

## France to move UN to blacklist Jaish chief Masood Azhar, all eyes on China

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IN A significant move, Diplomatic Advisor to French President Emmanuel Macron, Philippe Etienne, dialled National Security Advisor Ajit Doval Tuesday and decided to move a resolution at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for listing Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Maulana Masood Azhar as a "global terrorist".

Sources said France will be moving a proposal in a "couple of days". They said that more countries are likely to join in the next few days and conversations are taking place through diplomatic channels with other members of the UNSC.

Apart from P-5 countries, New Delhi is also in conversation with Indonesia, which is the

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## Masood Azhar

chair of the UNSC resolution 1267 sanctions committee that covers terror groups, and vice-chairs, Russia and Peru, for moving the resolution.

This is the second time that France has decided to take the lead in getting Azhar listed after a similar attempt along with the US and the UK in 2017 was blocked by China.

The French side has also decided to push for keeping Pakistan on the "grey list" of countries at the meeting of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in Paris this week. Pakistan was

put on the FATF list in June 2018 and placed on notice to be black-listed by October 2019 if it did not curb money laundering and terror financing. This, if implemented, has serious costs for Islamabad as it is trying to woo investors to Pakistan amid a dire economic situation.

New Delhi's attempts to list Azhar at the UNSC have been repeatedly blocked by China. The most recent effort began after India blamed JeM for the attack on the IAF base in Pathankot on January 2, 2016, and proposed a month later to designate Azhar as a global terrorist. But China intervened at Pakistan's behest and placed a technical hold on India's move in March and again in October 2016. It subsequently used its veto power to block the proposal in December 2016, a day before the technical hold ended.

China again employed a technical hold and blocked a proposal put forward by the US, the UK

and France on January 19, 2017, to designate Azhar as a terrorist. India had started pushing for Azhar's listing since 2008-09, after the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, and even then China had put a technical hold.