

Sikh leaders call for police protection for Singh after report of threats tied to India

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Former NDP leader Jagmeet Singh must receive continued police protection in the wake of a published report that threats against him last year were linked to the Indian government, senior Sikh leaders say.

Spokespeople for both the World Sikh Organization of Canada and the Sikh Federation Canada also said in light of the Global News report, it is all the more irresponsible for Prime Minister Mark Carney to have invited Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Canada for the Group of Seven summit, and are calling for the invitation to be rescinded immediately.

Mr. Singh lost his seat in the April election and resigned as party leader. Toward the end of the election campaign he had revealed he was placed under heavy police protection in late 2023 and early 2024, and the RCMP implied he was in danger because of a foreign government.

On Thursday, Global News reported the threats were tied to a suspected Indian government agent who had access to information about Mr. Singh's daily routines.

Global News cited sources who said the agent was associated with the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, which Canadian authorities have accused of committing violent crimes in Canada.

"If targeting a Canadian political leader on Canadian soil isn't enough to be barred from entering Canada, then where is our red line?" said Balpreet Singh, a spokesperson for the WSO.

"Where do we draw that line? In fact, it seems there is no red line when it comes to our community. It's telling Sikh Canadians that our lives simply don't matter."

The WSO's Mr. Singh said the former NDP leader has been told he won't receive police protection if a new threat materializes. "That's absolutely unacceptable," he said.

A spokesperson for the NDP said the former leader was unavailable for comment.

NDP MP Heather McPherson said Mr. Carney must immediately see to it that Mr. Singh is protected if the need arises.

"Mr. Singh chose to be the leader of a major political party. He put his name forward so that he could fight for Canadians, so that he could be of service to his country, and he should not be having to endure threats because of that," she told reporters Thursday.

Conservative Opposition Leader Andrew Scheer agreed.

"If there are specific threats that are out there against a Canadian, someone who has had a prominent position in public office, then that's something that certainly our security officials should take very seriously," he said.

More MPs aren't publicly opposing the invitation to Mr. Modi because of the threats against Mr. Singh, said Moninder Singh, a spokesperson for the Sikh Federation Canada and the B.C. Gurdwaras council.

"If our elected officials are going to bow to the pressure of a foreign government, thinking they are being intimidated, threatened or potentially in Jagmeet's case, potentially assassinated, then we have a huge problem on our hands," he said.

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Mr. Carney has defended the invitation to Mr. Modi as a necessity, given the size of India's economy and the fact the G7 – which Canada is hosting – must bring countries crucial to economic growth to the table.

But Sikh leaders said Mr. Carney must take into account the ways India has been accused of actively harming Canadians, and Canadian interests more broadly.

Last year, the Canadian government expelled six Indian government agents amid allegations from the RCMP they were linked to homicides, extortion and other violent criminal activities in Canada.

That was after former prime minister Justin Trudeau told the House of Commons in 2023 there were "credible allegations" that Indian government agents were involved in the fatal shooting of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a prominent Sikh leader in British Columbia.

Mr. Carney has not repeated those allegations, citing the continuing investigations. On Thursday, the Sikh community leaders accused him of waffling and being naive.

"We've seen this play out many times, through many prime ministers," the WSO's Mr. Singh said.

"Without strong action, without actual concrete announcements and requirements, nothing changes. It gets worse."