





# Overview

## ***A Message from the Chairman***

The last 12 months has been a remarkably busy period with some huge events and achievements. The biggest success achieved by the Sikh community in the UK has been to produce and actively use the Sikh Manifesto to make a massive positive impact. This has resulted in empowering the community and raising awareness of politicians and the public of the Sikh contribution and issues where we would like to see progress.

A political roadmap has been provided by the Sikh Manifesto for all British politicians over the next five years setting out the most important demands of the Sikh community. Over the next two to three years we hope to demonstrate some notable achievements.

The Sikh Federation (UK) has in the last couple of years reached new heights in terms of recognition, respect and public profile. The UK Government, Ministers and officials, acknowledge and have high regard for the leading role and grassroots strength of the organisation. We have had some landmark meetings, like with Nicola Sturgeon, the First Minister of Scotland and Leader of the Scottish National Party.

The Sikh Network is already in place, smoothly functioning and will be of great assistance in the political arena in helping deliver the Sikh Manifesto. However, the Sikh Federation (UK) itself must restructure, develop and expand to meet the increasing demands. New branches will be established over the next two years and our target is to have a presence in every region of the UK, including Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

We also have a growing recognition of the leading role played by the Sikh Federation (UK) in all major campaigns, in particular by the numerous active Sikh youth groups working in different fields. Many now wish to join and become part of the future development and leadership of the organisation in years to come.

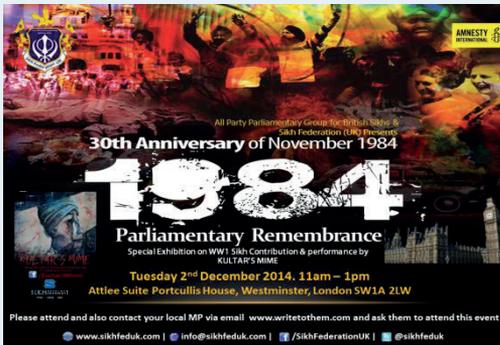
Our work is not confined to the UK so we will also be setting out a vision for uniting like-minded Sikh organisations across Europe and the globe. An international five-point plan will be announced and we will work with others to take this forward.

***Bhai Amrik Singh***  
***Chair Sikh Federation (UK)***



# SIKH FEDERATION (UK) ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

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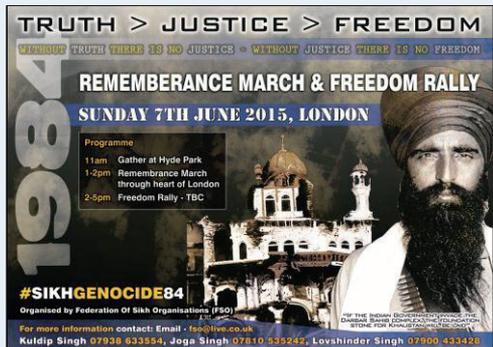

 All Party Parliamentary Group for British Sikhs & Sikh Federation (UK) Presents  
**30th Anniversary of November 1984**  
**1984**  
**Parliamentary Remembrance**  
 Special Exhibition on WWI Sikh Contribution & performance by KULTAR'S MING  
 Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014, 11am – 1pm  
 Atlee Suite Portcullis House, Westminster, London SW1A 2LW  
 Please attend and also contact your local MP via email [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com) and ask them to attend this event  
[www.sikhfeduk.com](http://www.sikhfeduk.com) | [info@sikhfeduk.com](mailto:info@sikhfeduk.com) | [/SikhFederationUK](https://www.facebook.com/SikhFederationUK) | [@sikhfeduk](https://twitter.com/sikhfeduk)



**MASS SIKH LOBBY & PROTEST**  
 for release of Sikh political prisoners  
 to coincide with  
**Prime Minister's Questions**  
 Wednesday 15 July from 11am to 1pm  
 Thousands to protest in Parliament Square  
 Hundreds to lobby inside Parliament  
 Show solidarity and support for 83-year old  
 US resident **Bapu Surat Singh** on hunger  
 strike for >180 days



**THE SIKH MANIFESTO**  
 2015 - 2020  
 Chant the Name, **Worship Gurbani**, Disciplined  
 Don't Smoke, **Compassionate**, Race Equality, **Protector**  
**Selfless Service**, **See God in All**  
**Honest**, **One God, I am a Sikh**  
 Work Hard **Help the Disadvantaged**, **Brave**  
**Fearless**, **Respects all Paths**  
 Gender Equality, **Attitude**, **Don't Drink**  
 Meditate on God, **Don't Drink**, **Distinct Appearance**



**TRUTH > JUSTICE > FREEDOM**  
 WITHOUT TRUTH THERE IS NO JUSTICE - WITHOUT JUSTICE THERE IS NO FREEDOM  
**REMEMBRANCE MARCH & FREEDOM RALLY**  
 SUNDAY 7TH JUNE 2015, LONDON  
 Programme  
 11am Gather at Hyde Park  
 12pm Remembrance March through heart of London  
 2-5pm Freedom Rally - TBC  
**#SIKHGENOCIDEB4**  
 Organised by Federation Of Sikh Organisations (FSO)  
 For more information contact: Email - [fsob@live.co.uk](mailto:fsob@live.co.uk)  
 Kuldip Singh 07938 633554, Joga Singh 07810 535245, Lovshinder Singh 07900 433428

# BUILDING A STRONGER POLITICAL VOICE IN THE UK AND ABROAD

## SIKH FEDERATION (UK) ANNOUNCE SIKH MANIFESTO THAT WILL IMPACT ON HOW SIKHS VOTE AT THE GENERAL ELECTION



The National Sikh Convention attracted over 10,000 Sikhs over the three days - making it the biggest political event of its kind in the UK. The annual convention took place as normal at Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Sedgley Street, Wolverhampton.

The event was organised by the Sikh Federation (UK), the one and only Sikh political party that was established in September 2003 to give the Sikh community a stronger political voice and protect and promote the interests of UK Sikhs.

The convention set out the idea of producing and launching by January 2015 a Sikh Manifesto - the vision for British Sikhs in the next Parliament. The convention also reflected on the outcome of the Scottish Referendum.

2014 has been a significant year for the British Sikh community following the revelations of British involvement in the June 1984 massacre at the Sikhs' holiest shrine in Amritsar. It is widely accepted in the Sikh community that the review in January led by the Cabinet Secretary and requested by David Cameron has proved insufficient.

It was explained the Sikh Manifesto would call for:

- greater Sikh representation in the House of Commons and Lords
- the UK Government and its agencies to abandon the term 'Asian' and recognise 'Sikh' as an ethnic classification in the 2021 Census
- the introduction of a Statutory Code of Practice on the 5Ks and Sikh turban (Sikh articles of faith)
- the allocation of a suitable site in central London for a permanent monument to highlight Sikh sacrifices in the First World War that will be funded through public subscriptions
- the main political parties to support an independent judge-led enquiry into British involvement in the 1984 Sikh Genocide – over 200 UK politicians across the political spectrum have already given unequivocal backing, including the Scottish Government
- UK Government recognition of the 1984 Sikh Genocide and backing from the permanent members of the UN Security Council for a UN-led inquiry
- UK Government working with other governments to exert pressure on France (and Belgium) to honour decisions by the UNHRC with respect to discrimination against turban wearing Sikhs



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

‘The Sikh Manifesto setting out our demands is important to all the main political parties. Despite a narrow victory against Scottish independence the outcome of the Scottish Referendum means big changes across the UK. We predict the outcome in Scotland will have significant implications at the General Election next year.’

The main political parties who are hoping to form the next government have in recent times made it clear that they want and need the Sikh vote and will therefore be closely monitoring the development of the Sikh Manifesto.

At the convention the Sikh Federation (UK) also announced the establishment of a Sikh Network. A UK-wide network of around 1,000 Sikh campaigners and activists taking forward political work. It is expected to have members covering at least 100 Parliamentary constituencies, with a focus on monitoring progress on the Sikh Manifesto at a local, national and European level. The main effort of activities of the Sikh Network will be to monitor progress against the Sikh Manifesto, co-ordinate associated political events and discuss changes in strategy and direction to help deliver the demands set out in the Sikh Manifesto.

40-50 target constituencies for May 2015 were also touched upon. In Wolverhampton South West Sikhs were urged to bring back Labour’s Rob Marris and replace the incumbent Paul Uppal who has proved very disappointing.

### **SIKH FEDERATION (UK) COMMENDED BY MINISTER FOR TRANSPARENT APPROACH TO DEVELOPING THE SIKH MANIFESTO**

3 November 2014

Representatives of the Sikh Federation (UK) today met with Lord Ahmad the Minister appointed in July by David Cameron with a specific responsibility for engaging with faith communities.

It was an open and positive meeting lasting over an hour that focused on progress with the Sikh Manifesto that will be officially launched in January 2015.



The full range of issues likely to be set out in the Sikh Manifesto were touched upon. The Minister was very supportive of this development and the transparent way in which consultations were taking place and younger Sikhs were being actively involved.

The Minister was also interested in the concept of the Sikh Network linked to the Sikh Manifesto that was drawing on representatives from existing organisations, professionals and younger Sikh groups.

Lord Ahmad, himself a Punjabi, praised the Sikh Federation (UK) on representing the views of the grassroots of the Sikh community and impressed by the ability of the organisation to attract mass support through Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations.

He indicated the persistence of the organisation over many years to raise a number of challenging issues was now widely recognised and respected by UK politicians. No doubt this has been helped by extensive mainstream media exposure in the last 12 months for the Sikh Federation (UK) that has considerably raised the public profile and wider appeal of the organisation.



Those who represented the Sikh Federation (UK) at the meeting with the Minister were its Chair, Bhai Amrik Singh, General Secretary, Bhai Narinderjit Singh and two of its advisers Bhai Sukhvinder Singh and Bhai Dabinderjit Singh.

### **30 YEARS AGO INDIA FORCED THATCHER TO STOP SIKHS CELEBRATING BIRTH OF FIRST GURU IN LONDON FEARING VOICES OF PROTEST REGARDING NOVEMBER 1984 SIKH GENOCIDE WOULD BE RAISED**

18 November 2014

The UK Government caved into Indian Government pressure 30 years ago by interfering and preventing Sikhs celebrate the birth of the first Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of the Sikh faith.

Margaret Thatcher, Geoffrey Howe and Leon Britton feared Sikhs may use the occasion to raise voices of protest regarding the truth of the November 1984 Sikh Genocide.



On Sunday 18 November 1984, exactly 30 years ago today, Sikhs wanted to celebrate the birth of the first Sikh Guru by holding a Nagar Kirtan, a procession led by the Panj Piare (the five beloved ones) followed by the Guru Granth Sahib Ji, the holy Sikh scriptures. The Nagar Kirtan would have involved the singing of hymns on route in central London and they are held without incident every year in many towns and cities throughout the UK and across the globe where there are a sizeable number of Sikhs.

However, 30 years ago the Foreign Secretary, Geoffrey Howe stated in a full Cabinet meeting on 15 November 1984 that if the religious procession took place on 18 November 'it would create the danger not only of inter-communal violence in the United Kingdom, but of profoundly serious repercussions on relations between the United Kingdom and India including, for example, a possible trade boycott.' There was no possibility of inter-communal violence, the only worry was trade with India.

The Metropolitan Police Commissioner had to assess the risk of public disorder and then to decide whether to ask the Home Secretary, Leon Britton to ban the Nagar Kirtan. The minutes of the Cabinet meeting on 15 November show Geoffrey Howe stated: 'In view of the importance of the British political and commercial interests at stake, it would be necessary to explore every possibility of preventing the march from taking place.'

Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister summed up the discussion by stating: 'that the Government, faced with the possible consequences of a Sikh march in London, should not remain passive' and suggested even a postponement of the Nagar Kirtan 'offered no satisfactory solution' implying there should be a ban.

The Cabinet meeting minutes of 22 November 1984 shed more light on Indian Government pressure and the failure of the UK Government at the time to stand up to Indian intimidation. Geoffrey Howe stated: 'the British High Commission in New Delhi had reported continuing threats in Indian governmental circles of a trade boycott in the event of behaviour by the Sikh community in the United Kingdom which the Indians might regard as provocative. This posed a serious risk: export contracts worth £5 billion could be at stake. The march by Sikhs in Central London, which had been due to take place on 18 November, had been banned (by the Home Secretary).'

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



‘What happen exactly 30 years ago today was scandalous. India successfully interfered in the rights of British Sikhs to hold a religious procession worried we may exercise our democratic right to protest about the November 1984 Sikh Genocide. Margaret Thatcher is not alive today to answer questions, but Geoffrey Howe and Leon Britton owe an explanation and apology to the British Sikh community.’ (Len Britton died in January 2015)

30 years later Sikhs have still not had justice for the November 1984 Sikh Genocide and are holding a serious of awareness raising events to continue to exert pressure on UK politicians to compel the Modi Government to take action.

## British Sikhs demand inquiry into Thatcher Government’s role in 1984 Operation Bluestar



Times of India – 1 Jan 2015

LONDON: The British Sikh community has warned political parties going into general elections in May this year that failure to initiate an independent public inquiry into whether the Margaret Thatcher-led British government provided military assistance to India in planning Operation Blue star 30 years ago, will cost them the all-important Asian vote.

The Sikh Federation (UK) said on Thursday that it will be releasing the Sikh Manifesto 2015-2020 and naming a prioritised list of 50 target seats where the 700,000 strong Sikh community can determine who is elected in May 2015.

The Federation is also sending letters to the leaders of each of the main political parties to clarify their positions by March 31, with regards to demands set out "in the Sikh Manifesto so the British Sikh community can be advised on the merits of each of the political parties".



Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK), said "Despite David Cameron's attempt in mid-January 2014 to limit the political damage by getting the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Jeremy Heywood, to produce and present a report to Parliament with unprecedented speed, we have been successful in winning the wider debate for a fuller independent inquiry and not letting this be brushed under the carpet".

"We said it would only be a matter of time before further revelations and the inevitable need for an independent public inquiry. By the time of the 30th anniversary of the June 1984 massacre we had already secured the support of over 200 UK

politicians - MPs, MEPs, Prospective Parliamentary Candidates, MSPs and Welsh Assembly members from nine political parties. With the General Election around the corner this number is expected to double in the next few months".

The Federation said "Last week newly-released files from the Irish National Archives under the 30-year rule have revealed how Margaret Thatcher in November 1984 was paranoid about British Sikhs. It is hugely surprising Thatcher would bring up the Sikh question while discussing Irish nationalists".

Fearing a backlash from the politically active Sikh community in UK, British Prime Minister David Cameron recently asserted that there was "absolutely no direct involvement" of the Margaret Thatcher government in the planning of the infamous attack by the Indian Army to flush out militants from the heart of the revered Golden Temple.

Staring at a general election in 2015, Cameron realizes that offending Britain's Sikh population could be political suicide. Cameron said "Around 30 years ago, a great tragedy unfolded at the Sri Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar. Many lives were lost and the scars in the Sikh community still run deep. So when documents came to light a few weeks ago raising the possibility that the then-UK



Government was involved in the Indian Army's operation, I immediately set up an inquiry to find those answers."

Cameron added "I hope the manner in which we have investigated these dreadful events will provide some reassurance to the Sikh community, here in Britain and elsewhere."

The community was also found to be very politically active. Around 3 in 4 Sikhs have voted in different elections in the last 4 years. Around 2 in 3 voted in the 2010 general elections.

## **UK SIKHS SHOW THE WAY TO THEIR INDIAN COUNTERPARTS ON OPERATION BLUESTAR**

2 January 2015

Chandigarh, The Sikh leadership in Punjab and Delhi has always tried to sweep under the carpet the sensitive issues that concern the community except when these are to be exploited during the elections to seek votes. However, it is the Sikh community in United Kingdom that is now setting an example by coming out with the Sikh Manifesto for the 2015 elections there. The issue of Operation Bluestar, the biggest tragedy faced by the Sikhs in the last century, is to be at the core of this agenda.

Going by the reports appearing in a section of the Media, the Sikh Federation (UK) which has a large following in England, has decided to demand an inquiry into the role played by the Margret Thatcher government in Operation Bluestar. The Sikh community numbering about 700,000 is effective in about 50 seats. The Sikh Federation (UK) has decided to write to all the main political parties on the demands listed in the Sikh Manifesto. The response of the political parties to this agenda would largely influence the decision making by the Sikh voters.



It may be mentioned that a storm had been created when certain papers were released by the British government relating to the advice sought by the Indian government in executing Operation Bluestar, the storming of the Golden Temple in Amritsar by the army in June, 1984 to flush out Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his armed associates. Hundreds of innocent men, women and children were killed in that Operation that left permanent scars on the Sikh psyche. However, the Sikh leaders from time to time have been trading over this tragedy of

immense magnitude. Despite that fact that Punjab is having fourth Akali Dal government, the exact number of the people who died is still not available. It is a different matter that the law and order is a state subject.

After Operation Bluestar, the next big tragedy was the planned killing of the Sikhs in Delhi following the assassination of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984 by her two Sikh security men. Sikh men were burnt alive and their women raped. Justice still eludes the victims. The Narendra Modi government announced compensation of Rs. 5 lakh each to the victims. But then this has to be seen in the context of forthcoming elections to the Delhi Assembly. The irony is while it is the BJP government that has announced the compensation, the Shiromani Akali Dal, the alliance partner, is just bargaining for a few seats rather than setting any Sikh agenda.

The Sikhs are decisive in about two dozen Assembly seats in Delhi. Articulating the Sikh view in Delhi are the Delhi Akali Dal, the Shiromani Akali Dal and then there is the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee. However, going by the past history, the concern of the Sikh leadership about the victims has only been superficial. The Akali Dal parades them in Punjab during elections. In Delhi



also, it is the same exercise. For the last several years, these victims who participate in these demonstrations have started charging from the organisers after realising that it was their tragedy that was being exploited by these unscrupulous leaders.

The Akali Dal extended unconditional support to the Bharatiya Janata Party to form the government at the centre in 1996. Perhaps this was the biggest blunder. That was the time to dictate terms. For years, Parkash Singh Badal used to claim that it was only the Akali Dal that had extended unconditional support to the BJP and that the bond between the two parties was everlasting. That bond is now under strain. The people have a right to know as to who gained from that unconditional support offered by the Akali Dal when the party could press for judicial probe into Operation Bluestar and the November 1984 killings of the Sikhs in Delhi and other states.

But then even at the cost of repeating, it may be recalled that Badal backtracked from the poll promise of his own party in 1997 to order a judicial probe into the turbulent period in which thousands of lives were lost. This issue becomes all the more relevant now when the Akali Dal is exhibiting the pretence of going back to the Panthic agenda after harping on the development agenda for the last seven and a half years which has failed to yield any results.

The Sikhs are a global community and the Sikh issues are alive in UK, USA and Canada. Of course, the Sikhs have never looked back in history, even after Guru Gobind Singh made the supreme sacrifice by way of the martyrdom of his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur and his four young sons, two of whom were bricked alive. But then Operation Bluestar and the situation that followed needs answers. The Sikh leadership in Punjab and Delhi has been characterised by escapism.

It is the global Sikhs who are now showing the way. It is time for the Sikh leadership in Punjab to learn some lessons. It is never too late.

Senior journalist and author Jagtar Singh is rooted in vast professional experience spanning more than 35 years, starting his career with The Indian Express in Chandigarh, the paper he worked with for about quarter of a century beginning 1978 covering religio-political dynamics of Punjab.

## Plea for inquiry over Thatcher documents

**Express & Star**

Express and Star – 5 January 2015



A group representing British Sikhs has demanded a full inquiry into the relationship between Margaret Thatcher's government and the government of India in the 1980s.

Margaret Thatcher was informed of allegations a confidant had taken part in sex parties with under-age boys, a senior police officer said.

It comes amid a raft of concerns from newly released cabinet papers including one that showed there were discussions surrounding an Asian sports event in the Black Country. The cabinet papers showed how Mrs Thatcher's government had said it would try to persuade the BBC not to give much publicity to the Sikh Asian Games taking place in West Bromwich in the summer of 1985.

The games were to be named controversially in honour of the Sikh bodyguards who assassinated former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. She was killed by two of her bodyguards, Satwant Singh and Beant Singh, in the aftermath of Operation Blue Star, the Indian Army's June 1984 assault on the Golden Temple in Amritsar which left the Sikh temple heavily damaged.

Bhai Amrik Singh, chairman of the Sikh Federation, said: "Despite David Cameron's attempt in mid-January 2014 to limit the political damage by getting the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Jeremy Heywood, to



produce and present a report to Parliament with unprecedented speed, we have been successful in winning the wider debate for a fuller independent inquiry and not letting this be brushed under the carpet.

“The terms of reference of Heywood’s internal inquiry for David Cameron and the associated report were intentionally kept very narrow and limited to a time period that avoided the link between military assistance for the attack on our holiest shrine in return for increased trade with India.

“We said it would only be a matter of time before further revelations and the inevitable need for an independent public inquiry,” he added.

The newly released papers show that in February 1985 the Thatcher cabinet noted that in India ‘resentment against the United Kingdom lingered on and that Indian feelings still ran high over the activities of Sikh extremists in the United Kingdom’.

And in July’s cabinet paper Mrs Thatcher is minuted as saying that “urgent approaches should be made to Sandwell District Council, the University of Aston, the leaders of the Sikh community and other individuals who might have influence in the matter, in order to secure the withdrawal of the naming of the games for Mrs Gandhi’s alleged assassins.”

It went on to say: “High level approaches should also be made to the BBC and other radio and television news organisations in the United Kingdom about the undesirability of major publicity for this matter.”

Last year it was revealed that in 1984 a British SAS officer had advised the Indian government before the Golden Temple assault, dubbed Operation Blue Star.

However, it was said in Parliament that the officer’s advice to the Indian government was not followed.

## UK Sikhs Make Manifesto Debut, Say Singh is King of Voting Clout

THE NEW  
**INDIAN EXPRESS**

The New Indian Express – 24 January 2015



CHANDIGARH: Sikhs living in the United Kingdom have strengthened their electoral presence in a historical move ahead of the May 2015 General Elections for the House of Commons. For the first time, they have come up with a manifesto. It will be realised on January 31. The British Sikhs have put a ten-point charter including the introduction of a statutory Code of Practice of the 5Ks and the Sikh turban to prevent discrimination at workplace and public spaces; Independent public inquiry into the actions of the UK Government in the Operation Bluestar; allocation of a suitable site in central London for a permanent monument to highlight Sikh sacrifices in the first World War besides other demands.

The Sikh Manifesto is to be officially released at Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara in Southall (London) on January 31. Sikhs have a considerable influence on 50 to 100 seats of parliament out of 650. The Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats, UKIP and Scottish National Party cannot ignore them.

Talking with the Sunday Standard, Dabinderjit Singh, Principal Adviser to the Sikh Federation (UK) said, “Discussions are on with the main political parties. However, the representatives of each have already confirmed to the Federation that they may be in a position to give firm public commitments on five or six of the demands in the manifesto before the General Election. This demonstrates that the British Sikh community is making the maximum use of its voting clout through the Federation.”



The representatives from all 250 UK Gurdwaras and all Sikh organisations besides ministers, MPs and prospective parliamentary candidates are expected to attend the function.

#### Priorities for representation

- Regardless of their own ethnicity, MPs elected in May 2015 and those who represent a large number of Sikh constituents must ensure that all issues of importance to the British Sikh community are appropriately and adequately raised and acted upon in Parliament and by the next government.
- Over the next five years, the British Sikh community working with the political parties must encourage more Sikhs to enter politics and remove barriers that prevent them from entering the House of Commons.
- The three main political parties and the Prime Minister after the General Election must ensure that a number of Sikhs are appointed to the House of Lords at the earliest opportunity.

### 'Sikh Manifesto' a Game-changer in UK Polls?

The New Indian Express – 13 February 2015

CHANDIGARH: The comprehensive 10-point manifesto, which was unveiled by the Sikh Federation in the UK, barely three months before the European nation heads to the general elections in May could well prove to be a game-changer.

And the Federation is also in the process of organising meetings with each of the main political parties next month to elicit their views on the manifesto. The Federation and the Sikh Network that was established to produce and monitor progress on the manifesto over the next five years will tomorrow hold a follow-up event at Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Smethwick in the West Midlands which is expected to witness the participation of 15- 20 MPs and PPCs from the 50 target seats.

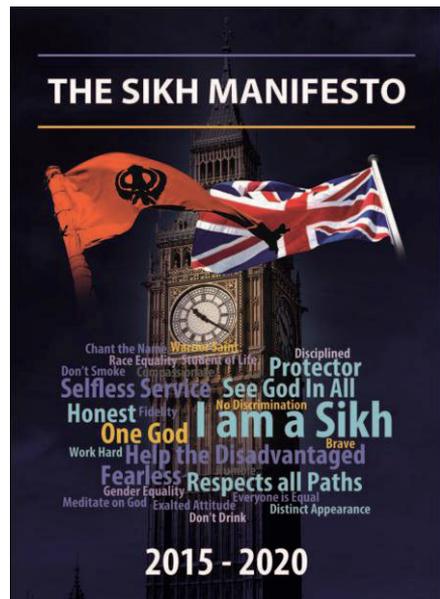
This will be followed by an event in Parliament on February 26 before the Federation holds meetings with each of the main parties. The general elections appear to one of the UK's most unpredictable with what appears to be a significant shift towards the Scottish National Party and the emergence of the UKIP and to a lesser extent the Greens in England and Wales. Both the Conservatives and Labour are currently projected to fall short of an overall majority.

Bhai Amrik Singh, Chair of the Sikh Federation said, "Many, who have studied the manifesto, the identification of 50 target seats and examined the voting strategy being put in place have been impressed and commented that the British Sikh community has politically come of age."

The Federation is in the process of organising meetings with each of the main political parties in March to establish their views on the manifesto while locally Gurdwaras and Sikhs are being encouraged to proactively use the manifesto to question the sitting MPs and those challenging them in around 120 constituencies.

According to Amrik Singh, the Sikh Manifesto, that was officially released on January 31 in London, is surprisingly far more innovative and far-reaching than the Jewish equivalent released a few days later.

THE NEW  
INDIAN EXPRESS



"The impact of the Sikh Manifesto is expected to go far beyond the 50 target seats as some issues in the manifesto resonate much more widely with politicians and the public at large. For example, the issues of more effective representation in Parliament, positive action to prevent discrimination and addressing human rights violations," he said.

## Sikh groups flex political muscle in UK



Times of India – 3 March 2015

CHANDIGARH: In the last 10 years there have been only five Sikh MPs in the UK (three Labour, one Conservative and one Liberal Democrat). This despite the fact that there are more than 700,000 Sikhs in the country and more than half a million may be eligible to vote. What's more, given the political equations forming in the run up to the general elections in May, there may be no Sikh MP in the 2015-2020 Parliament out of 650, fear a few community groups there.

Now, taking the matter in their own hands, Sikh Federation UK, Sikh Council UK and The Sikh Network launched a campaign six months back to consult the community members and put together a list of top issues that they want political parties to follow up. 37-year-old management consultant Jas Singh of the Sikh Network told TOI, "We have 50 target seats, where the margin of the winning MP was less than the number of Sikh voters in the constituency. There are 40 other seats where Sikhs can make a palpable difference."

"Discussions on a manifesto started back in August 2014 with many members of the Sikh organizations and Sangat. Following 6 nationwide consultations and many meetings the 10 points on the Manifesto were finalized," the Network website reads.

Perhaps aware that some of the issues raised are more emotive than locally relevant, the Network representative points out, "These points reflect the complete spectrum of Sikhs in Britain, not all will agree with every single word, however all Sikhs can relate to and adopt most or even all objectives set out in the Sikh Manifesto and will use it to challenge candidates and political parties to clarify their position prior to the May 2015 General Election and also judge their backing for Sikh issues after being elected."

## Right time as there is possibility of a coalition government



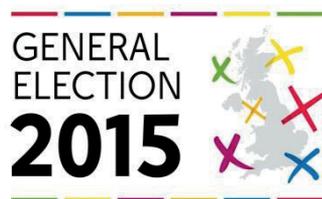
Times of India - 3 Mar 2015

AMRITSAR: Expecting a coalition government in the United Kingdom following the May 7 general elections, the Sikh Manifesto launched by Sikh Federation (UK) is aimed at raising awareness among leaders of all political parties of the community's issues.

Dabinderjit Singh, one of the key people behind the Sikh Manifesto, told TOI on Monday, "It is widely predicted that neither of the main parties (Labour and Conservative) will get an outright majority so they will need to form a coalition. The most likely coalition will be Labour and the Scottish National Party (SNP)."

He said that backed by the newly-formed Sikh Network, the Sikh Federation had 1,200 professionals including academics, lawyers and political activists from the community work to bring out the manifesto. "They will have a responsibility for deciding on strategy over delivery of the demands set out in the Sikh Manifesto over the next five years," he explained.

Dabinderjit Singh said that they had written to the leaders on January 1 to meet and discuss the party commitment and pledges before March 31. "Meetings will be taking place in late



March and early April with the leaders of Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and SNP parties," he said.

About the Sikhs contesting elections, he informed that Labour had four Sikh candidates Dr Amanjit Jhund (East Dunbartonshire), Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesei (Gravesham), Charanjeet (Chaz) Singh (South West Devon) and Bally Singh (Kenilworth and Southam). Conservatives and Liberal Democrats had three and two Sikh candidates, respectively.

While stating that the Sikh votes mattered, Dabinderjit Singh said, "We are heading for a coalition government. We not only have 50 target seats (set out in the Sikh Manifesto), we also have another 40 plus seats where Labour expects to gain from the Conservatives or Liberal Democrats. Sikhs may hold the balance of power there."

## Britain's Sikh community tightens grip, asks candidates to adhere to the Sikh Manifesto



Times of India – 9 Mar 2015

LONDON: Britain's Sikh community are tightening their grip over the outcome of the upcoming general election with the Sikh Federation (UK) writing to the main candidates in over 100 constituencies urging them to adhere to their recently released election manifesto demanding allocation of a site in central London for a permanent monument to Sikhs who lost their lives in the World War 1.

The politically active Sikh community have also called for a statutory code of practice on items of the Sikh faith in order to prevent discrimination in the workplace and public spaces besides an independent inquiry into the actions of the British government in relation to the Amritsar and Delhi massacres of 1984.

50 Target Seats - The Sikh Battle grounds			
#	CONSTITUENCY	MAJORITY	SITING MP/PARTY
1	Walsingham South West (Con)	481	SPENCER, Paul
2	Brentford & Isleworth (Con)	1,938	MALCOLM, Mary
3	North Walsingham (Con)	522	TRAVIS, Colin
4	Salisbury (Lib)	175	WINDHAM, Christopher
5	Derby North (Lab)	653	WINDHAM, David
6	Walsall North (Lab)	600	WAL, Edward, Carol
7	Walsall South (Lab)	1,735	WALSH, Christopher
8	Bradford East (Lab)	815	WATKINS, Graham
9	Wirrwick & Leamington (Con)	1,333	AYZELT, Ian
10	Bromsgrove, Edgbaston (Lab)	1,274	WATKINS, Simon
11	Derby North (Lab)	669	WATKINS, Simon
12	Hillingdon & Uxbridge (Lab)	1,274	WATKINS, Simon
13	Sheff (Lab)	3,523	WATKINS, Simon
14	Sheff (Con)	1,333	WATKINS, Simon
15	Walsingham North East (Lab)	2,484	WATKINS, Simon
16	Laford, South (Lab)	5,291	WATKINS, Simon
17	Thames (Lab)	51	WATKINS, Simon
18	Brentwood (Con)	309	WATKINS, Simon
19	Sheffington, Nelson (Lab)	382	WATKINS, Simon
20	Sheff South (Con)	312	WATKINS, Simon
21	Redon (Con)	706	WATKINS, Simon
22	Hove, Hove & Winton (Lab)	62	WATKINS, Simon
23	Walsingham South East (Lab)	4,393	WATKINS, Simon
24	West Bromwich East (Lab)	4,496	WATKINS, Simon
25	Telford (Lab)	928	WATKINS, Simon
26	Crewe North (Lab)	2,842	WATKINS, Simon
27	Leam North (Con)	194	WATKINS, Simon
28	Bayes & Walsingham (Lab)	15,824	WATKINS, Simon
29	Sheff East (Con)	294	WATKINS, Simon
30	Worley (Lab)	18,756	WATKINS, Simon
31	West North (Lab)	1,387	WATKINS, Simon
32	Derby South (Lab)	4,122	WATKINS, Simon
33	West Bromwich West (Lab)	5,831	WATKINS, Simon
34	Greenham (Con)	9,321	WATKINS, Simon
35	Walsingham West (Lab)	1,722	WATKINS, Simon
36	Leam North East (Lab)	4,146	WATKINS, Simon
37	Sheffington, Test (Lab)	2,413	WATKINS, Simon
38	West North (Lab)	4,484	WATKINS, Simon
39	Bromsgrove, Perry Barr (Lab)	11,968	WATKINS, Simon
40	Walsingham South (Lab)	708	WATKINS, Simon
41	Crewe North West (Lab)	4,288	WATKINS, Simon
42	Bromsgrove, Valley (Lab)	2,492	WATKINS, Simon
43	Huddersfield (Con)	9,797	WATKINS, Simon
44	Sheff East (Lab)	1,483	WATKINS, Simon
45	Crewe North East (Lab)	15,724	WATKINS, Simon
46	Leam East (Lab)	14,882	WATKINS, Simon
47	Crewe West (Lab)	1,142	WATKINS, Simon
48	Drif & Thame (Lab)	5,793	WATKINS, Simon
49	Leam West (Lab)	4,817	WATKINS, Simon
50	Leam South (Lab)	3,129	WATKINS, Simon

Bhai Amrik Singh, the chair of the Sikh Federation (UK) said each candidate in the 100 constituencies are being asked to provide a general endorsement of the Sikh Manifesto and indicate those items they are prepared to specifically commit to and work on if elected.

Amrik Singh said "So far the Labour leadership continue to take the Sikh vote for granted. We will publish a summary of the responses from candidates in the 100 constituencies one month before the general election on May 7. We are also planning meetings with the leadership of the main parties to get their commitment to specific issues that will be shared widely with the 700,000 strong Sikh community. Sikh voters will then look at both the support of the party as well as the individual candidates before casting their vote".

The candidates include the 50 target constituencies with a strong Sikh presence and 50 additional constituencies where Sikhs may hold the balance of power. The 50 additional constituencies are mainly due to the surge in support for UKIP and the collapse of the Liberal Democrat vote.

In the manifesto, Sikhs have also demanded more effective Sikh representation in the Houses of Parliament.

Labour leader Ed Miliband said "I think the Sikh Manifesto 2015-2020 demonstrates the commitment of British Sikhs to be actively involved with the political process and is a great way of empowering the British Sikh community". Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg said "The British Sikh community's energy and devotion in campaigning to drive forward our shared values of fairness, compassion and tolerance is a priceless contribution to the modern Britain we live in today".



Britain is home to 600,000-800,000 strong Sikh community.

The Federation is also sending letters to the leaders of each of the main political parties to clarify their positions by March 31, with regards to demands set out "in the Sikh Manifesto so the British Sikh community can be advised on the merits of each of the political parties".

### British Sikhs could hold the balance of power in the general election

Extract from The Times - 12 March 2015



British Sikhs could hold the balance of power in the general election, community leaders claimed yesterday, as Philip Hammond, the foreign secretary, opened a new deputy high commission in Chandigarh, the capital of the state of Punjab, in India. There are 500,000 Sikhs who can vote in Britain and the Sikh Federation said there were 50 constituencies where Sikh votes could make or break a party

### SIKHS TO PLAY SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN DETERMINING OVERALL OUTCOME OF GENERAL ELECTION AS FORMAL CAMPAIGNING STARTS

London - 30 March 2015



The Sikh Manifesto was launched on 31 January at Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall and followed by launch events on 14 February at Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Smethwick and 26 February in the UK Parliament. Sikhs up and down the country have in the last eight weeks been pro-actively using the Sikh Manifesto when contacting and meeting sitting MPs and candidates.

The UK Parliament has been dissolved today and an intense campaign lasting just over 5 weeks has formally started. Actions that Sikhs will take at the local and national level in this period will be critical, but Sikhs are well placed locally and nationally with the Sikh Manifesto to make a huge impact.

In the next 48-hours the Sikh Federation (UK) will be releasing dramatic information from two pulse surveys conducted in early January and late March of the voting intentions of the Sikh community in 60 key constituencies currently held by Conservatives or Liberal Democrats that Labour hope to gain to become the largest party and form the next government. Labour and the Conservatives will want to take note of what the results of the two pulse surveys of 1,500 Sikh voters show and reflect on next steps to influence the Sikh vote.

Bhai Amrik Singh the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK) said: 'The pulse survey will demonstrate both parties have it all to play for as far as the vote of the Sikh community is concerned.'



The Sikh Manifesto has already achieved so much, not least increased awareness by Sikhs, non-Sikhs and politicians across the political spectrum of Sikh demands. The Conservative-led government and opposition politicians have already taken certain positive actions and made specific pledges with the Sikh vote in mind. These range from an announcement about the possibility of a Sikh regiment in the British army, the Foreign Secretary's visit to Punjab and opening new offices in Chandigarh, the promise of more Sikh ethos schools, tackling grooming and forced conversions working with the Sikh community and general support from politicians of all parties for a site in central London for a permanent monument for Sikh sacrifices in the First World War.

At the weekend the Sikh Federation (UK) held a meeting of Gurdwara representatives in the North East. There was an excellent response to the Sikh Manifesto from Gurdwara representatives from Newcastle, Sunderland, Darlington, Middleborough, South Shields and Stockton on Tees. Events are being held in Wales (Cardiff) and the South West (Bristol) next week and the North West (Manchester) the week after.



### **SNP LEADER GIVES BACKING TO SIKH MANIFESTO AT MEETING WITH SIKH FEDERATION (UK)**

Edinburgh - 25 April 2015

The Sikh Federation (UK) and representatives of the Sikh community from Glasgow and Edinburgh met earlier this week in Edinburgh with Nicola Sturgeon, the First Minister in Scotland and the Scottish National Party Leader to discuss the Sikh Manifesto.

Nicola Sturgeon had been excellently briefed and was very familiar with each of the issues set out in the Sikh Manifesto. She became the first British leader of a political party to give her full backing to all key issues set out in the Sikh Manifesto in as far as they are applicable to the Scottish Government.

This creates considerable pressure on the Labour Party leadership who have most to lose in Scotland and have yet to formally respond to the specifics set out in the Sikh Manifesto. If Labour form the next government it is predicted by most that the SNP will be a strong influence in many of the decisions made. Over 100 Labour hopefuls are backing many of the items in the Sikh Manifesto.

It therefore makes sense for the Labour leadership to recognise the writing on the wall and back key issues in the Sikh Manifesto that it may be forced to support anyway. Otherwise Labour risks losing



many Sikh votes south of the border in 15-20 key constituencies it hopes to win to form the next government. This could prevent Labour coming to power. One of these issues is the call for an independent public inquiry into UK Government involvement and assistance in the Sikh Genocide in 1984.

Following the revelations last January concerning assistance to the Indian Government in relation to the Sikh Genocide in 1984 the Conservative leadership has been saying many positive things about the contribution of the Sikh community fearing a backlash at the polls. The Prime Minister's address at Vaisakhi even stole phrases and the logic of the Sikh Manifesto. However, positive headlines and nice pictures in the mainstream media alone are unlikely to win a large number of Sikh votes without specific commitments to some of the issues set out in the Sikh Manifesto.



Following the meeting Bhai Amrik Singh said:

'We are delighted with the backing we received today from Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP who we are convinced will play a significant role in influencing the decisions of the next UK Government.'

'She is the one leader who has stood out and has been a breath of fresh air in the run up to the General Election. The SNP has shown the courage and conviction to fully support the 10-point Sikh Manifesto. She told us the SNP would do everything it can to ensure progress on the Sikh Manifesto after the General Election.'

'Her warmth and genuine desire to work with the Sikh Federation (UK) to help the Sikh community was clear to see.'

Some of the specifics discussed were:

- the need to get Sikhs in Scotland to take an active part in politics and Sikhs to become elected representatives for the SNP
- separate ethnic monitoring of Sikhs by public bodies in Scotland and inclusion of a separate ethnic tick box for Sikhs in the Census 2021 in Scotland
- the introduction of a statutory Code of Practice on the 5Ks and Sikh turban in Scotland building on the excellent work already undertaken
- allocation of a site in Edinburgh (or Glasgow) for a permanent monument to highlight Sikh sacrifices in the First World War
- support and influence of the SNP on the next UK Government for an independent public inquiry into UK Government action in the lead up to and after the 1984 Sikh Genocide building on the Scottish Parliament resolution on 10 June 2014 supporting such an inquiry
- recognition of the events of 1984 as a Genocide and support for a UN-led inquiry
- support for the application of self-determination to the Sikhs where Nicola Sturgeon did not mix her words

Nicola Sturgeon when interviewed on the BBC on Wednesday referred to the excellent meeting she had with the Sikh Federation (UK) about the Sikh Manifesto.



## THE SIKH MANIFESTO AND SIKH VOTE

London - 30 April 2015

On 7 May we will see one of the most fascinating outcomes of a General Election in recent British history.

The SNP will be the clear winners and dominate in Scotland. However, the size of their victory will also have massive implications in determining the way we are governed in Westminster and some of the policies that will be implemented.

Almost half a million voters registered in the final hours before the voter registration deadline last week, but millions still remain disillusioned, do not trust politicians and may simply decide not to vote.

Any future UK Government needs to recognise and appreciate the immense past and present Sikh contribution, the community being a role model in terms of integration whilst maintaining a distinct separate identity and address undisputable and specific Sikh concerns.

The Sikh Manifesto has identified real community issues that resonate and Sikhs have been encouraged to raise and openly discuss them with candidates. Some of the issues are also larger UK society wide issues of broader interest to politicians. The manifesto was produced and launched in January 2015 to empower the Sikh community, engage with all the political parties and convince candidates the Sikh vote of around half a million matters more than ever.

Around 300 candidates from all the main political parties have actively engaged with the Sikh Manifesto and many have provided positive feedback and indicated their support for a number of the issues. The Sikhs are predicted to have one of the highest voter turnouts on 7 May at around 80% and have been identified by both the main parties as a target community. However unlike previous years, the Sikh community are better prepared.

Thousands of copies of the Sikh Manifesto have been distributed over the Vaisakhi celebrations across the UK and both David Cameron and Ed Miliband have been personally handed copies. Several political hustings focused on the Sikh Manifesto have taken place. The Sikh community have been very clear to politicians, that only action on key Sikh issues will secure votes.

The Sikh Network with the help of the Sikh Federation (UK) is developing a regional infrastructure across the UK that will have the capacity to reach over 300 MPs through active Sikh constituents after the 8 May. The network will be responsible for the strategic direction and measuring progress over the next five years against the issues set out in the Sikh Manifesto with existing organisations best placed taking forward specific items.

## MASSIVE SUCCESS OF THE SIKH MANIFESTO

9 May 2015



The Sikh Manifesto was launched on 31 January 2015 and has exceeded all expectations in terms of its impact. It empowered Gurdwaras, Sikh organisations and individual Sikhs to raise issues with hundreds of Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs) in a way never seen before in UK-wide elections.



The Sikh Manifesto and the associated campaign received unprecedented mainstream media coverage that reached and captured the imagination of Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike. The response to the Sikh Manifesto from

PPCs across the political spectrum was hugely encouraging. 180 candidates were specifically targeted in over 120 constituencies.

The Sikh Network working with the Sikh Federation (UK) provided information to the Sikh community in advance of the General Election on the relative support for the Sikh Manifesto in over 50 constituencies to help Sikhs decide how to vote. In a number of marginals with many Sikh voters, such as Bedford, Brentford and Isleworth, Ilford North, Northampton North and Wolverhampton South West the Sikh Manifesto made a real difference in terms of the final outcome despite the overall trend in the national vote.

Securing the support of so many elected MPs for issues set out in the Sikh Manifesto gives the British Sikh community a solid foundation to work with Government and opposition parties.

However, the real hard work starts now and the Sikh Network encourages those interested in any of the issues in the Sikh Manifesto to become active within the Network at a local, regional or national level and help progress relevant issues over the next five years.

### Tories 'attracting more Sikh voters'

The Times - 26 May 2015

**THE  TIMES**

The Conservatives are "closing the gap" on Labour among Sikh voters, according to a pressure group. Research by the Sikh Federation UK came amid a disputed claim that one million ethnic minority voters gave their backing to David Cameron.

The Conservatives have previously struggled to win over non-white voters, with those from an ethnic minority background less likely to back the party than the population as a whole. The gap led to warnings that the Tories would struggle to win majorities in future amid changing demographics.

A new survey by Survation for the British Future think tank found that the Conservatives narrowed the gap at the election. It said that Labour won the support of 52 per cent of ethnic minority voters, as opposed to 33 per cent for the Conservatives. It said that the Tories performed especially strongly among Hindus and Sikhs. Sunder Katwala, its director, said the figures showed that non-white voters were more "up for grabs" than ever before.

However, Rob Ford, an academic at the University of Nottingham, cast doubt on the findings, saying that it was "hard to tally" the British Future results with constituency results. He said that there was little evidence of a big swing to the Tories in areas with large Hindu and Sikh populations.



Bhai Amrik Singh, chairman of the Sikh Federation, described the British Future survey as misleading, pointing out that the group's claim that 49 per cent of Sikhs voted Conservative was based on just 63 respondents.

However, Mr Singh said the federation's own research suggested that about 36 per cent of Sikhs voted for the Conservatives at the election, compared with 15 per cent in 2010.

He said that the new government had an "opportunity" to work with Sikh groups on issues such as the campaign for a memorial to the Sikh contribution in the First World War. He also warned: "The new Labour leadership will have to take a good hard look at itself in terms of the Sikh vote if it is to stop and reverse this trend of losing Sikh votes."

### The race for the Sikh vote

British Future – Extracts from Blog posted on 1 June 2015



The largest survey of Sikh voting behaviour in the General Election shows an increasingly competitive race for the Sikh vote.

The Sikh Federation (UK) survey of over 1000 Sikh voters found Labour ahead, with almost half the vote, with the Conservatives up strongly to 36%, a rise of over twenty points.

The survey was conducted by the Sikh Network, a nationwide network of activists from Sikh organisations, youth groups and the professions, who had been gathered to help to put together a 'Sikh Manifesto' ahead of the election.

These activists were asked to approach Sikh voters in their areas and regions by email and through Gurdwaras to gauge how Sikhs had cast their votes. The organisers were thus able to gather responses from 1,000 Sikh voters across 190 constituencies during the fortnight after the General Election.

The large scale of the Sikh Federation (UK) survey makes it the most important snapshot to date of Sikh political engagement in the 2015 election.

The Conservatives are growing in confidence about their ability to compete with Labour for a greater share of ethnic minority votes than in the past, and have particularly sought to target aspirational voters in southern marginals. David Cameron won positive press coverage from a high profile visit to a Gravesend Gurdwara, on Samantha Cameron's birthday.

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

"Despite the revelations in January 2014, under the 30-year rule, about UK Government assistance in the attack on Sri Harmandir Sahib in June 1984, the Conservatives have closed the gap on Labour in terms of the percentage of the Sikh vote.

"In the next five years the Conservative government has an opportunity to work with us on delivering items in the Sikh Manifesto, such as separate ethnic monitoring of Sikhs, a site in central London to build a monument to mark Sikh sacrifices in the First World War and a Code of Practice relating to the Sikh identity.

"The new Labour leadership will have to take a good hard look at itself in terms of the Sikh vote if it is to stop and reverse this trend of losing Sikh votes."

The Sikh Federation (UK) surveys were also used to deepen engagement among the Sikh community in British politics and to promote the themes of the 'Sikh Manifesto'. The group will continue to advocate on these themes with the new government and parliament.

It includes a call for a permanent memorial to the Sikh soldiers in the First World War. 300,000 Sikhs fought with the Indian Army in the First World War, with growing public awareness of this significant contribution during the First World War centenary.



## PRESSURE FOR INDEPENDENT PUBLIC INQUIRY INCREASES WITH FURTHER EVIDENCE OF 'DEMONISATION' OF SIKHS IN THE MID-1980S

London – 23 June 2015

More declassified papers from 1985 show Margaret Thatcher held a very one-sided view of Sikhs in the UK.

As further revelations emerge it shows selling arms to India and breaking India's link with the Soviet Union was critical to Margaret Thatcher and she was heavily influenced by pressure and misinformation from India that was trying to hide its Genocide of the Sikhs.

In a meeting in Moscow on 13 March 1985 Charles Powell (now a Conservative member in the House of Lords), the private secretary to Margaret Thatcher records that she told Pakistan President, Zia-ul-Haq that 'Britain's problems with India' stemmed from the activities of Sikhs in the UK.

Similarly the Pakistan President showed he was also under considerable pressure regarding the trial of Sikh hijackers describing them as 'an irritant in India/Pakistan relations'.

What has been glossed over is young Sikhs (mainly from outside Punjab) hijacked a plane in July 1984 in protest against the attack on Sri Harmandir Sahib (often referred to as the Golden Temple Complex) and the army actions aimed at the elimination of tens of thousands of Sikh youth throughout Punjab. In January 1986 a court in Lahore sentenced three of the Sikhs to death and seven Sikhs were given life imprisonment.

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



'These revelations will keep coming and the British public and the law-abiding British Sikh community deserve to know the truth as to why British Sikhs were demonised. It is now clear India interfered in our right to protest and highlight atrocities in India after pressure from India following the Genocide of Sikhs in 1984.'

'Sikhs in the UK were and probably continue to be falsely portrayed in a negative light by India. After over a decade of pressure and lobbying we believe the current UK government and politicians in general are not like predecessor governments and politicians from 30 years

ago and they know and appreciate the positive contribution and value of Sikhs in the UK.'

'The Indian High Commission in London has made clear it strongly resents any criticism from the UK Government and UK politicians, but India needs to accept British Sikhs have every right to ask its own government and politicians they elect to raise matters that India does not want aired.'

'Trade with India is important to the UK Government, but this should not stop the UK Government from being critical over the lack of justice for the minority Sikh community.'

'The demands for an independent public inquiry into UK Government assistance to attack the Sikhs' holiest of holy places in June 1984 will continue to increase with every new revelation.'

'The scale to which British Sikhs have been demonised by India and how India has been instrumental in only allowing Sikhs that are silent on India's human rights record from having the ear of the UK Government is increasingly coming to the fore.'

'Until recently India has been successful in pressuring the UK Government not to have regular dialogue with Sikhs demanding greater rights, including an independent Sikh state. However, times are quickly



changing and even India has realised opposition and exposure will not stop and the UK Government and India itself has no choice but to engage and negotiate with Sikhs about their legitimate claims.’

### **TRADE WITH INDIA TOO IMPORTANT FOR UK GOVERNMENT TO TAKE UP MASS KILLING OF SIKHS IN 1984**

London – 9 July 2015

Lord Singh is rightly quick to issue a Press Release on his activities in the House of Lords. On 18 June 2015 he asked why the UK Government consider the mass killing of Sikhs in India to be a matter for the government of India alone, and not an issue for the international community.

The Earl of Courtown in his response on 2 July 2015 said: ‘The events of June 1984 at Sri Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar led to a tragic loss of life and remain a source of deep pain to Sikhs everywhere around the world. We recognise the deep scars that this event left and the incredibly strong feelings that exist to this day.’

But he ended his response by saying, however ‘relations between the Sikhs in India and the Indian government is an internal matter between those two parties.’

Tom Watson MP last month while addressing tens of thousands of Sikhs gathered in central London to mark the 31st anniversary of the Sikh Genocide in June 1984, said that when India approached the UK government and it decided to provide military assistance to the Indian authorities for the June 1984 attack it ceased to be an internal matter for India.

Subsequently there have been revelations that India successfully threatened the UK Government with dire consequences for multi-billion pound trade deals unless Sikhs in the UK were silenced. Last month documents revealed Margaret Thatcher admitted as much to the President of Pakistan at a meeting in Moscow in March 1985.

Lord Singh has chosen not to issue a Press Release probably because he has been pushing for an international inquiry and is livid that this is now the fourth time he has been officially told in the House of Lords by the UK Government that the mass killing of Sikhs in 1984 is an internal matter for India.



It first came in a debate organised by Lord Singh on 3 March 2014. He was told by Baroness Warsi at the end of the 90 minute debate that this was ‘a matter for the Indian authorities’. Lord Singh then raised the issue as a written question and Baroness Warsi provided a written response on 7 April 2014 and then the Earl of Courtown responded orally on 16 June 2014 with the same answer. In between Lord Singh upset by the UK Government response unilaterally called for a boycott of the Vaisakhi event at 10 Downing Street in April 2014. His decision of a unilateral call for a boycott was flawed as he failed to consult and take others into his confidence and this was rejected by those who decided his was a lone voice and chose to attend.



This is now the fourth occasion that Lord Singh has been officially told since the revelations in January 2014 of UK government involvement in the attack on Sri Harmandir Sahib to forget an international inquiry. There may have been numerous times in the last 18 months he has been told unofficially the UK Government is not interested in taking up this matter on the international stage because of trade interests. Lord Singh needs to decide what he will be doing next to secure a UN-led inquiry and if he can continue to operate on his own.

Following the debate he organised on 3 March 2014 when more peers and the official Opposition spokesman, Lord Triesman called for an independent judge led inquiry into UK Government involvement he has repeatedly blamed (or paid a complement to) the Sikh Federation (UK) for making this the main focus of his debate despite having little notice. He should not be bitter about being unsuccessful in getting the support of fellow Lords, but accept after self reflection it is unwise not to build alliances and try and do everything alone.

As more papers and revelations emerge Lord Singh needs to reflect on his single track approach as he has been knocked off the rails. It is still not too late for Lord Singh to join hundreds of other politicians who are supporting an independent judge led inquiry into UK Government involvement as they see merits in the British public deserving the truth of why Britain chose to provide military assistance to attack the Sikhs' holiest of holy shrines.

The Sikh Federation (UK) has said all along that we need an independent judge led inquiry into UK Government involvement and this is the most likely reason that will result in the UK Government eventually supporting an international inquiry.

At the Sikhs in politics event at PwC earlier this week the matter was raised by Richard Fuller the Conservative MP for Bedford and the Sikh Federation (UK) revealed it had commissioned a researcher to look at files in the UK National Archives and build on the issue highlighted in the Sikh Manifesto. Initial enquiries have shown that the National Archives appears to be missing over 100 potentially relevant files that Sir Jeremy Heywood claimed in February 2014 to have examined.



Freedom of Information requests had been made or are planned that will confirm many of these are Foreign Office files. Despite the 30 year rule, the most recent FCO files on South Asia are only from 1981. The FCO files from 1982 will be released to the public on 24 July 2015. The FCO has a large backlog of legacy files and is the department with the greatest difficulties meeting its obligations under the Public Records Act 1958 and the more recent Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. The FCO is well behind in meeting the transitional timetable for the move from the 30 to the 20 year rule. According to the timetable, FCO should have already transferred all files up to 1984. FCO's current estimate is that they will not complete transferring files until 2016.

Four files that are extremely relevant and should have been released in January 2015 have been 'temporarily retained' or kept closed. Following a Freedom of Information request for these four files the Cabinet Office has said some of the information was exempt from disclosure and the rest was being prepared for release. An appeal has been lodged with the Information Commissioner. The researcher has stated 'British involvement with India's security forces did not stop in 1984. Given the scale of trade interests at stake, I would imagine that British advisers continued to help the Indian military,



police and intelligence agencies'. This initial research suggests the pressure on the Conservative government for an independent public inquiry will continue to increase and a change in the leadership of the Labour Party is expected to result in determined efforts for the truth.

### **HOUSE OF LORDS NEEDS IMMEDIATE REFORM TO BRING BACK SOME PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN POLITICIANS**

- Size should be reduced by introducing a retirement age of 70
- Costs cut by reducing the number of peers and reducing the £300 tax-free daily allowance of peers living in London
- Improve public confidence by avoiding or limiting peerages for large party donors and ensuring better representation for those who are presently under represented in Parliament

London – 3 August 2015

The Sikh Federation (UK) supports calls for the reform of the House of Lords, especially following the scandal involving Lord Sewel. The start of the reform process needs to be immediate to bring back some public confidence in politicians.

The biggest complaint is regarding the size of the Lords and this will not be helped if in the next few weeks the Prime Minister announces another fifty or so new peers, who are expected to be mainly Conservative and Liberal Democrats. There are also media reports to suggest lessons have not been learnt for the cash for peerages controversy with a number of large party donors being lined up for the Lords.

It is beyond believe that peers are not subject to a retirement age. Peers should be subject to a retirement age of 70, bringing them into line with the practice for Law Lords and bishops. If this is seen as too radical an interim measure would be to have a retirement age of 75 or 80.

A retirement age would immediately reduce the number of peers and costs as well as leave room for a large number of new peers depending on the retirement age selected. The introduction of a retirement age would not be restricted to a one off reduction, but would result in a continuous lowering of numbers over time as peers reached the retirement age. To get the buy in of the main parties where it would have the most impact and to ensure sufficient independent cross-benchers the current inter-party and independent balance may need to be maintained.



Lord Bew, the chair of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, recently said peers over 75 should lose their £300 tax-free daily allowance. In effect those over 75 would keep their titles and their right to travel expenses if they wish to speak in the Chamber, but controversially peers living outside London would in effect be excluded. Lord Bew's proposal would reduce costs, but a retirement age of 70 would have a much bigger impact. A further step that could be taken to reduce costs further is to reduce the attendance grant worth

up to £300 a day for peers who live in London who clearly do not need to pay for accommodation costs when in London.

If the new peers to be announced by David Cameron include as reported a 'big handful' of large party donors this will prove to be a major mistake in terms of public confidence. The fewer the number of large party donors who are made peers the better. They should also be individuals that have proven



skills and experience that will be an asset in the Lords. The introduction of a retirement age would however leave room for a large number of new peers to ensure better representation.

All the political parties are aware that Sikhs are hugely under-represented in Parliament. There are currently 41 ethnic minority MPs, up from 27 in 2010, but for the first time since 1992 none are Sikh. Sikhs are also hugely under-represented in the Lords with only three compared to 20 Hindus and 13 Muslim peers (see Sikh Manifesto published in January 2015).

A retirement age of 70 or even 80 may result in two of the three Sikh Lords having to step down. Although academic if a retirement age was introduced, both peers would also be impacted on by Lord Bew's proposal, but as both are reasonably well-off and live in London this may be the least of their worries. On the upside, there is a long and illustrious Anglo-Sikh history and there are plenty of younger and very capable British Sikhs for each of the parties to choose from in the 700,000-strong Sikh community.

The Labour Party that has traditionally had the support of the Sikh community at the ballot box embarrassingly has no Sikhs in either the Commons or Lords. Despite all of Labour's promises regarding the need for Sikhs in the House of Lords it would be a huge surprise if a Sikh is one of the six Lords nominated by Labour.

## DEFENDING AND PROMOTING THE SIKH IDENTITY

**Sergeant-at-arms hailed as Canadian hero shows role is not just ceremonial**

**theguardian**

Guardian – 22 October 2014

The Guardian stated the man being hailed as a hero for reportedly shooting a gunman in Canada's national parliament was Kevin Vickers, who, as the holder of the post of sergeant-at-arms, is officially responsible for safety and security within the grounds of the building.



The Guardian continues: He spoke publicly last year of how he viewed Canada and his role after he was honoured by Sikhs when he moved to ensure that the community's sacred Kirpan was allowed in Canada's legislature in the face of a motion by Quebec nationalists calling for its prohibition.

"I see your wearing of the Kirpan, especially in our parliamentary buildings, as exactly that, respecting your dignity."

"But just as the Kirpan issue came before us last winter, we are reminded how vigilant we must be to not only defend but promote the practices, cultures and religions of all peoples.

"As head of security, I am going to accept and embrace your symbol of faith within the Parliamentary Precinct," he said.

### **BANDI CHHOR DIVAS GETS SPECIFIC MENTION BY ALL THREE UK PARTY LEADERS**

The Sikh Federation (UK) approached all three party leaders directly or through contacts and informed them about Bandi Chhor Divas. All three mentioned Bandi Chhor Divas: the PM in his speech in 10 Downing Street, Ed Miliband in his written Diwali message and Nick Clegg in his video message. Ed Miliband's written Diwali message gave it the most prominence. He stated: "The British Sikh



community celebrate Diwali as it coincides with the Day of Freedom, or Bandi Shor (Shodh) Divas. The Guru was freed from imprisonment and arrived in Amritsar on the Day of Freedom.<sup>7</sup>

## UK-based Sikh outfit seeks protection for community post-charlie hebdo attack



Time of India – 20 January 2015

AMRITSAR: Post the Charlie Hebdo attack in France, a UK-based Sikh organization has emphasized on the need for security to the community members and their religious places in UK, US, Canada and other countries stating Sikhs had been subject to hate attacks after the 9/11 incident due to mistaken identity.

Talking to TOI on Monday, Amrik Singh, chairman of Sikh Federation, said, "These incidents provide another reminder that resources need to be allocated towards security of the Sikh community and our religious institutions that have been attacked in UK, US, Canada, Greece and Australia by those who are ignorant." Reportedly, Sarandeve Singh Bhamra, 24, came under a racially-motivated attack last week with a machete and hammer by Zack Davies, who was shouting "white power", while he was shopping in a Tesco mall in Wales.

Amrik Singh alleged the incident had been downplayed despite containing all the ingredients of a terror attack. "The attack in North Wales has left the 24-year old Sikh in hospital with deep cuts on the left hand, his back and the back of his head. Davies has now been charged with attempted murder," he said



He said UK's former chief rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks said British Jews were scared to go to the shops in the wake of Paris killings. "Ironically, politicians and the police are rightly concerned with anti-Semitism and stepped up their presence outside sensitive Jewish sites, but are silent on the need to ensure the safety of Sikhs, one of the most visible ethnic minorities," said Amrik Singh.

He said since the 9/11 incidents, Sikhs had often been the first to be targeted following Islamist terror attacks in the West. "How many Sikhs need to be murdered or seriously attacked for the authorities to provide an adequate response?" he questioned. Amrik Singh said that last week's attack and numerous other cases of violence against Sikhs in the UK and across the globe on account of "mistaken identity" since 9/11 were a reminder that the community continued to be failed by the authorities. "Sikhs have made an immense contribution in all spheres of public life in Britain through honest hard work. They continue to promote equality and tolerance towards others through interfaith dialogue and charitable work," he said.

## BRITISH ARMY CONSIDERING CREATION OF SIKH REGIMENT

London - 23 February 2015 -

Mark Francois, the Armed Forces minister said today in Parliament that Lieutenant General Sir Nicholas Carter, the Chief of the General Staff is examining proposals to create a Sikh regiment,

He said the idea "may well have merit" and a reserve company is also under consideration that would inherit many of the "proud traditions of Sikh regiments" from the Army's past.

Speaking during defence questions, Conservative former defence minister Sir Nicholas Soames urged ministers to "do away with political correctness" and raise a Sikh regiment.



The Mid Sussex MP told Mr Francois: "You will be aware of the extraordinary gallant and distinguished service by Sikhs to this country down the generations.

"Would you not agree with me that it's high time to do away with the political correctness which infects some of this thinking and actually raise a Sikh regiment to serve in the country and make up a very serious gap in our Armed Forces?"



Mr Francois replied: "With regard to your specific suggestion, can I say that you are one of a number of Members of Parliament who have raised this suggestion with me recently.

"We have passed this possibility on to the chief of the general staff (CGS), who is now looking at this issue and we are awaiting CGS's comments back.

"But the idea may well have merit."

Conservative Rory Stewart, chairman of the Defence Select Committee, also asked Mr Francois to look at a Sikh company within the reserves "as a starting point".

He added: "There seems to be much more possibility within the reserves to begin what seems like an excellent idea."

Mr Francois replied: "I said earlier the idea may have merit but we've looked at one specific option, or are looking, at the possibility of a reserve company - not least one which would inherit many of the proud traditions of Sikh regiments going back through many years in the British Army.

"(Defence Minister Julian Brazier) is leading on that particular aspect and he too remains in contact with CGS on this matter."

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

"We welcome this announcement. It is a shame it has come so close to the General Election, but we will urge any future UK Government to make this a reality. Prince Charles confirmed his support to us a few months ago and it is good politicians are now beginning to see the logic. Better late than never."

"We expect the Conservatives and Labour to make a number of other positive announcements in the next couple of months as they fight for Sikh votes. The Sikh Manifesto sets out many of the issues where we need progress."

### Regiment of Kirpan carriers

Times of India – 2 March 2015



UK defence ministry's announcement that it is considering a proposal for re-establishing a Sikh regiment has raised several questions

In the backdrop of efforts to bring the contribution of Sikhs in World Wars I and II on the behalf of Great Britain to the fore, the UK government's move for a Sikh regiment its royal army has elated the community representatives and youngsters abroad. However, a section of the diaspora is apprehensive about the feasibility of the proposal. It's not the first time that the proposal has been floated.

There is no doubting that any army in the world will be proud to have the best of this martial race in its ranks. The Sikhs have a long history of valour with around 83,000 of them giving the ultimate sacrifice



in the WW-I. The Sikh Regiment on British Indian Army was one of the most highly decorated regiment of the entire British Empire at its peak.

So it was not a matter of surprise when last week, British defence minister Mark Francois gave assurance in the House of Commons that the British Army was examining proposals to re-establish a Sikh Regiment, on the lines of the erstwhile British Indian army. The proposal drew accolades from a few other MPs and representatives of Sikh community, many of whom have been raising the demand for long.

Yet it remains to be seen how exactly the plan takes final shape, say several UK-based Sikhs. "We welcome the proposal of a Sikh regiment. However, we are cynical as the announcement has come on the eve of the general election and when the British Army is being scaled back. By 2020, the British Army would have been reduced by 20% or 20,000 soldiers," says Bhai Amrik Singh, chair, Sikh Federation UK.

Raising questions over the viability of a Sikh regiment in the British army, he points out that there are only about 130 Sikh soldiers in the British army. "Currently, the smallest regiment is the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment having 350 soldiers. But a Company has 80 to 130 soldiers. We should have a distinct Sikh Company as soon as possible as the first step towards a Sikh Regiment," he suggests.

With a population of around seven lakh, Sikhs presently comprise around 1% of the UK population and the objective should be to have a similar proportion in the army, he sums up. In fact in 2007, the UK's ministry of defence had scrapped a similar plan after the Commission for Racial Equality warned that the move could be seen as divisive and perceived as "segregation".

Recalling the rejection, the supporters of Sikh regiment now argue that once formed, the regiment would be no different from the Scots, Welsh and Irish Guards or the Royal Gurkha Rifles which recruit exclusively from Nepal and is considered a model infantry regiment.

But to ensure that the proposal goes through, they suggest that the government should not only "do away with the political correctness" but also encourage young Sikhs to join army, by offering incentives. Many young Sikhs at present do not find a career in the army lucrative.

Meanwhile, a few social activists feel that having a Sikh regiment will help raise the profile of Sikhs in Britain as ordinary people will start recognizing their identity. "Regrettably, Sikhs are often victims of mistaken identity and are wrongly grouped with Islamist terrorists, who are perpetrators of vile acts in the name of their religion. They are also bearded and turbaned, but their values could not be more different. This will help improving social cohesion in Britain where Sikhs live in significant numbers and make a huge contribution in every field. In addition, it will also instill a strong sense of belonging in the Sikhs for their adopted country Britain," says Dr Rami Ranger, chairman, The British Sikh Association.

Sukhdeep Dhillon, a City Sikhs ambassador with UK-based City Sikhs Network, whose grandfather fought for the British army in WW-II from the Sikh regiment, agrees with him and adds that reviving a Sikh unit has been suggested several times in the past. But time has now come when the government should give the proposal a practical shape.

### **THE 2015 VAISAKHI MESSAGE FROM DAVID CAMERON**

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

"The 2015 Vaisakhi message from David Cameron is excellent. This sort of message at Vaisakhi from the British Prime Minister would have been unheard of a few years ago."

"British politicians are now talking about the Birth of the Khalsa and the Sikh community alone. This is down to the hard work of many organisations, including the Sikh Federation (UK) and many individuals working behind the scenes that are finally getting British politicians to appreciate what the



Sikh Nation has to offer not just Britain, but the world.'

'No doubt the impending election on 7 May and the importance of the Sikh vote has focused the minds of leading politicians.'

## Love jihad appears on UK Sikh Manifesto, raises murmurs of protest

Times of India – 16 March 2015



CHANDIGARH: Demand of action against love jihad as one of the top election agendas in the 'manifesto' issued by a Sikh group in the UK has upset the liberal-minded community members there. Speaking to TOI, they termed its inclusion in the list of community's top concerns to be raised during the UK general polls "an exaggeration".

Listed at number four as 'grooming and forced conversion', the issue is one of the 10 mentioned in the 'Sikh Manifesto' prepared by organizations like Sikh Federation UK and the Sikh Network. The issue of justice for 1984 Sikh carnage is listed at number eight. "We prepared the manifesto after several rounds of consultations with community members. Even though the issues are not listed in any priority order, they are all important," Jas Singh of Sikh Federation UK told TOI over phone. "It has been seen that guys of Pakistani origin or Muslims pose as Sikhs or Hindus and try to get into relationships with Sikh girls. These matters are not reported to authorities by the families of girls out of shame," he added.



Jas Singh said that they held six big consulting meetings with community members, each attended by a few hundred people and received over thousand responses over email. Over 1,100 volunteers, including professionals, teachers and lawyers, connected to The Sikh Network gave the manifesto a final shape after the consultations.

Unimpressed, director of development studies at Oxford Brookes University, UK, Prof Pritam Singh said that it may have been an issue a decade ago, but did not deserve to be on the community's agenda in the upcoming national elections. "It has become fashionable to use the term 'grooming'. Moreover, these issues cannot be sorted out by creating ghettos."

Educationist and former president of a Gurdwara in Southall, Dilbagh Singh Chana, said that promoting the idea of Sikh ethos schools, another demand on the manifesto, and talking of grooming in the same breath was counterproductive. "Faith schools encourage separation. And if you think there are forced conversions happening, you should allow more mingling because these things can happen only in an isolated environment."

Author Mahender Singh Dhaliwal said, "Don't blame Muslims. In a country like the UK, people are not normally hardcore religious. If parents are worried about their children marrying into other religion, they should talk to the kids about it. It is not an election issue."

The Sikh Network website demands that the UK government issues guidance to have accurate reporting systems that identifies the ethnicities of victims and perpetrators of grooming and forced conversions to develop and deliver culturally sensitive strategies. The UK government should provide funding to Sikh community organizations specializing in tackling child sexual exploitation and forced conversions.

Explaining the rationale behind the demand of accurate reporting, Lord Indarjit Singh of Wimbledon said, "Grooming and forced conversion is an issue. When we approach the government, they ask for statistics. However, it not an issue confined to Sikhs. We are a non-complaining community and our organizations are not as well funded as Jewish or Muslim bodies." However, Lord Singh too reiterated, "It's a bit of exaggeration to bring it to the manifesto."



## Sikh Federation UK

The Sikh Federation (UK) was launched in September 2003 as non-governmental organization. The website claims that to discharge its duties as an effective pressure group, it was registered with the electoral commission as the first-ever Sikh political party in the United Kingdom. However, it is not reported to have contested polls. The organization works to raise Sikh issues and concerns and facilitate consultations by the government and main political parties on the same. Though it claims support of over 150 different organizations, there are no numbers available about its total membership.

### Forced conversion reports

Over a decade ago, there were reports on forced conversion of white, Sikh and Hindu girls in the UK. Last main report on the issue was, BBC's "Inside Out" programme in September 2013, where the reporter travelled to a remote part of the US to meet a 16-year-old British Sikh girl who was "groomed" and sexually abused over a period of time. She is said to be one of a dozen British Sikh girls living abroad to hide their secret. The Sikh Awareness Society UK (SAS), a charity that focuses on family welfare, had claimed to have investigated over 200 reports of child sexual grooming in Britain over the past five years. However, there were no official statistics. In the same month, six men, including two of Indian origin, were jailed at Leicester Crown Court for offences, including facilitating child prostitution of a Sikh girl.

## **ROB MARRIS BECOMES CHAIR OF THE ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP (APPG) FOR BRITISH SIKHS**

London - 1 July 2015



In May Rob Marris was returned as the MP for Wolverhampton South West. His victory for Labour bucked the national trend and it has been widely acknowledged it was down to the public support and campaign from local activists of the Sikh Federation (UK).

The local Sikh community rejected Paul Uppal, despite attempts by him to show on the eve of the election he had some Sikh support. In the eyes of many Sikhs he had proved a huge disappointment as the one and only Sikh MP, especially for lacking the courage to take up any human rights issues on behalf of Sikhs that would result in criticism of India. Sikhs across the UK also recognised how much of a loss it had been in the last five years not to have Rob Marris leading on Sikh issues as Chair of the APPG.

Soon after Rob Marris's victory a most telling remark was made by a senior Indian High Commission official in London who summed up the situation when he said: 'We have lost a good friend in Paul Uppal and are not looking forward to dealing with the challenges that will be presented by Rob Marris.' To British Sikhs this statement from the Indian authorities is like an endorsement for the credentials of Rob Marris and a vote of no confidence in the credentials of Paul Uppal.

The APPG for British Sikhs held its AGM on 30 June and Rob Marris having returned to Parliament once again became the Chair of the APPG replacing Fabian Hamilton. Chris White the Conservative MP for Warwick and Leamington and Emma Reynolds, the Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government agreed to become Vice Chairs of the APPG.

The APPG was established 10 years ago by the Sikh Federation (UK) and Bhai Amrik Singh, its Chair, said:



'We were delighted to see Rob back not only as an MP, but Chairing the APPG. We shared proposals with the APPG in May and are pleased many of these have been adopted at the AGM.'

The APPG agreed that its priority would be three items in the Sikh Manifesto:

- Separate ethnic monitoring of Sikhs and a separate ethnic tick box for Sikhs in the Census 2021 (Section 2)
- The allocation of a suitable site in central London for a permanent monument to highlight Sikh sacrifices in the First World War (Section 6)
- Exerting pressure on France (and Belgium) to stop discrimination against turban wearing Sikhs (Section 7)

Bhai Amrik Singh concluded by adding:

'The APPG agreed to hold an annual celebration of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Gurburb in the House of Commons in late November. This will be a unique opportunity to celebrate what the Sikh faith offers to the world and will be directly supported by the Sikh Federation (UK) and five of our largest Gurdwaras as well as the annual celebration of Vaisakhi in the House of Commons in April.'

'It has not been lost on Rob as to which individuals and Sikh organisations campaigned against him or were used by his opponent prior to the General Election.'

## Guru Nanak's birth anniversary to be celebrated in UK House of Commons



Times of India – 3 July 2015

AMRITSAR: The birth anniversary of first Sikh master, Guru Nanak Dev, will be celebrated in the House of Commons in November.

Amrik Singh, Chair, Sikh Federation, UK, told TOI on Thursday that All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for British Sikhs will organize the event.

The UK has a population of nearly 4.3 lakh Sikhs according to Britain's 2011 census, with London accounting for 126,000. The community has also played a decisive role in the recently held UK polls.



In the run-up to the elections, British PM David Cameron visited various Gurdwaras with an eye on the Sikh vote.

Amrik Singh said, "This will be a unique opportunity to celebrate what the Sikh faith offers to the world. The celebration will be supported by the Sikh Federation (UK) and the country's five largest gurdwaras. Punjab's harvest festival of Vaisakhi will be celebrated in the House of Commons in April."

He said the APPG for British Sikhs held its annual general meeting on June 30 and chose Labour Party MP Rob Marris as its Chair.

According to Sikh Federation (UK), Marris was returned as MP from Wolverhampton South West, bucking the national trend, due to the support of Sikh Federation (UK) activists.

"We shared some proposals with APPG in May, and are pleased that many of these have been accepted," said Amrik Singh.

He said the APPG had agreed that its priority would be get three points in the Sikh Manifesto cleared. The manifesto seeks separate ethnic monitoring of Sikhs, ethnic tick box for Sikhs in the Census 2021, allocation of a suitable site in central London for a monument to Sikh soldiers killed in World War I and to mount pressure on France and Belgium to stop discrimination against turban-wearing Sikhs.



## **FUTURE OF COMMUNITY LANGUAGE QUALIFICATIONS, INCLUDING PUNJABI SECURED**

After the Sikh Manifesto was published an additional election issue concerning the future of GCSEs and A levels in community languages such as Punjabi emerged and led to considerable lobbying. Nicky Morgan, the Secretary of State for Education reacted and two weeks before the General Election wrote to Exam Boards telling them to reverse their decision.



On 22 July Schools Minister Nick Gibb announced the government had stepped in and taking action to work with the boards and Ofqual to make sure as wide a range of language subjects as possible, including Punjabi continue to be taught in the classroom. To avoid any gap in provision in certain the government extended the timetable for awarding organisations to continue with existing qualifications until September 2018

## **HANDS OFF! BRITISH SIKHS TELL INDIA IT HAS NO CLAIM ON THE 'KOH-I-NOOR' DIAMOND IT IS A SIKH ARTEFACT AND IT SHOULD REMAIN IN BRITAIN UNTIL THE SIKH HOMETLAND IS RE-ESTABLISHED**

London - 28 July 2015



Keith Vaz MP today called for the world-famous 'Koh-i-Noor' diamond to be returned to India during Narendra Modi's UK visit in November.

Keith Vaz's comments came in response to Congress MP Shashi Tharoor's speech in May calling on Britain to pay reparations to India. Earlier today Keith Vaz said:

"I welcome Dr Tharoor's speech and the endorsement

of its message by Prime Minister Modi. I share their views. These are genuine grievances which must be addressed."

"There is no excuse for not returning precious items such as the Koh-i-Noor diamond, a campaign I have backed for many years. What a wonderful moment it would be, if and when Prime Minister Modi finishes his visit, which is much overdue, he returns to India with the promise of the diamond's return."

Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK), the largest and most prominent Sikh organisation in the UK has said:

"India has no claim on the 'Koh-i-Noor' diamond."

"It has been stated in debate in the UK Parliament that it is a Sikh artefact. There were many others that were stolen from the Sikh Kingdom that need to be catalogued and preserved for the worldwide Sikh community."



"The Indian regime is the last one on earth Sikhs can trust in preserving the rich Sikh heritage following the confiscation and destruction of priceless documents and scriptures in the Sikh Reference Library in June 1984."

"Indian politicians, whether it be Narendra Modi, Shashi Tharoor or Keith Vaz can demand what ever they want, but they cannot re-write the Anglo-Sikh history or deny what happen in 1984."

"The diamond belonged to the Sikhs and the Koh-i-Noor should remain in Britain until the re-establishment of the Sikh homeland when such matters can be discussed and resolved."

The Koh-i-Noor belonged to the Sikh ruler, Maharaja Ranjit Singh who died in 1839. This was followed by the First and Second Sikh Wars (1845 and 1848) and the annexation of the Sikh Kingdom by the British.

On 29 March 1849, the British flag was hoisted in Lahore and the Sikh Kingdom came under occupation and was annexed. One of the terms of the Treaty of Lahore, the legal agreement formalising this occupation, was as follows: 'The gem called the Koh-i-Noor (belonging to Maharajah Ranjit Singh) shall be surrendered by the Maharajah of Lahore to the Queen of England.' Lord Dalhousie arranged for the diamond to be presented by Maharaja Ranjit Singh's successor, the young Maharaja Duleep Singh, under duress to Queen Victoria.

There are many countries that have tried to claim the Koh-i-Noor, including the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. In 1976, Pakistan Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto asked British Labour Prime Minister Jim Callaghan for the Koh-i-Noor to be returned to Pakistan. The prime minister replied to Mr Bhutto with a polite "No".

There have been repeated requests by India. When the Queen made a state visit to India to mark the 50th anniversary of India's independence from Britain in 1997, many Indians demanded the return of the diamond. In February 2013 David Cameron on the final day of a three day visit to India said the Koh-i-Noor would stay in Britain and ruled out returning the gem to India.

Bhai Amrik Singh added:

"The UK Government should once and for all tell the likes of India, Pakistan and others the rightful ownership and future of the Koh-i-Noor is a matter for Britain and the Sikhs with whom they have a number of treaties."

### **SIKHS DEMAND IMMEDIATE APOLOGY FOR IRRESPONSIBLE AND OFFENSIVE USE OF THE TERM 'SIKH TALIBAN' BY BBC RADIO PRESENTER**

London - 14 August 2015

BBC radio DJ and presenter Bobby Friction has offended Sikhs by using the term 'Sikh Taliban' on Twitter and failing to issue an apology. Instead he has tried to justify his use of the term, that he incredibly continues to describe as a 'metaphor'.

His comments reproduced below have been described as irresponsible and unacceptable by leading Sikh organisations. The BBC has started to receive complaints for what many have described as 'shocking and disgraceful' remarks.

The Sikh Federation (UK) launched an online petition of complaints to the BBC due to the numbers wishing to complain, attracting over 1,000 signatures in the first 24 hours.

There is no room for such language for law-abiding Sikhs and a term



directly associated with an Islamic fundamentalist political movement in Afghanistan that British armed forces have been confronting and laying down their lives. Condemnation of Bobby Friction from the British Sikh community has been swift and widespread.

There are no excuses for causing offence by using the term 'Taliban' that not only reminds Sikhs of sacrifices of the Sikh Gurus at the hands of the Mughal emperors, but also verbal abuse, racist attacks and killings of innocent turban wearing Sikhs in more recent times since 9/11. It is flippant remarks like these that fuel calls for the BBC not to be funded through the licence fee.

The comment by Bobby Friction on Twitter follows his personal desire for Gurdwaras to allow people of different faiths to partake in an Anand Karaj (Sikh religious wedding ceremony) and refusing to accept the Sikh Code of Conduct.



**Bobby Friction** We are seeing the beginning of the Sikh Taliban in this country. Fight them & stand up to them now & Sikhism may have a chance...or let them slowly but surely kill the future of Sikhism with their completely unspiritual version of it. To put it simply, they are in the process of committing a coup within one of the world's major religions...a coup drenched in arrogance & driven by their own lack of confidence in their identity. Dont say you haven't been warned. They don't want love, they don't want peace, and they definitely don't want God...they hunger for rules without understanding & anger without meaning.

The Code states: "Persons professing faiths other than the Sikh faith cannot be joined in wedlock by the Anand Karaj ceremony."

With an increasing number of interfaith marriages a further clarification on the Code of Conduct was issued in 2007 by the authorities in Amritsar that ruled an Anand Karaj can only be between two Sikhs.

Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations in the UK have made clear that if people of different faiths wish to marry they should partake in a civil rather than religious ceremony. If religion is important to one or both they can visit each other's places of worship, offer prayers and as far as Gurdwaras are concerned organise a Langar (free food kitchen) in the Gurdwara.

It is illogical to force marriages at religious places involving two religious backgrounds as the couple lack the solemn and sacred commitments necessary to partake in a religious ceremony.

The Sikh religion has its own guiding principles in married life which are explained during an Anand Karaj. If only one of the two sitting before Guru Granth Sahib Ji, the Sikh Holy scriptures, in the presence of the holy congregation (Sangat), is listening to and accepting the guidance then it becomes a form of disrespect to both the Guru Granth Sahib Ji and the Sangat.

The argument that the Guru Granth Sahib Ji is for all humanity and that the Gurdwara is open to all regardless of religion or social background misses the point. The Anand Karaj is an approved religious ceremony for Sikhs who have total belief in Guru Granth Sahib Ji as the only temporal and spiritual guide.

Bobby Friction's Twitter comment followed similar comments by Sunny Hundal, a freelance journalist and author who was quoted in the Independent on 12 August using the term 'Taliban' and 'thugs' to describe a small number of Sikhs who peacefully protested last week against an interfaith Anand Karaj in Southall. They have totally over reacted and taken advantage of a situation that involved no physical violence or arrests and for personal reasons and publicity.

Interestingly both Bobby Friction and Sunny Hundal were born into Sikh families, but have abandoned and do not accept the teachings of the Sikh Gurus. They mistakenly seem to believe their Sikh origin



and positions of responsibility in the media give them license to be offensive and racist without challenge on the basis of freedom to express their views.

### **BBC RADIO PRESENTER OFFERS UNRESERVED APOLOGY FOR DEEPLY OFFENSIVE COMMENTS**

#### **BOBBY FRICTION CLARIFICATION: My Remarks On Social Media Re: Sikhs.**

I understand my use of the term "Sikh Taliban" as a metaphor has caused offence for some Sikhs. For that I apologise unreservedly. It wasn't my intention to cause pain to those people in the Sikh community who are upset by the remarks, and I hope they understand that was never intended whatsoever.

On reflection I can understand, given the broader context and history, why that term is an offensive one. I regret using that term and I think could have been more judicious in making my point.

I hope we can collectively move on from this with open dialogue & peace in our hearts

DJ Bobby Friction

### **NEGATIVE, BIASED AND EXAGGERATED MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF THOSE PROTESTING TO UPHOLD THE PROTOCOLS FOR THE SACRED SIKH RELIGIOUS WEDDING CEREMONY, THE ANAND KARAJ AMOUNTS TO DISCRIMINATION AND NEEDS TO STOP**

London – 3 September 2015



The Sikh Federation (UK) are increasingly concerned about the negative and biased mainstream media portrayal of those peacefully protesting to uphold the protocols involved with the sacred Sikh religious wedding ceremony, the Anand Karaj.

Use of terms like 'militants' and 'thugs' in headlines from two isolated incidences where protests have taken place, but when

no violence on the part of protesters was involved and no charges or arrests were made is being blown out of all proportions by irresponsible media reporting.

The latest is an article earlier this week in the Daily Telegraph under the offensive headline of: 'Religious militants force mixed-faith couples to abandon wedding ceremonies'

This followed an article several weeks ago in the Independent under the headline: 'Wedding between Sikh bride and non-Sikh groom stopped by 'thugs' at London temple'

In essence these two isolated cases involved internal disputes between those protesting that wanted the management of these Gurdwaras to uphold established protocols and not to give in to various pressures that naturally exist.

We estimate around three thousand Anand Karaj ceremonies have taken place in the last 5-6 weeks in Britain's 250 or so Gurdwaras without any need for protests. Hundreds of couples and their families have been educated about the significance of the Anand Karaj ceremony before going through with it or amicably agreeing to on an alternative arrangement as the couple were not both Sikhs.



The media is failing to adequately explain that protests are very rare and are not targeting the couples but the management committees of Gurdwaras and are about those permitted to partake in the Anand Karaj ceremony. Mixed faith couples that wish to get married are free to do so through a civil ceremony or a religious ceremony that is acceptable and understood by the couple and sanctioned by the relevant authorities that govern the place of worship in question i.e. church, synagogue, temple or mosque etc. Where the bride or groom are Sikh they can still attend the Gurdwara and alternative blessings can be given where friends and family can be invited.

Those with an understanding of the Anand Karaj know it is based on established protocols established by the Sikh Gurus that have been in place for hundreds of years and that these are not subject to negotiation. The recent media headlines appear to have come about as a personal vendetta by a certain freelance journalist mentioned in both articles who has also introduced the highly offensive term Sikh 'Taliban'.

Several radio presenters, some are of Sikh origin, have continued with such abusive terms that in effect amount to racism. Such individuals who are of Sikh origin clearly do not agree with the teachings of the Sikh Gurus and believe they have a licence to use their positions and contacts in the media to offend and unnecessarily bring Sikh religious practices into disrepute.

Sikhs respect other religions, however our Gurus provided a distinct path in its own right with unique emphasis on the equality of all human beings. Sikhs are urged to live honestly, work hard and to look to the needs of their family and wider society. Sikhs believe in one God, the creator of all that exists and is beyond human understanding.

While many faiths share our belief in one God, their view of God is of someone having human attributes of gender, birth, favouritism, jealousy and anger. Sikhism uniquely is in favour of married life and this belief is central to the Anand Karaj ceremony in which the bride and groom affirm that they will henceforth be as one in mutual support and service to family and wider society.



Sikhism teaches that we should be open and honest in our behaviour, particularly in a Gurdwara, and it is therefore wrong for any couple to go through an Anand Karaj with no intention of living according to Sikh teachings as emphasised in the Anand Karaj ceremony. The four perambulations in the Anand Karaj ceremony around the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh Holy Scriptures, are a reminder of this.

There is considerable community frustration that important issues around human rights and identity discrimination continue to be largely ignored by the media, but there is some sort of obsession around the need for the Anand Karaj ceremony to be available to mixed-faith couples. This naturally raises some serious concerns around the motivation or intent with the continued pursuit of this issue from a negative, biased and exaggerated point of view.

The media have so far failed to compare Sikh practices with other major religions in this area, which are very similar if not more stringent. This kind of reporting targeting one particular religion and its sacred ceremonies and practices by those who do not understand, believe or follow the faith is discrimination and needs to stop.



## RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION AT ST ANNE'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL, SOUTHAMPTON

4 September 2015

The Sikh Federation (UK) wrote to the Education minister Rt. Hon. Nicky Morgan regarding the incident earlier this week at the prestigious St Anne's Catholic School in Southampton when two practicing Sikh schoolgirls aged 11 and 13 were ordered to remove their turbans on the first day back at school.



Following the media report in the Daily Mail, we had a number of concerned parents contact us about the situation and ask why the Sikh schoolgirls were discriminated against wearing the Sikh turban (dastaar).

This was an appalling incident given Sikhs successfully fought for the right for Sikh children to wear the turban over 30 years ago in the landmark *Mandla v Lee* case in the House of Lords in 1983. We had previously communicated our concerns with officials at the education department, but have not had any response.

Whilst it has been reported that the head teacher has apologised it is totally unacceptable and highly offensive that a teacher not only physically touched the turban, but also started unravelling it leaving the girl distressed and in tears. We indicated that we have been asked to consider further action, including legal options. We reminded her of our successful legal action in the High Court in 2008 with the assistance of Liberty involving a 14-year old Sikh schoolgirl who was denied the right by a school in South Wales to wear her Kara (steel bangle). The school ended up wasting around £250,000 of taxpayers money defending their discriminatory practice.

We are keen to meet to discuss this matter so the Sikh community can be reassured that tough action will be taken against any teacher involved in racial and religious discrimination of this sort and any similar incident can be avoided in the future.

The teacher concerned in this incident was totally out of order and repeatedly demanded the young girls remove their turbans (dastaars) and wear headscarfs like Muslim girls. We fail to see how the headteacher at the school can simply dismiss this as a misunderstanding and apologise.

Lawyers have advised there may be a case of racial and religious discrimination. We wrote to officials in your department earlier today demanding the internal grievance process at the school to be immediately actioned and the teacher suspended pending an investigation. Again your officials have not yet responded.

We are writing to you to help expedite the matter and avoid unnecessary and expensive legal action against the school for failing to protect children from racial and religious discrimination by a teacher.



## RAISING AWARENESS & CAMPAIGNING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

### 30 YEARS AFTER 1984 SIKH VOICE FOR TRUTH, JUSTICE AND FREEDOM STRONGER AND MORE SOPHISTICATED

November 2014 - 30 years ago the Indian authorities were not content with their Genocide of the Sikhs in June and November 1984. There is written proof the Indian authorities also set about to malign Amritdhari Sikhs in India and abroad and do all they could to silence Sikh voices of protest in countries like the UK, Canada and Germany.



We will probably never know the extent of the pressure and the underhand tactics the Indian authorities continue to deploy. However, one thing that is clear is that they may have been successful to silence or buy off some in the Diaspora who were all too eager to give up the fight for truth, justice and freedom, but in overall terms the Indian authorities have spectacularly failed

30 years later Sikh voices of protest in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia etc. are far more sophisticated and several generations of Sikhs, young, middle-aged and elders, stand united to take on the false propaganda of the Indian

authorities. Sikhs increasingly recognise the benefits of lobbying and working with non-Sikhs, non-governmental organisations, politicians and foreign governments to continue the crusade for truth, justice and freedom.

This is best illustrated in the UK where it has been widely recognised and acknowledged the Sikh Federation (UK) is leading the way in terms of lobbying and where the annual June Remembrance event has reached new heights in terms of turnout, mainstream media coverage and creative ways of raising awareness.

In November 1984 the Indian authorities unashamedly pressured the British government to stop Sikhs protesting in central London while thousands of innocent Sikhs were being burnt alive across India. However, 30 years later the Sikh Federation (UK) is showing by organising three events in less than two weeks that the campaign for truth, justice and freedom is very much alive and breaking new ground.

The first and largest event is an International remembrance event on Sunday 30 November in Wolves Civic Hall where over 2,000 are expected to attend. The second is a Remembrance event in the UK Parliament on Tuesday 2 December followed by an event in the European Parliament in Brussels on Thursday 11 December. The latter is expected to attract around 400 Sikhs from across Europe. The events are being supported by Amnesty International and many politicians and non-Sikhs are expected to attend to hear an impressive line up of speakers from across the globe.

Bhai Amrik Singh the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK) said: 'We will only get the truth, justice and freedom if we raise our voices for the 30,000 innocent Sikhs who died and the 300,000 left homeless in November 1984 who were systematically targeted in 18 different States in India.'





‘Ten government-appointed commissions and committees have investigated the deadly attacks against tens of thousands of Sikhs in 1984. Independent civil society inquiries found complicity by both police and leaders of the Congress Party.’

‘Yet, three decades later, only 30 people, mostly low-ranking Congress Party supporters, have been convicted for the attacks that resulted in thousands of deaths and injuries.’

‘No police officer has been convicted, and there have been no prosecutions for rape, highlighting a comprehensive failure of the Indian judicial system.’

‘The failure to deliver justice in the last 30 years has serious implications for the future of India as it strengthens the Sikh demand to exercise their right to self-determination and calls for the establishment of an independent Sikh homeland.’

### Thousands turn out for Indian massacre remembrance service in Wolverhampton

**Express & Star**

Express and Star – 1 December 2014

More than 2,000 Sikhs attended a remembrance service in the Black Country marking 30 years since thousands of Sikhs were killed in a massacre in India.

The event, in memory of those who had lost their lives, was held at Wolverhampton’s Civic Hall yesterday and was organised by the Sikh Federation (UK).

The organisation is campaigning for the deaths in India in November 1984 to be recognised as genocide so that it can be investigated by the United Nations.



On Sunday the Secretary General of Amnesty International Salil Shetty released a video talking about his experience of the killings - describing the impact on him.

It was screened to thousands of Sikhs from across the UK who had gathered in the city for the service.

It was the first of three such events with the next taking place in Westminster tomorrow and the European Parliament in the coming days.

Dabinderjit Singh, principal advisor to the Sikh Federation (UK), said: "It is 30 years on since the slaughter of thousands of Sikhs in India in 1984 and this is firstly a service to remember those who died.

"It has been described as a riot but we don't see it as a riot. A riot has two sides but our belief is that Sikhs were sought out via electoral rolls, Gurdwaras and businesses and killed.

"There have been 30 prosecutions but not one police officer has been brought to justice. It is important that we get this recognised as genocide so the people who did this can be brought to justice.

"Salil Shetty gave us permission to screen his video which speaks of his experience at that time in 1984 because he was there."

The group says it wants to seek the truth and justice into the massacre as part of its campaign.



## Sikh protesters demand release of political prisoners in India

The International News - 8 January 2015

INTERNATIONAL  
**News**

LONDON: At least 2,000 British Sikhs demonstrated here outside the Indian High Commission to demand release of political prisoners in India, seven Sikh political prisoners in their 60s and 70s who have served their sentences but still remain confined illegally.



Organised by the Federation of Sikh Organisations, an umbrella group, Sikhs, from different parts of the United Kingdom took part in the protest and chanted slogans against the Indian government and its alleged bias against Sikhs and other minorities, including Hindus of low-castes.

The protestors with black and Kesri flags showed solidarity with Bhai Gurbaksh Singh Khalsa, who has been staging an indefinite hunger strike, seeking the release of the Sikh political prisoners who have all submitted applications to be considered for premature release, some as long as 5-6 years ago, but have received no response.

Organisers of the protest told The News that health of Bhai Gurbaksh Singh has seriously deteriorated, and he could experience organ failure at any time and could die from a fatal heart attack.

Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK) said: "His hunger strike is a non-violent method of resistance and act of political protest designed to provoke guilt in those in positions of responsibility in the Punjab and Indian government to make a policy change.

"The Punjab and Indian government and those supporting them who are raising legal and political hurdles at the eleventh hour will be entirely responsible if he dies and what may follow. There has been ample time and opportunity for them to address these concerns, especially the political issues that were raised a year earlier."

Bhai Amrik Singh threatened that slogans will be raised for a separate Sikh homeland if Bhai Gurbaksh Singh's demands are not met as a "popular wave of anti-Indian government sentiment is likely to follow."

Protestors told that they were being discriminated against in India because the Indian establishment doesn't trust them and believes that Sikhs have not abandoned the idea of a separate homeland – called Khalistan.

Senior Sikh community leaders said that Sikh homeland was the dream of millions of Sikhs around the world who know it as part of their history that they have been the rulers but their rights can be guaranteed only if they have their own homeland. They said that the treatment of Sikh prisoners in India showed that it was only the ruling upper class Hindu elite that had its rights guaranteed while millions of Hindus suffered alongside Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and others. They said that Narendra Modi had made promises but has done nothing to improve the plights of minorities.

In any event, they said, they will not give up on their demand for a separate Sikh homeland where they could live as human beings and not as second class citizens.

Sikh activists said that persecution of Sikhs, following their 1984 genocide, is a matter of fact and several human rights organisations have documented the atrocities. They said that they will take their protest across the western world to expose India's true face before the world if "injustice is not stopped immediately".



## SIKH FEDERATION (UK) CALL ON UK AND US GOVERNMENTS FOR AN INTERNATIONAL INQUIRY INTO MASSACRE OF 35 SIKHS IN CHITTISINGHPURA AND SUBSEQUENT COVER UP

London - 20 March 2015

Today marks the 15th anniversary of the Chittisinghpura massacre when 35 innocent Sikhs were cold bloodedly murdered in the small village two-and-a-half-hours drive from Srinagar, the summer capital of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.



The massacre coincided with the visit of United States president Bill Clinton to India. When Bill Clinton went to India in March, it was the first visit by an American president in 22 years. Bill Clinton had apparently done some risk analysis of his own. Not long before his India trip, he called the region "the most dangerous place in the world."

The Sikh Federation (UK) has today written to the UK Foreign Office and US State Department via the US Embassy in London urging both permanent members of the UN Security Council to push for an international inquiry into the massacre and cover up.

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

"The Sikh community in the state has been demanding justice for 15 years. The state government ordered a police enquiry into the massacre, but nothing has been heard of it ever since."

The massacre, occurred on the evening of 20 March and preceded Clinton's arrival by only a few hours. The slaughter was remarkable in that the victims were Sikhs, a religious minority never before targeted.

The killers came to the village at about 7.20pm. There were perhaps a dozen of them, perhaps twice that. They were dressed in the regulation issue of the Indian Army. Most people were unaware of the armed strangers standing at opposite sides of the village, near its two Gurdwaras.

They gathered up men who were returning from evening prayers and collected several more from nearby stores and houses. They worked hurriedly. Some had their faces covered with black cloth. The Sikhs were herded into two groups and made to kneel, facing the Gurdwaras. They were killed with efficiency, shot first with a persistent rat-tat-tat from a volley of machine-gun fire, then with single bursts by executioners who moved from one fallen Sikh to another, stilling motion and silencing moans.

35 Sikhs were killed, but Nanak Singh, survived and was an eyewitness to the carnage. He was at first saved by the shield of a toppling body. Then he was wounded in the hip during the second round of shooting. He tried to lie perfectly still. He remembers that some of the gunmen had faces painted in the raucous fashion of Holi, a Hindu holiday being celebrated that day. As the killers marched off, a few called out the parting words "Jai mata di," a Hindi phrase of praise for a Hindu goddess. The entire attack lasted about half an hour.

President Clinton, acting with caution, condemned the massacre without casting blame. The first articles in Indian newspapers reported with confidence that "militants" had committed the crime. That the killers were dressed in army fatigues was easily explained away.



On 25 March Indian officials announced they had solved the crime on President Clinton's last full day in India. The army's Rashtriya Rifles and the state police's elite Special Operations Group had supposedly cornered the five guerrillas in a herdsman's shack.

As it happened, several men from the area were mysteriously missing. Speculation took off at a gallop: had Indian forces kidnapped them, murdered them, burned them and then tried to pass off their unrecognizable bodies as foreign militants. Relatives of the missing men demanded an exhumation of the bodies.

On 3 April, nine days after the 'militants' were killed and two weeks after the massacre protesters shouting "We want justice" were fired upon. Eight protesters, seven of them farmers and shepherds were killed. Some were shot in the back as they fled. Police officials claimed that their men were only returning fire, but a judicial inquiry found otherwise.

Three days later, the marchers received their wish. The five bodies were dug up by a forensics team from Srinagar. The five men killed were two farmers, two shepherds and one young cloth merchant. The killings were now considered a murderous fiction contrived by Indian security forces.

One official source confirmed: "After Chittisinghpura, there was tremendous pressure to catch the militants. Name, fame, money and career: those were the reasons to the fake encounter. They couldn't catch the militants, so they picked up locals. Unfortunately, locals have families that ask questions. It didn't work."

In March 2012, the Central Bureau of Investigation told the Supreme Court that the encounter was a "cold-blooded murder". The army was ordered to carry out an enquiry. In January 2014, the army closed the case saying no prima facie evidence came out of the investigation against five accused army men.

Nanak Singh holds the state and central governments responsible for their plight. "I have requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to personally look into the matter and have also sent a memorandum to state Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. I hope their coalition government would bring some closure to the forgotten case."

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

'After 15 years, the Indian army personnel responsible for the massacre in Chittisinghpura and the staged encounter five days later are yet to be brought to justice. These incidents represent a very sordid phase in India's targeting of minorities and we have no faith in the Indian authorities delivering justice.'

### **PROTEST OUTSIDE INDIAN CONSULATE IN BIRMINGHAM CALLING FOR RELEASE OF ALL SIKH POLITICAL PRISONERS**



15 May 2015

The Sikh Federation (UK) joined around 1,000 Sikhs from across the UK attended and supported a peaceful protest outside the Indian Consulate in Birmingham. This was to show solidarity with Babu Surat Singh Khalsa, an 82 year old Sikh activist who has been sitting on hunger strike since 16th of January 2015, now on his 120th day of an indefinite hunger strike seeking the immediate release of Sikh political prisoners who have completed their mandatory terms are released or have all submitted applications to be considered for premature



release but have received no response.

Bapu Surat Singh's protest saw him forcefully arrested and taken to hospital by police in February, whilst his son was also detained by police for two months and allegedly tortured. Now his health is seriously deteriorating, given his age and longevity of his hunger strike. He has clearly stated that the Punjab and Central government will be entirely responsible if he dies and what may follow.

Many international media outlets, organisations, personalities and individuals are supporting this cause and are calling in unity for the release of the Sikh political prisoners.

The plight of Sikh political prisoners who have already completed the terms of their sentence was originally highlighted by Gurbaksh Singh who went on hunger strike on 14 November 2014 at Gurdwara Amb Sahib in Punjab. After 66 days it was halted.

"Living a free life is every person's human rights, and these Sikh prisoners that have served their time should not be deprived of it." - Bapu Surat Singh Khalsa



## **SIKHS CONDEMN COLD BLOODED MURDER BY POLICE OF UNARMED SIKH TEENAGER IN JAMMU**

5 June 2015

The Sikh Federation (UK) has condemned the shooting by police of on an unarmed Sikh teenager, Bhai Jagjeet Singh in Jammu. He was shot in the head and died on the spot.

Initially Sikhs objected to police helping Shiv Sena activists remove posters relating to an event to mark the 31st anniversary of the Sikh Genocide.

Posters were removed on 3 and 4 June and police officers were found guarding the spots from where the posters were removed. The police then started rounding up Sikh youth on the morning of 4 June.

When Sikhs objected to these heavy handed police actions the police opened fire indiscriminately at the unarmed Sikh protesters.



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

'We have written to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office this morning warning them of the deteriorating law and order situation in India.'

'We have pointed to the heavy handed tactics of the police, the curfew and media blackout that has been imposed in Jammu.'

'Apart from the cold-blooded killing of Bhai Jagjeet Singh other Sikh protesters have sustained injuries in police firing.'

'Tensions are now also very high in Punjab with the 31st anniversary of the Sikh Genocide being marked at the weekend.'

'There is a real possibility of further unrest as the Indian authorities have provoked a reaction from Sikhs at this very sensitive time of the year.'



## TENS OF THOUSANDS TO CALL FOR ACTION ON 31ST ANNIVERSARY OF SIKH GENOCIDE



8 June 2015 - British Sikhs renew calls for an independent public inquiry, recognition of the killing of innocent Sikhs in 1984 as a Genocide requiring a UN-led investigation and recognising and accepting the Sikhs right to self determination

Tens of thousands of Sikhs from across the UK gathered in central London on Sunday 7 June to commemorate the 31st anniversary of the June 1984 attack on the Sri Harmander Sahib Complex (often referred to as the Golden Temple Complex).

Sikhs gathered in Hyde Park between 11am and 1pm and marched through central London before holding a rally in Waterloo Place between 2-5pm.

Chaupai Sahib was recited for Sikh political prisoners and 82-year old Babu Surat Singh, a US resident under arrest for protesting by going on a hunger strike.

Tom Watson MP, the clear favourite to become the new Deputy Leader of the Labour Party who in January 2014 led the calls for transparency on UK Government assistance in 1984 addressed those gathered. He stated when the revelations emerged the matter ceased to be a domestic one for India.

British Sikhs renewed calls on David Cameron to restore community confidence by announcing an independent public inquiry into UK Government military assistance in the June 1984 attack on the Sikhs' holiest shrine.

They asked the inquiry to be extended to look at pressure from India in its' attempts to deny British Sikhs the democratic right to protest to highlight the Genocide of Sikhs and expose widespread human rights violations in India.

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



'Too many questions now remain unanswered. The public at large have a right to know the truth of how the UK Government assisted India to cover up the Genocide of the Sikhs in 1984.'



‘David Cameron cannot ignore over 150 MPs elected on 7 May from across the political spectrum, including dozens of Conservative MPs who back an independent public enquiry.’

Sikh representatives delivered a letter to 10 Downing Street after the rally requesting the Prime Minister to recognise the systematic killing of Sikhs in June 1984, in the months that followed and in November 1984 individually and collectively as a Genocide.



They also called for justice for the victims and remind the Prime Minister assurances were given by Conservative Ministers to Sikhs some twelve months ago that concerted action would be taken following a change of government in India. The Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh in December 2014 referred to what happen to the Sikhs in 1984 as a ‘Genocide’ and that ‘justice would be meted out to the victims only when the perpetrators of the crime are punished’.

Bhai Amrik Singh added:

‘There are serious doubts if any Indian politicians or the judiciary are capable of delivering anything approaching justice given the experience of the Sikh Nation over last 31 years.’ ‘The UK Government should join other Permanent Members of the UN Security Council to call for a UN-led investigation into the Sikh Genocide of 1984.’

The third demand of the Sikhs was for the UK Government to recognise and accept the Sikhs right to self-determination and challenge India to also recognise this basic human right for all people within its territory.

Following on from the Sikh Manifesto released in January this year Sikhs will also call for the release of all relevant papers from 1947 relating to the British offer of a separate Sikh homeland prior to partition and the formation of India and Pakistan. It is understood the British offered a ten year agreement, including military assistance and support for the Sikh administration.

Bhai Amrik Singh added:

‘Britain has a unique historic and moral responsibility towards the Sikhs. The UK Government should facilitate a diplomatic solution to resolve the conflict between the Sikhs and India.’

‘International law allows for the Sikhs to exercise the right to self-determination, including the call for outright independence given the experience and betrayal of the Sikhs since 1947.’

### **Sikh protest blocks road outside British parliament**

AFP – 15 July 2015



Hundreds of Sikhs protested outside the British parliament on Wednesday, calling for the release of what they said were Sikh political prisoners in India.

Demonstrators also raised the case of octogenarian Babu Surat Singh Khalsa, who is on hunger strike in India to press the same cause.

The demonstration, which blocked the roads outside the Houses of Parliament in London, was called by the Sikh Federation (UK), the largest Sikh organisation in Britain. Its chair, Bhai Amrik Singh, said British Prime Minister David Cameron and Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond "were asked to urgently take up the issue of the release of Sikh political prisoners in Indian jails who have completed the terms of their sentence. But we have had no answers.





"It is a sad reflection that the present UK government is turning a blind eye to human rights violations of minorities in India fearing various trade deals could be jeopardised," he said.

"We have been forced to peacefully demonstrate at the lack of courage and action by the UK government on behalf of British Sikhs."

More than 430,000 people (0.7 percent of the population) said they were Sikhs in the last British census in 2011.

## INDIAN POLITICIANS LED BY NARENDRA MODI ARE PREPARING TO GIVE A KICK IN THE TEETH TO BRITAIN

London- 25 July 2015- David Cameron and his ministers have been courting their Indian counterparts for trade but without seeing anything substantial in return.

Britain wants to increase trade with India, but it is being suggested 'Indian patriots' may seek reparations of close to £2 trillion from Britain in the International Court of Justice. The current British Government needs to rethink its strategy towards India and choose its friends carefully.



Congress MP Shashi Tharoor (his family did quite well during and after the colonial rule) quoted lots of statistics in his speech in May e.g. contribution of the Indian army in World War 1 and World War 2, but overlooked the fact that the minority Sikh community paid the largest price.

Hundreds of thousands of Sikhs answered the call of Britain and the Allies in both world wars with over 83,000 turban-wearing Sikhs sacrificing their lives, with over 109,000 wounded. Shashi Tharoor conveniently failed to mention this.

Narendra Modi is backing Shashi Tharoor's call for reparations that will make his forthcoming visit to the UK in November even more controversial.

Last week one of the Hindu leaders said India would become a Hindu state by 2020 and the world would be dominated by Hindus by 2030. Such inflammatory comments have not been lost of the likes of the establishment in Britain, US, China and others.

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

It's about time the British Government take the moral high ground and adopt a stand with the loyal British Sikhs and turn the tables on India for what they have doing since independence. The Genocide of the Sikhs in 1984 and targeting other religious minorities e.g. Christians needs to be exposed on the world stage.

'The Anglo-Sikh relationship has existed for over 200 years and based on a number of friendship treaties. Sikhs are not asking for reparation from Britain or India for what has happen and continues to transpire to the Sikh Nation. Instead we are demanding the truth, justice and our freedom.'

'Sikhs were the third party with whom the British negotiated for the transfer of power in 1947 and offered a separate Sikh homeland and a ten year agreement of military assistance and support for the Sikh administration. The Sikh leadership at the time accepted promises and solemn assurances made by the leaders of India, but the latter reneged on these promises.'



"The British Government should lead international support for the Sikh demand for independence. Sikhs have demonstrated throughout their history they are tolerant freedom-loving people. A powerful Sikh Nation backed by the world powers would be a much valued asset in the current fight against intolerance and extremism across the globe. Indian politicians like Narendra Modi and his extreme patriotism will prove to be disastrous. The international community need to not only recognise and accept this, but take actions to counter it."

### **CANDELIGHT VIGIL REMEMBRANCE OUTSIDE THE U.S. EMBASSY FOR MURDERED SIKH ACTIVIST SATWINDER SINGH & SON IN LAW OF HUNGER-STRIKE CAMPAIGNER SURAT SINGH KHALSA**

28 August 2015 - The Sikh Federation (UK) along with hundreds of Sikhs from across the UK attended and supported a candlelight vigil in memory and remembrance of Satwinder Singh Bhola. Bhola, a US citizen, husband and father of three children, was killed in suspicious circumstances in the city of Peoria, Illinois (USA) on August 17th. Stabbed to death outside of his apartment building late that evening. There remains much speculation regarding the motive for his murder and an investigation by the Peoria police is ongoing.

Bhola's father-in-law is a noted Sikh human rights campaigner Jathedar Surat Singh Khalsa Ji. The 82 year old has garnered attention throughout the world with his hunger-strike protest which has now reached 225 days. Khalsa Ji is on hunger-strike in an attempt to pressure the Indian government into releasing Sikh political prisoners from jail.



As you will be aware Sikhs and non-Sikhs from across the US and UK are increasingly concerned with the situation in India relating to political prisoners and this campaign. Many believe that this tragic event is directly linked to Surat Singh Khalsa campaign and an attempt to break his resolve, as there is evidence of threats, harassment and arrests against Surat Singh Khalsa's close family & children.

Amrik Singh Chair of Sikh Federation (UK) said:

"Satwinder Singh Bhola was a respected member of the Sikh community that was actively contributing to campaigns in support of the rights of Sikhs in India. Sikhs have long suffered injustices in India, which is part of the reason so many have moved to seek a better life, just as Satwinder did.

"It speaks volumes about the situation that the Indian media have attempted to show Satwinder as complicit in alleged terrorist activities after his death. Satwinder was never charged with anything in India and led a peaceful, law-abiding life in the US. In spite of the tragic news, his father-in-law remains steadfast in his hunger-strike. The vigil in London is our way of showing people how much our activists mean to us."

Although the murder of Satwinder Singh Bhola occurred in America, the worldwide Sikh community are paying close attention to the investigation which we hope and trust will be robust, thorough and without international prejudice. If it is established that the Indian authorities were responsible then the U.S. State Department is expected to rebuke the Indian authorities publicly.

Surat Singh Ji's response regarding the tragic news of his Son In-law's murder - "Satwinder Singh Bhola was closer to me than my own son....but closer still are those Sikhs languishing in prisons, this incident will not affect my resolve or determination for the cause to free Sikh political prisoners"





## ABOUT US

The Sikh Federation (UK) is a non-governmental organisation, that is a pressure group and often referred to as the first ever Sikh political party in the United Kingdom. The Sikh Federation (UK) 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 OBJECTIVES

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.

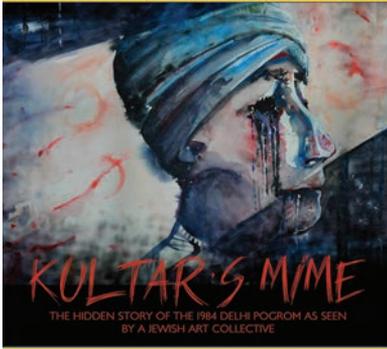
The main areas of work for the Sikh Federation (UK) are:

- ❧ 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; and
- ❧ Argue the case for the right to self-determination for the Sikhs 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 homeland.

## THE SIKH NETWORK

The Sikh Network was independently established in August 2014 as an open collective of Sikh activists and professionals from all backgrounds and organisations. The primary output of the Sikh Network is to monitor progress and set strategic direction for the Sikh Manifesto 2015 -2020. The Sikh Federation (UK) fully acknowledges the need for such networks and fully supports the Sikh Network's activities in both Panthic and political areas.

The Sikh Network plan to report progress via a quarterly newsletter and hosting relevant professional events throughout the year. Individuals in the Sikh Network have an opportunity to fully participate and contribute to the Sikh Manifesto, even those who wish to remain in the background and do not belong to any Gurdwara or organisation. For further information: [www.thesikhnetwork.com](http://www.thesikhnetwork.com) [info@thesikhnetwork.com](mailto:info@thesikhnetwork.com) [facebook/TheSikhNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/TheSikhNetwork) [twitter@TheSikhNet](https://twitter.com/TheSikhNet)



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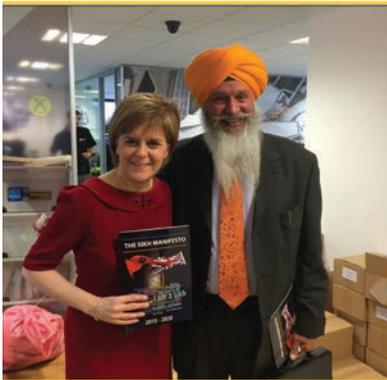


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[www.youtube.com/sikhfeduk](http://www.youtube.com/sikhfeduk)

[info@sikhfeduk.com](mailto:info@sikhfeduk.com) | [www.sikhfeduk.com](http://www.sikhfeduk.com)



**CONTACT US:** The Sikh Federation (UK) is a volunteer based organisation. Our members come from a range of backgrounds. Given the number of wide ranging projects and challenges ahead, we are keen to attract professionals and welcome additional volunteers and activists. Key skills and sector knowledge are needed in local & central government campaigning, politics & lobbying, human rights, PR & media and web & social media.

### **DONATE NOW**

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