# British Sikhs threaten electoral shift as Labour fails to act on 1984 Golden Temple inquiry



British Sikhs are ramping up their demands on the Labour Party, expressing deep frustration over its failure to initiate a public inquiry into the UK’s alleged complicity in the 1984 Golden Temple massacre in Amritsar, India. This discontent could very well lead to a pivotal shift in voting allegiances, potentially favouring alternative parties that represent a genuine commitment to addressing historical grievances and community interests.

On 1 June, over 450 Gurdwaras, charities, and Sikh associations collectively wrote to Prime Minister Keir Starmer, calling for immediate action to investigate Britain’s role in the tragic events that saw Indian forces assault the holiest site of Sikhism, resulting in countless deaths. With the 41st anniversary of the massacre approaching, the community's frustration only intensifies over what many describe as a “deafening silence” from Labour leaders, despite repeated attempts to engage the Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, that have gone unanswered.

The shadows of this issue are steeped in a troubling historical context. It was revealed in 2014 that the British government had prior knowledge of Operation Blue Star, a military operation aimed at removing Sikh leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale from the Golden Temple. An SAS officer had even provided strategic advice to the Indian government. However, the subsequent investigation led by former Prime Minister David Cameron was quickly dismissed as inadequate and a 'whitewash' by community leaders, failing to recognize or explore the full extent of UK involvement.

Labour’s continued inaction, following Starmer's promises made in 2022, has left many in the Sikh community feeling betrayed and deeply dissatisfied. Dabinderjit Singh, executive lead of the Sikh Federation, warned that if Labour does not respond to their calls for an inquiry by the end of July 2025, access to Sikh temples could become restricted for Labour MPs. With approximately one million Sikhs in the UK, this growing tidal wave of discontent could shift loyalties away from Labour, threatening the party's stronghold in essential constituencies.

As the Sikh community seeks allies in their fight for justice, engagement with various political parties, including the Lib Dems and SNP, is underway. Of particular note is an emerging consideration among some Sikhs for candidates from alternative parties that have demonstrated a willingness to address their concerns directly. This shift underscores a burgeoning frustration with established politicians who have fallen short on promises of meaningful change.

Singh articulated this urgent need for accountability: “When there were thousands of people killed in 1984, our lives cannot matter less.” These sentiments echo a broader discontent with the current political climate and the representation of minority communities, especially as the UK deepens its trade ties with India. The potential for Sikhs to realign their political support signals not just concern over immediate issues but also reflects a wider disenchantment with the prevailing political establishment.

The impending inquiry deadline presents a critical test for Labour's commitment to engaging minority communities. The increasing scrutiny surrounding the UK’s foreign relations and its acknowledgment of historical injustices will only amplify the pressure on a party that has evidently struggled to deliver on the promises made to one of its most significant demographics.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/01/uk-sikhs-may-no-platform-labour-mps-over-lack-of-amritsar-massacre-inquiry> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://news.sky.com/story/sikh-group-disappointed-at-labours-silence-on-1984-golden-temple-massacre-inquiry-despite-starmer-promise-13286567> - A UK-based Sikh group has expressed disappointment over Labour's failure to initiate an inquiry into the 1984 Golden Temple massacre, despite Sir Keir Starmer's earlier promise. The Sikh Federation UK has written five times to Foreign Secretary David Lammy without receiving a response. In 2022, Starmer pledged to open an independent inquiry into Britain's military role in the Indian army's 1984 raid on the Golden Temple in Amritsar. The 1984 operation resulted in hundreds of deaths after Indian forces stormed the temple to remove militants seeking refuge there.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/feb/05/uk-amritsar-massacre-david-cameron> - In 2014, Prime Minister David Cameron stated there was no evidence of UK government involvement in the Amritsar massacre of 1984. This followed an investigation prompted by the accidental release of documents indicating that a British SAS officer had advised the Indian government on the operation. Cameron's inquiry concluded that the advice was not followed and was a one-off, with no UK government involvement in the operation itself. The Sikh Federation UK expressed dismay over the narrow scope of the review, calling it a 'whitewash'.
4. <https://www.desiblitz.com/content/sikh-group-disappointed-by-labours-silence-on-amritsar-massacre> - The Sikh Federation UK has expressed disappointment over Labour's silence regarding the 1984 Golden Temple massacre inquiry, despite Sir Keir Starmer's earlier promise. The group has written five times to Foreign Secretary David Lammy without receiving a response. In 2022, Starmer pledged to open an independent inquiry into Britain's military role in the Indian army's 1984 raid on the Golden Temple in Amritsar. The 1984 operation resulted in hundreds of deaths after Indian forces stormed the temple to remove militants seeking refuge there.
5. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Blue_Star> - Operation Blue Star was a military operation by the Indian Armed Forces conducted between 1 and 10 June 1984 to remove Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and other Sikh militants from the Golden Temple (Harmandir Sahib), a holy site of Sikhism, and its adjacent buildings. The operation resulted in significant casualties, including both militants and civilians, and is considered a pivotal event in Sikh history, leading to increased tensions and the subsequent assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.
6. <https://news.sky.com/story/more-than-400-sikh-groups-call-on-starmer-to-launch-promised-inquiry-on-golden-temple-massacre-13340453> - Over 400 Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations have called on Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer to launch an inquiry into potential British involvement in the 1984 Golden Temple massacre. The groups have signed a letter urging Starmer to fulfil a commitment made in 2022. The calls relate to questions about the UK's role in the 1984 killings, in which hundreds of Sikhs died after the Indian military entered the temple complex where separatists had sought refuge.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/29/british-government-cover-up-amritsar-massacre-golden-temple-sas-india> - The British government has been accused of covering up its role in the 1984 Amritsar massacre in India. A report by the Sikh Federation UK calls for a full inquiry into the UK's involvement, alleging that previous investigations were limited and failed to uncover the full extent of support provided to India during the operation. The report highlights concerns over government secrecy and conflicts of interest, suggesting that attempts to expose the full facts have been thwarted.