Sikh Disinformation Lab

MISLEADING

Syndicated report alleging ISI funds Khalistan movement via drug networks is Misleading

An IANS report carried by Lokmat Times and Magzter asserts that Pakistan's ISI sustains Khalistan activity in North America through Punjabi-Canadian drug networks. The Lab's review finds the piece repackages an opinion column as an evidence-based report, and rates it Misleading.

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27 October 2026

SOURCE POSTED
24 October 2026

NARRATIVES
Claiming Pakistan Controls Sikh Political Activism · Portraying Advocacy for Khalistan as Terrorism · Stereotyping Sikh Youth and Migrants as Dishonest or Dependent · Linking Sikhs to Gangs, Drugs and Organized Crime · Portraying the Sikh Freedom Struggle and the Events of 1984 and After Solely as Terrorism

OUR ASSESSMENT

The October 24 IANS report, carried by Lokmat Times and Magzter, summarizes Harleen Kaur's Khalsa Vox opinion "Follow the Money Behind Khalistan," alleging that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) sustains Khalistan-related activities in North America through Punjabi-Canadian drug networks and illicit financing. The article invokes Canadian government assessments concerning terrorist financing and organized crime, but extends those findings to broader allegations involving Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), Canadian refugee claimants and peaceful political advocacy without establishing the necessary organizational or financial connections.

Canada's 2025 Assessment of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Risks do not establish that SFJ's non-binding referendums, legal advocacy or public demonstrations are financed through drug trafficking, nor do they demonstrate that Pakistan's ISI directs their funding.

A particularly consequential allegation concerns financial intelligence purportedly tracing tens of thousands of dollars from a raided Canadian drug house to a registered charity associated with pro-Khalistan activities. Neither the original Khalsa Vox opinion nor the IANS report identifies the charity, financial transaction, investigation, law-enforcement agency or underlying documentary evidence. A similar allegation appeared in a December 2025 NDTV opinion article, but its subsequent repetition does not independently verify the alleged transfer.

The article also cites Punjabi-Canadian gang-related homicides, drug seizures and trucking-related trafficking investigations as supporting context. While organized crime and narcotics trafficking are genuine Canadian security concerns, the nationality, ethnicity or occupation of individuals involved in criminal cases does not independently establish that the proceeds fund Sikh political organizations. Evidence of criminal conduct by particular individuals cannot substitute for documented connections to the organizations being accused.

The report further questions how asylum seekers and temporary residents who allegedly arrived with limited resources could participate in expensive political campaigns. However, no individual immigration records, financial declarations or investigative findings are provided. Refugee status, lawful employment, community fundraising and political participation do not themselves establish financial wrongdoing. Similarly, the report's claims about ISI sponsorship and changing funding priorities rely on unidentified intelligence assessments rather than independently verifiable financial or operational evidence.

Canadian intelligence authorities maintain an important distinction between violent extremism and lawful Khalistan advocacy. The CSIS Public Report 2025 explicitly states that non-violent advocacy for an independent Khalistan is not considered extremism.

The article also omits the RCMP's October 2024 findings concerning alleged Indian government-agent involvement in violence, organized crime and intimidation affecting Canadian residents, including pro-Khalistan individuals. India denies those allegations, but the findings demonstrate that organized-crime connections involving diaspora communities require careful identification of both perpetrators and targets.

The principal information-integrity concern is the use of substantiated findings about specific extremist organizations and Canadian organized crime to lend authority to unverified allegations concerning a wider Sikh political movement. The article also presents an opinion-based argument as an apparently evidence-backed report without providing the financial documentation necessary to establish its central claims.

Assessment: Selective use of official Canadian security findings, insufficiently substantiated allegations of ISI-directed criminal financing, and unsupported associations involving SFJ, Sikh political advocacy and refugee claimants. The underlying article is identifiable political commentary circulated through IANS syndication. No

independently established financial pipeline, coordinated publication scheme or deliberate fabrication has been demonstrated.

THE CLAIM

Pakistan's ISI Fuels Khalistan Movement in North America Through Drug Networks: Report

THE ANALYSIS

What was published

On 24 October 2026, an IANS report headlined "Pakistan's ISI Fuels Khalistan Movement in North America Through Drug Networks: Report" was carried by Lokmat Times and distributed through Magzter. The piece summarizes an opinion article by Harleen Kaur published in Khalsa Vox, titled "Follow the Money Behind Khalistan."

The report asserts that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is a key external sponsor of Khalistan-related activity in North America, and that this sponsorship operates through Punjabi-Canadian drug networks and illicit financing.

The Lab's assessment

The Lab assesses the item as Misleading.

The article invokes Canadian government assessments concerning terrorist financing and organized crime, then extends those assessments to far broader allegations involving Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), Canadian refugee claimants and peaceful political advocacy, without establishing the organizational or financial connections such allegations require. The underlying text is identifiable political commentary circulated through IANS syndication, presented as an apparently evidence-backed report.

Claim by claim

That the ISI finances Khalistan activities in North America through drug networks: Unsupported. The Khalsa Vox opinion refers to multiple assessments and intelligence reporting, but identifies no documents, transactions, named intermediaries or specific operational relationships.

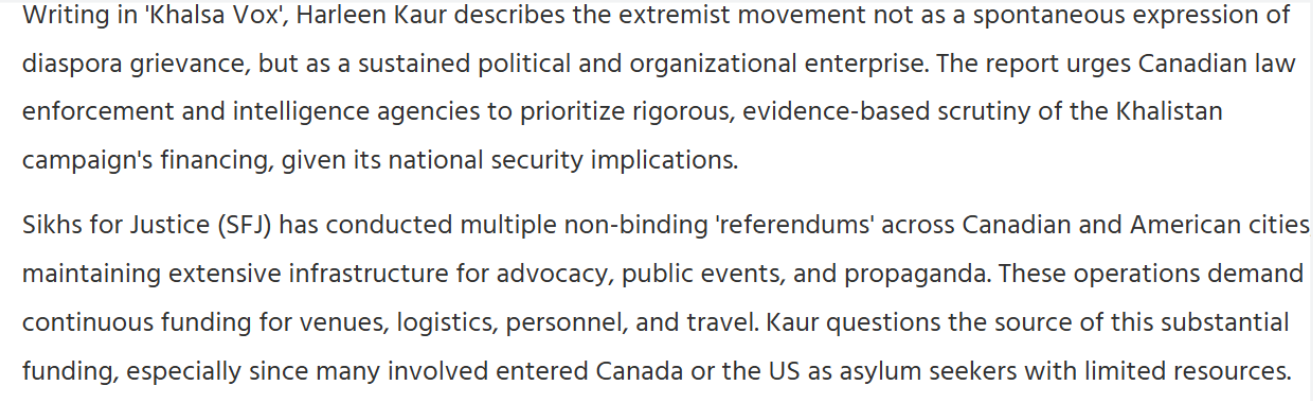
That Canadian drug-trafficking proceeds finance SFJ referendums and legal activities: False. Drug-related organized crime in Canada is documented. No traceable payment connecting identified drug proceeds to SFJ referendum expenses is supplied. Canada's 2025 Assessment of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Risks does not establish that SFJ's non-binding referendums, legal advocacy or public demonstrations are financed through drug trafficking, nor that the ISI directs their funding.

That financial intelligence traced tens of thousands of dollars from a raided drug house to a pro-Khalistan charity: Unsupported. Neither the Khalsa Vox opinion nor the IANS report identifies the charity, the transaction, the investigation, the police file, the law-enforcement agency or any financial-intelligence disclosure. A similar

allegation appeared in a December 2025 NDTV opinion article; repetition does not independently verify the alleged transfer.

That more than 200 gang-related homicides in British Columbia involved Punjabi-Canadian gangs: Unsupported. The figure requires source-specific verification, and the same number appeared in the December 2025 NDTV opinion article. Even if substantiated, gang-related killings do not independently establish the financing of political separatism.

That SFJ referendum organizers have faced firearms charges: Unsupported. The report provides no names, court references or case outcomes. A charge against an individual must be distinguished from a finding about an organization.



Writing in 'Khalsa Vox', Harleen Kaur describes the extremist movement not as a spontaneous expression of diaspora grievance, but as a sustained political and organizational enterprise. The report urges Canadian law enforcement and intelligence agencies to prioritize rigorous, evidence-based scrutiny of the Khalistan campaign's financing, given its national security implications.

Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) has conducted multiple non-binding 'referendums' across Canadian and American cities maintaining extensive infrastructure for advocacy, public events, and propaganda. These operations demand continuous funding for venues, logistics, personnel, and travel. Kaur questions the source of this substantial funding, especially since many involved entered Canada or the US as asylum seekers with limited resources.

Figure: Khalsa Vox commentary questioning SFJ funding and asylum seekers. The IANS report reproduces Harleen Kaur’s argument that SFJ’s referendum activities require substantial financing and raises suspicion about participants who entered Canada or the United States as asylum seekers. However, the passage provides no financial records, identified individuals or investigative findings establishing that refugee claimants financed these activities unlawfully or that the funding originated from criminal networks. — Source: magzter.com

That Sikh asylum seekers arrived with limited means yet sustain expensive political campaigns: Unsupported. No immigration records, financial declarations or investigative findings are provided. Refugee status, lawful employment, community fundraising and political participation do not themselves establish financial wrongdoing.

That the ISI is reassessing funding because support for Khalistan is declining: Unsupported. No financial records, dates, internal assessments or independently documented participation trends support this conclusion. It rests on unidentified intelligence assessments.

That CSIS considers Khalistani violent extremism a national-security threat: Misleading. This is confirmed, but with a crucial distinction the article omits. CSIS identifies threats involving a small number of violent extremists, while the CSIS Public Report 2025 explicitly states that non-violent advocacy for an independent Khalistan is not considered extremism.

Context

Organized crime and narcotics trafficking are genuine Canadian security concerns. The nationality, ethnicity or occupation of individuals involved in criminal cases does not, on its own, establish that proceeds fund Sikh political organizations. Evidence of criminal conduct by particular individuals cannot substitute for documented connections to the organizations being accused.

The article also omits the RCMP's October 2024 statements concerning alleged Indian government-agent involvement in violence, organized crime and intimidation affecting Canadian residents, including pro-Khalistan individuals. India denies those allegations. The statements nonetheless illustrate that organized-crime links involving diaspora communities require careful identification of both perpetrators and targets.

The principal information-integrity concern is the use of substantiated findings about specific extremist organizations and Canadian organized crime to lend authority to unverified allegations about a wider Sikh political movement. The Lab notes that no independently established financial pipeline, coordinated publication scheme or deliberate fabrication has been demonstrated.

CLAIMS ASSESSED

01	Pakistan's ISI finances Khalistan activities in North America through drug networks.	UNSUPPORTED
02	Canadian drug-trafficking proceeds finance SFJ referendums and legal activities.	FALSE
03	Financial intelligence traced tens of thousands of dollars from a drug house to a pro-Khalistan charity.	UNSUPPORTED
04	More than 200 gang-related homicides in British Columbia involved Punjabi-Canadian gangs.	UNSUPPORTED
05	SFJ referendum organizers have faced firearms charges.	UNSUPPORTED
06	Sikh asylum seekers arrived with limited means but sustain expensive political campaigns.	UNSUPPORTED
07	The ISI is reassessing funding because support for Khalistan is declining.	UNSUPPORTED
08	CSIS considers Khalistani violent extremism a national-security threat.	MISLEADING

SOURCES

01 https://www.magzter.com/stories/dhnews/LokmatTimes+English/Pakistans+ISI+Fuels+Khalistan+Movement+in+North+America+Throu

02 Harleen Kaur, "Follow the Money Behind Khalistan," Khalsa Vox (opinion)

03 Canada, 2025 Assessment of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Risks

04 CSIS Public Report 2025

05 RCMP statements, October 2024, on alleged Indian government-agent involvement in criminal activity in Canada

06 NDTV opinion article, December 2025

07 Earlier appearance of similar financing allegations *Other · Retrieved 2026-10-27.*

08 Original claims and framing *Other · Retrieved 2026-10-27.*

09 Reporting chain *Other · Retrieved 2026-10-27.*

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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