

Overseas Sikhs cited in report on violence

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NEW DELHI (Reuter) — India has blamed Sikh separatists and their network of supporters in Europe and North America for communal violence in which hundreds have died and thousands been arrested.

In a 196-page official report titled White Paper on Punjab Agitation published yesterday, the Government defended its crackdown on Punjab state and blamed Sikh groups based in the United States, Canada, Britain

and West Germany for actively supporting a campaign to establish a separate nation called Khalistan in the rich farming state.

"A sensitive border state with a dynamic record of agricultural and industrial development would be an obvious target for subversion. In this context the activities of groups based abroad acquire a special significance," it said.

The white paper said the Sikh's main party, the Akali Dal, and Sikh religious leaders had failed to condemn what it called terrorism aimed at driving a wedge between the India's Hindu majority and its 12 million Sikhs.

In Islamabad, a Pakistani Government spokesman said President Zia ul-Haq had rejected an Indian request to extradite nine Sikh extremists who hijacked an Indian airliner last week.

He said General Zia told a group of Indian journalists yesterday that Pakistan could not hand over the hijackers because it has no extradition treaty with India.