

President Freezes \$1 Billion in Funding for Jihadist Hotbed Pakistan

The Trump administration has just announced it is freezing upwards of \$1 billion in security assistance funds to Pakistan. For years, Pakistan has taken billions in U.S. tax dollars while supporting enemies of the United States, including the Taliban and Al Qaeda. No more. Now, they have a choice: Fight terrorists with U.S. support or lose hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

From 2002 to 2017, the United States has given Pakistan nearly \$34 billion in economic, humanitarian and security aid. On average, over the last five years, the United States has pledged over \$1 billion in security funding. In fiscal year 2017, the U.S. had pledged nearly \$1.2 billion in total security funding. \$250 million of that U.S. aid was earmarked for purchasing military equipment. The rest was allocated for reimbursing Pakistan for its alleged counter-terrorism operations.

As of this week, most of that \$1.2 billion is now frozen. Pakistan has repeatedly failed to uphold its end of the agreement to target the Taliban or the infamous Haqqani terrorist network that operates out of their northern tribal region. If Pakistan continues to support terrorism, the country could be denied close to another \$1 billion in 2018.

We applaud the administration's decisive action. Just days ago, the president threatened to cut U.S. aid to Pakistan; he followed through in less than a week. No longer will Pakistan be allowed to build their armies and line their pockets with U.S. taxpayer dollars and then betray our interest and fund terrorist who kill Americans.

At the ACLJ, we have advocated for this policy change for years. Pakistan is not just a terrorist hotbed, but also an infamous persecutor of Christians. Under the authority of the International Religious Freedom Act, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has designated Pakistan as a country of particular concern (CPC) for its “particularly severe,” “systematic, ongoing and egregious” violation of religious freedom.

In one instance, Bashiran Bibi, an elderly Pakistani Christian woman, was beaten by an influential Muslim man for refusing to clean his home. Through our office in Pakistan, we fought for Bibi and held the perpetrators accountable. Yet, many more Christians still suffer. Asis Bibi, a Pakistani Christian mother of five, has been on death row for over seven years because of her Christian faith just for offering a Muslim co-worker a glass of water. Every day, we fight to defend the lives and liberties of innocent Christians suffering in Pakistan.

The United States should never fund terrorists, and no U.S. taxpayer dollars should ever fund the persecution of Christians, or anyone else, on account of their faith. Denying Pakistan this vital security aid is a powerful first step.

With your help, we can continue to advocate for common sense national security actions and to defend Christians facing persecution in Pakistan and around the world.

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