



Sikh Federation (UK)

Never flinch from performing righteous deeds

Tanglewood House, Pine Walk, Chilworth, Southampton SO16 7HQ

Sent via email: elizabeth.truss.mp@parliament.uk & rishi.sunak.mp@parliament.uk

30 July 2022

Dear Liz/Rishi

The Sikh Federation (UK) was set up in September 2003 in a well-publicised event where the Conservative Shadow Home Secretary at that time [announced](#) the launch of the organisation.

We have thousands of members across the UK that we encourage to be politically active in the UK. We also have tens of thousands of Sikh supporters that attend our events and join our campaigns.

We estimate there are around 1,000 Sikh Conservative party members who will be voting to select the next Conservative Leader and become our next Prime Minister.

We are writing to request clarification of your views on the following three issues so we can advise our Conservative party members and Sikh supporters on who they should vote for as the next Conservative Leader and Prime Minister.

The three issues are as follows:

1) Release and return to the UK of Jagtar Singh Johal who has been tortured and is in arbitrary detention in an Indian jail for nearly 5 years

Jagtar a British national has been tortured and in arbitrary detention in an Indian jail since 4 November 2017. Boris Johnson wrote to us about Jagtar's arbitrary detention on 7 July 2022 just before he resigned (his letter is attached).

This week Jagtar has been formally charged under the draconian Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) that obliges judges to frame charges even where they know evidence would be inadmissible or easily discredited at trial.

The framing of charges that carry the death penalty does not change the fact Jagtar has been tortured to obtain a false confession and there is no physical evidence to support the trumped-up political charges.

Given Jagtar now faces the risk of the death penalty in India will you increase efforts to secure the immediate release and return of Jagtar to his family in Scotland in line with UK Government pronouncements on the arbitrary detention of British nationals?

2) Priti Patel's offensive and unsubstantiated comments labelling British Sikhs as extremists

In the letter Boris Johnson sent me on 7 July 2022 in response to an [open letter](#) from over 300 UK Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations he apologised for not acknowledging the Gurburb (Birthday) of Guru Nanak Dev Ji in November 2021 and promised it would not happen again.

Boris Johnson however in his response completely avoided addressing Priti Patel's actions against the British Sikh community, including the failed extradition of those associated with Jagtar Singh Johal and the attempted deportation of Jagtar's wife. We took note that he delayed his response for this reason, but it was impossible to defend Priti Patel's actions and her offensive and unsubstantiated comments labelling British Sikhs as extremists.

To make matters worse Priti Patel's comments in a speech in Washington DC on 19 November 2021 coincided with the Gurburb of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and were pre-meditated. Her generic reference to British Sikh separatist extremists was offensive and totally inappropriate as her speech was about the banning of right-wing groups and Islamist terrorist organisations in the UK.

She has never raised any concerns about British Sikhs in Parliament while Home Secretary and US State Department officials have confirmed her labelling of law-abiding British Sikhs as extremists in a speech in the US was to appease the Indian authorities. The fact that she has been unable for the last nine months to corroborate her reference to British Sikhs as extremists with any evidence necessitates the next PM not to let her remain as Home Secretary.

If you become the next Prime Minister, will you have a new Home Secretary who is competent to tackle the many challenges facing the proper administration of the Home Office where Priti Patel has clearly failed and hit the reset button to have a different relationship with grassroots Sikh organisations?

3) Addressing Anti-Sikh hate in the same way as Antisemitism and Islamophobia

The Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and its predecessor that have a joint responsibility for tackling hate crimes have repeatedly failed to respond to Anti-Sikh hate and acknowledge it in the same way as Antisemitism and Islamophobia.

In July 2016 following the EU Exit referendum the first hate crime action plan relating to faith communities was published and we have evidence reference to Sikhs was airbrushed out. Despite an apology and promises made by Ministers the same mistake was repeated in the refresh of the plan in October 2018.

The All Party Parliamentary Group for British Sikhs published an [Anti-Sikh hate report](#) in October 2020. The report was an attempt to consult the government on the definition of Anti-Sikh hate and suggest a community-led solution to under reporting. More than 20 months later the Home Office and DLUHC between them have failed to respond.

However, True Vision to avoid criticism of not using funds allocated by Sajid Javid 5 years earlier to improve reporting of anti-Sikh hate crimes recently set up "Sikh Guard" working with Sikh police officers. This is an attempt to undermine the main APPG for British Sikhs recommendation to set up a Sikh community-led equivalent to the Community Security Trust (CST) and Tell Mamma. By ignoring the APPG for British Sikhs recommendation and adopting a police rather than community led solution is insulting and demonstrates a discriminatory approach in the Home Office and by True Vision towards the British Sikh community compared to the Jewish and Muslim communities.

The Metropolitan Police recently provided us with data on reported anti-Sikh hate crimes in the last 12 months up to 31 March 2022. This suggests when the Home Office releases nationwide data in October 2022 it will show a four-fold increase in Anti-Sikh hate across the UK in the last 12 months as the community has encouraged increased reporting despite no government support.

Will you as Prime Minister acknowledge and address Anti-Sikh hate in the same way as Antisemitism and Islamophobia by providing resources to tackle the massive increase in reported Anti-Sikh hate crimes and support a community-led solution to increased reporting so law enforcement agencies are better able to understand and confront the issue?

This letter to both the leadership hopefuls will be shared with Sikh media outlets and your specific written responses to the three issues that we hope you will be able to send ASAP. We will widely share your responses with the British Sikh community and those who will be casting their vote in the Conservative leadership contest in the coming few weeks.

Yours sincerely,



Bhai Amrik Singh
Chair, Sikh Federation (UK)