



# Sikh Federation (UK)

*Never flinch from performing righteous deeds*

## Foreign Secretary feels pressure to explain actions to secure the release and return of Jagtar Singh Johal ahead of meeting with family

London – 26 November 2025

Over 100 MPs have had hundreds of letters<sup>1</sup> from constituents in the first 24 hours of the Sikh Federation (UK) launching a campaign to get MPs to put pressure on the Foreign Secretary, Yvette Cooper to explain her actions to secure the release and return of British national, Jagtar Singh Johal.

The letter reminds MPs that in opposition Keir Starmer as the Labour Leader and David Lammy as the Shadow Foreign Secretary accepted Jagtar had been in arbitrary detention in an Indian jail since 4 November 2017. On this basis in June 2022 Keir Starmer wrote to Boris Johnson, the Prime Minister to get the UK Government to acknowledge this.<sup>2</sup>

Boris Johnson as PM, just before he resigned on 7 July 2022, categorically accepted Jagtar's arbitrary detention in an Indian jail since 4 November 2017 in a letter to Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK) that is attached. The Labour leadership in opposition therefore consistently called on the Conservative government to secure Jagtar's release and to be reunited with his family in Scotland.

The letter to MPs states Labour has now been in power for over 500 days and Jagtar has been arbitrarily detained in an Indian prison for over eight years. Whilst the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have repeatedly stated they continue to raise the case of Jagtar Singh Johal with their Indian counterparts constituents are demanding answers from Yvette Cooper via their MPs.

They had expected to see significant progress under Labour to try and get Jagtar released and back with his family. The expectation increased following Jagtar's acquittal on 4 March 2025 when the first case eventually came to a conclusion in court, especially as the other cases are based on the same evidence.

On 1 July 2025, Jagtar's MP Douglas McAllister, confirmed the Foreign Secretary, David Lammy had told him he would personally be focusing on two cases; those of Jimmy Li and Jagtar Singh Johal and that he would provide a monthly update. Narendra Modi met Keir Starmer in the UK at the end of July and the two met again in India in September and it was reported Jagtar's case was raised on both occasions.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://campaigns.sikhfeduk.com/campaigns/securing-the-release-and-return-of-jagtar-singh-johal>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-61681556.amp>

Yvette Copper, became the Foreign Secretary in September 2025 and has provided no updates or clarification on what was discussed regarding Jagtar at the two meetings between the two leaders, despite several written requests. A meeting is planned with Jagtar's family and his MP, Douglas McAllister early next week, but it is unclear if Yvette Copper will be able to satisfy them that the UK Government is doing all it can to get Jagtar home sooner rather than later.

MPs receiving letters are being urged to write to the Foreign Secretary to specifically confirm whether or not the Labour Government has used diplomatic channels with the Indian government to call for Jagtar's release since coming to power in July 2024, especially after Jagtar's acquittal on 4 March 2025.

Yvette Cooper is being urged to publicly call for Jagtar's release as it is UK Government policy to call for the release of British nationals who it accepts are arbitrarily detained abroad. She is also being urged to set out what steps have been taken by the UK Government to investigate the allegations of the torture of Jagtar Singh Johal that were made 8 years ago after he was arrested. This includes if the UK Government has taken up the matter at the UN Human Rights Council as the UK Government threatened 'extreme action' eight years earlier.<sup>3</sup>

Some MPs are expected to table Written Parliamentary Questions or raise the matter on the floor of the House of Commons in the next few weeks if Yvette Cooper fails to provide answers when she meets Jagtar's family and MP early next week.

Dabinderjit Singh OBE, a Lead Executive at the Sikh Federation (UK) said:

*"Yvette Cooper must come clean with the family on the efforts of the UK Government to secure the release and return of Jagtar Singh Johal."*

*"8 years is far too long for a British national to be held in arbitrary detention in an Indian jail."*

*"The UK Government stand accused of having double standards when it comes to the Indian government and the targeting of Sikh activists."*

*"Labour since coming to power have had long enough to apply diplomatic pressure on the Indian government and must now publicly call for and increase pressure to secure Jagtar's release and return without further delay."*

**ENDS**

Jaspal Singh  
Lead Executive  
Sikh Federation (UK)

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-42064802>