

3.2.6. Punjabi Taliban

The term ‘Punjabi Taliban’ is an unofficial term referring to militants from non-Pashtun backgrounds who joined the TTP382 or allied with them in 2007, hailing from Punjab and Karachi.383 Their proclaimed aim was to implement Sharia.384 Within this broad category of militants, there was a distinct group led by Asmatullah Muawiya, a former commander of Jaish-e Muhammad (JeM). Many militants in this Punjabi group came from militant groups such as JeM and HuM which were primarily focused on anti-India operations in Kashmir.385 However, Punjabi Taliban figures disappeared from the TTP leadership after 2014.386 While the group continued to exist in name, its activities in Pakistan ceased,387 with some Punjabi Taliban factions becoming dormant, while others merged with AQIS.388 More recently, however, TTP was reported to have reactivated its networks in Punjab and Karachi, reviving the ‘Punjabi Taliban’ as part of its new ambition to wage a nationwide insurgency.389 A senior ethnic Punjabi TTP commander, Chaudhry Muneeb-ur-Rehman Jatt,390 played a key role in TTP’s recent attempts to re-expand its networks in these areas. At the same time, as of mid-2025, he remained the only known high-ranking ethnic Punjabi commander within TTP.391

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