

was actually dead. The hospital gave the postmortem report the police wanted. The Chief Medical Officer of the hospital at Patti also offered us some astonishing information on how he helped the police to get the post-mortem reports they legally needed in all circumstances before cremating the dead bodies.]

Investigation carried out by the Human Rights Wing forms the basis of a petition that the Committee for information and Initiative on Punjab has filed before the Supreme Court of India. The issue of illegal cremations by the Punjab police is not being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation, on the orders from the Supreme Court. However, the order of the probe did not come before Jaswant Singh Khalsa himself "disappeared."

[Interview with Jaspal Singh Dhillon: "Khalsa was quite clearly told that he can also become an unidentified body. And today Khalsa is not there."]

The guilty officials of Punjab police knew that, without Khalsa's investigative resourcefulness in the Amritsar district, the Human Rights Wing could not have so conclusively exposed their ways of handling the Sikh unrest in Punjab. Khalsa had also been providing legal counselling to victims of police atrocities, particularly the relatives of the "disappeared", which encouraged them to approach the courts to redress their grievances.

Khalsa's whereabouts remain unknown. The chief of the Punjab police has categorically denied Khalsa's abduction by the officers of his force. The Supreme Court of India has ordered the Central Bureau of Investigation to probe the "disappearance" along with the issue of illegal cremations by the Punjab police. In ordering the probe, the court has neither extended protection to witness who might lead evidence to establish the truth, nor has asked the CBI to associate the human rights groups, directly involved in exposing the police atrocities, with the inquiry. It is evident that the Central Bureau of Investigation, as an investigating agency under the Union Home Ministry, lacks the necessary power and independence to determine the truth of allegations of serious human rights crimes, made against India's security forces.

Human right groups worldwide are seriously concerned about the disappearance of Jaswant Singh Khalsa, which is seen as a warning to all those who are engaged in exposing police atrocities in the State. The Sikh groups in Punjab are agitating for Khalsa's release. Many leaders of the Western countries, including the President of the United States of America have conveyed their concern about the case to the government of India. However, the information percolating from the police sources suggests that Khalsa might already have been eliminated. Despair dominates the mood of the Sikh leaders in Punjab.

INDIA THREATENS WITNESS TO KHALSA ABDUCTION

HON. GARY A. CONDIT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 1996

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn a blatant abuse of power by the Indian Government. I join many other Members of the House who have spoken previously about the kidnapping of human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalsa, who languishes in illegal detention more than 6 months after being

taken from his home in Amritsar on September 6. Last year, 65 Members of the House wrote to Indian Prime Minister Rao demanding Mr. Khalsa's release. So far, we have been ignored. Mr. Khalsa must be released immediately.

The March 6-12, 1996, issue of World Sikh News reports that a key witness to the Khalsa kidnapping, Kirpal Singh Randhawa, secretary of the Punjab Human Rights Organization, filed a complaint in India's Supreme Court stating that "police had threatened to eliminate him and his family." It seems that the authorities will go to any length to keep Mr. Randhawa from testifying about Mr. Khalsa's abduction. Mr. Randhawa also said that he feared that the Indian Government will file a false legal case against him to prevent him from testifying. I will be placing this article in the RECORD.

Such actions by the Indian Government are not unprecedented. In the State Department's 1996 country report on human rights in India, it is reported that "the brother of Surinder Singh Fauji was held for a week in incommunicado detention, apparently to persuade Fauji not to testify on extrajudicial executions he witnessed in 1993." How can India call itself a democracy when the police are so out of control?

Recently I received a chilling video documentary called "Disappearances in Punjab." It details murder, torture, and rapes of Sikhs in Punjab, Khalistan. I am introducing into the RECORD, a press release from the Council of Khalistan regarding this video.

In "Disappearance in Punjab," a female officer from the Punjab police is interviewed. Her testimony is frightening to anyone who cares about basic human freedom. This police officer says that she saw "atrocities—including those against women—that I cannot bear. Women suffer much. Male officers torture them. They also rape detainees. Some who had been picked up were in the interrogation center. Then I read that they had been killed in an encounter. But I had seen them in detention." The policewoman is asked, "What was their condition in custody?" "Their legs had been broken," she replies. "Could they have run away?," asks the interviewer. "They could not even have walked" is her chilling reply.

This video, and the threat against Mr. Randhawa, prove that India's claim to be a democracy is a complete fraud. Democracies respect human rights. Democracies do not threaten to kill witnesses or falsely detain their relatives. Democracies neither kidnap people nor arrest them for publishing reports that embarrass the government, as in Mr. Khalsa's case. In short, democracies respect and practice freedom. India does not. It is against this background that the Sikh Nation declared itself independent on October 7, 1987. With that declaration, the independent country of Khalistan was formed. The Council of Khalistan, which brought these gruesome cases to my attention, was formed at that time to serve as Khalistan's government in exile. India's response to the Sikh Nation's exercise of its sovereignty has been to step up the repression, as these cases show. This repressive campaign of terror and genocide by the Indian regime has caused the deaths of over 150,000 Sikhs since 1984. Thousands of other non-Hindus have also been killed in Kashmir, Nagaland, and other areas struggling for human rights and self-determination.

The United States Government does not have to sit idly by and let India continue this brutal repression. There are two bills pending which address this situation. They are H.R. 1425, the Human Rights in India Act, which will seek to cut off United States development aid to India until India observes basic human rights; and House Concurrent Resolution 32, which seeks a plebiscite on independence in Khalistan under international supervision so that the Sikh Nation can freely choose its own future in free and fair vote, the way democracies make decisions. I urge my colleagues to support both of these bills. It is imperative that we assist the oppressed urge my colleagues to support both of these bills. It is imperative that we assist the oppressed Sikhs of Khalistan so that they too, can enjoy the glow of freedom, as we do here in America.

[From the World Sikh News, Mar. 6,-12, 1996]

KHALSA CASE THREATENED

AMRITSAR.—The secretary of Punjab Human Rights Organization, Mr. Kirpal Singh Randhawa, who is a key witness in the case pertaining to the alleged kidnapping of the human rights activist Mr. Jaswant Singh Khalsa, last week alleged that police had threatened to eliminate him and his family.

In a complaint sent to Mr. Justice Kuldeep Singh of the Supreme Court who is hearing the case, Mr. Randhawa alleged that he had gone to Lopoke (Majitha) police station in connection with another case of police high-handedness where he was threatened of dire consequences by Mr. Jagdip Singh, SHO, and ASI Mr. Gural Singh Bajwa. The police also threatened Mr. Randhawa to withdraw security cover given to him by orders of the Supreme Court.

Mr. Randhawa told the Supreme Court that he apprehended danger to his life and his family or implication in a false case.

[Press Release From the Council of
Khalistan, Mar. 14, 1996]

"DISAPPEARANCES IN PUNJAB"

VIDEO DOCUMENTARY EXPOSES MURDER,
TORTURE AND RAPE OF SIKHS BY INDIAN POLICE

WASHINGTON, DC, MARCH 13.—A new video documentary entitled "Disappearances in Punjab" uncovers the truth about India's decade of brutal oppression against the Sikhs of Punjab, Khalistan. Produced by Ram Narayan Kumar, a Hindu human rights activist and Lorenz Skerjanz of the University of Vienna, the documentary shows "disappearances" and death in police custody as common occurrences in the Sikh homeland. Indian state terrorism against the Sikhs, the video shows, is part of its policy to violently crush the demand for Sikh independence—a policy widely supported by the government and Indian society at large. According to Dr. Satish Jain, Professor of Economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, "There is a large section of [India] which approves of State atrocities. And, I think, the weakness of the Indian nation, the weakness of Indian society, really lies in this attitude."

According to "Disappearances in Punjab," the deceased Chief Minister Beant Singh spearheaded a government-backed campaign to crush all voices of dissent in Punjab regarding the demand for an independent Khalistan. Under Beant Singh and police chief K.P.S. Gill, tens of thousands of Sikhs were murdered. Reports of human rights violations became widespread. According to the Amnesty International report, *Determining the Fate of the Disappeared in Punjab*, "... the Punjab police have been allowed to commit human rights violations with impunity in the state." Indian journalist Iqbal Masud, called India's claims of having restored normalcy to Punjab a "bogus peace." "The

Beant-Gill duo," writes Masud, "committed mass incarceration and disappearances and called it 'normalcy'" (*The Pioneer*, Nov. 4, 1995).

Through a series of interviews with respected human rights activists, intellectuals, Punjab police officers, and eye witnesses, "Disappearances in Punjab" reveals the extent to which the so-called "world's largest democracy" has used brutal oppression to silence the voice of dissent in Khalistan. For over a decade, Sikhs have claimed that the Indian police have followed a *modus operandi* in which they abduct Sikhs, torture them and then kill them claiming that the victim was killed in an "armed encounter" with the police. In the following excerpt, a female police officer confirms these allegations.

Woman: "I work for the Punjab police. I joined out of patriotic sentiments, but what I saw, atrocities—including those against women—that I cannot bear. Women suffer much. Male officers torture them. They also rape detainees. Some, who have been picked up, were in the interrogation center. Then I read that they had been killed in an encounter. But I had seen them in detention."

Interviewer: What was their condition in custody?

Woman: Their legs had been broken.

Interviewer: Could they have run away?

Woman: They could not even have walked.

Interviewer: Are you afraid disclosing this?

Woman: No. I do not fear telling the truth.

The Chief Medical Officer at Patti Hospital sheds similar light on the tactics of police in Punjab. He recalled the time when police officers brought the body of Sarabjit Singh into his hospital to acquire a postmortem report. However, there was a problem: Sarabjit Singh was still alive. Upon learning of this, the police officers took Sarabjit away and returned his body later when he was actually dead! During his interview, the Chief Medical Officer offered some startling information on how he assisted police in giving them the postmortem reports they legally needed to cremate the bodies of their victims:

I ordered that the [postmortem] lists be prepared. The lists must say where the deaths have taken place. Also, mention the time of death and say "death due to fire-arms." My boss said that postmortems should take time. I told him to do whatever he wanted. My example set the precedent in Punjab. Five minutes a postmortem, five minutes a postmortem.

After obtaining their postmortem reports, police cremate their Sikhs victims as "unidentified bodies" at municipal cremation grounds. An attendant at the cremation ground in Patti commented on the alarming rise such cremations:

Unclaimed bodies have continuously been burnt here. Previously, it used to happen once in awhile. In the last four-five years, it has been common. They only cremate. . . . No one cares to take away the remains.

"Disappearances in Punjab" also explores the case of Sikh human rights activist, Jaswant Singh Khalsa. According to the findings of Mr. Khalsa, police have killed and cremated over 25,000 Sikhs in the manner described above. Mr. Khalsa arrived at this number by visiting municipal cremation grounds and tallying up the number "unidentified bodies" recorded on their registers. During a press conference announcing these findings, the Amritsar district police chief publicly threatened Mr. Khalsa saying "We have made 25,000 disappear. It would be easy to make one more disappear." The police chief followed through on his threat. Mr. Khalsa was abducted by Indian police in front of his home in the presence of witnesses at 9:15 AM on September 6, 1995. Amnesty International and other human rights

organizations have taken up his case. On October 19, 1995, sixty-five Members of the U.S. Congress sent a letter to Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao demanding Khalsa's release. India has yet to respond. Mr. Khalsa's whereabouts remains unknown.

Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, praises "Disappearances in Punjab" as a milestone in the movement for Sikh freedom. "This is a rare case in which the truth about Indian atrocities against the Sikhs has managed to find its way out of India. It shows that India is not the democracy it claims to be, but rather a repressive tyranny where the right of minorities are brutally violated. Now the world can see what the Sikhs have been enduring for over ten years. India has killed over 150,000 Sikhs and the time for an independent Khalistan is long overdue. After word of this video gets out to the international community, India will no longer be able to deny its policy of genocide against the Sikhs. Khalistan will be liberated."

AMBASSADOR BENJAMIN LU ON A FREE TAIWAN

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 1996

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, a few days before the first free and democratic elections in Taiwan, Ambassador Benjamin Lu, the official representative of the Government of Taiwan here in the United States, made the following remarks to Members of Congress and others interested in a secure, free and prosperous Taiwan. I commend my colleagues' attention to his excellent remarks.

ADDRESS BY AMBASSADOR BENJAMIN LU

Distinguished guests, and Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you all for joining us today. I am delighted that so many good friends and associates could be here to share in this exciting event.

The ROC has embarked on a path of political reform which is transforming Taiwan into a full democracy. Adding to the many institutions of personal freedom, human rights, popular elections, and a full-scale market economy which my country already enjoys, this week, on the 23rd of March, the people of Taiwan will conduct their first direct popular election for president of the Republic of China, an historic milestone in our democratization movement. At this very moment, there is a spirited campaign underway among four presidential candidates, including the incumbent President Lee Teng-Hui; a DPP candidate; and two others running as independents.

By any standard, the Republic of China is functioning today as a genuine pluralistic democracy, with ample political choices and fully representational government. This is an amazing transformation in just one decade. The stark contrast with deteriorating political and human rights conditions on China's mainland today could not be more obvious.

The Republic of China and the United States today share the same political ideology, principles and objectives. As fellow democracies with a closely intertwined history of friendship, cooperation and trade in this century, we have much in common. Moreover, there is much we can accomplish together for the sake of regional and international peace, freedom, and prosperity in the 21st century.

The 21 million people on Taiwan are grateful that the United States has responded to mainland China's military exercises and missile tests in the Taiwan Strait, and reassured that Americans share our concern for the region's stability. A continued American presence in the area will discourage unnecessary escalation of tension and will help advance those principles and goals which are championed by your country and mine, as prospering democracies. The success of Taiwan's democratic reforms hopefully can influence mainland attitudes toward political reform in a positive way by encouraging the establishment of democratic process and institutions. Only within the framework of democracy can reunification be eventually achieved.

Mainland China's coercive and hostile actions should cease immediately, allowing the process of democratic elections and free market commerce in the region to continue unimpeded. Let us work together to support the causes of peace and democracy throughout the Asia-Pacific region, and indeed throughout the world.

SUPPORTING THE KARENNI FREEDOM FIGHTERS

HON. DANA ROHRABACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 1996

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, Karenni freedom fighters are in battle today against the hired thugs of the Burma Army. Heavily outnumbered and outgunned, the Karenni are fighting to defend their homes along the Thai-Burma border from the inhuman onslaught of the SLORC regime. The SLORC regime is using air attacks and heavy artillery against the Karenni, a peace-loving Christian nation, who defend themselves with a few rifles.

Last year, thousands of SLORC troops attacked the Karen in neighboring territory. Then, the SLORC used brutal methods to systematically terrorize thousands of innocent hilltribe families. That tragic scene is now being replayed in the Karenni State.

Over 6,000 SLORC troops are relentlessly attacking less than 1,000 Karenni farmers, fisherman, and schoolteachers. These men and women are desperately fighting an honorable battle to defend their families, heritage, and identity. Although they may think that they are in the jungle alone, our spirit is with them. The heroes in the wilderness should know that we condemn the SLORC regime for its brutal aggression, and that we support their noble struggle for freedom and democracy.

In the past, the SLORC regime has justified aggression against the Karenni as a necessary first step before it could control the activities of Khun Sa, the infamous drug thug. Now, the SLORC regime has allowed Khun Sa to retire in luxury, while the aggression continues. It shouldn't surprise anyone that the SLORC regime was lying. Their entire system is based on lies.

I intend to visit the Karenni during the upcoming Easter break. Until then, I wish them success against their evil oppressors. Freedom loving people in the United States are on their side, and we will remember them in our prayers. Because they are striving for democracy and justice, they should know, that their victory is our victory.