

THE SIKH NETWORK

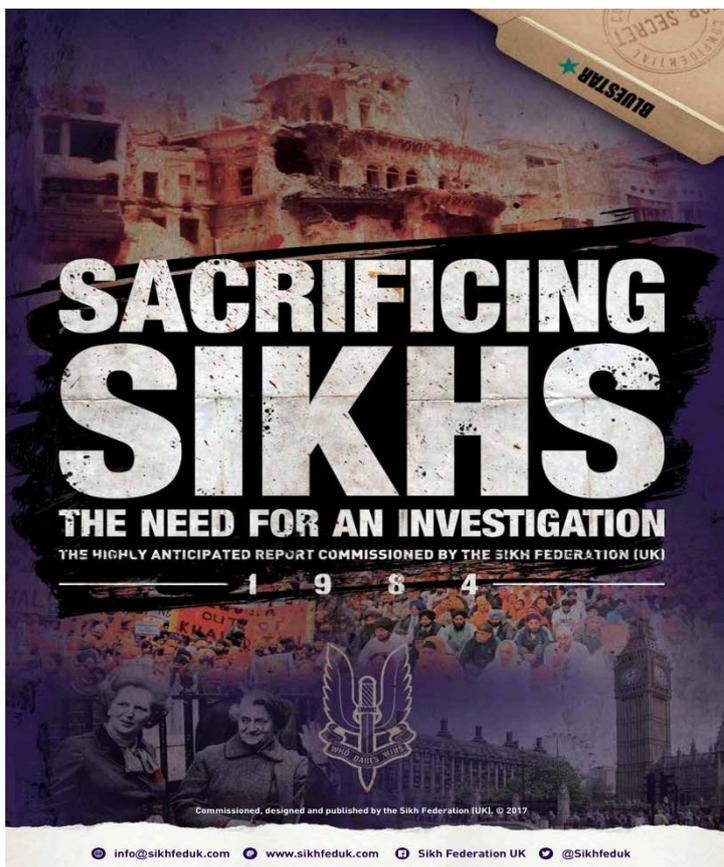
quarterly

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Responsible for monitoring progress and strategic direction of the Sikh Manifesto over the next five years

The Sikh Network newsletter provides a quarterly update on activities and events associated with the highly acclaimed 10-point Sikh Manifesto published in January 2015 and the associated UK Sikh Survey, the largest survey of its kind.

Independent public inquiry into UK government action in the lead up to and after the 1984 Sikh Genocide

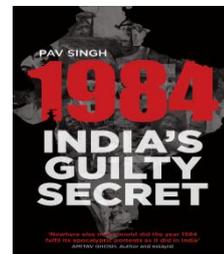


This is a significant issue in the Sikh Manifesto where there has been a major development with the release on the long awaited Sikh Federation (UK) report – Sacrificing Sikhs – the need for an investigation. The journey and pursuit of the truth continues with the publication of this explosive report into the hidden role of the UK government in the 1980s with support for the Indian Army assault of Sri Harmandir Sahib and anti-Sikh measures in the UK. **Please download this invaluable report, share it with your MP and ask them to write back to you explaining what action they are taking.**

On 29 October an article appeared in the Observer titled: 'British government 'covered up' its role in Amritsar massacre in India' and was also picked up by the Times of India in an article titled: 'UK role around Operation Blue Star went much further, says new report'. These were followed up by an article the next day in the Independent titled: 'British government accused of covering up role in Amritsar massacre of Sikhs'.

On 1 November the report was released in Parliament by Tom Watson, the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party and this made front page news in Ajit. The Press Trust of India (PTI) produced a news report the same day that appeared in many Indian newspapers titled: 'British Sikh group seeks new probe into UK's role in Operation Blue Star'. Earlier the same day just before Boris Johnson, the Foreign Secretary entered the Grimond Room to give evidence to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee he was "served" with a copy of the report. When Ian Austin the Labour MP for Dudley North specifically asked him about the report he was left floundering. Watch Boris Johnson being challenged and urged to meet the Sikh Federation (UK) to consider the evidence presented.

The event was held to coincide with the remembrance of the November 1984 state sponsored Sikh Genocide in Delhi and cities across northern India. A new book exposing the horrific truth and government cover-up titled 'India's Guilty Secret' by Pav Singh was also presented. Full report available in PDF download at: www.sikhfeduk.com



Sikh demand for Census 2021 change move closer

The demand and calls for a separate Sikh ethnic tick box in the Census 2021 (key issue in the Sikh Manifesto) has seen significant progress in the last three months following continuous efforts and representation by the Sikh Network team. On 12 September the Times carried a story "Sikhs demand census change". This coincided with the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for British Sikhs and an adviser to the Sikh Federation (UK) meeting Iain Bell, the Deputy National Statistician and his team to discuss the demand. The media reported nearly 140 MPs wrote to John Pullinger, the Head of the Office for National Statistics (ONS), but that the numbers could easily have been doubled or tripled. MPs warned ONS to recommend a separate Sikh ethnic tick box in the Census 2021 or it will be overturned by MPs.

In a follow up meeting with the ONS on 3 October 2017 the Sikh Network and the Sikh Federation (UK) presented information from Gravesend and Leicester to show the optional religious question significantly undercounted the number of Sikhs by 30-50%. The ONS is in the process of analysing the Census 2011 database by last name to estimate the number of Sikhs who did not indicate Sikh to the optional religious question, but may have an ethnic origin of Sikh.

On 23 October Sikhs moved a step closer to their demand when the ONS organised an open meeting to update the community on what they have been doing since the Census 2011 on preparation for the next Census and a separate Sikh ethnic tick box. Preet Kaur Gill MP's letter 'A Sikh ethnic tick box is needed in the UK's 2021 census' was published in the Guardian on the same day and two days later a letter from Dabinderjit Singh, noting the strength of feeling in favour of a Sikh ethnic tick box. Further productive meetings took place with ONS and Damian Green, Cabinet Office Minister and Deputy Prime Minister as this newsletter went to print.



Sikhs are experiencing institutional racism, Minister challenged in Parliament

On 10 October, watch Preet Kaur Gill MP challenge Damian Green, Cabinet Office Minister and Deputy Prime Minister in the House of Commons on the failure of public bodies to monitor Sikhs as part of the Race Disparity Audit. The Ministers' response showed his lack of understanding of the legal status of Sikhs as an ethnic group as well as a religion.

The Race Disparity Audit was announced by the Prime Minister soon after she stepped into 10 Downing Street. The Sikh Network and the Sikh Federation (UK) in several meetings with the Cabinet Office raised concerns that public bodies were failing to collect data regarding Sikhs, although Sikhs have been legally recognised as an ethnic group since 1983 and protected under race laws. The Cabinet Office failed to address the data gap with respect to Sikhs therefore Preet challenged the Minister and has now had a subsequent meeting with him to see how the Cabinet Office can address this data gap.

A week later on 17 October Preet Kaur Gill the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for British Sikhs and a member of the Home Affairs Select Committee challenged Amber Rudd, the Home Secretary at the Home Affairs Select Committee. Watch Preet ask the Home Secretary about Sikhs being excluded from the Hate Crime Action Plan that focused on religions and contrast it with the PM's Race Disparity Audit that focused on ethnic groups that had also excluded Sikhs.

Sikh Network support & encourage change in our major UK Gurdwara management committees

This summer, management committee elections took place at Sri Guru Singh Sabha Southall, arguably one of the biggest Gurdwaras outside India.

Similar to the last election, a youth lead slate called Tera Panth Vasse (TPV) took part in this year's election. Although, they did not win, they increased their vote share by 50% which is a great achievement for a new party. They also succeeded in changing the agenda of this election, with the other two parties creating manifestos similar to the group's 2014 pledges and selecting youngsters to take up major positions of responsibility.

The Sikh Network, along with other organisations, played a supporting role in providing TPV a platform to make their case for a progressive agenda for the Gurdwara and getting younger people selected in key positions. The support came naturally because of the shared values and aims.



Separately celebrations continued for the Sikh community when on Sunday 29th October, Ajaib Singh Cheema was elected Mukh Sevadar (Lead Volunteer) of the Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara Gravesend. Ajaib Singh's entire campaign focused on "breaking barriers and building our community" his prime motive for standing. Backed by a team of local professionals including some from the Sikh Network. The campaign succeeded in promoting youth and women in an effort to make the Gurdwara more accessible, progressive and inclusive. Following the sizeable victory, the team have continued with further outreach asking for volunteers in the community to come forward and help make their vision a reality. We would like to offer our congratulations and wish the local community our very best in making the Gurdwara a leading example to the international Sikh community.

Sikh Network attend 120th Saraghari event



The Sikh Network were invited to the National Memorial Arboretum in Litchfield, in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji to mark the 120 year commemoration of the brave and historic battle of Saraghari in 1897.

The Battle of Saragarhi is considered to be one of the greatest last stands in history.

21 soldiers of the 36 Sikh Regiment fought an army of over 10,000 Afghans and killed more than 600 of them before perishing to enemy bullets, epitomising the Sikh spirit of Sava Lakh se Ik Laraun.

The Sikh Network have been committed to raising the profile and awareness of the Sikh contribution to both World Wars through the Sikh Manifesto commitment of a permanent monument in central London.

Project Malachi secures £1.1million funding

We have great news to share on Project Malachi, a homeless hostel project that Sikh Network are supporting. £1.1 million of legacy funding has been secured from The Salvation Army for the homeless shelter and workshop in Ilford. The funding will help transform the site from a crumbling funeral home into a modern centre built from shipping containers designed to pave the way for more pop-up homeless hostels across the country.

The hostel will also support entrenched rough sleepers who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF) which includes a number of Punjabi men who have been sleeping on the streets of Ilford for a number of years. Find out more www.popuphostel.org

Sikh Network's Preet Kaur Gill MP makes her maiden speech



The following is an extract from Preet's speech on 13 September where she set out some of the issues that she and others will be raising:

"It is also an honour to be the first female Sikh to sit on these Benches and to be here alongside my hon. Friend the Member for Slough (Mr Dhesi), the first turban-wearing Sikh MP. Being the first Sikh female MP comes with a huge sense of responsibility. I and many others will be asked to raise difficult issues in the House on behalf of Sikhs, on matters such as hate crime, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, Sikh ethnic monitoring in the 2021 census and an independent public inquiry into UK involvement in the 1984 Sikh genocide."

"For many decades, Sikhs have lived in this country, paid their taxes, fought in world wars and contributed to society in every way imaginable. It is a historic moment for Sikhs in this country because Parliament is beginning to look more like the people it serves. Sophia Duleep Singh, the granddaughter of Maharaja Ranjit Singh—the ruler of the formidable Sikh empire from 1801 to 1839—and the goddaughter of Queen Victoria, would have been immensely proud that the United Kingdom had elected its first female Sikh MP some 100 years after she, a prominent suffragette, had fought for women in this country to have the right to vote."

Watch the full maiden speech by clicking [here](#).

Jagmeet Singh elected leader of Canada's New Democratic Party (NDP)



In early October Jagmeet Singh was easily elected leader of the NDP. 38-year-old Jagmeet Singh became the first non-white to lead a major federal party in the country. He blew away the competition with nearly 54% of the vote, his closest rival, Ontario MP Charlie Angus, garnering just under 20%. This is and remains a very proud moment for Sikhs across the globe.

"It's an incredibly profound honour. Thank you," Singh said, echoing the words of UK MP Preet Kaur Gill, just months earlier.

Having worked closely with Jagmeet Singh in recent years, the Sikh Network extend very warm congratulations to him and wish him all the best to become Canada's next Prime Minister in 2019.

Forthcoming Events:

Guru Nanak Dev Ji Gurburb in Parliament

Wed 22 November 2017, House of Commons

Book your place <https://goo.gl/QAk6ab>

