

### Summary of Khalra Judgment

On November 18, 2005, Additional Sessions Judge Bhupinder Singh in Patiala convicted six Punjab police officials for the 1995 abduction and murder of human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra. The court sentenced Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Jaspal Singh and Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Amarjit Singh to life imprisonment for murder, seven years imprisonment for abduction with intent to murder, two years for destruction of evidence with intent to protect the offenders, and five years for criminal conspiracy. The court sentenced Station House Officer (SHO)/Sub Inspector (SI) Satnam Singh, SHO/SI Surinderpal Singh, Head Constable (HC) Pritpal Singh, and SHO/SI Jasbir Singh to seven years imprisonment for abduction with intent to murder and five years imprisonment for criminal conspiracy. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Ajit Singh Sandhu, the primary accused, and DSP Ashok Kumar died during the trial of the case. A revision is pending in the High Court of the earlier discharge of accused Rashpal Singh. All of the accused police officers had been charged under Sections 120-B of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Section 364 read with Section 34 of the IPC. Jaspal Singh and Amarjit Singh were further charged under Sections 302 and 201, read with Section 34 of the IPC.

The following individuals testified as prosecution witnesses: Kikkar Singh, who was declared hostile; Paramjit Kaur, wife of Jaswant Singh Khalra; Vishpal Singh; Gurbhej Singh; Justice (Retd.) Ajit Singh Bains; Satnam Singh; Kirpal S. Randhawa; Satwinderpal Singh; Piara Singh, who was declared hostile; Baljit Singh; Jaspal Singh Dhillon; Surinderpal Singh; Baljinder Singh; Kulwant Singh; Rajiv Singh, who witnessed Khalra's abduction; Kuldip Singh, who witnessed Khalra's detention, torture, murder and the disposal of his body; Dr. B.A. Vaid; DSP P.L. Meena; Superintendent of Police (SP) K.S. Joshi; Inspector Ramesh Kumar; Satnam Singh, who was declared hostile; and Damgajjan Singh, who was declared hostile. (9)

The accused police officers admitted that they were posted in the same district from which Khalra was abducted, but declared they were innocent, providing alibis to the court. The defense examined: Devinder Singh, Record Clerk of Judicial Record Room, Amritsar; Gurjit S. Kahlon, an advocate from Jalandhar; Kuldip Singh, resident of village Gorkha; ASI Bahal Singh; Kulwant Singh, resident of Chohla Sahib; Ravinder Singh, the then Sub Divisional Judicial Magistrate of Tarn Taran; HC Jaspal Singh; MHC Satnam Singh; HC Dalip Singh; Chanan Singh; Ajit Singh, Manager of Gurdwara Hemkunt Sahib Management Trust; and Baldev Singh, retired Inspector of police. (10)

In his order, Judge Bhupinder Singh defined the following points for determination in this case:

- (i) Whether there was motive behind the abduction and lateron [sic] killing of Jaswant Singh Khalra by the accused?
- (ii) Whether the accused hatched criminal conspiracy to commit offence i.e. to abduct Jaswant Singh Khalra with an intention to commit his murder or to put him in danger of being murdered?
- (iii) Whether Jaswant Singh Khalra has been abducted by the accused with an intention to murder or put him in danger of being murdered?
- (iv) Whether Jaswant Singh Khalra has been murdered? If so, by whom and at whose instance? (12)

Judge Singh conducted an extensive review of the evidence, and answered in the affirmative each point raised for determination. The judge further accepted all of the testimony given by the prosecution witnesses.

### The Motive Behind the Abduction and Murder

Judge Singh began with a discussion of Khalra's investigations into the fate of disappeared youth in Punjab and his discovery of police abductions leading to illegal cremations. Witness testimony and documentary evidence proved that Khalra was preparing a list of the disappeared when he was killed. The judge next discussed the press battle that ensued between Khalra and then Director General of Police (DGP) KPS Gill after Khalra made his findings public. Khalra challenged Gill to an open debate in order to rebut Gill's explanation regarding the disappeared persons, i.e. that they had all traveled abroad. Khalra also criticized the government for reposting SSP Ajit Singh Sandhu to Tarn Taran, after Khalra announced his findings of mass illegal cremations. The judge briefly mentioned how the proceedings of the Punjab mass cremations matter before the National Human Rights Commission had verified Khalra's findings of police abductions leading to illegal and unidentified cremations. (13)

Judge Singh next discussed the death threats that the police, in particular SSP Sandhu, issued to Khalra. (13-14) Sandhu threatened Khalra that he, too, would become an unidentified dead body. Prior to his murder, Khalra expressed his apprehensions about the police threats and monitoring of his family to his peers. At a meeting in Chandigarh in late August 1995, attended by colleagues such as Jaspal Singh Dhillon and Justice Ajit Singh Bains, Khalra agreed to file a petition before the Punjab & Haryana High Court requesting security for himself and his family. (14) After discussing Khalra's investigations and the police threats against Khalra, Judge Singh concluded:

[I]n order to shut the mouth of Jaswant Singh Khalra, the higher police authorities particularly Ajit Singh Sandhu, the then Senior Superintendent of Police, Taran Taran developed a grudge against Sh. Jaswant Singh Khalra. He threatened Sh. Jaswant Singh Khalra to stop his activities, failing which he would also be in the list of unidentified dead-bodies. When Jaswant Singh Khalra openly challenged the police authorities, Ajit Singh Sandhu decided to abduct Jaswant Singh Khalra through his subordinate police officers/officials. This part of the evidence produced by the prosecution remained [sic] un rebutted. (14)

Judge Bhupinder Singh thus found that the prosecution had "fully proved the motive" behind Khalra's abduction by the accused police officers. (14)

### A Criminal Conspiracy is Hatched: Abduction & Illegal Detention

Next, Judge Bhupinder Singh held that SSP Sandhu criminally conspired with his subordinate officers, also accused in this case, "to abduct Jaswant Singh Khalra with an intention to cause him to [be] secretly and wrongfully confined. . . and . . . to eliminate him or to put him in danger of being murdered." (15) The judge accepted Rajiv Singh's and Kirpal Singh Randhawa's testimony regarding Khalra's abduction from Khalra's home on the morning of September 6, 1995.

On the morning of September 6, 1995, Paramjit Kaur left for her job as an assistant librarian at Guru Nanak Dev University. Rajiv Singh, a reporter, was present at the Khalra residence at 8 Kabir Park, opposite the university. Both Khalra and Rajiv Singh planned to go to the Amritsar office of the *Indian Express*. Khalra took out his vehicle and began to wash it, while Rajiv Singh sat in the drawing room. At about 9:15 to 9:20 a.m., a sky-blue Maruti van, with the registration number DNB-5969, drove up and parked in front of Khalra's car and driveway. A white Maruti gypsy was also parked at some distance, providing cover to the sky-blue van. Rajiv Singh saw

three uniformed policemen and one policeman in civil clothes exit the Maruti van. Two of the uniformed policemen, SHO Satnam Singh of Police Station Chabbal and HC Prithipal Singh of Police Post Manochahal, carried carbines, and Jaspal Singh, also uniformed, had a walkie-talkie set. DSP Ashok Kumar sat in the front seat of the Maruti gypsy, on the left side of the driver seat. Surinderpal Singh, SHO of Police Station Sarhali, sat in the front seat. Rajiv Singh further observed five to six uniformed policemen sitting in the back of the Maruti gypsy; one of them was Jasbir Singh, in-charge of Police Post Manochahal, another was ASI Amarjit Singh, and a third was Avtar Singh Sona, son of SSP Sandhu's nephew Jagbir S. Sandhu. (15)

After hearing loud noises, Rajiv Singh rushed to the main gate, and heard DSP Jaspal Singh tell Khalra that SSP Sandhu wanted to meet him. Rajiv Singh requested Jaspal Singh to allow Khalra to dress properly, since he was still in his night-clothes. Jaspal Singh pushed Rajiv Singh aside and shoved Khalra into the Maruti van, onto the rear seat. Khalra was placed between DSP Jaspal Singh and HC Prithipal Singh. Satnam Singh sat in the front left seat, and a clean-shaven person sat in the driver seat. Rajiv Singh then heard DSP Jaspal Singh make a call on the walkie-talkie to a superior officer and state that the work was completed. (15)

The accused took Khalra away in the Maruti van, followed by the Maruti gypsy. Kirpal Singh Randhawa, a resident of 36 Kabir Park, also saw the vans. He had left his house at 9:15 a.m., walking towards Khalra's house. When he crossed about ten yards and reached a speed breaker, he saw a sky-blue Maruti van, with registration number DNB-5969, parked in front of Khalra's driveway and blocking Khalra's vehicle. In the front seat, Kirpal S. Randhawa saw Satnam Singh of Police Station Chabbal with a clean-shaven driver. In the rear seat, Randhawa saw Khalra seated between two officers. As they drove by Randhawa, Khalra called out to him that he was being abducted by the accused police officers. (16)

After the abduction, around 9:25 a.m., Rajiv Singh called Paramjit Kaur and informed her of the abduction. She immediately came home and, accompanied by Rajiv Singh, went to Islamabad Police Station to make further inquiries. The policemen there expressed ignorance of the abduction. Paramjit Kaur then informed her family and husband's colleagues, and also sent telegrams to the Chief Minister of Punjab, Director General of Police, Chief Justice of India, and Chief Justice of the Punjab & Haryana High Court, among others. (15)

In the evening, Paramjit Kaur and the two eyewitnesses to the abduction, Rajiv Singh and Kirpal Singh Randhawa, visited the office of D.R. Bhatti, Inspector General (IG) of Border Range, and requested his assistance in locating Khalra. They also named the police officers who had abducted Khalra. Bhatti advised them to directly meet with DGP Gill because of the gravity of the matter. (16)

After establishing the abduction, the judge discussed the evidence proving that the accused confined Khalra in illegal police custody. On September 6, 1995, Kulwant Singh shared the same cell with Khalra for one night at Police Station Chabbal. They spoke and exchanged their names and addresses. Khalra informed Kulwant Singh of the officers who had abducted him, in particular Satnam Singh and DSP Jaspal Singh. The police implicated Kulwant Singh in two false cases, in both of which he was later acquitted. After he was transferred out of Police Station Chabbal, Kulwant Singh was brought to the office of SSP Sandhu and questioned about Khalra by SHO Satnam Singh and DSP Jaspal Singh. The SHO who brought him there warned him not to disclose anything about Khalra to anyone. (17)

Next, Judge Singh discussed the testimony of Special Police Officer (SPO) Kuldip Singh, who testified to Khalra's illegal detention, torture, murder, and disposal of body. Kuldip Singh served

as SHO Satnam Singh's bodyguard. When SSP Sandhu was transferred back to Tarn Taran district in 1995, Satnam Singh and SPO Kuldip Singh also accompanied him. Fifteen days before Diwali in 1995, SHO Satnam Singh gave SPO Kuldip Singh the key to a room adjoining the SHO's quarters. SHO Satnam Singh instructed him to serve meals to the man in the room, and not disclose anything about this man to anyone. SPO Kuldip Singh went to the room, opened the door, and observed the man there in torn clothing, with scratches covering his body. (17)

After SPO Kuldip Singh had served meals to Khalra for four days, the accused police officers arrived in unnumbered cars at Police Station Chabbal and immediately proceeded to the room where Khalra was detained. SSP Ajit Singh Sandhu told Khalra that he had sent him a message to stop his activities. Khalra replied that he had rightly inquired into the issue. The police officers proceeded to beat Khalra. (17)

About three days later, Satnam Singh had SPO Kuldip Singh accompany him as they took Khalra to SSP Sandhu's residence. Sandhu was also present. Half an hour later, DGP KPS Gill and a clean-shaven individual arrived at Sandhu's residence and went into the room where Khalra was being held. Satnam Singh also went into the room and bolted the door from inside. They interrogated Khalra for about half an hour. SSP Sandhu, DGP Gill, and the unnamed officer left the house, and SHO Satnam Singh and SPO Kuldip Singh returned with Khalra to Police Station Chabbal. On the return trip, Satnam Singh told Khalra that he should have accepted DGP Gill's advice, and thus saved both himself and the police officials. Subsequently, SPO Kuldip Singh went on vacation for three to four days, returning after Diwali. Upon return, he resumed his duties feeding Khalra. (17)

After discussing this evidence, the judge concluded that the prosecution had fully proved points (ii) and (iii). The accused had criminally conspired to abduct Jaswant Singh Khalra, and did so on September 6, 1995 from his house, "with an intention to force him to desist from his activities against the police authorities and to put him in danger of being murdered." (18)

### The Defense's Case

Judge Singh next discussed a portion of the defense's case, mainly that the prosecution's witnesses did not initially identify the accused, and the prosecution's main witnesses, Rajiv Singh and Paramjit Kaur, improved upon their testimony in court. (19-20). The defense cited the habeas corpus petition filed by Paramjit Kaur before the Supreme Court, immediately after Khalra's abduction which did not name the accused. (*Note: The petition named the State of Punjab, DGP Gill, IG Bhatti, SSP Sandhu, and SHO Islamabad as defendants*). The defense also cited the First Information Report (FIR), allegedly recorded by the Islamabad police based on an interview with Paramjit Kaur. (19)

In response, the prosecution highlighted the special facts pertinent to this case: the case implicated senior police officials. Further, the prosecution stated that the FIR submitted by Police Station Islamabad regarding Paramjit Kaur's first complaint to the police was unreliable because it was not recorded as she reported it. At that point, SSP Sandhu had already hatched his conspiracy, and the police purposefully doctored the FIR. Further, Rajiv Singh, as a reporter, knew the accused and did identify them on the spot. (21)

The judge rejected the defense's arguments and found that the facts in this case distinguished it from other cases, because "the accused are high dignitaries of [the] police department." Further, Judge Singh agreed with the prosecution that Paramjit Kaur had consistently stated to different

officials that her FIR was not recorded by the police as she reported it. In fact, she was made to sign a paper without knowledge of its contents. (22) Likewise, Paramjit Kaur, Rajiv Singh, and Kirpal Singh Randhawa regularly named the accused in their different meetings with police and in their statements to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). In a supplementary affidavit filed in relation to her habeas corpus petition on November 10, 1995, Paramjit Kaur stated that in spite of naming the accused police officers to other policemen and officials, her husband remained in their illegal custody. (22)

Further, the Supreme Court itself found that the police had failed to find Khalra. It then turned over the inquiry to the CBI. The Advocate General of Punjab endorsed the Court's decision to turn the case over to the CBI. Thus, the judge held that the prosecution witnesses had fully identified the accused. (22)

The defense next attempted to destroy the credibility of Kulwant Singh and SPO Kuldip Singh, the witnesses who had seen Khalra in police detention. The defense argued that Kulwant Singh was not credible because he was a repeated drug offender. (23) The prosecution demonstrated that Kulwant Singh was implicated in false cases by the police, in order to give some of the policemen an alibi on the day of Khalra's abduction, and later to intimidate him from testifying in the case. (24) Further, the police detention of Kulwant Singh on September 6, 1995 proved that he was in detention at Police Station Chabbal on the day he alleged he met Khalra. (25) The defense attempted to discredit SPO Kuldip Singh by claiming that he had filed false charges against the complainant Paramjit Kaur Khalra and her associates, and that he changed his testimony to favor Paramjit Kaur only after the police refused to give him permanent employment. The prosecution showed that Kuldip Singh had categorically stated to the CBI in his witness statement, and repeated during his court testimony, that the police picked him up and forced him to file those false cases against Paramjit Kaur and her associates.<sup>1</sup> (24)

Judge Singh highlighted the government's decision not to pursue the false cases filed by Kuldip Singh, as further indicative of their falseness. Judge Singh commented on Kuldip Singh's testimony: "He did respond properly to all the queries put forward to him by the defence counsel who could not shake his veracity despite detailed and lengthy cross-examination of this witness." The judge found that the in-court statements made by both Kulwant Singh and Kuldip Singh were "fully consistent" with the statements they had given earlier to the CBI. (26)

### Murder

Judge Singh next discussed whether the accused had murdered Jaswant Singh Khalra, and if so, who had done it and on whose order. He recapped the death threats made by the police to Khalra, and the witnesses who recounted those threats in their testimony. (28) The judge then discussed SPO Kuldip Singh's testimony regarding the murder of Khalra and disposal of his dead body.

After SPO Kuldip Singh had returned from vacation, SHO Satnam Singh of Police Station Chabbal gave him custody of Khalra's room again. SPO Kuldip Singh served Khalra meals for

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<sup>1</sup> The judge briefly mentioned how the CBI attempted to discredit Kuldip Singh, its own witness. The judge faulted the CBI for trying to present a weak case, but did not discuss this issue further. In his written arguments, Paramjit Kaur's attorney Rajvinder S. Bains highlighted the conflict of interest created by the CBI's prosecution of high-level police officials. He further pointed to the CBI's unwillingness to charge DGP Gill in the murder of Khalra, despite witness testimony regarding his interrogation of Khalra in illegal custody.

three days, until DSP Jaspal Singh, SHO Surinderpal Singh, SHO Jasbir Singh, Prithipal Singh, Balwinder Singh Ghora, and Arvinder Singh came to the police station in unnumbered vehicles. SPO Kuldip Singh, SHO Satnam Singh, and the police officers went to the room where Khalra was detained; the police officers started beating him. SHO Satnam Singh directed Kuldip Singh to bring a glass of hot water. As Kuldip Singh put water on the gas stove in the kitchen, he heard two shots fired. He immediately turned off the gas stove and returned to the room. There he saw Satnam Singh standing in the door of the room. Satnam Singh directed Kuldip Singh to go where the vehicles were parked. Kuldip Singh went and saw Balwinder Singh Ghora driving one of the vehicles in reverse towards the room. Ghora opened up the trunk. Arvinder Singh and Ghora threw the body of Khalra into the trunk. Kuldip Singh saw blood oozing out of Khalra's chest. (28)

The judge then recounted Kuldip Singh's testimony describing how the body of Khalra was disposed of in Harike canal, and how the policemen went to the Harike Canal Rest House to celebrate afterwards. Kuldip Singh saw SSP Sandhu's gunman there, and also heard that SSP Sandhu was there, as well. Kuldip Singh sat on the chairs on the lawn outside the rest house, and did not enter the establishment. (28)

Judge Singh continued with a discussion of Kuldip Singh's decision to provide evidence in this case, after SSP Sandhu died in 1997. (29) The judge also recounted the subsequent harassment Kuldip Singh faced from accused DSP Jaspal Singh and SHO Satnam Singh, who threatened to implicate him in false cases, kill him and his wife, and, with DSP Ashok Kumar, took him into custody and forced him to file false cases against Paramjit Kaur and her associates. DSP Jaspal Singh and SHO Satnam Singh also attempted to force Kuldip Singh's in-laws to file false complaints, but his in-laws instead approached the Additional Director General of Police and revealed these pressure tactics, getting the false cases cancelled. (30)

In addition to SPO Kuldip Singh's testimony, the judge cited Section 108 of the Evidence Act, presuming Khalra to be dead because he had not been heard from for ten years. (30) Thus, the judge concluded that the prosecution had proved that the accused murdered Khalra and threw his body into Harike canal. (31) The judge rebutted the defense's argument that murder could not be proven without a dead body, pointing to the police abduction, custody, torture, and shooting of Khalra, as well as the disposal of his dead body as sufficient proof of his murder.

#### Defects of Police Alibis

The judge then devoted his discussion to describing the faults in the alibis constructed by the different accused policemen. (33-41) The judge highlighted the following faults, among others: forgery of documents, insufficiency of evidence, and failure to conclusively demonstrate that the accused could not have been at Khalra's residence at the time of abduction. (38)

#### Conclusion & Sentencing

Judge Singh concluded that: (i) all of the accused had a motive to abduct and eliminate Jaswant Singh Khalra because he continued to investigate police abductions leading to illegal cremations, and he openly challenged the illegal acts committed by the Punjab police; (ii) the accused then criminally conspired to abduct and silence Khalra; (iii) they executed this conspiracy by abducting Khalra on September 6, 1995, keeping him in illegal confinement, torturing and beating him "to the extent that he could not move or take meals or go to the bathroom," and (iv) the accused killed him about four days after Diwali in October 1995. (42)

Judge Bhupinder Singh then convicted all of the accused for criminal conspiracy to abduct and eliminate Khalra under Section 120B of the Indian Penal Code, and also convicted all of the accused for abduction with intent to eliminate Khalra under Section 364 w/34 IPC. The judge further convicted DSP Jaspal Singh and ASI Amarjit Singh for murdering Khalra under Section 302 IPC. He stated: "No doubt [sic], the other accused have also played part in causing the death of Jaswant Singh Khalra but only accused Jaspal Singh and Amarjit Singh have been charged under Section 302 IPC." The judge also convicted Jaspal Singh and Amarjit Singh for destruction of evidence, with intent to screen the offenders, under Section 201 IPC. He stated, "No doubt [sic], the other accused have also played a part in the commission of this crime, as discussed above, but charge has been framed by my learned predecessor on 25.7.1998 under Section 201/34 I.P.C. against only these accused." (42-4)

The judge rejected the leniency pleas made by the police officers and issued the following sentence, to run concurrently:

1. All, 120B IPC: Rigorous imprisonment for five years and fine of Rs. 2000/each (or if default, two more months of rigorous imprisonment)
2. All, 364/34 IPC: Rigorous imprisonment for seven years and fine of Rs. 5000/each (or if default, five more months of rigorous imprisonment)
3. Jaspal Singh and Amarjit Singh, 302/34 IPC: Life imprisonment and fine of Rs. 5000/each (or if default, five months of rigorous imprisonment)
4. Jaspal Singh and Amarjit Singh, 201 IPC: Rigorous imprisonment for two years and fine of Rs. 2000/each (or if default, two more months of rigorous imprisonment) (46)

### Subsequent Filings

The petitioner Paramjit Kaur has appealed the leniency of the sentences, given that the judge awarded only two policemen with life sentences. The leniency of the sentences is due, in part, to the reduced charges framed against the other police officers, failing to charge them with the murder of Jaswant Singh Khalra and destruction of evidence with intent to screen the offenders.

On International Human Rights Day, December 10, 2005, Paramjit Kaur also wrote a letter to the Director of the CBI, requesting it to conclude the investigation and bring charges against former DGP KPS Gill. As stated in the letter, evidence emerged during the trial indicating that DGP Gill was one of the main conspirators, and was also guilty of criminal omission to save Jaswant Singh Khalra's life while his wife's habeas corpus petition was pending before the Supreme Court after his abduction, but before his murder.

In February 2005, SPO Kuldip Singh gave his testimony in court and explained the sequence of events leading to Khalra's custodial torture and murder, including the role of KPS Gill. He described how the policemen brought Khalra to SSP Sandhu's residence. Thereafter, KPS Gill visited SSP Sandhu's house and interrogated Khalra for half an hour. Subsequently, when SHO Satnam Singh drove Khalra back to Police Station Chabbal, SHO Satnam Singh stated that if Khalra had agreed to KPS Gill's offer, then he would have saved his life and also saved them. According to Paramjit Kaur, the order to murder Khalra was probably given by KPS Gill in that meeting. The evidence directly implicates Gill in Khalra's abduction, illegal detention, torture and murder.

Paramjit Kaur's letter also points to the role of senior officers in hatching and executing the conspiracy to abduct and murder Khalra. According to the letter, the participation of so many senior officers would not have been possible without DGP Gill's sanction. Further, the

evidentiary record discloses that IG D.R. Bhatti expressed his helplessness in securing Khalra's release immediately after his abduction, advising Paramjit Kaur to approach DGP Gill in order to save Khalra's life. The evidence further reveals that Jaswant Singh Khalra was alive almost six weeks after his abduction. Thus, the SSP and his team of officials defied the Supreme Court and State of Punjab for six weeks, ignoring the pending habeas petition. This could not have been done without the connivance and approval of DGP KPS Gill.

Other issues: *Intimidation of Witnesses During Trial*

Throughout the trial, witnesses reported police harassment and intimidation. Police implicated five of the key witnesses—Paramjit Kaur, Kulwant Singh, Kikkar Singh, Rajiv Singh, and Kirpal Singh Randhawa—in false criminal cases, ranging from bribery, to rape, to robbery, to establishing a terrorist organization. The police arrested Rajiv Singh, the witness to Khalra's abduction, several times to prevent his appearing in court to testify, and implicated him in a total of four false cases. For example, the police charged him with forming a terrorist organization. The Punjab Human Rights Commission investigated the charges and concluded that the police falsely implicated him.

Kikkar Singh initially told the CBI that he saw Khalra in police custody in October 1995, witnessed signs of torture on his body, and helped him eat. Kikkar Singh's police detention was independently corroborated by a judicial inquiry. After giving his statement to the CBI, Kikkar Singh repeatedly asked for protection. Despite the protection he received, four armed men tried to abduct him in the presence of his security guards in July 1996. In his affidavit of August 29, 1996, Kikkar Singh stated that the police were pressuring him to turn hostile, by implicating his father and relatives in false cases, and by conducting raids on his house led by the accused in the case (SSP Sandhu and DSP Jaspal Singh). The police charged him and his father with five false criminal cases, and after spending time in judicial custody, Kikkar Singh turned hostile in Khalra's case.

In March 1998, officers implicated in Khalra's abduction visited SPO Kuldip Singh and intimidated him into filing false bribery charges against Khalra's wife Paramjit Kaur. The charges were quashed after SPO Kuldip Singh's parents denied his statement and human rights groups like Amnesty International drew attention to the case. In November 2004, SPO Kuldip Singh expressed no confidence in Punjab police security and requested that a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) vehicle replace the Punjab Police vehicle that was bringing him to court. He stated that the Punjab police driver was purposefully delaying him and threatening him.

In 2004, prior to his testimony in the Khalra case, the police falsely implicated Kirpal Singh Randhawa in a rape case, and both him and Rajiv Singh for allegedly threatening the witness of the rape case.