



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

MEDIA STATEMENT

21 September
2023

QPS response to The Australia Today regarding Hindu temple vandalism

4:41 PM

Enquiry from **Jai Bharadwaj** The Australia Today:

We are concerned about some of the comments made in a report of the Queensland Police regarding the attack on a Hindu temple earlier this year in Brisbane, accessed through RTI, which is being quoted in the Indian media. We are seeking a response on some of these comments given the damage and trauma it is causing the Hindu community here.

1) The report suggests that police could not find the source of the videos where 'Khalistanis' are openly claiming that they defaced the temple on social media platforms. Can you confirm that police could not find the source of those videos? Also is the police pursuing the video lead or has closed that line of investigation?

2) It says intel officers believe that 'Hindus' may be behind the acts themselves. On what basis was such a note made? Are comments like this made about other religious communities as well in internal notes? Demonising a whole community rather than talk about individuals? Also does the police have concrete evidence? If so we would like the police to share it with us. The report is not identifying individuals but using their religious identity which is blatantly demonising Hindus. Without a statement from the police this would be considered blatant anti-Hindu bigotry on part of Queensland police. Moreover, the word Khalistan or Khalistani is not mentioned in the released report even though they themselves have been claiming attacks on temples all over social media. The report instead of using the word Khalistani has used the word Sikhs suggesting that the Queensland police believes that Sikhs and Khalistanis are the same. It is disturbing to note that the police seems to be conflating Sikhs for Khalistanis associating an entire religious community with an extremist movement. We would like a comment from the police on this as well.

3) The report also suggests that given the handwriting the same person could be behind the vandalism in Victoria who then travelled to Brisbane. Is the police pursuing this lead? The police would have a database of people who were in Melbourne and then in Brisbane given the violence that was captured on camera in the Melbourne rally.

4) The releasing of partial information in this report through RTI is creating a lot of stress and anxiety among Hindu community members as it indicates that if a member of the community is attacked then they can't trust the police as reporting an incident and providing information to the police regarding the same can be misused or misconstrued. Can the police explain why it chose to release sensitive information (that too only partially) which would enable the demonising of an entire community and deter people from approaching the police in the future.

5) Also, the report itself says that upon investigation it was found that the Hindu person was nowhere near its vicinity as confirmed by the person's mobile in the time frame of the temple attack. Why did you release identifiable information about this person especially when you found no evidence against this person? Releasing partial information in this report endangers the wellbeing and security of that person, a person who by the police's own admission could be having mental health issues. How did police release this information knowing the risks involved while it could have been completely redacted? The report should not contain information that could endanger the life of a person.



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6) Did you investigate if there are any active members belonging to Khalistani groups in Brisbane as they have openly claimed that they have been attacking temples? If so, did you investigate their mobiles to ascertain their locations at the time frame of the temple attack? Also, given that Khalistanis have been taking part in rallies in Brisbane and claiming on social media that they have attacked temples, did you investigate anyone belonging to the Khalistani group?

7) The temple said that they believe that the cctv could have been jammed. Did police investigate this? If so can the police conclusively say that no jamming was involved?

8) The report also suggests that there was an installation issue with the CCTV which were put on advice of the consulate. Did the police check with the people who installed the camera why the issues may have cropped up?

We would also like to interview someone from Queensland Police about this issue.

We are hoping the Queensland police will respond to our query at the earliest so that the community can be assured that there is no rampant anti-Hindu bias among Queensland police.

The following can be attributed to a QPS spokesperson:

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) commenced an investigation into reports of vandalism at a Daymar Street, Burbank, address alleged to have occurred between 9.00pm Friday, March 3, and 9.00am Saturday, March 4, 2023.

The QPS treats all instances of threats against cultural and religious communities with the utmost seriousness.

Everyone in Queensland has a right to feel safe and not feel threatened or victimised. The QPS urges anyone who feels threatened or fearful by the actions of others to contact police.

The QPS remains committed to community safety and engaging with people from across our culturally diverse society to help foster better relationships, forge ahead with mutual partnerships and build upon platforms for community engagement.

The QPS works closely with other state and federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies to understand, investigate, and respond to potential instances of extremism of any kind.

After exhausting several lines of enquiry, officers have filed this matter pending any further information.

Investigators appeal for anyone with information to come forward and anonymous reports can be made.

The Right to Information Act 2009 (RTI Act) provides the community with a right to apply for documents held by government.

The RTI Act obligates agencies to release information unless it would be contrary to the public interest to release.

Decision makers are required to have a pro-disclosure bias when making decision on access applications, and decisions are made in accordance with the provisions in the RTI Act.



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