



KHALISTAN: A MOVEMENT OF HATE, VIOLENCE, & EXTREMISM

“If my bus is not released by 5:00 pm, I’d hack 5,000 Hindus to pieces in 1 hour” — Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, deceased Khalistani leader & face of the movement

Introduction

The Khalistan movement seeks to secede the Indian state of Punjab to create a Sikh theocratic nation, “Khalistan.” The movement began violently in the 1980s, spanning two decades of terrorism including bombing an airplane in Canada, killing all 329 passengers and crew aboard. At the height of the movement, 11,000+ innocent civilians were killed by Khalistani terrorists.

Dormant for decades, in the past few years the violent movement has resurged in the western diaspora, targeting Hindu and Indian individuals, institutions, buildings, and symbols. The movement regained international spotlight in 2023 following the murder of Khalistani extremist, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, and led to the fallout of diplomatic relations between India and Canada.

Why is Khalistani “activism” relevant to US law enforcement?

In the wake of Nijjar’s murder and accusations around the alleged attempted assassination of US based extremist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, international media failed to report on the hate, violence and extremism inherent in the Khalistan movement. Modern pro-Khalistan extremists glorify the terrorists responsible for the 11,000+ civilian deaths, displaying their images in propaganda as martyrs of the Khalistan cause. The legacy of assassinations, bombings, and attacks coupled with the recent spike of attacks on Hindu temples and arson on Indian consulates, has created a climate of fear for Hindus and moderate Sikhs across the diaspora.

Recently, pro-Khalistan activists have spearheaded referendums in the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom asking Sikhs to “vote” on carving out the theocratic Sikh state of Khalistan, encompassing an area that is 80% Hindu, including the Indian capital, New Delhi.

Recent Incidents of Khalistani Violence in the US, UK, Canada, & Australia

Activism championing the referendums has been hateful and violent: arson attacks on consulates, defacing Hindu temples, harassment of Hindu worshippers, and promotional material with violent imagery. The following are a few examples of incidents across the diaspora:

- After **harrasing** devotees during devotionals at a Hindu temple, Khalistani extremists **shot off 14 rounds of an automatic rifle** at the home of the temple’s president.
- A Hindu student was **dragged** from their car, **severely beaten** and **hospitalized for his injuries** by a mob of Khalistani extremists.
- A Sikh family was forced into hiding after **receiving incessant death and rape threats**.
- Two people were **stabbed** at an Indian Independence Day festival.
- The FBI **arrested** a Khalistani extremist who **gave material support** to terror groups.



Key Khalistani Leaders and Groups

When championing their cause, the new wave of pro-Khalistan ‘activists’ frequently display images of violent Khalistani terrorists who orchestrated the killing of thousands of innocent Hindus and Sikhs. These activists frequently harass and intimidate the Hindu community.

Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale Militant Khalistani leader during the 1980s, who orchestrated the deaths of several Hindus and Sikhs. Despite his death, he remains the most visible symbol of the Khalistan movement and his image is often displayed as a martyr in Khalistani propaganda.

Gurpatwant Singh Panun Leader of the present Khalistan movement and legal advisor to hate group Sikhs For Justice (SFJ). Known for violent, hateful, inflammatory speech, including threatening to blow up airplanes, encouraging assaults on Indian diplomats, and telling Canadian Hindus to “go back to India.”

Hardeep Singh Nijjar Deceased leader of Khalistan Tiger Force, a terrorist organization and offshoot of Babbar Khalsa International (BKI). Nijjar had close links to Jagtar Singh Tara, the BKI leader allegedly responsible for the assassination of former Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh.

Talwinder Singh Parmar Deceased Canadian militant, co-founder of Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) and co-conspirator of the AirIndia 182 bombing in Canada that killed 329 people on board.

Babbar Khalsa International (BKI)* Fundamentalist Sikh designated terrorist organization founded for the creation of Khalistan through assassinations, bombings, and armed attacks.

International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF)* A designated terrorist organization founded for the Khalistan cause. ISYF members have engaged in assassinations, bombings, and terrorist attacks.

Khalistan Tiger Force A militant offshoot of Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) led by Nijjar.

Sikhs for Justice A US-based hate group led by Khalistani extremist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.

Law Enforcement Recommendations

- Increase law enforcement presence at Hindu temples, community centers and institutions during referendum votes as a matter of policy
- Work with Hindu temples to strengthen their safety and security
- Investigate Khalistan attacks against Hindu temples and devotees as hate crimes
- Monitor social media platforms for US-based groups and individuals with ties to Khalistan terror groups who advocate violence and fundraise in furtherance of Khalistan, or make threats against US residents or visiting Indian officials.

For additional information about protecting communities from Khalistani extremism and violence, please contact info@hinduamerican.org