



appg
British Sikhs



A REPORT INTO **ANTI-SIKH** HATE CRIMES

By the All Party Parliamentary Group
for British Sikhs

October 2020

Foreword



19 years ago, my brother Balbir Singh Sodhi was the first person to be murdered in a hate crime in the wake of the 11th September terrorist attack. On the morning of 15 September 2001, Balbir donated the contents of his wallet to the victims of the attacks. He then went to the gas station he owned in Mesa, Arizona and began planting a garden out in front, when a man who was seeking retaliation for 9/11 drove by in his pickup truck and shot my brother five times and killed him assuming he was a Muslim man. Balbir was a follower of the Sikh religion and wore a turban as part of his faith.

*It was a pleasure to be a guest speaker at the Anti-Sikh hate crime virtual event on 6 October 2020 and see dozens of MPs take part from across the UK, from different political parties and from different backgrounds. Everyone who took part spoke with one voice that the UK Government has not done enough to tackle Anti-Sikh hate and must take concrete actions to recognise the problem and take serious measures to address under-reporting. - **Rana Singh Sodhi***



The rise of hate crimes against Sikhs and Gurdwaras are of grave concern to me as chair of the APPG for British Sikhs. It is a sad fact that many of us who attended the Anti-Sikh hate event have experienced or know someone who has been victim to some kind of race or religious hate abuse in our normal, everyday life.

As a Councillor in Sandwell, and then a Member of Parliament, I have become acutely attuned to the extent of this issue. It spreads far beyond what our public bodies are managing to record. I have heard many upsetting experiences from victims and the related frustration and disappointment by the lack of action and ignorance shown towards Sikh hate by government and other public bodies.

*I am committed to leading on this issue as Chair of the APPG, as it's also very personal to me. I was delighted with the response from MPs, organisations and individuals who attended the meeting. This is a much needed report that can drive the conversation and lead to actions from public bodies and community groups to build the necessary support structures to tackle, report, record, and prevent Anti-Sikh hate going forward. -**Preet Kaur Gill MP***

Introduction

There are more than 150 constituencies across the UK with over 1,000 Sikh constituents. The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for British Sikhs hosted a virtual Zoom meeting on Anti-Sikh hate on 6 October 2020. It was a thought-provoking meeting with some excellent contributions and an impressive MP turnout.

43 MPs from four political parties, including Ministers and Shadow Ministers from across the UK participated in the two-hour meeting with hundreds of Sikh constituents observing. Official speakers included:

- **Preet Kaur Gill MP**, the Chair of the APPG for British Sikhs who was an ideal host and chaired the meeting throughout
- **Rana Singh Sodhi**, from Arizona and the brother of Balbir Singh Sodhi who was the first person killed 19 years ago after 9/11 who touched the hearts of many listening
- **Rose Simkins**, the Chief Executive of Stop Hate UK
- **Jas Singh**, from the Sikh Network who presented the hate crime data from the latest UK Sikh Survey that created much interest
- **Dabinderjit Singh OBE**, the principal adviser to the Sikh Federation (UK) who talked about his personal experience of being threatened to be burnt alive in London, reporting the hate crime, police response and final outcome
- **Jas Athwal**, Redbridge Council Leader who's contribution was poignant as he spoke about his personal experiences as a prominent turban wearing Sikh
- **Gurpreet Singh Anand**, the President at Central Gurdwara (Khalsa Jatha) London,

the first UK Gurdwara and newly appointed Secretary General of the Sikh Council UK.

Apart from the official speakers 14 MPs from four different political parties also spoke during the meeting. A number of other people were able to speak and give their views including **Trishna Singh OBE**, the Director of Sikh Sanjog, **Jay Singh-Sohal** who has been selected the Conservative candidate for the role of West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, **Dr Jagir Kaur Sekhon OBE** and **Jasbir Singh** from the Gurdwara Bhat Sikh Council UK.

One of the agreed outputs was to produce a report with recommendations that should be sent by the APPG for British Sikhs to relevant Ministers, Shadow Ministers and nearly 300 MPs who have indicated a specific interest.



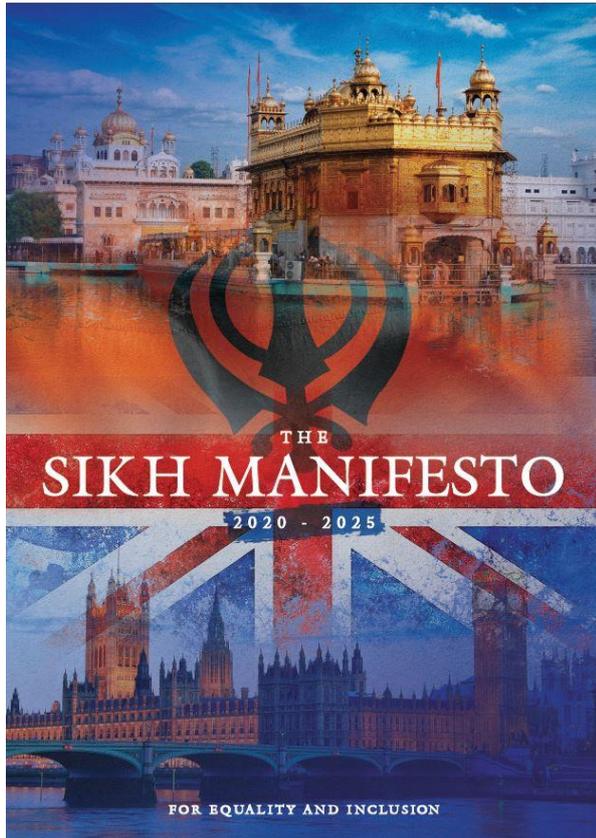
Can you name this man [#wantedforquestioning](#) in connection with a [#HateCrime](#) in [#Westminster](#)? Suspect targeted a Sikh male in [#VictoriaPlace](#) and threatened to set him on fire. Please call police on 101 quoting 6508106/19 or call Crimestoppers anonymously.



Hate crimes against Sikhs – Definition

Hate crimes against Sikhs became a worldwide phenomenon after 9/11. These crimes are often based on ignorance and misinformation about the Sikh identity and

the Sikh way of life. Section 4 of the Sikh Manifesto 2020-2025¹, “**Hate crimes targeting Sikhs and our religious institutions**” was intended to bring UK Government and MPs’ attention to this growing concern and urge those representing the Sikh community to act now.



The lack of an official term for hate crimes committed against Sikhs and subsequent lack of definition of such a term is a contributing factor to why this type of crime goes largely unnoticed, unreported and unrecorded.

The first objective of this report, through consultation with the Sikh community and governing bodies in the UK, is to agree an official term that will clearly describe hate crime against Sikhs.

¹ <http://www.thesikhnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Sikh-Manifesto-2020-2025.pdf>

The second objective is to create an official definition of the said term that is recognised and adopted by governing bodies and institutions within the UK so these crimes can be appropriately identified, reported, recorded, monitored and prevented.

The APPG for British Sikhs is simultaneously consulting the Sikh community on the proposed term and definition. A 60-day public consultation has started to allow UK governing bodies, Sikh individuals, Gurdwaras and organisations to have input.

This report highlights the actions needed and proposes how governing bodies can work towards better identification, reporting, recording, monitoring and prevention of hate crimes against Sikhs in the UK.

Proposed Official Term

The official term proposed to describe hate crimes against Sikhs is “**Anti-Sikh hate**”. This is the term used in the Hate Crime Operational Guidance issued by the College of Policing². This term is also used in the United States of America to identify racist or religious incidents or crimes against Sikhs, Sikh articles of faith, the Sikh way of life and Sikh institutions.

Proposed Official Definition

“Anti-Sikh hate” is any incident or crime which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be religiously or racially motivated by hostility, hatred or prejudice against Sikhs or those perceived to be Sikh people, Gurdwaras, organisations or property.

² https://www.report-it.org.uk/files/hate_crime_operational_guidance.pdf

According to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)³, hostility can be “ill-will, spite, contempt, prejudice, unfriendliness, antagonism, resentment and dislike”.

The Hate Crime Operational Guidance for the police states: “Anti-Sikh hate crime takes place where a recordable crime is committed and the victim perceives it as motivated (wholly or partially) by anti-Sikh hostility. Victims may, therefore, perceive crimes targeting them to be either a religious hate crime or a racist crime, even when the victim is secular or non-practising.”

Background

In 2016, at the time of the Brexit referendum **21% or 1 in 5 of Sikhs** responding to the UK Sikh Survey⁴ had experienced hate crimes in the last 12 months. This equates to over 100,000 Sikhs being the subject of hate crimes each year.



The UK Sikh Survey 2019⁵ indicates this has risen to **32%** of respondents. This is more

³ <https://www.cps.gov.uk/crime-info/hate-crime>

⁴ <http://www.thesikhnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/UK-Sikh-Survey-2016-Findings-FINAL.pdf>

⁵ [Findings of the UK Sikh Survey 2019](#)

than a **50% increase** between 2016 and 2019 and suggests **over 150,000 Sikhs** are being subjected to hate crimes.

Home Office data released on 13 October 2020⁶ shows reported hate crimes up 8% for the year 2019-2020 compared to 2018-2019. Reported religious hate crimes fell 5%, the first fall since 2012-2013, in part probably explained by a drop during Covid-19 restrictions.

When compared to 2018-2019 Home Office data⁷, reported religious hate crimes in the last 12 months fell for Muslims by 12.5%, Jews by 9.3%, remained level for Hindus, but for **Sikhs they increased by 7.3%**. The increase for reported hate crimes for Sikhs last year was a staggering 61% as Sikh community organisations like the Sikh Network and the Sikh Federation (UK) raised awareness within the Sikh community of the importance of reporting hate crimes.

Despite this, **85%** of respondents to the 2019 UK Sikh Survey who experienced hate crimes claimed not to have reported these hate crimes to the police in the last 12 months. **8 out of 10 said it was because it was a waste of time or they expected no positive outcome.**

The UK Sikh Survey 2019 also found that **94%** of those experiencing hate crime said this was because of their **race or religion**. Race was stated twice as often as religion. The increase in Anti-Sikh hate is therefore likely to be higher still given the majority of incidents or crimes will be reported as race

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2019-to-2020>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2018-to-2019>

hate crimes in line with CPS guidance that states that, “according to the law, Sikhs and Jews are members of both a racial and religious group”⁸. Reported race hate crime **increased 6% in 2019-2020**, continuing the year on year increase since 2011-2012.

Police contacts have suggested that religion is not a mandatory field in terms of crime reporting standards set by the Home Office for police forces. However, police forces are required to record ethnicity or EA codes.

The EA codes in use that are similar to the IC (identity codes) or 6+1 codes are understood to be:

- White European
- Dark European
- Afro-Caribbean
- Asian
- Oriental
- Arabian/Egyptian
- Unknown

So there is nothing specific required in relation to recording Anti-Sikh hate crimes. Not surprisingly, when comparing the results of the UK Sikh Survey 2019 to Home Office data, more than **95% of Anti-Sikh hate crimes** being reported to the police appear not to be recorded under “Sikh” in police records. This is in part as most Anti-Sikh hate crimes are likely lost in the race hate crime numbers that account for three quarters of all reported hate crimes. In addition, some religious hate crimes against Sikh individuals, Gurdwaras, organisations and property are almost certainly being reported under Muslim hate crime based on the perceived

religion of the victim by the offender rather than the victim’s actual religion or race.

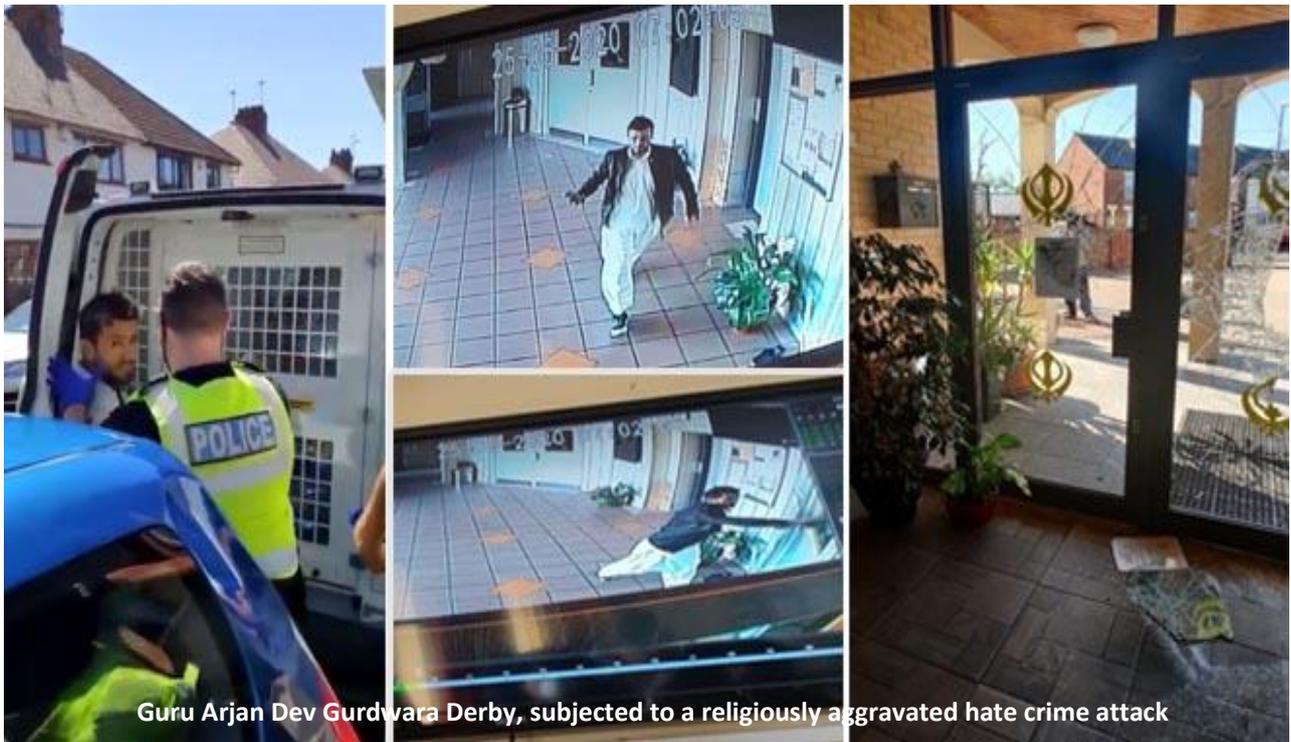
“If anti-Muslim graffiti is sprayed on a religious temple of another faith, this would be recorded as an offence of racially or religiously aggravated criminal damage and flagged by the respective police force as a religious hate crime against Muslims.”

Hate crime, England & Wales 2019-20

Sikhs were barely mentioned in the government’s plan for tackling hate crime, *Action Against Hate*, published in July 2016 that focused on Islamophobia, Antisemitism and attacks against Christians. Subsequently, it emerged later in the year that 10 Downing Street had removed from the plan a case study of the attempted beheading of a Sikh dentist in a racially-motivated machete revenge attack by far-right extremist, Zack Davies for the murder of Lee Rigby by Islamic extremists. This hate crime, like many others against Sikhs was recorded as a hate crime against Muslims, leaving the Sikh victims and Sikh community widely ignored in hate crime data and policies.



⁸<https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/racist-religious-hate-crime-statement-2017.pdf>



Guru Arjan Dev Gurdwara Derby, subjected to a religiously aggravated hate crime attack

A simple trawl of media reports of attacks, incidents or crimes against Sikhs in the last 12 months and the UK Sikh Survey 2019 supports the notion above that many incidents against Sikhs that are in the public domain or reported to the police fail to register as “Sikh” hate crimes as they are either reported under race hate crime that, as mentioned, has seen a 6% increase, incorrectly classified as Islamophobic and hence reported under Muslim hate crime, or lost somewhere in the system as some Sikhs have confirmed they have reported hate crimes online through the police run True Vision website, but had no follow up from the police.

High profile examples of Anti-Sikh hate crime from the last 12 months include an incident leading up to the December 2019 General Election that involved a Conservative candidate and former Minister telling a Sikh rival candidate that he was “talking through

his turban.”⁹ Another attack on the turban occurred in September this year, when a Sikh taxi driver in Reading was attacked by four passengers after being asked “are you Taliban?”¹⁰. Anti-Sikh hate is inflicted not only on Sikh individuals, but also Gurdwaras, as was the case in May this year when a Muslim man attacked Guru Arjan Dev Ji Gurdwara in Derby and caused thousands of pounds worth of damage.

Conclusion

This report makes clear:

- There is huge amount of under reporting of Anti-Sikh hate
- There is significant lack of visibility on Anti-Sikh hate crimes reported because hate crimes against Sikhs are recognised

⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/nov/28/sikh-tories-criticise-offensive-comment-by-conservative-candidate>

¹⁰ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-berkshire-54147842>

under at least 3 different categories (Race, Religion: Sikh and Religion: Muslim)

- Of the data that is available, Anti-Sikh hate is on the rise

When we look to other high-risk hate crime groups, namely Muslims and Jews, there are three main distinctions when compared to Sikhs:

1. The lack of a term to describe hate crimes against Sikhs
2. The lack of definition of hate crimes against Sikhs
3. The lack of a competent body with adequate funding, monitoring capabilities, and third-party reporting status to report Anti-Sikh hate to the police. A body that can act as a go-between for victims who are unable to or unwilling to report to the police directly. Much like the Community Security Trust (CST)¹¹ for Jews and Tell Mamma¹² for Muslims.

There has been no real input or resources dedicated by government or the police directed towards Sikhs to increase reporting of hate crimes. Instead, government resources have approached Tell Mamma to increase hate crime reporting linked to Islamophobia and the Community Security Trust (CST) to increase hate crime reporting linked to Anti-Semitism. Tell Mama has received over £1 million since 2012¹³ and the CST receives annual funding of £14 million from government as part of the Jewish

¹¹<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/6/e/Definitions%20of%20Antisemitic%20Incidents.pdf>

¹²<https://tellmamauk.org/>

¹³<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm140430/text/140430w0001.htm>

Community Protective Security Grant that in part addresses the reporting of Anti-Semitic hate crimes¹⁴.

Following considerable pressure in January 2017 the government appeared to be making its first effort at correcting the lack of attention to Anti-Sikh hate crime reporting. Sajid Javid as the Communities Secretary announced that the government would be funding a programme aimed at improving the reporting of hate crimes by Sikhs and Hindus with a proportion of the £375,000 grant allocated to True Vision, the police's online portal for reporting hate crimes¹⁵.

Proposal

Given the lack of Government support to date, following on from their work in raising awareness within the Sikh community of the importance of reporting hate crimes, the Sikh Network, in partnership with the Sikh Council UK, is proposing to act as a third-party reporting partner for Anti-Sikh hate.

This community-based proposal is designed to allow the Sikh community open and wide access to report any incident at a local reporting centre, in a private and friendly environment.

¹⁴<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-office-grants-14-million-funding-for-security-at-jewish-institutions>

¹⁵<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-hate-crime-package-to-target-groups-at-need>

As sighted above, the recent UK Sikh Survey 2019 reported that 85% of Sikhs who had experienced a hate crime did not report it; 8 out of 10 said it was because it was a waste of time or they expected no positive outcome. This highlights the huge lack of confidence and faith in the police, Crown Prosecution Service and wider authorities to investigate record and successfully prosecute Anti-Sikh hate.

In addition to a lack of faith in the police and authorities, the community also face other obstacles and challenges in reporting hate crime, these vary from self-pride to a complete lack of knowledge and understanding of the reporting process. These issues must be tackled both from within the community and by UK bodies in order to effectively curb the rise in Anti-Sikh hate across the UK.

The Sikh Network and Sikh Council UK are working to address these issues from both sides. Firstly, by working with the community to raise awareness and understanding of Anti-Sikh hate, its definition, forms and real examples. They are also working to implement a UK-wide network of open reporting centres within 15 Sikh Gurdwaras and facilities that are accessed by all age groups and genders. The planned mechanism also caters for both Punjabi and English language, which is another barrier to reporting.

Using their UK footprint and membership both organisations are ideally placed to connect directly with the grass root community and educate the most vulnerable in how to appropriately recognise and report such hate crimes.



The initial plan is to develop an Anti-Sikh hate reporting app and website, then roll it out to 15 new Sikh reporting centres across the UK covering all the regions as well as additional places in cities with a high Sikh population. The programme will require a start-up grant and annual funding for next 3-5 years.

The proposal also comes with a direct communication plan which targets vulnerable groups within the community with focused messaging on understanding hate crime, differentiating it from 'mistaken identity Islamophobia' or other crimes and abuse. In addition, the plan includes important factors such as the benefits and need for reporting and data gathering, as well as on managing expectations for follow up action post reporting.

The second advantage of the proposal is to provide the police and authorities with a standardised format of reported hate crimes against Sikhs. We know from independent data referenced herein that there is a significant gap between the data held by the

police and authorities on reported and investigated Anti-Sikh hate and the number of hate incidents/crimes that are actually experienced by Sikhs and reported/unreported. Current analysis highlights that over 95% of these reported hate crimes are invisible or missing from police data.

By collating all the reported hate crimes experienced by the Sikh community for race, religion and Islamophobia, it will enable full visibility and transparency on the size of the problem, therefore allowing local authorities and the police to allocate the appropriate efforts, resources and programmes to support the victims. Furthermore, holding the same authorities accountable on their efforts or lack of. This essential data will also be extremely useful in wider national discussion with the Government on tackling race hate crime and race or religious discrimination.

Actions

The first action for the Sikh community is to respond and provide feedback in the next 60-days on the consultation to agree an official term and definition that will clearly describe and recognise hate crime against Sikhs.

The second action is for Sikh Network and Sikh Council UK to finalise their Sikh community proposal by 31 December 2020.

This report also urges Government Ministers and parliamentarians to help tackle Anti-Sikh hate crime by:

1. Supporting the recognition of a term to identify hate crimes against Sikhs i.e.

“Anti-Sikh hate”

2. Commenting on the following proposed definition of hate crimes against Sikhs

“Anti-Sikh hate is any incident or crime which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be religiously or racially motivated by hostility, hatred or prejudice against Sikhs or those perceived to be Sikh people, Gurdwaras, organisations or property.”

3. Supporting the creation and funding of a competent body to monitor Anti-Sikh hate across the UK, with third-party reporting status to report Anti-Sikh hate to the police and act as a go-between for victims who are unable or unwilling to report to the police directly, based on the Sikh Network and Sikh Council UK proposal.



“ THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A 'MISTAKEN' HATE CRIME. NO ONE SHOULD EVER BE TARGETED. THE ONLY MISTAKE IS THINKING OTHERWISE.”

All Party Parliamentary Group
for British Sikhs
Chair: Preet Kaur Gill MP
preet.gill.mp@parliament.uk

A REPORT INTO **ANTI-SIKH** HATE CRIMES

By the All Party Parliamentary Group for British Sikhs

Copyright 2020

