

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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Questions

- 1. Please locate Simble Camp.**
- 2. Do reports indicate that Simble Camp residents are subject to militant attacks and/or recruitment from militants?**
- 3. Please provide links to information on the Khalistan Zindabad Force.**
- 4. Do November 2005 and August 2008 coincide with any marked improvements with the security outlook in Jammu & Kashmir or the region generally?**

RESPONSE

1. Please locate Simble Camp.

Note: Simble Camp is also referred to as Simbal Camp.

According to the sources consulted, Simbal Camp is in Jammu district, close to the Indo-Pakistan border. An April 2007 *Ground Report* article states that Simbal Camp is near the border town of RS Pura. A 1998 *Indian Express* article describes Simbal Camp in Jammu as “where the Sikhs migrated from Pakistan in 1947 live” (Guruji, M. 2007, ‘Curse of partition undone after 50 years, lost brothers unite’, *Ground Report*, 12 April <http://www.groundreport.com/World/Curse-of-partition-undone-after-50-years-lost-brot/2833558> – Accessed 13 November 2009 – Attachment 1; Taggar, R. 1998, ‘Biography of an unexploded bomb’, *Indian Express*, 9 April <http://www.indianexpress.com/res/web/pIe/ie/daily/19980409/09950334.html> – Accessed 21 May 2008 – Attachment 2)

A 2007 *San Francisco Chronicle* article describes Simbal as “an unofficial camp for partition refugees...which skirts the northern city of Jammu.” The article describes the situation for partition refugees in Jammu & Kashmir, stating that there are “500,000 Hindus and Sikhs from rural Kashmir living in impoverished conditions in 46 refugee colonies in Jammu

province” (Sisodia, R. 2007, ‘60 years on, people uprooted by birth of India, Pakistan live in camps’, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 20 August <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/08/20/MNCNRIPH5.DTL> – Accessed 13 November 2009 – Attachment 3).

A 2002 book includes Simbal Camp as a case study, and states that Simbal Camp is a “comparatively developed area with 6697 population, 880 households, 30% household living below poverty line, 72% literacy rate, quite good infrastructural facilities” (Kaur, G. 2002, *Marketing Strategy for Indian rural banks in new millennium*, Anmol Publications Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, p. 125, Google Books website <http://books.google.com/books?id=KHaUPNwMI58C&lpg=PA125&ots=qylFAQ2tjJ&dq=%22simbal%20camp%22&pg=PA127#v=onepage&q=%22simbal%20camp%22&f=false> – Accessed 13 November 2009 – Attachment 4).

Simbal Camp was located on Wikimapia. Attachment 5 shows two images: a street view satellite image of Simbal Camp, and a city view map indicating that Simbal Camp is located south-west of Jammu City, between the city and the border with Pakistan [Simbal Camp is indicated by a cross] (‘Govt High School Simbal Camp’ (undated), Wikimapia <http://wikimapia.org/#lat=32.6422659&lon=74.7853088&z=18&l=0&m=b> – Accessed 13 November 2009 – Attachment 5).

2. Do reports indicate that Simble Camp residents are subject to militant attacks and/or recruitment from militants?

Reports were found of militant activity in Simbal Camp, dating from the late 1990s to present. A June 2005 *India Blitz* article states that Simbal Camp is “one of the areas notorious for sheltering Sikh militants in the 1980s, when insurgency was at its peak in Punjab. The area is close to the India-Pakistan border”. A May 2003 *Hindu* article reports on Sikh militants from Jammu, who had escaped to Pakistan. Simbal Camp is specifically mentioned in the article, which states that “Almost every home in this area has one of its boys in Pakistan”. The article also states that “the house of Khalistan Zindabad Force commander, Ranjit Singh, alias Neeta” is in Simbal Camp. A number of articles were found mentioning the Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZF) in relation to Simbal Camp. Most recently, a 9 October 2009 *United News of India* article reports that a KZF militant, who was a “resident of Simbal Camp locality”, was arrested (‘Police suspect link between Kashmir, Punjab militants’ 2005, *India Blitz*, 25 June <http://www.indiablitz.com/showNews.asp?nid=11428&pg=Results-and-standings-of-Spanish-Primera-Liga&isp=y> – Accessed 13 November 2009 – Attachment 6; ‘Sikh families await return of their youths’ 2003, *The Hindu*, 29 May <http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/2003/05/29/stories/2003052904881200.htm> – Accessed 13 November 2009 – Attachment 7; ‘KZF militant held in Jammu’ 2009, *United News of India*, 9 October – Attachment 8).

The following are a selection of reports which mention militant activity in relation to Simble camp. The articles are dated from 1998 to October 2009 and are listed in reverse chronological order.

A 9 October 2009 *United News of India* article reports that:

A Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZF) militant was arrested here in the city at Satwari area, police sources today said. Identified as Ranjit Singh alias Ranji, resident of Simbal Camp locality, the KZF militant was apprehended along with a revolver from Satwari last afternoon,

police said. He was involved in several militancy-related incidents ('KZF militant held in Jammu' 2009, *United News of India*, 9 October – Attachment 8).

The Panun Kashmir website (which advocates for a "homeland for Kashmiri Pandits") records that on 14 September 2007: "Three live grenades were recovered from house of a terrorist at Simbal Camp, Jammu" ('Chronology of Events Sep 1-Oct 15 2007' 2007, Panun Kashmir website <http://www.panunkashmir.in/kashmir-sentinel-dec2.php> – Accessed 13 November 2009 – Attachment 9).

June 2007 *Press Trust of India* article reports that a militant hideout near Simbal Camp had been "smashed", a militant had been arrested and weapons and explosives had been recovered ('Over 40 kg of explosives recovered in J-K' 2007, *Press Trust of India*, 27 June – Attachment 10).

15 September 2006 update on the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) website mentions the house of "a terrorist" at Simbal Camp in Jammu ('Two civilians and a police personnel among four persons killed in Jammu and Kashmir' 2006, South Asia Terrorism Portal website, 15 September http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/detailed_news.asp?date1=9/15/2006#2 – Accessed 13 November 2009 – Attachment 11). More detail is given in a 15 September 2006 *Times of India* article, which states:

[S]leuths of the counter-intelligence unit of the state arrested one Yoga Singh from Simbal camp of Jammu district on Thursday, they said and added three hand grenades were seized from his fields near the house.

His son, working in police as a constable and identified as Mohan Singh, was also taken into custody for questioning.

His other son Sukhdev Singh, who was involved in Punjab militancy, is already in Tihar jail, they said ('Two held, explosives recovered from J&K' 2006, *Times of India*, 15 September <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Two-held-explosives-recovered-from-JK/articleshow/1993085.cms> – Accessed 13 November 2009 – Attachment 12).

An *Express India* July 2005 article reports further on the June 2005 arrest of KZF militants, including one in Simbal Camp, and states that the police had "confirmed that the KZF was making attempts to regroup" (Naseem, I. 2005, 'Efforts to foil KZF bid to regroup', *Express India*, 7 July <http://www.expressindia.com/news/fullstory.php?newsid=50169> – Accessed 13 November 2009 – Attachment 13).

A June 2005 *India Blitz* article reports on the arrest of a KZF activist after police raided "a hideout of militants in Simbal Camp" ('Police suspect link between Kashmir, Punjab militants' 2005, *India Blitz*, 25 June <http://www.indiablitz.com/showNews.asp?nid=11428&pg=Results-and-standings-of-Spanish-Primera-Liga&isp=y> – Accessed 13 November 2009 – Attachment 6).

A number of articles from 2000 report on militants, especially the KZF, in Simbal camp (See: '3 terrorists held, police claim Khalistan module neutralised' 2000, *Times of India*, 25 August – Attachment 14; 'Pak-based militant chief stayed in Jammu for three weeks' 2000, *Times of India*, 27 March – Attachment 15).

An April 2000 *Indian Express* article reports on a Simbal camp resident who's son was recruited by the KZF (Dutta, P. 2000, 'Stigma of being a militant's mother still haunt her',

Indian Express, 20 April <http://www.indianexpress.com/ie/daily/20000420/ina20004.html> – Accessed 13 November 2009 – Attachment 16).

A 1998 *Express India* article reports on KZF militants, many of who appear to hail from Simbal camp (Bhan, R. 1998, 'ISI desperate to revive nexus between Sikh, Kashmiri ultras', *Express India*, 21 July <http://www.expressindia.com/news/ie/daily/19980721/20250284.html> – Accessed 13 November 2009 – Attachment 17).

A 1998 *Indian Express* article reports on a KZF member, who is a resident of Simbal camp (Taggar, R. 1998, 'Biography of an unexploded bomb', *Indian Express*, 9 April <http://www.indianexpress.com/res/web/pIe/ie/daily/19980409/09950334.html> – Accessed 21 May 2008 – Attachment 2).

3. Please provide links to information on the Khalistan Zindabad Force.

The SATP website has an undated analysis of the KZF ('Khalistan Zindabad Force' (undated), South Asia Terrorism Portal website http://satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/punjab/terrorist_outfits/KZF.htm – Accessed 7 December 2007 – Attachment 18)

Previous research responses provide sourced information on the KZF:

- Questions 1 & 5 of *Research Response IND33307*, dated 26 May 2008, provide information on the KZF. Question 5 provides information on the KZF generally, as well as making specific reference to its activities in the area of RS Pura (very close to Simbal camp) (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response IND33307*, 26 May – Attachment 19);
- Question 2 of *Research Response IND32679*, dated 11 December 2007, provides some information on the KZF (RRT Research & Information 2007, *Research Response IND32679*, 11 December – Attachment 20).

4. Do November 2005 and August 2008 coincide with any marked improvements with the security outlook in Jammu & Kashmir or the region generally?

2005

Information indicates that the security situation in J&K improved in 2005. Information was not found to indicate whether there was a general improvement in November 2005 compared to August 2005.

The SATP Jammu & Kashmir Assessment – Year 2006 (which looks at the situation in 2005) states that there was a continuation of the decline in terrorist violence in 2005:

In retrospect, year 2005 witnessed a continuation of the secular decline in terrorist violence in J&K, a trend discernible since 2001. While the year witnessed a relatively lower level of violence, the terrorists' capacity to strike at important targets and also maintain a threshold level of violence, however, was maintained. 2005 was also an eventful year for J&K in which the détente between India and Pakistan paved the way for reopening of the historic Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road and the Congress party was back at the helm of affairs after 30 years ('Jammu and Kashmir Assessment – Year 2006' (undated), South Asia Terrorism Portal website <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/assessment2006.htm> – Accessed 13 November 2009 – Attachment 21).

According to a 28 November 2005 *Indian Express* article, overall levels of violence in the state had lessened, but there had been a recent escalation of militant violence due to the political transition in the state ('J&K: Violence Down By 22 Pc Compared To Last Year: Centre' 2005, Jammu-Kashmir.com, source: *Indian Express*, 28 November <http://www.jammu-kashmir.com/archives/archives2005/kashmir20051128d.html> – Accessed 13 November 2009 – Attachment 22).

2008

The SATP Jammu & Kashmir Assessment – Year 2009 (which looks at the situation in 2008), indicates that militant related violence declined significantly in 2008 compared to 2007:

In its year-end review, the Union Home Ministry stated that, during 2008 (data till November), terrorist incidents in J&K were down by 39 per cent, killings of civilians by 41 per cent and of SFs by 31 per cent, over the corresponding period of 2007. The level of infiltration across the Line of Control/International Border also saw a decline and, for the first time since 1990, the number of militancy-related incidents, according to J&K Police data, dropped below the four-figure mark to approximately 703 in 2008. The J&K Director General of Police (DGP), Kuldeep Khoda, stated on December 25, 2008, that the year witnessed an exceptional decrease of 40 per cent in militancy-related incidents compared to 2007, the largest such decline since 1990 ('Jammu and Kashmir Assessment – Year 2009' (undated), South Asia Terrorism Portal website <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/index.html> – Accessed 28 July 2009 – Attachment 23).

There was, however, widespread unrest in J&K in 2008, with a number of people killed during protests, the Chief Minister resigning in July 2008 and the state subsequently being placed under federal rule until the state elections in November/December 2008. The SATP 2009 assessment states that the "success of the elections...needs to be assessed against the backdrop of the extended Shri Amarnath land agitation which had virtually paralysed and apparently polarized J&K through July-August 2008". An October 2008 *Jane's Islamic Affairs Analyst* article analyses the unrest in J&K at the time ('Shrine tensions deepen Kashmir divide' 2008, *Jane's Islamic Affairs Analyst*, 20 October – Attachment 25; 'Jammu and Kashmir Assessment – Year 2009' (undated), South Asia Terrorism Portal website <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/index.html> – Accessed 28 July 2009 – Attachment 23).

Question 9 of *Research Response IND34577*, dated 25 March 2009, provides some background information on the Amarnath Shrine Incident (RRT Research & Information 2009, *Research Response IND34577*, 25 March – Attachment 24).

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Google search engine <http://www.google.com/>

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIAC Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)
ISYS (RRT Research & Information database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)
RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. Guruji, M. 2007, 'Curse of partition undone after 50 years, lost brothers unite', *Ground Report*, 12 April <http://www.groundreport.com/World/Curse-of-partition-undone-after-50-years-lost-brot/2833558> – Accessed 13 November 2009.
2. Taggar, R. 1998, 'Biography of an unexploded bomb', *Indian Express*, 9 April <http://www.indianexpress.com/res/web/pIe/ie/daily/19980409/09950334.html> – Accessed 21 May 2008.
3. Sisodia, R. 2007, '60 years on, people uprooted by birth of India, Pakistan live in camps', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 20 August <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/08/20/MNCNRIPH5.DTL> – Accessed 13 November 2009.
4. Kaur, G. 2002, *Marketing Strategy for Indian rural banks in new millennium*, Anmol Publications Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, p. 125, Google Books website <http://books.google.com/books?id=KHaUPNwMI58C&lpg=PA125&ots=qylFAQ2tjJ&dq=%22simbal%20camp%22&pg=PA127#v=onepage&q=%22simbal%20camp%22&f=false> – Accessed 13 November 2009.
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6. 'Police suspect link between Kashmir, Punjab militants' 2005, *India Blitz*, 25 June <http://www.indiablitz.com/showNews.asp?nid=11428&pg=Results-and-standings-of-Spanish-Primera-Liga&isp=y> – Accessed 13 November 2009.
7. 'Sikh families await return of their youths' 2003, *The Hindu*, 29 May <http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/2003/05/29/stories/2003052904881200.htm> – Accessed 13 November 2009.
8. 'KZF militant held in Jammu' 2009, *United News of India*, 9 October. (FACTIVA)
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10. 'Over 40 kg of explosives recovered in J-K' 2007, *Press Trust of India*, 27 June. (FACTIVA)
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13. Naseem, I. 2005, 'Efforts to foil KZF bid to regroup', *Express India*, 7 July <http://www.expressindia.com/news/fullstory.php?newsid=50169> – Accessed 13 November 2009.
14. '3 terrorists held, police claim Khalistan module neutralised' 2000, *Times of India*, 25 August. (FACTIVA)
15. 'Pak-based militant chief stayed in Jammu for three weeks' 2000, *Times of India*, 27 March. (FACTIVA)
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20. RRT Research & Information 2007, *Research Response IND32679*, 11 December.
21. 'Jammu and Kashmir Assessment – Year 2006' (undated), South Asia Terrorism Portal website <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/assessment2006.htm> – Accessed 13 November 2009.
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23. 'Jammu and Kashmir Assessment – Year 2009' (undated), South Asia Terrorism Portal website <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/index.html> – Accessed 28 July 2009.
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