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BILL

further to amend the National Counter Terrorism Authority Act, 2013

WHEREAS it is expedient further to amend the *National Counter Terrorism Authority Act, 2013* (XIX of 2013), for the purposes hereinafter appearing;

It is hereby enacted as follows:-

1. Short title and commencement. (1) This Act may be called the National Counter Terrorism Authority (Amendment) Act, 2019.

(2) It shall come into force at once.

2. Amendment of section 4, Act XIX of 2013.— In the National Counter Terrorism Authority Act, 2013 (XIX of 2013), in section 4,-

i. in paragraph (a), for semi colon “;” the colon “:” shall be substituted and thereafter, the following proviso shall be inserted, namely:-

“Provided that such periodical reviews shall also be presented in the Parliament for making adequate suggestions and guidelines to counter terrorism and extremism;”

ii. in paragraph (c), after the words, “Federal Government” appearing in the second line, the words, “and Parliament” shall be inserted;

iii. in paragraph (e), for semi colon “;” the colon “:” shall be substituted and thereafter the following proviso shall be inserted, namely:-

“Provided that provincial counter terrorism departments shall also be given an enhanced role in coordinating counterterrorism reporting and activities and coordination to be made in seeking their expertise, collating, analysing and disseminating counter terrorism information and in investigating and arresting subjects;”;

iv. in paragraph (f), the word “and” occurring at the end shall be omitted;

v. in paragraph (g), the full stop “.” occurring at the end shall be substituted with the semi colon and word and “;and” and thereafter, the following new paragraph shall be inserted, namely:-

“(h) To develop SOP’s and guidelines for defining the key role of police stations in countering terrorism and integrate those effectively into Pakistan’s counter terrorism effort.”

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

National Counter Terrorism Authority is mandated to devise a counter-terrorism strategy that should address short, medium and long-term goals and devise action plans for their implementation. Keeping in view of the current national, regional and international scenario this function of National Counter Terrorism Authority is gaining wider significance. Countering terrorism is a huge task which involves multi actors at local, provincial and national levels. Besides Government, Parliament's role as an active participant in national counter terrorism strategy is becoming more inclusive and effective. Therefore, keeping in view of this growing responsiveness on the part of parliamentarians, National Counter Terrorism Authority should lay its periodical reports in parliament as well so that our public representatives may also oversee the reviews and report findings of National Counter Terrorism Authority and formulate pragmatic proposals for the Government as well as for the law enforcing agencies in this regard. In order to streamline our national action plan to counter terrorism a robust and synchronized cooperation is highly sought in the current context among all the state entities.

2. In addition to this, Provincial counter terrorism departments should also be given an enhanced role in coordinating counter terrorism reporting and activities. Provincial CTDs already play an important role in providing expertise, collating, and disseminating CT information and in investigating and arresting subjects. Expanding the CT authorities of police stations and enhancing their capacities would require comparable upgrades in authorities and capacities at the provincial level to the CTDs to play their role effectively. This would require strengthening the ability of the CTDs to develop and approve CT-related policies, procedure, and directives to coordinate CT-related information collection and direct CT operations. National Counter Terrorism Authority should closely coordinate with these departments for preparing effective counter terrorism strategy at all levels.

3. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Pakistan requires effective policing institutions, without which the path to stability, sustainable development and good governance will be impossible to achieve." This is particularly true in Pakistan's megacities of Karachi and Lahore and throughout the country's increasingly urbanized environment. Policing in urban areas requires a more modern, sophisticated, and community-oriented approach and great technical resources than policing in rural areas. Unfortunately, the basic unit policing and law enforcement in Pakistan the police station remain largely unchanged from the country's colonial and agrarian past. This has left the country's local police ill prepared for and largely divorced from playing an effective role in countering Pakistan's high levels of terrorist and criminal violence. Hence, provincial civilian police should have primacy for countering terrorism. The police station which is the basic unit of law enforcement in Pakistan should be given the mission and resources to combat terrorism starting at local level. Providing a key role to the police station in controlling terrorism begins with developing SOPs that define the role of the local police and equip them with the authorities and direction to perform the task. New ways of doing business of policing must be introduced through internal information campaigns and in-service training programs to be aware of indications of terrorist activities and equip them to conduct effective surveillance and perform their duties as first responders.

Hence the Bill has been devised to attain the aforementioned purpose.

SENATOR MIAN MUHAMMAD ATEEQ SHAIKH
Member-in-Charge