

Sikh candidate in Australia polls targeted with 'racist' flyers

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Melbourne: A Sikh politician contesting in the upcoming elections from Australia's Greens party has been targeted with "racist flyers" which she claimed were distributed in her electorate here.

Alexandra Kaur Bhathal is a candidate from Greens party

Alexandra Kaur Bhathal, a candidate from Greens party for the seat of Batman, Melbourne, yesterday wrote on her facebook page that a flyer was distributed in her electorate targeting her background and beliefs.

"Yesterday and today a flyer has been distributed in my electorate of Batman targeting my background and beliefs. The leaflet contains vicious and racist statements about me and my heritage as a Sikh," Bhathal said.

"I was sickened and disturbed by this, as are members of the Sikh community who've seen the flyer, but it only adds to my resolve to keep campaigning and defend multiculturalism. This propaganda, based on misinformation, racism and hatred, will not sway me from my faith as a Sikh, a religion that stands up for the rights of all people - we are a progressive, humanist faith that believes all people are created equal and that we must respect all religions," she said.

According to media reports, the alleged printed material claimed Bhathal supported, "Khalistan terrorist movement" to create a "racist" nation in Punjab.

The flyers had a picture of Bhathal speaking at a Sikh congregation in Melbourne marked as 'Sikh Genocide Remembrance Day' on the 1984 anti-Sikh riots anniversary last year and it claimed that she "infiltrated the Greens to promote her hidden race agenda."

Bhathal said, "It won't sway me from my political commitments as a Greens candidate. I have lodged a complaint with the Australian Human Rights Commission. This kind of racism has no place in our politics. We cannot allow hatred to grow unchallenged."

"To the people who wrote and produced this flyer, I want to tell you that I will not be intimidated. I'm proud to stand up for what I hold most fundamental and that includes my belief that racism has no place in our country," she asserted.

Polling for the general election in Australia will be held on July 2.

- PTI