Objective: To explain the persecution of Sikhs in India during the 1984 Ghallughara (codenamed Operation Blue Star by the Indian government) and highlight the Sikh principles of justice.

Overview: The teacher will discuss the timeline of events during that fateful year of 1984, and explore the students’ reactions. The class will also take a look at our Gurus’ concept of justice. The students will gain new information through discussion and group work.

Materials Needed:
- Paper, pens/pencils, scissors, tape, and poster board
- Teacher Resources
- Multiple copies of testimonials (depending on classroom size)
- Multiple copies of pictures of victims (depending on classroom size)

INTRODUCTION

Share the pictures below (5 minutes). [Full size pictures available in Teacher Resources.]

1. Ask: What do these pictures have in common? Possible reply: "Places of worship"

2. Ask: How do people generally feel in places of worship? Possible replies: "safe, unguarded, at peace, free etc."
QUICK-WRITE 1

Quick-writes give students the opportunity to reflect on a certain topic while allowing each student to participate in the thinking process. Students are given a topic to focus on and they may only write a few sentences or an entire paragraph or two.

Show picture of the Akal Takhat Sahib one more time (10-15 minutes).

Ask:
- What do you know about this place?
- What does the Akal Takhat represent?
- What does it mean to Sikhs?

Give the class five minutes to write down their thoughts.

Discuss: Allow them to share their thoughts with the class.

The teacher can either share the Akal Takhat write-up with students at this time by reading it aloud or just clear any misconceptions or incorrect facts. The Akal Takhat write-up is included in the teacher resources appendix at the end of the lesson plan.

QUICK-WRITE 2

Share the image of the desecrated Akal Takhat (5-10 minutes).

Ask:
- What could have caused such a horrible destruction of a place of worship?
- What would justify an action such as this?

Give the class five minutes to write down their thoughts.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Review Timeline: (15 min.)

Students will work on a timeline worksheet during the review (attached in teacher resources).
THE GURUS AND JUSTICE

Objective: To give students perspective and guidance about how to react to injustice.

Ask:
- How would our Gurus handle such a situation?
- How do you think they would’ve responded to such an unjust act by the Indian Government towards its own people?

Allow students to share their thoughts to these questions (5 minutes).

Discuss Babar-Bani and other examples of Gurus standing up against injustice (15 minutes).

Even during the time of the Gurus, there was injustice. Guru Nanak Sahib shared with us his feeling through his Bani.

Share the sakhi of Babar Bani, or have the students share if they are familiar with it.

In 1521, the Indian subcontinent was invaded by an oppressor named Babar. He unleashed tyranny onto the citizens of Saidpur. Babar and his army not only invaded lands, but they also looted and tortured the citizens of those lands.

Guru Nanak Sahib and his companion, Bhai Mardana, were traveling through Saidpur during this distressing time. They witnessed a strong and powerful ruler trampling over the rights of the weak and powerless. They were arrested and imprisoned. No one dared to speak up against Babar; so Guru Nanak spoke up for the helpless.

In Babar Bani, Guru Sahib shares his reflections. Babar Bani is a collection of four sabads, inscribed at different places in Guru Granth Sahib. This Bani is a commentary on the state of justice and Guru Nanak Sahib’s idea of it. Guru Sahib expresses grief to Vahiguru for letting this happen. The message is that, Vahiguru is directing/hinting for us to take action whenever we see injustice.

Ask students to share examples from the lives of the Gurus of standing up against injustice, for example:
- Guru Amardas Sahib standing up for women’s rights (sati)
- Guru Hargobind Sahib’s incident at Gvalior Fort regarding freeing of the Hill rajas who were unfairly imprisoned (Bandi Chor Diwas)
- Guru Teghbahadar Sahib’s shahidi for freedom of religion.

All Gurus lived the message of standing against injustice.
Read and discuss the following Sabad (20 minutes).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Read and discuss the following Sabad (20 minutes).</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>आमा मरणा १ II</td>
<td>आसा महला पाहला।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>पुराना घमण्डा जीरा रिस्तु ज़ुरिला II</td>
<td>khurāsān khasmānā kī hindustānū darāiā।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>अपेम देखे र देखी वरबा सभ वार भुगलु चुरिला II</td>
<td>Protecting the Khurasan, fear was instilled in Hindustan (through Babar).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>घेडी भग भरी वललाहे उं दीर एक्टु र अगिला ॥१॥</td>
<td>अपाई दोसु न देखा जामू कारिला।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>वरबा दू परला वा मेली II</td>
<td>बुराई मार पाइ कारलाई ना अलाई।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>अपे मरबा मरबे वदहे आ भग देम र देमी ॥९॥ वरबा II</td>
<td>अपाई दोसु न देखा जामू कारिला।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>मरबा मीघ भरे ये दोधे धममे मा धुखमारी II</td>
<td>बुराई मार पाइ कारलाई ना अलाई।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>वरबा विजाड़ विदोषे चूमी भूलिया मग र लामी II</td>
<td>रतान विगा र विगोक कू मार ना काई।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>बे बे रुपहे रक्षे बड़ माप करे भग दरे ॥</td>
<td>जेको नाउ दहरा वादा साद कारी मारी बाहने।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>धममे तस्ली जीझ आने सेंआरे चुड़ी राखे ॥</td>
<td>कहसमा नदरा रिखा आवा जेते कूग दाधे।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>भग भग सही दा दिस्दा परे राख दम रखे बाले ॥३॥</td>
<td>मार मारी जिवाइ ताकिक्चु पाए नानक नामु वाक्षाने।</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Gurū Grant Sāhib, 360
Sabad Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think this Sabad is about?
   Possible replies: It's a conversation with Vahiguru about why so much pain and suffering was allowed; it's about how unjust it is for a powerful ruler to attack helpless people, etc."

2. Do we have a relationship with Vahiguru the way Guru Nanak Sahib did?
   This may be a yes or no question but if students feel comfortable ask them to describe their relationship with Vahiguru; some students may say Vaihiguru is a friend, others might see Vahiguru more as an authority figure.

3. How do we build that relationship?
   All relationships have to be worked on; our relationship with Vahiguru is no exception. Some ways to build our relationship is doing seva, singing/reciting Gurbani etc.

4. How can we make this sabad relevant to present day?
   * Bullies
   * Human rights

Something to Think About:

Sometimes, we only worry about atrocities that happen to our own people and don’t voice any concerns when they affect others. What is Guru Sahib trying to show us here?

(Possible replies: It is our duty to stand up against all forms of injustice.)
QUOTE REFLECTION

Share and Discuss the following Quote (10 minutes).

When the Nazis came for the communists,
I did not speak out;
As I was not a communist.

When they locked up the social democrats,
I did not speak out;
I was not a social democrat.

When they came for the trade unionists,
I did not speak out;
As I was not a trade unionist.

When they came for the Jews,
I did not speak out;
As I was not a Jew.

When they came for me,
there was no one left to speak out.

- Friedrich Gustav Emil Martin Niemöller

Ask:

- As I shared this quote with you, what came to your mind?
- How does this quote relate to our topic today?

(Possible replies: We should speak up against injustice whether we're personally being affected or not.)
Students will be divided into groups of 3 or 4 and work on activities set up in 3 centers.

As a group, students will carry out the assigned tasks at each center and take all the new information they’ve gained to create a collage with it.

**Reading Center (20 minutes)**

Have 5-7 testimonials at the center. Testimonials can be found in Teacher Resources. Have students read the testimonials.

**Instructions for students:**
- Choose part of one testimonial to share with the class at the end of the day.
- Write down why you chose a certain testimonial.
- After reading a few of these testimonials, create a list comparing/contrasting Babar’s tyranny towards the people of Saidpur to the Indian government’s brutality towards the Sikh nation in 1984.

Students will take with them to the next center:
- The testimonial they chose
- Their written response and
- Their compare/contrast list

These can be used for the final collage.

**Writing Center (20 minutes)**

Show pictures of Sikhs, available in Teacher Resources. Students will look at pictures of Sikhs and will respond through writing to these pictures.

**Ask:**
- What do you think is happening in these pictures?
- Why is this happening?
- How is the Sikh in this picture feeling?
- How does this make you feel?

The answers do not need to be in complete sentences. They may choose to put the picture in the center of a page and use single words or phrases that help express your feelings about this picture. The end product will look like a cluster or a web.
Next, the student will look at the picture they’ve chosen, and write a short letter to those responsible. In the letter:

- Ask questions
- Express your feelings
- State your opinion

Students will take a picture and their written responses with them to the next center. These can be used for the final collage.

*Teachers - have enough pictures so that students can take a picture for their collage.

Poetry Center (20 minutes)

Have poems from Teacher Resources printed out for this center and have students read through them. Ask them to think about the style in which the poem is written.

Then have them look at the description of 'Haiku' and 'Cinquain' (attached in resources) and have them come up with a cinquain or haiku related to the Sikh Ghallughara.

FINAL CULMINATING PROJECT

Instructions for students:

You are an artist. Take all the information you've learned about the events of 1984 (the Ghallughara and the Delhi Pogroms) create a collage using your quickwrites, lines from the sabad, pictures, words or phrases from your webs/clusters etc. that express your thoughts and feelings about this tragic time in our history.

Have students present their thought process behind developing their culminating project. Encourage them to share a part of a testimonial that really hit them or they may choose to share their letters written to the perpetrators of Sikh mob attacks.

* Teachers can have these collages displayed around the school or Gurduara for the entire community to see.
THE GHALLUGHARA OF 1984
Lesson Plan - Teacher Resources
Grades 6-8

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Presented By:

SIKH RESEARCH INSTITUTE

and

Ensaaf
AKAL TAKHAT SUMMARY

In 1606, Guru Hargobind Sahib, the sixth Guru laid the cornerstone for the Akal Takhat. The construction was then completed by Baba Buddha ji and Bhai Gurdas ji. The Akal Takhat became part of the Golden Temple complex facing Harmandir Sahib. Though it was just a platform then, it was built a few inches higher than the platform of the Mughal Emperor. This may not seem like a big deal, but this was a subtle message to the world that the Sikhs are sovereign people and are not ruled by anyone. This was the place where the Guru handled secular affairs of the community. From here he sent the first Hukamnama asking Sikhs to include gifts of weapons and horses in their offerings.

There are five Takhats in total; however, the Akal Takhat has attained special status perhaps because it is the oldest of the five takhats. Traditionally, it was also the place where the entire panth would assemble for Sarbat Khalsas to discuss and decide on serious matters affecting the panth. The Akal Takhat also acts as a court where it listens to offenses committed by Sikhs and decides on a verdict to resolve those matters. It is the primary seat of Sikh religious authority and holds the power to issue Hukamnamas that offer guidance and/or clarification about the Sikh doctrine or practice. These Hukamnamas are universally applicable to all Sikhs.

The Akal Takht stands as a symbol of sovereign rule for the Sikhs. The idea of religious sovereignty doesn't always appeal to the ruling powers. The Akal Takhat has been invaded a number of times by ruling parties. The first two attacks were by Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1762 and 1764. In 1764 however, a small group of 30 Sikhs led by Nihang Gurbakhs Singh defended the Akal Takhat and attempted to fight off the invaders. Though both Harmandir Sahib and Akal Takhat were badly destroyed, the Sikhs did not give up. They continued to meet for Sarbat Khalsas in front of the ruins and then decided to rebuild. Most of the construction was completed in 1774 but they continued to add on during the reign of Sardar Ranjit Singh.

Most recently, the Akal Takhat was attacked by the Indian Government in 1984. They claimed to be seeking militants that were hiding out in the Akal Takhat; however, the government simultaneously attacked up to 40 other Gurdauaras all over Panjab. The Indian Army under the orders of Indira Gandhi chose to attack on June 3rd, 1984 when they knew that thousands of Sikhs would be gathered in the complex to celebrate the gurpurab of Guru Arjan Sahib. This Ghallughara, codenamed Operation Bluestar by the Indian Government, left more than 5,000 dead.

The 1984 Ghallughara left an open wound in the heart of Sikhs. The Indian Government attempted to reconstruct the Akal Takhat in order to make the Sikhs forget the devastating damage they had caused. The Sikhs did not accept this form of apology and demolished the building in 1986 and then reconstructed it through kar-seva and voluntary donations from the panth.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Translation 1</th>
<th>Translation 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>āsā mahalā pahalā.</td>
<td>Protecting the Khurasan, fear was instilled in Hindustan (through Babar).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>khurāsān khasmānā kī hindustānu ḍarāiā.</td>
<td>But the Creator (Vāhigurū) did not take any blame and sent the Mughals as the messengers of death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>āpai dosu na deī kartā jamu kari mugalī caṛāīā.</td>
<td>People suffered so much beating that they shrieked in pain, did you not feel any pain (O Vāhigurū)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>kartā tūṁ sabhanā kā soī.</td>
<td>Creator, you are the same for all beings!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>je saktā sakta kaū māre tā mani rosu na hoī.1.ṛahāu.</td>
<td>If someone powerful attacks another who is equally powerful, the heart won’t complain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>saktā sīhu māre pai vagai khasmai sā pursāī.</td>
<td>But if a powerful lion attacks a herd of cattle, then the Master (Vāhigurū) must answer to that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ṛatān vigāṛi vigoe kutī mūrñā sār na kāī.</td>
<td>(O Vāhigurū!) You yourself separate and unite everyone in relationships; this is indeed your greatness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>je ko nāu dharāe vaḍā sad kare mani bhaṇe.</td>
<td>Even if someone is arrogant to consider his/her name great, and indulges in all the pleasure that mind seeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>khasmai narādī kīṛā āvai jete cugai dāṇe.</td>
<td>In the eyes of the Master (Vāhigurū) he is nothing more than a worm, as much as he/she indulges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>mari mari jīvai tā kichu pāe nānak nāmu vakhāṇe.3.</td>
<td>If one lives a life of humility and gives up ego, O Nānak! only then consider such a person to be truly uttering Vāhigurū’s Name.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Ghallughara of 1984
Teacher Resources
"क्योंकि यह एक दृष्टि है"  

मंत्र ले भवज हिंदी मे मादा सं  
स्मिर्न के लिए अपने लेख, बुद्धि और मे माते पहले मे भूल ही नहीं  
िमित्त, सम, झुड मे बोलींगी ही बोली  
लिखित आप देवी मे हुई मुक्ति दी भेंडी  

बंधे मिर्ने दे आपाने दे भावी दीवन  
शिक्षा दी शिक्षा भर भरा मे भती एक  
कहती है मेरी ही बच्ची सती हीट  
बूंदी दीवन तो, पह दिया ही मे वह रह धीर  

"भुलिया होवाए वाट"  

Kale Je Din, Andheri Jihi Raat,  
Mauth da saath, vichaare bache hoye anaath  

Mauth dey muh vich si saada naa  
Sikha ne khoey apney bhen, bhra te maa  
Saare paase si, khun di holi  
Swer, Shaam, Raath si goliya di boli  
Widhvaa Ho rahee si o dulhan di doli  

Thale gir ke lokaa ne mangee bheek,  
Ek hi vishvaas si, sabh ho jayega theek  
Eh he hain zindagi di karvey je reet  
Kuch theek nahi phir vi hain rab naal preet  

Eh siga ik buraa ja sapna,  
Aagar koi la pata, te samjo si oh aapna  

Eh si Rab to saada ehmtehaan,  
Dekhna si kaun chop ke koyegaa aapna maan,  
Lok larde rahey te pardey rahey apni kuraan  
Yakeen si key manega unaa da Bhagwaan  

Police hain saadi hifazat karan vaaste  
Aapni jaan deyke theek karan lokaay dey raaste  
Par afsar chumdey rahey minister dey bhoot  
Sikha nu zinda rakhna si sabh to vadaa jhoot  

Sabh kuch theek hon dey bavajud kuch theek nahi  
O maa jisda beta zinda nahi  
O bhai jisdi bhen mardi gayee  
O patni jisda pati zinda rehkey vi zinda nahi  

Aasu tham gaye, Lok chup!  
O '84 dey saal nu kadhi nahi mili dhup  
Andhere vich bach gayee zalma di maar  
Jis vich miley si police, minister tey puri sarkaar  

- English transcription by  
Gunjiv Baagi Singh  

The Ghallughara of 1984  
Teacher Resources
"The Forgotten Time"

Black days, fearful nights,
Accompanied by Death, innocent Kids orphaned

Bringer of Death had our names on his lips
Sikhs lost their sisters, brothers and mothers
There was blood shed everywhere
Day and night, all that could be heard was the ringing of bullets
The newly-wed wives had become widows

People had fallen to the floor; they were pleading for their lives
There was one hope to hold on to; maybe they could survive
This was the bittersweet fate of life
Even though they were in the midst of misfortune, they still held on to their love for God

This was a nightmare!
If someone was missing, just imagining it was one of your own

This was a test from God,
To see who is going to hide their face in fear
People were fighting and praying
There was hope that God would send some help

You would think that cops were there to help
And to risk their life’s to protect others,
But the police bowed to the will of the ministers,
And the last thing on their minds was to keep the Sikhs alive

Nothing was okay for the mother, whose son was dead,
For the brother whose sister was no longer living,
And for the wife whose husband being alive was dead inside.

Tears paused and people were silent
That year 84 has never seen the light of day or justice
Escaped the culprits in the nights of injustice
Created by the police, the ministers and government.

- Translated by Gunjiv Baagi Singh
POETRY FORMAT

Haiku

**Format:**
It consists of 3 lines.
The first and third lines have 5 syllables.
The middle line has 7 syllables.

*Remember 5, 7, 5*
*It does not need to rhyme*

**Example:** What Am I Haiku

*Green and speckled legs,*
*Hops on logs and lily pads*
*SPLASH IN COOL WATER.*

Cinquain

**Format:**
*Line 1:* One word topic
*Line 2:* Two describing words
*Line 3:* Three action words
*Line 4:* A four word phrase
*Line 5:* A synonym for the topic

**Example:**

Rain
Heavy, awesome
Drenching, soaking, penetrating
Renewing the Earth’s Firmament
Soil-Soaker

The Ghallughara of 1984
Teacher Resources
AKAL TAKHAT
LOTUS TEMPLE
The Ghallughara of 1984
Teacher Resources
AKAAL TAKHAT DESECRATED
The Ghallughara of 1984
Teacher Resources
PICTURES

The Ghallughara of 1984
Teacher Resources
The Ghallughara of 1984
Teacher Resources

**Bhan Singh, Secretary of SGPC:**
They cut our electricity and water supplies. It was very hot in the rooms. There was no water. We had only two plastic buckets of water. Longowal had to place two people as guards over the buckets. Many people would squeeze their undershirts to drink their sweat to quench their thirst.

Around 1:00 am the Army entered the hostel and administrative buildings and ordered everyone out and made them sit in the courtyard of the Guru Ram Das Hostel. There were about 250 people who came out.

**Prithipal Singh, Sevadar of Akal Rest House:**
At 2 a.m. on June 6 the Army people came to the Rest House. They tore off all my clothes, stripped me naked, my kirpan was snatched, my headgear (patta) was untied to tie up my hands behind my back. They caught me by my hair and took me along with five others - who were all pilgrims - to the ruins of the water tank, there we were told, "don't move or you'll be shot." They kept hitting us with the rifle butts. Then a Major came and ordered a soldier, shoot them, then shouted at us: "You must be Bhindranwale's Chelas? You want Khalistan?" I said, "I am here to do my duty. I have nothing to do with all this." Six of us were in a line facing the Major, when a Pahari soldier started shooting from one end, killing four of us (with 3 bullets each). As my turn was coming, suddenly a Sikh Officer turned up and ordered, "Stop shooting." Thus I was saved.

**Bhan Singh:**
Suddenly there was a big explosion. All hell broke loose. It was pitch dark. People started running back into the verandah and the rooms. Abhinashi Singh and I were sitting next to Gurcharan Singh, the former Secretary of the Akali Dal. Gurcharan was shot as he tried to run inside. We realized that soldiers were shooting at us. They thought someone from among the crowd had exploded the grenade. But it was probably thrown by extremists on the water tank overlooking the Guru Ram Das Serai (Hostel). We ran to Tohra's room and told Longowal what was happening. Longowal came out and shouted at the Major. He said, “Don't shoot these people! They are not extremists. They are employees of the S.G.P.C.” The Major then ordered his men to stop shooting. Later in the morning we counted at least seventy dead bodies in the compound. There were women and children too.

Among the dead were 35 women and 5 children. The survivors were made to sit in the courtyard of the Guru Ram Das Hostel until curfew was lifted the next evening. They were not given any food, water or medical aid. People drank whatever water was in puddles in the courtyard from the blown up water tank.

**Karnail Kaur, mother of 3 young children:**
When people begged for water some soldiers told them to drink the mixture of blood and urine on the ground.... Many of the young men in the group of innocent unarmed civilians were then shot by the soldiers.

**TESTIMONIALS**
**Bhan Singh:**
I saw about 35 or 36 Sikhs lined up with their hands raised above their heads. And the major was about to order them to be shot. When I asked him for medical help, he got into a rage, tore my turban off my head, and ordered his men to shoot me. I turned back and fled, jumping over the bodies of the dead and injured, and saving my life crawling along the walls. I got to the room where Tohra and Sant Longowal were sitting and told them what I had seen. Sardar Karnail Singh Nag, who had followed me, also narrated what he had seen, as well as the killing of 35 to 36 young Sikhs by cannon fire. All of these young men were villagers.

**Ranbir Kaur, School Teacher:**
Early on the sixth morning the army came into the Guru Ram Das Serai and ordered all of those in the rooms to come out. We were taken into the courtyard. The men were separated from the women. We were also divided into old and young women and I was separated from the children, but I managed to get back to the old women. When we were sitting there the army released 150 people from the basement. They were asked why they had not come out earlier. They said the door had been locked from the outside. They were asked to hold up their hands and then they were shot after 15 minutes. Other young men were told to untie their turbans. They were used to tie their hands behind their backs. The army hit them on the head with the butts of their rifles.

**Giani Puran Singh**
I went to the Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) on 5th June around 7:30 in the evening because I had to ensure that religious ceremonies were performed. The moment I stepped on to the parkarma I stumbled across a body. Bullets were flying and I had to take shelter behind each and every pillar to reach the Darshani Deorhi. Another body was lying there. I ran a few yards and reached the Akal Takht. Night prayers start at Harmandir Sahib 5 minutes after they start at the Akal Takht. I wanted to find out if the path (recitation) had started there. I glimpsed Bhindranwale. We did not speak to each other. Around 7:45 I came out of the Akal Takht and ran into the Darshani Deorhi. I ran towards Harmandir Sahib, unmindful of the bullets flying past my ears. I began night prayers. Soon a colleague of mine, Giani Mohan Singh, joined me. Seeing the intensity of the fire we decided to close all the doors, barring the front door. Soon we completed all religious rites. We then took the Guru Granth Sahib to the top room to prevent any damage to the holy book. The Head Priest, Giani Sahib Singh, had given clear instructions that under no circumstances was the Guru Granth Sahib to be taken to the Akal Takht if the conditions were not right.
In the early hours of the morning of 6th June we took the holy book down and performed the religious rites that are performed every day, like maharaj da prakash karna (unfolding the holy book) and reciting hymns from the scriptures. The two side-doors were closed and the front and back doors were open. Bullets kept hitting the wall both inside and outside, ripping off the gold surface at various places. Soon after we finished reciting prayers one of our colleagues, Ragi Avtar Singh, was hit. We pulled him into a corner. Another bullet came and hit the holy Granth Sahib.

In the meanwhile the pounding of the Akal Takht was continuing. There was no let-up in the fire in other places either. We were thirsty and desperate for water. We crawled to the holy pool to get water for ourselves and for the wounded colleague.

Around 5pm they announced on loudspeakers that those hiding in the Harmandir Sahib should come out and that they would not be shot dead. While myself and Giani Mohan Singh remained inside, others walked out with the arms above their heads.

Narinderjit Singh Nada, Temple Public Relations Officer:
We had to step over dead bodies strewn everywhere. We were taken to the square in front of the main clock tower entrance. The minute the soldiers saw me, a male member of the group, they positioned their rifles on their shoulders with the barrels pointing at me. I think they were about to shoot me when a brigadier who recognized me intervened. We were then led by soldiers across the parkarma to the library side. A lieutenant accompanied us. Upon reaching the other side, he asked me to stand against the wall and lined up a firing squad. He asked me to say my prayers. I requested to say good-bye to my wife and the two daughters. At this point the brigadier showed up again and shouted at the young officer, “What the hell are you doing?” The officer said, “Sir, I misunderstood your order. I thought this man was to be shot.”

Now we were made to sit on the ground. My hands were tied behind my back. We were about 70 in that lot. All of us were told to keep our heads down. A slight movement of the head resulted in a sharp rifle butt. We spent the whole night sitting there. Outside the Temple complex the army troops were on a rampage, killing and looting surrounding houses of Sikhs.

Giani Chet Singh:
The people were taken out of their houses. Men’s hands were tied with their turbans. Women's necks were sought to be asphyxiated with their plaits. Then they were shot in the chests. No quarter was shown to women, aged or children; in the eyes of the troops every Sikh was a terrorist. Those who survived died of thirst. Their houses were ransacked, and then put on fire. The area surrounding Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) was full of debris. What happened is beyond description of sight, hearing or words.

Doctor:
A doctor and a police officer confirmed seeing the bodies of Sikhs who had been shot at point-blank range, with their hands tied behind their backs. As one Sikh doctor who worked at a government hospital confirmed: “Two of the Sikhs whose post-mortem examinations I conducted had their hands tied at the back...Some of my other colleagues conducting postmortems also came across young Sikhs who had been shot this way.”
Kirpal Singh:

In his eyewitness account, Giani Kirpal Singh lists some of the artifacts that were destroyed during the attack, such as weapons belonging to the Sikh Gurus, in addition to the destruction and confiscation of artifacts in the Sikh Reference Library. The library had included early manuscripts of the Guru Granth Sahib, with the Gurus’ handwriting, as well as, at least: Four hundred manuscript copies of Adi Guru Granth, Dasam Granth, Janam Sakhis, Hukamnamas; typed manuscripts of 500 old precious books; 1200 files of many newspapers of last sixty years; manuscript copy of Sant Nihal Singh’s Kavi Parkash; many manuscript copies of historical records; 18 albums of historical paintings; and all the almiraahs, racks, furniture, blocks of photographs.

Affidavit of Gurbachan Singh – November 1984

On November 1st, 1984 Gurbachan Singh was at home with his father and two brothers-in-law. At around 10 AM, Gurbachan claims that between 500 – 700 people attacked his house, throwing stones and big bricks. They set fire to all three doors of the house. The men managed to shift the women and the elders to a neighbor’s house and stayed behind as to defend them.

The men continued to defend the house even as buses brought more people to the site, causing the mob to swell. Gurbachan Singh mentions that about ten police officials were also present at the scene, directing and encouraging the mob violence.

Gurbachan Singh managed to flee the scene with his two brothers who defended themselves with their kirpans. His father and brothers-in-law were taken from their neighbor’s house and killed. No investigation has been carried out to look into this matter.

Affidavit of Narinder Singh – November 1984

Narinder Singh was at home on November 1, 1984 with his mother, sister and several Sikh neighbors. Narinder Singh started noticing unrest in his neighborhood. Mobs had started to form, looting and setting houses on fire.

Around 10 that morning, several Bihari neighbors came to visit Narinder and his family and said that they would protect him. They encouraged him not to seek refuge at the police station, stating that the police were working with the mobs and that Narinder Singh would not be safe there. His neighbors repeated their assurances that they would protect Narinder and that they should not leave their house.

Later that evening, Narinder heard several people banging on his door. He looked out the door and noticed the neighbors who had come earlier to assure him of their support. They were holding revolvers, iron rods, spears and other sharp weapons like knives. They demanded that Narinder and his family leave the house. They said that they did not want to harm them, only to loot their house.

Narinder felt they had no choice and stepped outside with his mother, his 17-year-old sister and his neighbors. The mob immediately attacked them, immediately killing his mother and sister and beating Narinder until he was unconscious. Members of the mob dragged their bodies and threw them into a ditch. After the mob had left, Narinder dragged himself out of the ditch and went to a friend’s house where he received some medical attention.

Narinder went to a relief camp where he spent some time recovering from his extensive injuries. On November 2nd, he found the dead bodies of his mother, sister, and neighbors. He performed the last rites, but became severely depressed. He moved to Kapurthala two months later and has never returned to the site of his family’s death.
Sources:
- *Twenty Years of Impunity: The November 1984 Pogroms of Sikhs in India*, by Jaskaran Kaur
- *The Ghalughara*, by Ram Narayan Kumar
In June 1984, the Indian government sent 150,000 Indian Army troops to Punjab, equipped with helicopters, heavy artillery, and tanks. On June 4th, 1984, the Indian Army attacked the Harmandir Sahib complex (also known as the Golden Temple), killing thousands of civilians trapped inside. The siege was codenamed “Operation Bluestar” by the Indian Army. Sikhs remember the event as the Ghallughara of 1984.

What led to the Ghallughara of 1984? Over the decades since Indian independence, Punjab lost its land to other states, as well as 75% of its river waters, which were diverted at the order of the Central government. Increasingly, industrial development was also being shifted to other states, leaving Punjab in poor economic health. Over the next several pages, you will find a timeline which explores some of the key dates and events which allowed the situation to escalate even further.

"It was an attack not on a political figure or movement but to suppress a religion, to attack their heart, to strike a blow at their spirit and self-confidence. The army which had suffered a heavy toll in the 3 days of battle went berserk and killed every Sikh man, woman and child who could be found inside the temple complex. They were hauled out of the rooms, brought to corridors on the circumference of the temple and with their hands tied behind their backs, were shot in cold blood."

- Joyce Pettigrew, *The Sikhs of the Panjab: Unheard Voices of State and Guerrilla Violence, 1995, p. 8*
April 13, 1978
A bloody clash between Sikhs and the Nirankari sect left 13 Sikhs and 3 Nirankaris dead in Amritsar. Those who were accused of killing the Sikhs were later acquitted of any charges, leading to protests by Sikh leaders.

Sep 9, 1981
Lala Jagat Narain, Hind Samachar newspaper group founder and a bitter critic of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, was gunned down near Ludhiana.

1982 - Asian Games
Akalis continued demonstrations. During the Asian Games, the central government issued orders that every Sikh entering the games should be thoroughly searched and interrogated whether they were a common civilian or a high-court judge.

April 24, 1980
The leader of the Nirankari Sect was shot dead by Ranjit Singh, who later became Jathedar of the Akal Takht.

1982
Akali Dal launched the Dharam Yudh Morcha – among other issues, their demands included reallocation of river waters, transfer of capital city Chandigarh to Panjab (currently being shared with Haryana), and a more independent government for Panjab within an Indian federal system. During the 88 days of this protest, the police arrested over 36,000 Akali Dal activists and arrested 2,500 Sikhs under the National Security Act of 1980.

October 6, 1983
The protests to fulfill the Akali demands escalated. Panjab was brought under President's Rule and Panjab was declared a "Disturbed Area." 50,000 state and paramilitary forces began to patrol Panjab. These forces were given power to kill people they felt might breach public order. There were also laws forbidding more than four people from getting together.

May 25th, 1984
150,000 Indian Army troops were mobilized and deployed throughout Panjab, surrounding all important Gurduaras, including the Harmandir Sahib complex.
May 31, 1984
The Akalis planned another agitation, blocked the transport of grains, water and power supplies from Panjab, and threatened to limit Panjab’s grain supply by 60%. This agitation was to take place on June 3rd from Harmandir Sahib.

June 2nd, 1984
Panjab was declared a "restricted area” and all travel to Panjab was forbidden. The Army had taken over the state. Visitors were allowed to enter the Golden Temple Complex. Thousands of pilgrims started to gather at the complex to celebrate the martyrdom anniversary of Guru Arjan Sahib on June 3rd. They were not allowed to leave.

"For five days the Panjab has been cut-off from the rest of the world. There is a 24-hour curfew. All telephone and telex lines are cut. No foreigners are permitted entry and on Tuesday, all Indian journalists were expelled. There are no newspapers, no trains, no buses - not even a bullock cart can move."
- Christian Science Monitor, 8 June 1984

June 4th, 1984
The army started firing on the temple complex, leading to a gun battle lasting 5 hours. The Army used machine guns and mortars and destroyed two 18th century towers, called Ramgarhia Bunga's, as well as the water tank and surrounding buildings. At least 100 people were killed on both sides, according to witnesses.

May 30, 1984
The army had taken positions in some high rise buildings around the temple.

June 1st, 1984
Numerous eyewitnesses reported that the Army shot into the Harmandir Sahib complex from the surrounding taller buildings. The firing continued for several hours, leaving 11 people dead and close to 300 bullet marks around the complex.

June 3rd, 1984
All communications including phone lines to and from Panjab were cut. Roadblocks prevented anyone from entering or leaving Panjab and all journalists were expelled from Panjab. A total curfew was imposed and as many as 10,000 pilgrims and 1300 workers were trapped inside the temple complex.
June 6th, 1984

After midnight, tanks plowed their way towards the Akal Takht, and began firing into the building. The effect on the Akal Takht was devastating. Over 80 shells were pumped into the sacred Gurduara. The entire front of the Takht was destroyed and fires broke out in many of the different rooms, blackening the marble walls and wrecking the delicate decorations dating back to the time of Sardar Ranjit Singh. The gold dome of the Akal Takht was also badly damaged by artillery fire. At the other end of the Temple complex, a battalion of the Kumaon Regiment were invading the hostel complex where many of the innocent pilgrims were in hiding as well as the complex administration staff. There was no water because the water tower had been destroyed and it was very hot. As night fell the Army troops were given the order to storm the remains of the Akal Takht and shoot anyone they found inside.

"[Sikhs] were shot at point blank range, their hands tied behind their backs with their turbans. It was a virtual massacre. A large number of women children and pilgrims were gunned down."
– The Guardian, 13 June 1984

June 5th, 1984

At 7:00 p.m. Operation Bluestar, the invasion of the Harmandir Sahib complex began. Tanks of the 16th Cavalry Regiment of the Indian Army moved to enclose the complex. Other buildings both inside and around the complex were on fire.

June 7th, 1984

In the early hours of the morning the troops discovered the bodies of Baba Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his closest followers in the basement of the Akal Takht. The day was spent flushing out any remaining snipers and collecting the dead bodies. Soldiers were openly walking about the temple in their shoes, drinking alcohol as well as smoking. Blood and bodies were strewn all over the broken marble of the parkarma. There were corpses floating in the sarovar. The Darshani Deori, the entrance gate of the Golden Temple which housed many priceless treasures, was destroyed and looted. The central library complex was burned down. Many priceless manuscripts, some in the Guru’s own handwriting, were lost forever.
June to September, 1984
Parallel to Operation Blue Star, another military operation called Operation Woodrose took place. Across Panjab, the Indian Army attacked 42 to 74 Gurduaras resulting in high casualties at Moga, Mukatsar, Faridkot, Patiala, Ropar and Chowk Mehta. The exact number of Sikhs killed is not known, but 257 people were shot and killed in the storming of the Gurduara Dukhniwarian Sahib in Patiala alone.

October 31, 1984
Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was shot and killed by her Sikh two bodyguards. During that night Congress party officials met with their local support networks to identify the residences and properties of Sikhs through government issued voter or ration lists; distribute weapons, kerosene and incendiary chemicals; exhort non-Sikhs to kill Sikhs and loot and burn their properties; and plan the time to attack.

November 1 -3, 1984
Assailants attacked Sikhs throughout the country, shouting slogans of extermination. Gurduaras were attacked, Guru Granth Sahibs were desecrated and then Sikh homes and businesses were looted and burned along with the Sikh owners.

"The Army Action was not the “last resort” as Prime Minister Indira Gandhi would have us believe. It had been in her mind for more than 18 months. Shortly after the Akali agitation of 1982, the Army began rehearsals of a commando raid near Chakrata Cantonment in the Doon Valley, where a complete replica of the Golden Temple complex had been built
The number of people who lost their lives during The Ghallughara of 1984 will never be known. The Army refused to let the Red Cross enter the complex and cremated the dead before the bodies could be identified or claimed by their families. The Amritsar municipal sweepers refused to clear the dead bodies away but were eventually persuaded by offers of rum and being allowed to strip the bodies of all valuables. They piled the dead into garbage trucks and unceremoniously cremated them. Family members were not allowed by the army to claim the remains or perform any traditional funeral rites. It is clear that thousands lost their lives in the Temple complex.

**How Many Died During the Ghallughara (Operation Bluestar) According To…**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Indian Government</td>
<td>493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP, Reuter, and the New York Times</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author Mark Tullys, <em>Mrs. Ghandi’s Last Battle</em></td>
<td>2,093</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amritsar Crematorium Workers</td>
<td>3,300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author Chand Joshi, <em>Myth and Reality</em></td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyewitnesses</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rebuilding** Kar Seva is the ceremonial cleaning of the sacred pool is normally undertaken every 50 years. A special Kar Seva was undertaken in 1985 to replace some of the damage. Tens of thousands of Sikhs participated and the sarovar was completely drained and cleaned. The Akal Takht has been entirely rebuilt. The marble of the parkarma has been replaced in sections with new marble. Repair work on Harmandir Sahib included rebuilding the temple dome and walls with new gold. The Ramgharia Bungas have been repaired and Teja Singh Samundri Hall has been left, pockmarked with bullet holes as a reminder of the tragedy.
Timeline Worksheet:

As we review the events of 1984, please add important events onto the timeline.

1469
Birth of Prophet Gurū Nānak Sāhib

1762
Great Holocaust
30,000 killed

1847
Pañjāb Partitioned
India & Pakistan

1984

1604
Revelations Complied – Nānak V (Gurū) Ādi Granth

1699
Inauguration – Nānak X
Gurū Khālsā Panth

1600s 1700s 1800s 1900s