

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

Congratulations on the 350th Birth anniversary of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji



On 5th January and throughout the month, we joined millions across the globe to celebrate the 350th birth anniversary of the tenth Sikh Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj's Parkash Utsav (Birth). The amazing life of the tenth Guru inspires

not only the 30 million Sikhs settled across the world, but long ago transcended the borders of the Indian sub-continent and is continually influencing today's world in the most remarkable manner.

Search the pages of history and you will find no end of kings, emperors, rulers, generals & governments who have started countless wars & invasions, sacrificing millions all to save their own rule, empires or family. Only one King of Kings stands out above all who sacrificed his home and family including his father, voluntarily beheaded to save the Hindu faith, his mother & his four young Princes for truth and the Sikh identity, all so the Sikh nation and humanity would prevail.

Let us all take lessons from the life and teachings of all our Gurus and Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and live a true, honest and purposeful life in the service of our Guru and others.

The Sikh Network congratulate all on the 350th Gurburb of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj – The Tenth Sikh Guru, a Warrior, a Poet & a Philosopher.

'Waho Waho Gobind Singh Aape Gur Chela'

'Wonderous, Wonderous Gobind Singh He is the Guru and the disciple'

#350sikhwomen initiative launched by the Sikh Network to mark the Gurburb & message of equality



The #350sikhwomen initiative is inspired by the 350th Birth anniversary of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. It recognises and celebrates the sacrifices, contributions and achievements of Sikh Women to act as an inspiration for future generations.

From Guru Nanak Dev Ji through to Guru Gobind Singh Ji, all the Gurus practised and preached equality, regardless of gender, colour, race or creed and embodied it within Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji for all humanity.

The initiative, which ran throughout January on social media, featured Sikh women from a variety of categories, starting with the most inspirational Women in History and the Sikh movement and then moving on to modern day achievements in Charity, Education, Business, professionals, Politics, Sports, Arts, Music, Health, Medicine, Media, Entertainment, Police, Public & Community service and Human rights. As well as high achievers the initiative also recognised and highlighted many unsung heroines within the Sikh community including;

- Karpal Kaur Sandhu, UK's and possibly the world's first Asian police officer
- Ashpal Kaur Bhogal, hockey player, representing England in International Hockey.
- Kuldip Kaur Bharj OBE, Educationalist & Researcher in Midwifery, worked for Prime Minister Commission and Vice President of Ramgharia Gurdwara in Bradford.

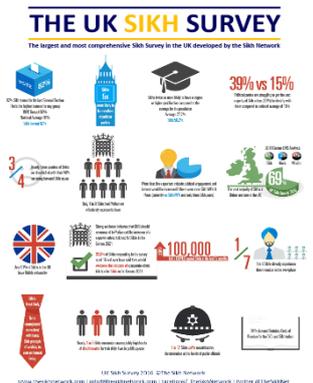
Many employers, politicians, organisations, charities, family and friends congratulated and acknowledged our sisters for being recognised in the #350sikhwomen initiative.

We have many further initiatives planned to continue supporting and encouraging our Sikh Sisters in the future. Watch this space!

Launch of the UK Sikh Survey 2016 at the University of Wolverhampton

The UK Sikh Survey Findings Report 2016 was officially launched at the University of Wolverhampton on 25th November 2016. The event was very well attended by politicians, academics, students and the general public. Dr Opinderjit Kaur Takhar, who organised the event, played a key role in the analysis of the data collected. Wolverhampton MP's Rob Marris and Pat McFadden also welcomed the findings of the UK Sikh Survey 2016 at the event.

Presentations on the day were also delivered by Dr Jatinder Singh Mehmi and Katherine Dowd (a research student on the Sikhs) who came from Ireland for the launch. The UK Sikh Survey has been developed and managed by the Sikh Network and was devised in light of much needed statistical evidence on the issues that matter to the British Sikh community at present.



There is a lot of academic interest in the findings of the UK Sikh Survey too since it gives us real figures in relation to key relevant areas such as identity, hate crime and political engagement. The findings of the survey reveal that identity is of key importance to British Sikhs with 19 out of 20 Sikhs rejecting to being described as 'Indian' or 'Asian' and 93.5% of Sikhs have said they would welcome the inclusion of a separate ethnic tick box for Sikhs in the Census 2021. Despite being five times more likely to join political parties, Sikhs are lagging well behind other BAME communities in representation. More worrying stats revealed were the 1 in 7 being discriminated in the workplace and 1 in 5 in a public space. Overall the survey highlighted there may have been over 100,000 hate crimes against Sikhs in the last 12 months, many of which were either unreported or incorrectly recorded. Positive findings included over £1.2m per day donated to charities by Sikhs and the high importance and value UK Sikhs placed on education, employment and homeownership.

UK Sikh Survey raises many important questions and interest at cross government surgery

A cross government 'surgery' was organised on 20 December 2016 to present the findings of the UK Sikh Survey. The surgery included representatives from the Cabinet Office, Home Office, Department for Communities and Local Government, Department for Education, Government Equalities Office, Mayor of London's office and the Association of Chief Police Officers, National Community Tension Team. The presentations covered the major points that had emerged from the UK Sikh Survey conducted by the Sikh Network.



Further discussions centred upon the need for the Census 2021 to have a separate ethnic tick box, developing a Code of Practice for the Panj Kakkars (5Ks) and turban and the Race Audit.

Various follow up actions were agreed immediately after the surgery to progress specific matters in the coming weeks and months.

Sikh Network team meet with Cabinet office to discuss Prime Ministers Race Audit

The Chair of the Women's and Equalities Select Committee, Rt. Hon. Maria Miller wrote to the Home Secretary, Rt. Hon. Amber Rudd and the Chief Executive of the Civil Service, Jon Manzoni on 15 November 2016 on the back of initial findings of the UK Sikh Survey. Amber Rudd's response on behalf of the government was recently shared in which she implied Sikhs would be covered by the annual Race Audit announced by the PM on 27 August 2016.

The Sikh Network recently met the Cabinet Office who clarified the audit would pull together existing data held by government departments. One of the conclusions in the Race Audit is expected to be about 'data gaps'. Public bodies are required to promote racial equality and Sikhs are a legally recognised and protected racial/ethnic group. However, public bodies tend to only monitor the ethnic groups used by the ONS in the last Census. Unfortunately this means there may be no data that is specifically collected about Sikhs by any government departments.

In a separate follow up meeting with the Cabinet Office the Sikh Network has suggested monitoring of Sikhs as a separate ethnic group by central government public bodies is necessary and this should be encouraged following the findings of the UK Sikh Survey. All central government public bodies need to understand and appreciate that the legal status of Sikhs is that of an ethnic group (as well as a religion) and their monitoring systems should reflect this. On the back of the findings of the UK Sikh Survey an important part of the central government sector has already agreed at a meeting to change their monitoring system to monitor Sikhs as a separate ethnic group.

Calls for a fresh, independent investigation in relation to the UK role in assisting the Indian authorities in 1984

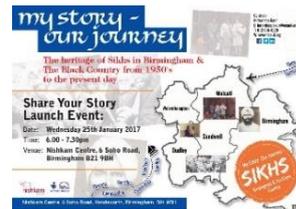
At the end of August 2016 the FCO files for 1984 were released. A researcher working with the Sikh Federation (UK) found another inadvertent disclosure on further SAS involvement immediately after the June 1984 massacre calling into question the adequacy and integrity of the Heywood Review published in February 2014 and suggesting Parliament was misled in July 1984 and February 2014.



KRW Law wrote to the Home Secretary and the Foreign Secretary on 3 November 2016 and The Times ran a significant related article. Tom Watson MP, the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party made an official statement on behalf of the Labour Party on the eve of the British PMs high profile visit to India that was widely reported by the Indian media.

Jeremy Corbyn, the Leader of the Labour Party wrote to the PM on 4 January 2017 and there was a recent meeting with the Shadow Foreign Secretary, Emily Thornberry following another letter to the Foreign Office sent by KRW Law on 16 January 2017. The letter has given requested further information and indicated following publication of a report: **'Sacrificing Sikhs: the need for an investigation'** lawyers will formally apply to the Home Secretary for an independent public inquiry. The report is based on papers released over the last three years and will also highlight anti-Sikh measures in the UK in the 1980s, at the behest of the Indian authorities.

Sikh Network partners with groups in Birmingham on historical Sikh migration project



The Sikh Network is delighted to support the Nishkam Centre on the Sikh Migration project which is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund

The aim of the project is to capture the oral history of the Sikh diaspora population who migrated to Birmingham and the Black Country. There will be an exhibition at the Birmingham museum and art gallery and there are plans to develop a toolkit for schools. We congratulate the Nishkam Centre on taking the lead with such an important project capturing our history for future generations.

Our board member Cllr Preet K Gill is on the steering group for this project and says "many of us have lost our grandparents and some of us our parents. We need to record our history for future generations as our rich diversity has contributed to the West Midlands region in so many ways. It's down to us to document and share that."

The 'My Story-Our Journey' project has already received coverage from BBC Midlands Today and is capturing the attention of not only the Sikh community, but also all those intrigued by remembering and sharing stories which would otherwise be left untold and Uncaptured.

Weekly Sikh Network show introduced on KTV



The Sikh Network team are delighted to be given their own weekly television show on newly launched KTV channel on Sky 858, on Mondays 7-8pm. This is a fresh new faith, cultural and educational channel that reflects the diverse modern Sikh society across Europe.

This philosophy fits very well with the Sikh Network and the team will be bringing the latest updates, news and events on the Sikh Manifesto, UK Sikh Survey and related initiatives each week.

Progress on Sikh ethnic tick box in the Census 2021

Following the release of the findings of the UK Sikh Survey Rob Marris MP, Chair of the APPG for British Sikhs met with ONS in January to discuss progress on testing of a Sikh ethnic tick box. This was followed by a meeting with ONS attended by representatives from the Sikh Network and Sikh Federation (UK). ONS confirmed nearly 84,000 Sikhs in the Census 2011 had 'protested' by ticking other and writing in Sikh.

ONS confirmed an independent market research agency was about to commence an online survey in two local authorities with an 8-10% Sikh population to test a Sikh ethnic tick box. Last time round in February 2010 the Sikh Federation (UK) issued a pre-action letter with the possibility of judicial review and enquired about the 'decision' point by ONS regarding a separate Sikh ethnic tick box for the Census 2021. ONS confirmed they were expecting to make a final decision by the end of 2017. Lawyers have advised an alternative could be legal action arguing unlawful racial discrimination by ONS under the Equality Act 2010 if a separate Sikh ethnic tick box for the Census 2021 is not recommended.



Sikh Network join communities to mark and remember all victims on Holocaust day.

Holocaust Memorial Day remembers those people who were singled out because they were different. Every year on the 27th January communities from all different backgrounds come together at Mount Edgecumbe to remember. Sikh Network advisor and prominent local Sikh politician, Chaz Singh ensured that the Sikh community was not forgotten after they were singled out in Genocides of June and November 1984. As well as those from the Jewish holocaust they also remember those who died from Rwanda, Darfur, Bosnia and Cambodia.