

# Have you forgotten?



June 1984 - 20 years

Anti-Sikh Riots - 20 years

## Operation Bluestar

It was a virtual massacre. A large number of women, children and pilgrims were gunned down. *The Guardian, 13<sup>th</sup> June 1984*

Every man, women and children pilgrim inside the temple were treated as 'The Enemy' to be shot and killed if possible or if wounded, to be denied first aid or water.

*The Sunday Telegraph, 11<sup>th</sup> June 1984*

Pieces of the Guru Granth Sahib were flying around in the air and littering the ground. The place seemed to have been transformed into a haunted house.

*Untold Story, Amiya Rao, Aurbinda Ghose, Sunil Bhattacharya*

Dozens of Sikh youths arrested inside the temple made to pull their trousers below their knees, kneel and march on the hot road, while the soldiers repeatedly kicked and punched them. *Paul Keel The Times, 14<sup>th</sup> June 1984*

Operation Blue star was an attack not on a political figure or movement but to suppress a religion... With their hands tied behind their backs (Sikh Youths), were shot in cold blood. In some villages men between 15 and 35 have been bound, blindfolded and taken away. Their fate is still unknown. *Joyce Pettigrew, Sunday Times, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1984*

The bodies of Sikhs killed in the storming of the golden temple are being burnt in batches of 50 to conserve fire wood. One person discovered by doctors to be still alive beneath a pile of bodies was shot dead by a soldier. *Daily Express, 13<sup>th</sup> June 1984*

## Anti Sikh Riots

Then the mob increased in strength and started attacking individual homes, driving people out, beating and burning them and setting fire to their homes. Men were hit on the head, sometimes their skulls broken, kerosene poured over them and set on fire. Before being burnt, some had their eyes gouged out. Sometimes, when a burning man asked for water, a man urinated on his mouth. *Khalsa Human Rights*

The bodies beside the track were all Sikhs, some had burned alive others burnt to death. The Sikhs were pulled out from trains by a hindu mob outside New Delhi to face a slow death. *Brian James, Daily Mail, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1984*

Days of violence and loot and murder left the national capital dazed an unprecedented holocaust. Criminally led hoodlum killed Sikhs, looted or burnt homes and properties while the police twiddled their thumbs. *India Today, 15<sup>th</sup> November 1984*

## The Aftermath

Many cases of disappearances result in death disfigured bodies found in canals, by railway tracks and roadsides are testimony to cover up of state murder that is so much as part of everyday life. *Amnesty International*

Thousands of political prisoners were held without charge or trial. Torture, including rape, and ill-treatment, were endemic throughout the country, leading or contributing to at least 200 deaths in custody. Prison conditions amounting to ill-treatment were common. Disappearances continued. Hundreds of people were reportedly extrajudicially executed by the security force, human rights defenders continued to be targeted. . .

*Amnesty International Report 1997*