

ALL INDIA BANK OFFICERS' CONFEDERATION



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To All Affiliates (Please Circulate)

Dear Comrade,

TERRORIST ATTACK ON BANK BRANCHES JAMMU & KASHMIR

We reproduce hereunder our letter No. AIBOC/2018/61 dated 04.08.2018 addressed to the Hon'ble Governor of the State of Jammu & Kashmir on the captioned subject for your information.

With greetings,

(Soumya Datta)
General Secretary

Text of AIBOC Letter No.2018/61 dated 04.08.2018

Shri Narinder Nath Vohra
Hon'ble Governor of the
State of Jammu & Kashmir

Honourable Governor,

TERRORIST ATTACK ON BANK BRANCHES JAMMU & KASHMIR

I extend my sincere regards to your good office and convey hearty greetings from All India Bank Officers' Confederation (AIBOC), the largest apex organisation of Bank Officers' representing over 3,20,000 members.

2. Sir, this has reference to the grisly incident of terrorist attack on the Qaimoh Branch of State Bank of India, District Kulgam, South Kashmir on Wednesday i.e., 01.08.2018 in broad daylight. The media report states that around six masked terrorists armed with sophisticated weapons including AK-47 rifles had barged into the Branch and looted cash from the Bank after threatening the Manager, staff and customers. While some of the armed terrorists held the employees, the customers and visitors hostages at gunpoint, others looted cash from inside the Branch. The fact that the incident took place at about 2.30 p.m. near the busy Qaimoh market where the branch of SBI is located, speak volumes of the intensity of aggression and the extent of militancy among the terrorists. The Branch Manager and Staff, however, displayed exemplary courage and presence of mind by not handing over the keys of cash vault to the terrorists which compelled the terrorists to decamp after looting only the cash available in the counters, which is reported to be around Rs.6.00 lakh. The Branch Manager was reported to be mercilessly beaten by terrorists and luckily due to timely intervention of some local customers his life could be saved. This ghastly episode has once more sent shockwaves across the Banking fraternity in the valley.

3. Sir, of late there have been incidents of Bank dacoity at regular interval in the valley. This undeniably has got accentuated in the aftermath of the demonetization exercise which has possibly been instrumental in curtailing the scope of adequate supply of currency notes in the coffers of the terrorists across the valley. During the last one year or so around 13 such robberies have been carried out in South Kashmir and reportedly cash of worth of almost Rupees one crore has been looted from various bank branches. These months have also witnessed the looting of ATM machines and cash remittance vans in South Kashmir. The spate of attacks on bank branches has further intensified during the last few weeks. There have been four attacks on the bank branches in the last three days. SBI Ananatanag Branch has come under Grenade attacks from terrorists where two security personnel were seriously injured. With dreaded militant groups operating in the valley openly claiming responsibility for such attack, the situation has got deteriorated further. We earnestly feel that these incidents of bank robbery in the otherwise chaotic and tumultuous political upheaval in the Valley should be viewed with more focused attention. We feel that following the Government's crackdown on money laundering, the Banks could become potential targets for the terrorists as a ready source of raising financial resources. We apprehend that this could trigger off a spate of similar attacks possibly at a heightened scale on Bank Branches across the valley as Bank branches are soft targets being operated with limited and inadequate security arrangements.

4. Sir, you are well aware that branches of Public Sector Banks have been opened at quite inconvenient and sometimes at partly inaccessible places in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. More than the challenge of difficult terrain, the menace and scare of terrorist and extremist infested places of the state pose greater threat and challenge to our colleagues in the Banking industry. All the employees of the Bank have been serving the nation steadfastly and meeting the expectations of the customers accepting the demands of trade, local environment and keeping in view the national priorities. Despite all odds, the bank employees in the valley have seldom raised the issue of inadequate availability of standards of physical safety and security. The time, however, has come to recognize that many of our colleagues are facing enormous challenges of different kinds while rendering their service and becoming soft targets for anti-social and anti-national elements in places infected by tumult, upheaval and lawlessness. Such dastardly attacks on our colleagues are undoubtedly going to instill in them a sense of fear and as a result would erode their confidence. This, if not addressed immediately and effectively, will definitely have a discouraging and demoralising effect on the quality, intensity, extensiveness and priority of all Bank employees. Unbridled acts of such nature will eventually force closure of Bank branches in all such areas which are vulnerable to terrorist attacks and continuous and prolonged law and order problem. This will only deprive our citizenry of all the facilities of service through various banking channels through which we have so long been catering the various needs of our customers.

5. Sir, with a deep sense of anguish, we, All India Bank Officers' Confederation (AIBOC), being the largest representative Organisation of Bank Officers in the country, condemn this heinous, cowardly attack on innocent bank employees and urge upon your good office to not only bring the culprits to book without any further loss of time but also see to it that exemplary punishment is given to the miscreants as a strong deterrent against any future indulgence to such despicable crime.

6. The anxiety of many of our colleagues and their family members coupled with their sense of despair and feeling of helplessness generate a unique sense of pain and agony among us. We, with deepest sense of pain and agony, submit before you that today each member of the banking fraternity in the state and their kith and kin look up to you for protection at place of work where security stands imperiled due to unabashed rise of militancy compared to the adequacy and effectiveness of available security. The need of the hour is without any doubt to strengthen the state of security prevalent in the bank branches across the state and also during the movement of cash between bank branches.

7. We request your good office to initiate measures to immediately deploy army personnel to all the Bank branches operating in the valley. We also request you to issue suitable direction to the State Administration so that the aspect of ensuring adequate, effective and efficient armed protection to bank branches to guard against any possible terrorist attack is given utmost priority. Sir, the loss of precious human lives and public property needs to be arrested to thwart the abominable attempt to terrorize and intimidate common people. Any delay, laxity and inadequacy in this regard we apprehend, would lead to closure/shifting of vulnerable branches. In that eventuality, the local populace and the Government will suffer the most. We, therefore, do not simply appeal for restoration of the standards of safety and security at the branches but also plead for ushering in an environment free from scare, threat and

intimidation by meeting the intense and escalating challenges on security front head on suitably, appropriately and effectively.

8. We wish you all the very best in your attempt to restore terror free state in the valley and assure you that we continue to remain committed to our responsibility and contribution to the cause of economic development, social upliftment and overall service to the citizenry of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

9. We request your good office to meet a small delegation of our Confederation at your earliest convenience to discuss on this issue.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

Soumya Datta
General Secretary