Sikh Disinformation Lab

UNSUPPORTED

Anonymously sourced IANS report ties Sikh political advocacy abroad to Pakistan's ISI without evidence

A report carried by Orissa Post on 5 September 2026 asserts that pro-Khalistan groups overseas shifted from violence to political campaigning on direct instructions from Pakistan's ISI. The Lab assesses the claim as disinformation: it is unsupported, resting entirely on unnamed officials and on reasoning that treats lawful advocacy as proof of foreign direction.

PUBLISHED
15 September 2026

SOURCE POSTED
5 September 2026

NARRATIVES
Claiming Pakistan Controls Sikh Political Activism

OUR ASSESSMENT

On 5 September 2026, IANS distributed a report stating that pro-Khalistan organisations abroad had changed strategy on direct instructions from Pakistan's ISI, shifting from violence to political campaigning.

The report cites no named official, no document and no evidence for this. Its sources are described only as an Intelligence Bureau official, another official, and officials.

The report's own logic should be noted. It presents lawful political activity that includes referendums, marches, public advocacy; as proof of foreign intelligence direction, on the basis that these groups were previously violent. Under this framing, both violence and the absence of violence demonstrate the same conclusion.

The Indianapolis event described took place publicly on 16 August. Attendance at a public political event is not evidence of foreign direction.

Canada's Foreign Interference Commission has found that agents of the Government of India target Sikhs in Canada. No equivalent finding exists regarding ISI direction of Sikh organisations in North America.

THE CLAIM

Pro-Khalistan outfits abroad change strategy amid global law enforcement crackdown

THE ANALYSIS

What was published

On 5 September 2026, Orissa Post published a report headlined "Pro-Khalistan outfits abroad change strategy amid global law enforcement crackdown," distributed by the Indo-Asian News Service (IANS) and datelined New Delhi.

The report asserts that "pro-Khalistan outfits operating in foreign countries altered their operational framework under direct instructions from Pakistan," specifically Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). According to the report, these organisations have moved away from violence and toward political campaigning — referendums, marches and public advocacy — under that direction.

The verdict

The Lab assesses the item as **disinformation**, with the nuance **unsupported**, and rates it **3 on a five-point severity scale**. The report contains inaccuracies and advances a central claim for which it supplies no evidence.

What the review found

The report cites no named official, no document and no evidence in support of its central assertion. Its attribution is limited to an Intelligence Bureau official, another official, and officials — none identified, and none quoted with any verifiable detail that would allow a reader or a third party to test the claim.

The report's internal logic also merits attention. It presents lawful political activity — referendums, marches and public advocacy — as proof of foreign intelligence direction, on the reasoning that the groups in question were previously associated with violence. Under that framing, violence and the absence of violence are both treated as demonstrating the same conclusion. A proposition that cannot be contradicted by any observable conduct is not an evidentiary finding; it is an assumption presented as one.

The report points to an event in Indianapolis. That event took place publicly on 16 August. Attendance at a public political event is not evidence of foreign direction.

Context

The claim inverts the documented record in Canada. The Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions — Canada's Foreign Interference Commission — has found that agents of the Government of India target Sikhs in Canada. No equivalent public finding exists regarding ISI direction of Sikh organisations in North America.

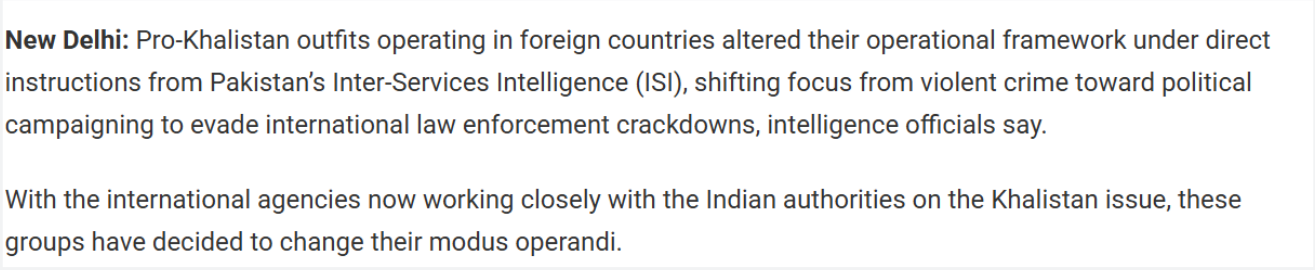
That asymmetry is the core problem with the report. A finding reached by a Canadian commission of inquiry, on the record, is set aside in favour of an unevidenced assertion attributed to unnamed officials in New Delhi, and the direction of the alleged interference is reversed.

The practical effect of the framing is to recast protected political expression in Canada and the United States — advocacy, demonstrations, non-binding referendums — as the activity of a foreign intelligence service. Sikh organisations and individuals engaged in ordinary democratic participation are thereby positioned as proxies for a hostile state, without any named source or document supporting the connection.

The Lab tracks this item within the Claiming Pakistan Controls Sikh Political Activism narrative.

Note on scope

This assessment addresses the evidentiary basis of the published report. It makes no finding about the intentions of the outlet, the wire service or any individual journalist, and the Lab has not assessed whether the item forms part of any coordinated effort. The assessment is that the claim, as published, is not supported by the material the report itself provides.


New Delhi: Pro-Khalistan outfits operating in foreign countries altered their operational framework under direct instructions from Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), shifting focus from violent crime toward political campaigning to evade international law enforcement crackdowns, intelligence officials say.

With the international agencies now working closely with the Indian authorities on the Khalistan issue, these groups have decided to change their modus operandi.

Caption this image — Source: name the source

SOURCES

01 https://www.orissapost.com/pro-khalistan-outfits-abroad-change-strategy-amid-global-law-enforcement-crackdown/

02 Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions (Foreign Interference Commission), findings regarding agents of the Government of India targeting Sikhs in Canada

03 The Lab's analyst review record, the Claiming Pakistan Controls Sikh Political Activism narrative

Sikh Disinformation Lab

About Sikh Disinformation Lab

Sikh Disinformation Lab is an independent, evidence-based programme founded and hosted by the World Sikh Organization of Canada. It monitors, analyses and publicly documents disinformation affecting Sikhs.

The Lab examines claims against evidence, publishes assessments with that evidence attached, and tracks coordinated campaigns over time. Every published assessment names what was claimed, where it appeared, what the review found, and what that assessment rests on. Where an item makes several distinct claims, each is assessed separately.

Assessments are made against the methodology framework in force at the time of publication. That framework is public, versioned, and reviewed at each phase gate; a material change produces a new version rather than a silent edit. The full method is published at sikhdisinfolab.ca/method.

Corrections are dated entries, never silent edits. Where a published assessment is found to be wrong or incomplete, the correction is recorded against it and listed at sikhdisinfolab.ca/corrections. If you believe something published here is inaccurate, write to the programme and it will be reviewed.

Assessments are the responsibility of Sikh Disinformation Lab.

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