

# Targeted Intolerance: Rising Hate Crimes Against Hindus in Canada



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**भारत नीति प्रतिष्ठान**  
**India Policy Foundation**

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## **Targeted Intolerance: Rising Hate Crimes Against Hindus in Canada**

The disturbing rise in attacks targeting the Hindu community in Canada over the past three years has raised significant concerns both in India and rest of the world. Despite Canada's reputation as a multicultural nation that champions religious freedom, the increasing incidents of hate crimes and discrimination against Hindus tell a different story. These attacks, ranging from physical assaults to the vandalism of Hindu temples, have left the Hindu community in Canada living in fear, insecurity and anxiety.

The response from Canada's leadership and law enforcement agencies has been largely inadequate, limited to occasional condemnations for the global press, offering little solace and security to those affected. Furthermore, reports suggest that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the Sikh extremists demanding creation of a separate nation-state 'Khalistan', with alleged support from certain elements within the Canadian state, are exploiting the vulnerabilities of the Hindu community as part of a broader strategy to undermine India.

In the current Canadian government led by Justin Trudeau, this dangerous nexus appears to have found a supportive environment, further fuelling their efforts to destabilise India. This situation represents a larger geopolitical conspiracy that demands the immediate attention of the global community to protect a law-abiding and peace-loving community from becoming victims in cruel games played by those who unabashedly use terrorism as their political tool.

### **Rising attacks against Hindus: A cause for alarm**

In the years between 2022 and 2024, there has been a systemic vilification of Hindus in Canada, supported by the Canadian authorities as well as by external actors like the ISI and Khalistani terrorists. Twenty major incidents of overt acts of hate

which includes the vandalism of Hindu temples and the defacement of religious symbols have been reported while hundreds of verbal assaults and physical attacks against individuals have gone unreported as many fear for their lives in an environment of rising religious intolerance.

Some of the major attacks as recorded by the Coalition of Hindus of North America are:<sup>1</sup>

### **Attacks in 2024:**

**November 12:** Brampton Triveni temple cancels life certificate event amidst threats of violent protests.

**November 10:** Attack by a violent group of men, carrying flags of pro-Khalistan groups, on devotees at the Hindu Sabha Mandir on Gore Road in Brampton.

**July 7:** BAPS Edmonton Temple vandalised with hateful graffiti using words “Hindu Terrorist”

**July 28:** Canadian city council glorifies a man who threatened to kill 40,000 Hindus

**June 24:** Harassment of Hindu Canadians gathered to pay respect to their relatives who died in the bombing of Air India Flight 182 (Kanishka aircraft) by Khalistani terrorists in 1985

**February 11:** Sacred spaces of the Vaishno Devi Temple in Oakville vandalised and desecrated

### **Attacks in 2023:**

**December 27:** 14 Gunshots fired at residence of son of a Hindu priest in Vancouver

**December 22:** Miscreant attacks Ram Dham Temple in Waterloo, desecrating murtis, sacred spaces and uttering hateful words

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<sup>1</sup> For more information and social media clippings, visit <https://cohna.org/growing-attacks-on-hindu-mandirs-in-canada-list-of-events/>

**November 26:** Khalistanis call Hindu temples as ‘Terror Houses’

**October 15:** Khalistanis block the entrance of Lakshmi Narayan Mandir in Surrey During Navratri festival celebration

**October 8:** Three Hindu temples attacked on a single night in Durham

**September 7:** Shree Mata Bhameshwari Durga Devi Society in Surrey vandalised with hateful graffiti

**August 13:** Lakshmi Narayan Mandir in Surrey vandalised with Pro-Khalistan posters

**July 8:** Bharat Mata Mandir in Brampton threatened with a “War Zone” posters

**April 4:** BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Windsor vandalised with hateful graffiti

**February 13:** Ram Mandir in Mississauga vandalised with hateful graffiti

**January 30:** Gauri Shankar Mandir in Brampton vandalised with hateful graffiti

### **Attacks in 2022:**

**September 14:** BAPS Swaminarayan Temple in Toronto vandalised with hateful graffiti with “Hindu” written in big letters

**July 13:** Mahatma Gandhi statue vandalised at Vishnu Temple in Richmond

**February 9:** Six Hindu temples vandalised in six weeks in Jan-Feb 2022

### **A community under threat**

The escalating violence against Hindus from 2022 to 2024 prove that these are not isolated incidents of religious intolerance but are well planned examples of Hindumisia or religious hatred. It is an attack on the identity and beliefs of the Hindu community

which have left them vulnerable and uncertain about their future in Canada.

These constant attacks are attempts at dismantling the unity and solidarity of Hindus which are the fastest growing diaspora with their population totalling 828,000<sup>2</sup>. A significant Hindu population comes from countries like Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and Suriname. These individuals are descendants of indentured labourers brought by the British to the Caribbean during the colonial era. Hindus from Fiji, Nepal and Sri Lanka also contribute to the Canadian Hindu demographic. Smaller groups of Hindus have migrated from Mauritius, Malaysia, Singapore, and African nations like Kenya, Uganda, and South Africa, where Hindu communities have existed for generations. Currently, there is a high concentration of Hindus in provinces Ontario (575,000 people), British Columbia (81,000) and Alberta (78,000). In cities like Toronto, Vancouver, Brampton and Mississauga, 15 to 20 per cent voters are now Hindus. It is evident from the attacks that there are clear attempts at threatening Hindus and dismantling their peaceful solidarity.

To understand how the narratives against Hindus have changed, it is pertinent to critically analyse how the threats slowly took a different shape and form in the years between 2022 to 2024. In 2022, in the attack on the BAPS Swaminarayan Temple in Toronto, vandals spray-painted slogans like “Hindu Terrorists” on the temple’s exterior walls. Till this time, the attacks on Hindus were largely racist slurs but a coordinated effort was seen to associate the Hindu community with violence and terrorism from 2022. On 13 July, the statue of Mahatma Gandhi was vandalised, with the perpetrators breaking parts of the statue and defacing it with anti-Hindu graffiti. This act was perceived as a

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<sup>2</sup> Douglas Todd. Hindu Canadians are distressed and politicians need to take heed. Vancouver Sun

<https://vancouversun.com/business/douglas-todd-hindu-canadians-are-distressed-and-politicians-need-to-take-heed>

symbolic attack on Hindu values of non-violence and peace. On 8 October 2023, three temples in Durham were vandalised in a synchronised effort. The scale of this attack heightened fears of organised targeting of Hindus in Canada.

On 4 April 2023, the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Windsor was defaced with graffiti containing hateful messages, including references to Hindus as terrorists. On 30 January 2023, the Gauri Shankar Mandir, Brampton was vandalised with graffiti promoting hatred against Hindus and this was followed by weeks of social media agitation by extremist groups. On 22 December 2023, vandals desecrated murtis (idols) and sacred spaces while shouting hateful slogans. On 15 October 2023, pro-Khalistan activists blocked the entrance of Lakshmi Narayan Mandir, Surrey during Navratri celebrations, chanting inflammatory slogans against Hindus. This act of violence was a direct attack on Hindus' right to practice their religion freely and was in stark contrast to the widely accepted Canadian values of granting religious freedom to all.

Following these attacks, on 7 July 2024, the signs of the how efforts were being taken to systematically vilify the Hindu community and make them pawns in a larger geo-political game was clearly visible. In the attack on BAPS Edmonton, the word "Hindu Terrorists" was used in the graffiti and there was a continuous social media campaign that was run promoting anti-Hindu rhetoric. On 11 February, sacred spaces within the Vaishno Devi Temple, Oakville were desecrated, with damage to idols and offerings. This act deeply hurt religious sentiments and highlighted the growing threat to the minorities in Canada. However, it was the November 2024 attack on devotees in Hindu Sabha Mandir, Brampton where physical injuries were reported that made the world aware of the worsening situation in Canada and how the Hindu community is facing one of its biggest crises in Canada.

What is often overlooked here is that while the attacks escalated from 2022, there was an entire ecosystem that was quietly put in



place to target the Hindus. In September 2021, University of Toronto arranged a conference to “Dismantle Global Hindutva”. In December 2021, Toronto Public library organised an event on “How Hindu Nationalism has eroded the world’s largest democracy” to vilify Santana Dharma and its followers. In July 2022, a Canadian movie “Kaali” was released in Toronto, depicting the Hindu goddess Kali as smoking.

Many scholars and activists in Canadian universities have been promoting narratives that portray Hindus and their religion in a negative light, often reducing the religion to casteism or violence. In fact, concerted attempts have been made to overlook the diverse global origins of Hindus and take a reductionist view of Hindus as Indians and equate them to violence and terrorism. The Hindus have been projected as a monolithic entity tied to India ignoring the diversity within the group as well as their ties to various parts of the world. These are often followed by online harassment and intimidation campaigns that are used to silence the voices of Hindu supporters. Many schools and universities have also reported Hindu students being subjected to discrimination or bullying. The religious and political hostility have also resulted in the desecration of Hindu Festivals.

Often times, it is the law enforcement agencies that are fanning the flames of religious hatred. This year, the Halton district Police – removed pictures of a Hindu festival (Rakshabandhan) from their Twitter account which they had attended, citing that the post was removed to maintain public confidence after objections from some residents of Halton district.<sup>3</sup> Community leaders have reported that there is a growing reluctance among Hindus to openly celebrate festivals or wear religious symbols as many have started fearing for their lives in an atmosphere filled with hatred and violence. Following the Brampton attacks, the Indian High Commission stated that despite requests to provide support amid potential threats to the religious places of worship,

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<sup>3</sup> <https://vhpcanada.ca/addressing-hinduphobia-in-canada/>

the Canadian police allowed the violence to happen. Due to this lack of accountability, many incidents of violence against Hindus go unreported, leaving the community unprotected and vulnerable to violence. It also needs to be noted that in a country where Hindus are being constantly targeted, Hindumisia or even Hinduphobia is not even recognised as a form of bias as opposed to Islamophobia or anti-Semitism. It is unfortunate that the calls that the community has been making for a shift in discourse which recognises their contribution to the Canada's social, cultural, and economic fabric have gone unheard. Moreover, the Canadian government's constant backtracking on its commitment to protecting all citizens have put the community at greater risk.

### **Canadian administration and media behind anti-Hindu narratives**

An important reason behind the recent surge in hate crimes against Hindus in Canada can largely be attributed to the systematic vilification of the community, which has been facilitated by the state apparatus. A key factor in this is how Canada has been disowning its own multiculturalism and disregarding the eclectic mix of population that it once claimed to be proud of. As discussed earlier, today, Canada equates Hindus primarily with India when the truth is that starting from the late 19th century, the Hindu community migrated to Canada in significant waves. The Hindus migrated from British Columbia, parts of Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia. Currently, Hindus comprise 2.3 per cent of the Canadian population and have made significant contributions to the country's business, politics, and cultural life. Despite many not even having ties to India, all Hindus are connected to one nationality and made scapegoats for geopolitical issues.

In the ugly power game that is being played out on the Canadian soil, the way local media is being used as a potent tool in spreading narratives against India cannot be discounted. Here it needs to be noted that it is not random social media posts by

unverified accounts that is fanning the flames of racism and hatred but it is the state apparatus itself indulging in the spread of fake narratives. The official website of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada has several unsubstantiated reports of how ‘Sikhs are persecuted in India.’<sup>4</sup> According to Ganesh, a journalist currently based in Canada, “Many fake reports of ‘Sikh persecution’ in India are published by the Canadian authorities. Over the years, a totally fake narrative has been built that Sikhs are persecuted by Hindus in India which paves the way for thousands of pro-Khalistan extremists to get Canadian visas on the grounds of religious persecution.” It is evident that either fake stories are planted with impunity in the mainstream media or isolated incidents are picked up and their facts are distorted to spread anti-Hindu propaganda.

In addition to these, social media platforms like X and TikTok further spread Hinduphobia and Hindumisia (hatred for Hindu beliefs) in Canada. Several videos can be found on these platforms that portray a peace-loving community as the one responsible for the attacks against pro-Khalistan extremists and for spreading violence in Canada. In what can be seen as an appalling lack of sympathy, TikTok commenters celebrated the suicide of a former Niagara College student, Charandeep Singh and called for more Indians to follow suit.<sup>5</sup> These social media stereotypes are reinforced by those in the government, opposition, academia as well as by pro-Khalistan terrorists and fundamental Islamists to systematically vilify the Hindus. In a separate incident, the Canadian government allowed glorification of former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassins as 'martyrs' during a parade in the City of Brampton.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/country-information/rir/Pages/index.aspx?doc=457975&fbclid=IwZxh0bgNhZWOCMTAAAR2Nv7oGHnOHvkRzw6sig2fVGQbQX0QzruBMcgEcPRSE4QF8Z2MrWWWv1Pw\\_aem\\_W1g23gYQ\\_Lke1v0L\\_J6RQ](https://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/country-information/rir/Pages/index.aspx?doc=457975&fbclid=IwZxh0bgNhZWOCMTAAAR2Nv7oGHnOHvkRzw6sig2fVGQbQX0QzruBMcgEcPRSE4QF8Z2MrWWWv1Pw_aem_W1g23gYQ_Lke1v0L_J6RQ)

<sup>5</sup> <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/november-2024/anti-indian-racism-canada>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.deccanherald.com/world/a-look-at-hate-crimes-against-hindus-in-canada-3262565>

For Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the Hindus have become easy targets to hide his own political incompetence. A reason for the rise in migration from South Asia in the past few years have been a result of the Canadian government's easing of immigration policies to support a tight labour market post Covid. Now with the current housing crisis which is a result of Trudeau's own myopic vision with insufficient investments in the housing sector and students overcrowding low ranking educational institutes, he has found an easy way to shift attention from the burning issues by targeting a vulnerable community. The end result is profound psychological and emotional impact on a community which is known for being law abiding citizens, but their painful cries have been overlooked by those in power in Canada. With limited access to law enforcement, Hindus as a minority in Canada seem to have become soft targets of intimidation and extortion.

Trudeau seems to have forgotten that it was only in 2016, he apologised for an incident of 1914 in which a Japanese ship, the Komagata Maru, carrying 376 passengers from British India (including Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus), was not allowed to disembark in Vancouver due to restrictive immigration laws, pointing to racial discrimination. He recommitted to ending racial discrimination in the country. Yet six years later, he seems to be spearheading the most brutal attacks against Hindu community in the country that he promised to protect.

### **The damaging Trudeau legacy**

It is said that the past influences one's present. So, in Justin Trudeau's case, it becomes important to analyse the legacy left behind by his father and former prime minister of Canada Pierre Elliott Trudeau to understand his present actions. It can be argued that for Justin Trudeau who lacks the political acumen and statesmanship that is expected from a leader of such a vast country, he found it easier to follow his father, Pierre Trudeau's footsteps.

In the 1985 bombing of the Air India flight 182, an outfit called the Babbar Khalsa International (BKI), a pro-Khalistan separatist group, was implicated. Prior to the bombing, the Indian government had requested the extradition of Talwinder Singh Parmar, head of BKI, which was denied by Pierre Trudeau's government. Even when Parmar called for attacks on Indian missions abroad and communal killings, Pierre Trudeau decided not to act. He ignored all the intelligence warnings. Singh was later found to be the mastermind of the terrorist attack. Such incompetence of Pierre Trudeau resulted in the loss of hundreds of lives under his watch. In the end, Canada acquitted everyone arrested for the bombing including Parmar and only one person, Inderjit Singh Reyat was convicted and given a prison term of 15 years. Eventually Parmar was killed in a police encounter in Punjab in 1992 when he was trying to enter India illegally.<sup>7</sup>

Pierre Trudeau made Canada pay a heavy price for his political myopia, yet his blunders are being repeated by his son. Once Justin Trudeau came to power, Reyat walked out of prison a free man. Under his watch, in June this year, posters honouring Parmar were seen at various locations in Canada. It is evident that both Pierre Trudeau and Justin Trudeau had no regrets putting the lives of their own citizens at stake for petty political objectives.

Yet another legacy that Pierre Trudeau left behind for his son is Canada's decades old intelligence-to-evidence problem. Due to the excesses committed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) under Pierre Trudeau's prime ministership, the intelligence-gathering task was shifted to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS). Currently, both these agencies do not have any established mechanism of intelligence sharing and

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<sup>7</sup> Yudhajit Shankar Das. Before son, there was father: Why Trudeaus have difficult relationship with India. India Today. <https://www.indiatoday.in/history-of-it/story/justin-trudeau-father-pierre-trudeau-khalistani-terrorists-kanishka-air-india-bombing-canada-khalistan-2439080-2023-09-22>

the RCMP often finds itself relying on unsubstantiated rumours.<sup>8</sup> This was seen when Justin Trudeau blamed India for Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar's killing. His U-turn made it evident that he had made no efforts to reverse the damages done by his father and continues to undermine his nation for short term gains using identity politics. In the light of this, it comes as no surprise that today, Canada has become a haven for organised crime. In 2022, the Indian High Commission warned Canada about the involvement of gangsters operating from its soil in violent crimes in Punjab. But Trudeau's government never paid any heed to it<sup>9</sup> and now his actions are threatening the internal security of his own country.

Another interesting display of hypocrisy that was passed on from the father to son is the repression of secessionist forces within Canada. While Canada supports secessionist movements elsewhere in the name of free expression, its own double standards became evident when Pierre Trudeau brutally crushed the French separatist movement in Quebec. In what was a legitimate democratic movement, the French-speaking population wanted to break from Canada but the government immediately suspended all civil liberties and over 500 people were detained from raids conducted in homes and offices. Justin Trudeau, like his father, opposes Quebec's separation from Canada and perceives it a question of Canada's sovereignty while claiming that the demand for an independent Khalistan is part of free expression.

Just like how Pierre Trudeau made Canada pay a heavy price for his short-term political gains, Justin Trudeau's myopia will also have long lasting repercussions for his nation. Perhaps it will

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.indiatoday.in/world/canada-news/story/why-canada-no-evidence-canadian-pm-justin-trudeau-csis-rcmp-age-old-problem-pierre-trudeau-2618585-2024-10-17>

<sup>9</sup> Harsh V Pant. 'Strategic Myopia: The Trudeau factor in India-Canada Ties'. ORF <https://www.orfonline.org/research/strategic-myopia-the-trudeau-factor-in-india-canada-ties>

bode well for Canada to think of the fate of its ally Pakistan which is fighting the very forces it established to spread terrorism in the South Asian region. Instead of following his father's legacy, what Trudeau can do is to study the prime ministership of Stephen Harper. Under prime minister Stephen Harper, from 2006 to 2015, it was seen that a shift in Indo-Canadian relationship is possible if there are sagacious leaders willing to take their nations on a path of progress and development.

### **The external actors targeting India**

While Canada's internal crisis may be blamed for the current spike in attacks against the Hindus, the roots of these anti-India sentiments run deeper. To put the recent events in perspective, it is necessary to look at the history of Khalistan movement. As is well known, Bangladesh was created after defeat of Pakistan in 1971 India-Pakistan war. To take revenge for its defeat and subsequent independence of Bangladesh, Pakistan began to instigate and sponsor separatism in Muslim-majority state Jammu and Kashmir as well as in Sikh-majority state Punjab, both Indian states having long border with Pakistan.

Due to continued patronage of Pakistan, and some Western countries, the Sikh separatism, along with Kashmiri Muslim separatism, took the form of an armed insurgency in North India, with demands for the secession of Kashmir from India, and the establishment of Khalistan, a separate state carved out of Punjab. The terror and violence for demand of Khalistan continued for more than a decade, killing thousands of innocent Hindus and Sikhs who opposed Khalistani terrorists. Using the porous border, both Kashmiri and Khalistani terrorists would sneak into Pakistan after killing innocents in terror attacks within India. Pakistan provided them arms, ammunition, training, logistics, finances and political support. It also helped many terrorists wanted by India to travel from Pakistan to the western countries like UK and Canada on forged documents. During this period, the Khalistani terrorists received huge financial support from their patrons based in countries like Australia, Canada, United

Kingdom and the United States. Canada, with its sizeable Sikh population became an ideal location for the fleeing Khalistani terrorists to take refuge. In addition to this, Canada's weak extradition laws made it challenging for India to prosecute the terrorists who had left the country for safe havens abroad.

Along with spreading terror in border states, Pakistan's ISI continued to exploit the situation to create religious divisions within India. It relocated several terrorists and separatists to Canada with the intention of keeping the issue of Khalistan alive. At that time, the Golden Temple in Amritsar, turned into a safe sanctuary for Khalistani terrorists, led by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. He, along with some other terrorists, died fighting against the Indian army, when the prime minister Indira Gandhi ordered the armed forces to enter the temple premises and arrest all anti-India elements hiding there with stockpiles of firearms and ammunition. Even after losing its proxies like Bhindranwale, Pakistan's ISI kept on intensifying the tensions between Hindus and Sikhs through various means.<sup>10</sup> When Indira Gandhi's assassination by two of her Sikh bodyguards on October 31, 1984 triggered widespread anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and some other cities, Canada had also witnessed violence.

### **Canada as safe haven for Khalistanis**

Funded and patronised by external forces, the Khalistan movement that was initially seen only as a separatist movement soon took to terror and brutal violence. In the early 1980s, it carried out hundreds of terrorist attacks in different parts of India which resulted in thousands of civilian deaths. Canada, the country that gave refuge to the pro-Khalistan Sikh radicals was also not spared. In 1985, the bombing of Air India flight 182 enroute from Montreal to London killed all 329 passengers and crew on board. Till date, it is the deadliest terror attack that Canada has witnessed, yet the country continues to support the terrorists who are affiliated to the same separatist movement. It

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/what-is-the-khalistan-movement-that-triggered-india-canada-rift-explained-11695193745105.html>



is baffling that a group that orchestrated such a deadly attack on innocent Canadian civilians is seen as a legitimate entity by the Canadian administration.

In fact, current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, blinded by partisan political gains, displayed the audacity to sponsor a petition that promoted a conspiracy theory that the Indian government was behind the Air India bombing. His government also watered down a Public Safety Canada report that listed “Sikh (Khalistani) Extremism” as among the top five home-grown terrorism threats.

Over the years, Pakistani agencies have ensured that the issue of Khalistan separatism continues to be a sensitive topic in Canada with all Hindus being portrayed as supporters of the Indian government that refuses to grant a separate statehood for the Sikhs and persecutes them.<sup>11</sup> Despite the Indian government repeatedly warning Canadian government that the Khalistani separatist movement was getting revived by certain elements based in Canada, and appealing it that the Khalistani terrorists linked to various outfits need to be arrested and extradited to India, the Trudeau administration has turned a blind eye to the facts on the ground. Today, Canada is among those few countries that provide state patronage and protection to terrorist organisations openly advocating violence against civilians.

The biggest example of the Canadian government support extended to the terrorists was seen when the Khalistani terrorist Gurbatwant Singh Pannun, leader of an organisation named Sikhs for Justice, openly threatened violence against Canada based Hindus, yet the Trudeau administration defended it in the name of “free speech.” Pannu who holds a dual citizenship of the US and Canada, has admitted on record that he has been working in close association with Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau for the past many years. He warned the Canadian Hindus against

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.outlookindia.com/national/growth-of-pro-khalistan-sentiments-abroad-how-canada-became-hotbed-of-khalistan-movement-news-319127>

celebrating Diwali, threatening them with attacks and also released a video last year demanding the Hindus in Canada to “go back to India.” He has not only been holding pro-Khalistan referendums in Western countries but had openly warned of bombing of Indian airlines and terror attacks on Indian Parliament, as well as newly built Shri Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

Furthermore, Trudeau instead of protecting his country against violent elements made a baseless allegation that India was behind the killing of the Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar last year in Vancouver. In fact, Nijjar was once arrested by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and was placed on a no-fly list in Canada despite not being charged, clearly exposing the Canadian government’s double standards. The dangerous communal undertones of his speeches were ignored by the Trudeau government as it served their purpose of garnering domestic support among pro-Khalistan voters, exposing the double standards. The Canadian authorities identified the Indian High Commissioner and other diplomats as “persons of interest” in an investigation without being able to furnish any proof so far.<sup>12</sup> Defying all rules of diplomacy and sovereignty, time and again, Trudeau has also spoken on the internal issues of India ranging from the Kashmir issue to the farmer protests.

Surprisingly, the Trudeau government, in a sudden change of heart, after running a year-long spear campaign against the Indian government, its top leaders and diplomats, suddenly debunked the theory that India was involved in Nijjar’s killing. The statement issued by his government read, “On October 14th, because of a significant and ongoing threat to public safety, the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) and officials took the extraordinary step of making public accusations of serious criminal activity in Canada perpetrated by agents of the Government of India. The Government of Canada has not stated, nor is it aware of the evidence, linking Prime Minister Modi,

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<sup>12</sup> <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/what-led-to-the-khalistani-attack-on-canadas-hindu-temple/articleshow/114942941.cms?from=mdr>

Minister Jaishankar, or NSA Doval to the serious criminal activity within Canada.”

This statement in no way absolves the Canadian state apparatus of the support that they have been giving to the Khalistani terrorists. Staying true to his father’s legacy, Trudeau used the killing of Nijjar in June 2023 to gain political mileage. Nijjar was designated as a terrorist by India in 2020 under its Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). Despite this, he lived and operated in Canada freely. He immigrated to Canada in the late 1990s on fake documents and later became a Canadian citizen. Over the years, India had continuously called for his extradition, citing his involvement in terrorist activities in Punjab including targeted killings and arms training and his leadership in the Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) with the support of dossiers substantiating all the charges. However, Canada did not act on any of these requests giving due process concerns or insufficient evidence as reasons. Whenever he openly advocated for the Khalistan movement and organised protests and events promoting the idea of breaking sovereign India, the Canadian government allowed it under the pretext of free speech. He also leveraged his position in Canadian gurudwaras to fundraise and mobilise support for Khalistan which the Canadian government did not scrutinise. Yet, Canada has no hesitation in painting him as a religious leader and putting the blame for his death on India with no substantiating evidence to back up the claims.

It needs to be noted that Nijjar is not the only terrorist that Canada has been protecting. Another terrorist from the long list of names that Canada has been shielding is Goldy Brar who is affiliated with the transnational criminal gang of Lawrence Bishnoi. Brar has been linked to various criminal activities, including the assassination of Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala. Yet he continues to reside in Canada as a legal immigrant and operates from there despite repeated extradition requests by India. In this case too, detailed dossiers have been submitted to the Canadian authorities outlining his role in extortion, organised crime and targeted killings. The Canadian authorities did not act

on it saying it needs clear and admissible evidence despite Brar himself claiming responsibility for crimes, including the murder of Moosewala through social media posts.

Yet another example of the state support is the presence of Arshdeep Singh Gill, alias Arsh Dalla in Canada. A local gangster from Punjab transformed into a dreaded Khalistani terrorist once he reached Canada with the help of the tacit support provided by the Canadian government. He took over as the chief of Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) after the death of Harjit Singh Nijjar. Using his terror networks, he has been orchestrating several violent crimes in India including the killing of Congress leader Baljinder Singh Balli. It is also alleged that he uses social media to recruit youths in Punjab and Haryana to support his terror operations. He is known to have connections with Islamic terror groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and has been involved in cross-border arms trafficking. Declared a "proclaimed offender" by the Indian government, Dalla is linked to over 50 cases, including murder, attempted murder, extortion, terrorism, and terror financing. In May 2022, a red corner notice was issued against him, and he was designated an "individual terrorist" in January 2023. Despite all this, he operates from Canada with impunity. It was only after a shoot-out in Ontario that the Halton Regional Police Service arrested him in October 2024, but he was soon released on bail arranged by his protectors in Canada, even when India continues to push for Dalla's extradition.

Additionally, it is also observed that the Khalistani separatists have effectively infiltrated into the Canadian law enforcement agencies. A recent example is that of Canadian police officer Harinder Sohi being given a clean chit by the Peel Police for taking part in a pro-Khalistani rally in which devotees at the Hindu Sabha Temple in Brampton were attacked by the mob of Khalistan supporters. Despite being off duty and clearly been seen taking part in the protests, the police claimed that he was trying to disarm protesters. There have been many such instances of discriminatory approach of the Canadian police where no

action has been taken against the violent Khalistani protestors while the government agencies have overlooked atrocities against Hindus. The Canadian government has been wilfully turning a blind eye to the increasing cases of violence despite Canada's laws which includes the Canadian Human Rights Act and Criminal Code of Canada criminalising hate crimes and religious discrimination.

Here, an oft given explanation of why Trudeau supports the Khalistani terrorists is his urgent need to fight the anti-incumbency wave in the face of impending elections. His government is propped up by the New Democratic Party (NDP) led by Jagmeet Singh. Domestic pressures mean that any party that comes to power will have to appease the Sikh population that exert a great level of influence in Canadian politics.

It is pertinent to note here that Nijjar was active in British Columbia which constitutes a significant Sikh community voter base which prime minister Trudeau would not have wanted to alienate. Despite representing only two per cent of the total population, Sikhs occupy 15 seats in the House of Commons which is over four per cent and some of them are prominent seats during national elections. This means that the Canadian government is forced to legitimise the Khalistan movement and in turn play into the hands of Pakistan's ISI. The opposition also proved that it shares a similar thought process when the opposition leader Pierre Marcel Poilievre of the Conservative Party decided to cancel a Diwali event.

However, a recent protest march taken out by the Khalistanis urging native Canadians to go back to Europe and England has raised the question of whether short term political gains was worth putting the security and future of Canada at stake.

### **The Pakistani-Khalistani nexus**

The Pakistani-Khalistani nexus goes much beyond a proxy war that is being fought in Canada. Together, they run a well-oiled

transnational criminal enterprise<sup>13</sup> in the name of religious political movement. Their activities go much beyond the joint protests of Khalistani and Kashmiri separatists that have occurred in various parts of the world. Pakistan's ISI has been using the Khalistan movement to fund separatist activities and destabilise the region by smuggling drugs into Punjab and fostering drug addiction among the youth. This is also a part of Pakistan's strategy of "bleeding India with a thousand cuts"<sup>14</sup>, the Khalistani terrorists often smuggle drugs into India, particularly Punjab, using drones from Pakistan. Proceeds from drug smuggling go into financing extremist activities in Canada and abroad. The drug addiction also enables this axis to create an environment of despair which make the youth susceptible to extremist ideologies. This eventually helps in the recruitment efforts. This nexus has further deepened as smuggling routes overlap with regions of influence for both ISI and local operatives.<sup>15</sup> Also, since Pakistan is a critical Chinese ally, this strategy is also aimed at weakening India's collaboration with the West.<sup>16</sup>

The nexus between Khalistani terrorists and Pakistan get exposed every time a death of a Khalistani terrorist is reported in Pakistan. Some of them include: 1) Harmeet Singh alias "PhD", a prominent leader of the Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF) who was killed in Lahore in 2020. His death was linked to inter-gang disputes over drug money; 2) Paramjit Singh Panjwar, leader of the Khalistan Commando Force (KCF) who was killed in Lahore in 2023. He was listed as a wanted terrorist by India for his involvement in militant activities.<sup>17,18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/rest-of-world/the-next-pakistan-how-trudeaus-pro-khalistan-stance-puts-canada-at-risk/articleshow/114314171.cms>

<sup>14</sup> Anupreeta Das. Sikh Activists See It as Freedom. India Calls It Terrorism. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/03/world/asia/india-sikh-separatism.html>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.dnaindia.com/explainer/report-explained-how-the-khalistan-movement-is-interlinked-with-punjab-s-growing-drug-problem-gun-culture-3062906>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.hudson.org/foreign-policy/pakistan-s-destabilization-playbook-khalistan-separatist-activism-within-the-us>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.satp.org/publication/ajaisahni/WarWithinBorderDetails.aspx?Id=354>

Other Khalistani terrorists harboured by Pakistan include; 1) Gajinder Singh, co-founder of the Dal Khalsa. He was involved in the 1981 hijacking of an Indian Airlines flight to Lahore and served a prison sentence in Pakistan. After his sentence, Pakistan has been protecting him and have resisted the extradition efforts by India; 2) Lakhbir Singh Rode, leader of the International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF), a banned group. He is in Pakistan since 1990s and is implicated in multiple terror cases; 3) Wadhwa Singh Babbar, leader of the banned outfit Babbar Khalsa International. He has been using Pakistan as a base to plan operations against India. 4) Ranjeet Singh Neeta, associated with the Khalistan Zindabad Force. He has found refuge in Pakistan and is linked to various violent incidents in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.

Another important evidence of Pakistan's involvement is that its government in 1999 appointed Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Javed Nasir, former ISI chief as the Chairman of Pakistan Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (PGPC), the body that administers Sikh shrines in Pakistan. According to intelligence reports, Sikh terrorists camping in Pakistan worked under the direct supervision of General Nasir. Media reports in April 2002 stated that the ISI at that point entrusted the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) with the task of reviving terrorism in Punjab. The LeT is believed to have opened at least eight camps in Pakistan to train the Khalistanis. These were at Kot Lakhpat, Chakwal, Gujranwala, Mianwali, Peshawar, Attock, Shahidan Da Banga and Gulbarg in Lahore.<sup>19</sup>

## **Larger Geopolitical Game**

It is evident from the above arguments that the attacks against the Hindu community in Canada is essentially a part of a larger

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/list-of-prominent-pro-khalistanis-who-died-in-2023-2695063>

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/punjab/terrorist\\_outfits/bki.htm](https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/punjab/terrorist_outfits/bki.htm)

geo-political game that is being played out on a foreign soil against India. It is important for the global community to look at this issue with critical eyes and unravel the depth of the global conspiracy against India.

First and foremost, a fact that often goes unnoticed is that those advocating for the Khalistani cause are second and third generation Sikhs who are born in Canada and are essentially Canadians in all aspects. They have no connection to their roots and do not even understand what India represents. Yet if they have taken up arms, it points to a systematic brainwashing or external forces trying to create divisions in Canada with the hope that the repercussions of it will be felt in India. An important aspect here is how repeatedly Hindus have been equated only with India when they have migrated to Canada from different parts of the world. It is a proxy war on India's sovereignty initiated by the Khalistani and Islamist fundamentalist nexus that has chosen Canada as the battleground.

Geopolitically, for the West, keeping the Khalistan issue alive stems from strategies to destabilise India and counter its rising influence on the global stage. By amplifying separatist narratives, some nations aim to exploit India's internal divisions, weaken its unity, and apply pressure on its policies. Such an approach also serves to appease diaspora groups with vested interests and maintain leverage in diplomatic negotiations, particularly as India asserts itself as a major global player and challenges established power dynamics.

Indian-origin Canadian politician Ujjal Dev Dosanjh speaking to news channel NDTV shared the same opinion when he said, "Khalistanis may be trying to drive a wedge between Hindus and Sikhs in Canada and hoping that this division spills into India." He added that the political class of Canada was in slumber over these issues. "They have always been in denial of the extent of damage that the Khalistanis have done to the country for want of votes". A pertinent question that he put forth was if someone had



called for the persecution of Jews, would Canada have still been nonresponsive?<sup>20</sup>

Another important reason for the current state of affairs would be West's own insecurity with the growing popularity of Sanatana Dharma and its values across the world. For the West, a non-Abrahamic religion that propagates the values of peace and unity in diversity is anti-thesis to all that they have learned so far. Many from the Hindu religion have achieved phenomenal success in their chosen fields without abandoning their quest for spiritual growth. If these values spread to the larger society, it means that the partisan propaganda of West will suffer a major setback. An ecosystem has been created against the Hindus and the Canadian media, academia, police and political system were all complicit in this. Unfortunately for those who helmed these narratives, the peace-loving community has chosen to face the relentless attacks with resilience and non-violence.

## Conclusion

A critical analysis of the recent events makes it evident that the rising attacks against Hindus in Canada are not isolated incidents but part of a larger geopolitical game driven by internal political compulsions as well as external interference. The hypocrisy of the Canadian government that preaches multiculturalism for the global stage while giving active support for the spread of anti-Hindu narratives within the nation stands exposed. The weaponisation of religious divisions by Khalistani elements, backed by Pakistan's ISI and enabled by Canada's political apparatus, highlights a dangerous nexus threatening the safety of law-abiding Hindu citizens and undermining India's sovereignty.

It is clear that what is happening in Canada is no longer just a matter of religious intolerance but a broader issue of state complicity in fostering hate and jeopardising societal harmony.

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/ujjal-dev-dosanjh-india-canada-relations-khalistani-plan-to-divide-hindus-sikhs-what-canada-ex-minister-told-ndtv-6946481>

As Justin Trudeau's government continues to turn a blind eye, it is important for the world community to step in to ensure that such systemic targeting does not escalate further. It is imperative to hold the Canadian government accountable for safeguarding all its citizens, irrespective of faith, and to stop using geopolitics and internal political compulsions to perpetuate hatred against a peaceful community.

India can no longer remain a mute spectator while a proxy war is being waged against it by targeting Hindus in Canada or elsewhere. The government must act decisively, both in national interest and to protect the global Hindu diaspora that shares the values of Sanatana Dharma. By leveraging its growing diplomatic clout, India must hold Canada accountable on international platforms, seek justice for affected people and communities, and ensure the safety of Hindus worldwide. Silence in the face of such attacks risks emboldening those who seek to harm India's interests and also jeopardises the principles of multiculturalism and religious harmony globally.

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