashmir. In early May, the Mirwaiz wrote letters to Pakistan PM Benazir Bhutto, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan that the killings of innocent people in Kashmir must stop. Mirwaiz Farooq Shah was willing for talks with Center and the Governor of J&K. Pakistan and its ISI knew that the Mirwaiz would not be part of their diabolical plan for Kashmir. By April 1990, harsh criticism had been unleashed against Mirwaiz Farooq Shah by a section of the Pakistani press where he was branded as a “stooge of India and the paid agent of New Delhi.” Pakistan knew that the Mirwaiz was aspiring for peace in Kashmir, and they planned his killing.

Pakistan knew that the assassination of the Mirwaiz would trigger huge unrest in the already-torn valley. Two teams were formed to execute the murder. One was handed over the task of assassinating Mirwaiz Farooq. The other team was entrusted with the task of spreading the news of the murder of Mirwaiz Farooq and triggering violence.

The stage was set for the assassination of Kashmir's loved and respected religious leader. At this point, Pakistan's terror agents made a mistake. They spread the news of the assassination of Mirwaiz Farooq Shah before the evil act had taken place. Law and order situation started deteriorating in Srinagar.

When Mirwaiz Farooq Shah heard the news of his murder, he came out of his Nigeen residence to tell people that the news was fake. At this time, Hizbul terrorist Ayoub Dar Pumped bullets into the Mirwaiz.

The Mirwaiz was rushed to SKIMS Soura, where doctors declared him dead. In this connection Case FIR No 61/1990 was registered in Police Station Nigeen Under Section 3/2 TADA, 7/25 Arms Act, 120-B, 302 RPC. The case was transferred to the CBI on June 11, 1990. Accused Abdul Rehman Shingan alias Inayat, a resident of Batamaloo, was arrested on September 20, 1990. Shingan confessed that he along with Mohammad Ayoub Dar and Zahoor Ahmed went to Mirwaiz Farooq's residence armed with pistols and shot him. Abdul Rehman Shingan and another accused Mohammad Abdullah Bangroo of Solina, Srinagar, died during the pendency of the trial.

Accused Javed Ahmed alias Ajmal Khan and Hizbul terrorist Zahoor Ahmed alias Bilal are absconding. Mohammad Ayoub Dar was sentenced to life by the trial court. In 2010, the Supreme Court upheld the conviction and life sentence to Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist Mohammad Ayub Dar for the murder. Hurriyat termed Mirwaiz Farooq Shah as Shaheed i Milat. The Hurriyat has been commemorating his death anniversary



Mirwaiz Umer Farooq was only 17 when he was made Chairman of the Hurriyat Conference. Why would Geelani, an autocrat, accept a minor on this important position?

The unprecedented public sentiment in favour of the assassinated Mirwaiz forced Geelani to make this tactical retreat

every year without acknowledging the hand of Pakistan and its terrorists in killing Mirwaiz Farooq.

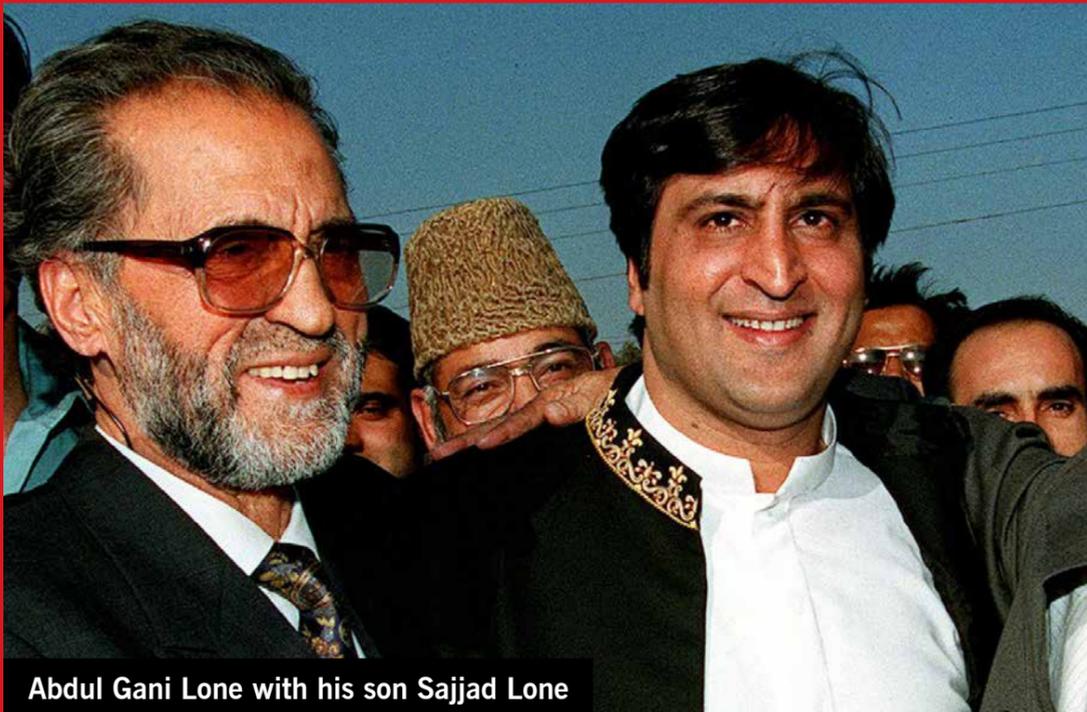
The Killing of Abdul Gani Lone

Hurriyat Conference used to give strike call every year on May 21st to commemorate the death anniversary of Mirwaiz Farooq Shah. It also used to organize protest demonstrations. On May 21, senior leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference and Founder-President of the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Conference Abdul Gani Lone was assassinated at the Eidgah graveyard in Srinagar when he was leaving from there after addressing a huge gathering. In this attack, his personal security officer was also killed.

Prof Abdul Gani Lone was a moderate leader and supported talks instead of violence. In 2000, during a meeting with Pak President Gen Musharraf, Lone expressed his difference of opinion with the Pakistani establishment. He expressed the fear that Pakistan's ulterior motive was to take over Kashmir valley. In April 2002, Lone met the ISI in UAE along with Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. They also met Sardar Abdul Qayoom Khan of PoK. At the meeting, Lone asked Sardar Qayoom to urgently request the Pakistan government to withdraw militant groups from Kashmir. The ISI chief, Lt. Gen. Ehsan Ul Haq who met Mr Lone and Mirwaiz in the UAE, told them categorically that Pakistan did not want them to participate in the forthcoming Assembly elections in J&K. Pakistan wanted these leaders to derail the peace process. Both Mr Lone and Mirwaiz rejected the ISI chief's demand. They said that the people of Jammu and Kashmir wanted peace. Lone also wanted to participate in the electoral process.

Lone Attacked At Eidgah

This did not go down well with Pakistan. The ISI hatched a conspiracy and killed Prof Lone. An eye witness who wished anonymity for security reasons said that a group of youths assembled in Eidgah and raised pro-Pakistan slogans. The assassins were in police uniform. They first threw a hand grenade towards the crowd, which failed to explode but created disruption. The terrorists then fired upon the personal security officer of Prof Lone, injuring him critically. Then the attackers showered bullets upon Professor Abdul Gani Lone, killing him on the spot. In this connection a case FIR No 70/2002 was registered in Police Station Safa Kadal under sections 7/25 Arms Act, 302, 307, 120-B RPC. The charge-sheet was issued against Mohammad Rafiq Dar aka Lalchari, a resident of Lukhriyabal, Nawakadal, Srinagar. Rafiq was a dreaded terrorist of Al-Umar outfit.



Abdul Gani Lone with his son Sajjad Lone