

### How significant is the current happening?

- Domestic divisions in India, exacerbated by the politics and policy are echoing among the diaspora in the U.S., Canada, Europe and Australia.
- Religious minorities and Dalits have been disconnected from the diaspora mobilisation of the Indian government.
- Thoughtless comments and campaigns against the community, particularly when they are led by powerful political actors, can trigger serious reactions.
- There is an immense scope for India's enemies to inflame passions for which vigilance is essential.
- Though isolated and feeble, Sikh separatism continues to flicker and it must serve as a constant reminder for social cohesion and impartial state policy.

### 3.7 Malhama Tactical

#### Why in news?

A conglomerate of elite jihadists, referred to as Malhama Tactical, has emerged as a serious threat.

#### What is Malhama tactical?

- It was formed by an Uzbek militant, Sukhrob Baltabaev or Abu Rofiq, in 2016.
- It is believed to be the first for-hire terrorist group, which has trained Islamist militants, including the East Turkistan Islamic Movement fighters, and those who participated as mercenaries in the Syrian war.
- It has therefore gained notoriety as the "Blackwater of Jihad".
- Blackwater (renamed Academi) is an American private military company whose contractors have infamously participated in conflict-ridden states like Iraq, as part of American security operations.
- Unlike the conventional terrorist groups, Malhama Tactical is a commercial enterprise driven by a for-profit agenda and is not constrained by a specific ideology and defined enemies.

#### What are the concerns related to Tactical?

- Today, the market for private contractors is flourishing with a vast supply of cash and weaponry and earnings far better than that of ordinary soldiers.
- These factors have given Malhama Tactical much leeway in carrying out its objectives, and associating with a broad spectrum of radical and violent groups including Hayat Tahrir alSham, Jabhat al-Nusra and Ajnad al-Kavkaz.
- It is also considered exclusive due to the military expertise and guerilla warfare tactics passed on by the trainers (battle-hardened and former Chechen militants) and Abu Rofiq, who was a member of the Russian Airborne Troops, an elite group within the armed forces.
- The training modules also incorporate lessons from the strategic tactics of foreign armies.
- Its trainers and recruits have easy access to a wide array of extravagant arms and ammunition, such as the Rocket Propelled Grenades, that amount to no less than \$800 per round.
- Malhama Tactical has posed multiple challenges for global security. Hostile states can now rely on plausible deniability while conducting asymmetrical war against actors perceived as oppressors, infidels or contenders for dominance.
- It has resulted in an additional problem for states that cannot associate Malhama Tactical with a specific terrorist group and, consequently, an ideological underpinning, the base of operations, leadership and recruitment methods.
- Furthermore, it could foment the growth of similar extremist organisations worldwide, potentially taking advantage of the security vacuum in the territories experiencing turmoil.
- Malhama Tactical has indirectly targetted countries such as Russia by providing training in combat to violent extremists who are fighting against it on the Syrian battlefield.