



## OVERVIEW



We are campaigning on behalf of Sikhs in interesting political times with the coalition government having to make difficult choices and changes. Many, including a number of Ministers belonging to the coalition government have worked closely with the Sikh Federation (UK) and supported many of our campaigns. We also have many new MPs and a newly formed All Party Parliamentary Group for UK Sikhs.

The situation represents an opportunity for the Sikh community. The early signs are good with the new Government listening and responding positively to Sikh concerns regarding respect for the Sikh turban at airports across Europe. However, we will only succeed if we step up our campaigning by involving as many MPs as possible. This requires Sikhs up and down the country to keep regular contact with local MPs and to exert pressure.

With the growth in Sikh TV channels we are certain the coverage of key campaigns and events will increase and more Sikhs will have the chance to become involved in our work. The Federation is expanding the involvement of younger Sikhs at the highest levels in the organisation to increase capacity and respond to greater demands.

An important theme at the convention is to set out in broad terms the work that like-minded Sikhs from the UK, USA, Canada and Australia have agreed to carry out regarding the building blocks for a Sikh homeland. This will provide a framework for an international negotiating team that has plans for an initial dialogue with each of the five permanent members of the Security Council - China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and United States to increase co-operation and gain support. The dialogue and progress made as a result of the meetings will provide a new direction and impetus to bring about the establishment of an independent sovereign Sikh State.

### Bhai Amrik Singh

Chair Sikh Federation (UK)

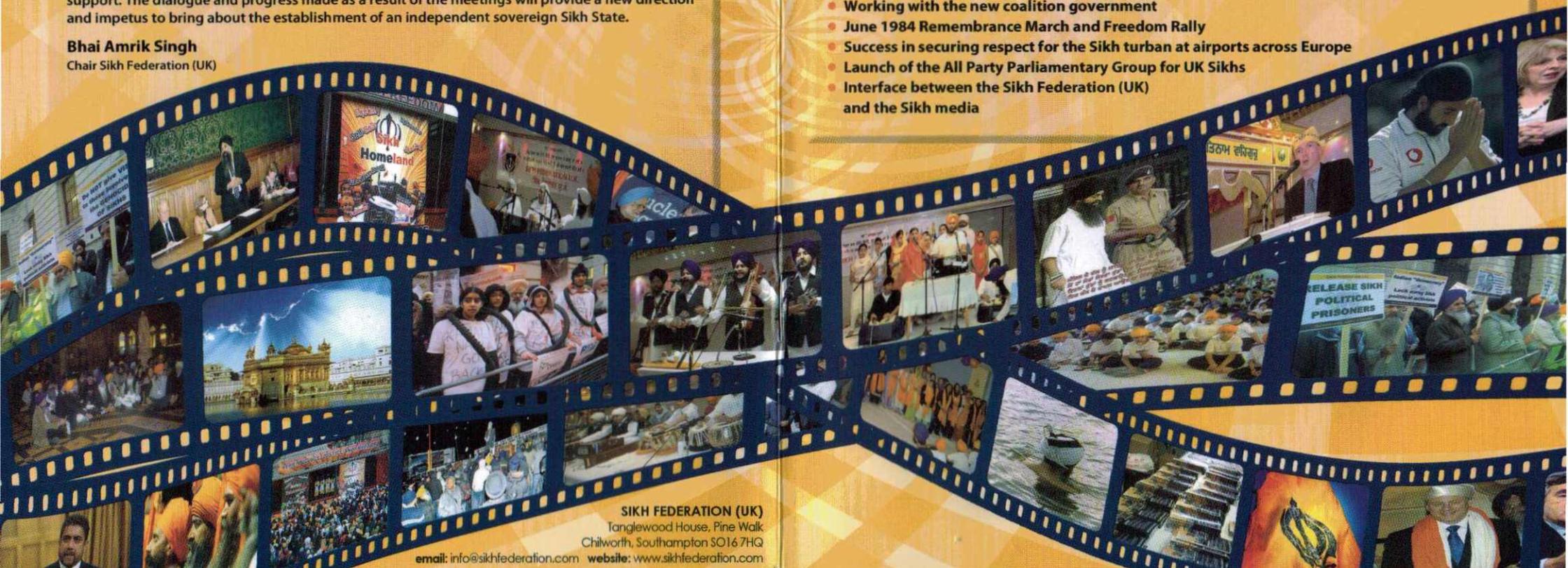
# WORKING FOR JUSTICE AND FREEDOM



## SIKH FEDERATION (UK) ANNUAL REPORT

### HIGHLIGHTS 2009-2010

- Annual International Sikh Convention
- 25th anniversary of the martyrdom of Shaheed Beant Singh
- Protest outside the Foreign Office on 25th anniversary of November 1984
- Exclusion of Jagdish Tytler from the UK
- Sikh Lobby and sit down protest in the UK Parliament
- Launch of One Society Many Cultures in UK Parliament
- Census 2011 - Investigative report and legal challenge against ONS
- UK Sikh Sangat prevents controversial Ragi function in Southall
- Kamal Nath, Indian Cabinet Minister forced to pull out of talks at London Business School
- 10-point pledge, Sikh Vote 2010 and General Election
- Working with the new coalition government
- June 1984 Remembrance March and Freedom Rally
- Success in securing respect for the Sikh turban at airports across Europe
- Launch of the All Party Parliamentary Group for UK Sikhs
- Interface between the Sikh Federation (UK) and the Sikh media



### SIKH FEDERATION (UK)

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### About Sikh Federation (UK)

The Sikh Federation (UK) is a non-governmental organisation, that is a pressure group that is often referred to as the first ever Sikh political party in the United Kingdom. The Federation is based on the "miri-piri" principle, the Sikh principle that temporal and spiritual goals are indivisible.

The organisation was established in September 2003 with the aim of giving Sikhs a stronger political voice by taking an increasing interest in mainstream politics in the UK.

### Aims and Objective

To work closely with each of the main political parties in the UK to promote relevant issues set out in the Sikh Agenda for the UK Government.

The main areas of work for the Sikh Federation (UK) are:

**Promote the Sikh religion, philosophy and way of life** - working within the Sikh community and with local and national government;

**Promote sporting and educational activities** as well as relevant cultural issues directly associated with the Sikh way of life;

**Campaign for human rights** issues impacting on Sikhs in the UK and abroad - working with human rights groups, non-governmental organisations and politicians;

**Argue the case for the Sikhs right to self-determination** and lobbying politicians, the UK Government, official representatives of foreign governments in the UK, the European Parliament and at the United Nations for the establishment of an independent sovereign Sikh State of Khalistan.

### About Young Sikhs (UK)

Young Sikhs (UK) was established by the Federation in September 2004 in recognition of the need to do more for the younger generation, encourage younger Sikhs to become more actively involved in the full range of activities carried out by the Federation.

In recognition of the need to fully utilise the skills offered by the younger generation, around half the members of the National Executive Council (NEC) of the Sikh Federation (UK) has since 2004 been those born and educated in the UK.

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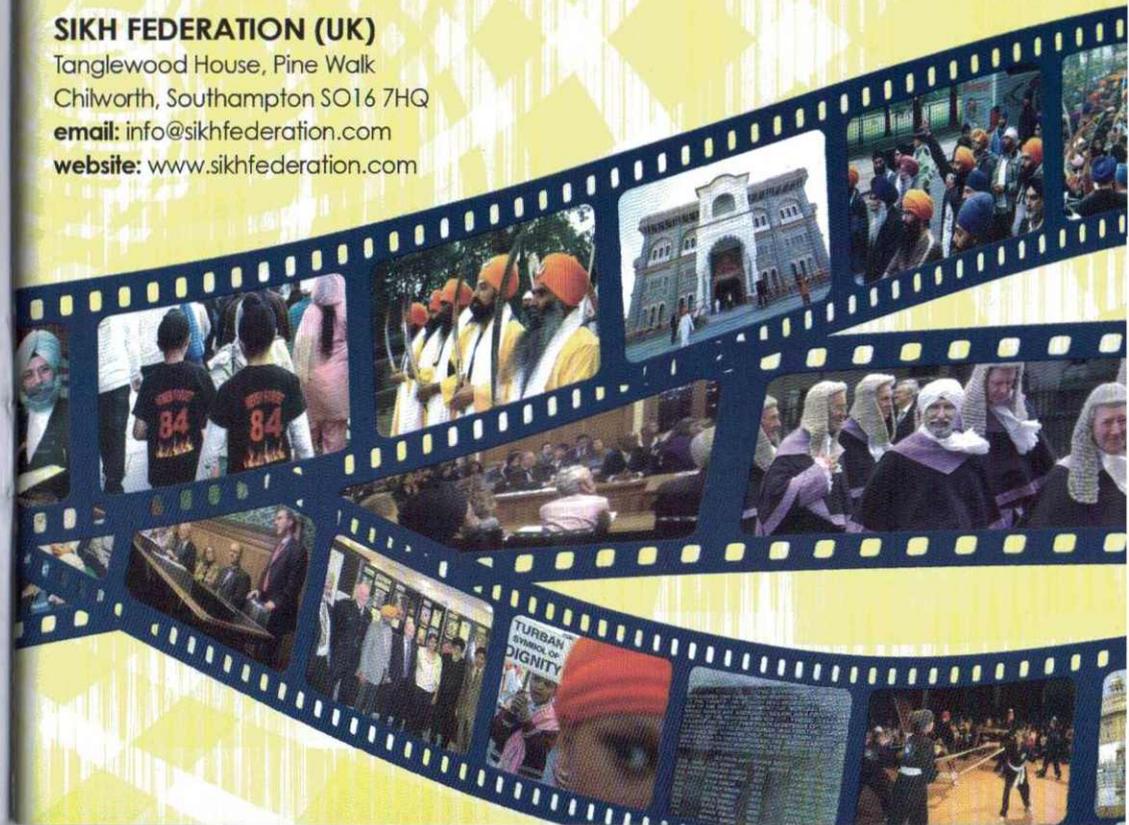
### HIGHLIGHTS 2009-2010

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# BUILDING A STRONGER POLITICAL VOICE IN THE UK AND ABROAD

## OVER 10,000 AT SIKH CONVENTION TO MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR NEXT UK GOVERNMENT

An estimated 10,000-12,000 Sikhs took part in the Annual International Sikh Convention organised by the Sikh Federation (UK). The turnout was the largest for many years and helped by extensive media advertising, such as on TV via the Sikh Channel, which opened some six months earlier.



Sangat at the Annual International Sikh Convention in September 2009

The Sikh Federation (UK) often described as the first Sikh political party in the UK reminded those gathered that when they meet at the next Convention in September 2010 there will be a new government in the UK and a very different make up in Parliament with many new MPs.

The Federation emphasised the need to be proactive at the local level in having an open dialogue with prospective candidates from the leading parties about the needs of the Sikh community in the lead up to the next General Election.

The Federation pledged it would release information that can be used by Gurdwaras and local community representatives as a basis for discussions with those seeking the votes of the Sikh community.

At the national level the Federation said it would build on the relationships established with leading politicians from each of the main political parties to ensure Sikhs are well placed to work with the next government and to move closer to achieving its objectives.

Information on the development of the UK, EU and World Sikh Lobby Network was given and Sikhs were encouraged to come forward from across the UK (and Europe) to join the Network. This would put the Sikh community in a stronger position to influence politicians before and after the next General Election.

The Federation has every year since its inception in September 2003



Rob Marris MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for UK Sikhs



Bhai Amrik Singh, Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK)

produced an annual booklet setting out its work over the last 12 months. Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK) summarised the key activities during the last 12 months. These included political activities in the UK Parliament, European Parliament and at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva and at the UN Headquarters in New York.

A number of campaigns involving Sikh identity issues, human rights issues and events aimed at raising awareness about Sikhs and the plight of the Sikh Nation were touched upon.

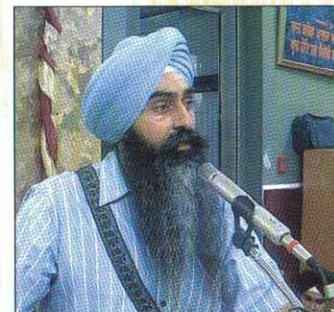
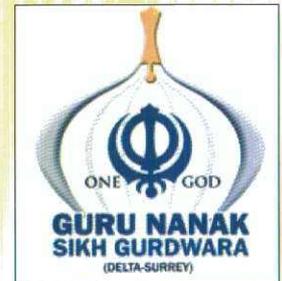
It was widely recognised by different speakers that the Federation is the largest and most effective Sikh pressure group in the UK that works with all the main political parties. Several speakers also emphasised that the Federation's impact and leading role in setting the agenda across the globe should not be underestimated. For this reason many from different organisations spoke about the forthcoming SGPC elections and the dangers associated with power being concentrated in one family. Maintaining personal power and positions at the expense of the Panth was creating a perilous and volatile situation. Moving away from family domination would be good for the Shromani Akali Dal, SGPC, Akaal Takht Jathedhar and Punjab itself.

## SIKH FEDERATION (UK) CONGRATULATE BC SANGAT ON SIKH YOUTH SLATE VICTORY

As the results of the election at Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, Surrey started to emerge telephone calls to the Sikh Federation (UK) confirmed the victory of the Sikh youth slate by a large margin.

A written message of congratulations was sent by Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK), to the Sikh youth slate led by Bhai Bikramjit Singh. An extract from the message reads:

'Congratulations to the Sangat at Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, Surrey for bringing in those on the Sikh youth slate. Early indications regarding the margin of victory - over 6,000 votes (as indicated by those ringing us in the early hours) shows the appetite for change for the better.



Bhai Bikramjit Singh, President at Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, Surrey

Please pass on our congratulations to the entire Sikh youth slate for setting out a Panthic agenda that everyone will wish you can deliver on with their support.'

This victory for the youth slate which received 13,458 votes compared to the incumbents receiving only 7,257 votes followed an earlier victory for an all youth committee at New Westminster.

Note: As the booklet went to press the youth slate were also preparing to challenge the incumbents at Ross Street Gurdwara in Vancouver.



## WILL CANADIAN PRIME MINISTER RAISE SIKH CONCERNS IN FIRST INDIAN VISIT?

Before leaving Canada for a 3-day visit (15-18 November 2009) Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper said "We share a history of cooperation in the Commonwealth and the United Nations, as well as a shared commitment to pluralism, democracy, human rights and the rule of law".

Sikhs from Canada confirmed with the Sikh Federation (UK) that a number of issues were raised with Stephen Harper before his first ever visit to India. However, there is little or no evidence to suggest these issues were taken up with the Indian authorities. Contrary to this it appears from press reports later in the year that the Canadian Prime Minister has been all ears when meeting his Indian counterpart with respect to restricting the activities of Sikhs in Canada.



Meeting at the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington in April 2010

Stephen Harper hoped to promote trade as well as nuclear co-operation during a meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and other officials. The two sides discussed a proposed civil nuclear agreement, which paved the way for Canada to sell nuclear technology to India. Nuclear trade between the two countries had been stalled since 1974, when India tested its first nuclear weapon with the unauthorised help of Canadian nuclear technology.

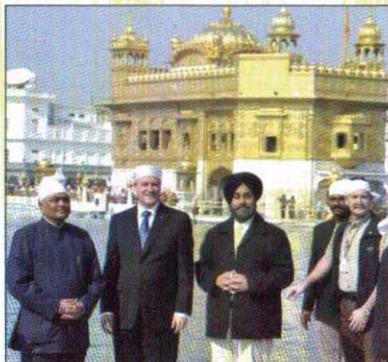
In a 30-minute meeting with Stephen Harper on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington in April 2010 Manmohan Singh conveyed his concerns over the surge in activities of Sikh separatists and a Khalistani revival in Canada. The media again reported that 'one of those whom India is extremely wary... is Dabinderjit Singh, a British citizen... who... sought support of Canadian political leaders and radical Sikhs for reviving the Khalistan separatist movement. Singh serves as an advisor to the Sikh Federation (UK)'.



Nuclear cooperation agreement being signed in June 2010 at a ceremony in Ottawa

The nuclear cooperation agreement was finally signed in June 2010 at a ceremony in Ottawa. This has coincided with Sikhs in Canada taking a much more robust line with their politicians with regards to ties with India. The next few years will be interesting politically if younger Sikhs in Canada step up their political agitation on issues linked to the events of June and November 1984.

Recognising the Sikh vote bank Stephen Harper also visited Amritsar where he was received at the airport by the Deputy Chief Minister, Sukhbir Singh Badal before visiting the Harmandir Sahib Complex for about one hour. Stephen Harper was accompanied by members of his family, ministers and officials during the visit.



Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper with Sukhbir Singh Badal outside the Harmandir Sahib



## SIKH LOBBY OF UK PARLIAMENT

On Thursday 19 November around 150 Sikh representatives took part in a lobby at the Houses of Parliament. Over 200 MPs were contacted prior to the lobby and over 100 MPs, including Ministers were lobbied on the day itself. Meetings were held with around 25-30 MPs or their assistants, including:

John Austin, Paramjit Dhanda, Mike Gapes, Sandra Gidley, Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt, Alan Keen, Ann Keen, John Lancaster, Bob Laxton, Fiona Mactaggart, Mike O'Brien, Virendra Sharma, Dr Phyllis Starkey, Mark Todd and Keith Vaz.



Sikhs at the lobby pictured with Virendra Sharma MP for Ealing Southall

Five issues were raised during the lobby:

i) the campaign for separate ethnic monitoring of Sikhs for the Census 2011 where the Office for National Statistics (ONS) is ignoring the needs of the Sikh community

MPs were requested to copy their Sikh constituents all correspondence with Jil Matheson the new head of the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

ii) the need for a Code of Practice on Sikh articles of faith where the UK Government has been dragging its heels for four and half years and Sikhs are experiencing more and more difficulties – Kara, Kirpan, Turban (Dastaar) etc.

Parliamentary Questions were raised with all Government Departments and the issue raised in Parliamentary debate in April 2005. The UK Government promised at that time in Parliament a Code of Practice, but then changed its mind after the General Election. The Government was again reminded in December 2006 in Parliamentary debate by MPs from all the main political parties of its promise.

Despite considerable political pressure and numerous individual cases of discrimination the UK Government is still in the process of developing a Code of Practice. Following the lobby the relevant Minister confirmed the Equality & Human Rights Commission (EHRC) was taking forward work on developing guidance that was being confused with a Code of Practice. The guidance was expected in early 2010.

iii) the increased discrimination being experienced by turban wearing Sikhs at various airports in Europe

MPs were informed a Sikh lobby may take place at the European Parliament in March 2010 and urged to write to the Europe Minister to arrange with UK MEPs to host the lobby and raise awareness on Sikh articles of faith throughout Europe where Sikhs are being discriminated.

iv) the death penalty case of Professor Davinderpal Singh Bhullar

MPs were requested to provide copies of their correspondence with : i) the German Embassy in the UK; ii) the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; iii) the European Parliament President; and iv) the EC Commissioner for External Relations.



v) the need for the UK Government to stop providing visas to those involved in the Genocide of Sikhs in November 1984

Following the successful campaign to have Jagdish Tytler dropped from the delegation to visit the UK a note was provided to MPs supplying details of a number of leading Indian politicians and police officers implicated in the November 1984 anti-Sikh pogroms. MPs were urged to request the UK Government and other EU member states to exclude entry to these individuals.

## SIKHS MAKE POINT IN FIRST EVER SIT DOWN PROTEST IN CENTRAL LOBBY OF PARLIAMENT

At the end of the Sikh Lobby in the UK Parliament on 19th November Sikhs decided to spontaneously show their disappointment with the lack of UK Government action in not addressing its concerns on separate Sikh monitoring, Code of Practice on Sikh articles of faith, discrimination against Sikhs across Europe and excluding those involved in the genocide of Sikhs in November 1984.

The 10-minute sit down protest that came at the end of the lobby involved around 70 Sikhs sitting down in a silent protest in the Central Lobby - the core of the Palace of Westminster. It is a large octagonal hall that connects the Lords and the Commons lobbies as well as other corridors of the House with an intricately tiled floor. The sit down protest by Sikhs was on the large tiled star in the centre of the hall that can be seen in the photograph opposite.

Police, security and the Serjeant at Arms who is responsible for security and keeping order within Parliament were called. However, they appreciated this was a short peaceful protest that the organisers ensured did not disrupt Parliamentary business. In fact the silence that descended on the Central Lobby was remarkable and many non-Sikhs, including security personnel commended the Sikhs for their action.

The point that was made was subtle in that Sikhs are law-abiding citizens that are having their needs ignored and this can be contrasted to others who break the law, but are perversely being rewarded for their behaviour. The sit down protest was to signal Sikhs can and will take direct action to secure fair treatment and their rights.

## ONE SOCIETY MANY CULTURES - LAUNCHED IN PARLIAMENT

On 23 November cross-party political figures, religious leaders, trade unionists and anti-racist campaigners were amongst the individuals that launched a new campaign "One Society Many Cultures" and pledged to stand up against division and hatred, to defend the right to freedom of thought, religion and culture at one of the most diverse events ever held in Parliament.



The Central Lobby in Westminster



Sit down protest in the Central Lobby



Speakers at the event included Ken Livingstone, Rt. Hon Sadiq Khan MP - Minister for Transport, Simon Hughes MP, Emily Thornberry MP, Susan Kramer MP, Dr Abdul Bari - Secretary General of Muslim Council of Britain, Rabbi Lee Wax - Jewish Council for Racial Equality, Bruce Kent - Vice President of Pax Christi, Dabinderjit Singh OBE - Sikh Secretariat, Anas Altikriti - British Muslim Initiative, Billy Hayes - General Secretary of Communication Workers Union, Diana Holland - Assistant General Secretary UNITE, Jenny Jones - Green Party London Assembly Member, Salma Yaqoob - Leader of The Respect Party, Pav Akhtar - Chair of Imaan, Weyman Bennet - Love Music Hate Racism, Sabby Dhalu - Unite Against Fascism.



Ken Livingstone speaking at the launch as Bruce Kent looks on

The campaign aims to bring together people of all faiths and none. It will monitor and respond to discrimination against different communities as well as promote the positive benefits of diversity for the economy, culture and society generally.



Dabinderjit Singh speaking at the launch

Dabinderjit Singh OBE Sikh Secretariat said: "The Sikh Community is very proud to be part of this launch as it's important that we stick together. You have to speak out for justice and freedom. Not your own freedom but freedom for all. Sikhs by definition are defenders of human rights. Most of you will remember a 14-year girl in South Wales who was denied her right to wear her Kara to school. She took on the establishment and she won. A few weeks back Gurmeel Singh of Greater Manchester Police took them on and won his right to wear his turban. One Society Many Cultures is a timely campaign that can bring people together to defend the rights of all."

## UK SIKH SANGAT PREVENTS CONTROVERSIAL RAGI FUNCTION IN SOUTHALL

On 19 March 2010 hundreds of Sikhs spontaneously protested in Southall to voice concern regarding a small private Gurdwara's invite to Darshan Singh, a man who had been issued with an edict of religious misconduct and excommunicated by the the Sri Akal Takht (highest spiritual and temporal seat of the Sikhs).



Sangat protesting against Ragi with an effigy and placard stating "I am the Panth"

Those that had invited him and the police were aware and had access to video footage that violence had taken place in various towns and cities in India where Darshan Singh had tried to appear at a Gurdwara after the edict. However, those that invited him refused to listen to appeals not to create this controversy, instead they suggested Ragi would be honoured, and the police hugely underestimated the protest and feelings of the Sangat.



The three to four hundred protesters forced the cancellation of Ragi's first program in the UK since his excommunication. In the picture below the protesters pulled out a dark effigy of the Ragi with a placard stating "I am the Panth."

Worried about a possible protest, the organisers appeared to have turned the Gurdwara into a small fortress. They had brought in local hoodlums and armed them with wooden staffs and swords – in hopes of intimidating the protesting Sangat. Additionally, hundreds of police officers from across West London were rushed in to manage the protesters who were prevented from entering the Gurdwara. The Sangat had demanded that they be allowed inside the Gurdwara and also raised slogans against Ragi Darshan and the Gurdwara management. The standoff continued for several hours. The situation became tense and came to a boiling point when the hired hoodlums inside countered the Sangat with abusive insults and foul language and challenged them to come inside.



Some of Ragi's supporters who were shouting obscenities to the Sangat. Note not a single one of them is 'sabat-surat'

The protesting Singhs accepted the challenge of the anti-Panthic hoodlums and quickly advanced towards the Gurdwara's front gates, and the rest of the Sangat also joined in from behind. By this time riot police, with canine units, and reinforcements from other London boroughs had also arrived and tacitly situated themselves between the protesting Sangat and anti-Panthic hoodlums. The entire commercial block of the 'The Broadway' had now been shutdown for fear of violence.

Reportedly small scuffles did break out and several objects were thrown back and forth causing some minor injuries to a handful of the protestors and some onlookers.

With the ranks of the Sangat swelling into the hundreds, and fearing the inevitable, the Ragi's cronies quickly retreated back into the main building. The management then asked the police if the protestors would be willing to leave the premises if they cancelled Ragi's planned visit.

The police put forward the management's offer to the protestors and the Sangat agreed to leave the premises but only after assurances from the management that they would not allow the Ragi to hold a program at that venue. The organisers agreed to abide to the Sangat's demands and cancelled the anti-Panthic function.

Upon hearing their demands had been met, jaikaras of "ਬੇਲੇ ਜੋ ਨਗਿਲ" and slogans of "ਖਾਲਸਿਤਾਨ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਾਬਾਦ" were heard in a continuous-thunderous roar before the Sangat left.

(Courtesy of Panthic Weekly)

## FALSE ARREST OF COMMUNITY LEADERS RESULTS IN OUTRAGE

To the surprise of the Sikh community Bhai Amrik Singh and Bhai Kuldeep Singh the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK), Harjit Singh, the Vice President of Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall and Sukhvinder Singh, the



Managing Director of Akash Radio were arrested and questioned on 27 May 2010. This was some ten weeks after the original protest.

On the one hand rather than go to their residences or places of work to make the arrests the police informed the individuals the day before there were warrants for their arrest and invited them to attend appointments at separate police stations for questioning. As the four believed they had not broken the law and not committed any offences they decided not to be accompanied by solicitors. All of the individuals acted responsibly and fully cooperated with the police. However, when the four were in custody and being questioned the police visited their homes and conducted extensive searches without their knowledge and took away for investigation mobile phones, laptops and personal computers belonging to them and in one case belonging to other family members. These were kept for many weeks and disrupted their activities.

Officers are believed to have questioned family members without indicating this information could be used. Some of the families involved in this investigation felt intimidated by the behaviours and actions of the police. Family members questioned were also not fully informed of their basic rights, for example families were not informed they could request for an itemised list of seized items.



Many Gurdwaras wrote to complain to the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Paul Stephenson

The four were released the same day without any charges, but they were asked to come back for further questioning at various dates in late July and early August. Information regarding their arrests was immediately released to the media, almost certainly by those that had made bogus accusations and signed false witness statements. They even took out full page advertisements in some Punjabi newspapers to make the most of the situation. The publicity was designed to damage the reputation of the individuals and cause disharmony by bringing leading figures in the community into disrepute.

However, given those arrested were community leaders it also resulted in widespread outrage from the Sikh community. Many Gurdwaras, Gurdwara Councils and those belonging to the Sikh Federation (UK) itself took up the matter with the Home Secretary, individual MPs, Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the Borough Commander for Ealing. The four were not asked to attend police stations for further questioning and eventually on 20 August they were informed no charges would be forthcoming.

As explained to the police earlier whilst the community may now be satisfied at the eventual outcome they were unlikely to let the matter rest.



Sikh representatives held meetings with Borough Commander Chief Superintendent Sultan Taylor

Gurdwara representatives at a meeting with the Metropolitan Police in late July said if it was found that false witness statements had been made it would expect the police to consider prosecution if a criminal offence had been committed and police time wasted. It is understood solicitors are being consulted about possible damages for wrongful arrest, detention and harassment. One of the four is also considering damages for defamation against those that took out adverts making false accusations and any newspapers that allowed accusations against named individuals.



Sikh Federation (UK) branches wrote to MPs who took the matter up with the Home Secretary, Rt Hon Theresa May MP



## SIKHS RELEASE 10-POINT PLEDGE FOR POLITICIANS TO SIGN BEFORE GENERAL ELECTION

Prior to the General Election the Sikh Federation (UK) as promised released a 10-point pledge for each Prospective Parliamentary Candidate to sign if they hope to get Sikh votes.

The Federation suggested Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations use the pledge when candidates approach them to speak at Gurdwaras prior to the election.

All the main political parties were also directly approached by the Federation so candidates are made aware of the contents of the pledge.

The pledge covers a range of issues including:

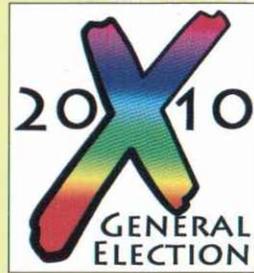
- active membership of the All Party Parliamentary Group for UK Sikhs
- monitoring of Sikhs as an ethnic group by over 43,000 public bodies to ensure a fair provision of public services to the Sikh community
- introduction of a statutory Code of Practice on Sikh articles of faith
- a radical improvement in how government engages with the Sikh community through better consultation and representation
- taking up Sikh identity and human rights issues at the international level
- exclusion from UK of individuals directly involved in torture, fake encounters, disappearances, genocide and other crimes against humanity
- support for the Sikh campaign for justice for the June and November 1984 massacres
- support to have Article 25 of the Indian Constitution and laws, such as the Hindu Marriage Act 1955, changed so the Sikh faith is properly recognised
- due to the continued injustices against Sikhs in the Indian sub-continent support the Sikhs legitimate right to national self-determination

The Sikh Federation (UK) has also promised to publish an annual performance report in July each year on how MPs that are supported by the Sikh community are performing with regards to the 10-point pledge.

The Federation published a series of performance measures it will use to identify the best performing MPs who will be formally recognised by the Sikh community at an awards presentation in the autumn each year. It will also highlight MPs failing to live up to the pledges.

### SIKH VOTE 2010

In preparation for the General Election the Sikh Federation (UK) in association with the Sikh Channel and Operation Black Vote invited leading politicians from the Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Green Parties to take part in high profile BBC Question Time style programmes – SIKH VOTE 2010.



Representatives from each of the mainstream political parties took part with representatives from Plaid Cymru and UK Independence Party at different events completing the Panel membership.

Issues of importance to Sikhs in the UK were discussed so Sikhs could make better informed decisions on how to vote at the General Election. The issues ranged from fair representation in public life, the 2011 Census, protecting and promoting the Sikh identity in the UK and EU, freedom to wear the five articles of faith, human rights concerns, self determination for the Sikhs etc.

The series of events forced these issues on the radar of political parties and MPs seeking the votes of Sikhs. There were events in five major cities in lecture theatre style venues or Gurdwaras with suitable accommodation. The schedule of events was:

1. Birmingham – Aston University, Saturday 20 March 2010
2. London – University of Westminster, Saturday 27 March 2010
3. Bristol – Filton College, Saturday 10 April 2010
4. Leeds – Chapeltown Road Gurdwara, Saturday 17 April 2010
5. Leicester – Guru Teg Bahadur Gurdwara, East Park Road, Saturday 24 April 2010

A Sikh Federation (UK) representative chaired each of the events and all questions asked were based on suggestions from the audience. The Sikh Federation (UK) worked with local Gurdwaras and University Sikh Societies to ensure the events were a success. The Sikh Channel filmed the first of the five events and the Federation arranged for private filming of the other four events and provided footage to the Sikh Channel.



## MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR VOTE - GUIDE FOR THE SIKH COMMUNITY FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION

On the eve of the General Election the Sikh Federation (UK) took out an advert titled: Make the most of your vote. This stated:

The political landscape following the 6 May General Election will result in some radical changes in the UK Parliament and the possibility of electoral reform. Many new MPs will take their seats in the House of Commons for the first time.

Gurdwaras, Sikh organisations and individual Sikhs need to be much better organised and willing to constantly work at pressuring MPs in the new Parliament if Sikhs want to make real progress on issues that matter to them most. The Federation mentioned the possibility of coalition government when this will be even more important.

It was predicted the Conservatives would receive the most votes and have the most number of MPs with Labour support declining, but there would be a hung Parliament with the Liberal Democrats holding the balance of power.



**NICK CLEGG**

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29 April 2010

**For the attention of Bhai Amrik Singh**

Thank you for writing to me with information about the Sikh Federation's ten-point pledge. The Sikh community makes an enormous contribution to British life, and I am delighted to see the Federation representing the community's needs at this election.

The Liberal Democrats have a proud record on standing up for religious freedom, defending, for example the right for Sikhs to wear a Kirpan without risk of prosecution for carrying a weapon. It is our plan to now build on that record by ensuring that Sikhs have both more autonomy and more support from government.

Central to that is transforming our closed and elitist political system to hand power back to people – back to our Sikh communities – and to ensure individual voices are heard. Liberal Democrats will give people much greater control over the services in their neighbourhoods, including the health services they rely on and local policing. In Westminster we'll change the voting system so that every vote counts; we'll clean up party funding to end the influence of big money; and, when MPs are found to be corrupt we'll give people the right to sack them.

This is the radical political renewal we desperately need but which Labour and the Conservatives have consistently joined together to block. But they cannot block the momentum for change that we are seeing growing at this election. We have a huge opportunity to change our politics to empower people across Britain.

Shaking up our politics also means ensuring it much better reflects the rich diversity of British society. For me, it is a deep source of personal regret that the Liberal Democrats are still not as diverse as we should be. Since I became Leader of the party just over two years ago I have been taking action to change that. We now have a dedicated Diversity Unit to give support to parliamentary candidates from ethnic minorities, and we have set up the Next Generation Initiative which is proving hugely successful in helping BME activists, councillors and prospective MPs pursue their political ambitions. We are also working round the clock to make sure our ethnic minority candidates are elected on May 6<sup>th</sup>, including Parmjit Singh Gill in Leicester South. But whatever happens at this election, we will still have a lot of work to do, and I will not rest until that progress is made.

**NICK CLEGG**

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS  
4 COWLEY STREET | LONDON | SW1P 3NB

It is only through better Sikh representation in politics, and through the transfer of power away from central government to Sikh communities, that we will ever find a resolution to all of the issues you raise in your pledge. That is how we can ensure, for example, that government does show international leadership in defending the human rights of Sikhs; our authority in doing so abroad will of course, only be legitimate, if those human rights are defended here in the UK. I also agree that government has a huge role to play in fostering awareness of, and tolerance towards, Sikh traditions; that is a duty Liberal Democrats take enormously seriously, and I am pleased we have already played an active role on the All Party Parliamentary Group for UK Sikhs.

On the particular issue of British citizenship, I can guarantee that Liberal Democrats will get on top of what is currently an immigration system in chaos, which is crucial for restoring people's confidence in it, and so facilitating greater cohesion between communities. By reintroducing exit checks we can better manage migration in and out of Britain, and we will make it possible for those families and individuals who have been living here for a number of years without permission to now come out of the shadows, work, pay taxes and after a two year probationary period apply for citizenship.

Many Sikhs will of course also benefit from our broader agenda to deliver fairness for British society. Under our tax reforms no one on a low or middle income will pay any income tax on the first £10,000 they earn, lifting millions of people on the lowest paid out of tax altogether and giving everyone else around £700 back. Our plans to invest an extra £2.5bn in our schools, targeted at the children who are struggling most, and paid for by making cuts elsewhere in government, will enable schools to cut class sizes and provide more one-to-one tuition, so that no pupil falls behind. And by scrapping Labour's pointless ID cards we will put an extra 3000 police on the streets, clamping down on anti-social behaviour, vandalism and intimidation.

This election is a huge opportunity for change in Britain. It is our chance to deliver real fairness for Sikhs and for all of our communities, and it is our chance to say no to the discrimination and prejudice that have been allowed to fester in the past, choosing instead a future we can all look forward to.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Clegg  
Leader of the Liberal Democrats





Amrik Singh  
Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK)  
Tanglewood House  
Pine Wall  
Chilworth  
Southampton  
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## new Labour for Britain

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Monday 3 May 2010

Dear Amrik Singh

Thank you for your letter about Labour's support for the Sikh community and for the 10 point pledge outlining your main political concerns and your future plan to hold Members of Parliament to account.

British Sikhs have made a great contribution to the economic, cultural and political life of the United Kingdom, and the Sikh faith and culture have brought tremendous strengths and benefits to our society.

The Labour Party is proud to have championed the involvement of the Sikh community in politics. The Sikh belief of Sewa, often translated as 'selfless service', is seen by many as the essence of Sikhism itself. It is a conviction that we have a responsibility to our fellow humans. It is a conviction that is shared by this Party and Stephen Timms, the Labour Party's Vice-Chair for Faith, is looking forward to meeting with you immediately after the election to discuss the 10 points in detail.

Our record since we took office in 1997 demonstrates our commitment to fighting prejudice and helping people from all backgrounds make the most of their talents and abilities.

In Government, Labour acted to protect and promote human rights. The Equality Act now offers faith communities protection against discrimination in public life and places a positive duty on public bodies to promote equality on grounds of religion and belief. It demonstrates our commitment to fairness but also the value we place on religion in public life.

Faith is enormously important to millions of people in Britain shaping their values and the way they live. We respect the importance of belief and welcome the contribution that people of faith make to our communities and society more widely.

Labour has ensured the voices of faith and minority communities are heard in British society. The re-established Inter-Departmental Group coordinates faith concerns across all departments. And we welcome the strong Sikh input into the FCCC (Faith Communities Consultative Council). Sikh voices were especially supportive of John Denham's recent announcement of a fund to help minority communities engage more effectively with Government.

At a Parliamentary and political level Labour MPs have been active in new initiatives for the community. The All Party Parliamentary Group for UK Sikhs was launched in 2005 and chaired by Rob Marris, the Labour MP for Wolverhampton South West. That group has developed discussion and representation of Sikh issues in Parliament. I am very keen that the APPG remains effective and influential. At a political level, Sikh friends of Labour, was sponsored by Parmjit Dhanda, the



Labour MP for Gloucester. It has enabled Sikhs to build relationships and help shape policy debate within the Labour Party.

Fairness is also central to our foreign policy. Human rights are universal and it is the job of mature democracies to support the development of free societies everywhere.

Labour remains committed to spending 0.7 per cent of national income on aid from 2013 and we will enshrine this commitment in law early in the next Parliament. Our aid will target the poorest and most excluded - spent transparently and evaluated independently.

On representation, we agree that Parliament must do better to reflect the diversity of modern Britain. Because many of the citizens of this country are Black, Asian and from minority ethnic communities - to command legitimacy - the House of Commons needs to be more representative of this country than it is now.

Labour has a higher proportion of female and Black and Asian MPs than any other party but we are determined to make more progress. We are proud that we have a talented new generation of political candidates from ethnic communities from across the country standing in the forthcoming election. 12% of candidates in seats where a Labour MP has stood down are from BAME backgrounds. If Labour wins all of these seats, we will have 23 BAME MPs, doubling our number. I know these candidates will make excellent MPs, and provide a strong voice for you in Parliament.

We will also take forward the proposals of the recent Speaker's Conference so that the House of Commons properly reflects the diversity of modern Britain. This will create further opportunities for more Sikh politicians to succeed in the Labour Party.

The Sikh community's commitment to equality for all and its work towards religious tolerance is a vision that we share. Labour has provided funding for interfaith dialogue and other initiatives and we will continue to support them.

You can therefore be assured that support for Labour candidates locally will enable Labour MPs to continue to promote this equality and to build a society that is fair for all.

In the days ahead, you'll be making a big choice about the kind of future you want for your family and for Britain. There's a stark choice ahead - a choice between creating a future that is fair for all, or a change that puts the economic recovery at risk, threatens public services, and makes life tougher for families.

Don't let the Tories turn back the clock on all the achievements we have together fought so hard for. Labour is only party fighting for a fair future for all.

Yours sincerely

*Harriet Harman*

**Harriet Harman**  
Deputy Leader of the Labour Party



Around 60% of seats were regarded as safe with the leading parties currently in power holding large majorities. In these constituencies the votes of Sikhs were unlikely to make any difference. However, in marginals Sikhs were urged to consider their experiences with:

- the Labour Government, including on issues such as the 2011 Census and Code of Practice for Sikh articles of faith
- the track record of the Conservatives – will they see through on promises concerning monitoring, changes to the way Sikhs are consulted or will they shy away from certain issues when the time comes
- the emergence of the Liberal Democrats

Ieuan Wyn Jones, the Leader of Plaid Cymru wrote: 'I am pleased to inform you that Plaid Cymru has fully endorsed the 10-point pledge sent to all prospective parliamentary candidates from the Sikh Federation (UK)'. The Liberal Democrats leader (now the Deputy Prime Minister) was the first of the three leaders of the main parties to respond to the 10-point pledge relating to the Sikh community. Harriet Harman, the Deputy Leader (and now acting leader) of the Labour Party, also responded (see letters that have been reproduced).

The Federation suggested tactical voting in around 50 named marginal constituencies where a swing of around 5% or less will either result in the current party in power being able to retain the seat or where a change of political parties is deemed appropriate. Prior to the election the Federation predicted Labour would lose 31 with the Conservatives gaining 25 and the Liberal Democrats 6. This prediction proved extremely accurate.

## SIKH FEDERATION (UK) LETTER TO THE NEW UK PRIME MINISTER

Following the formation of the coalition government the Sikh Federation (UK) wrote to the new Prime Minister on 16 May congratulating him on behalf of the British Sikh community. The letter said the Federation looked forward to working with the new government in all relevant areas in what will be an extremely challenging few years.



The letter made reference to the 10-point pledge and areas where the previous government fell short and where the new coalition government needed to think how it may be able to assist. These included:

**Need for public bodies to monitor Sikhs** for the purposes of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 as the 2011 Census has not reflected the need for a Sikh ethnic tick box. Reference was made to the largest Sikh lobby on this subject that David Cameron himself hosted in July 2002 at Portcullis House when the Shadow Home Secretary, Oliver Letwin, led an all-party campaign that the government and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) eventually ignored. Reference was made to the Judicial Review process to challenge the ONS regarding unlawful discrimination as regards Sikhs in the 2011 Census, but given the change of government (and legal advice on the probability of defeating the government on this high profile issue) it was indicated the Federation was willing to work with the Cabinet Office to find an acceptable solution.



**Code of Practice on Sikh articles of faith** that a Labour Home Office Minister promised before the last General Election, in April 2005, but failed to deliver over the last 5 years. The letter explained the need for a Code of Practice was given a very low priority by the Home Office, followed by the Department for Communities and Local Government, while Sikhs have continued to experience discrimination and have in some cases ended up taking matters to the courts or tribunals to all rule in favour of Sikhs. Ministers belonging to the previous government had in recent months been hiding behind the Equalities and Human Rights Commission producing non-statutory guidance. The Prime Minister was urged to commit the incoming government to introduce a Code of Practice within a 12-18 month period and take immediate action to stop discrimination when Sikhs try and enter government buildings, such as what was the Passport Agency.

**Improving consultation and representation** by working with grassroots organisations and looking at the Sikh advisers to the previous Labour Government who are not always in touch with many in the Sikh community, have no mandate and not always done a good job in representing Sikh community interests.

The letter pointed out in opposition the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats had been supportive in each of these areas and the hope was the coalition government can make quick progress and changes.

## LAUNCH AND ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS OF THE ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR UK SIKHS

On 23 July the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for UK Sikhs was formally launched in Parliament following the most recent General Election. The group was first set up with the support of the Sikh Federation (UK) in July 2005 following the last General Election. Rob Marris MP, one of the most respected MPs and voted the best back bench MP in 2008, almost single-handedly, led the group for five years and took up numerous issues on behalf of the Sikh community.

We have now moved into a new and uncertain era with a coalition government and many new MPs. Much thought has therefore gone into creating a brand new team of MPs to lead the APPG for UK Sikhs.

Fabian Hamilton the Labour MP for Leeds North East was elected the Chair. For the last 10 years he has been a member of the influential Foreign Affairs Select Committee.



Newly elected Chair of the APPG for UK Sikhs

Three Vice Chairs were elected. Lee Scott the Conservative MP for Ilford North and the Parliamentary Private Secretary for the Secretary of State for Transport. Mike Gapes the Labour MP for Ilford South who served as Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee from July 2005 to April 2010. The third Vice Chair is a newcomer – Caroline Nokes the Conservative MP for Romsey and Southampton North.

Those elected as Secretary and Treasurer are also new comers. Emma Reynolds the Labour MP for Wolverhampton North East and Paul Uppal the Conservative MP for Wolverhampton South West.

The APPG has been formally established with 10 MPs from the Coalition government. This is the minimum number required from the government and 25 Labour politicians, including two from the House of Lords. The membership is expected to double by the time the APPG meet again in October as Sikhs urge their local MPs to join and strengthen the group.



At the meeting three key issues were discussed.

- i) Respect for the Sikh turban at airports across Europe - further details are set out below.
- ii) The continued need for a Code of Practice on Sikh articles of faith promised by Labour Ministers, but not yet delivered.
- iii) The need for public bodies to monitor Sikhs as an ethnic group for provision of public services, irrespective of the ethnic group categories in the 2011 Census.



Newly elected office bearers of the APPG for UK Sikhs pictured with Sikh representatives

The presence of Lee Scott as the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Transport was particularly helpful with regards to respect for the Sikh turban at airports. He personally dealt with an incident a couple of years ago in Spain when a prominent local Sikh was forced to remove his turban in public and at gun point. The Spanish authorities were forced to recognise their mistakes and apologise.

He said he would personally feedback to the Secretary of State regarding the constructive approach so far between the Department for Transport (DfT) and Sikh representatives and noted areas where some Sikh concerns remain:

- i) the possibility of random checking of Sikh turbans using the self pat down option to check for non-metallic materials rather than all turban wearing Sikhs that trigger the initial metal detectors all being subject to a check for non-metallic materials; and
- ii) the possibility of specific reference by DfT to the wearing of the Kirpan by passengers. The Sikh Federation (UK) raised with him the possibility of a specific letter from the Secretary of State addressed to Sikhs and those that operate UK airports regarding this matter.

Further announcements on the work of the newly constituted group and the administrative arrangements are expected in October.

## INTERFACE BETWEEN THE SIKH FEDERATION (UK) AND THE SIKH MEDIA

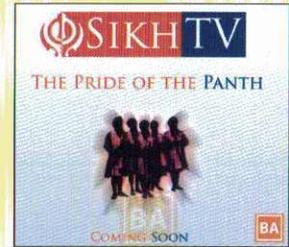
The Sikh media has evolved considerably in recent years. For decades weekly Punjabi newspapers were the only regular means for taking news and views to the wider Sikh/Punjabi community. In the last ten years or so we have had Punjabi radio stations (mainly available through satellite) that could almost instantly get news and views to listeners across Europe.

However, for the last eighteen months we have had the first Sikh TV channel – The Sikh Channel that has not only taken news and views to a higher level e.g. attack on Sikhs in Ludhiana, but helped in campaigns e.g. 2011 Census, respect for the Sikh turban at airports and shaped debates on the future direction of community institutions through programmes such as Panth Time that was the origin for initiatives, such as, the Sikh Council UK. The channel has also through its advertising and discussion programmes helped improve the turnout at major national events e.g. June 84 Remembrance March and Freedom Rally.



Newspapers and radio stations have their place, but in comparison the power and reach of TV is much greater as the visual message is much superior. As this booklet went to press two new Sikh TV channels were in the process of opening – Sangat TV and Sikh TV. The Federation will continue with its work and expects these new channels to approach them in much the same way as the Sikh Channel. It will be interesting to see if these new channels recognise their wider community role and highlight campaigns and promote national events of importance to the Sikh community in the same way as the Sikh Channel.

The Sikh Federation (UK) is a leading organisation and always involved in taking forward many campaigns and creating news through its actions, organising major events and is often asked by the media for its views. The Federation is one of very few Sikh organisations that is regularly asked by the mainstream media e.g. BBC to express views on various subjects where the Sikh community may have an interest. It is therefore ironic that when the Federation is quoted in articles in the mainstream national newspapers or quoted online e.g. BBC News Online our Punjabi weeklies and radio stations either do not realise the significance or choose to ignore the news, sometimes as they may not wish to give the Federation greater exposure.



The Sikh Channel recognising the leading role of the Federation as an organisation campaigning for the Sikh community has always been responsive to the Federation's activities. Other Sikh organisations involved in serious work e.g. Khalsa Aid have also been covered by the Sikh Channel. Some organisations have instead supplied volunteers as regular presenters to the channel as they realise it is the only way for them not to become irrelevant in this new media age. The Federation has deliberately not supplied regular presenters as its focus is on campaigning, but the Federation has and will always be prepared to send its representatives to appear on radio and television or give statements to the press. Occasionally the Federation has helped out the Sikh Channel and supplied a presenter e.g. chairing Panth Time in Gravesend.

There has however been demand from the community for the Federation to deliver a regular weekly programme at a fixed peak time slot as many wish to learn of ongoing campaigns and what the community can do to assist. The Federation did on a trial basis deliver for 6 weeks a programme titled Qaum Di Gal on the Sikh Channel, but agreed to only continue this when a London studio opens and if a regular peak time slot could be guaranteed.

An opportunity that was missed was the ability of the Sikh Channel to properly advertise, cover and support the Sikh Vote debates before the General Election due to demands on its staff and resources with the popular and parallel Panth Time series of programmes. Whichever channel opens a London studio will also have an advantage in securing quality presenters and participants.



Sikh Federation (UK) representatives delivering a programme on the 2011 Census campaign



# DEFENDING & PROMOTING THE SIKH IDENTITY

## PRESSURE OF SIKH LOBBY FORCES MINISTER TO PROMISE CODE OF PRACTICE / GUIDANCE ON SIKH ARTICLES OF FAITH IN EARLY 2010

On 19 November around 150 Sikh representatives took part in a lobby at the Houses of Parliament. Over 200 MPs were contacted prior to the lobby and over 100 MPs, including Ministers were lobbied on the day itself.

One of the issues covered in the lobby was the need for a Code of Practice on Sikh articles of faith. The UK Government first promised a Code of Practice four and half years ago. In the meantime Sikhs have been experiencing greater difficulties. Many of these have related to the Kirpan, but the wearing of the Kara and the Dastar has also been challenged.



Considerable pressure has been exerted with the issue raised through Parliamentary Questions, during Parliamentary Debates and in letters to relevant Ministers. Two weeks before the lobby the Sikh Federation (UK) wrote to Rob Marris MP, Chair All Party Parliamentary Group for UK Sikhs, regarding the Code of Practice. Rob Marris challenged the Minister to explain the latest position knowing Sikhs would be in Parliament taking up the matter at the lobby and they would want answers.



DCLG Minister Shahid Malik MP

In a letter received on 20 November (sent on 17 November) the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Shahid Malik confirmed that the Equality & Human Rights Commission (EHRC) would be producing guidance on Sikh articles of faith in early 2010 and the Sikh community would have ownership of the development of the guidance.

The EHRC is taking forward work on developing guidance in partnership with the Department for Communities and local

Government (DCLG). The Home Office and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) are also participating. A meeting was held in Birmingham on 20 November to discuss a draft circulated on 17 November.

A final meeting took place on 10 March 2010 with the DCLG Minister writing to Rob Marris MP on 6 April to explain the

Equality and  
Human Rights  
Commission

equalityhumanrights.com



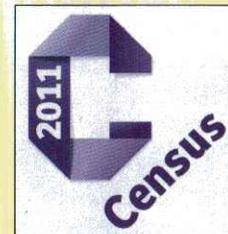
The Federation recognise some continue to try and incorrectly confuse the Code of Practice with the guidance to be issued by the EHRC.

Note: At the time this booklet went to press the EHRC had still to issue its guidance and the DCLG Minister had yet to be consulted by civil servants on whether or not to provide a forward to the publication. The campaign for a Code of Practice first promised by Labour Ministers will continue as a Code is of more value than guidance as it is endorsed by Parliament. A breach of the Code would be taken into account by tribunals and courts when dealing with any dispute arising out of the implementation of the Code. The newly formed APPG will be inviting the relevant Minister to its next meeting to explain the present government's position.



Code of Practice would have more weight than guidance

## CAN THE OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS BE TRUSTED WITH THE 2011 CENSUS?

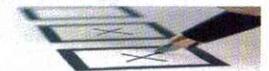


On 1 February the Sikh Federation (UK) released an investigative report titled: Can the Office for National Statistics be trusted with the 2011 Census? This followed research commissioned on the selection of new ethnic groups for the Census 2011. The investigative report provided evidence to show how the option of an 'Arab' category was incorrectly favoured compared to other categories, including a 'Sikh' category.

The authors of the report alleged a pre-determined outcome to include an 'Arab' category without sufficient evidence to support this conclusion. It emphasised a Sikh category was overlooked despite Sikhs constituting one of very few legally recognised ethnic groups.

The report proved the methodology used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) ignored the views of hundreds of MPs across the political spectrum supporting the Sikh community in their demand and paid lip service to its own public consultation on the issue that showed considerable support for a separate Sikh category. Evidence was also presented in the report that showed ONS omitted vital information, misinterpreted other information it had available and did not fully consider other relevant evidence to arrive at accurate conclusions.

CAN THE  
OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS  
BE TRUSTED WITH THE 2011 CENSUS?



An investigation into the ONS process to select ethnic groups for the 2011 Census questionnaire and the unfair exclusion of the 'Sikh' category

Investigative report released by the Sikh Federation (UK)



The Sikh Federation (UK) called on MPs and ONS to consider the findings and recommendations in the report relating to each aspect of the ONS methodology to select ethnic groups for the 2011 Census questionnaire and for the ONS to urgently revisit its overall assessment in light of the report.

In the Federation's opinion the report proposes the ONS gives the 'Sikh' category priority over the proposed 'Arab' category for the Census 2011 questionnaire. The report suggests major flaws in the process to select ethnic groups for the 2011 Census questionnaire and raises wider issues of trust and the need for improved governance at ONS.

The Federation also shared the report with lawyers to consider possible legal action. There is also the possibility of a postponement in the 2011 Census; until trust in the process is restored, otherwise the information produced will not be a true reflection of British society or fit for purpose. The latter would also save tens of millions of pounds during the economic downturn.

## MPs EXPRESS ANNOYANCE WITH ONS REGARDING 2011 CENSUS AND HANDLING OF DEMAND FOR ETHNIC GROUP BOX FOR SIKHS

Following the release of the investigative report a live 1-hour TV programme on the Sikh Channel resulted in a huge number of enquiries about the report and what could be done to get the ONS to change its position.

On the following day an article appeared in the Independent. In response to the Independent article the ONS issued a media statement where they suggested the ethnic groups were approved by Parliament in December 2009 to try and stop a debate on the subject.

Rob Marris MP also wrote to ONS asking for a detailed response to the findings and recommendations in the Sikh Federation (UK) report and expressed annoyance at the ONS attitude of suggesting the matter is closed due to decisions by Parliamentarians.



MPs raise issue at Adjournment Debate in Parliament on 3 February

Many MPs were contacted by Sikh constituents and asked to write to ONS on the matter and request findings and recommendations in the report are acted upon. On 3 February the issue was raised by MPs in an Adjournment Debate in Parliament. MPs demanded the Minister arrange an immediate face-to-face meeting with ONS to resolve the matter.

ONS offered to meet Sikh representatives on 23 February to discuss the report. But due to the pressure the Sikh Federation (UK) succeeded in obtaining a meeting with ONS on 12 February so the report could be discussed before the Regulation was presented to Parliament.

# THE INDEPENDENT

## Census 2011: 'Heavy metal's not music. It's a religion'

As next year's census nears, head-bangers are among the groups demanding special recognition

By Jerome Taylor, Religious Affairs Correspondent  
Tuesday, 2 February 2010

The preparation for next year's census is in full swing, but the jostling and politicking about who and what will be counted in the population survey is already causing serious headaches.

This time next year, every adult in England and Wales will receive a questionnaire for what is expected to be the longest and most detailed census ever conducted.

Costing £500m, it will paint a precise portrait of who and what makes up our nation – which is why a litany of special interest groups, from the serious to the absurd, are agitating for their vision of what the form should look like and which questions should be asked.

Sikh groups, for instance, want to be recognised as an individual race and not just a religion. And at the sillier end of the spectrum, heavy metal enthusiasts have begun an online campaign to get their head-banging music genre recognised as a religion. For analysts at the Office for National Statistics (ONS), meeting everyone's aspirations will be all but impossible.

A population census has been carried out in Great Britain every 10 years since 1801, except for 1941, during the Second World War. As the cultural and ethnic make-up of the country changed, so did the questions. Following devolution, separate surveys were carried out in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In 1991, citizens in England and Wales were asked for the first time to describe their ethnic origin, with 16 options including a catch-all "other" box for those whose races were not included. Ten years later,

respondents were asked their religious affiliation. But not everyone is happy with the way race has been categorised. People of Middle Eastern, Latin American or South-east Asian origin, for instance, have to tick the "other" box.

This week, the Sikh Federation will urge the ONS to include Sikhs as an individual race, after their community won a High Court battle in the 1980s to be officially recognised as a race under British law.

Jagtar Singh, a federation member, said the request was more than just a point of principle. "Information taken from the census is used by 40,000 government bodies to work out where resources should go and how they can be allocated," he said. "If Sikhs are missed off in 2011 we will have to wait yet another decade, perhaps longer, before we are properly recognised."

The ONS has said that because of financial constraints it will only be adding two ethnicity boxes to the census. It has yet to state what these will be but a test questionnaire three years ago included the terms "Arab" and "Irish traveller/gypsy", suggesting that Sikhs may miss out this time around.

Mr Singh said: "We want Sikhs to be included for positive reasons but the Government looks set to collect data for Arabs and travellers to keep a closer eye on them."

Opposition MPs believe the census will be too expensive and intrusive. The shadow Cabinet Office minister, Francis Maude, said last week: "How can a cost of £500m, which is double the cost of the last census, be justified at this time of fiscal crisis?"

The Government hit back, saying a detailed census enabled future administrations to allocate money more efficiently, adding £700m to the economy. Others will no doubt use the census to cause mischief. In 2001, an online campaign launched by Star Wars fans encouraged people to list their religion as "Jedi" so that it had to be officially recognised. Parliament quickly changed the law – but not before 390,000 "Jedi" adherents signed up.

This year, social networking sites could throw another spanner in the works at the ONS. A Facebook group asking for heavy metal to be made a religion has attracted 14,000 members in two weeks. "It's not meant to offend anyone. It's just a bit of fun," said Alexander Milas, editor of Metal Hammer magazine. "But then again, maybe we are trying to make a point."



## LEGAL ACTION BY SIKHS COULD SEE DELAY IN CENSUS 2011

On 12 February Glen Watson, the Director at ONS responsible for the 2011 Census and his staff met with representatives of the Federation to discuss Sikh concerns.

Following the meeting the Federation put an innovative proposal to the ONS to consider; a two-part 'religious' question that would be consistent with the Census Order 2009 already approved by Parliament, but would also see Sikhs and Jews recognised in the Census as not only religious, but also racial groups, but without the need to collect more information than currently planned.

If ONS fail to take forward the proposal the Sikh community made it clear that it may need to consider legal action where it would argue the 2011 Census questionnaire is inconsistent with the requirements on the Census Act 1920 with respect to coverage of 'Race'.



Glen Watson, the Director at ONS responsible for the 2011 Census

The Federation said it also believed it had sufficient evidence to demonstrate discrimination towards Sikhs under the Race Relations Act 1976 with a host of mistakes by ONS in not properly assessing the needs of Sikhs.

If legal action is taken it would be most unfortunate and lead to inevitable delay in the ONS taking forward the 2011 Census until matters were resolved in the courts. The Conservative opposition indicated it may use any delay to slim down the Census questionnaire that could save tens of millions of pounds.

Another issue to emerge is the ONS confirmed it had not formally evaluated the appropriateness of any of the existing sixteen 2001 Census categories for the ethnic question. The Sikh Federation (UK) pointed out the majority of categories e.g. Bangladeshi (283,000) or Chinese (247,000) are significantly smaller in number terms than the estimated number of Sikhs.



It was also questionable if four separate categories were appropriate in England and Wales for the 'Mixed' group (first introduced in 2001) given the total numbers in each category and considering the real terms impact (e.g. service delivery). One 'Mixed' category as in Scotland and Northern Ireland may be more suitable.

## ONS RESPONSE TO FEDERATION PROPOSAL

ONS responded on 17 February to say they are considering the proposal. To address one of the concerns that ONS may have the Federation tested the two-part 'religious' question over a 48 hour period with around 400 respondents.



The test results were extremely encouraging and demonstrated the proposal could with appropriate guidance be an extremely effective way of collecting reliable high quality data. The proposal would enable the 2011 Census to establish an effective baseline to be used to assist public bodies to monitor all recognised ethnic groups.

On 22 February Glen Watson, the ONS Director responsible for the 2011 Census appeared in Parliament before the London Committee and to his surprise was expressly challenged by MPs regarding Sikh monitoring. Karen Buck MP, the Chair of the London Committee and Andy Slaughter MP specifically asked about the Sikh Federation (UK) proposal.



London Committee member, Andy Slaughter MP challenged ONS during questioning

A fuller response was provided by ONS on 24 February following a BBC news item earlier the same day - 'Sikh campaigners threaten legal fight over 2011 census'. The ONS response suggested the proposal may not be compatible with the Census Order approved by Parliament in December 2009.

On 1 March another news item - 'Sikhs fight for space on British census' appeared. ONS in a further response on 2 March stated in their opinion the proposal was not viable based on the 'intention' of Parliament when approving the Census Order 2009.

The Federation argued the proposal put forward was compatible with the Census Order 2009 and better reflected the requirements stipulated in the primary legislation - Census Act 1920.

We also made clear that we had sufficient evidence to demonstrate indirect discrimination against Sikhs by ONS under the Race Relations Act (1976) in the process of selecting 'ethnic' groups for the 2011 Census.

The Sikh community were let down by the ONS and the Parliamentary process and reluctantly embarked on a legal option to enforce the legal rights secured already by Sikhs in the courts.

One of the issues to emerge is the ONS whilst considering the proposal put to it on behalf of the Sikh community had been working behind the scenes to undermine it by exerting pressure on the Board of Deputies of British Jews and trying to find Sikh organisations or individuals that may not agree with the majority Sikh view.



The Federation had already established with the Board of Deputies that whilst it thought the proposal that would see Sikhs and Jews treated differently was coming too late it would not oppose it. Jon Benjamin, the Chief Executive of the Board of Deputies, clarified its position with the Federation on 4 March.

The Federation wrote to the ONS regarding it proactively seeking out Sikh organisations or individuals that may not agree with the majority Sikh view and rebuked it by writing:

'The issue we found most offensive in your response (on 2 March) was your statement: 'I am also aware that there is not a unanimous view on this even within the Sikh community'. Your own public consultation on this had responses from 154 Sikh organisations (by far the largest number of responses from any community group) and all 154 indicated the need to monitor Sikhs as an ethnic group. You will always be able to find individuals and/or organisations from any community that did not take part in the public consultation that do not agree with the majority view.' The Federation



continued by saying 'reckless statements like this . . . undermine your own consultation and put up the backs up of the Sikh community.'

A Federation spokesman said: "The ONS should be responding in a fair and balanced way to a legitimate community demand. It has lost credibility with the community and with elected representatives."

It also became clear to the Sikh community that most MPs had probably been misled by the ONS when the Census Order came before Parliament between October and December 2009 for their approval of the details in the Census questionnaire. MPs supporting Sikhs missed the opportunity to express their views as many did not fully understand or appreciate the Parliamentary process that had been adopted.



## SIKHS THREATEN CENSUS LEGAL FIGHT

BBC News Online - 25 February 2010

The UK Sikh Federation says it might take legal action over the Office for National Statistics' 2011 census form.

It says the ONS is breaking the law by putting a box for Sikhs to tick in the voluntary religion section of the form but not one in the ethnicity section.

It fears this will result in the number of Sikhs being underestimated and mean community services get fewer resources.

The ONS says space is limited on the form and putting the Sikh box under religion will generate the best data.

### Invisible

The census is a national survey that takes place every 10 years and the next one is on 27 March 2011.

"Given the constraints in the questionnaire size and layout we can't put more than one tick box in for a particular ethnic or racial group"

Peter Benton, deputy census director

It is a social, economic and racial snapshot of the nation and public bodies use the information to plan, fund and deliver services as well as allocate resources.

The ONS has included two new categories in the ethnicity section in next year's questionnaire. One is for Gypsy or Irish Traveller and the other is for Arab.

But Sikhs argue that if they are not represented in this section then they will effectively remain invisible to the authorities.

"Basically, as far as the Sikhs are concerned, the questions that the census asks are being asked in a particular way so that it's actually undermining the Sikh community and the services we're entitled to," said Dabinderjit Singh, an adviser to the federation.

"At the last census in 2001 the number of Sikhs that we believe were recorded in the census were actually half the number of Sikhs in the UK.

"Therefore, policy makers, whether it be central government or local government, have been making decisions on the basis of incorrect information."

### Voluntary

He believes that the fact that UK law recognises Sikhs as a separate race gives them a "very clear basis" for taking legal action.

The previous census in 2001 suggested that there were 336,000 Sikhs in Britain whereas campaigners claim the true number is closer to 600,000.

The 2001 census was the first time that the form had a section on religious beliefs. And, although this section included an option for Sikhs, it was the only question that was voluntary, with households having to answer everything else.

The ONS believes that having a Sikh box in the religious identity section is adequate and that it is not necessary to have a box to tick for Sikhs in the section on ethnicity.

Deputy census director Peter Benton: "Given the constraints in the questionnaire size and layout we can't put more than one tick box in for a particular ethnic or racial group.

"We have chosen to put it in the religion question as that gives the best quality data."

The ONS said it had effectively finished putting together the census form and that it planned to start printing the questionnaires in a few months.

## SIKHS LAUNCH LEGAL CHALLENGE AGAINST OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS (ONS)

On 25 March 2010 the Sikh Federation (UK) launched a judicial review claim against the ONS for not including a 'Sikh' ethnic question tick-box in the 2011 Census.

The 17-page pre-action letter issued to the ONS by Bindmans, a top law firm specialising in human rights and discrimination with nationally recognised leading experts, asserted the decision not to include an ethnic tick-box in the 2011 Census, and the decision-making process leading up to it, was unlawful.

The letter pointed out serious limitations in the Equality Impact Assessment and prioritisation exercise carried out by the ONS.

The ONS was specifically accused of:

- a) failing to gather or commission research that would have provided them with the information needed to make a considered decision;
- b) failing to consider relevant information that was already available to them prior to both exercises; and
- c) considering irrelevant or flawed information.

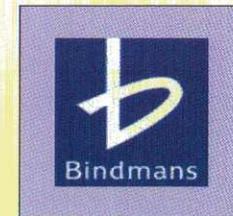
The letter stated: "ONS's failure to gather and consider relevant information has led them to reach inadequate and incorrect conclusions which are unsupported by facts."

"Substantial under-counting of the Sikh population, and its implications in terms of equality monitoring and the provision of services, is an issue of serious concern within the Sikh community."

The letter concludes:

"There can be no doubt that failure to include Sikhs in the ethnic category of the Census disadvantages them by comparison with ethnic groups who are included. The omission of Sikhs renders them invisible as an ethnic group. The invisibility of Sikhs means that their distinct needs are overlooked in terms of the provision of services and equality monitoring. At its lowest, this means that public authorities cannot identify the needs of Sikhs, or the disadvantages suffered by them, and cannot therefore promote equality of opportunity or eliminate discrimination."

Note: In the letter to the new Prime Minister mentioned earlier in the booklet an update was given on the current approach to take this campaign forward to find an acceptable solution. Before the Census takes place on 27 March 2011 a further and intensive campaign will be undertaken regarding completion of the Census questionnaire.

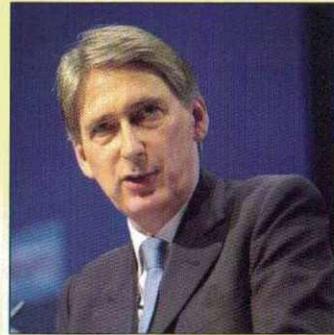


Top law firm specialising in human rights and discrimination



## SIKHS MOVE CLOSER TO AGREEMENT ON AIRPORT SECURITY PROCEDURES THAT WILL FULLY RESPECT THE SIKH TURBAN

In an unprecedented move the Secretary of State, Rt Hon Philip Hammond, moved quickly on Tuesday 29 June to issue directions to all UK airports to apply the pre-29 April procedure for Sikh turbans that prevents security staff from touching the turban. They have been directed to only use hand held metal detectors for Sikh passengers and Sikhs working at the airports until a solution can be found working with the Sikh community.



Secretary of State for Transport,  
Rt Hon Philip Hammond

Bhai Amrik Singh, Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK), said: 'The campaign launched less than 2 weeks ago has shown what Sikhs are capable of doing when they come together and our media, such as the Sikh Channel, encourage Sikhs up and down the country to exert pressure on MPs. For the Secretary of State to issue a directive to all UK airports on the eve of what was predicted to be a massive Sikh lobby that may have attracted around 1,000 Sikhs to the Houses of Parliament shows the power of lobbying.'

The Sikh Federation (UK) received a letter from the Secretary of State at around 5pm on Tuesday 29 June and the first sentence and last sentence of the letter made it abundantly clear that what made the UK Government change its mind were letters to MPs and the pressure on the Department for Transport. This was acknowledged by officials from the Department at a meeting to find a solution to the complication caused for Sikhs by the new EU Regulation on aviation security. The Ministerial decision resulted in the mass Sikh lobby being postponed at the last minute to allow time for the Department to find a long term solution not only at UK airports, but also across the EU.

The letter from the Minister to the Sikh Federation (UK) dated Tuesday 29 June starts with: 'Thank you for your note yesterday and your subsequent email last night'. There was also pressure from Federation media contacts, including the BBC and other mainstream media outlets, who contacted the Department about the lobby and issues raised by MPs. The pressure came to a peak on Monday that resulted in a change of direction. The last sentence of the letter from the Minister to the Federation states: 'On this basis, I hope that you will no longer feel the need to pursue the lobby you have planned for tomorrow afternoon in Parliament.'

This contrasts with the very negative e-mail response from a Department for Transport official received the week before by Jasdev Singh Rai, one of the two faith advisers to the UK Government. If you compare this email with the response from the Secretary of State you can see why it has been referred to by the media as a U-turn by the Department following considerable political pressure.

On 30 June the first meeting was held with Department for Transport officials that was positive and moved both parties closer to agreement on airport security procedures that will fully respect the Sikh turban. This demonstrates that had the Department consulted when the EU Regulation was being developed and also when considering implementation this situation could have been avoided. The two Sikh faith advisers should also rebuke the relevant Department when it fails to consult and inform the Sikh community as soon as possible otherwise there is a risk that the community will see them as part of the problem of inappropriate advice.



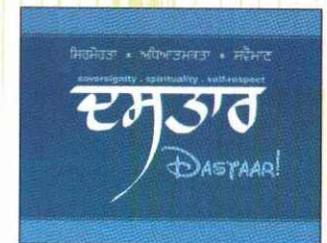
Sikh representatives at the meeting were very clear that they were equally interested in security, but believed an acceptable solution could be found without security staff having to touch the Sikh turban. It became clear that the Department is keen to find a solution as soon as possible as the UK Government could be deemed to be in breach of the EU Regulation. The Federation was pleased a very short timetable was agreed as this will allow a long term solution to be found for UK airports in a matter of a few weeks that the UK Government can then share and push with its EU counterparts that will help all Sikhs travelling out of airports throughout the EU.



The solution put forward for the Sikh turban that the Department is considering is i) continued use of hand held metal detectors; and ii) the Sikh himself or herself touching their own turbans and having their hands swabbed to check for inappropriate materials as practised in the USA. This could easily be implemented at all UK airports for turban wearing Sikh passengers and airport workers. It could be argued as representing 'special screening procedures' under the new Regulation that provide better security than security staff conducting hand searches as they do not have their hands swabbed. Where full body scanners are available and working (e.g. Heathrow) turban wearing Sikhs will have the option to use these scanners and provided there is no medical reason why they should not to use the scanner.

As the standard letters to MPs indicated the planned lobby was also to get clarity from the Department on the right of Amritdhari Sikh passengers to wear a small Kirpan (blade up to 6cm) while flying. The initial response given to Dr Jasdev Singh Rai from the Department last week was offensive to say the least.

At the meeting yesterday the Sikh representatives asked the Department to clarify its position on the Kirpan with respect to passengers with regards to the new Regulation. The Department agreed to put details on its web site about Amritdhari Sikh passengers being able to wear the Kirpan. However, the Department did not agree at this meeting to go as far as to state it would inform security staff at UK airports about this situation. Sikhs appreciate the Kirpan issue is a sensitive one for the Department in terms of the impression it may give to the general public who do not understand the significance of the Kirpan to an Amritdhari Sikh. However, the regulation does allow scissors and knives with blades up to 6cm so in principle there should be no difficulty in allowing Kirpans with a blade of up to 6cm, especially if they are worn discreetly under the clothes. The Department agreed to consider raising training standards for security staff at UK airports with regard to further understanding the sensitivity of Sikh articles of faith so this should make this a challenge that can be overcome.





## AIRPORT SECURITY CHANGE ON HOLD

BBC News  
30 June 2010

The Department for Transport has delayed plans to bring in hand searches at UK airport security because of concerns from a Sikh group.

Sikhs are concerned it could mean hand checks of turbans or demands for the religious headwear to be removed.

The changes have already been implemented across the EU.

But a DfT spokesman said: "We have written to airports to advise them to continue using the previous methods of screening religious headwear." She added: "These methods do not require all headgear to be touched.

"We will then work with the airport industry and religious communities to find an acceptable long-term solution to this issue."

At present, passengers walk through metal detectors at UK airports and, if the alarm goes off, they are then searched again with handheld metal detectors.

The new EU rules instead tell security staff to use their hands for the second checks.

"It just felt as if we were treated as criminals and branded as potential terrorists just because we were wearing a turban"

### Vinder Singh

Sikhs believe the prospect of having their turbans checked by hand or removed in public is degrading. Vinder Singh, a 41-year-old medical rep from Dudley in the West Midlands, fell foul of the new rules when travelling in Spain.

Even though he had not set off the alarm when passing through a metal detector at Barcelona airport, he was told to take his turban off in front of his work colleagues and other passengers.

"I allowed him to touch my turban, feel it and check it and yet he (security guard) wasn't satisfied." Vinder Singh said.

"I wasn't prepared to do anything further because he was still insisting that he wanted me to take my turban off and that, otherwise, I wouldn't be able to fly."

Eventually, he and three other Sikh colleagues made their own way home to England by train.

"It just felt as if we were treated as criminals and branded as potential terrorists just because of the fact that we were wearing a turban," he added.

### 'Considered a crown'

The Sikh Federation is worried that the new EU security rules will mean more embarrassment and upset at airports.

"It is disrespectful for anyone else to touch the turban other than the individual (wearer) themselves," said Dabinderjit Singh of the Sikh Federation.

"It is almost a humiliation. It is very difficult to describe when someone touches your turban. Sikhs regard it as a crown."

Wearing a turban is protected by British law. This follows a landmark ruling by the House of Lords in 1983 in a case in which a Birmingham teenager was refused entry to a school because of his turban.

The Department for Transport is in discussion with Sikhs to see if they can try to resolve the issue, with the first meeting taking place in central London today.

But the problem for Sikhs is that the EU rarely changes its regulations and, when it does, it can often take years.

In the meantime, Sikhs are bracing themselves for further problems.

"The reports that we've had from France and Italy in the last few weeks is that Sikhs are being asked to remove their turbans," added Dabinderjit Singh.

"That's the equivalent of having a strip search but having it in public."

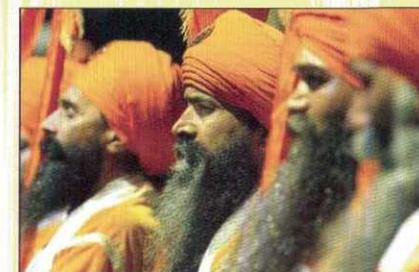
## CONSULTATION ON RESPECT FOR SIKH TURBAN AT AIRPORTS SENDS STRONG MESSAGE TO DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT

On 9 July, Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK), wrote to thank the Rt. Hon. Philip Hammond, the Secretary of State for Transport, for installing the pre-29 April 2010 security check for turban wearing Sikhs at UK airports until an acceptable solution could be found.

The letter also pushed for the need to find an acceptable long term UK solution for the Sikh turban as a matter of urgency and that a large survey of a wide cross section of Sikhs across the UK had been commissioned. The results for which would be available to the Department for Transport (DfT) on 19 July.

On 19 July the Federation finalised the report summarising the results of the consultation with the Sikh community on the implementation of the new EU Regulation on aviation security. The report was shared with the DfT before a meeting between Sikh community representatives and officials on 21 July.

A short questionnaire was distributed to a number of regional co-ordinators across the UK to seek high level feedback on a number of security procedures for the Sikh turban. The primary target for this questionnaire was turban wearing Sikhs and Amritdhari (initiated) Sikhs. However, searching the Sikh turban will not only affect turban wearing Sikhs, but also their family's when travelling, therefore efforts were made to obtain the views of a cross section of the Sikh community.



Around 1,200 questionnaires in total were completed. Respondents were from over 50 different towns and cities across the UK and included Executive Committee members from 95 Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations. The results in the report were based on around 850 completed questionnaires that had been received and analysed by the deadline for this survey. The key conclusions were:

**Extent of objection to hand searching the Sikh turban** - Almost all (98%) of respondents were against hand searches of the Sikh turban, even though only 60% of those responding actually wear turbans. This reinforced the strongly held view in the wider Sikh community that under no circumstances should the Sikh turban be touched by security or other officers.

**Preferred method of searching the Sikh turban** - Almost all (99%) of Sikhs had no objections to hand held metal detectors being used to check the Sikh turban. These results suggest hand held metal detectors should continue to be used to check for metal if the walk-through metal detectors suggested a passenger should be searched further. This should also be used for Sikhs working at airports.

92% of all turban-wearing Sikhs were willing to pat down their own turbans and have their hands swabbed or to use a plastic strip (or rod) that could be checked for the possibility of having been in contact with inappropriate materials. However, many when asked suggested a random check of the Sikh turban using the self patting down option would be preferable. This would be less obtrusive, more cost-effective and proportionate response.

**Extent to which the Sikh turban is being disrespected at airports in mainland Europe** - Feedback from Sikhs across Europe indicate there are extensive difficulties at airports in mainland Europe with reports of Sikhs having their turbans disrespected in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland. This has been corroborated by British Sikhs when responding to the questionnaire. In the last 12 months 36% of turban wearing Sikhs living in the UK who have flown back from an airport in mainland Europe stated they had their turbans disrespected.



**Expectations of Amritdhari Sikh passengers in respect of wearing their Kirpan on flights** - All Amritdhari Sikhs indicated that following the new Regulation that allows passengers to carry knives or scissors with blades up to 6cm they would welcome clarification on the wearing of their Kirpans on flights. They also indicated they would welcome a directive from DfT to airport security informing them of the right of Amritdhari Sikhs to wear the Kirpan.

## SIKHS CLOSE TO LONG TERM SOLUTION FOR RESPECT FOR SIKH TURBAN AT AIRPORTS ACROSS EUROPE

On 29 June the Rt. Hon. Philip Hammond, the Secretary of State for Transport, installed the pre-29 April 2010 security check for turban wearing Sikhs at UK airports until an acceptable solution could be found.

On 19 July the Sikh community provided DfT results of its wide spread consultations that showed Sikhs were totally opposed to the Sikh turban being touched by security or other officers when any new procedures are re-introduced.

On 21 July Sikh representatives had a constructive follow up meeting with Department for Transport (DfT) officials following a useful initial meeting on 30 June to try and find a long term solution regarding sufficient and appropriate security procedures and respect for the Sikh turban.



At the meeting Sikh representatives repeated the key conclusions from the consultation exercise that reinforced the position given at the 30 June meeting and provided a way forward. DfT officials acknowledged the results of the consultation and the solutions presented.

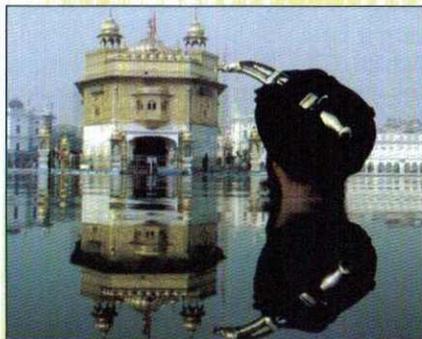
Whilst considerable progress has been made further work is being conducted on the government side to find an effective and practical solution for both Sikh passengers and Sikhs that work at airports that maintains basic standards in aviation security and fully respects the Sikh turban. Subject to further research being conducted DfT said it was confident of finding a solution which is acceptable for all concerned.

The UK has the largest Sikh community in Europe so DfT is taking the lead in resolving this matter and finding a solution that can be shared with the European Commission and other EU Member States.

Once an acceptable solution is agreed by all, DfT will amend its documentation and guidance, which in turn will allow the airport operators to revise their guidance for staff at airports and introduce suitable training.

DfT clarified that knives and by extension Kirpans worn by Amritdharis maybe allowed on passengers, unless the blade is longer than 6cms with a sharp or pointed blade. Sikh representatives continue in a dialogue with DfT on clarification regarding Amritdhari Sikh passengers wearing a Kirpan that is consistent with the EU Regulation and widely understood by those that operate airports and are responsible for security.

Note: At a meeting with senior officials at the Department for Communities and Local Government on 20 August it was confirmed to the Federation an acceptable long term solution had been found and would be endorsed in September and confirmed by letter in mid-September. The letter is expected to be received around the time of the Convention and a government representative is likely to attend the Convention and announce the long term solution.



# RAISING AWARENESS AND CAMPAIGNING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

## FIRST SUCCESS FOR SIKH LOBBY NETWORK - EXCLUSION OF JAGDISH TYTLER FROM THE UK

The Sikh Lobby Network achieved its first major success less than six months after being established by the Sikh Federation (UK). The Network currently has over 2,500 members, although only around 200-300 hundred are active members who when called into action write to MPs when alerted to an issue by the Federation.



Jagdish Tytler dropped from delegation to visit UK

When it was learnt Jagdish Tytler might be visiting the UK as part of the delegation led by the Indian President Pratibha Devisingh Patil for the launch of the Commonwealth Games baton relay in London over 100 MPs were contacted overnight and urged to exert pressure on the Foreign Secretary and the Border Immigration Agency.



Ivan Lewis, junior Foreign Office Minister responsible for India

Jagdish Tytler was dropped from the delegation to visit the UK and from media reports in India it was clear the pressure by politicians in the UK had a major effect. The reports said a British MP asked Scotland Yard to arrest him for his role in the 1984 Sikh massacre. Rob Marris MP and Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for UK Sikhs, said he objected to Tytler's planned 29 October entry to Britain in an emergency meeting with the Junior Foreign Office Minister responsible for India, Ivan Lewis, and in a letter to Foreign Secretary David Miliband.

It later emerged much to his annoyance Tytler as chairman of the volunteers committee of the Commonwealth Games Organising Committee was dropped from the Indian delegation at the eleventh hour by Sports Minister M S Gill after Rob Marris wrote to say the presence in Britain of the former minister of state for overseas Indian affairs was "unacceptable".

In his letter to David Miliband, Rob Marris described Tytler as "a controversial former politician from India, who is alleged to have been deeply involved in the November 1984 anti-Sikh pogroms in India, in the aftermath of the assassination of Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi".

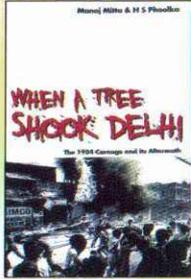
"Many survivors of those harrowing events are now living in the UK; as are the relatives of many victims. It would be unacceptable for someone who had committed such acts to be admitted to the UK, even to visit," said the MP.



Indian President Pratibha Devisingh Patil, Sports Minister M S Gill with the Queen for the launch of the Commonwealth Games baton relay in London



Rob Marris recalled his campaign at a meeting in Parliament organised by the All-Party Parliamentary Human Rights Group to mark the 25th anniversary of the November 1984 massacre. "You can't just go to the Metropolitan Police and say - as we tried last week - that 'Jagdish Tytler is coming to Britain and we want you to investigate him, imprison him'," Rob Marris told the meeting.



"You have to present them with a sufficient cut-and-dry dossier. We only need two or three of the ringleaders - not hundreds of them - so that if they set foot in Britain, they get arrested and they get charged," Rob Marris said.

The meeting was also addressed by Ann Clwyd MP, the chair of the group and Manoj Mitta, an Indian journalist and co-author of the acclaimed book on the pogrom - 'When a tree shook Delhi'.



Manoj Mitta, co-author of the book 'When a tree shook Delhi'

## 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARTYRDOM OF SHAHEED BEANT SINGH MARKED AT SRI GURU SINGH SABHA, SOUTHALL

After many years a significant event was held at Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Park Avenue, Southall to commemorate the martyrdom of Shaheed Beant Singh.



Harinder Singh with the Sikh Research Institute from Texas



Tarlochan Singh MP representing Haryana who has raised many relevant issues in the Rajya Sabha

Much of the Sikh Federation (UK) leadership were present and spoke at the event, including Bhai Amrik Singh and Bhai Narinderjit Singh, Chair and General Secretary of the Sikh Federation (UK) respectively. Other Federation speakers included Bhai Charan Singh and Bhai Dabinderjit Singh.

The Federation also invited Manmeet Singh, the producer of the Widow Colony, Sanjay Suri a journalist with the Indian Express in November 1984 and an eye-witness to implicate Kamal Nath (Sanjay Suri now works for CNN-IBN) and Harinder Singh with the Sikh Research Institute from Texas.

Other speakers included Tarlochan Singh MP and Avtar Singh Makkar, SGPC President who were both obliged to speak about the events of November 1984. The SGPC President also met with Sikh representatives after the event and explained that meetings surrounding changes to the Nanakshahi Calendar were at an advanced stage and were likely to be announced in late December.



Manmeet Singh, the producer of the Widow Colony



Avtar Singh Makkar, SGPC President

## SIKHS CALL FOR UK GOVERNMENT ACTION ON THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NOVEMBER 1984 MASSACRE

On 3 November, which coincided with the hugely successful Punjab Bandth protests, Sikh representatives from across the UK protested outside the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London on the 25th anniversary of the massacre of Sikhs in India in November 1984.

The aim of the protest was to get the UK Government to:

- push for international action against India for the lack of justice over the last 25 years;
- stop issuing visas to those involved in the genocide of the Sikhs in 1984; and
- call for the immediate release of all Sikh political prisoners, including those arrested in recent months from Sikh opposition parties



Protesters outside the Foreign Office hold placards depicting Sajjan Kumar and Jagdish Tytler



Placard referring to recent arrests of Sikh political opponents and student activists

Various placards were held by the protesters regarding the three issues. Some placards depicted Sajjan Kumar and Jagdish Tytler, while others showed Daljit Singh Bittu referring to recent arrests of Sikh political opponents and student activists. Brad Adams, the South Asia Director of Human Rights Watch met protesters before a meeting at the Foreign Office.

A letter to the Foreign Secretary was submitted by the Sikh Federation (UK) describing what followed the death of Indira Gandhi as the most ruthless and bloody chapter in modern day Sikh history. Thousands of Sikhs in over 130 cities across India were massacred in the most barbaric method of burning. Encouraged by central government Ministers and MPs with the connivance of the police, mobs were assembled to carry out a four day orgy of killings and plunder.

The attacks in November 1984 were state sponsored pogroms; designed and led by leading members of the Congress party to inflict as much harm as possible on the Sikh community. It is estimated that over 20,000 Sikhs were killed during the November 1984 genocide.

The letter said there has never been a detailed and determined independent public investigation by the authorities into the events of November 1984 as they would rather sweep it under the carpet. Commissions that have been organised have been no more than whitewashes and cover ups.

Not a single political leader responsible for the genocide of the Sikhs has been convicted. For 25 years high-ranking members of the Congress party have enjoyed political impunity for this violence.



Sikh Federation (UK) representatives delivering letter to the Foreign Secretary



The UK Government should therefore on behalf of British Sikhs lead the international community in calling for a UN inquiry to investigate the persistent failure of successive Indian Governments to ensure the prosecution of those alleged to be responsible for the killings and destruction. That UN initiative should require the Indian authorities to:

- take action against those responsible including proportionate criminal sanctions; and
- ensure that the victims (or their families) are adequately compensated and provided for.

Article 5.2 of the UN Convention against Torture obliges each State Party to "establish its jurisdiction over [acts of torture] in cases where the alleged offender is present in any territory under its jurisdiction". The UK incorporated this provision into law under the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

The Universal Jurisdiction principal allows ordinary national courts to pursue charges against perpetrators found within their jurisdiction, regardless of their nationality or the location of the crime. It is reserved for those crimes that are considered to be crimes against humankind itself - and includes war crimes, genocide, slavery, crimes against peace and crimes against humanity.

Unfortunately, the Criminal Justice Act 1988 can not be used for the Sikh genocide committed four years earlier in 1984. However, the least that can be expected of the UK Government is for it to stop issuing visas to those involved in the genocide of the Sikhs. Failure to do this will encourage a sense of impunity for the perpetrators.

In India approximately 225,000 prisoners are awaiting trial, which is equivalent to 74% of the total prison population. Recent media reports have highlighted the cases of five people held without charge or trial for over 30 years (56 years in one case).

Many Sikh political prisoners are unnecessarily being held, either without trial or with false charges and without evidence. The trend in recent months has been to falsely imprison leaders from Sikh opposition parties or the student movement that dare raise their voices. The latter is an increasingly worrying trend in the message it sends about the failings of the democratic process in India. Sikhs are being prevented from exercising their right to self determination and freedom of speech and expression. The international community must require India to guarantee the immediate release of leaders of the Sikh opposition parties and the student movement so they are free to campaign and operate in opposition.

## **FOLLOWING SUCCESS WITH EXCLUSION OF TYTLER, OTHERS INVOLVED IN NOVEMBER 1984 SIKH GENOCIDE TARGETED AT THE SIKH LOBBY**

On the 25th anniversary of the anti-Sikh pogroms of November 1984 a briefing was provided to MPs with the aim of stopping visas from being issued to known perpetrators.

The briefing provided an outline into the anti Sikh pogroms and a description of those who have been identified as being guilty but have not been brought to justice.

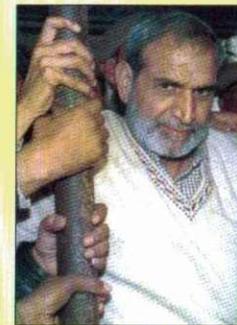
MPs were urged to get the Foreign Office to inform the European Union that those listed should not be entitled to visit, or stay in the EU on any basis due to their part in the 1984 anti Sikh pogroms. A further request was made that the Foreign Secretary asks the Indian Government to remove Tyler from the Volunteers' Committee of the Commonwealth Games Organising Committee due to his



role in instigating violent attacks on Sikhs. It was hoped Sikhs in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other countries belonging to the Commonwealth can take similar steps with their respective governments.

Other than Jagdish Tyler some of the others named were:

**Sajjan Kumar** - The police filed the first case in 1984, accusing Kumar and 10 accomplices of instigating riots in the Sultanpuri area of Delhi, killing 49 people. In 1987, the Jain Bannerjee Commission recommended filing a case against Sajjan Kumar in 1987, however, it was not registered. The CBI filed the second case in 1990, acting on a complaint by a Sikh widow called Anwar Kaur. She accused Kumar of leading the mob that killed her husband in Sultanpuri on November 1, 1984. In August 1990, Potti-Rosha Committee issued recommendations for filing cases based on affidavits submitted but victims of the violence. There was one against Sajjan Kumar. A CBI team went to Kumar's home to file the charges. His supporters locked them up and threatened them harm if they persisted in their designs on their leader.



Sajjan Kumar, his trial begins on 7 September 2010

The Nanavati Commission claimed evidence against congressmen Kumar for instigating the mobs to violence. In April 2009 Kumar sought to re-enter politics by opting to stand for the Lok Sabha elections on behalf of the Congress Party. Due to wide spread condemnation on behalf of Sikhs and human rights activists the Congress Party withdrew their selection.



Mangat Ram Singhal who was rewarded for his role and is currently Minister of Social Welfare, Labour, Employment, Law, Justice & Legislative Affairs and Election

**Mangat Ram Singhal** - Member of Municipal Corporation was reportedly with Dharam Das Shastri (now deceased but named in the Nanavati Commission as a key instigator of the pogroms). Currently the Minister of Social Welfare, Labour, Employment, Law Justice & Legislative Affairs and Election, Government of NCT of Delhi. The People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) and People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) also named him among the alleged instigators of the 1984 pogroms.

**R. D. Malhotra** - Police Officer in the East District of Delhi at Shakarpur. Reported to have invited mobs, heard to say "You should have blown up the Gurdwaras in addition to killing Bhatia" (Congress worker, Trilochan Singh Bhatia). A mob was accompanied by Malhotra, who moved with one jeep, station-wagon, two men with sten-guns and revolvers, petrol-cans and stones. He supplied weapons to the mob, according to eye-witness accounts. He also reportedly incited mobs at Laxmi Nagar, Gurnunganal Nagar.

Malhotra was the Supervisory Officer in charge at Police Station Krishna Nagar located in the centre of the District. The total number of persons killed in this Police Station, as per Police records, was sixteen whereas according to the Relief Commissioner, the figure was 86. The incidents of violence in the Police Station started in the morning of November 1, 1984. A number of shops at Lal Quarters were set on fire during the day between 1200 hours to 1500 hours. The most serious incident the burning of the house of the owner of Swaran Cinema.

As it appeared that many police officers and the policemen had either failed to perform their duty by remaining indifferent or had helped the mobs in their violent activities, notices were given to all of them, including ACP Shri R.D. Malhotra.



**Hari Ram Bhatti** - Police Officer at Sultanpuri, reported to have helped the mob by disarming the Sikhs. On November 1 and 2 it is alleged that he himself killed Sikhs. On 3 and 4 reported to have had the Sikhs shaven at gun point. The police involvement may be summed up in words of one survivor "they themselves killed: they were in complicity". Bhatti was issued with a Section 8B Notice further to allegations against him by witnesses.

In the briefing it was pointed out that the evidence outlined is supported by independent human rights organisations and hundreds of Sikhs. Reference was also given in the briefing to a list of more than 200 named perpetrators.

## ONGOING CAMPAIGN FOR THE RELEASE OF PROFESSOR DAVINDERPAL SINGH BHULLAR

Towards the end of 2009 the Sikh Federation (UK) reminded UK politicians of the plight of political activist Professor Davinderpal Singh Bhullar. The Sikh Lobby Network was utilised to inform MPs that the Professor went to Germany almost 15 years ago in December 1994 to seek political asylum after his father was disappeared by the Punjab police in 1991 and his family was repeatedly harassed and tortured. Letter writing to MPs was followed by a Sikh lobby in the UK Parliament on 19 November 2009.

The Professor was a known political dissident and had claimed that his life was at risk in India because of his political activism. His family was persecuted as evidenced by the 'disappearance' of his father, uncle and best friend. Following an unsuccessful asylum application in Germany in January 1995, he was deported back to India on the basis of he had nothing to fear. Professor Bhullar was handed over to Indian police officials on German soil even before deportation. Not surprisingly he was arrested upon arrival and he has now been in prison for almost 16 years.

The German immigration authorities returned him to India but in his absence a Higher German court ruled that he should not have been sent back because his life would be in danger in India, effectively overruling the prior decision. Germany by deporting someone to a death-penalty prone country violated the European Convention on Human Rights and was morally obliged to do all it can to seek Professor Bhullar's release because weaknesses in the German asylum system have led to him facing the death penalty.

While in India Professor Bhullar was put on trial in a conspiracy case and on 17 December 2002 his sentence to death was confirmed by the Supreme Court although based on erroneous facts. Professor Bhullar's case is one of the most controversial and highest profile death penalty cases in recent Indian history. For the first time in India's Supreme Court's history, someone was sentenced to death on the basis of a split judgment.

The presiding judge, Justice Shah acquitted the accused whereas the other two judges, Justice Aggarwal and Justice Passayat upheld the death sentence arguing that proof "beyond reasonable doubt" should be a "guideline, not a fetish," and that procedure is only "a handmaiden and not the mistress of law." The presiding Judge, Justice Shah acquitted Professor Bhullar and substantiated his decision by stating that the conspiracy theory falls flat as the "rest of the accused who are named in the confessional statement are not convicted or tried."



Professor Bhullar who has now been on death row in Tihar Central Prison, New Delhi for almost 8 years

The confession statement, allegedly extracted under torture, was signed by a thumbprint. For a man who is highly educated, the sign of a thumbprint implies duress. A confession made before a police officer under normal criminal law is not admissible as evidence. Furthermore, none of the 133 witnesses produced by the prosecution, while the case was in lower court, identified Professor Bhullar.

While Justice Shah concentrated on the facts of the case, Justice Pasayat chose to decide the case with political rhetoric and find Professor Bhullar guilty based on contradicting arguments and judgments. The police, in contravention of the law, failed to send the confessional statement at the earliest opportunity to the magistrate concerned. The other two judges upheld the confession admissible saying that neither proof beyond reasonable doubt nor procedure was important.

Professor Bhullar has now been on death row in Tihar Central Prison, New Delhi for almost 8 years. During this period he has lived knowing that he can be taken any day to the gallows. In 2002 and 2003 considerable international pressure was applied by MPs from the UK, Canada and elsewhere on the German and Indian authorities to prevent his execution. Assurances were given by leading Indian politicians that the death sentence would not be carried out. However, each day for the last 8 years the Professor has been held in solitary confinement and waking up thinking this will be his last day. In many ways this is a torture worse than death. At times when in suits politicians it has also been suggested he may be released having been in prison for almost 16 years in a controversial conspiracy case.



Action required - As the Commonwealth Games in Delhi approach (October 2010) the Sikh Federation (UK) working with Sikhs around the globe are to exert political pressure so i) the Indian President immediately withdraws the death sentence imposed against Professor Davinderpal Singh; and ii) there is a full review of the Professor's case in accordance with international law, under monitoring by UN observers. The widely held view is this should result in his release given he has already spent almost 16 years locked away. As India prepares to host the next

Commonwealth Games the UK has a unique opportunity to push the Indian authorities to signal an end to the death penalty and the release of political prisoners, such as Professor Bhullar.

## POLICE AND PARAMILITARY FORCES OPEN FIRE AND KILL SIKH PROTESTERS IN LUDHIANA

On 5 December 2009 police and paramilitary forces opened fire to stop Sikh protesters, belonging to Sikh religious organisations, marching towards a controversial anti-Sikh two-day event organised in Ludhiana by Dera Divya Jyoti of Ashutosh. At least one Sikh was killed and around 15 seriously injured.

Despite an indefinite curfew in the city there was uproar across Punjab at the heavy handed action of the police and paramilitary forces. The Sikh Channel through its coverage was pivotal in raising awareness amongst Sikhs in Europe and elsewhere. Upon seeing footage and photographs, such as those below, thousands of Sikhs travelled to Ludhiana to participate in further protests.

Sikh religious organisations called for a peaceful 'bandh' (closure) in Ludhiana and cases to be registered against Ashutosh and BJP MLA Harish Bedi, who is also reported to have fired shots at Sikh protesters.



Darshan Singh, the 58-year old that was shot dead



Meanwhile the Punjab government recognising the seriousness of the situation ordered a magisterial probe into the incident.



ਪੁਲਿਸ ਦੀ ਤਸੱਦਤ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਹੋਏ ਤੜਫ ਰਹੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਜੱਥੇਬੰਦੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਜੁਝਾਰੂ ਵਰਕਰ

Sikhs were particularly upset as what has been interpreted as double standards and deliberate provocation of Sikhs. A few days earlier following a minor incident there was widespread arson and violence by migrant workers in three-quarters of Ludhiana. This was permitted without any action taken by the police. However, the protest march by Sikh religious organisations was met with the use of tear gas, batons and then live ammunition.

UK MPs were contacted to urgently raise the above matter with the Foreign Secretary and the Indian authorities. The following Early Day Motion (EDM) was tabled:

**EDM 440 – Attacks on Sikhs in Ludhiana, Punjab**  
- That this House condemns the action of police and paramilitary forces in opening fire on a peaceful Sikh protest in Ludhiana, Punjab on 5 December 2009; notes that at least one Sikh was killed and many injured; calls on the Government to condemn this action and raise the issue with the Indian government; and asks the Indian government to launch an independent investigation into this appalling act.



ਆਸੂਰੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ਼ ਸਿਆਪਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਿੱਖ ਜੱਥੇਬੰਦੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਆਗੂ

Sikhs living in the UK, Canada, Australia, USA and many other countries were outraged seeing such incidents of police brutality and discrimination. Incidents like these of deliberate provocation and targeting force Sikhs to think about their long term future in India.

## ARE THESE BRITISH SIKH MEN VICTIMS OR CRIMINALS?

During the year the Sikh Federation (UK) assisted the BBC to meet UK MPs and Sikh contacts in the UK and Punjab to produce an investigative report titled: 'Victims or Criminals'. Reporter Sanjiv Buttoo travelled to Punjab and reported that British Sikh's were being wrongly arrested and detained when travelling to India.



BBC reporter Sanjiv Buttoo who reported that British Sikh's were being wrongly arrested and detained when travelling to India

Reference was made to events 25 years earlier in 1984 and how recriminations have not stopped and this is continuing to affect the lives of Sikhs in the UK. He said: 'one national organisation the Sikh Federation (UK) estimates that more than 100 British Sikhs may have been detained in recent years'.

In the report broadcast in February 2010 he discovered how some Sikhs returning to India were being singled out, arrested and even tortured by the police. Gurnam Singh from Scunthorpe who was arrested after returning to India thirteen years ago claims he was innocent, but is now being refused entry back into the UK. Balbir Singh Bains from Southall said he was targeted simply because he 'looked religious'. He alleged he was tortured and spent three years in jail before his case was thrown out



of court due to lack of evidence. He has lodged a complaint against the Indian authorities.

The 25-minute BBC programme was produced by Perminder Khatkar. The overwhelming feedback to the BBC following the programme from Sikhs and non-Sikhs was the Sikhs were victims.

## ROB MARRIS MP TELLS TYTLER WHERE TO GO!

Jagdish Tytler was clearly upset in being dropped from the delegation to the UK in October and wrote to Rob Marris MP on 11 February 2010 several months later to not only complain, but make veiled threats to the UK MP. Having seen the full exchange of emails it reinforces the widely held view that Tytler is a liar and nasty piece of work.



Jagdish Tytler who was dropped from the delegation to the UK

Tytler accused Rob Marris of making negative statements on him based on false and concocted stories to nurture his vote bank. He claimed to have been trying to contact him since he was dropped from the Indian delegation visiting the UK on 29 October. He also said he has written to certain members of the House of Lords and the Speaker of the House of Commons and he would be seeking the help of the British and international media to get a reply. To give himself more importance he signed off his email as the former Union Minister.

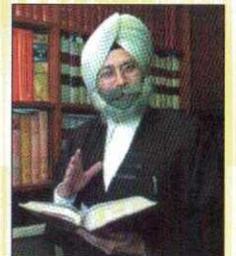
Rob Marris with the assistance of the Sikh Federation (UK) and Harvinder Singh Phoolka wrote back to Tytler on 9 March setting out specific facts recorded by the Nanavati Commission. The Commission concluded 'it safe to record a finding that there is credible evidence against Jagdish Tytler to the effect that very probably he had a hand in organizing attacks on Sikhs. The Commission, therefore, recommends to the Government to look into this aspect and take further action as may be found necessary.'

Reference was made by the Nanavati Commission to the Citizens Commission inquiry, which took place a short time after the pogroms. It concluded: 'that inquiry was made by eminent persons of unquestionable integrity'. Gurbachan Singh (Witness-137) and Govind Narain (Witness-150) told the Citizens Committee, whose Chairman was Justice Sikri about the participation of H.K.L. Bhagat, Sajjan Kumar and Jagdish Tytler in the anti-Sikh pogroms.

Rob Marris continued:

'In addition, on 30 October 2008 I discussed the issue with H. S. Phoolka, at which meeting he kindly gave me a copy of his seminal 2007 book 'When a Tree Shook Delhi'.

I appreciate that you have, surprisingly to many, not been convicted of any criminal offence in relation to the 1984 anti-Sikh pogroms. Nevertheless, based on Justice Nanavati's findings, and on discussions with H.S. Phoolka, it remains my view that it would not be desirable for you to enter the UK because of your probable past actions'.



Harvinder Singh Phoolka, senior advocate of Delhi High Court

To rub salt into Tytler's wounds Rob Marris concluded: 'Incidentally, you again mention difficulty in contacting me. You say that "Since the day, I saw your comments on me on the Internet; I have been mailing you repeatedly." I do not believe you.

I have previously received only one e-mail from you, dated 11 February 2010; never any letters or telephone calls. Clearly you can use the internet. I can be located via the internet, and then contacted, by any competent person within 5 minutes, worldwide. Therefore there are only two realistic explanations: either that you did not in fact try to contact me as frequently as you would have me believe, or you are (unsuccessfully) trying to have me believe that you are totally incompetent on the internet'.



## KAMAL NATH, INDIAN CABINET MINISTER FORCED TO PULL OUT OF TALK IN LONDON FEARING SIKH PROTEST

On 12 May hundreds of Sikhs under the banner of Sikh Federation (UK) protested the visit of Indian Minister Kamal Nath to the UK and chanted slogans on the periphery of Regent's Park outside the London Business School.

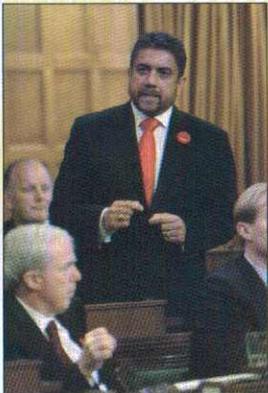
The demonstration went ahead even though Kamal Nath did not attend the conference. Jagtar Singh, an advisor to Sikh Federation (UK) stated that: "They decided to go ahead anyway because the police would not confirm that Kamal Nath would not attend."

During the demonstration against Kamal Nath, Professor Sir Andrew Likierman, Dean of London Business School spoke to the Sikhs and took the postcards presenting the clear evidence against Kamal Nath's role in November 1984 Sikh Genocide to distribute in the conference.

In the coming weeks, Senior Advocate HS Phoolka hopes to take the first case against Indian Minister Kamal Nath through the Delhi courts.

Kamal Nath led the mob that attacked Gurudwara Rakab Ganj in Delhi during November 1984 Sikh Genocide where many Sikhs were burnt alive. According to the Indian Express reporter Manish Sanjay Suri, Kamal Nath was in control of the mob and led the mob outside Gurudwara Rakab Ganj, Delhi.

In March 2010, during Kamal Nath's visit to Canada several Justice Rallies were held against Kamal Nath in Toronto and Ottawa. Several Canadian MPs supported the Justice Rallies which include Liberal MP Andrew Kania, Brampton West, MP Sukh Dhaliwal, Newton-North Delta, MP Navdeep Singh Bains, PC and MP Tim Uppal,



Sukh Dhaliwal MP tabled a petition in Canada's Parliament asking the government to recognise the November 1984 massacre of Sikhs as an act of genocide



Indian Minister Kamal Nath forced to pull out of talk



Protest against Kamal Nath in Toronto

Edmonton - Sherwood Park. Canadian New Democrat Leader Jack Layton stated that a "divisive and controversial" politician had been invited to Canada and urged his caucus members to boycott Kamal Nath events.

In April 2010, during Kamal Nath's visit to United States, Sikhs for Justice held the "Justice Rally" against Kamal Nath's visit outside McGraw Hill Auditorium, New York. On 06 April 2010, during Kamal Nath's visit to the US, Sikhs for Justice and Victims of November 1984 Sikh Genocide filed a case against Kamal Nath in the US District Court charging Nath with human rights violations under the Alien Torts Claims Act and the Torture Victims Protection Act. Honorable Judge Sweet issued a summons and ordered Kamal Nath to respond to the allegations within twenty one days. On 7 September 2010 Judge Sweet ordered the trial against Kamal Nath and asked the parties to appear in court on 22 September for a pre-trial conference.



## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

### Protesting Kamal Nath in Absentia

May 12, 2010  
The Wall Street Journal (blog)

Kamal Nath is India's pitch-man-in-chief, circling the globe to speak at conferences, road shows and official get-togethers, first as India's trade minister and now as India's highways minister. But recently he's been getting unwanted attention on his overseas jaunts.

On Wednesday in London, where he had been scheduled to appear at a conference at the London Business School, a crowd of about 30 Sikhs (eventually over 100) waited outside the venue, facing a small line of police, chanting slogans against Mr. Nath. Ironically, even though Mr. Nath was in London, he didn't attend the conference, having given his regrets about 10 days ago.

But that didn't deter the demonstrators who showed up just in case Mr. Nath showed up too. They claim the minister was involved in the anti-Sikh riots that followed the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1984. Mr. Nath faced another demonstration over the same allegations on a recent trip to Canada.

'We decided to go ahead anyway because the police would not confirm that he would not attend', said Jagtar Singh, an advisor to Sikh Federation (UK), which organized the demonstration.

A government spokeswoman said Mr. Nath denies any involvement in the anti-Sikh riots and wonders why he is being accused of something more than 25 years after the alleged event. She added that she didn't think his cancellation was related to the prospect of a protest but had been unable to confirm that with the minister.

Few in the conference were aware of what the demonstrators were protesting. Some thought they were there to protest Vedanta and its controversial mining project in Orissa since Vedanta chairman Anil Agarwal also had been scheduled to attend. But he was travelling and also was a no-show.

The demonstrators made some noise through the morning of the conference, on the periphery of Regent's Park, then disbanded. But Mr. Nath should expect more of the same as he globetrotts to try to drum up investment in India's infrastructure. Let's hope he didn't cancel his appearance out of security concerns, as some in the audience speculated, since India needs all the help with infrastructure it can get and Mr. Nath is an enthusiastic raiser of much-needed funds.

## 20,000 SIKHS COMMEMORATE 26TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE JUNE 1984 MASSACRE

10,000 Sikhs from across the UK were expected in central London on Sunday 13 June to take part in a Remembrance March and Freedom Rally to commemorate the 26th anniversary of the June 1984 Indian army assault on the Golden Temple Complex.

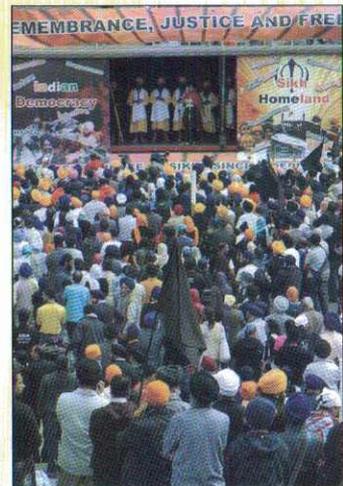
The numbers were expected to be down on the 15,000 from last year, which was special as it was the 25th anniversary. However, organisers and sceptics were taken aback when an estimated 20,000 attended this year and many hundreds if not thousands were left behind as coaches and minibuses organised from across the UK were unable to cope with the demand.



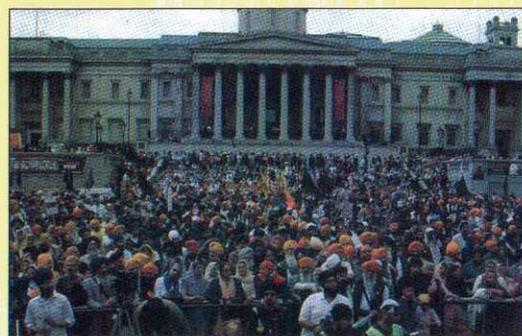
Some came for the first time last year and liked what they saw in Trafalgar Square so decided to come again and encourage others to come. For the first time over 7,000 Sikhs were invited by the Sikh Federation (UK) via Facebook. However, the biggest factor was almost certainly advertising on the Sikh Channel and discussion programmes leading up to the event. Many commented had the Sikh Channel pushed the event in the same way as the 10 Downing Street demonstration for the 17 Sikh labourers sentenced to death in Dubai the numbers could have been even higher.

Certain clique groups were less enthusiastic about joining others at the event this year and either decided to stay away or have a token presence. However, many have commented the gathering was not only larger, but free of controversy. Gone were groups of youths with their faces covered by balaklavas so they remain unrecognisable to the Indian government. This year, there was no nonsense with the youth and elders alike willing to show that they were proud to be Sikhs and openly and freely support the notion of a Sikh homeland. All groups need to realise ordinary Sikhs, including many families, reinvigorated by the activities in Trafalgar Square are in the process of reclaiming this event on behalf of the community.

The fact that support for a Sikh homeland from ordinary Sikhs appears to be growing rapidly once again will send shivers down the spines of the Indian government. The message is clear - Sikhs abroad will never give up on bringing those guilty of the crimes in 1984 to justice. The stage in Trafalgar Square also signalled a better marketing campaign to highlight the benefits of a Sikh homeland through carefully prepared messages.



The stage in Trafalgar Square highlighting the benefits of a Sikh homeland

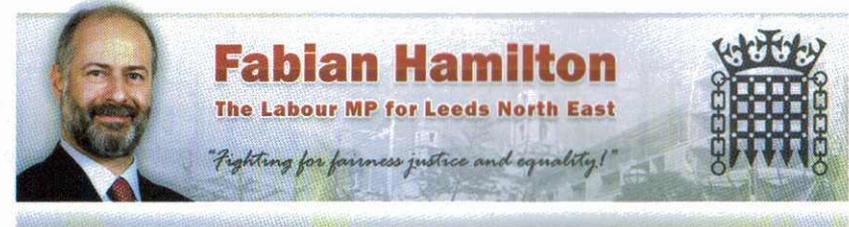


An estimated 20,000 Sikhs attended the Remembrance March & Freedom Rally



Event this year attended by many Sikh families

Sikhs gathered in North Carriage Drive, outside Hyde Park from 11am and were addressed by numerous representatives from Gurdwaras. The Remembrance March started at 1pm and wound its way through central London streets and ended in Trafalgar Square at around 2.30pm. The Freedom Rally followed with both English and Punjabi speakers, a specially prepared 30-minute video that was shown in two parts to Sikhs on the big screen and a floral tribute to the Shaheeds. The video was shown earlier in the day to non-Sikhs in Trafalgar Square. Politicians from all political parties sent messages of support and former Minister John Spellar MP once again addressed Sikhs. Simon Hughes the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats who has made his views very clear on the self determination of Sikhs was delayed and not able to reach the Freedom Rally before it concluded.



Dear Friends,

I am sorry that I am unable to join you for the Sikh Federation's Annual National Sikh Convention which is taking place on Sunday 19th September in Wolverhampton. I wanted to send my warmest greetings to all your delegates as the newly elected Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for UK Sikhs. It is a pleasure and a privilege to be following in the footsteps of my dear friend and former colleague Rob Marris.

I thought that you would like to know that our immediate priorities for the APPG are:

- *To persuade over 40,000 public bodies systematically to monitor Sikhs as an ethnic group, despite the categories in the 2011 Census. This will ensure a fair provision of public services to the Sikh community*
- *To make sure that the government keeps its promise to introduce a Code of Practice on Sikh articles of faith that is endorsed by Parliament – a breach of the Code would be taken into account by tribunals and courts when dealing with any dispute arising out of the implementation of the Code*
- *To press for a radical improvement in how the government engages with the Sikh community through better consultation with organisations like the Sikh Federation (UK)*

The APPG also has the challenge of taking up international issues on behalf of UK Sikhs and include:

- *Taking up Sikh identity and human rights issues at an international level.*
- *Ensuring the exclusion from the UK of individuals directly involved in torture, fake encounters, disappearances, genocide and other crimes against humanity.*
- *Supporting the Sikh campaign for justice for the June and November 1984 massacres.*
- *Support for a change to Article 25 of the Indian Constitution and laws, such as the Hindu Marriage Act 1955, so the Sikh faith is properly recognised by the Constitution.*
- *Because of the continued injustices against Sikhs in the Indian sub-continent to support the Sikhs' legitimate right to national self-determination.*

I hope that our priorities meet with your approval and I look forward to a strong working relationship between this Parliament and all Sikhs living in the United Kingdom. Your contribution to the health and welfare of our economy and society is a source of pride to all UK citizens, whether Sikh or non-Sikh.

With all my best wishes,  
Yours sincerely,

Fabian Hamilton  
Labour Member of Parliament for Leeds North East

[www.leedsne.co.uk](http://www.leedsne.co.uk)