

Conservatives drop candidate for endorsing shipping people to India

Patel was removed as the party's pick for Etobicoke North for liking a Facebook post about deporting 'non-sense people'

STEVEN CHASE
SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY
REPORTER
KINGSTON

The Conservative Party has dropped a Toronto-area candidate who publicly supported a call for Canada to ship people to India where, it was suggested, they would face retaliation from the government.

Conservative Party spokesman Sam Lilly said Etobicoke North candidate Don Patel was removed and provided a screenshot of a Facebook post that he liked with a positive emoji.

The post, written by another person, recommended: "Should be stop these people by Canadian government and deported to India then PM Modi can take care of these non-sense people." Mr. Patel replied with an emoji of a smiley face hugging a heart, understood to mean support for the statement.

It's not clear whether the statement was referring to critics of the Indian government in general in Canada, or Sikhs, or the Khalistan movement among some Sikhs who wish to carve an independent homeland out of



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre holds an election rally in Kingston on Wednesday. SEAN KILPATRICK/CP

Punjab in northern India.

Mr. Patel is the second candidate in the 2025 federal campaign to exit the race this week because of their association with statements about co-operating with foreign governments to punish people. He is also the fourth Conservative candidate to be dropped from the race in two days.

Earlier this week former MP Paul Chiang resigned as the Liberal candidate for Markham-Unionville after it came to light that he told journalists that people should bring a Conservative

politician to the local Chinese consulate to collect a bounty placed on him for criticizing Beijing's crackdown on Hong Kong.

The Conservatives' Mr. Lilly said the campaign would not tolerate Mr. Patel's support for the statement on India.

"Endorsing such a statement is clearly unacceptable," he said. "The Conservative Party will always stand up for the safety and security of Canadians."

Mr. Patel is "no longer a candidate," Mr. Lilly said. The party did not provide more details on their decision.

The Globe reached out to Mr. Patel for comment Wednesday but he did not respond immediately.

Balpreet Singh, legal counsel for the World Sikh Organization, an Ottawa-based advocacy group for Sikhs, said the Conservative Party's decision to remove Mr. Patel "is a welcome sign of a party taking a zero tolerance approach to foreign interference."

Two days before the election campaign began, the federal Liberal Party also informed Nepean MP Chandra Arya that it was removing him as candidate. The

party, including Liberal Leader Mark Carney, has declined to explain why. However, The Globe and Mail reported last week that the Liberals revoked Mr. Arya's bid to run for the party leadership and his nomination in his own Ottawa riding over alleged foreign-interference concerns involving India. Mr. Arya had won election three times in his riding.

The MP, who is of the Hindu faith, said he believes he was removed because he has spoken out against the Sikh Khalistan movement in Canada that promotes a separate state in Punjab.

On Tuesday, the Conservative Party announced it had dropped Laurence Singh as the candidate for New Westminster-Burnaby-Maillardville in British Columbia. It did not explain why. Mr. Singh is reportedly appealing this decision to the party.

The Conservatives had already dropped two candidates that day: Stefan Marquis, who was running in the Montreal riding of Laurier-Sainte-Marie, and Mark McKenzie, who was running in the southwest Ontario riding of Windsor-Tecumseh-Lakeshore.

Mr. McKenzie told The Globe on Tuesday that before his removal the party had called him about a 2022 podcast where he joked about public hangings that might include then-prime minister Justin Trudeau. Mr. Marquis believed he'd been removed for posts on social-media platforms. Recent X postings by Mr. Marquis include material suggesting Russia's invasion of Ukraine was provoked by NATO expansion.