

The “Kashmir 2 Khalistan” Campaign Is the Solution to India’s Separatist Issues

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The recent merging of the peaceful campaigns for self-determination referenda in Kashmir and Khalistan presents the only realistic solution to India’s separatist issues there, and the international community should facilitate their democratic goals and take steps to ensure that India doesn’t carry out a bloodbath against them.

The Kashmir and Khalistan self-determination movements recently merged into a single campaign called “[Kashmir2Khalistan](#)” inspired by the close coordination between the two following the [Sikhs For Justice](#)’s (SFJ) alliance with the Kashmiris in carrying out the global protests on India’s “[Independence Day](#)” last month and the enormous ones in [Houston](#) and [New York](#) during Modi’s visits there. This represents both a tactical and strategic decision by both intended to convince the international community to support the democratic referenda that they’re pursuing. The Kashmiri cause is comparatively better known but has hitherto lacked the organizational finesse of the Khalistani one that’s necessary for successfully lobbying their interests across the world, so the first-mentioned is able to receive organizational assistance through this alliance while the second one receives more international attention as a result. Seeing as how both the Kashmiris and Sikhs have been subjugated to Indian state terrorism for decades that’s denied them their UN-enshrined right to self-determination (mandated in the case of the Kashmiris through roughly a dozen UN resolutions on the matter), it makes sense for these kindred causes to finally unite in jointly advancing their shared agenda.

The author explained in an earlier piece how “[1984 Punjab Was The Template For 2019 Kashmir](#)”, which elaborated a bit on the history of the Khalistani struggle and how India’s brutal attempt to quell it was the precedent for what’s currently taking place in Kashmir following the country’s unilateral “[Israeli](#)”-like annexation of this UN-recognized disputed territory. Punjab never had the same international status as Kashmir did, but that doesn’t mean that it’s people haven’t suffered any less. India’s 1984 “[Operation Blue Star](#)” saw the state attack the holiest shrine of the world’s fifth-largest religion after popular separatists sought shelter there at the time, after which the government-backed death squads terrorized Punjab for months during “[Operation Woodrose](#)” as they sought to exterminate Sikh separatists and any civilians accused of supporting them. The response to this ethnic cleansing campaign was the assassination of Indira Gandhi by two of her Sikh bodyguards, which then triggered nationwide pogroms against the Sikhs that caused many of them to flee the country, a trend which still continues to this day and is responsible for their large diaspora in the West.

It's little wonder then that so many Sikhs, both those who fled their homeland after those hellish events and the ones who remained during its climax in the 1990s, so strongly support the SFJ's [Referendum 2020](#) campaign, just like the Kashmiris at home and abroad insist that their people be given their right to hold a plebiscite on their future political status too after suffering so much at the hands of Indian occupying forces over the years as well. The Kashmiri and Khalistani causes are therefore sister struggles whose people have a lot in common relative to their shared relationship to the Indian state, which is why it was only natural for them to team up after India annexed Kashmir simultaneously with preparing for an intensified crackdown against the Sikh community following the upsurge of support over the summer for the SFJ's Referendum 2020 campaign. The timing couldn't have been more perfect either because of what was at the time the upcoming commemoration of Indian "Independence Day" and the "Howdy Modi" spectacle in Houston. By joining forces, the Kashmiris and Khalistanis were able to inflict significant soft power damage to India.

The highly publicized protests that both groups collectively carried out served to erode India's international reputation as the self-professed "world's largest democracy" by getting people to think twice about the veracity of that slogan after it became undeniable that a critical mass of minorities are extremely dissatisfied with the status quo there. With the pro-Khalistan Sikhs' assistance, the Kashmiris were able to better organize their efforts to draw attention to the humanitarian crisis unfolding in their homeland, while the Khalistan supporters received unprecedented international media coverage that provoked India into intensifying its infowar attacks against them. Indian Mainstream Media is now chock full of unproven but ultimately defamatory allegations purporting that the Khalistani cause is nothing more than a "[Pakistani-backed terrorist front](#)" just like they claim that the Kashmiri one is, but these desperate accusations only reveal how afraid India is of the grassroots support that both movements are receiving, as well as ominously hinting that a more [forcefulcrackdown](#) is being prepared against the Sikhs on a similar Kashmiri-like "anti-terrorist" basis.

It's therefore incumbent on the international community to not only take action to avoid a possible bloodbath in Indian-Occupied Kashmir such as the one that Pakistani Prime Minister [warned the UN](#) about during his speech last week, but to also take similar moves in Indian Punjab to ensure that nothing of the sort transpires there in the run-up to next year's planned plebiscite either. It's impossible to ignore the Khalistani cause after it paired with the Kashmiri one and organized highly effective protests over the past two months that drew global attention to their shared plight, so it's high time for the international community to put pressure on India to allow the SFJ's plebiscite to take place along with the Kashmir's long-overdue one too. At the very least, they should hold India to account for its human rights violations through credible sanctions threats and demand that it allow UN observers into both regions in order to assess the true state of the humanitarian situations there. As the cliched saying goes, "it's better late than never", and the same holds true in these two cases since the Kashmiris and Sikhs deserve justice after everything that they've suffered in pursuit of self-determination.

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