Dear [MPs name]

**Transnational repression by the Indian authorities and the targeting of Sikh activists in the UK**

I and others wrote to you following the Canadian PM, Justin Trudeau making a dramatic statement on 18 September in the Canadian Parliament accusing the Indian government of involvement in the assassination three months earlier of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, the President at Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, Surrey, BC.

Prior to the statement in the Canadian Parliament Justin Trudeau, Joe `Biden and others raised the extrajudicial killing in “no uncertain terms” with Narendra Modi at the G20 Summit in Delhi. The Indian government has however refused to co-operate with the Canadian investigation since mid-August when Canada’s national security and intelligence adviser Jody Thomas first went to Delhi and provided evidence and discussed their findings with her counterpart, Ajit Doval.

The Indian government rather than co-operate has admitted they were annoyed and upset with the Canadian government for making the matter public and they reacted by taking away diplomatic immunity and forcing more than 40 Canadian diplomats to leave India that is in breach of the Vienna Convention.

I also wrote to you about the mysterious death of 35-year old Avtar Singh Khanda in Birmingham three days before the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Since I last wrote to you there have been a number of important developments regarding the lack of investigation of Avtar Singh Khanda’s death and the call for an inquest that have been widely reported by the media.

The Guardian on 4 December [reported](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/04/indian-police-accused-of-harassing-sikh-activist-in-uk-before-his-sudden-death?utm_term=Autofeed&CMP=twt_gu&utm_medium&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1701682310) and confirmed the West Midlands Police did not carry out a proper investigation by looking into death threats Avtar Singh Khanda was receiving from serving Indian police officers and neglected to conduct any interviews or trace his movements leading up to his death.

The West Midlands Police therefore had no basis to conclude there were no suspicious circumstances surrounding the death of Avtar Singh Khanda. The backtracking by the West Midlands Police raises serious questions about the senior coroner’s decision not to order an autopsy into his death. The senior coroner should not simply have relied on the sub-standard West Midlands Police investigation.

FCDO and Home Office Ministers in response to over 100 MPs who wrote to raise concerns on behalf of Sikh constituents about the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar and the mysterious death of Avtar Singh Khanda erroneously referred to the ‘thorough’ investigation by the West Midlands Police with regards to the latter.

**You should ask Ministers to withdraw their letters in light of the new information and the Home Secretary to call for an urgent and full investigation into Avtar Singh Khanda’s death by a police force other than the West Midlands Police.** The situation demands an inquest into Avtar Singh Khanda’s mysterious death that will almost certainly need to become a judge-led inquiry into his death.

On 22 November it was [reported](https://www.ft.com/content/56f7d6d6-6a93-4172-a49e-d8a91991e29d) in the Financial Times an assassination plot by the Indian authorities was thwarted in the US on another Sikh activist. This was confirmed later the same day by a White House spokesperson for the National Security Council.

At Prime Minister’s Questions (PMQs) on 29 November Rishi Sunak was specifically asked to give reassurances to Sikh activists in the UK on their safety and security following the revelations of assassinations and plots in Canada and the US. Rishi Sunak’s response was extremely disappointing and dismissive given the mysterious death of Avtar Singh Khanda and Sikhs in the Diaspora being targeted by the Indian authorities in clear cases of transnational repression. Rishi Sunak missed the opportunity in Parliament to publicly give reassurances to the law-abiding Sikh community in the UK.

Rishi Sunak, since he became Prime Minister has been far more interested in appeasing the Indian government to help with a trade deal by demonising Sikh activists in the UK by calling them extremists, although his government has presented no evidence to back this up. Unlike the US and Canada no Sikh activists have been contacted by the police or intelligence services in the UK to warn them to take precautions.

Over 350 Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations wrote an open letter to Rishi Sunak on 24 April 2023 raising many concerns about ignoring Sikhs and the demonisation of Sikh activists in the UK to appease India. A follow up letter was sent on 19 June 2023 following the mysterious death of Avtar Singh Khanda and the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Both letters were copied to all MPs at the time.

Rishi Sunak outrageously tried to delegate responsibility to Tom Tugendhat, the Security Minister for responding to British Sikhs on his behalf. Tom Tugendhat sent a letter on 14 July 2023 that completely failed to address the specific issues raised in the letters to the PM on 24 April and 19 June. He was immediately asked him to withdraw the response that was acknowledged by his office on 19 July 2023.

Rishi Sunak has yet to respond to the British Sikh community on the range of issues raised on 24 April and 19 June, including why as PM he went out of his way to meet India’s National Security Adviser, Ajit Doval on 4 February 2023, but has not offered the same courtesy to the National Security Advisers from the US and Canada who might have told him to be careful who he meets and assassination being plotted.

A few hours after PMQs on 29 November the US Department of Justice decided to unseal an explosive [15-page indictment](https://www.justice.gov/media/1326501/dl?inline). The US Department of Justice in a press release [stated](https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-charges-connection-foiled-plot-assassinate-us-citizen-new-york) a senior Indian government intelligence officer based in India was directing assassinations of a number of Sikh activists in Canada and the US and there were many more targets. The indictment confirmed the Indian government intelligence officer based in India shared within hours of the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar a video showing his bloody body slumped in his vehicle. Although the indictment and evidence held by law enforcement agencies in the US vindicates the allegations made by the Canadian government the Indian government is still refusing to co-operate.

It has now emerged Joe Biden directed William J. Burns, the C.I.A. director, to visit India in August to discuss the suspected assassination plot and press the Indian government to hold those involved responsible. Joe Biden raised the New York plot directly with Narendra Modi when they met at the G20 Summit on 14 September.

A [report](https://theprint.in/diplomacy/top-officers-expelled-after-nijjar-killing-raw-downs-shutters-in-north-america-for-1st-time/1866238/) published in London for The Print, an Indian online newspaper has disclosed an Indian RAW intelligence officer, understood to be a former Indian police officer was expelled from the UK in the Summer at the request of British intelligence. This came before Justin Trudeau made allegations in the Canadian Parliament on 18 September and expelled the head of RAW in Canada.

What is not clear is what activities was the Indian RAW intelligence officer or ex-police officer carrying out in the UK for which he was expelled in the Summer and why did India not respond in a tit-for tat move as they did with Canada. Was this the penalty the Indian authorities accepted for targeting Avtar Singh Khanda, the illegal repressive activities of the India’s National Investigation Agency (NIA) in the UK and putting out a “hit-list” of 20 Sikh activists living abroad, including up to seven from the UK on Indian television in July.

**I would be grateful if you could raise Parliamentary Questions asking:**

1. why Rishi Sunak did not raise India’s transnational repression activities with Narendra Modi at the G20 Summit given Justin Trudeau and the US shared their concerns with him prior to the Summit;
2. what pressure the UK Ministers have exerted on the Indian government to co-operate with the Canadian investigation into the extrajudicial killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar;
3. what specific measures UK Ministers are taking to give reassurances to Sikh activists in the UK on their safety and security in light of transnational repression by the Indian authorities;
4. why an Indian RAW intelligence officer, understood to be a former Indian police officer was expelled from the UK in the Summer at the request of British intelligence; and
5. why Rishi Sunak has not responded to the range of issues set out in the open letters sent to him on 24 April and 19 June from over 350 Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations.

**It is also important for the UK Government to make an urgent statement following the unsealing of the indictment by the US Department of Justice and MPs to call for an urgent debate into transnational repression involving the Indian authorities who are targeting Sikh activists.**

Yours sincerely,

Add name and full address, including postcode