

# Lahore: first observations on the attack on Sri Lankan cricket team

Thursday 5 March 2009, by [TARIQ Farooq](#) (Date first published: 3 March 2009).

Dear all,

I am writing this observation after one and half hour of the incident I am watching Pakistani television channels and receiving calls about the attack on Sri Lankan cricket team at Liberty Chouck Lahore this morning at 8.40 am. The place is next to Asma Jehanghir home and office.

7 police men killed and six Sri Lankan cricket players injured in a direct firing lasting for 25 minutes.

Watching different channels and looking at the footage of the attack, it is clear that religious fundamentalists have stuck. They were four of them with hand grenades, rocket launchers, modern rifles and other sophisticated weapons. They were with small beard and apparently looked like Pushtoon.

The government is claiming that they were able to save the Sri Lankan team. I was shocked to hear the top Lahore police officers saying that there was no security lapses.

It could have been avoided by proper security measures. One must see the incident in the background of the political and bureaucratic changes that took place during last one week.

The Lahore top police's officers were transferred and new people were brought mainly to suppress the proposed long march of lawyers due on 12 March and resistance by PMLN supporters against the toppling of their Punjab government.

The top Lahore police officer, a loyalist of PPP has been brought from Quetta, Baluchistan. He has not yet settled properly. His priority was us, advocates and other political activists demanding an end dictatorial measures. Yesterday, a meeting of Punjab governor, police officers and top bureaucrats discussed in a special meeting how to stop the proposed long march. They decided, according to today's papers, to go for mass arrests. There is no mention of any hint of discussions on Sri Lanka team security, in today's news papers.

They were too busy in planning to stop the opposition demonstrations and bringing their loyalists to key posts. Media is full of such reports during the last one week since the Supreme Court decision against Sharif brothers and imposition of governor rule.

I know the place of the incident very well. It seems from the footages that the terrorists were running freely and firing. Few police men on the round about of Liberty would have been enough to notice the presence of these terrorists. Today, It was a routine security measures for the team. A police van in front, one on the back of the team bus, an ambulance and that is it. Even a governor of Punjab would have more security measure than this. Whole area is cordoned off in such cases.

There is no arrest of terrorists. One private channel newspaper journalist who watched the firing told that the terrorists first attacked the police in the front. They even went near to an injured police

officer and showered him with more bullets.

He told that the team is saved by the bus driver of the team and not by police. Had he gone to the direction of the cricket stadium, after the firing, the terrorist would have done more damage. He went to another direction and were able to minimize the damage.

Our condolences for the families of those killed and sympathies with the Sri Lanka cricket team.

It seems clear that serious security lapses have occurred. They were too busy in other things. The present Punjab government must accept the responsibility of security lapses.

---

**P.S.**

\* Farooq Tariq is spokesperson for Labour Party Pakistan. Posted online on Links.