

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
The Secretary of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520  
Via electronic delivery

September 24, 2025

Dear Secretary Rubio:

This year marks the sixth year in a row that the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has recommended that the Department of State designate India as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) for engaging in and tolerating systemic, ongoing, and egregious religious freedom violations.<sup>1</sup> **On behalf of the Sikh Coalition and the 10 undersigned faith-based, civil rights, and civil society organizations, we write to you today to urge the Department of State to adopt this long standing recommendation and designate India as a CPC.** We are deeply concerned that in the absence of this critical step forward, the government of India (GOI) and countries around the world will feel further emboldened to evade accountability for their impermissible targeting of religious minorities, including on U.S. soil.

The Indian government's religious freedom violations over the past several years are well documented in the Department of State's own annual reports on international religious freedom,<sup>2</sup> as well as by USCIRF<sup>3</sup> and organizations like Human Rights Watch<sup>4</sup> and Amnesty International.<sup>5</sup> USCIRF's 2025 Annual Report, in which it renewed its recommendation to designate India as a CPC for the sixth time, documented deteriorating religious freedom

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<sup>1</sup> "Annual Report 2020, India," USCIRF, <https://www.uscirtf.gov/sites/default/files/India.pdf>; "Annual Report 2021, India," USCIRF, <https://www.uscirtf.gov/sites/default/files/2021-05/India%20Chapter%20AR2021.pdf>; "Annual Report 2022, India," USCIRF, <https://www.uscirtf.gov/sites/default/files/2022-04/2022%20India.pdf>; "Annual Report 2023, India," USCIRF, <https://www.uscirtf.gov/sites/default/files/2023-05/India%202023.pdf>; "Annual Report 2024, India," USCIRF, <https://www.uscirtf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/India.pdf>; "Annual Report 2025, India," USCIRF, <https://www.uscirtf.gov/sites/default/files/2025-04/India%202025%20USCIRF%20Annual%20Report.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> "2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: India," U.S. Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/india/>.

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 1.

<sup>4</sup> "India, Events of 2024," Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/india>.

<sup>5</sup> "India 2024," Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-asia/india/report-india/>.



conditions for Christians, Muslims, and others in India. These conditions include vigilante violence, targeted and arbitrary killings, discriminatory abuse of legal authorities, and demolition of property and places of worship—all specifically targeting religious minorities.<sup>6</sup>

USCIRF's 2025 report also documented one of the most alarming escalations of the GOI's religious intolerance: the 2023 attempted assassination of a Sikh American attorney and activist in New York City. According to the Department of Justice (DOJ),<sup>7</sup> an officer within India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) recruited an alleged weapons and narcotics trafficker to facilitate the assassination, and apparently may have been in contact with sources in New York City who were tracking the movements of the intended victim. The DOJ's indictments in this case alleged that the recruited trafficker asserted that the targeted Sikh in New York was only one of "so many targets."<sup>8</sup>

Reporting from the Washington Post indicated that U.S. intelligence agencies assessed that more senior GOI officials, including then-chief of RAW, Samant Goel, and Prime Minister Modi's national security advisor Ajit Doval, were likely aware of the 2023 plot.<sup>9</sup> The Post's inclusion of former RAW chief Samant Goel is particularly relevant given his documented role in the Indian state's historic genocidal violence against Sikhs in Punjab and India more broadly. Per human rights organization Ensaaf, which studies and documents the Sikh Genocide of 1984 and subsequent decade of violent repression against the Sikh community, "at least 128 enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions were committed under [Goel's] command during his tenure as Senior Superintendent of Police in various jurisdictions of Punjab in the 1990s."<sup>10</sup>

Mounting evidence suggests that the GOI's attempted assassination in New York was not a one-off operation, but part of a broader campaign of violence aimed at targeting diaspora Sikhs in the United States and abroad. In October, the Canadian government ordered six

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<sup>6</sup> "Annual Report 2025, India," USCIRF, <https://www.uscifr.gov/sites/default/files/2025-04/India%202025%20USCIRF%20Annual%20Report.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> United States of America v. Vikash Yadav and Nikhil Gupta," Sealed Superseding Indictment, S2 23 Cr. 289 (VM), <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/media/1373831/dl>.

<sup>8</sup> See id. and United States v. Nikhil Gupta, Sealed Superseding Indictment, S1 23 Cr. 289 (VM), <https://www.justice.gov/media/1326501/dl?inline>.

<sup>9</sup> Greg Miller, Ellen Nakashima, and Gerry Shih, "An assassination plot on American soil reveals a darker side of Modi's India," The Washington Post, Apr. 29, 2024. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/29/india-assassination-raw-sikhs-modi/>.

<sup>10</sup> "Samant Kumar Goel," Ensaaf, <https://data.ensaaf.org/official/S0024/detail/>.



Indian diplomats to leave the country, including India's top representative in Ottawa.<sup>11</sup> According to the Washington Post, they did so after finding that those diplomats were directly involved in gathering intelligence on members of the Sikh community who were later killed, threatened, or attacked by India's criminal proxies.<sup>12</sup> That same month, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) addressed the public about their findings indicating a "significant threat to public safety" in Canada posed by the "breadth and depth of criminal activity orchestrated by agents of the Government of India."<sup>13</sup> Canada is not the first country to expel Indian agents; earlier last year, an investigation by the Australian Broadcasting Company revealed that Australia had expelled four Indian spies in 2020 for intelligence activities targeting defense technology politicians and airport security protocols.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, the Sikh Coalition has also documented several additional potential and confirmed instances of the GOI's transnational repression of Sikhs on U.S. soil, including immigration threats at a gurdwara, or Sikh place of worship, in California; attempted intimidation efforts targeting Sikh elected officials in the U.S.; attempts to suppress the of academic freedom of U.S.-based scholars; online censorship of our own organization, and more.<sup>15</sup>

Taken together, the Department of Justice's allegations of at least one GOI-orchestrated assassination attempt on U.S. soil, the Canadian government's findings about the GOI's campaign of violence across Canada, consistent public reporting indicating the involvement of senior-level members of the GOI in these unacceptable activities, and firsthand reports from U.S. Sikhs make clear that the GOI's violent targeting of religious minorities does not stop at its own borders. We are part of a growing chorus<sup>16</sup> of diverse faith groups and civil

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<sup>11</sup> Hanna Ziady, Paula Newton, and Tara John, "Canada Expels Indian Diplomats after Tying Agents to 'Serious Criminal Activity,'" CNN, Oct. 14, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/10/14/americas/canada-expels-indian-diplomats-intl-latam/index.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Greg Miller and Gerry Shih, "Canada Alleges Much Wider Campaign by Modi Government Agents Against Sikhs," Washington Post, Oct. 14, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/10/14/canada-modi-sikhs-violence-india/>.

<sup>13</sup> "RCMP statement on violent criminal activity occurring in Canada with connections to agents of the Government of India," Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Oct. 14, 2024, <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/news/2024/rcmp-statement-violent-criminal-activity-occurring-canada-connections-agents-the>.

<sup>14</sup> Maroosha Muzaffar, "Australia quietly expelled four Indian spies who targeted politicians and defence tech — report," Independent, June 18, 2024, <https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/india/australia-modi-indian-spies-sikhs-khalistan-b2564364.html>.

<sup>15</sup> 'So Many Targets' Contextualizing Modern Indian Transnational Repression Against the Sikh Community," updated Nov. 2024, The Sikh Coalition, <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/So-Many-Targets-Sikh-Coalition-TNR-Report.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> "UN Special Rapporteurs, Freedom House, USCIRF Call on US to Designate India as Country of Particular Concern," Indian American Muslim Council, Jul. 17, 2025, <https://iamc.com/un-special-rapporteurs-freedom->



and human rights organizations requesting that the Department of State take a clear, unwavering stance against the GOI's actions within and beyond its own borders. So far, no Secretary of State—across Democratic or Republican administrations—has had the conviction to designate India a CPC. If you choose to do so in the face of all this evidence, it will be a powerful way to encourage the rest of the U.S. government to adhere to more stringent sanctioning requirements regardless of political circumstances in either the United States or India.

Until our government takes bold, unequivocal action to hold the GOI accountable and deter further acts of violence, harm, repression, or intimidation against Sikhs and other religious minorities, we have no doubt that our communities' concerns will persist, and that countries around the world will feel similarly empowered to violate both their own citizens' freedom of religious conscience as well as U.S. national security and sovereignty. For these reasons, your leadership now is imperative to America's standing on the world stage.

Thank you for your consideration of our request, and your attention to this pressing matter.

Sincerely,

The Sikh Coalition  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC  
Ensaaf  
Hindus for Human Rights  
Indian American Muslim Council  
Muslim Civic Coalition  
Sakhi for South Asian Survivors  
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)  
Sikh Assembly of America (SAA)  
South Asian Network  
Voices for Freedom

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[house-uscirf-call-on-us-to-designate-india-as-country-of-particular-concern/](#); “Synod seeks U.S. pressure to end violence against religious minorities in India,” Hans Holznagel, United Church of Christ, Jul. 15, 2025; <https://www.ucc.org/synod-seeks-u-s-pressure-to-end-violence-against-religious-minorities-in-india/>. “Transnational Repression, Modi Regime’s Targeting of Critics in the United States,” Indian American Muslim Council, 2025, <https://iamc.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/TNR-Report-Final-4.pdf>.

