

## EXPORTING HATE: THE PERILS OF HINDUTVA AT LEICESTER, UNITED KINGDOM

By  
**Muhammad Ali Baig**  
Research Associate  
India Study Centre (ISC), ISSI

Edited by  
**Dr Arshad Ali**

October 17, 2022

*(Views expressed in the brief are those of the author, and do not represent those of ISSI)*



Image Source: *BBC News*<sup>1</sup>

### ***Introduction***

The basic problem with hateful ideologies and revengeful narratives is their almost unrestricted ability of unlimited proliferation. This is why such threats are studied under the realm of non-traditional security threats. The manifestation of such an ideology-driven unfortunate event took place on August 28, 2022, at Leicester, United Kingdom (UK), when the hate filled Hindutva supporters chanted slogans against the majority Muslims and even repeated derogatory slogans against Pakistan. Since September 16, a total of 27 people have been arrested, most of them belonging to the Hindu religion and adherents of the Hindutva ideology.<sup>2</sup> It was also noted that “Half of those arrested over clashes in Leicester from outside county” and they especially came to Leicester to incite Hindu-Muslim violence.<sup>3</sup> The police acted responsibly; however, the clashes resulted in injuring many people from both sides.

<sup>1</sup> ‘Fifteen Arrested in Leicester Disorder Operation’, *BBC News*, 19 September 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-leicestershire-62946146>.

<sup>2</sup> ‘East Leicester Disorder Leads to 27 Arrests’, *BBC News*, 16 September 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-leicestershire-62934815>.

<sup>3</sup> Rajeev Syal, Aina J. Khan, and Geneva Abdul, ‘Half of Those Arrested over Clashes in Leicester from Outside County’, *The Guardian*, 19 September 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/sep/19/half-those-arrested-over-clashes-in-leicester-from-outside-county>.

The city of Leicester is the symbol of Britain's multi-ethnic, multi-national, and multi-cultural communities living together harmoniously devoid of any communal violence and hatred towards each other.

It all started following the India-Pakistan T-20 cricket match at the Asia Cup on August 28, 2022, in which India defeated Pakistan by 5 wickets.<sup>4</sup> Just after the match, almost 200 Hindutva goons marched in the Muslim majority East Leicester inciting violence against the majority Muslim community. The marchers also threw glass bottles and stones at Muslim property as well as on the riot police. Later, on September 4, Pakistan defeated India in another T20 match by 5 wickets.

Sunny Hundal, a renowned British journalist has been closely watching the events taking place in Leicester and tweeted a number of tweets sounding alarms to the authorities about the outsiders arriving in the city. Such people chanted anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistan slogans and triggered violence (Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** A tweet by British journalist Sunny Hundal.<sup>5</sup>

### ***What is Hindutva?***

The Hindutva ideology was introduced by a secular Hindu named Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in 1923. According to Savakar "This land (India) of Bharat Varsha, from the Indus to the Seas—as his motherland (mathrbhumi), the land of his ancestors (pithrbhumi), as well as his holy land (punya

<sup>4</sup> 'British City Tense in Wake of Pakistan-India Cricket Match', *Dawn*, 19 September 2022, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1710839>.

<sup>5</sup> 'Sunny Hundal', *Twitter*, 19 September 2022, [https://twitter.com/sunny\\_hundal/status/1571928490886184963](https://twitter.com/sunny_hundal/status/1571928490886184963).

bhumi), that is the cradle-land of his religion.”<sup>6</sup> Savarkar tried to redefine Hindu religion and he influenced his contemporary Keshav Baliram Hedgewar who founded the organization called *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS) in September 1925, with a clear aim to make British India a *Hindu Rashtra* or Hindu Nation devoid of all other non-Hindu religions. In such a desperate drive, all non-Hindus were to be converted back using all means to a distorted version of Hindu religion called Hindutva and to cleanse, eliminate, and to demonise them if necessary.<sup>7</sup> Briefly, Hindutva is an instrument of distorting history and creating a virulent narrative about the origins of all non-Hindu religions in the Indian sub-continent and consequently calling all of them as the offshoot of Hinduism.

This is the briefest definition of Hindutva ideology which hesitates not resorting to extreme violence of all sorts. The Hindutva cleansing was exercised at the Gujarat Riots in 2002 where almost 2,000 Muslims were killed – many were burnt alive.<sup>8</sup> The incumbent Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the Chief Minister of Gujarat at the time of rioting and perhaps the chief architect of the ethnic cleansing of Indian Muslims.

### ***Exporting Hindutva: Why did the incident take place?***

The incumbent Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in India led by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi is relentlessly pursuing the Hindutva ideology by a systematic apartheid, marginalising minorities, distorting history, and turning mosques into Hindu temples.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, now it is on its way to export such an ideology by indoctrinating and using its diaspora. The incident took place primarily due to these reasons.

### ***The Pakistan High Commission***

The Pakistan High Commission in London issued a Press Release stating that “We strongly condemn the systematic campaign of violence and intimidation that has been unleashed against the Muslims of the area. This is not the first time such Islamophobic incidents have been reported in Leicester.”<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *Hindutva*, Fifth Edition (Bombay, India: Veer Savarkar Prakashan, 1969).

<sup>7</sup> A. G. Noorani, ‘What Is Hindutva?’, *Dawn*, 10 December 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1301496>.

<sup>8</sup> Tarushi Aswani, “‘They Burnt My Parents Alive’: Gujarat Riots Still Haunt Victims”, *The Diplomat*, 21 April 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/they-burnt-my-parents-alive-gujarat-riots-still-haunt-victims/>.

<sup>9</sup> Soutik Biswas, “Gyanvapi Masjid: India Dispute Could Become a Religious Flashpoint,” *BBC News*, May 18, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-61476741>.

<sup>10</sup> ‘On Situation in Leicester’, *Pakistan High Commission London*, 19 September 2022, <http://www.phclondon.org/pressrelease/on-situation-in-leicester>.

It is notable that the Pakistan High Commission did not use the word 'Pakistani' and instead used the word "Muslims" in its Press Release. Since Pakistan believes that such a virulent and poison filled violence was orchestrated against the Muslim community instead of the Pakistani community.

### ***The Indian High Commission***

It is quite sad that the Indian High Commission only condemned the violence "against the Indian Community" and the "symbols of Hindu religion." The Press Release itself is a biased and hate filled instrument of the Hindutva driven Indian government (Figure 2). The Indian High Commission should have expressed concern over the peace and inter-faith harmony, instead it is acting as a tool of spreading hate and violence under the guise of Hindutva.



**Figure 2:** A one-sided and biased tweet by the Indian High Commission.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Reaction from the Hindu Community***

A Hindu community leader and the President of the city's Iskcon Leicester Hindu temple Pradyumna Pradip Gajjar argued that "We the family of Leicester stand in front of you not only as Hindus and

<sup>11</sup> 'India in the UK', *Twitter*, 19 September 2022, [https://twitter.com/HCL\\_London/status/1571805409060462593](https://twitter.com/HCL_London/status/1571805409060462593).

Muslims, but as brothers and sisters. We together, call upon the inciters of hatred to leave our city alone. Leicester has no place for foreign extremist ideology that causes division.”<sup>12</sup> This message clearly reveals that the Hindus and Muslims living in Leicester have no beef whatsoever especially regarding their respective faiths. It is a fact that those Hindus who took part in stirring up the religious or nationalistic issue were not originally from Leicester.

### ***Why Should the International Community be Concerned?***

It is the time that the international community should play its role in penalising the incumbent Indian government and its PM Modi for acting like a hate peddler and inciting violence against Muslims and other minorities. This is exactly why Pakistan has been arguing again and again for many years that the Hindutva ideology is responsible for the marginalization of the Indian Muslims and other minorities and depriving them of their Indian citizenship.



**Figure 3:** Armed Hindus carrying weapons marching in the streets of Leicester.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Sky News, 'Leicester Riots: Hindu and Muslim Leaders Urge "inciters of Hatred" to End "Violence"', *YouTube*, 21 September 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rAUhBtUX9ik>.

<sup>13</sup> 'Sunny Hundal'.

Indeed, the unfortunate events which took place at Leicester could happen at any place around the globe where the hate-peddling Modi government could mobilise Hindu population against other religions and ethnic groups.

Now, it is an established fact that India is exporting hate and its PM Narendra Modi, and his political party BJP are the political vehicles of their mother organization called RSS. The latter is responsible for spreading the hateful Hindutva ideology that divides communities and incites people for violence.<sup>14</sup> It is almost 93 years since the inception of RSS and now its tentacles are reaching Europe, and perhaps soon we may witness Hindutva-induced violence in other parts of the world.

---

<sup>14</sup> Sunny Hundal, 'Leicester Shows Hindu Nationalism Is No Longer Confined to India', *New Statesman*, 20 September 2022, <https://www.newstatesman.com/quickfire/2022/09/leicester-shows-hindu-nationalism-no-longer-confined-to-india>.

## Bibliography

- Aswani, Tarushi. "“They Burnt My Parents Alive”: Gujarat Riots Still Haunt Victims". *The Diplomat*, 21 April 2022. <https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/they-burnt-my-parents-alive-gujarat-riots-still-haunt-victims/>.
- Biswas, Soutik. "Gyanvapi Masjid: India Dispute Could Become a Religious Flashpoint." *BBC News*, May 18, 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-61476741>.
- Dawn. 'British City Tense in Wake of Pakistan-India Cricket Match', 19 September 2022. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1710839>.
- BBC News. 'East Leicester Disorder Leads to 27 Arrests', 16 September 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-leicestershire-62934815>.
- BBC News. 'Fifteen Arrested in Leicester Disorder Operation', 19 September 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-leicestershire-62946146>.
- Hundal, Sunny. 'Leicester Shows Hindu Nationalism Is No Longer Confined to India'. *New Statesman*, 20 September 2022. <https://www.newstatesman.com/quickfire/2022/09/leicester-shows-hindu-nationalism-no-longer-confined-to-india>.
- Twitter. 'India in the UK', 19 September 2022. [https://twitter.com/HCI\\_London/status/1571805409060462593](https://twitter.com/HCI_London/status/1571805409060462593).
- News, Sky. 'Leicester Riots: Hindu and Muslim Leaders Urge “inciters of Hatred” to End “Violence”'. *YouTube*, 21 September 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rAUhBtUX9ik>.
- Noorani, A. G. 'What Is Hindutva?' *Dawn*, 10 December 2016. <http://www.dawn.com/news/1301496>.
- Pakistan High Commission London. 'On Situation in Leicester', 19 September 2022. <http://www.phclondon.org/pressrelease/on-situation-in-leicester>.
- Savarkar, Vinayak Damodar. *Hindutva*. Fifth Edition. Bombay, India: Veer Savarkar Prakashan, 1969.
- Twitter. 'Sunny Hundal', 19 September 2022. [https://twitter.com/sunny\\_hundal/status/1571928490886184963](https://twitter.com/sunny_hundal/status/1571928490886184963).

Syal, Rajeev, Aina J. Khan, and Geneva Abdul. 'Half of Those Arrested over Clashes in Leicester from Outside County'. *The Guardian*, 19 September 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/sep/19/half-those-arrested-over-clashes-in-leicester-from-outside-county>.