

## **Trigger/content warning: genocide, religious persecution**

Sat sri akaal and assalamu alaykum,

The month of June is a time of grieving in the Sikh community as it marks the beginning of outwardly genocidal policies against Sikhs in India that continue to have profound implications to this day. The Simon Fraser Student Society recognizes the violation of human rights and organized and systemic violence carried out against the Sikh population throughout India in 1984 and beyond.

From June 1st through 10th 1984, the Indian government executed Operation Blue Star where the holiest spiritual site of Sikhism, the Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) complex was scouted, sealed and used as the grounds for mass arrests and murders of Sikhs. Unaware of the curfew they had been put under and danger they faced, unsuspecting Sikhs arrived at the Golden Temple on June 3rd to celebrate the martyrdom day of Sikhism's fifth guru, Guru Arjan Dev Ji. When attempting to leave, individuals were arrested by the Indian Army on the grounds that they were affiliated with militants and those who remained were then subject to beatings, interrogations, and executions. This injustice continued until June 10th, with the Indian Army simultaneously attacking dozens of gurdwaras in addition to the Harmandir Sahib. This operation was only the start of targeted violence against Sikhs that would eventually build and culminate into what is known as the anti-Sikh riots of November 1984, which is recognized as genocide in the City of Surrey and in many communities around the world.

As members of a religious minority, we as Sikhs would also like to take this opportunity to stand in solidarity with our Muslim community members. As we remember 1984, it is imperative to recognize that religious persecution continues to occur and it is all of our responsibilities to fight for justice and equity. We condemn the act of terror against Muslims that occurred in London, Ontario and recognize the impact it had on Muslims worldwide. These atrocities have resulted in intergenerational trauma, which manifests within generations of our elders and within ourselves as well. The impact of this trauma continues to resonate with students today. Our struggles as religious minorities are very much interconnected and we will continue to fight for all of our rights to practice our respective religions free of persecution.