



# OPEN LETTER



## First Amendment Rights Of American Sikhs Are Under Attack By Modi Government

President Biden & VP Harris:

On behalf of the American NGO Sikhs For Justice “SFJ” and American Sikhs who support the Punjab farmers' right to protest and subscribe to the political opinion of Khalistan – the establishment of a sovereign country in the region of Indian Punjab through the means of Referendum - we request you to raise with Prime Minister Modi, the issues of:

- India's heightened attempts to curb the freedom of speech of American Sikhs who support Khalistan Referendum; and
- India's use of unbridled and brutal violence to crush the ongoing farmers' protest against agricultural reform bills and use of sedition charges against American Sikhs for supporting farmers;

### Attack On The 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment Rights of American Sikhs

Khalistan is a political opinion and advocacy to establish Khalistan through Referendum is an expression of political opinion protected under the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment. However, India has been criminally charging American Sikhs who have been advocating for Khalistan Referendum from the US soil.

In most recent and brazen case, on September 16<sup>th</sup> Indian police in Ludhiana, Punjab confiscated the printing press and arrested Gurwinder Singh and his associates for printing and distributing Khalistan Referendum material. Indian government also filed criminal case against SFJ's General Counsel and New York based lawyer Gurpatwant Singh Pannun and other Americans Harpreet Singh, Bikramjit Singh and Gursahay Singh Makhu under the colonial era draconian law of “sedition”.

Earlier, in December 2020, Modi government charged attorney Pannun and other foreign based supporters of SFJ for organizing pro farmer demonstrations outside Indian Embassies in USA.

### Modi Government's Violence Against Farmers.

In the most recent incident of intentional and deliberate governmental violence against protesting farmers, an Indian official was recorded giving the directions to the police to “Break the Head of Protestors”, which directly resulted in severe injuries leading to death of a farmer from Haryana and injuries to several others.

Chronology and history of Modi Government's use of violence and sedition charges to punish the farmers for protesting against India's new Agricultural Reform Bills; intimidation of journalists for reporting governmental mistreatment of protesting farmers and harassment of overseas supporters of farmers including threats to Meena Harris, niece of VP Harris and American singer Rihanna, is well documented in March 21, 2021 Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report R46173 “Farmer Protests in India”.

The suppressive and brutal policies of the Modi government seem to have two primary objectives:

- The first is to suppress the farmers' protest enabling the Government of India to implement restrictive legislation designed to force the struggling community of farmers who live in the Northeastern Indian states of Punjab and Haryana – the majority of whom are Sikhs – further into destitution.
- The second is to methodically silence the message of the Sikh community, conveyed by U.S.- based advocacy group SFJ, to shed light on Government sanctioned atrocities while also campaigning people of Punjab's right to secede from India to form an independent country – Democratic Republic of Khalistan.

During your meeting, remind PM Modi that America was built by and is home to people persecuted for their political and religious views from around the world and thus America will continue to allow full and free expression of political opinion – Khalistan - to American Sikhs.

### Paid For By



**Gurpatwant Singh Pannun**  
Attorney-At-Law (NY)  
General Counsel to SFJ

American Human Rights Advocacy group Sikhs For Justice “SFJ”, which believes in UN Charter, UDHR & ICCPR. SFJ is campaigning for realization of right to self-determination for the indigenous people of Indian Punjab of which Sikhs are a majority, through the democratic means of Referendum. SFJ's is holding non-governmental **Khalistan Referendum** to allow the Sikhs living anywhere in the world and indigenous people of all faiths living in Punjab to vote on the question “whether the region of Punjab should secede from India to form a sovereign Democratic Republic of Khalistan”. The voting in non-governmental Khalistan Referendum is due to begin on **October 31<sup>st</sup>** from **London UK**, under the supervision of **Punjab Referendum Commission “PRC”** ([www.punjabreferendumcommission.org](http://www.punjabreferendumcommission.org)), a panel of non-aligned and independent experts on direct democracy.



**Dr. Bakhshish Singh Sandhu, M.D.**  
Bethlehem, PA  
President - Council of Khalistan  
Director - SFJ