Sikh Disinformation Lab

MISLEADING

idrw.org Presents Anonymous Opinion Piece as a 'Report' on New York Flag Protest

An item carried by idrw.org on 1 September 2026 was headlined as a report calling on the United States to condemn the tearing of the Indian flag outside Madison Square Garden. The Lab's review finds the piece contains no reporting: its substance is quoted from Khalsa Vox, an opinion outlet of undisclosed ownership. Verdict: misleading.

PUBLISHED
16 September 2026

SOURCE POSTED
1 September 2026

NARRATIVES
Portraying Advocacy for Khalistan as Terrorism · Portraying Foreign Governments as Safe Havens for Sikh Activists · Denying Sikhi Is a Distinct Religion

OUR ASSESSMENT

On 1 September 2026, IANS distributed and idrw.org published an item headlined as a report on flag desecration outside Madison Square Garden. There is no report. The source, named in the article's own text, is Khalsa Vox - an opinion outlet whose ownership is not disclosed. Every substantive passage in the piece is a block quote from it. IANS conducted no reporting and idrw.org carries a standing notice that it republishes wire copy unverified. The protest itself took place and was filmed. What is misrepresented is the authority of the account: an anonymous opinion piece presented, through two republication steps, as research. The article also frames the United States' decision not to designate Sikhs For Justice as a gap to be closed. That decision was made by US authorities applying US law. A foreign government's designation is not a finding binding on another state.

THE CLAIM

US Should Call Out ‘Disgraceful Act’ Of Indian Flag Desecration By Khalistani Extremists: Report

THE ANALYSIS

What was published

On 1 September 2026, the Indian defence news site idrw.org published an item under the headline "US Should Call Out 'Disgraceful Act' Of Indian Flag Desecration By Khalistani Extremists: Report." The copy was distributed by the news agency IANS.

The piece asserts that the United States "should be able to call out" the tearing of the Indian national flag outside Madison Square Garden in New York, and characterises the episode as "glorification of violence as political theatre." It notes that India has designated Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) and its leading figure as terrorist entities, and frames the United States' position on SFJ as a shortfall.

What the review found

The Lab assesses the item as misleading, with a severity rating of 3 out of 5.

The central problem is the word "Report" in the headline. There is no report. The source is named in the article's own text: Khalsa Vox, an opinion outlet whose ownership is not disclosed. Every substantive passage in the idrw.org piece is a block quote drawn from it.

IANS conducted no independent reporting before distributing the copy. idrw.org, for its part, carries a standing notice that it republishes wire material without verification. The result is that an anonymous opinion piece acquires, through two republication steps, the appearance of research — an item readers may reasonably take to be a documented finding rather than commentary.

The protest itself is not in dispute. It took place and was filmed. What the review identifies as misrepresented is not the event but the authority of the account describing it.

The designation question

The article's framing of the United States' posture toward SFJ also requires correction. India's designation of SFJ as a terrorist entity is accurate, as is its designation of the organisation's leading figure. The Lab reviewed both claims and found them true.

What does not follow is the article's implicit premise that the absence of a corresponding American designation is a gap to be closed. The decision not to designate SFJ was made by United States authorities applying United States law. A designation issued by one government is not a finding that binds another state. Presenting the divergence as an oversight elides the fact that two sovereign jurisdictions reached their own determinations under their own statutes.

Why the sourcing chain matters

> Police suspect that Preetpal “received lakhs of rupees in foreign funding via hawala channels in his mother’s bank account to avoid suspicion”.
>
> “He was tasked to do sloganeering for Operation Blue Star, among other pro-Khalistan activities. When he won their trust, they gave him bigger tasks, even managed to recruit more people for this job,” the police source told ThePrint.
>
> It was during his time in prison in Patiala that Preeptal recruited Harminder Singh and Niranjan, offering them money to paint graffiti.
>
> (Edited by Amrtansh Arora)

Source: thePrint

The mechanism at work here is one the Lab has documented across this narrative cluster: opinion content of unclear provenance is picked up by a wire service, redistributed to outlets that do not verify, and then presented under headline language — "Report" — that implies investigation.

Each step adds apparent institutional weight without adding any verification. A reader encountering the piece on idrw.org sees a defence news site citing a wire agency citing what is described as a report. None of those layers involved a journalist checking the underlying assertions.

The Lab makes no finding as to why the item was produced or republished, and draws no conclusion about coordination between the outlets involved. The finding concerns the content and its sourcing.

What readers should take from this

The verdict is that the item is misleading and contains inaccuracies. The designations it cites are real. The protest it describes occurred. But the piece is commentary presented as documentation, and its treatment of American designation policy misstates how such decisions are made.

Readers encountering material headlined as a "report" should check whether the underlying source is identified and whether that source conducted reporting. In this case, the article names its own source, and that source is an opinion outlet that does not disclose who owns or funds it.

CLAIMS ASSESSED

01	India has designated Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) a terrorist entity.	TRUE
02	India has designated SFJ's leading figure a terrorist.	TRUE

SOURCES

01 https://idrw.org/us-should-call-out-disgraceful-act-of-indian-flag-desecration-by-khalistani-extremists-report/#disqus_thread

02 The Lab's analyst review, flagged item published 1 September 2026, the Portraying Advocacy for Khalistan as Terrorism 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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