

Sikh Federation (UK)

Never flinch from performing righteous deeds



IDENTITY



FREEDOM



35
YEARS

JUSTICE



#FreeJaggiNow

TRUTH



**ANNUAL REPORT
2018-2019**

WORKING FOR TRUTH, JUSTICE & FREEDOM



Overview



A Message from the Chairman.

The National Sikh Convention this year is taking place at a time when there is unprecedented political upheaval in the UK. The need for the British Sikh community to be properly organised to deal with politics from a Sikh perspective has never been greater. The Sikh Manifesto 2015-2020 that was published by the Sikh Network in January 2015 was a masterstroke in providing a resource to be used to initiate influence with individual politicians, political parties and government.

A General Election is around the corner and a refreshed Sikh Manifesto highlighting some of the notable achievements, new challenges and opportunities will be showcased on the eve of the Convention and published soon after.

Some of the opportunities that will be highlighted relate to international support and action on the 1984 Sikh Genocide and progress on the Sikhs' right to self-determination.

Many of the achievements in the last 12 months have been focused on Sikh identity or human rights related issues. One of the most notable successes was regarding changes to the Offensive Weapons Bill to protect the right of Sikhs to purchase, own, possess and use the large Kirpan.

The Sikh community has also shown remarkable unity with unparalleled support from Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations for the campaign to secure the option of a Sikh ethnic tick box in the Census 2021 that has reached a critical point from a legal and political viewpoint.

The refreshed Sikh Manifesto when published needs to be proactively used by Gurdwaras, Sikh organisations, Sikh families and individuals to take up issues with those hoping to be elected MPs. The Sikh Manifesto is there as a resource to empower Sikh institutions and the community.

Tactical voting is expected to play a much greater role in the next General Election and the Sikh vote will matter more than ever. 135 constituencies that have 1,000 or more Sikh constituents have been identified and local Sikhs need to ensure the MPs elected from these areas do much more on Sikh issues, including supporting the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for British Sikhs. A balanced scorecard approach will be used to assess the performance on Sikh issues of each of the 135 MPs after they are elected. Some of these MPs will be Ministers, Shadow Ministers or backbenchers and able to use their positions in different ways.

Last year we promoted several younger Sikhs to key leadership positions in the Sikh Federation(UK). This process of transitioning the leadership and changing the structural balance means 60% of the leadership of the Sikh Federation (UK) will now be Sikhs born in the UK, including a team of five Sikh women. The Sikh Federation (UK) with the support of Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations is leading on political engagement and campaigning for the Sikh community with new leadership on the horizon. Together we are well placed to deliver historic victories for the Sikh Panth.

Bhai Amrik Singh
Chair Sikh Federation (UK)

NB: The updates and articles in this report are a reflection of the work and activities undertaken by the Sikh Federation (UK) over the past year. The mainstream newspaper coverage published has been as a direct result of our press releases and media outreach.

SIKH FEDERATION (UK)



Sikh Federation (UK) ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019

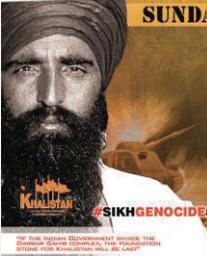
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TRUTH > JUSTICE > FREEDOM
WIKING THE TRUTH TO THE LIGHT OF THE SIKH SCRIPTURES

1984 35 YEARS REMEMBRANCE MARCH & FREEDOM RALLY

SUNDAY 2ND JUNE 2019, LONDON



Programme

- 11am Gather at Hyde Park - Reformers Tree
- 1:45pm Remembrance Protest March through London
- 2:45pm Freedom Rally - Trafalgar Square

For more information:
 Email - fs@live.co.uk
 Kuldip Singh 07928 633554
 Joga Singh 07968 335588

Organised by Federation Of Sikh Organisations (FSO)

ਸਲਾਨਾ ਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਨਵੈਨਸ਼ਨ
ਸਿੱਖ ਕੋਵਰੇਜ਼ (ਯੂਕੇ) SIKH FEDERATION (UK)
NATIONAL SIKH CONVENTION 2018

Highlighting the issues facing the Sikh Community in the UK and Internationally
SUNDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER 2018

ਸਿੱਖ ਕੋਵਰੇਜ਼ (ਯੂਕੇ) ਦੀ ਸਲਾਨਾ ਕਨਵੈਨਸ਼ਨ 16 ਸਤੰਬਰ ਤਿੰਨ ਮੈਡਰਨ ਨੂੰ
ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ, ਵਾਲਸਲ ਓਰ, ਵਿਲਿਨਹਾਲ ਵਿਖੇ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ

GURU NANAK GURDWARA, WALSALL RD, WILLENHALL WV13 2RD

Sri Akhand Paath Sahib Arambh: Friday 14th Bhog: Sunday 16th at 10am
 * Open invitation to all British Organisations and Churches
 * Speakers from Punjab, USA, Canada, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland
 * Evening Prayers from one of the world's 10 Holiest Places
 * Live Broadcast Throughout Europe 11-4pm (UK time)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
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MASS SIKH LOBBY

Wednesday 14 November 2018
12 noon to 3pm

- Take part in the Mass Sikh Lobby of the UK Parliament and ask for your MP by name
- Ask your MP to meet you in Central Lobby between 12 noon and 1pm or in Committee Room 10 between 1:30pm
- Sikh ethnic tick box in the Census 2021
- Amending the Offensive Weapons Bill so there are no restrictions on the large Sikh Kirpan
- Independent public inquiry on UK involvement in the 1984 Sikh Genocide and anti-Sikh measures taken against Sikhs in the UK
- First anniversary of the torture and imprisonment of Jagtar Singh Johal
- Police raids on the homes of five British Sikh activists



THE UK SIKH SURVEY

The largest and most comprehensive Sikh survey in the UK, powered by the Sikh Network

Please participate and complete the UK Sikh Survey at
www.uksikhsurvey.com

THE SIKH NETWORK
 Responsible for monitoring progress and strategic direction of the Sikh Manifesto

Phone, Tablet, Laptop



QR Code

info@thesikhnetwork.com | www.thesikhnetwork.com | www.facebook.com/TheSikhNetwork | [twitter @thesikhnet](https://twitter.com/thesikhnet)

BUILDING A STRONGER POLITICAL VOICE IN THE UK AND ABROAD

SIKH FEDERATION (UK) REVEAL PLANS FOR PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION FOR LEADERSHIP ROLES



17 September 2018 - The 35th Annual International Sikh Convention organised by the Sikh Federation (UK), often referred to as the first and only Sikh political party, attracted in excess of 10,000 Sikhs at Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Willenhall in the West Midlands.

Sikhs from over 100 towns and cities and over 200 UK Gurdwaras were represented yesterday where a number of resolutions relating to Punjab, the Census 2021, an independent public inquiry into UK involvement in the 1984 Sikh Genocide and the immediate release of Jagtar Singh Johal were passed.

Those present heard from an impressive list of Sikh representatives from abroad including Dr Gurtej Singh from Sacramento, USA, Amarjit Singh Mann the Chair of the Ontario Gurdwara Committee and various speakers from France, Germany and other European countries.

Three significant announcements were also made including revealing plans for preparing the next generation for leadership roles.

Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK) told those gathered that the focus of efforts in the next 3-5 years, will be to prepare and promote the next generation for leadership roles and that this will be partly achieved through the expansion of the Sikh Network concept.

The Sikh Network concept was launched exactly four years ago at this convention and was about bringing talented Sikhs - men, women, young and old together with one clear objective of developing the Sikh Manifesto by 31 January 2015.

For the last three and a half years the Board members of the Sikh Network, including Preet Kaur Gill MP have been focused on delivery, monitoring progress and strategic direction of the Sikh Manifesto.



They also successfully delivered and presented the results of the UK Sikh Survey 2016, the largest survey of its kind and are planning a follow up survey in 2019.

The Sikh Network has been keeping everyone updated through a quarterly newsletter and Sikh Network Shows on TV.

Those at the Convention were told that the next phase of the Sikh Network concept was to create specialist, but autonomous networks from which the future leadership of Sikhs could emerge.

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

“The Sikh Network concept has proved a huge success in the last four years. The time is now right to take this concept to the next level with specialist, but autonomous networks.”

“The networks are at various stages of developments, but we are confident that the future leadership of Sikhs in the UK will emerge from these networks in the next 3-5 years as has already been demonstrated with the likes of Preet Kaur Gill MP.”

Later in the Convention the Sikh Federation (UK) to set an example announced the name of Jatinder Singh, the current President at Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Smethwick to be the next Vice Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK).

SIKH FEDERATION (UK) SHARE DETAILS FOR TAKING SIKH POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

17 September 2018 - Another key announcement at the Convention concerned the steps being taken to take Sikh political engagement to the next level. Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK) spoke about Sikh Roundtable meetings with the UK Government, increased activities of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for British Sikhs and quarterly regional workshops to assess progress with the Sikh Manifesto and consult on its update ready for the next General Election.

To make meetings with government more effective the Sikh Federation (UK) had taken the initiative to organise pre-meetings of Sikh representatives prior to the meetings with government officials and the Faith Minister.

Over the summer the Sikh Federation (UK) has made a number of suggestions in meetings and written exchanges with the Department. These include two or three separate Sikh roundtable meetings with the Home Office and a similar number with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office each year.



The Sikh Federation (UK) and the Sikh Network are engaged and working on a very broad range of matters cutting across government and play an increasing role in government-wide meetings and the only ones really pushing for this expansion of roundtable meetings.

Eddie Hughes, the Conservative MP for Walsall North speaking at the Convention accepted the British

Sikh community is a role model community and provides an exceptionally interesting example of successful integration whilst maintaining a very visible and distinctive identity.



This journey has not been without its challenges and struggles. When necessary Sikhs have not been reluctant to assert their rights through peaceful protests, lobbying and legal action.

Sikhs in Britain are proud to be identified as British and make an immense contribution in all spheres of public life through honest hard work, promoting equality and tolerance towards others, charitable work and interfaith dialogue.

Today, although Sikhs have excelled in commerce, education and medicine, it is widely accepted Sikhs have yet to fully interact, participate and engage with the democratic institutions through the UK political system with similar dedication. Although there are two Sikh MPs the community is far from fully represented in relation to its population or contribution.

Politicians on all sides accept more Sikhs need to be encouraged to become directly involved in decision making processes in government that impact on their daily lives. Sikhs will only have integrated successfully when they have fully interacted and participated both with and within civic society through local, regional and national democratic institutions and organisations.

Bhai Amrik Singh announced at the Convention that quarterly regional workshops – Sikh Roundtable meetings open to representatives of Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations would take place to assess progress with the Sikh Manifesto published in 2015.

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

“We have embarked on several steps to take Sikh political engagement to the next level.”

“An active APPG with quarterly regional workshops should allow greater progress on Sikh issues. Eventually we will develop an updated Sikh Manifesto in 2019.”

CONSTRUCTIVE MEETING WITH HOME SECRETARY ON SIKH ISSUES

21 October 2018 - The first quarterly Sikh Roundtable meeting for representatives of all leading Sikh organisations and Gurdwaras took place yesterday at Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Smethwick.



The meeting was very productive and jointly organised by the APPG for British Sikhs, Sikh Federation (UK) and the Sikh Network. There was diverse representation and the meeting was insightful and constructive in developing consensus on major challenges faced by the community.

Preet Kaur Gill MP, the Chair of the APPG shared with the community for the first time at the meeting the outcome of her one-to-one meeting with Sajid Javid, the Home Secretary that took place on Tuesday 16 October.

On the Hate Crime Action Plan, he said he was open to a Cross-Government Working Group to tackle Anti-Sikh hatred.

On the Code of Practice on the 5 Kakaars and Sikh Turban he agreed in-principle to provide a foreword to the Code of Practice and attend and speak at the APPG launch of the Code of Practice in Parliament.

On the Offensive Weapons Bill he said he had spoken with Victoria Atkins, the Minister responsible and they would work with the APPG and make an amendment as they do not want to introduce any restrictions on larger Kirpans.



On Immigration enforcement officers targeting Gurdwaras to gather intelligence he was challenged and after some reluctance asked his staff to provide the information requested by Preet relating to the extent to which they are targeting places of worship for different faiths, clarification on the Sikh organisation that had sanctioned Gurdwaras being targeted and the propriety and accountability of grants of over £400k.

On Sikh Windrush Generation cases he said he remained to be convinced on the number of Sikh Windrush Generation cases but had an open mind if the Sikh community provided further information.

On police raids on the homes of five Sikh activists at the request of the Indian authorities he confirmed he was made aware of the raids. He suggested Matt Ward, the head of the West Midlands Police Counter Terrorism Unit, could be asked to clarify about sharing of information with foreign intelligence agencies.

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

"Preet and the APPG are doing an excellent job in championing issues for the Sikh community and challenging the most senior Ministers in government."

"Sajid Javid provided a very positive response on the Offensive Weapons Bill and the Code of Practice on the five Kakaars and Sikh Turban."

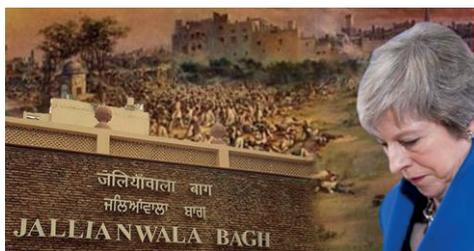
"He also realised the Home Office was vulnerable to criticism in several areas and provided a useful steer on other issues."

Theresa May expresses 'regret' for 1919 Amritsar massacre

theguardian

PM stops short of apologising for killings by British troops who opened fire on crowd

The Guardian - 10 April 2019



Theresa May has expressed "deep regret" for the massacre of at least 379 Indians in the Punjabi city of Amritsar by British colonial troops a century ago, but stopped short of apologising for the slaughter.

"We deeply regret what happened and the suffering caused," May told parliament on Wednesday, three days before India marks 100 years since the killing.

Jeremy Corbyn, the leader of the Labour party, had called for "a full, clear and unequivocal apology".

On 13 April 1919, a crowd gathered at Jallianwala Bagh, a public garden, including families having picnics and people protesting about the deportation of a pair of nationalist leaders. Many were unaware there was a ban on public gatherings in the city, which had been placed under the direct rule of the British Indian army to curb recent unrest.

Brig Gen George Dyer, the officer in charge of the city, lined his men up against a wall of the enclosed garden and they started firing without warning on the crowd for up to 10 minutes, stopping only when they had run out of ammunition. Official estimates put the death toll at 379 with up to four times as many wounded, though both tallies are thought to be significant underestimates.

Dyer was ordered to retire and Winston Churchill told parliament at the time that the massacre was



“an extraordinary event, a monstrous event, an event which stands in singular and sinister isolation”.

“The tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh of 1919 is a shameful scar on British Indian history. As Her Majesty the Queen said before visiting Jallianwala Bagh in 1997, it is a distressing example of our past history with India,” May said on Wednesday.

The former British prime minister David Cameron described it as “deeply shameful” during a visit in 2013 but also stopped short of an apology.

The UK junior foreign minister Mark Field said on Tuesday that an apology could have financial implications and that “we debase the currency of apologies if we make them for many events”.

Navjot Singh Sidhu, a minister in the Punjab government, wrote a letter on Wednesday asking the leader of the state to seek an apology from the British prime minister.

“It would go a long way towards bettering people-to-people contact among our two nations if a strong message of reconciliation is delivered,” Sidhu said.

The UK Sikh Federation said in a tweet it was “very disappointing” that May had not apologised.

A ceremony is due to take place at the site of the massacre on Saturday.

Labour writes to PM May calling for UK to apologise for Jallianwala Bagh massacre

TOI

Times of India – 12 April 2019

LONDON: The leader of the opposition in the UK, Jeremy Corbyn, has written to Prime Minister Theresa May asking the British government to make a full apology for the 1919 massacre at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar.

“In government, Labour would apologise for this shameful moment in our history,” Corbyn wrote.

“And as Sikhs across the globe celebrate the creation of the Khalsa and organise events for the first-ever UK Sikh Heritage Month, it is time for the UK government to address this formative moment in our shared histories and make a full apology for the massacre.”

The Sikh Federation UK, which leads on political engagement for the British Sikh community, had raised the same demand for an apology in its five-point plan prior to the 2017 snap election.

Corbyn wrote: “It is vitally important that the UK government apologises for this atrocity. The apology should be to the victims of the massacre, their families and descendants, the people of Punjab and the worldwide Sikh community.”

His letter dated April 11, 2019 states: “It is believed up to 1,000 people — predominately Sikhs but also Muslims and Hindus — died and 1,500 were injured when troops from the British Indian Army fired thousands of rounds at unarmed civilians, who had gathered for a peaceful protest and to mark a religious festival, Vaisakhi. The massacre came within months of the end of the Great War in which tens of thousands of turban-wearing Sikhs from Punjab sacrificed their lives for our freedom in Europe.”



“It is not enough to condemn the massacre and express shame,” Corbyn wrote in his letter, referring to May’s comments on Wednesday, when she had said in the House of Commons, “The tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh in 1919 is a shameful scar on British Indian history.”



Winston Churchill and former Prime Minister H. H. Asquith did openly condemn the attack ordered by Colonel Reginald Dyer, the acting military commander for Amritsar. Churchill called it “monstrous” and Asquith said it was “one of the worst outrages in the whole of our history”.

But in the House of Commons on Wednesday May only expressed shame and regret. Foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt is “reflecting” on the situation, Baroness Goldie told the House of Lords, after an apology was called for during a debate there in February.

“The UK government has had plenty of time to reflect on an appropriate response,” Corbyn wrote, in reference to that.

Labour British Sikh MP Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi said: “I feel that it would be highly appropriate, especially as we mark the centenary, that the prime minister makes a formal apology on behalf of the nation for the 1919 Amritsar massacre. Many, especially the younger generation, would not be aware of this history, but it’s important that everyone knows, so that such an atrocity is never repeated. It was a crime against humanity when hundreds of innocent people were mercilessly killed and no British prime minister has formally apologised.”

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON CONTRIBUTION OF SIKHS IN THE UK ALLOWS MPs TO RAISE WIDE RANGE OF CONCERNS WITH UK GOVERNMENT



1 May 2019 - 20 MPs spoke yesterday during a 90-minute debate in Parliament on the Contribution of Sikhs in the UK to mark the end of the first ever Sikh Heritage Month.

Emma Reynolds the Labour MP for Wolverhampton North East referred to the Sikh Manifesto produced by the Sikh Network when she said: “At election time, we always know what the Sikh priorities” and “demands are” “for the election”. She congratulated Sikh organisations who produce the manifesto for the election.

The Sikh Federation (UK) provided briefing to more than half the MPs who spoke during the debate on a wide range of issues. Many MPs

spoke about the importance of Sikh representation and praised the two Sikh MPs. Jake Berry MP, the Minister from the Ministry on Housing, Communities and Local Government said he was “delighted that our Parliament has been made richer and more diverse.”

Talking about Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP he referred to history being made with the first turban-wearing Sikh in Parliament. Speaking about the first Sikh female Preet Kaur Gill MP he said she was: “doing a fantastic job representing not just her constituents but the Sikh community more widely.”

However, the Government Minister came under pressure from many MPs, like John Spellar Jim Cunningham and Tanamanjeet Singh Dhesi, on the need to act much more quickly on the Sikh war memorial in central London. In January 2018 the Communities Secretary, Rt. Hon. Sajid Javid confirmed support for a Sikh war memorial in central London to mark the contribution made by Sikh servicemen.

He stated: “Once an appropriate site has been identified and a memorial agreed on, the Government has agreed to provide funding towards the project.”

The site, near Admiralty Arch has been known about for many months and the design of the memorial is nearing finalisation. Preet Kaur Gill MP and Pat McFadden MP referred to the Lions of the Great



War monument outside Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Smethwick and the support provided by Sandwell Council.

Many MPs also used the opportunity of this debate to raise the matter of their disappointment that an apology for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre 100 years ago on Vaisakhi in Amritsar had not yet been forthcoming. Seema Malhotra MP who obtained the debate specifically spoke about the story of Shaheed Udham Singh who she said, “made it his life’s mission to assassinate the lieutenant governor of the Punjab”.

Several MPs spoke about hate crimes targeting Sikhs. Preet Kaur Gill MP spoke about the disappointment with the hate crime action plan refresh given the promises made to Sikh organisations that “they would not be ignored or be invisible to Government”. She urged the government to work with the APPG on UK Sikhs to address the under-reporting of Sikh hate. She urged the Government to reach out to Manchandan Kaur, the new chair of the community safety group for the Sikh Council UK.



There were several references to Sikh articles of faith – the turban and Kirpan in particular. Pat McFadden MP spoke of the bravery of Tarsem Singh Sandhu, who led the fight in Wolverhampton for Sikhs to be able to wear a turban while driving a bus. He said: “He had to face down great hostility to win his battle, and his bravery and that of those who campaigned alongside him paved the way for change that today we take for granted. Even after that great progress, however, there are still struggles. Legislation still has to be amended to ensure that the simple act of observing the five Ks and wearing a turban can be done freely.”

Preet Kaur Gill MP struck a chord when she said: *“I want us to do more than offer warm words about the contribution of Sikhs”*. She spoke of the *“repression and exploitation that has occurred in Britain’s name”* *“and we must know the truth of the role of the then Government involvement in Operation Blue Star, otherwise known as the 1984 Genocide of Sikhs.”*

Alison Thewliss the SNP MP from Glasgow Central raised the campaign for Jagtar Singh Johal and the meeting with the Foreign Secretary last week. Eddie Hughes the Conservative MP from Walsall North said he *“met with Jagtar’s wife and brother last week after they had met with the Foreign Secretary, so there is cross-party, consensual agreement that we support the “Free Jaggi Now” campaign.”*

Several MPs also touched upon freedom of religion Jim Shannon a DUP MP for Strangford criticised Article 25 of the Indian constitution and spoke of the “Khalistan political movement” while criticising right wing Hindu nationalism.

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

“We have come along way with lobbying. We now have two Sikh MPs who not only take up issues themselves without prompting but are also able to influence other MPs from across the political spectrum to speak up for the Sikh community and take up the full range of issues that concern us.”



LABOUR LEADERSHIP MAKE PITCH FOR SIKH VOTE WITH ONE EYE ON THE GENERAL ELECTION

19 May 2019 - Four days before the European elections Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour Leader and John McDonnell, the Shadow Chancellor visited and addressed the Sikh community at Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Park Avenue, Southall to make a pitch for the Sikh vote.



The voter turnout on Thursday for the European elections is expected to be lower than normal with much disillusionment with how the government and all politicians have handled the EU Exit following the 2016 marginal victory for leaving. Many thought we would never have to vote again in the UK to elect Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) that may never take their seats or be lame ducks.

Traditionally the Sikh voter turnout in elections is one of the highest of

all communities, so it was not surprising the Labour leadership chose to focus on the Sikh community and covered key issues significant to the Sikh community with one eye on a General Election.

On Thursday the Brexit Party and Liberal Democrats are expected to be the main beneficiaries and the Conservatives the main losers. However, Labour is also expected to suffer with Labour remainers wanting much more clarity from the party leadership about a second referendum and Labour leavers pulling in the opposite direction.

The results on Thursday on the back of the recent local elections are expected to change the political landscape turning many Westminster seats that had previously been viewed as safe seats into marginals. The meltdown of support for the Conservatives with voters punishing them by switching to the Brexit Party and the Liberal Democrats gaining support from Labour and Conservative remainers due to their clear stance on a second referendum will make all parties have to work much harder for votes in the next General Election.

The next General Election may come much sooner than everyone expected. The Prime Minister is being forced to step down within the next few weeks. A destructive contest will then begin within the Conservative Party to elect a leader and the next Prime Minister who will almost certainly be unable to keep the warring factions within the Conservative Party together. The Brexit conundrum has created instability and with no easy solution in sight the next General Election may therefore be on the cards within months rather than years.

The Sikh Federation (UK) has already analysed what the opinion polls are suggesting and identified 135 seats in a General Election where the Sikh vote will matter even more with a changed political landscape. John McDonnell therefore announced during the visit today that the Labour leadership will be meeting the main Sikh organisations with grassroots support to help formulate the next Labour manifesto for the General Election.

Harmeet Singh, the young General Secretary at the Gurdwara set the tone for the visit with a brilliant introductory speech covering the Miri-Piri principle, Sikh values and some of the key Sikh demands.



The first political speaker was Dr Onkar Singh Sahota, the only Sikh member of the London Assembly and the Chair of the Labour Party in Ealing Southall. He also gave an excellent speech and covered the three key issues on which the Sikh Federation (UK) had briefed Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell.

In January 2015 the Sikh Network working with the Sikh Federation (UK) produced the much acclaimed 10-point Sikh Manifesto that was launched at the same Gurdwara. The Sikh Federation (UK) also set out a 5-point plan before the snap election in 2017, including the need for the UK Government to make a full formal apology for the Amritsar Massacre 100 years ago in 1919 at Jallianwala Bagh.

This was the first issue on which the Sikh Federation (UK) had briefed and reminded the Labour leadership that it had given an assurance that the next Labour Government would make a full apology to the descendants of the victims of the massacre 100 years ago and the worldwide Sikh and Punjabi community. Jeremy Corbyn spoke passionately and repeated his commitment. Many of the Labour politicians that spoke before him touched upon the same issue.



The second issue was the Labour Party manifesto commitment in 2017 to an independent public inquiry into UK involvement in the 1984 Sikh Genocide and anti-Sikh measures taken in the UK by the Thatcher government at the behest of the Indian regime. Reference was made by several speakers to the 35th anniversary of the 1984 Sikh Genocide and a commitment to get to the truth.

The third and final issue the Labour leadership was briefed about was also mentioned by

Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell. It was acknowledged Preet Kaur Gill MP, the first Sikh woman MP was doing an excellent job in getting significant cross-party support to address proper Sikh recognition and the need for a Sikh ethnic tick box in the Census 2021.

Later this week Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations are expected to begin legal proceedings against the Cabinet Office if they fail to agree to provide the option of a Sikh ethnic tick box when the Census Order is presented in Parliament in the Autumn. The legal challenge will emphasise the need to address equal opportunities and anti-discrimination as regards the Sikh community and highlight institutional discrimination by public bodies against the Sikh community.

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

“Today has shown Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Sikh community on key human rights issues.”

“We are delighted the Labour leadership is much more responsive to the demands of the Sikh community and wants our assistance to develop the next Labour manifesto.”

“However, no one can take the Sikh vote for granted that will matter much more in the next General Election with a changed political landscape due to massive divisions created by Brexit.”

Other speakers included Tanamajeet Singh Dhese the Labour MP for Slough, Seema Malhotra the Labour MP for Feltham and Heston, Virendra Sharma the Labour MP for Ealing Southall and Neena Gill MEP and Claude Moraes MEP who are both standing again in the European elections on Thursday.

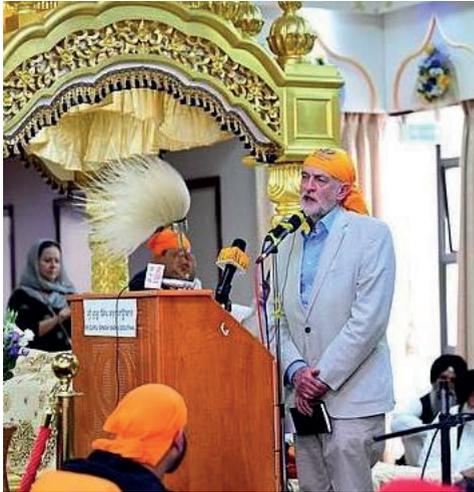


Corbyn addresses gurdwara, promises Jallianwala apology in bid to win Sikh vote in EU elections

TOI

Times of India – 20 May 2019

LONDON: Labour Party and Opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn visited a gurdwara in Southall on Sunday in an attempt to win over the Sikh vote for the European Parliament elections.



The elections to select 73 members of the European Parliament to represent the UK in the 751-seat European Parliament will take place on May 23 since the UK is still a member of the bloc and has not yet left. Labour is performing very badly in the polls, having slipped to third place, after the Lib Dems.

Speaking to the congregation at Sri Guru Singh Sabha in Southall, the Labour leader repeated his assurance that the next Labour government would make an apology for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 100 years ago.

He also reiterated his commitment, as made in his party's 2017 manifesto, to hold an inquiry into the British government's role in the 1984 Sikh genocide.

His visit to speak to Sikhs had been organised by Sikhs for Labour.

Labour's Neena Gill MEP, the first India-born and Punjabi MEP and the only Sikh MEP, who is chair of Sikhs for Labour, spoke, as did MP Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi, Seema Malhotra and John McDonnell, the shadow chancellor.

Gill, who has been an MEP since 1999 and is standing for re-election in the West Midlands, told TOI: "I am delighted that Jeremy and John took up the invite of Sikhs for Labour to pay their respects and show support for the Sikh candidates in the European Parliament elections."

Whilst Labour has 246 seats in the House of Commons and the Lib Dems have only 11, according to the latest YouGov poll, Labour is set to win only 15% of the vote share, falling into third place, after the Lib Dems at 16% and the Brexit Party, who are set to win 35%.

"Labour has seen a vote collapse, albeit not as bad as the Tories as they are not in government. Labour is losing different directions. Seventy per cent of Labour wants to remain and those voters are moving to the Lib Dems and Greens, and the 30% who want to leave are voting for the Brexit Party. The reason for the collapse of the vote is that Labour has sat on the fence saying it wants to deliver the EU referendum result but has not voted for any of Theresa May's deals, and has a confusing policy on a second referendum," explained Dominic Walsh, policy analyst at think tank Open Europe.

"The next general election may come much sooner than everyone expected with Theresa May being forced to step down within the next few weeks," said **Bhai Amrik Singh, chair of the Sikh Federation UK (SFUK)**. "The SFUK has identified 135 seats in a general election where the Sikh vote will matter. We are delighted the Labour leadership is much more responsive to the demands of the Sikh community. However, no one can take the Sikh vote for granted."



SIKH BUSINESSES COMMIT TO PROVIDE MASSIVE £500M INJECTION INTO PAKISTAN GURDWARAS AS IMRAN KHAN LED GOVERNMENT MAKE POSITIVE OVERTURES TO UK SIKHS

10 June 2019 - Sayed Zulfiqar Bukhari, the Chairman of the Pakistan Tourism Board and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan met Sikh community representatives at The Rembrandt Hotel in London on 10 June 2019. The meeting was to discuss religious tourism projects in Pakistan following the historic laying of foundation stones for the Kartarpur Corridor on either side of the border in November 2018.

The Central Gurdwara (Khalsa Jatha) London supported by Peter Virdee organised the event where several significant announcements were made by Sayed Bukhari. Many of the Sikhs that spoke congratulated the Pakistan government for the stand taken regarding not only the establishment of the Kartarpur Corridor but also other measures being taken for the 550th Gurburb of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

Sayed Bukhari made a series of specific commitments regarding visas for religious reasons, including the possibility of visas online and visas on arrival. However, after being pushed on this issue during a question answer session he said he would ensure the establishment of tourism desks in Pakistani embassies and dedicated staff to facilitate visas for those taking part in Yatras in Pakistan later this year.

He also made a specific commitment on

connectivity whereby high standard free buses would connect all the main Gurdwaras in Pakistan. Several speakers also made comments about the Pakistan authorities needing to ensure the preservation of the rich religious and national heritage of the Sikhs rather than allow renovation by some that have little or no appreciation of preservation.

A Pakistani journalist made a generous gesture of donating land for the Pakistani authorities to build accommodation near Kartarpur. However, this was overshadowed by Peter Virdee making a huge financial commitment by announcing the setting up of a trust under the name of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. He said the Peter Virdee Foundation and other business people he had discussed the project with were prepared to inject a massive £500m. He said money was not an issue for the Sikh community as they were prepared to lay down their lives for their Gurdwaras.

The announcement concluded an excellent event with speakers alongside Sayed Zulfiqar Bukhari included, Peter Virdee, Gurpreet Singh Anand, Bhai Amrik Singh, Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK), Preet Kaur Gill MP, Neena Gill MEP, Lord Suri, Sukhjavean Singh, the Spokesperson for the Sikh Council UK, Dabinderjit Singh, Manvir Singh Bhogal and Justice Anup Singh.



DEFENDING AND PROMOTING THE SIKH IDENTITY

SIKH CONVENTION ENDORSES LEGAL AND POLITICAL FIGHT IN CENSUS ETHNICITY BATTLE

14 September 2018 - One of the resolutions at the Convention related to taking all legal and political measures to secure a Sikh ethnic tick box in the Census 2021.



The local MP – Eddie Hughes, the Conservative MP for Walsall North spoke in support of this demand.

The resolution gave backing to take legal action against the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for racial discrimination against Sikhs if ONS fail to recommend the inclusion of a Sikh ethnic tick box.

ONS are expected to make its recommendation to the Cabinet Office later in the year as part of the Census White Paper 2018 submission.

A year ago nearly 140 MPs from across the political spectrum came forward within a matter of days to sign a letter to John Pullinger, the National Statistician, in support of the Sikh community demand.

The All Party Parliamentary Group for British Sikhs that sent the letter claimed the number of MPs could easily have been doubled or tripled suggesting a majority of MPs back the Sikh community demand.

The resolution called on MPs of all political parties to show support for the Sikh community by amending the Census White Paper 2018 to include a Sikh ethnic tick box if this proves necessary.

There is no legal doubt that Sikhs and Jews constitute ethnic groups under UK law. This is one of the reasons why ONS has been in active discussions with the Sikh and Jewish communities. ONS has taken legal advice on the potential implications of denying Sikhs or Jews ethnic tick boxes, but is refusing to share the legal advice, not even with MPs who will be making the final decision.

In Canada, when respondents were first able to identify themselves as 'Jewish' in response to both the religion and the ethnicity questions in the Census, the number identifying in either of these ways was 27.6% more than those identifying themselves Jewish by religion only. The same can be expected if a Sikh ethnic tick box is introduced in the UK.

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

"Jewish groups have admitted in their formal submissions to ONS they requested that 'Jewish' be included as one of the options under ethnicity. But a few weeks ago it was reported that the Board of Deputies of British Jews had changed its mind claiming it was worried about comparability of data."

"In really what has made the Jewish community nervous is the latest Census in Canada conducted in 2016 that suggested the Jewish community numbers may have fallen by 56% over five years."

"But this was due to a significant change in the way Statistics Canada worded the 2016 census ethnic question. The 2016 census, like counts in the past, asked respondents to record their ethnicity and



offered sample responses. But unlike other censuses, the 2016 form did not include Jewish in the list of examples.”

“To complicate matters further there was no religious question in 2016 to supplement the ethnicity question that is asked every 5 years as the religious question is only asked every 10 years. We are in discussions with Jewish groups not to be put off by what happen in Canada as it is totally misleading.”

In a show of support for the Sikh community Philip Rosenberg, the Director of Public Affairs at the Board of Deputies for British Jews has recently written to the ONS and stated:

“We are aware that our friends in the Sikh community are very keen to have Sikhs included in both questions. I am writing to say that we certainly have no objection to this and, indeed, will be interested to see if/how having the two options affects the outcomes, as this will likely shape our approach to the census in future.”

2021 ਜਨਗਣਨਾ ਮੌਕੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਵੱਖਰੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਲਾਜ਼ਮੀ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਬਰਤਾਨੀਆ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਖ਼ਿਲਾਫ਼ ਹਾਈਕੋਰਟ 'ਚ ਕੇਸ

ਲੰਡਨ, 19 ਜੁਲਾਈ (ਮਨਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੱਧਨੀ ਕਲਾ)- ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੈਡਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਯੂ.ਕੇ. ਨੇ ਬਰਤਾਨੀਆ ਦੇ 150 ਗੁਰੂ ਘਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀਆਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਬਰਤਾਨੀਆ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਖ਼ਿਲਾਫ਼ 2021 ਜਨਗਣਨਾ ਮੌਕੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਵੱਖਰੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਲਾਜ਼ਮੀ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਹਾਈਕੋਰਟ 'ਚ ਕੇਸ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੈਡਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਯੂ.ਕੇ. ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਵਲੋਂ ਲੀ ਡੇਅ ਸੁਲਿਸਟਰਜ਼ ਅਤੇ ਮੈਟਰਿਕਸ ਚੌਬਰ ਨੇ 22 ਮਈ 2019 ਨੂੰ ਕੈਬਨਿਟ ਦਫ਼ਤਰ, ਯੂ.ਕੇ. ਸਟੇਟਿਸਟਿਕ ਅਥਾਰਟੀ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਸਟੇਟਿਸਟਿਕ ਦਫ਼ਤਰ (ਓ.ਐਨ.ਐਸ.) ਨੂੰ ਜੁਫ਼ੀਸ਼ੀਅਲ ਰਿਵਿਊ ਕਰਵਾਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ 'ਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਜਨਤਕ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੈਰ-ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਰੋਲ ਅਦਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਨਾ ਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਤੁਸ਼ਟ ਨਾ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਸੂਰਤ 'ਚ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਿਹਾ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਲਈ ਕੈਬਨਿਟ ਦਫ਼ਤਰ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਸਮਾਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਬੀਤੇ ਸ਼ੁੱਕਰਵਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਵਕੀਲ ਨੇ ਨਿਰਾਸ਼ਾਜਨਕ ਜਵਾਬ ਦਿੱਤਾ, ਜਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਕੌਲ ਲੀ ਡੇਅ ਸੁਲਿਸਟਰਜ਼ ਵਲੋਂ ਡੇਵਿਡ ਵੁਲਫੀ ਕਿੰਗ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਆਇਸ਼ਾ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਟੀ ਆਫ ਮੈਟਰਿਕਸ ਚੌਬਰ ਨੇ ਕੌਲ ਹਾਈਕੋਰਟ 'ਚ

ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਮੰਗ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੂਰੀ ਸੁਣਵਾਈ ਲਈ ਦਰਖਾਸਤ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ। ਹਾਈਕੋਰਟ 'ਚ 150 ਸਫ਼ਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਅਰਜ਼ੀ 'ਚ ਦਸੰਬਰ 2018 'ਚ ਜਾਰੀ ਵਾਈਟ ਪੇਪਰ 'ਚ ਜਨਗਣਨਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੈਬਨਿਟ ਦਫ਼ਤਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਪੇਸ਼ ਸੰਸਦੀ ਖਰੜੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਵਾਲ ਉਠਾਏ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਖਰੜੇ ਨੂੰ ਅਗਲੇ ਮਹੀਨਿਆਂ 'ਚ ਸੰਸਦ 'ਚ ਮੁੜ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਣਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੈਡਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਯੂ.ਕੇ. ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦੀ ਤਰਫ਼ੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸੰਸਦ 'ਚ ਇਸ ਖਰੜੇ ਨੂੰ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਵੱਖਰੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਖਾਨੇ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਖਰੜੇ ਨੂੰ ਤਦ ਤੱਕ ਲਈ ਸੰਸਦ 'ਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਕਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ। ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੈਡਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਯੂ.ਕੇ. ਦੇ ਚੇਅਰਮੈਨ ਭਾਈ ਅਮਰੀਕ ਸਿੰਘ ਗਿੱਲ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸ

ਗੱਲ ਦੇ ਸਬੂਤ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਦੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨਾ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰੁਜ਼ਗਾਰ, ਘਰ, ਸਿਹਤ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਦਿਅਕ ਖੇਤਰ 'ਚ ਮਿਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਲਾਭਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵਾਂਝੇ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵੀ ਮੰਨਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਦਾ ਡਾਟਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਜਰੂਰਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਨਸੰਖਿਆ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰਨ 'ਚ ਲਾਭ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ 2011 ਦੀ ਮਰਦਮਸ਼ੁਮਾਰੀ ਮੌਕੇ 83362 ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਖੁਦ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਖਾਨੇ 'ਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਜੋਂ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ। ਭਾਈ ਗਿੱਲ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੈਡਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਯੂ.ਕੇ. ਵਲੋਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਵੱਖਰੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਲਈ 15 ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਆਸ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਕੇਸ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰੇਗਾ।



UK GOVERNMENT ACCUSED OF NOT RESPECTING THE LAW AND PROMOTING INDEFINITE INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST SIKHS DUE TO DECISIONS AROUND THE CENSUS



The Census White Paper published by the Cabinet Office in December 2018 set out proposals from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) that will form the basis of a Census Order to be presented to Parliament in the autumn.

The White Paper explained although the 'Sikh' category was one of the four proposed ethnicity response options with the "highest user need" the ONS recommended not to provide the option of a

Sikh ethnic tick box "because of the evidence that this would not be acceptable to a proportion of the Sikh population".

This was immediately challenged through Parliamentary Questions and on the floor of the House of



Commons by Preet Kaur Gill, the Labour MP for Birmingham Edgbaston and the Chair of the APPG for British Sikhs who wanted answers from the Cabinet Office.

Iain Bell, the Deputy National Statistician was also challenged on the failure of the ONS to propose the option of a Sikh ethnic tick box in the Women and Equalities Select Committee hearing by Eddie Hughes the Conservative MP for Walsall North.

Chloe Smith, the Cabinet Office Minister responsible for laying the White Paper and senior ONS officials met Preet Kaur Gill MP, Eddie Hughes MP and the principal adviser of the Sikh Federation (UK) on 14 January 2019.

The Minister showed genuine understanding and concern at the meeting and requested the ONS officials to answer two key questions as they were unable to give convincing answers at the meeting. The Minister asked for:

- a) specific and conclusive evidence collected by ONS to support the White Paper assertion that a proportion of the Sikh population would not accept the option of an additional Sikh ethnic tick box; and
- b) how ONS will ensure 40,000 public bodies collect information on Sikhs as an ethnic group to address their legal duties for equal opportunities and anti-discrimination without the option of a Sikh ethnic tick box in the Census 2021.



On 31 January 2019 the Minister shared detailed information provided by ONS, but it failed to answer both questions. The Minister also indicated that MPs may be unable to amend the options suggested for the ethnic group question in Parliament when the Census Order is presented in the autumn. However, the Minister suggested a window of opportunity existed to influence the ONS before the Census Order was finalised.

Shadow Cabinet Office Ministers were consulted in February and they concluded the Sikhs had an “open and shut” case as far as they were concerned and suggested there may be undisclosed “political” reasons for ONS ignoring the strong evidence supporting the need for the option of a Sikh ethnic tick box.

After several failed attempts a meeting eventually took place between MPs, Sikh representatives and ONS officials on 2 March 2019. The senior ONS officials were unprepared, unable to answer key questions and incapable of providing any convincing evidence to support the White Paper conclusion.

On 13 May 2019 a make or break meeting took place with John Pullinger, the National Statistician. Remarkably he was unable to provide any further evidence to support the ONS conclusion in the Census White Paper and how public bodies would address their legal duties for equal opportunities and anti-discrimination without the option of a Sikh ethnic tick box in the Census 2021.

Since the White Paper was published five months ago the Sikh Federation (UK) that is spearheading the legal challenge on behalf of the Sikh community with the backing of over 150 Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations across the UK has revealed compelling new evidence to support the need for the option of a Sikh ethnic tick box. It is shocking the ONS that prides itself on its independence withheld this evidence in the White Paper and its website.

The only evidence ONS has put forward on “acceptability” that it has relied upon is qualitative and from small focus groups of 7-10 Sikhs conducted by Kantar, an external research company, in March and April 2018. The focus groups suggested the levels of support for the option of a Sikh ethnic tick box was highest from men over the age of 50.



The Sikh Federation (UK) has pointed out the ONS has ignored the actual evidence around “acceptability” from the Census 2011. 83,362 Sikhs made a strong public statement around “acceptability” when they refused to use any of the existing ethnic tick box categories and wrote “Sikh”. The National Statistician was recently asked to provide a breakdown of the 83,362 Sikhs by gender and age. This shows 52% were men and 48% were women and the level of support was across a wide spectrum of ages. The highest level of support was in the under 50s with nearly 75% of those ticking other and writing Sikh being under the age of 50. The highest proportion was in the 25-35 age group for both men and women.

The legal submission points out much stronger evidence ONS has not considered in assessing “public acceptability” that applies to Sikhs as well as non-Sikhs. For example, it has emerged in correspondence with the National Statistician that an external research agency, on behalf of the ONS conducted an individual online quantitative survey in May 2018 that had 2,412 respondents. Its stated purpose was to test acceptability of a revised ethnic group question including a Sikh tick box.

In the survey, respondents were asked how comfortable they were with different options. 88% of respondents reported being either “very comfortable” or “somewhat comfortable” with the inclusion



of the Sikh ethnic group; 7% reported being “somewhat uncomfortable” or “very uncomfortable”, and 5% misunderstood the question. ONS states the sample of 2,412 respondents was nationally representative in terms of age, socio-economic grade and location.

Sikh groups ramp up pressure to get tick box decision overturned



Times of India - 9 February 2019

LONDON: British Sikh MP Preet Gill is busy tabling parliamentary questions as some Sikh groups are lobbying MPs in an orchestrated bid to overturn the Office for National Statistics (ONS) recommendation not to have a Sikh ethnic tick box in the 2021 UK Census.

The Sikh Federation (UK) (SFUK), Sikh Council UK, All-Party Parliamentary Group for British Sikhs (APPG) for British Sikhs, of which Gill is chair, want the box to be included in the response to the question “What is your ethnic group?”



and plan services for Sikhs, and the religion question is voluntary.

However, those against say it creates a conflict between having to choose whether they are Sikh or Indian, and Sikh is not their “ethnic identity”. An ONS report on the findings of six focus groups they commissioned states: “Many younger Sikh participants were more concerned about expressing the British aspect of their ethnic identity...They also saw the inclusion as an attempt to segregate them from...their Asian or Indian heritage.”

On February 6, Eddie Hughes MP asked Iain Bell, deputy national statistician at ONS, in the Parliament, how the ONS could ensure that the 40,000 public bodies that use census ethnic categories to collect data, would have sufficient data on Sikhs. Bell admitted, “Many public bodies are only picking up ethnicity.” But he said the “evidence on unacceptability” came from the focus groups and “there was not a single unanimous view in favour of inclusion.”

On December 14, 2018, the ONS recommended that Sikh would remain as an option in the religion question but not be added to the ethnicity question “because this would not be acceptable to a proportion of the Sikh population”.

ONS said it reached this conclusion having undertaken qualitative and quantitative research between 2015 and 2018, to explore whether to add Sikh under ‘Asian/Asian British’ in the ethnicity response box, which has Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese, or whether to add it under ‘Other ethnic group’ next to ‘Arab’.

Infuriated by the response, Sikh groups launched a year-long campaign **#MakeSikhsCount2021** to get the tick box included in the secondary legislation, which the government will put before the Parliament in the form of a Census Order later this year.

Supporters claim the ONS findings are flawed and the majority of Sikhs want the box. They claim many Sikhs do not want to be labelled as Indian and the box is required to allocate resources to

The SFUK told TOI it is not ruling out legal action against the ONS.

In December Gill, in a written parliamentary question, asked what proportion of the Sikh population would not accept a Sikh tick box. John Pullinger, national statistician, responded the box was not acceptable to younger, second-generation participants, who felt it was unfair to include Sikh without also including all other religions within the ethnic group question. “Some were confused on whether to identify as Indian, Sikh or to write in another identity such as Punjabi”, he wrote.

Gill tabled another parliamentary question on 28 January, asking “How many of the 53 focus group participants supported the introduction of a Sikh ethnic tick box?”. Pullinger replied: “Qualitative research is not designed to provide such figures.”

The SFUK points to an open meeting held by ONS on 23 October 2017, to which 47 people came. Of those 45 – in a show of hands – said they wanted both a Sikh ethnic tick box and a Sikh



religion tick box. The two who did not were Lord Singh of Wimbledon, who is the director and Hardeep Singh, who is deputy-director, of the Network of Sikh Organisations (NSO).

An NSO spokesperson told TOI: "The meeting was confused and hostile, with lots of Sikh Federation UK supporters in attendance". The spokesperson said the focus should now be on research commissioned by the ONS across the broader British Sikh community which "showed younger Sikhs identified primarily as Sikhs by religion...which is consistent with Sikh teachings."

The SFUK, however, maintains the ONS has also ignored a survey of 112 gurdwaras, which show 100 per cent want the box. Pullinger argues that

the survey was flawed as it was undertaken by APPG for British Sikhs, not the ONS. In a letter to Gill, he wrote: "The covering letter put a strong case for the inclusion of the tick-box. This would not be considered conducive to the collection of independent statistical evidence."

A spokeswoman for the ONS stands by its recommendation. "ONS made its recommendations on the ethnicity group tick boxes after looking at all the evidence provided up to the publication of the white paper," she said.

But Bhai Amrik Singh, chair of the SFUK said: "We are confident Cabinet Office ministers will see common sense after listening to MPs from all sides that will expose the failings of the ONS."

Sikhs challenge ministers over plans for next census

THE  TIMES

The Times - 29 May 2019



Ministers face a legal challenge over a proposal not to include Sikhs in the ethnic groups listed in the 2021 census.

Lawyers have sent a letter before action on behalf of

the Sikh Federation, with the support of more than 120 gurdwaras and Sikh organisations.

The legal letter warns the Cabinet Office that it would be unlawful not to include a Sikh ethnicity tickbox on the form, as was recommended by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) last year. The federation claims that the process that preceded the recommendation was unlawful.

In 2011, the UK-wide census recorded about 430,000 Sikhs based on a non-mandatory question about religion. Not all people who would identify as ethnically Sikh identify as religiously Sikh. The Sikh Federation estimates that there are 700,000 to 800,000 ethnic Sikhs in the UK.

The ONS says that the results from a census provide "information that government needs to develop policies, plan and run public services, and allocate funding" and the federation argues it is vital that the ethnic Sikh population is properly accounted for.

Rosa Curling, a solicitor at the London law firm Leigh Day, which is acting for the Sikhs, said: "Our clients have identified a number of flaws within the process for determining whether to include a Sikh ethnicity category in the 2021 Census.

"They believe it is crucial that individuals are able to identify as ethnically Sikh in the next census to ensure a more accurate picture of the community is taken. This will ensure public bodies are fulfilling their duties under the Equality Act when making decisions about the allocation of vital public services."

A spokesperson for the ONS said: "No group will be missed out in the digital-first 2021 Census. The ONS recommendations follow extensive research and consultation with groups and individuals and everyone who wishes to identify as Sikh will be able to do so. The religion question will have a specific Sikh tickbox response option and everyone who wishes to identify as Sikh in response to the ethnicity question will be able to do so through a write-in option. We believe these proposals will enable public bodies to work with the Sikh community in shaping public services to meet their needs."

The census order, setting out the questions that will be asked in 2021, will be introduced to parliament in the autumn.



SIKH COMMUNITY TAKES GOVERNMENT TO HIGH COURT CONCERNING UNLAWFUL PROCESS USED FOR CENSUS 2021

The Sikh Federation UK yesterday formally applied to the High Court on behalf of 150 Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations to challenge the lawfulness of the decision-making process concerning the option of a Sikh ethnic tick box for the Census 2021

18 July 2019 - Leigh Day Solicitors and Matrix Chambers acting for the Sikh Federation (UK) and the Sikh community first wrote to the Cabinet Office, UK Statistics Authority and Office for National Statistics (ONS) on 22 May 2019 to begin the pre-action process before applying for judicial review.



It was explained in detail where the public bodies named had acted unlawfully, asked for detailed explanations and threatened with judicial review if these explanations were not forthcoming or were unsatisfactory.

The Cabinet Office were given extended time to provide explanations and provide further information. A disappointing final reply from government lawyers came last Friday. Leigh Day Solicitors having instructed David Wolfe QC and Ayesha Christie of Matrix Chambers yesterday submitted papers and applied to the High Court for permission to move to a full hearing.

The submission to the High Court sets out why it would be unlawful for the Cabinet Office to lay before Parliament a draft Census Order based on the proposals set out by the ONS in their December 2018 White Paper. The draft Census Order is due to be laid before Parliament in autumn 2019.

The Sikh Federation (UK) is bringing the challenge on behalf of the Sikh community before, rather than after, the draft Census Order is laid in Parliament. This is to avoid the prejudice to good administration which would arise here if the challenge were delayed until after the draft Census Order is laid. The lawyers acting for the Cabinet Office have agreed that the claim should be expedited.

The government has also accepted that *“There is evidence to suggest that Sikhs are experiencing significant disadvantage in several areas of life including employment, housing, health and education.”* They have also stated: *“Having Census data on the Sikh population would allow improvements to service planning and commissioning to better meet the needs of the Sikh population.”*

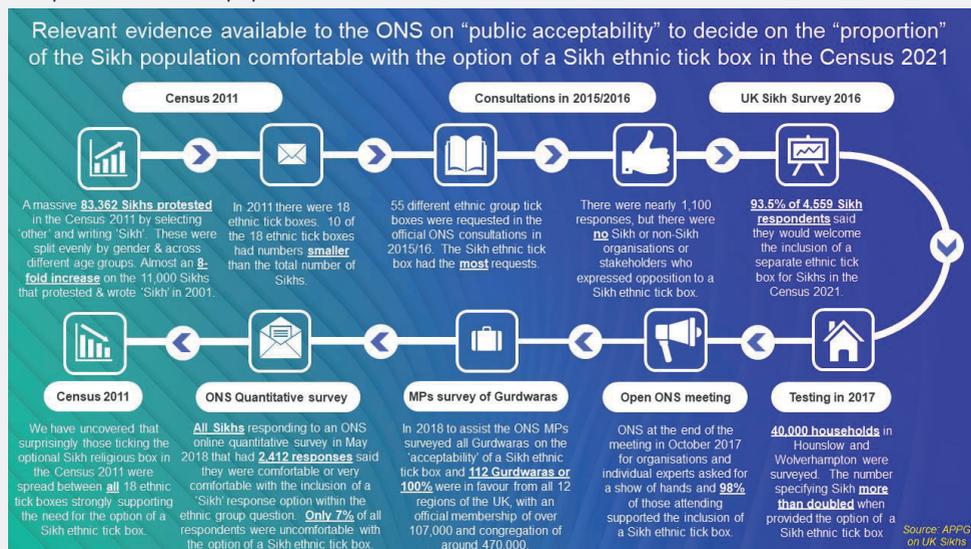


The High Court has been told the lawyers acting for the Cabinet Office failed to engage with the substantive arguments in the pre-action letter. A witness statement from Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK) with supporting letters and minutes from December 2018 to May 2019 has been submitted to the High Court disclosing meetings and written exchanges with the Cabinet Office Minister responsible, ONS and the National Statistician.

Bhai Amrik Singh’s witness statement states information has now been released by ONS, which was not previously in the public domain that strongly supports the need for a Sikh ethnic tick box and undermines the evidence publicly quoted by the ONS. For example, the results of the May 2018 quantitative survey that had 2,412 respondents to test acceptability of a revised ethnic group question were withheld at the time of publishing the White Paper. The results show a very high level of public acceptability for the option of a Sikh ethnic tick box and totally undermine the weak qualitative evidence used by ONS from earlier focus groups of only 7-10 Sikhs to justify its final proposal. This new evidence was shared in a letter from the National Statistician on 13 May 2019.



Similarly, a breakdown by gender and age of the 83,362 Sikhs that ticked other and wrote Sikh in the Census 2011 was also provided for the first time on the 13 May 2019 by the National Statistician. The gender split and support from different age groups for a Sikh ethnic tick box directly contradicts the evidence quoted from small focus groups by ONS to conclude a Sikh ethnic tick was not acceptable to the Sikh population.



This new evidence that has been uncovered shows widespread public support for the option of a Sikh ethnic tick box. This was information that should have been directly relevant to the decision taken in relation to the option of a Sikh ethnic tick box.

ONS has also accepted the possibility that the census data from the optional religious question could significantly under-report the number of Sikhs as around 20 million of the population in the Census 2011 either chose not to answer the religious question or indicated “no religion”. If recent trends continue the 20 million is expected to increase further in 2021 further reducing the usefulness of data from the optional religious question that perversely encourages respondents to select “no religion”. Conservative estimates suggest over 200,000 Sikhs in the UK may have been under counted in official statistics in 2011.

The Sikh Federation (UK) is concerned that decisions are being taken by local and national decision-making bodies based on inaccurate and incomplete data, and that without public bodies monitoring Sikhs as a distinct ethnic group, they cannot be aware of the specific needs of the Sikh community or the barriers they face.

The ONS is clearly worried about the rigour of its own methodology, whether the evidence that has been quoted by them will support the conclusion reached in the White Paper and if this will stand up to judicial scrutiny. It has therefore retrospectively published in June 2019 an ‘Information Paper’ after the pre-action letter was sent. The Information Paper introduces, for the first time, an “evaluation tool” which contains evaluation criteria that differ from the evaluation criteria on which the recommendations for the inclusion of new ethnic groups in the 2021 Census were based.

The Sikh Federation (UK) believe that the process which preceded the ONS proposal in the December 2018 White Paper that a Sikh ethnicity category not be included in the 2021 census was procedurally flawed and unlawful. The judicial review claim is it would be unlawful to make the draft



Census Order based on a recommendation that was reached without the consistent application of published evaluation criteria and the published “public acceptability” test.

Questions have also been raised regarding the legality of the Kantar report. Kantar took a flawed approach to “acceptability” and the conclusions on the option of a Sikh ethnic tick box are legally unsustainable with material internal inconsistencies, inaccuracies, and a failure even to apply its own stated definitions and methodology.

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



“Given the wider public interest and need to move quickly with the Census we are hopeful the High Court will agree to an early full hearing. We note many cases are “settled” following the decision of the High Court to grant permission.”

“We believe we have a strong case and the Cabinet Office recognise we mean business, but common sense can prevail. As far as we are concerned the matter can be settled by the Cabinet Office simply agreeing to include a Sikh ethnic tick box option in the draft Census Order to be presented to Parliament in the autumn.”

“The Sikh Federation (UK) has been campaigning for and advocating the inclusion of a Sikh ethnicity tick-box in the UK Census for more than 15 years and believe the Sikh community are close to securing a massive victory that will help address institutional racism and discrimination against Sikhs by public bodies.”

Sikh group moves high court over ethnic tick box in 2021 UK census

TOI

Times of India – 19 July 2019

LONDON: A Sikh organization, claiming to have support of more than 150 Gurdwaras and Sikh groups, has moved the London High Court to seek a judicial review of the UK Government’s decision not to include a Sikh ethnic tick box in the 2021 UK Census, claiming it is “unlawful.”

The Sikh Federation UK wants a Sikh option to be included in the response to the question, “What is your ethnic group?” in the 2021 Census, which is due to be conducted online in March.

The group believes that British Sikhs suffer institutional discrimination and disadvantages in employment, housing, health and education and that having census data on Sikhs will allow improvements to the planning and commissioning of services to meet their needs.

The Federation had sent a ‘letter before action’ to the UK Cabinet Office on May 22 and said it received a “disappointing final reply” from

government lawyers last Friday. On Wednesday, its barristers David Wolfe QC and Ayesha Christie from Matrix Chambers applied to the Administrative Court of the High Court for permission for a judicial review.

The Census Order, setting out the questions which will be asked in the 2021 Census, will be introduced in Parliament this autumn.

Their submissions to the court set out why the Federation believes it would be “unlawful” for the Cabinet Office to lay before Parliament a Census Order based on proposals set out by the Office of National Statistics, which rejected the notion of a Sikh ethnic tick box.

A decision on whether permission will be granted for a judicial review is expected in four to six weeks.



"We believe we have a strong case and the Cabinet Office recognise we mean business, but common sense can prevail. As far as we are concerned the matter can be settled by the Cabinet Office simply agreeing to include a Sikh ethnic tick box option," Bhai Amrik Singh, Chair of the Federation, said.

A spokesperson for the Office for National Statistics reiterated the stance that Sikhs can write "Sikh" to the ethnicity tick box question and identify as Sikh in the voluntary religious question.

Sikhs can continue to keep large kirpans without being criminalised despite clampdown on knives in UK

TOI

Times of India – 27 March 2019

LONDON: British Sikhs can continue to buy, possess and gift large kirpans without fear of being sent to jail after amendments in the Offensive Weapons Bill were passed by the UK Parliament on Tuesday night.



The purpose of the bill, which will now become law, is to reduce violent crime in the UK following a spike in fatal knife attacks and acid attacks in London by strengthening the law surrounding the possession, supply and sale of dangerous knives, corrosive substances and firearms. However, there were fears that it would unintentionally criminalise the Sikh community, who keep ceremonial large kirpans, or curved swords, at home.

Small kirpans were not affected by the new legislation and are already protected in UK law.

MP Preet Gill said: "The bill would have meant that Sikhs who possessed a 50 cm kirpan in the home would be committing a criminal act and subject to a year's imprisonment, so I am grateful for the minister's intervention to amend the justification for a Sikh possessing a kirpan from the narrow 'religious ceremonies' to 'religious reasons'. This was a fundamental change to protect the rights of Sikhs to purchase and possess a kirpan. With this amendment, the Sikh community have been given a clear commitment by the government that they will not be penalised."

When the bill was first introduced it had said defence to possession of a dangerous knife could be "the person's conduct was for the purpose only of participating in religious ceremonies". Gill told TOI: "When the amendment said religious ceremonies that did not cover you taking it back to your house after a wedding ceremony."

She said the APPG for British Sikhs, of which she is chair, then met with the minister and the team drawing up the bill to change it.

"The government then tabled an amendment to change it to 'religious reasons' to cover marriages, Nagar Kirtan gatra, Akhand Paths, etc.," she said.

When the bill reached the House of Lords that defence was changed to "show that the person possessed the weapon for religious reasons only".

Narinderjit Singh, general secretary of the Sikh Federation (UK), said: "The Sikh Federation (UK) picked this up before the third reading in the House of Commons and approached MPs belonging to the APPG on UK Sikhs. Over 200 MPs were lobbied in November 2018 and home secretary Sajid Javid was persuaded with the help of Preet Kaur Gill and other MPs to change the wording on legislation that only referred to 'religious ceremonies', i.e. shift from Sikh weddings to the much broader term 'religious reasons'. The explanatory note supporting the bill published on November 29, 2018 for the first time mentioned the Kirpan by name."

The explanatory note now states: "Religious reasons would include large kirpans which are supplied and possessed for religious reasons."

"Some campaigned in the Lords through opposition peers to have the kirpan legally recognised ... but were unable to convince home office ministers and officials," Singh added.



Not understanding impact of anti-knife crime legislation on Sikhs shows Government officials lack knowledge of Sikh way of life

HUFFPOST

Huffington Post – 24 April 2019

In a welcome bid to tackle the menace of knife crime, government officials almost criminalised all Sikh families simply for possessing the large Kirpan, required for religious purposes

The Offensive Weapons Bill has completed its nine-month progression through Parliament and is expected to receive Royal Assent in the next couple of weeks. I along with many others from the Sikh community welcome the new legislation aimed at young people and to tackle the menace of increased knife crime and acid attacks.

The Bill however included clauses directly impacting on Sikhs, including extending existing offences of possessing a bladed article or offensive weapon on school premises to cover further education premises and banning the sale and possession of curved swords defined as those over 50cm both in public and private.

As an Amritdhari, or practising, Sikh, who is the principal adviser to the Sikh Federation and regular attendee at government Sikh roundtable meetings I was however alarmed these proposed changes that would have a huge impact on Sikhs were being introduced without any consultation with the community.

The most disturbing proposed change was to criminalise the sale and possession of the large or 3ft Sikh kirpan and the effect this would have on Sikh religious practices. The change was justified by overzealous Home Office officials as proportionate in the Policy Equality Statement that was published alongside the Bill.

The Home Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) that holds Sikh roundtable meetings were negligent not to communicate or consult with the Sikh community. This is inexcusable as government officials failed to identify significant unintended consequences of banning the possession of large Sikh Kirpans that are kept by virtually all Sikh families in their homes.

Their logic that the impact was mitigated by the narrower “religious ceremonies” defence introduced in legislation for curved blades over 50cm in 2008 covering the use of the large Sikh kirpan in religious ceremonies, for example Anand Karaj or Sikh wedding ceremonies, shows officials



lack a basic understanding of the Sikh way of life and religious practices or consult those who also have little or no understanding.

The advisers to the Sikh Federation (UK) were alerted by a Sikh police officer from Leicester on the potential impact on the Sikh community just prior to the third reading of the Bill in the House of Commons. Within 48 hours, a group of cross-party MPs led by Preet Kaur Gill, Dominic Grieve and Pat McFadden belonging to the all-party parliamentary group on UK Sikhs tabled an amendment to change the wording in the Bill to the much wider term “religious reasons”. Simply possessing the large kirpan would have meant all Sikh families being criminalised and those found in possession facing a prison sentence of up to one year. The Sikh Federation arranged for constituents to write and lobby over 250 MPs before the Third Reading.

MPs met with Victoria Atkins, the Home Office minister responsible for the Bill and Preet Kaur Gill met with the Sajid Javid, the Home Secretary. They convinced them of the need for a wider government amendment to cover the sale, possession and use of the large Sikh kirpan for “religious reasons”. The government amendment was approved at the Third Reading in the





Commons on 28 November 2018 and the word Kirpan – meaning mercy (kirpa) and honour (aan) – was included in the explanatory note for the first time.

Recently it has emerged some Sikhs learnt of the risk presented by the Bill much earlier but neglected to act. To make matters worse it transpires some of them unscrupulously worked with officials at the Home Office and MHCLG to try and undermine the proposed amendment by MPs. However, due to the quick thinking and excellent cross-party approach by the APPG they were able to convince Home Office ministers to address the concerns of the Sikh community. Officials were instructed by ministers to move to use the broader term “religious reasons” as large Kirpans are kept in Sikh homes for a range of religious reasons, such as to place before the Guru Granth Sahib Ji, the Sikh holy scriptures.

The same Sikhs then showed their naivety by going directly to opposition politicians in the House of Lords to persuade them to table an amendment to seek a change in the law to try and use the Bill to make the smaller kirpan worn by Sikhs “lawful”. Unfortunately, those campaigning failed as they did not consult or properly

understand the situation and what had been achieved by the APPG, their briefing was inaccurate and the strategy adopted lacked the intellect to convince Home Office officials and Ministers.

Sections 139 and 139A of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 provide for offences of having an offensive weapon in a public place or school premises respectively without lawful authority or good reason. However, it is a defence for a person charged with an offence to prove that he or she had good reason or lawful authority for having the article in a public place or school premises. It is a defence to show that you had the knife or bladed or pointed article for use at work, for religious reasons (e.g. the Sikh kirpan) or as part of a national costume (e.g. the sgian dubh of traditional Highland dress).

Amritdhari Sikhs are required to always wear the Kirpan and have been able to rely on the religious reasons defence in most public places, employment and schools. However, challenges have existed in private establishments such as the London Eye, and complications sometime arise in schools or employment that are often overcome.

The changes in legislation that are about to come into effect now mean the broader “religious reasons” phrase specifically applies to the Sikh Kirpan. What has gone unnoticed is that “religious reasons” now for the first time have been defined in law as a “good reason” for possession. Many in the Sikh community now realise there is no substitute for having Sikh MPs such as Preet Kaur Gill, who connect with the Sikh community and have their fingers on the Sikh pulse.





ਸੰਸਦ 'ਚ ਹੋਮ ਆਫਿਸ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਵਿਕਟੋਰੀਆ ਅਟਕਿਨਜ਼ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਸਦ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੁਮਾਇੰਦੇ।
ਤਸਵੀਰ: ਮਨਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੱਧਨੀ ਕਲਾਂ

ਯੂ.ਕੇ. 'ਚ ਵੱਡੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨ 'ਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੱਗੇਗੀ ਪਾਬੰਦੀ

ਲੰਡਨ, 22 ਨਵੰਬਰ (ਮਨਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੱਧਨੀ ਕਲਾਂ)- ਯੂ. ਕੇ. 'ਚ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਰੱਖਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਬਣਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਓਫੇਸਿਵ ਵੈਪਨਸ ਬਿੱਲ (ਓ. ਡਬਲਿਊ. ਬੀ.) ਨੂੰ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ 'ਚ ਭਾਰੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਪਾਈ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਨਵੇਂ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ 50 ਸੈਂਟੀਮੀਟਰ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਤਿਰਛਾ ਤੇਜ਼ਧਾਰ ਚਾਕੂ ਸਮੇਤ ਹਥਿਆਰ, ਬੰਦੂਕ ਅਤੇ ਐਸਡ ਰੱਖਣ 'ਤੇ ਪਾਬੰਦੀ ਲਗਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਇਕ ਸਾਲ ਕੈਦ ਦੀ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਦੀ ਤਜਵੀਜ਼ ਸੀ। ਯੂ. ਕੇ. 'ਚ ਵਧ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਿੰਸਕ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਖਦਿਆਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਨਵਾਂ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕੰਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਇਹ ਸੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਵਜੋਂ ਰੱਖੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਨਗਰ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਕੋਲ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਹਨ, ਗਤਕਾ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਵਿਆਹ ਮੌਕੇ ਲਾਜ਼ਾ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਕੋਲ ਵੱਡੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਘਰਾਂ 'ਚ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਮੌਕੇ ਵੀ ਵੱਡੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਸਰ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਘਰਾਂ 'ਚ ਵੱਡੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਰੱਖੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਨਵੇਂ ਬਣਨ ਵਾਲੇ

ਕਾਨੂੰਨ 'ਚ ਵੱਡੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਹਥਿਆਰਾਂ 'ਚ ਨਾ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ। ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਅ ਦੀ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕੱਲ੍ਹ ਸ਼ਾਮੀ ਹੋਮ ਆਫਿਸ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਵਿਕਟੋਰੀਆ ਅਟਕਿਨਜ਼ ਨਾਲ ਹੋਈ ਅਤੇ ਜਿਸ 'ਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਫੋਡਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਯੂ. ਕੇ. ਵਲੋਂ ਦਬਿੰਦਰਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਖਵਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਸਨ ਜਦ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਐਮ. ਪੀ. ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਕੌਰ ਗਿੱਲ, ਐਮ. ਪੀ. ਡੋਮਿਨਿਕ ਗਰੀਵ ਸਾਬਕਾ ਅਟਾਰਨੀ ਜਨਰਲ, ਐਮ. ਪੀ. ਪੈਟ ਫੋਬੀਅਨ ਆਦਿ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਸਨ। ਸੰਸਦ 'ਚ ਬਿੱਲ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਇਸ 'ਚ ਸੋਧ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਬੰਦ ਹਥਿਆਰਾਂ 'ਚ ਵੱਡੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਹਰ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਸੰਸਦ 'ਚ ਇਹ ਬਿੱਲ ਤੀਜੀ ਵਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਆਖਰੀ ਵਾਰ 27 ਨਵੰਬਰ ਨੂੰ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਸਿੱਖ ਫੋਡਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਯੂ. ਕੇ. ਦੇ ਚੇਅਰਮੈਨ ਭਾਈ ਅਮਰੀਕ ਸਿੰਘ ਗਿੱਲ ਨੇ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਸ਼ਾਜਿਦ ਜਾਵੇਦ ਅਤੇ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਵਿਕਟੋਰੀਆ ਅਟਕਿਨਜ਼ ਦਾ ਧੰਨਵਾਦ ਕੀਤਾ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਐਮ. ਪੀ. ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਕੌਰ ਗਿੱਲ ਦੇ ਨਿਭਾਏ ਰੋਲ ਦੀ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਲਾਘਾ ਕੀਤੀ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਮੰਗ ਦੀ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਸਦ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਹਮਾਇਤ ਕੀਤੀ।

**ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ
ਮੰਨਦਿਆਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ
ਵਲੋਂ ਓ. ਡਬਲਿਊ.
ਬਿੱਲ ਸੋਧ ਕੇ ਕੀਤਾ
ਜਾਵੇਗਾ ਪੇਸ਼**



ITV News – 5 November 2018



The first ever full-sized statue of a Sikh soldier to be built in the UK has been unveiled.

The 'Lions of the Great War' monument in Smethwick has been designed to honour the millions of service men and women from South

Asia, who fought in both world wars. Soldiers from the premier Reservist Logistics regiment in the Midlands attended the unveiling on Sunday.

The 10ft-high bronze statue, which depicts a Sikh soldier from WW1, sits in its own public square in the town's High Street, outside the Guru Nanak Gurdwara, which is the largest Sikh temple in Europe.

The community are very, very proud. They feel that the contribution of their ancestors or their forefathers has been recognised.

This statue will become an inspiration to all - not only the people that will come and visit it - but definitely to create other statues around the world, where Sikhs and men of other faiths that came over from South Asia fought. – Jatinder Singh, President Of Guru Nanak Gurdwara Smethwick.



■ ਐਮ. ਪੀ. ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਕੌਰ ਗਿੱਲ ਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਦਬਿੰਦਰਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਿੱਖ ਆਗੂ ।

ਤਸਵੀਰ: ਮਨਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੱਠਨੀ ਕਲਾ

ਯੂ. ਕੇ. 'ਚ ਪੰਥਕ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਬਦਲੇ ਐਮ. ਪੀ. ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਕੌਰ ਗਿੱਲ ਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਦਬਿੰਦਰਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਸਨਮਾਨ

ਲੰਡਨ, 9 ਜਨਵਰੀ (ਮਨਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੱਠਨੀ ਕਲਾ)-ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਮੇਂਦਿਕ ਵਿਖੇ ਸੰਸਦ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਕੌਰ ਗਿੱਲ ਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਦਬਿੰਦਰਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਥਕ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਬਦਲੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਇਸ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਜਤਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਸੀ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਸ਼ਖਸੀਅਤਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਯੂ. ਕੇ. 'ਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਹਿਚਾਣ ਕਾਇਮ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਕੀਤੇ ਕੌਮਾਂ ਬਦਲੇ

ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਭਾਈ ਦਬਿੰਦਰਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਯੂ. ਕੇ. ਤੇ ਯੂਰਪ 'ਚ ਚੱਲਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਮੁਹਿੰਮਾਂ 'ਚ ਵੱਡਾ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ 'ਚ ਦਸਤਾਰ, ਕੜਾ ਤੇ ਕਿਰਪਾਨ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਲੜਾਈ ਜਿੱਤਣ ਲਈ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਮੁੱਖ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਯੂ. ਐਨ. 'ਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਨਸਲਭੂਖੀ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਦਿਆਂ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਚੱਲਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਮੁਹਿੰਮਾਂ 'ਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਅੱਗੇ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਪਾਇਆ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਸੰਸਦ ਮੈਂਬਰ

ਅਤੇ ਆਲ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਪਾਰਲੀਮੈਂਟਰੀ ਗਰੁੱਪ ਫਾਰ ਸਿੱਖਸ ਦੀ ਚੇਅਰਪਰਸਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਕੌਰ ਗਿੱਲ ਨੇ ਥੋੜੇ ਸਮੇਂ 'ਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਸੰਸਦ 'ਚ ਮਸਲੇ ਉਠਾਏ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਯੂ. ਕੇ. 'ਚ ਹਥਿਆਰਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਪਾਬੰਦੀ ਲਗਾਉਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਬਣਨ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ 'ਚ ਵੱਡੀ ਕਿਰਪਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਰ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਕੌਰ ਗਿੱਲ ਦਾ ਵੱਡਾ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ, ਸਿੱਖ ਫੈਡਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਯੂ. ਕੇ., ਯੂਨਾਈਟਿਡ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਦਲ ਯੂ. ਕੇ., ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਅਕਾਲੀ

ਦਲ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਯੂ. ਕੇ. ਰਜਿਸਟਰਡ, ਧਰਮ ਯੁੱਧ ਜਥਾ ਦਮਦਮੀ ਟਕਸਾਲ ਯੂ. ਕੇ., ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਯੂ. ਕੇ., ਸਿੱਖ ਨੈਟਵਰਕ ਯੂ. ਕੇ. ਦੇ ਆਗੂ ਭਾਈ ਜਸਵਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਕਾ, ਭਾਈ ਅਮਰੀਕ ਸਿੰਘ ਗਿੱਲ, ਭਾਈ ਲਵਜਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਡੱਲਵਾਲ, ਭਾਈ ਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ, ਭਾਈ ਕੁਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਮੁੱਠੜਾ, ਭਾਈ ਜਸਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੈਸ, ਭਾਈ ਜਸਵਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੱਸ, ਭਾਈ ਕੁਲਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਚਹੜ੍ਹ ਆਦਿ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਸਨ।



100 STRONG UK SIKH DELEGATION SET TO VISIT FRANCE AND BELGIUM TO MARK 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF END OF FIRST WORLD WAR



9 November 2018 - Over the course of the First World War, the British Indian army sent more than 140,000 men to the Western Front – 90,000 serving in the infantry and cavalry and as many as 50,000 non-combatant labourers.

The British Indian soldiers went on to fight in some of the bloodiest battles of the first year of the war. 20% of the British Indian army were Sikhs, despite being less than 2% of the Indian population.

The Sikhs came forward and helped the Europeans at a time of crisis in World War I and II and gave their lives in their thousands. Sikhs fought for the Allies in all seven regions of battles across the world, including Europe, Africa, Gallipoli and the Middle East. Over 83,000 turban wearing Sikhs were killed and over 109,000 were injured serving in both World Wars.

Sir Winston Churchill commenting on the Sikh sacrifices said:

“British people are highly indebted and obliged to Sikhs for a long time. I know that within this century we needed their help twice and they did help us very well. As a result of their timely help, we are today able to live with honour, dignity and independence. In the war, they fought and died for us...”

On Saturday 10 November the 100 strong UK Sikh delegation will set off for the impressive Neuve-Chapelle Memorial in France. This commemorates more than 4,700 British Indian army soldiers who lost their lives on the Western Front during the First World War and have no known grave.

It was at Neuve Chapelle that British Indian soldiers fought their first major action as a single unit in March 1915. From 10–13 March 1915, Indian soldiers made up half of the attacking force and despite suffering very heavy casualties succeeded in capturing important sections of the German line.

The delegation will then travel to Ypres in Belgium and take part in the last post ceremony at the Menin Gate Memorial at 8pm. Having seen some of the heaviest fighting in the First World War, Ypres was in ruins. The Menin Gate, bears the names of more than 54,000 soldiers who died before 16 August 1917 and have no known grave.

Between October 1914 and September 1918 hundreds of thousands of servicemen of the British Empire marched through the town of Ypres's Menin Gate on their way to the battlefields.

Building of the memorial began in 1923 and it was unveiled on 24 July 1927. The memorial now stands as a reminder of those who died who have no known grave and is perhaps one of the most well-known war memorials in the world.

Soon after its completion the memorial became an important place of pilgrimage for visitors to the battlefields. Every evening since 1928, at 8pm buglers sound the Last Post.

The ceremony has become part of the daily life of Ypres and traffic is stopped from passing through the memorial. Only during the German occupation of the Second World War was the ceremony interrupted.





Every year on the November 11 (Armistice Day), hundreds of Sikhs come from across Europe to Ypres to take part in the Poppy parade and pay their respects at Menin Gate. This year on the 100th anniversary the numbers are expected to be much higher and Sikhs will also be putting on a Gatka demonstration.

Following the last post ceremony at 11am that will attract the worlds media hundreds of Sikhs from across Europe will gather at

Hollebeke Memorial where a small monument was built by the Belgium Government in 1999. It was inaugurated by the 'Panj Piare' in memory of Sikh soldiers who fought for the first time against Germans in October 1914. After an Ardaas ceremony Langar will be served to all present.

Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK) is leading the UK delegation and has been chosen by Sikhs from across Europe to lay the wreath at Menin Gate on 11 November on behalf of the Sikhs. He said:

“The Sikh teachings profess it as a duty and great honour to face and fight oppression and tyranny where ever it exists. It is quoted in the Sikh National Anthem:

“May I never be afraid to die on the battlefield fighting against the oppression and injustice....May I never refrain from performing righteous deeds.”

RAISING AWARENESS & CAMPAIGNING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENT PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO UK GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE 1984 SIKH GENOCIDE WILL NEVER BE DROPPED UNTIL TRUTH ESTABLISHED

15 September 2018 - One of the resolutions at the Annual Sikh Federation (UK) Convention related to continuing the campaign to establish the truth by never dropping the demand for an independent public inquiry into UK Government involvement in the 1984 Sikh Genocide and anti –Sikh measures in the 1980s in the UK.

A strong signal was sent to all UK politicians that they need to read and reflect on the Sacrificing Sikhs report that the Sikh Federation (UK) commissioned based on around half of the UK Government papers available from the md-1980s.

The report is a real eye opener and alone proves that Parliament and the public were misled in February 2014 by the Sir Jeremy Heywood review commissioned by David Cameron.

Those at the Convention were told if politicians were looking for further proof they need not look further than the unanimous legal judgement against the Cabinet Office and Foreign and Commonwealth in June 2018.

Judge Murray Shanks, who presided over a three-day hearing concluded there was “a very high public interest in disclosure of the withheld information” and stated “we also acknowledge the



limitations of the Heywood review . . . in particular the speed with which it was carried out and the limited time period of the files that were looked at”.

Jeremy Corbyn the Labour leader has reiterated the party will once again include the commitment to an independent public inquiry in a future Labour manifesto.

‘Major milestone’ ‘too little too late’: UK Sikhs on **hindustantimes** Sajjan Kumar verdict

Hindustan Times – 17 December 2018



Congress leader Sajjan Kumar was sentenced to life imprisonment in a case relating to the (so-called) 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Delhi by the Delhi High Court on Monday.

A key interlocutor in talks between a delegation of UK-based Sikhs and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in London in 2015 welcomed the Sajjan Kumar judgment while a Sikh political group called his life sentence a case of “too little, too late.”

Jasdev Singh Rai of the Sikh Human Rights Group, who has been interacting with the Modi government on issues related to Sikhs abroad, called Monday’s Delhi high court judgement in cases related to the 1984 riots “a major milestone for worldwide Sikhs”.

“After 34 years, it restores faith in the judicial system when it is freed from political interference. I applaud Prime Minister Narendra Modi for keeping to his word when in 2015 he said his

government will ensure that those responsible are convicted”.

“There is no doubt that the evidence was always there but under various Congress governments, the process of justice may not have functioned robustly and independently”.

Rai added: “Now that the Modi government is sincere in its commitments, (overseas) Sikhs who have held back from engagement in meaningful dialogue should seriously reconsider”.

Issues related Operation Bluestar and the 1984 riots have resonated in the United Kingdom over the decades, figuring in bilateral talks as well as in public events. The Indian high commission has been enhancing its engagement with the Sikh community over the years.

However, **Bhai Amrik Singh, chair of Sikh Federation (UK)** said: “Whilst we welcome the long overdue decision to convict and sentence Congress leader Sajjan Kumar to life imprisonment for his involvement in the genocide of Sikhs, this is too little, too late.”

“Sajjan Kumar has been roaming the streets of Delhi for more than 34 years watched by the thousands of Sikh families that lost loved ones...We expect Sajjan Kumar to appeal and at best it will not be a surprise if he gets a reduced sentence and will probably be released after a short time in prison.”

UK FOREIGN OFFICE NEEDS TO JOIN THE US AND OTHER COUNTRIES TO PUBLICLY CHALLENGE INDIA ABOUT FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF



17 December 2018 - Last week the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for International Freedom of Religion or Belief released a report highlighting 27 countries.

These countries included India and were chosen in the



light of the significant denials of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) that occur within their borders.

This report supports the UK Government's prioritisation of FoRB. Earlier this year the FCO Minister of State for the UN and Commonwealth, and the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on FoRB, Lord Ahmad stated:

"The connection between religious tolerance and stable societies is another reason why we think promoting freedom of religion or belief is so important. There is clear evidence to suggest that tolerant and inclusive societies are better equipped to resist extremism. And most importantly, by ensuring that everyone can contribute, it makes society as a whole better."

Because of the scale and intensity of violations, FoRB has emerged as a critical issue and countries including the UK, USA, Canada, Germany and Denmark have started to prioritise FoRB in their work and the EU has created a new mandate on FoRB alongside the Special Rapporteur at the UN.

Dr Ahmed Shaheed, the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion or Belief has written the foreword to the report released last week.

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

"The 2018 report by the APPG for International Freedom of Religion or Belief for the first time ever highlights the 1984 Sikh Genocide and the detention, torture and killings of 250,000 Sikhs in the decade that followed."

"The report continues by drawing attention to the regular desecration of Guru Granth Sahib Ji and the torture and imprisonment of Jagtar Singh Johal that has been raised with India by three UN rapporteurs."

"The report has also highlighted the extreme discrimination Sikhs face in Afghanistan with specific reference to the suicide bombing in July 2018 in Jalalabad that wiped out much of the Sikh leadership in Afghanistan."

"The harsh truth is these changes have only been made possible as Preet Kaur Gill MP is now the co-chair of the APPG for International Freedom of Religion or Belief and has pushed for historic injustices and ongoing issues to be mentioned. Previously Lord Singh has been the Vice Chair and remained silent on the treatment of Sikhs in India and Afghanistan."



The report with regards to Sikhs and India states:

"Sikhs have both historic and current issues affecting their religious freedoms and equality as a minority community within India. There are long standing issues and grievances between the Sikhs and the Indian government. The most recent traumatic events are the wide-scale systematic and deliberate killing of an estimated 30,000 Sikhs (most burnt alive) in November 1984 in 18 states and over 130 cities across India."

"The 10 years following the 1984 genocides saw over 250,000 Sikhs illegally detained, tortured, disappeared and killed in extra judicial killings and fake encounters by the Punjab Police. 34 years later there have been no independent inquiries in India – including into Operation Bluestar and Woodrose led by the Indian military in 1984 - or what has followed. It was only on 28 November 2018 that the Delhi High Court pronounced the Sikh pogrom in 1984 a "genocide" and brought punishment to 89 arsonists involved in the killings. No senior members involved in the 1984 killings have been brought to justice."



“The passage of time has done little to heal wounds and issues for the Sikh community continue. Routine cases of torture carried out on the Sikh community by the Indian police, targeted arrests and torture towards human rights activists, and a failure to respond to regular acts of desecration of the Sikh holy scriptures and the Guru Granth Sahib have been reported.”

“In November 2017, British-born Sikh activist Scot Jagtar Singh Johal was taken by plain clothes officers 2 weeks after his wedding in India. His lawyer states that he has been subject to torture while imprisoned but a medical assessment has been denied and he has still not been charged despite 3 UN rapporteurs writing to the State of India.”

The report with regards to Sikhs and Afghanistan states:

“The indigenous Christian community remains invariably out of sight, while the Sikh and Hindu community are more visible but still at risk of extreme discrimination.”

“Sikhs and Hindus also report pressure to convert from their faiths, and face disruption to funeral and cremation ceremonies by local officials. Sikhs living in Kabul experience social ostracism and economic hardship, with many non-Sikhs refusing to conduct business with them. ‘Land grabbing’ in areas where Sikhs have historically resided are also reported.”

“The dangers facing the Sikh community were further illustrated in July 2018 when a suicide bomber attacked a bus on its way through Jalalabad. Most of those killed were Sikhs on their way to meet President Ashraf Ghani. Among those killed was the only Sikh candidate who had planned to contest the October 2018 parliamentary elections. Responsibility for this attack has since been claimed by Daesh.”

OVER 150 UK MPs RECEIVE LETTERS ABOUT THREE SIKH YOUTH GIVEN LIFE SENTENCES IN INDIA

10 March 2019 - Last month the Sikh Federation (UK) formally launched the Sikh political lobbying network to co-ordinate regular letter writing to MPs by constituents.

The network has already attracted more than 600 members with a reach of over 200 MPs from six different political parties across the UK.

One of the first issues taken up was that of three Sikh youth given life imprisonment in India for “waging war” against India for simply possessing books, pamphlets and photographs.



The three – Arwinder Singh (29) of Nawanshahr, Surjit Singh (27) of Gurdaspur and Ranjit Singh (29) of Kaithal in Haryana – were convicted on 31 January and sentenced on 5 February 2019.

Within a week of the sentencing the Dal Khalsa that is closely associated with the Sikh Federation (UK) held a sit-in protest on the doorsteps of the court that convicted them as the judgement has far reaching implications on the right to dissent and the right to free expression.

Legal experts in India have termed it a first-of-its-kind case where the accused have been sentenced to life imprisonment on recovery of incriminating literature and not any ammunitions or for an act of violence.



The court concluded the literature was for propaganda that could be used to incite people to campaign for a Sikh homeland. However, there has been widespread uproar by Sikhs across the globe, including Punjab and politicians from different political parties in Punjab have criticised the extremely harsh sentences.

The letter to MPs states this “represents a serious breach of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as international law protects the right to freely express opinions and ideas. The right to freedom of opinion and expression is a foundation stone of a democratic society and the right is also essential at an individual level.”

MPs that have received letters were asked to write to the Indian High Commissioner in London to protest against the life sentences. In addition, MPs were asked to write to the Foreign Secretary to raise the matter directly with India and at the United Nations Human Rights Council as this demonstrates the continued persecution of Sikhs.

The Sikh Federation (UK) has also been in contact with Sikhs in other countries like Canada, USA, Australia and New Zealand to write to their elected representatives as well as Sikhs in other countries to raise the matter with their respective governments.

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

“In practice it is already extremely difficult for Sikhs to raise their voice on their right to self-determination. Many see the court judgement in this case as having overstepped the mark to crush all peaceful dissent.”

“UK MPs, including Ministers appreciate the dire situation the Sikh minority finds itself in India and we are confident that co-ordinated lobbying across the globe can eventually result in international invention to allow Sikhs to exercise their right to self-determination.”

Thousands march in London to mark 35th anniversary of Operation Bluestar

TOI

Times of India - 3 June 2019



The demonstration, organized by the Federation of Sikh Organisations, marked the 35th anniversary of June 5, 1984, when the Indian Army had stormed the Golden Temple in Amritsar to evict armed militia holed up inside. There has been no independent public inquiry into Margaret Thatcher's involvement in it, despite the release

of classified documents five years ago implicating UK government.

The rally began in Hyde Park with speeches and then participants marched on Trafalgar Square where a huge stage and sound system had been erected. Before they arrived a huge screen was



showing moving pictures of the marchers as a voice blasted out a narrative claiming the Indian state has “failed to prosecute those responsible for the deaths in Operation Bluestar” as well as the police responsible for the “subsequent extra-judicial killings and disappearances” in Punjab.

Tourists and British people sunbathing on the Square’s fountain as well artists sketching on the pavement nearby carried on, baffled by what was going on.

Just after 2pm around 10,000 British Sikhs, men, women and children, many with orange turbans on, marched into the square chanting “Khalistan Zindabad” and “What do we want? Justice”. They listened to talks by a variety of people speak from the stage. Several hundred of the participants wore ‘Referendum 2020’ T-shirts and carried yellow ‘Khalistan’ flags.

One of the protesters India-born Jarnail Singh, 64, from Slough, who moved to Britain in 1976 and watched Operation Bluestar unfold on TV here, said: “I joined this rally because Sikhs have had no justice since 1947. When India was divided after independence the British should have divided it into three and given Punjab our own nation.”

Parmjit Singh, 54, from Twickenham, said: “I come here to remember the people who lost their lives in 1984 at the hands of the Indian government. Thatcher sent in the SAS to do a recce beforehand and that’s why we need to have a public inquiry”.

A book called ‘Sikh Martyrs’ was launched at the event which details all the Sikhs who died in 1984 with their photos and biographies.

Sukhjaveen Singh, spokesperson for Sikh Council UK, said, “This call for our own nation is not that we are power-hungry or want land, it’s about self-respect and dignity. Punjabi is not even a

compulsory language in our state. We have been promised a public inquiry into 1984 by various political parties but because the Tories are the same party as Thatcher they have been very slow about it.”

Davinder Singh, principal advisor to the Sikh Federation UK, said the key issue was that former PM David Cameron had rushed the Heywood Review, which had limited scope and was “a “whitewash”.

Declassified files in 2014 revealed that Britain had sent an SAS officer to India in February 1984 ahead of Operation Blue Star to draw up a plan to remove Sikh extremists from the Temple. This provoked uproar among the Sikh community.

The subsequent Heywood review found no record of any assistance to the June 1984 operation called ‘Blue Star’ by the Indian Government other than the limited military advice provided in mid-February. But the UK government did not release four files. In June 2018 Judge Shanks ordered for those files to be released. Three out of four were released in July 2018, but only 40 pages from them.



INDIA’S BAN ON SIKHS FOR JUSTICE SHOWS IT HAS NO RESPECT FOR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND THE BASIC RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

11 July 2019 - The decision earlier this week by the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs to ban Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) from operating in India shows India’s total disrespect for basic human rights and its desire and desperation to silence the Sikh Diaspora.



SFJ is a human rights advocacy group based in North America that has been highlighting human rights violations and the 1984 Sikh Genocide by the Indian state for the last 12 years and has in the last five years been underlining the right to self-determination.

During the 1984 Sikh Genocide and in the decade that followed the Indian State perpetrated what can only be termed crimes against humanity. Following the 1984 Sikh Genocide the rape, torture, disappearances, fake encounters and extra-judicial killings of Sikhs was nothing short of Indian State terrorism.

Not content with its gross violation of human rights for over a decade the Indian authorities turned its attention by killing human rights activists in Punjab like Jaswant Singh Khaira. He was eliminated by Indian police as he highlighted to the global community 25,000 Sikh disappearances, including unidentified bodies and illegal cremations.

The “Sacrificing Sikhs” report published in November 2017 based on around half of the UK Governments own official papers released after 30 years provides evidence the Indian State was active in the 1980s to try and silence the British Sikh voice of opposition and calls for Sikh independence that followed the 1984 Sikh Genocide.

There is little doubt the Indian state would have tried to do the same with other foreign governments like Canada and the USA to varying degrees of success that no one has yet uncovered to the extent as in the UK. The Sikh Federation (UK) has also in recent years become aware of some of India’s anti-Sikh activities in countries like Germany and Switzerland to try and silence Sikh opposition.

UK politicians have confirmed in 2001 the Indian government pressured the UK Government to ban the International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF). The ISYF was the main Sikh organisation operating in the Sikh Diaspora highlighting human rights violations by the Indian State and advocating for an independent Sikh State. The 9/11 act of terrorism was misused by India for its own purposes to push for worldwide restrictions on the ISYF and bans in India (December 2001) and Canada (June 2003).



In the UK Sikhs have successfully lobbied and used the legal process to have the ban on the ISYF lifted in March 2016 and two months later to have all restrictions lifted on the ISYF across Europe. There has been recent talk that Sikhs in Canada may be legally

challenging the Canadian government to justify the continued ban on the ISYF.

The US Administration has stood up to the Indian government and never banned any Sikh organisation, but the authorities have been pressured to act against individual Sikh nationalists. What is abundantly clear is the Indian government has been constantly complaining to foreign governments for up to 40 years about Sikhs in the Diaspora raising human rights violations in India and pressuring them not to engage with Sikh organisations and individuals advocating for the right to self-determination. Instead the Indian authorities have increasingly pushed with foreign governments Sikh groups, businessmen and individuals that are totally silent on criticism of India or who are pro-Indian as Sikh representatives with whom they should engage.

The Indian authorities are increasingly worried about the in-roads being made by Sikhs in the Diaspora into the highest levels of the political arena in countries like Canada and the UK. They are struggling to understand many of the Sikh politicians have been born in Canada or the UK or lived



most of their lives there and are duty bound to respect human rights and act as champions for the minority Sikh community.

As shown with Canada India has gone to extreme lengths in the last 18 months to discredit the current Canadian Prime Minister and exert pressure on the Canadian government to act against individual Sikh activists with a no-fly policy or try and demonise the entire Sikh community through official reports. With federal elections taking place in Canada in October 2019 the Indian authorities are unashamedly approaching the opposition Conservative Party to change their position on freedom of expression and those campaigning for Sikh self-determination.

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

"We want to make clear the Indian authorities will never be able to silence the Sikh Diaspora from highlighting human rights violations and our right to self-determination."

"Banning Sikhs for Justice in India where it does not exist, pressuring foreign governments to take actions against Sikh nationalists and interfering in the Canadian federal elections are signs of desperation by the Indian regime."

"Sikhs in the Diaspora are increasingly politically active and media savvy and foreign politicians will find it more and more difficult to appease the Indian authorities at the expense of their own Sikh citizens."

"In the long run India's actions will backfire as foreign governments will eventually realise they have more to gain from a large independent Sikh State in the Indian sub-continent than from bowing to the blackmail of the Indian authorities."

CAMPAIGNING FOR JAGTAR SINGH JOHAL #FREEJAGGINOW

SIKH CONVENTION DEMANDS UK GOVERNMENT TAKE 'EXTREME ACTION' PROMISED AGAINST INDIAN AUTHORITIES TO SECURE RELEASE OF 31 YEAR OLD SCOT

14 September 2018 - One of the resolutions at the Annual Sikh Federation (UK) Convention related to the UK Government taking all steps necessary to secure the immediate release of Jagtar Singh Johal.

On 4 November it will mark a year since a sack was put over Jagtar's head while he was out shopping with his newly wed wife and he was bundled into a van.



Three days of third degree torture immediately followed resulting in him being unable to walk and as police officers threatened to pour kerosene over him and burn him alive or execute him in a fake encounter.

Within days of his abduction the UK Government promised in Parliament that extreme action would be taken against the Indian authorities for the mistreatment of the Scot from Dumbarton who was simply in India to get married.

Jagtar has now been in prison for over 300 days on trumped up charges with no evidence yet presented in court despite over 50 appearances.

The resolution at the Convention urged the UK Government to take all necessary steps working with other governments and those at the United Nations to secure Jagtar's immediate



release so he can be reunited with his family in Dumbarton.

The British Deputy High Commissioner, Andrew Ayre has asked to meet Sikh representatives on 25 September when he visits the UK where Jagtar's case along with other issues relevant to Sikhs and the Punjab will be discussed.

Andrew Ayre has also been pressured by the Sikh Federation (UK) so he has now agreed to meet with Jagtar's elder brother Gurpreet Singh Johal during his visit to the UK.

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

"Jagtar's family has been patiently waiting for the UK Government to take the extreme action against India promised in Parliament. No country should be allowed to treat British citizens in this way."

"The Punjab authorities appear to have no evidence against Jagtar and he must be released without delay. Our fear is British pressure is falling on deaf ears and Jagtar could be in prison for 2-3 wasted years despite being innocent."

"We were however shocked to hear this morning that the British Deputy High Commissioner from Chandigarh who will be visiting the UK later this month has not arranged to meet Jagtar's MP Martin Docherty-Hughes who we spoke to earlier today."

"We are amazed the UK diplomat is happy to meet Indian politicians and officials to discuss Jagtar's case, but he has failed to reach out to his MP when he visits the UK."

"Boris Johnson after repeated challenge eventually agreed in Parliamentary debate to meet Martin Docherty-Hughes. However, since his resignation Jeremy Hunt the new Foreign Secretary has to date failed to honour this commitment or meet the family."

UK terrorism unit raids, Sikh body cries foul

TOI

India Today – 19 September 2018

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Sikh Federation UK** said unfair targeting will be opposed
- UK Police had carried out raids across 3 cities
- The Sikh body called the raids 'unjustified'



Britain's West Midlands Police Counter Terrorism Unit (WMCTU) carried out multiple raids against (so-called) extremists on Tuesday. A number of properties in three cities were searched for anti-India material by the Counter Terror Unit.

The raids came a day after **Sikh Federation UK (SF UK)**, held a convention in support of Khalistan in Willenhall in the West Midlands. SF UK has protested against the raids calling them unjustified.

In a press statement, the UK Police said that its detectives searched a number of properties as part of a WMCTU investigation. The residential addresses in Coventry, Leicester and Birmingham were searched on Tuesday by WMCTU with the support of East Midlands Special Operations Unit Special Branch (EMSOU-SB).

The searches were in connection with allegations of extremist activity in India and fraud offences. It said that no one had been arrested.

The SF UK tweeted in protest against the raids.

The raids have gained significance in the backdrop of a convention held on September 17 in Willenhall in the West Midlands where support for Khalistan was declared.



Guildford Four lawyer Gareth Peirce to probe case of Jagtar Singh Johal

The National - 24 September 2018



Guildford Four lawyer Gareth Peirce is to probe for answers over the case of a Scot detained in India.

The four served 15 years imprisonment for IRA pub bombings before their convictions were quashed.

Now Peirce – who aided Aamer Anwar in a battle against a contempt of court charge that could have ended his legal career – is to challenge West Midlands Police over seizures made last week that may be linked to the case of Jagtar Singh Johal.

The Dumbarton man has made more than 50 court appearances during almost a year in detention in India over allegedly funding the killing of the leader of a right-wing Hindu group.

However, no evidence has yet been led against him and no medical examination has been allowed despite claims that he was tortured by Punjab police.

Sikh activists in the UK are campaigning for his release and the homes of several men involved in the #FreeJaggiNow drive were raided by anti-terrorism squads in the West Midlands last week.

Cash and electronic devices were seized, but no arrests were made and the Sikh Federation UK,

which backs the creation of an independent country for Sikhs in the Punjab region, believes the action was aimed at quashing support for Johal.

His family believes the arrest, made shortly after his Indian wedding, is related to his translation work for a website dedicated to the 1984 Sikh genocide.

Birmingham Edgbaston MP Preet Kaur Gill, the first female Sikh elected to Westminster, has expressed “serious concerns” about the raids and West Midlands Police says that while searches have concluded, its investigation into “allegations of extremist activity in India and fraud offences” continues.

Now Peirce is to represent five of the men whose items were seized and believes questions must be answered about any links to the Johal case.

She told The National: “I’m involved for the individual households concerned in challenging the legality of the seizure of individual items and also the way in which the searches were conducted, as well as the wider issue of to what extent the searches were generated by the hostile interest of the Indian authorities and in relation to the ongoing case of Jagtar Singh Johal.”

Meanwhile, Johal’s MP Martin Docherty-Hughes has urged Westminster colleagues to sign a letter urging Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt to meet with his constituent’s family.

While this was promised by Hunt’s predecessor Boris Johnson, no such meeting has occurred.

Docherty-Hughes, who represents the West Dunbartonshire constituency, says the internet marketer should be subject to “an open and transparent judicial process”.

BRITISH DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER EXPOSED FOR TELLING HALF-TRUTHS, BREACHING CONFIDENCE AND SHOWING LIMITED UNDERSTANDING OF LEGAL BASIS TO INDEPENDENT SIKH STATE

23 October 2018 - The British Deputy High Commissioner in Chandigarh, Andrew Ayre is under severe pressure following a controversial and offensive interview full of half-truths in The Times of India titled: ‘There’s no legal base for a separate state’ Andrew Ayre.





He also stands accused of becoming a mouth-piece for the Indian state by trying to compromise Sikh organisations by telling untruths and lacking respect for confidentiality when meeting Sikh representatives.

An even more serious charge is he discussed without permission the case of Jagtar Singh Johal, the 31-year-old Scot from Dumbarton who has been tortured by police in an Indian jail and has been held without a proper trial for almost a year.

The competence of this junior diplomat and if he can be trusted has been called into question with this interview. His unprofessionalism, abandonment of diplomatic protocol and limited understanding of the historic, moral and legal basis for an independent Sikh State suggests he is not suitable to represent Britain in the Sikh homeland, Punjab.

Andrew Ayre met with Sikh representatives from the Sikh Federation (UK), Sikh Network, Sikh Council UK, Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewaka Jatha, British Sikh Consultative Forum and City Sikhs at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London on 25 September during his trip to the UK.

As all those who attended the London meeting have and can confirm there was no discussion whatsoever about a separate Sikh State, Referendum 2020 or the police raids on the homes of five Sikh activists as these issues were not on the agenda given the range of Sikh organisations invited.

Instead there was a lengthy discussion on the human rights situation in Punjab and across India. Andrew Ayre when pushed admitted in the meeting that the human rights situation was dire and not improving for women and minorities with the blame firmly and squarely at the feet of the right-wing BJP government. He should have shown courage and gone public with such criticisms of the Indian authorities in his interview with the Times of India.

The Sikh Federation (UK) in the meeting also exposed the total and consistent failure of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to officially acknowledge the poor human rights situation in India in its annual human rights report.

Before Andrew Ayre came to London he also went to meet Jagtar Singh Johal in prison. Andrew Ayre stated in the London meeting with Sikh representatives he had obtained the permission of Jagtar Singh Johal to talk to those gathered about his case.

However, when Andrew Ayre met Jagtar Singh Johal's family and his MP Martin Docherty-Hughes three days later on 28 September Andrew Ayre was rebuked by his family for breaching his confidence. Jagtar Singh Johal is on record as stating he only authorised the Deputy High Commissioner to discuss his case with his family, his MP and the Sikh Federation (UK) so he is bang out of order.

When Andrew Ayre met Jagtar Singh Johal's family he was told he was living in an ivory tower in Chandigarh and was ignorant to the long-term suffering and experiences of ordinary Sikhs in Punjab and elsewhere. The protest in Bargarhi, the associated targeted killing of innocent Sikhs and desecrations were highlighted to show significant problems remain.

Andrew Ayre also showed his naivety and bias in the meeting with Sikh representatives when without prompting he openly criticised the previous Punjab government led by the Shiromani Akali Dal/BJP alliance compared to the current Congress incumbents.





Although Referendum 2020 was not discussed had Andrew Ayre raised this we would have reminded him that what is planned is a non-binding referendum that does not require the authority of the Indian state. For him to say in his interview there is no legal basis for Khalistan demonstrates his total lack of knowledge of history and international law.

The Sikhs' right to self-determination and claim to re-establish a sovereign Sikh State is based on the fact Sikhs first secured political power in the form of an independent

state in 1710 CE. The larger sovereign Sikh state established in 1799 CE was recognised by all the world powers as a subject of international law and was party to several treaties with the British.

We would also have pointed out the 'territorial integrity' limitation does not apply to India when it comes to Sikhs securing independence by means of secession as India has systematically oppressed Sikhs who have not had their political and human rights respected since 1947. The level of oppression of the Sikhs in Punjab and elsewhere in India, especially during the period 1978 to 1995 was severe.

The violation of "individual" human rights such as genocide and other crimes against humanity, such as extra-judicial killings, disappearances, torture, rape and illegal detention have left the Sikh people traumatised. Independent human rights observers at the United Nations familiar with the Sikh situation accept that the 'territorial integrity' limitation cannot be afforded to India.

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

"The interview by Andrew Ayre in The Times of India is an absolute disgrace. He has become a mouthpiece for the Indian state and as far as British Sikhs are concerned he cannot be trusted to represent our interests."

"He has not had the decency to apologise to the family of Jagtar Singh Johal for a serious breach of confidentiality and shown with his latest outburst he has no sense of compassion or understanding for the plight of Sikhs in Punjab."

"Foreign Office Ministers have emphasised the need to avoid 'megaphone diplomacy' when it comes to India. However, this interview shows it remains a priority for British diplomats that have double standards to keep India happy at the expense of the Sikh minority in the UK and Punjab."



A YEAR ON: BRITISH SIKHS HIGHLIGHT UK GOVERNMENT'S INABILITY TO SAFEGUARD 31-YEAR OLD SCOT AND STAND UP TO CORRUPT INDIAN AUTHORITIES

3 November 2018 - On 4 November it will be a year since Jagtar Singh Johal from Dumbarton was abducted by plain clothes Indian police, hooded and thrown into a van whilst out shopping with his newly-wedded wife and cousin sister.



He has been tortured by Indian police, denied all requests for an independent medical examination and outrageously not been given private access to British consular staff.

Jagtar travelled to India to get married having been engaged six months earlier in his first visit to Punjab after 7-8 years.

Within days of his abduction and torture by Indian police and denial of proper access to British consular staff there was a huge outcry by the British Sikh community and over 250 MPs had letters from constituents.

Within weeks of Jagtar's abduction and torture Theresa May was compelled to speak to the BBC specifically about his case. The next day in Parliament Rory Stewart, the Foreign Minister stood up and in response to a question from Jagtar's MP about his torture and threatened the Indian authorities with 'extreme action'.

Jagtar has faced the ordeal of trial by media with so-called confessional police video recordings obtained following his torture being released to the Indian media to manipulate public opinion.

Following numerous court appearances, Jagtar was eventually charged after 6 months in prison, but with nothing more than what was in the confessional video tapes that are inadmissible in a normal court of law.

Jagtar has now made appearances in 60 pre-trial preliminary hearings, but a year on the Indian authorities have produced no credible evidence or witnesses in court.

The British authorities acknowledge the failings of the Indian legal system that could result in Jagtar remaining in prison for years before being released without conviction.

However, they appear to be powerless to take any action for a British national they know has been tortured and privately admit is innocent, let alone the 'extreme action' promised by the Foreign Minister last November in Parliament.

In April this year in an unprecedented move Theresa May raised Jagtar's case with Narendra Modi when he came to 10 Downing Street for a meeting before the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

Three UN rapporteurs have formally raised Jagtar's case with the Indian authorities and at the UN Human Rights Council.



Sikh constituents are understood to have again just written to over 200 MPs in the last week demanding answers and are planning a mass Sikh lobby on Wednesday 14 November when Jagtar's case is expected to be raised at Prime Ministers Questions. We expect this renewed pressure will result in the Foreign Secretary meeting Jagtar's family and MP.

In recent weeks the pressure and desperation of the Indian authorities has increasingly come to the fore in Britain in the hope to find incriminating evidence against Jagtar. Five British Sikh activists campaigning to free Jagtar have had their homes raided and families harassed in Birmingham, Coventry, Leicester and London.



No arrests have been made, but in a worrying development West Midlands police have effectively admitted they have shared intelligence gathered in Britain with the Indian police. Embarrassingly for West Midlands police the names, addresses and photographs of the five British Sikh activists have been leaked to the Indian media putting them and their families at risk.

A senior Punjab police officer has been quoted in one leading Indian newspaper as stating “we have received confirmation (of names) from the WMCTU” about homes that have been searched. In another leading Indian newspaper, a Punjab Police officer, said: “The raids were the result of diplomatic pressure created by India on the UK.”

Sikh campaigners have also made the serious accusation that the West Midlands police have acted upon information obtained from the torture of Jagtar by Indian police.

Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation said:

“As far as the British Sikh community is concerned the Home Office and West Midlands police cannot be trusted and their reputation lies in tatters.”



“The Home Office and West Midlands police have been totally compromised by the Indian authorities following statements by senior Indian police officers in the Indian press and the details of British nationals that have been published.”

“A week ago, the West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit (WMCTU) issued a confidential 3-page internal briefing that we have seen on what it has called ‘Operation TECUMA’ that confirms the police raids on the homes of British Sikh activists were to assist the Indian authorities.”

“The confidential briefing gives senior police officers defensive lines to take when dealing with the Sikh community. Police officers have been told to deny the raids were ‘directed by either the UK or Indian Government’, not part of a “joint investigation” with the Indian authorities or a “pretext to gather evidence against” Jagtar Singh Johal.”

“The briefing continues: “Some of the seized material related to the Khalistan movement and ‘1984’. It is important to emphasise the possession of Khalistan material, campaigning for Khalistan or cart campaigning against the Indian Government are not criminal offences.”

“This confidential briefing has been shared and possibly cleared with the Indian authorities. West Midlands police are determined to learn the hard way that anything they share with them will be leaked. By now they must realise the Indian authorities are corrupt to the core.”

Britain is ‘ignoring torture of Scots Sikh’ Jagtar Singh Johal: Lawyer alleges secret collusion with India **THE TIMES**

The Times - 5 January 2019

A lawyer who fought for justice for the Guildford Four and Birmingham Six has accused the British government of ignoring evidence that a Scottish terrorism suspect has been tortured in India.

Gareth Peirce claims that the British authorities are secretly colluding with India’s counterterrorism agency in the investigation into Jagtar Singh Johal, a Scottish Sikh who is being held in connection with the murder of Hindu nationalists in 2016 and 2017.

Ms Peirce’s previous clients include Gerry Conlon, who spent 15 years in prison after being wrongly convicted of the Guildford pub bombing. She is investigating how photographs of Sikh activists apparently seized by British police ended up in the hands of Indian interrogators.

Mr Johal, 31, from Dumbarton, was arrested, put in a hood and forced into an unmarked police vehicle in November 2017. He was held for six months without hearing the charges against him. Police broadcast a televised “confession” which Ms Peirce said was coerced and provably false.

Mr Johal claims that police tortured him and threatened to burn him alive.

Soon after Mr Johal’s arrest, Rory Stewart, the former international development minister, warned of “extreme action” against India if he were tortured during his detention. He remains in prison, however, more than a year later with no sign of a trial. Mr Johal’s lawyer claims that a consular official inspected his injuries but police and courts have refused a request for an independent medical examination.

Ms Peirce, 78, said: “Reports of a British citizen



being taken hooded to court, the broadcast of a coerced, probably false ‘confession’ and marks of his injuries noted by a consular official should



have generated exceptional and energetic activity by his own government.

“Do the clues to this inertia lie in the emerging evidence of close co-operation between the UK and the Indian authorities?”

“In repeated cases and worldwide, it has been such covert collusion, belatedly acknowledged, that has accounted for the seeming impotence of official government expressions of concern.

“The urgent need is for Jagtar’s government to apply those lessons from this country’s recent past before it is too late.”

Narendra Modi, India’s prime minister, is under pressure from opponents to bring the Hindu nationalists’ killers to justice. Mr Johal fears that he is being used as a political pawn in the forthcoming general election.

Jaspal Singh Manjhpur, Mr Johal’s lawyer, said: “India’s National Investigation Agency is worried about the lack of evidence and to delay matters further has appealed to the Supreme Court to transfer many of the cases to Delhi. Apart from the inevitable delay this is causing they are also pushing for Jagtar to be transferred to a prison in Delhi making it difficult to regularly meet me, his

wife and her family who are based hundreds of miles away in Punjab.”

Gurpreet Singh Johal, his elder brother, said: “The family was disgusted to hear from Jagtar’s lawyer that when Jagtar was being tortured by Indian police he was being shown photographs of Sikh activists from the UK and Canada that could only have come from intelligence agencies or police in the UK and Canada. His lawyer told us in the absence of evidence they have been pressuring Jagtar to become a false state witness against Sikh activists in the UK and Canada but he has refused as he has nothing he can tell them.”

A UK government spokesman said that it was unable to comment on ongoing police investigations.

“Our staff continue to support a British man and his family following his detention in Punjab,” the spokesman said. “We continue to visit him regularly, and raise concerns with the government of India about his case, including allegations of torture and mistreatment and his right to a fair trial.”

The family insisted that he was innocent of all allegations.

TORTURED SCOT HELD IN INDIAN JAIL FOR 500 DAYS CONSIDERED 2ND CLASS CITIZEN

Foreign Office branded racist and unable to stand up to Indian pressure



11 March 2019 - In one week on 18 March it would have been 500 days since the imprisonment in India of the 32-year old, Scot Jagtar Singh Johal from West Dunbartonshire.

He has been tortured by Indian police, threatened with being burnt alive or shot in a fake encounter.

He is awaiting trial, but his lawyer is confident he will eventually be released as the charge sheet is flimsy and no evidence has yet been presented in court that could result in a conviction.

However, given the inefficiencies, acute delays of the corrupt Indian judicial system and political pressures it could be years before his release without conviction unless there is serious UK Government intervention in his case.

Foreign Office Minister, Rory Stewart responding to



a question by Jagtar's MP Martin Docherty-Hughes in the Commons a few days after Jagtar's torture came to light threatened India with "extreme action" if it was proved the Scot had been tortured.

When Jagtar's brother and Martin Docherty-Hughes met Foreign Minister Mark Field a few weeks after Jagtar's abduction by plain clothes Indian police officers the Minister suggested "they hoped to get Jagtar out sooner rather than later".

However, the Indian authorities have gone to great lengths to pressure the UK Government. Rory Stewart was rebuked for his threat to the Indian authorities and he was soon removed as a Foreign Office Minister.

Mark Field has met the family and Jagtar's MP on several occasions and shown genuine sympathy, but he has come up against incompetence of British officials on the ground in Punjab, including the British Deputy High Commissioner, Andrew Ayres who has been compromised and blatant Indian intransigence.

Successive Foreign Secretaries, first Boris Johnson and now Jeremy Hunt have despite promises made in Parliament failed to meet Jagtar's family and MP.



Martin Docherty-Hughes is furious that this is in part as Jagtar is a Scot and represented by a Scottish National Party MP.

Over 200 MPs have again had letters from constituents in the last few weeks urging them to get Jeremy Hunt to meet Jagtar's family and MP.

But as the 500-day anniversary approaches the family and British Sikh community have concluded the Foreign Secretary is avoiding a meeting as the UK Government do not have the appetite to stand up to Indian pressure and brutality.

To his credit last week Jeremy Hunt took the unprecedented step of granting Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe diplomatic protection. This means the case will now be treated as a formal, legal dispute between the two states involved - Britain and Iran.

Following this move Rachel Bell from the BBC in Scotland challenged Jeremy Hunt on why he has not met with the family of Jagtar Singh Johal and taken up the case with the Indian authorities as Jagtar has been tortured. Jeremy Hunt struggled to give an appropriate response or refer to Jagtar by name.

The move in the Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe case follows the pardon by the United Arab Emirates in November 2018 of Matthew Hedges who confessed to be an MI6 officer or face torture. This came after diplomatic pressure from Jeremy Hunt.

The UAE government maintained Matthew Hedges who spent only seven months in prison was "100% a secret service operative".

A month earlier on Jagtar's 32nd birthday Matthew Hedges wife, Daniela Tejada made a strong personal video appeal to Jeremy Hunt to meet Jagtar's family. She said no due process has been followed in the case and the Foreign Office have changed case workers more than ten times. She urged the Foreign Office to protect Jagtar, a British citizen from arbitrary detention abroad. However, her personal appeal appears to have fallen on deaf ears.

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



"The British Sikh community is disgusted that Jagtar is being treated as a 2nd class citizen by the Foreign Office."

"Jagtar appears not only to be at a disadvantage because of his Scottish identity and being represented by an SNP MP, but also because he is a Sikh activist."

"Quite simply the lack of action taken by the Foreign Office to date to protect Jagtar smacks of racism and being frightened to stand up to the Indian authorities."

Case of British Sikh in Indian jail being actively dealt with: Theresa May



The New Indian Express - 13 March 2019



LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May on Wednesday said the case of a British Sikh murder suspect lodged in an Indian jail for over a year was being "actively" dealt with by ministers.

Jagtar Singh Johal, from Dumbarton in Scotland, was arrested by Indian authorities in November 2017 on charges of fanning communal disturbance in Punjab.

His constituency's MP, Scottish National Party's (SNP) Martin Docherty-Hughes, has been lobbying for his release along with his family members and raised the issue in the House of Commons during the weekly Prime Minister's Questions.

"On Monday (March 18), my constituent Jagtar Singh Johal would have been incarcerated for 500 days without trial.

He would have suffered trial by media, sanctioned, some would say, by the Indian state," Docherty-Hughes said, calling on May to direct her foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt to take up the case with the Indian government.

"Ministers are dealing with this. They have been actively involved in this case," May said.

"One of the ministers is actually dealing with this case and will I am sure will be pleased to meet with him," she said, in reference to the request for a ministerial meeting.

Johal, a 31-year-old Scottish-born Sikh, was in Jalandhar with his family for his wedding in October 2017 when he was arrested by plainclothes police officials in the city.

The Punjab government claimed he was among a group of suspects arrested in relation to the murder of Hindu leaders in the state.

While the Indian government maintains that "due process" is being followed in the case, British MPs have repeatedly taken up the case in the UK Parliament.

"Mr Johal alleges he has been subjected to torture at the hands of the Indian security forces," Preet Kaur Gill, a Labour Party MP and Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for British Sikhs, noted in a letter to Downing Street last year.

The APPG and other MPs have continued lobbying for the release of Johal, with some Sikh groups in the UK organising a "Free Jaggi" drive.

"The British Sikh community is disgusted that Jagtar is being treated as a second-class citizen by the Foreign Office," said **Bhai Amrik Singh, Chair of Sikh Federation UK.**



Jagtar Singh Johal's wife tells of meeting with Jeremy Hunt

The National – 26 April 2018



The wife of the Scot held in India for more than 500 days has spoken out about her “emotional” journey to the UK to meet the Foreign Secretary over his case.

The Indian national spoke exclusively to The National on condition we do not use her name due to fears about her safety, as husband Jagtar Singh Johal remains in prison.

The 32-year-old Dumbarton man, known as Jaggi, has been held without trial since November 4, 2017, less than three weeks after his wedding in the country’s Punjab region.

He is alleged to have funded a murder plot by Sikh group against prominent right-wing Hindus. However, no evidence has been led despite more than 80 court appearances, and he claims to have been tortured by police.

Jaggi’s wife travelled to London to meet Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt on Wednesday alongside

other relatives, including Johal’s brother Gurpreet, and the family’s MP Martin Docherty-Hughes.

She said: “My journey was an emotional one. I was crying most of the way. I always imagined I’d be coming to the UK for the first time with my husband. I never imagined it would be this way.

“I’m tired. First it was the running about and hiding, then going long distances to visit him in prison, and going to court hearings where he was not presented, and constant delay.

“I wanted to pass Jagtar’s message to Jeremy Hunt, that he’s looking for the UK Government’s support. If they don’t help him, he could be in jail for a long time. Jeremy Hunt did listen and acknowledge the suffering.

“I was assured they will do what they can within their powers.”

Docherty-Hughes said: “The impact of this arbitrary detention and violation of Jagtar’s human rights by the Indian state authorities has been harrowing for his loved ones.

“The families of Scots imprisoned abroad deserve the best possible support from the Foreign Office and I intend to hold Jeremy Hunt to the promises made to my constituents.”

Jagtar Singh Johal’s family also thanked backers of the Free Jaggi Now campaign for their support.

INDIA USES TRADE TO FORCE FOREIGN OFFICE TO ABANDON TORTURED SCOT HELD IN INDIAN JAIL FOR 600 DAYS

26 June 2019 - Today marks 600 days in an Indian jail of Jagtar Singh Johal, the 32-year old Scot from Dumbarton who has been tortured and threatened to be burnt alive by police and is being detained without a proper trial.

On Monday the Foreign Affairs Select Committee released its report Building Bridges: Reawakening UK-India ties that disappointingly failed to acknowledge the high profile case of the British national that has been taken up by over 250 MPs on all sides following lobbying by constituents.



The family are in despair as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) are failing to apply any political or diplomatic pressure to bring an end to the continuous delays in getting a trial or presenting evidence after such a long time to justify Jagtar's continued detention.



This is a far cry from Rory Stewart's promise in Parliament in November 2017 of "extreme action" against India upon learning of third-degree torture of Jagtar. The Indian authorities were furious and are understood to have issued a *démarche* that resulted in Rory Stewart being dropped as a Foreign Minister.

Earlier this month and following political pressure from the ruling right-wing political party the Supreme Court agreed to transfer Jagtar from Punjab to maximum security Tihar jail in Delhi. The judge gave Jagtar's defence team only 30 seconds to make their case and he is now 250 miles away from his wife and legal team. The FCO has raised no objections and failing in its duty of care to a vulnerable British citizen.

The FCO has admitted at the highest level Jagtar could be detained in an Indian prison for several years and privately informed his family and his MP, Martin Docherty-Hughes that he will not get a fair trial.

Jeremy Hunt, the Foreign Secretary had a meeting with Jagtar's family, including his wife who came to meet him from India and his MP exactly 3 months ago and promised to increase pressure.

However, Dominic Asquith, the British High Commissioner in Delhi who was in the UK this month refused to meet the family. This comes after the family complained to the Information Commissioner about a serious data breach by the Andrew Ayre, the British Deputy High Commissioner that the FCO are now having to investigate and a complaint against the lead caseworker .

The family are frustrated with the lack of diplomatic support and absence of political leadership or a willingness to act as the present and former Foreign Secretary are pre-occupied with battling it out for the Conservative Party leadership and Mark Field, the Minister responsible for relations with India has been suspended.

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

"Jagtar's family are shocked and upset with the actions of the British authorities that suggest they have abandoned him in an Indian jail and left him to the mercies of the slow and corrupt Indian judicial system."

"Jeremy Hunt had offered the family some hope 3 months ago, but today the Foreign Office lacks the diplomatic nous and political leadership to defend a British national in India that is always willing to use trade to force Britain to turn a blind eye to human rights violations."

"The next Prime Minister will be familiar with Jagtar's case and have an opportunity to demonstrate early on that Britain will take a firm stand to protect its citizens and take steps to secure Jagtar's release and return to Scotland."



Jagtar Singh Johal: India stays quiet on Sikh who says he was tortured

THE  TIMES

The Times – 17 August 2019

Indian authorities are under increasing diplomatic pressure to either prosecute or release a Scottish man held for more than 650 days in connection with the murder of a Hindu nationalist.



A United Nations official has raised concerns about the treatment of Jagtar Singh Johal, 32, from Dumbarton, who says that he was electrocuted while under interrogation in prison.

Mr Johal, known as Jaggi, denies allegations by India's anti-terrorism unit that he delivered cash to the former head of the Khalistan Liberation Force, Sikh nationalist militants accused of terrorism.

The group has been implicated in the death of Ravinder Gosain, a politician affiliated to the government of Narendra Modi, the prime minister.

Gurpreet Singh Johal, Mr Johal's brother, visited the UN rapporteur's office in Geneva on Thursday for an update. He said: "The Indian authorities have yet to respond to previous correspondence sent by the special rapporteurs on torture in 2018. The next step is to write to them again. They used to be totally unresponsive but they have been complying a bit more, so hopefully we will start getting a bit more engagement."

"I spoke to Jaggi on 24 July, but it was a very short call, literally 'Hello, how's the kids, how's the family?', and then the phone cut out and he hasn't been able to call back."

Mr Johal was recently moved from a jail in Punjab, which was close to his family and legal team, to the high security Tihar prison 250 miles away in Delhi. His family fear that he is under threat from affiliates linked to Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the Hindu nationalist group that Mr Gosain worked for.

Theresa May raised Mr Johal's case with Mr Modi when they met in April last year, when she was prime minister. Gareth Peirce, a lawyer who fought for justice in the Guildford Four and

Birmingham Six cases, has accused the British government of ignoring evidence that Mr Johal has been tortured.

Mr Johal's lawyers are also being supported by Redress, a torture survivors group that is working to free Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, a British-Iranian woman being held in Tehran.



Rupert Skilbeck, director of Redress, said: "Electrocution torture is unfortunately something we hear about in India and in other countries as well. We fear the only evidence they have against him is a 'confession' that was tortured out of him."

"International law and law from the Indian constitutional court has made very clear that you can't use evidence obtained under torture in a criminal trial."

He said that Mr Johal had never been subjected to an independent medical examination in the near two years he has been detained, even though an Indian judge had said that he should receive an examination.

"There are about 100 British nationals a year who allege they have been tortured or mistreated abroad," he said. "Torture in India is a massive problem. It is essentially standard behaviour by the police."

"Countries are periodically reviewed by various human rights bodies and the fact that this has gone unanswered won't go unnoticed."

The Indian embassy in London was contacted for comment.





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 Khalistan.

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 and the UK Sikh Survey. The Sikh Federation (UK) fully acknowledge 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.

SIKH FEDERATION (UK)

WORKING FOR TRUTH, JUSTICE & FREEDOM



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For monetary donations to support any of the initiatives please note the following bank details:
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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. Key skills and sector knowledge are needed in local & central government, politics & lobbying, human rights, PR & media and web & social media.

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