# Australia Expels Indian Spies Over Espionage Operation



### Australia Expels Indian Spies in Secret Operation

In a covert move, Australia expelled four Indian intelligence agents involved in espionage activities. The agents, posing as diplomats, targeted sensitive defense technology, security protocols, and current and former politicians. The expulsion, which occurred quietly to prevent diplomatic fallout, was uncovered by an ABC investigation.

### Espionage Activities

Australian intelligence, led by Mike Burgess, discovered the activities in 2020. The spies aimed to obtain classified information on defense technology and airport security, and they monitored the Indian-Australian community. Burgess revealed these activities in March 2021 without naming India directly.

### Diplomatic Sensitivities

The discovery prompted the quiet expulsion of the spies to avoid embarrassing Narendra Modi's government, which seeks to position India as a global player. Despite strong outward diplomatic ties, this incident highlights underlying tensions between India and Australia.

### Political Reactions

Greens Senator David Shoebridge advocated for public condemnation of India’s actions, emphasizing the need for transparency in diplomatic relations. The Washington Post also reported on the expulsions, leading to a response from India's foreign ministry dismissing the claims.

### Broader Implications

The ABC investigation revealed threats against Australian Sikh activists by Indian authorities, notably after the assassination of Khalistan movement leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada, allegedly by Indian operatives. The Khalistan movement seeks an independent state for Sikhs in northwest India, opposed by the Indian government.

### Impact on India-Australia Relations

Despite the espionage incident, India remains a crucial trade and military partner for Australia. Both nations are part of the Quad security dialogue, aiming to counter China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region. The expulsion of the Indian spies places India alongside Russia and China in terms of overseas espionage activities.

While strengthening ties, such incidents underline the complexities and challenges in the India-Australia relationship.