

PRESS RELEASE

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SCUK: 'Hindutva' threat to UK Communal Harmony

The Sikh Council UK expresses concern over rising community tensions in the UK due to events in India. We feel that India's current domestic policy endangers the communal harmony between different communities of Indian origin in the UK, especially minorities like the Sikhs.

Since the onset of the farmers' protest, there has been a campaign led by the Hindu nationalist government in India to demonise the protestors. Propaganda by India's ruling party falsely suggests that this is a Sikh/Punjab driven agitation. The truth is that the protest consists of Indian citizens from different states with diverse religious, cultural and political views. **This has led to religious tension in India, we feel this could trigger similar unrest in the UK.**

Generally, Sikhs and Hindus of Indian origin have lived together peacefully in the UK. However, in recent months, there has been an increase in anti-Sikh hate rhetoric from supporters of the Hindu nationalist government in India. Many supporters of the farmers' protest, including climate-activists, journalists and UK parliamentarians have been subjected to hateful online abuse containing racial and sexual undertones. **We urge anyone receiving hate-crime to report this to the police immediately.**

Last week, UK based group, 'Inspiring Indian Women' sparked outrage through an inflammatory tweet: "Punjab needs to be cleansed of lots of cobweb. They forgot the massacre after Indira". This has led to resignation of its patron Virendra Sharma MP who is also the chair of Indo-British All-Party Parliamentary Group.

In Australia, a right-wing Hindutva group allegedly threatened to lead a march past a Gurdwara that could have led to violence. As there is some indication of lockdown coming to an end here in the UK, we are fearful that we will see a series of protests and counter-protests on this divisive issue that may collide.

Gurpreet Singh Anand, Secretary General of SCUK said, "The anti-Sikh riots in Delhi in November 1984 are a traumatic memory for the Sikh Community. Social media has been plagued with reminders of the Sikh Genocide and allusions to a repetition of 'history the Sikhs have forgotten'. We have seen the dangers of inciteful propaganda in the USA. This behaviour is a threat to the cohesive social fabric of Britain, it must stop."

India's ruling party, the BJP make no secret of their 'IT Cell'. There is evidence to suggest a similar international syndicate network and we fear the UK is being targeted to propagate Hindu Nationalist extremism known as *Hindutva*. The Sikh Council UK has written to the High Commission of India, London to urge them to condemn 'Hindutva' hate-crime conducted by people of Indian origin in the UK.

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