

# 1948

## Gandhi assassinated in New Delhi

[Mohandas Gandhi](#), the world's chief advocate of non-violence, is assassinated in New Delhi by a terrorist sponsored by a right-wing Hindu militia group. The murder came only 10 days after a failed attempt on Gandhi's life. Thirty-nine-year-old Nathuram Godse shot the great Indian leader as he made his way through a small crowd to lead a prayer session.

The father of Indian independence had angered Hindu extremists by his efforts to bring peace in the wake of the British withdrawal from India. Muslims and Hindus had been fighting a civil war since the decision to the Muslim-dominated western region of India had become separated as Pakistan. Religious-inspired riots were breaking out all over India when Gandhi went on a hunger strike in September 1947.

The fast almost killed Gandhi but it successfully suspended the fighting. However, he was forced to fast again in January in order to finally bring the sides together for a peace pact. Hindu extremists saw this as selling out the nation and plotted Gandhi's death. On January 20, the group detonated explosives inside the wall of a New Delhi house where Gandhi was, but stopped short of throwing a grenade at Gandhi because they feared that bystanders would be killed.

Gandhi was instrumental in driving the British out of India. His non-violent protests and boycotts crippled England's ability to control the populace and brought unwanted attention to one of the world's last major bastions of colonialism. He was a leader in the Indian National Congress, and led the revolution for independence. His ideas and tactics were later borrowed by Martin Luther King, Jr., who used them successfully in the 1960s civil rights protests.

The assassin Godse tried to kill himself after the attack, but was grabbed before he had the chance. Four accomplices were arrested over the next several days. Godse showed no remorse for his crime. Along with Narayan Apte, Godse was hanged to death on November 15, 1949, against the wishes of Gandhi's sons, who argued that the execution stood against everything Gandhi believed in.