

Topic: Killings for medals

Batla House encounter officially known as Operation Batla House, took place on **19 September 2008**, against **Indian Mujahideen (IM) terrorists** in Batla House locality in Jamia Nagar, Delhi, in which two suspected terrorists, **Atif Amin and Mohamed Sajid** were killed while two other suspects **Mohd Saif and Zeeshan** were arrested, while one accused **Ariz Khan** managed to escape. Encounter specialist and Delhi Police inspector **Mohan Chand Sharma**, who led the police action was also killed during the incident. The encounter led to arrest of a number of local people, leading to widespread allegations and protests by political parties, civil society groups, activists, especially teachers and students of the **Jamia Millia Islamia University**.

Facts about Batla Case:

1. In September 2008, **seven officers of the Delhi Police** stormed an apartment building in Batla House in Delhi's Jamia Nagar. They later alleged that terrorists from the Indian Mujahideen were holed up here.
2. Two suspected terrorists were shot dead. **Shahzad was arrested** and a fourth managed to escape. They all belonged to the Azamgarh area of Uttar Pradesh.
3. The encounter at Batla House occurred days **after serial blasts in Delhi** in which more than **26 people were killed and over 100 injured**. The police said that it had information that the men hiding at the Batla House flat were involved in that terror attacks.
4. Encounter specialist and Delhi Police inspector **Mohan Chand Sharma** was killed, but various **politicians and activists alleged the encounter was 'fake'** and Sharma was shot dead due to "**inter-departmental rivalry**". But a post-mortem ruled out speculation that **Sharma was shot from the back** - which would have meant he was not shot by the accused.
5. Questions were also raised as **one of the alleged suspects was shot multiple times** at close range. The judge **asked why the cop, Sharma, was not wearing a bulletproof jacket** while facing men believed to be deadly terrorists. Counsel for the accused also cited ballistic **reports to show that the bullets found in the officer's body did not match** the gun seized from Shahzad.
6. In **2009, the National Human Rights Commission** said the police had not violated any rights.
7. Verdict is also based on Shahzad Ahmed, who was arrested from the Batla House flat. **His lawyer alleges he was not in the apartment** at the time of the encounter and has been framed by the Delhi Police.
8. After the encounter, teams of the Delhi Police were deployed for raids in Azamgarh, provoking protests from locals and leaders of the **Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)**.
9. **Congress leader Digvijay Singh** described the encounter as fake, but his party distanced itself from his remarks. Then **Home Minister P. Chidambaram** asserted that the encounter was genuine.
10. While campaigning in Azamgarh during the Uttar Pradesh elections, senior Congress leader **Salman Khurshid** had said party chief **Sonia Gandhi "cried"** when she was shown photographs of the Batla House encounter. After political whiplash, Mr. Khurshid said that he had been **misquoted**.

Topic
Introduction

Scores of **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)** workers and volunteers on 30th May staged a protest outside **Congress president Sonia Gandhi's New Delhi residence** over the party's statement on Batla House encounter case. Last week, Congress general secretary **Digvijay Singh** had stoked a controversy after he dubbed the **2008 Batla House encounter as 'fake'** and asked the government in Centre to order a judicial probe into the 2008 encounter in which two suspected terrorists and a police officer were killed. However, a day later, **Shivraj Patil**, the then Union Minister under UPA government, rejected Digvijay's claim and asserted that the **2008 Batla shoot-out was genuine** and not 'fake'.

The encounter, which had taken place during the former UPA regime, recently came into news amid a claim by an **alleged ISIS operative** that he had fled Batla House right before the police raided it. According to the reports, **Mohammed Sajid alias Bada Sajid** is one of the six persons who featured in **the 22-minute video** allegedly posted by the Islamic State recently, however he was **one of the terrorist who was claimed killed** in the encounter. A Delhi court had in **2013 sentenced to life** the lone convict and suspected Indian Mujahideen operative **Shahzad Ahmad in the case for killing 'decorated' police officer Sharma** and injuring two other policemen.

Other Fake Encounter Cases in India:

Debate over fake encounters notwithstanding, **such cases are growing in the country**, more so in **disturbed areas like the Naxal-affected States and the north east**. The nine-year-old **Ishrat Jahan fake encounter case** has also brought to national limelight the controversial issue of extra judicial killings being carried out by various State police and other forces like the Army and the paramilitary. Government figures show that **in the last four years, 555 fake encounter cases** were registered across India, with majority being reported in **Uttar Pradesh (138)**, followed by Manipur (62), Assam (52), West Bengal (35), Jharkhand (30), Chhattisgarh (29), Odisha (27), Jammu and Kashmir (26), Tamil Nadu (23) and Madhya Pradesh (20). **Only 144 cases, out of 555, have been solved so far.**

According to **Human Rights Director Suhas Chakma**, Whatever cases regarding alleged fake encounter are registered, they are mainly due to the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)'s intervention**. The **State police always try and hide such cases** and the **Centre has no control over States** or a mechanism to deal with such cases. While a decade back fake encounters were rampant in insurgency-affected States like Jammu and Kashmir and the north east, such cases are now growing in the **Naxal-affected states**. He pointed out that **fake encounters were not being fully reported from the Maoist-affected States** due to **lack of media** scrutiny and terror of State and police administration in human rights and social workers who are active in these States.

Read further:

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/555-fake-encounter-cases-registered-across-india-in-last-four-years/article4916004.ece>

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/batla-house-encounter-bjp-demands-sonias-apology/article8669107.ece>

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/batla-house-encounter-bjp-stages-protest-accuses-congress-of-propagating-false-facts-2825530/>

<http://www.ndtv.com/cheat-sheet/batla-house-encounter-verdict-today-ten-facts-of-the-case-529365>