



THE
SIKH MANIFESTO

2020 - 2025



FOR EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

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For equality and inclusion...



Introduction

Millions of Sikhs across the world have in the last few weeks marked Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's 550th Parkash, the birth anniversary of the founder and first Sikh Guru. He rejected all forms of discrimination and exploitation under any pretext and founded a new egalitarian social order. Equality for women, rejection of the caste system, respect for diversity while seeing God in all.



While the Guru's message of universal wellbeing (Sarbat da Bhalla) inspires Sikh socio-political activism, it also resonates with the values of the British way of life. It comes as no surprise that Sikhs have adjusted well in the plural British society and contributed in all spheres of British way of life.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji was highly sensitive to the contemporary social environment, he was convinced that institutions needed to change, society needed to change and for this he struck at the roots of social systems. As Sikhi was revealed to Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, a new social order was formed. One which was founded on rejection of the caste system, equality for women and social justice for all. These teachings are timeless and the struggle for equality and social justice continues today. The social order, the Sikhs, stood up in the face of injustice and fearlessly fought oppression of all people. Under Guru Ji's guidance institutions were challenged and reformed to serve all.

The Sikh Manifesto 2020-2025 was created for the Sikhs by Sikhs, living out all of which Guru Ji taught us to achieve a fair, just and thriving society for all. The manifesto helps to raise awareness of relevant issues, establish the level of support that will be provided by those hoping to be elected MPs and can be used over the next five years to monitor progress and judge the performance of MPs elected on 12 December 2019.

Sikh migration to Britain

The first recorded Sikh settler in Britain was Maharajah Duleep Singh the last ruler of the Sikh Kingdom, and the son of Maharajah Ranjit Singh, the ruler of the formidable Sikh empire, who ruled from 1801 to 1839 and was known as the Lion of Punjab. Maharaja Duleep Singh (1838-1893) was sent into exile in Britain in 1854 at the age of 16, after the Anglo-Sikh wars. It is also important to note one of the most prominent suffragettes who fought for women in this country over 100 years ago to have the right to vote was none other than Princess Sophia Duleep Singh the granddaughter of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Despite the early arrival of the Maharajah, the first Sikh Gurdwara was not established until 1911 in London. Gurdwaras are the main institutions for Sikhs and central to community-building.

The first Sikh migration came from the Punjab in the 1950s and 1960s or from East Africa slightly later. It was mostly of men from the Punjab seeking work in British industry, which had a shortage of unskilled labour. Most of the new arrivals worked in foundry and textile industries. These new arrivals mostly settled in London, Birmingham and West Yorkshire. The first batch of Sikh migrants usually removed the outward religious symbols (turban, hair and beard) as racist prejudice in Britain was a major obstacle in securing employment.

Sikhs left Punjab not just because there was a shortage of industrial and agricultural jobs, but also because of the chaotic aftermath of the 1947 division of 'British' India into the secular but largely Hindu state of India and the Muslim state of Pakistan. The frontier between India and Pakistan divided the Sikh homeland of the Punjab.

There was bloodshed and destruction as millions tried to cross the border to the safety of their own communities. The Punjab changed from a settled and prosperous area to a violent and overcrowded frontier zone. Many Sikhs migrated from what was to become West Punjab (Pakistan) to East Punjab (India) whilst others left India altogether. East Punjab was disrupted again in 1966, when India further subdivided it into three parts, with the creation of the states of Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh.

The migration from East Africa was the result of the move to Africanise countries like Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, depriving many Asians of their work, and in many cases expelling them altogether. The Sikhs from East Africa took a robust attitude to the outward symbols of Sikhism and continued to wear them.

Since they had been living as an expatriate community in Africa for over 70 years they were accustomed to being a highly visible minority. They also had the further advantage of usually being highly skilled and employable, in contrast to those from Punjab.

The presence of a group of Sikhs who radiated pride in being members of the Khalsa encouraged others to externally display their Sikh identity through the five

Kakaars (often referred to as the 5K's). These are the external markers of the Khalsa Sikh Identity which continue to strengthen the visibility of the British Sikh community. In the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s British Sikhs campaigned tenaciously to safeguard their religious identity thereby leading the way in terms of British multiculturalism.

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Contributions of British Sikhs and their place in politics

In less than seventy years the British Sikh community has grown from fewer than 2,000 to over 700,000. Sikhs are a role model community and provide an exceptionally interesting example of successful integration whilst maintaining a very visible and distinctive religious identity. Sikhs are an integral part of British multicultural society and make an immense contribution in all spheres of public life in the UK 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, they have yet to fully interact, participate and engage with the democratic institutions through the UK political system with similar dedication. They have not been truly represented in relation to their population or contribution.

Sikhs must be allowed to become part of the DNA of the British nation and become directly involved in the decision-making processes 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.

The current political representation of British Sikhs is somewhat of a paradox given the "Miri-Piri" principle in Sikhi. This key Sikh concept accentuates the close relationship between the temporal and the spiritual components of life that influence a Sikh's religious and political thought and governs their social structure, political behaviour, organisation, leadership and politics. Sikh organisations, such as the Sikh Federation (UK) and the Sikh Network, have tried to address this issue through increased social and political activism amongst British Sikhs. As a result, presentation and awareness of Sikh issues has considerably improved and the British Sikh community are acknowledging the need to lobby

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Parliamentarians and to participate through political parties at local and national levels.

Sikh Network role – Publish and track progress on the Sikh Manifesto and conduct the UK Sikh Survey

Recognising the needs of a growing British Sikh community, the Sikh Network was set up and launched in 2014. It has now been operating for over 5 years and is collaboration between hundreds of Sikh organisations, Gurdwaras, youth groups, professionals and individual activists. The Sikh Network has over 5,000 members and includes Sikh activists from existing Sikh organisations, human rights and political activists, lawyers, academics, researchers, journalists, public and private sector professionals, management consultants, marketing and PR professionals, charity workers and students. All members of the Sikh Network have the opportunity to fully participate and contribute, even those who wish to remain in the background.

The main priority and activities of the Sikh Network is to publish and track the progress of the Sikh Manifesto, to conduct the UK Sikh Survey and support the Sikh community in better representation on these and other key issues. In addition, the Sikh Network work with the Sikh Federation (UK) and All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for British Sikhs to organise Quarterly Sikh Roundtable meetings held in different regions of the UK. The Sikh Network has to date deliberately maintained a low public profile given the complementary role of the Sikh Federation (UK).

Sikh Federation (UK) role – Lead on political lobbying, government engagement and handling of mainstream media

The Sikh Federation (UK) was launched in September 2003 as the first and only Sikh political party to represent Sikh issues and concerns in the political arena and to encourage Sikhs to take a more active role in British politics. In 2005 the Sikh Federation (UK) was instrumental in setting up the APPG for British Sikhs and provides the APPG its secretariat support.

The Sikh Federation (UK) leads on political lobbying and mainstream media engagement. Since 2010 its activities could no longer be ignored by the UK Government and it has increasingly been recognised by the Government as an influential voice and has been regularly participating in meetings with officials and Ministers.

It is now widely accepted by the UK Government, political parties, UK politicians and European institutions that the Sikh Federation (UK) represents a model political organisation for minority communities wishing to participate in the democratic processes and the life of the nation. British politicians from across the political spectrum and media recognise and respect the grassroots

level network which the Sikh Federation (UK) provides for effective British Sikh political engagement. This is evidenced not only by the headlines made by Sikh issues through the work of the Federation, but also by the progress in genuine dialogue between the Federation representing Sikh interests at a community level, and the Government and senior politicians of the main parties.

British Sikhs have when necessary asserted their rights by taking legal action

British Sikhs have openly practised their religion by welcoming people of all faiths to participate in their Gurdwaras, events and celebrations. This journey has not been without its challenges and struggles. When it became absolutely necessary, Sikhs have not been reluctant to assert their right to defend religious sensibilities through peaceful protests, lobbying and legal action. On several occasions, British Sikhs have had to take legal action to tackle discrimination and restrictions and, in every case, they have to date been successful.

The historic Mandla vs Dowell-Lee case in the House of Lords in 1983 led to the legal recognition of Sikhs as an ethnic group. In 2008 a case in the High Court ruled in favour of a fourteen-year-old Sikh school girl in South Wales to wear her Kara (a steel or iron bracelet that constantly reminds a Sikh of the all-pervading nature of the Divine and the importance of righteous actions).

In 2015 three prominent members of the Sikh Federation (UK) legally challenged the ban on the International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF) and Theresa May, the then Home Secretary took the unprecedented step in December 2015 not to fight the case and the UK Government agreed to lift the ban. The ban on the ISYF was officially lifted in the UK in March 2016 and across Europe in May 2016. The Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK) was also successful at the same time in winning his case in the High Court to obtain his British nationality.

In June 2018 the Sikh Federation (UK) worked with Phil Miller and KRW Law in winning a two-half year Freedom of Information (FOI) battle in the tribunal concerning the release of Cabinet Office papers relating to UK involvement in the military attack on the Sri Harmandir Sahib Complex. The latest legal challenge at the time of publishing the Sikh Manifesto, is a High Court judicial review claim for the option of a Sikh ethnic group tick box in the Census 2021 (see section 2).

Need for reliable data for decision-making and significance of the UK Sikh Survey

The contributions and way of life of Sikhs in the UK are often cited as being exemplary. In part due to what history shows us, such as being trusted allies during two World Wars. Whilst some parts of society may know of Sikh contributions, from their personal and lived experiences, the Sikh Network sought to provide the strongest evidence source possible, in the current absence of separate Sikh

monitoring (see Section 2 for more details). This has been through conducting the largest and most comprehensive Sikh Survey.

The UK Sikh Survey 2016 found a plethora of community achievements and the UK Sikh Survey 2019 that is ongoing is providing new insights and valuable trend information. The results show

- Sikhs are twice as more likely to have a degree or higher qualification compared to the average for the population
- Sikhs are the least likely to be unemployed with a continuing downward trend, consistent with basic Sikh principle of working to earn an honest living.
- 91% of Sikhs are owner occupiers, the highest for any group in the UK, although in the last three years there been a large influx of Sikhs from mainland European countries like Italy, Spain and Portugal that has resulted in Sikhs in rented property increasing
- Notably Sikhs donate over £1.2 million a day to charities, equivalent to more than 6.5 times the average annual charitable donation per person.

Perhaps these contributions have become reasons why successive UK Governments have chosen to rest on the laurels of Sikhs or to remind us of our contributions at election time in the hope that this appeases a community whose issues and concerns need to be acted upon. However, the UK Sikh Surveys in 2016 and 2019 also highlights how the Sikh community faces discrimination and prejudice. The latest survey results show

- More than 22% of Sikhs now directly experience discrimination in the workplace, a 33% increase on the figures from 3 years ago
- 1 in 5 have encountered discrimination in a public place in the last 12 months, a 7% increase on the figures from 3 years ago
- In 2016 1 in 12 stated they had experienced discrimination when dealing with public officials in the last 12 months, the latest ongoing survey results show the numbers have nearly doubled
- Hate crimes against Sikhs aged 16 and over in the last 12 months have increased from 21% to 30% (further details in Section 4)
- More than 1 in 9 Sikh women still indicate being targeted by grooming gangs, although numbers have reduced in the last three years

With such stark statistics and more importantly the personal difficulties that sit behind these statistics politicians and public bodies must do more to tackle the discrimination that Sikhs face. If moral and ethical reasons were not enough, there are political leveraging reasons for the main parties to hold at the forefront of their minds:

- Sikhs continue to have one of the highest turnouts of any group in General Elections
- Nearly 1 in 5 Sikhs are members of political parties, a 30% increase compared to three years ago and more than ten times the average for the population as a whole

Yet political parties are struggling to get the vast majority of Sikh voters to identify with them:

- The proportion who continue to feel no identification with a political party remains at 39%
- Nearly three quarters of Sikhs remain dissatisfied with how their MPs take forward Sikh issues
- In 2016 only 1 in 9 Sikhs felt Parliament effectively represented them, three years later this has risen to 1 in 7 no doubt as a direct result of the first Sikh woman MP and first turban wearing Sikh MP elected in the snap election in 2017, but much more progress is required as 85% of Sikhs still feel they are not being effectively represented

Overall, this suggests nearly 20% of Sikhs associate so strongly with political parties that they have chosen to become members, but overall the political parties are struggling to get the vast majority of Sikh voters to identify with them. A community which has the highest election turnout rate, yet the majority of whom are struggling to see their issues and needs acted upon and therefore feel a lack of political party identity should be a wakeup call for all political parties.

This is one of the main reasons why the Sikh Manifesto is so important.

The Sikh Manifesto – Concept, Purpose and Journey

The Sikh Network team responsible for drafting the Sikh Manifesto have worked closely with the Sikh community to produce the Sikh Manifesto 2020-2025 which provides politicians and the wider public with a better understanding of the Sikh contribution, as well as the challenges which Sikhs continue to face due mainly to their distinct religious needs and identity. The Sikh Manifesto is about empowering the UK Sikh community to engage with the UK political system and create partnerships with democratic institutions. The Sikh Network will monitor progress against the Sikh Manifesto over the next five years and discuss and agree changes in strategy and approach to help deliver against the issues set out.

The ten-point Sikh Manifesto is unlike the manifestos of the political parties. All Sikh organisations can relate to all or part of the Sikh Manifesto as a briefing document. It is based on the widest possible consensus and collates the most important areas in which challenges remain for British Sikhs and where progress is required.

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This Sikh Manifesto is based on nationwide consultations through meetings and networks and is written with the 12 December 2019 General Election in mind. Some issues can also be raised with members of the assemblies and parliaments of London, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales and with members of the House of Lords and the European Parliament.

The Sikh Manifesto concept has been welcomed and endorsed by leading members of the Sikh community as well as all the major political party leaders. With the Sikh Manifesto we will test the commitment of the main political parties and individual politicians to the British Sikh community, and politically active Sikh organisations like the Sikh Federation (UK) and the Sikh Network may advise Sikhs to vote for certain parties or MPs if they have a good track record in looking after the interests of the Sikhs, or if they are committed to work with Sikhs on points raised in the Sikh Manifesto. Hopefully, it should also promote openness and accountability on the part of those Parliamentary candidates who are seeking Sikh votes to get elected.

The Electoral Commission has highlighted that Sikhs participate in the British voting process more than most other communities. However, to make the Sikh vote count we should strongly bear in mind the prior commitment of the party or the candidate to the issues and concerns raised by the Sikh community through the Sikh Manifesto.

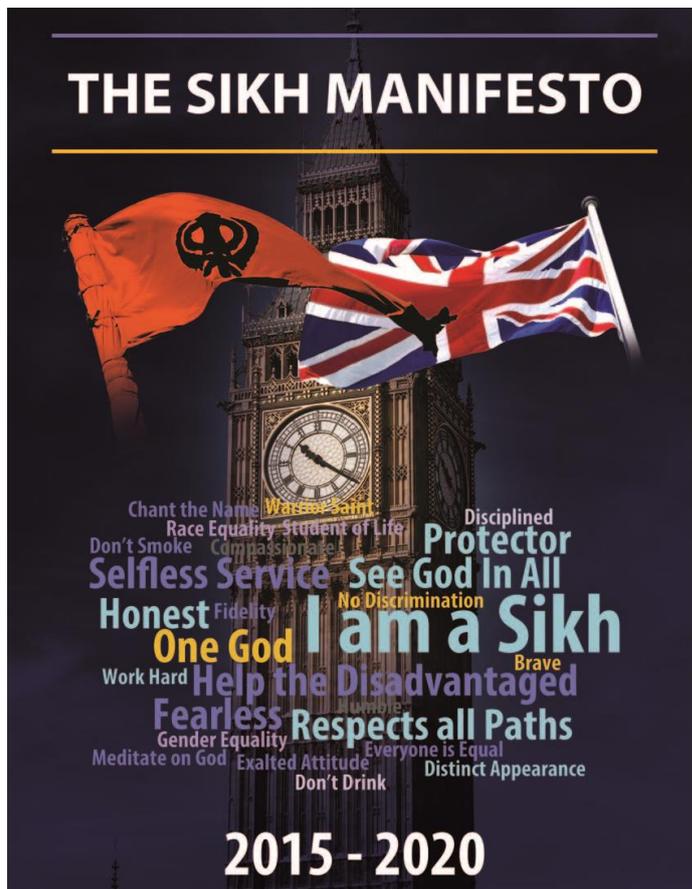
These points reflect the complete spectrum of Sikhs in Britain, not all will agree with every single word. However, all Sikhs can relate to and adopt most or even all of the objectives set out in the Sikh Manifesto and will use it to challenge candidates and political parties to clarify their position prior to the upcoming General Election and judge their backing for Sikh issues after being elected.

The first Sikh Manifesto 2015-2020 was widely viewed as a crucial development reflecting the political maturity of British Sikhs. This second Sikh Manifesto demonstrates a broadening of our reach, in terms of the influencing and lobbying of those in power and a deepening of our roots, in terms of coverage of the grassroots issues of importance to Sikhs.

Achievements of the first Sikh Manifesto (2015-2020)

At the National Sikh Convention in September 2014, it was decided to establish the Sikh Network and launch a Sikh Manifesto for the 2015 General Election so that the main political parties seeking Sikh votes were made aware of Sikh objectives during the next Parliament. The success of the first Sikh Manifesto plus, of course, this second comprehensive manifesto which seeks to further the progress achieved has also resulted in the planned launch of an International Sikh Manifesto in January 2020.

The International Sikh Manifesto will be based largely on the last five Sections of this manifesto to provide



international co-ordination and a global approach on longer term issues that require a worldwide response to be successfully delivered. It will provide a framework that will be used to co-ordinate political activities in different countries to secure international support for issues focused on truth, justice and freedom.

The International Sikh Manifesto will be a high-level document that will be released in several languages, including English, Punjabi, French, Spanish, German and Italian. It will provide a tool or resource for individual Sikh activists from Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations to campaign systematically with individual politicians, political parties and governments in different countries. An international network of Sikh activists from around 45 different countries are expected to come together to co-ordinate global efforts to secure truth, justice and freedom.

Two Sikh MPs - first woman and first turbaned Sikh elected to the House of Commons

The first Sikh Manifesto set out the need for better representation of Sikhs through having both Sikhs elected from parties of all persuasions, and through more effective representation of issues that are important to Sikhs.

2017, was a landmark year for Sikhs, we saw Preet Kaur Gill and Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi elected as MPs to serve Birmingham Edgbaston and Slough respectively in the House of Commons. This dynamic force has furthered Sikh issues more than any other. Both MPs have served their constituency concerns exceptionally well. Also, importantly, both have dispelled any myths of voter bias

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that the political parties often fear by increasing their constituency voter shares for their party, the Labour Party. No other political party in the House of Commons has a Sikh MP, largely due to reluctance to put any of their Sikh candidates into winnable seats.

The Labour Party heeded the advice of the first Sikh Manifesto in several areas, better representation being one. Preet Kaur Gill MP joined the powerful Home Affairs Select Committee and within months became a Shadow Minister for International Development. Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP served on the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee and has made some powerful backbench interventions, including during Prime Minister's Questions. The appeal of both MPs is internationally recognised.

Preet Kaur Gill MP and Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP both supported and recognised the benefits of the Sikh Manifesto and have led on several the issues in Parliament in the last two and half years. There were also a number of Sikh Conservative candidates during the 2017 General Election, but they were less enthusiastic and open about their support for issues in the Sikh Manifesto. Sikhs are highly involved in political activism, it is an important aspect of our faith, and as such can easily identify those who are paying lip service to our concerns.

As political parties devise their election strategies and manifestos, we advise them to take note of the impact of having visible Sikhs serves their party, constituents and having Sikhs in the House of Commons.

The right to possess and carry a large Kirpan

When the Sikh Federation (UK) learnt that the Offence Weapons Bill, if passed, would result in all large Kirpans (defined as those with curved blades over 50cm) being made illegal in terms of sale, possession and use, they immediately contacted Preet Kaur Gill MP, the Chair of the APPG for British Sikhs and sought to work together to resolve the issue for UK Sikhs.

If the Offensive Weapons Bill had become law without change the possession of a large Kirpan even at home could have resulted in imprisonment of up to 1 year as well



as a fine. It is estimated at least 100,000 Sikh households have one or more large Kirpan at home.

Realising the significance of the problem the law change would create for virtually all Sikh families, Preet Kaur Gill MP led a delegation, which included two Vice Chairs, Conservative MP Dominic Grieve and Labour MP Pat McFadden, both former Ministers who were expertly supported by Dabinderjit Singh and Sukhvinder Singh, two of the advisers to the Sikh Federation (UK). The cross-party approach working with experienced members of the Sikh community played a vital part in securing this massive victory.

Following a successful meeting of the delegation with the Home Office Minister, Victoria Atkins, the government itself agreed to table an amendment to the Bill with an appropriate explanatory note specifically referring to the Kirpan. The statutory guidance supporting the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 to be issued after the General Election will include specific and helpful references to the Kirpan.

The Minister and Home Secretary were fully supportive of the need for Sikhs to have the large Kirpan and instructed officials to meet the APPG and make changes. Large Kirpans are used in Anand Karaj ceremonies, in Gatka training and demonstrations, in Nagar Kirtans and other processions, used in Amrit Sanchar ceremonies and displayed in front of Guru Granth Sahib Ji at Gurdwaras and in homes.

This incident of protecting the Sikh identity and of an article of faith, was addressed head on due to the leadership, influence and resolve of a Sikh MP who knew first-hand the significance of classifying large Kirpans as 'weapons' and only for ceremonies as opposed to religious reasons, demonstrating the direct impact of having more effective representation in Parliament.

Code of Practice ready and waiting to be published

One of the ways to address the discrimination faced by Sikhs due to our visible identity is through a comprehensive statutory guidance that covers all the existing pieces of legislation that allow Sikhs to practice their faith both in the workplace and public spaces. The first Sikh Manifesto set out how this could be achieved by developing a Statutory Code of Practice.

The Sikh Network have been working closely with other Sikh organisations in conjunction with public bodies to collectively draft a Code of Practice. The draft Code of Practice meets both current law and best practice. It provides an authoritative, comprehensive and technical guide to the relevant laws. When published, it would be invaluable to lawyers, advocates, HR departments, courts and tribunals, everyone who needs to understand the law in depth, or to apply it in practice. Although the Code of Practice would be an authoritative statement of the law,

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the courts would not be bound by it, but would need to take it into account.

Since the launch of the first Sikh Manifesto much work has taken place by Sikh organisations on developing a Code of Practice which meets the needs of Sikhs who wear the five articles of faith (five Kakaars). Sikh organisations now need to hand the baton over to the UK Government. Given the degree of discrimination experienced by Sikhs, see section 3, the UK Government are urged to launch the Code of Practice as a matter of urgency.

Sikh Sacrifices monument for First World War



The first Sikh Manifesto set out the ambition to establish a memorial to Sikh Soldiers who fought in the First World War. The APPG for British Sikhs Vice Chair, Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP, worked with The National Sikh War Memorial Trust (NSWMT) to galvanise cross party support in creating and maintaining a public war memorial to honour Sikhs in military service of Great Britain, and to educate the public about their role, service and sacrifice.

According to official records, despite only making up less than two percent of the Indian population when the First World War broke out, Sikhs accounted for over 20 percent of the Indian Army. On the Western Front, Sikhs fought and died alongside their fellow comrades, their contribution

was critical to the war and resulted in 14 of 22 Military Crosses awarded to Indian soldiers being awarded to the Sikhs.

The APPG for British Sikhs took on this ambition from the Sikh Manifesto and under Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP's leadership the UK Government agreed to support and fund the monument in January 2018, honouring the 83,000 turbaned Sikh soldiers who gave their lives and more than 109,000 who were injured during the wars. A site next to Admiralty Arch near Trafalgar Square has been allocated that is expected to have a monument with two Sikh soldiers from the First and Second World Wars.

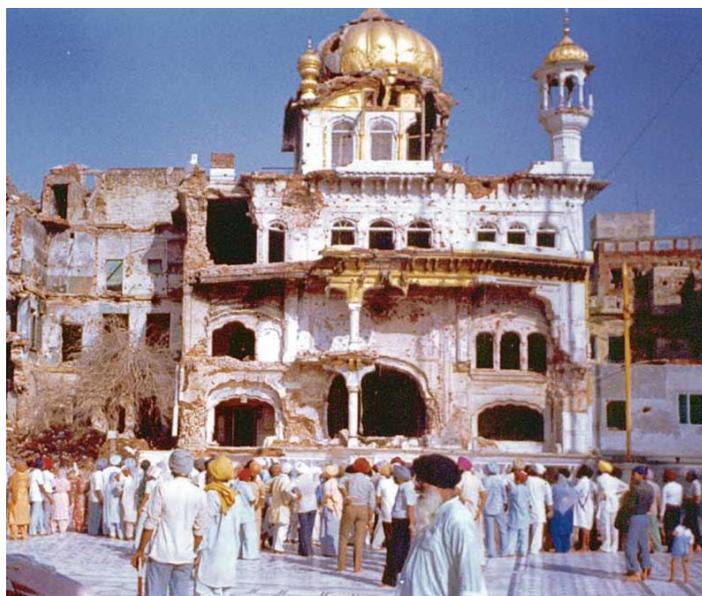
The first Sikh Manifesto's vision and foresight to remember Sikh sacrifices through a permanent reminder in the centre of our capital is being brought to reality. This will provide all Sikhs and others in the wider community a physical legacy to cherish and remember our fallen.

The inclusion of this Sikh Manifesto item also led to the establishment of the Lions of the Great War memorial opposite Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Smethwick that opened a year ago and the Sikh Remembrance Garden in Bristol that opened in April 2019. Other monuments are planned in Leicester and Huddersfield.

Labour Party manifesto commitment in June 2017 and subsequent commitments

In the June 2017 snap General Election, one of the strongest indications of the importance of the Sikh Manifesto released in 2015 was highlighted when the main Labour Party Manifesto pledged to hold an independent public inquiry into the actions of the UK Government in assisting India attack on the Sikh faith's holiest site, in which thousands of pilgrims were massacred in June 1984.

The Labour Party specifically committed to hold an independent public inquiry into the actions of the UK Government as well as into restrictions imposed on British Sikhs in the 1980s. Labour's Race and Faith Manifesto in



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2017 also referred to defending the right of Sikhs to their articles of faith.

Prior to the June 2017 snap election, although the Sikh Manifesto was not reissued the Sikh Federation (UK) issued a five-point plan highlighting four of the Sikh Manifesto items, but also demanding a full apology to the worldwide Sikh community from the British Prime Minister for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in recognition of the 100th anniversary on 13 April 2019, Whilst Theresa May expressed deep regret at what happened and the suffering caused and also described the massacre as a shameful scar it fell short of an apology. The Labour leader put on record a future Labour Prime Minister would make a full apology to the worldwide Sikh community.

Priorities for 2020-2025

Much progress has been achieved since the publication of the first Sikh Manifesto. The continued strong support from British Sikhs demonstrates how vital the manifesto has been on issues of importance to them. What is also clear is that individual MPs and the political system has sat up and taken notice.

Seven of the ten commitments from the first Sikh Manifesto continue to be commitments for this 2020-2025 Sikh Manifesto. This is to provide sustained focus and steadfastness on priority areas until they are fully achieved. Three new commitments are introduced (Section 4, 6 and 7), these have unfortunately arisen as matters of basic human rights violations.

Individual Sikhs, Gurdwara management committees and Sikh organisation representatives are encouraged to read and understand this Manifesto. The aim should be to discuss each of the sections directly with their Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs) from each of the main political parties, in the forthcoming General Election. It is also advised that PPCs be asked to confirm in writing, public statements and video messages on social media their commitment to support the Sikh Manifesto in general and specific sections. This will allow progress to be discussed and tracked with those elected as MPs.

**“Truth is high,
higher still is
truthful living”**

Guru Nanak Dev Ji



SECTION 1- MORE EFFECTIVE REPRESENTATION OF SIKHS IN PARLIAMENT

Build stronger and more effective representation in Parliament of issues that are important to the Sikh community, including an increase in visible Sikh representation in the House of Commons and House of Lords. Parliament should reflect the communities it represents but based on Sikh population demographics there is currently a shortfall of around 60% in the number of Sikh MPs and Lords.

Key priorities:

MPs with large numbers of Sikh constituents need to raise the profile of issues that are important to the Sikh community

All MPs that are elected on 12 December with a sizable number of Sikh constituents should ensure all issues important to the British Sikh community, as set out in this Sikh Manifesto, are raised and acted upon both in Parliament and with the next government. 150 constituencies that have 1,000 or more Sikh constituents have been pinpointed. Those elected in these constituencies are expected to take up Sikh issues.

MPs need to join and strengthen the APPG for British Sikhs

MPs with large numbers of Sikh constituents are expected to join and strengthen the APPG for British Sikhs. Ministers, Parliamentary Private Secretaries or those in Shadow Minister positions are expected to support priority issues the APPG decide to take up.

Political parties need to remove barriers that are preventing more Sikh MPs

Over the next five years the main political parties working with the Sikh community need to self-evaluate and address the barriers that clearly exist in preventing more Sikhs from becoming MPs, especially turban wearing Sikhs. There are currently only two Labour Sikh MPs who were elected in the June 2017 snap election. All other parties however, have no Sikh MPs in their ranks. Based on Sikh population demographics there need to be another five Sikh MPs. Prejudice and racism exist, which makes the rate of progress in selecting and electing Sikhs painfully slow.

Party leaders need to nominate more Sikhs to the House of Lords

There are only four Sikh members of the House of Lords with an increase of only one in the last five years, whereas the Sikh population demographics suggest double the number. The three main political parties, especially the Labour leadership need to address why they have decided not to nominate any Sikhs to the Lords when several

excellent candidates have been suggested. Those appointed to the Lords should be visible Sikhs, well known within the Sikh community and possess the skills, professional background and attributes to be able to make a positive contribution. Those appointed should be role models and send a positive signal to the Sikh community.

Background

The factors that affect Sikh political disadvantage are complex and relate to many different dimensions: socio-economic integration and inequalities, the demographic and spatial distribution of Sikhs; the attitudes of the electorate; the participation and voting behaviour of minorities, and the selection procedures and policies of political parties.

We have focused our priorities for more effective representation of Sikhs in Parliament across two areas:

Raising the profile of Sikhs and taking actions on issues of importance to the Sikh community in Parliament and with the government

With the publication of the first Sikh Manifesto in January 2015, many MPs with large numbers of Sikh constituents who were elected in May 2015 specifically agreed to take up issues detailed in the Sikh Manifesto. It had been hoped the days of relying on a small number of stalwart MPs to represent the Sikh community would be a matter of the past.

Following the snap election in June 2017, Preet Kaur Gill MP was elected as Chair of the APPG for British Sikhs, supported by several Vice Chairs, including Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP. It has been acknowledged by politicians on all sides that they have brought dynamic leadership and valuable, personal insights as British born Sikhs. The APPG has taken the lead on specific issues felt by the Sikh community. However, apart from some notable exceptions there has not been as general an increase in the level of support from MPs as was expected.

Often mass letter writing on the Census issue, Offensive Weapons Bill or the campaign for Jagtar Singh Johal has had to be initiated to get MPs to act on relevant Sikh issues. The Sikh Political Lobbying Network has now been established with thousands of members across the UK able to quickly reach up to 250 MPs.

The UK Sikh Surveys in 2016 and 2019, with nearly 5,000 respondents, have specifically asked Sikhs across the UK about the effectiveness of MPs on Sikh issues. On both occasions nearly three-quarters of all respondents have stated they viewed their MPs as ineffective or not very effective.

We have therefore, pinpointed 150 Parliamentary constituencies belonging to different political parties that have 1,000 or more Sikh constituents where those elected are expected to take up Sikh issues. A balanced scorecard

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is being developed to objectively judge the performance of MPs elected in each of these constituencies that will include reviewing:

- feedback on the performance of individual MPs from Sikh constituents in each of the 150 constituencies via the UK Sikh Survey
- membership and support for the work of the APPG for British Sikhs, including attending important meetings and events
- track record of taking up Sikh issues by raising Parliamentary Questions, speaking in debates, writing to Ministers etc.

Increasing the number of Sikh MPs and Lords in Parliament

In the last Sikh Manifesto, we accurately predicted that following the May 2015 General Election there would be no Sikh MPs. The snap election in June 2017 resulted in two Labour MPs and this was only possible as the NEC chose the candidates. Other political parties neglected to put up Sikh candidates in winnable seats.

The snap election in 2017, elected the most diverse House of Commons to date. It was a landmark moment for Sikhs. The first Sikh woman MP and the first turban wearing Sikh MP entered the House of Commons to serve their respective constituencies of Birmingham Edgbaston and Slough.

Political parties should have a good understanding of their membership and clear policies to show how they are trying to ensure Parliament represents the people it serves and there is equality of opportunity. Britain's diverse multi-cultural society, including the Sikh community, should be sufficiently reflected in the make-up of its Parliament. This is vital for good governance of the nation as it will promote social cohesion and equal political rights of all its citizens.

Sikhs in the UK are increasingly comparing the two Sikh Labour MPs or 0.3% in the Commons with the 18 Sikh MPs or 5% recently elected in Canada. In the UK we can boast of having a turban wearing Sikh MP, but in Canada there are turban wearing Sikh MPs in all three main political parties, one is a party leader and we have turban wearing Ministers, including the Defence Minister. Political parties and the public in Canada appear to be far more appreciative and accepting of turban wearing Sikhs than in the UK. In Canada they had their first turban wearing Sikh MP in 1993, some 24 years before the UK. Our one Sikh woman MP in the UK who became a shadow Minister within months of being elected is overshadowed in terms of numbers by the six in Canada that have nearly 50% fewer MPs in total.

Given the candidates the main political parties have selected in winnable seats for the 12 December 2019 General Election it is a damning indictment that the

political establishment has not done enough in the last five years to ensure there is the possibility of significantly more Sikh MPs despite many excellent Sikh candidates in all the main political parties.

Some outstanding turban wearing Sikhs who would have made ideal MPs in winnable seats with a large local BAME vote have been side-lined or overlooked by the leadership of their parties. An opportunity has been missed that has put visible Sikh identity in British politics back by at least a decade and risks huge damage to traditional party loyalty.

Representation in the House of Lords is more in the hands of the political parties and their leaders as many are now party nominees. Currently there are four Sikhs in the House of Lords, three Conservative and one cross-bencher. Sikhs are hugely under-represented in the Lords while other minorities like Jews, Muslims and Hindus are far better represented with numbers in double figures.

It has been nearly seven years since Lord Tarsem Singh Kang passed away as the one and only Sikh Lord for Labour. Whilst in opposition Labour have had less opportunity to appoint peers, the former and current Labour leaders have nominated and appointed around 25 Labour peers but overlooked Sikhs. Promises have been made by the former and current Labour leader to appoint visible Sikhs to the Lords, but these promises are yet to be honoured.



SECTION 2 – SIKH ETHNIC TICK BOX OPTION IN THE CENSUS 2021 AND SYSTEMATIC COLLECTION OF DATA ON SIKHS BY PUBLIC BODIES

Parliamentarians need to ensure there is the option of a Sikh ethnic tick box in the Census 2021 that will assist public bodies to address equal opportunities and anti-discrimination. Public bodies need to take immediate action to systematically collect data on Sikhs to help make decisions on improvements to services, allocation of resources, and meeting duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Key priorities:

MPs should approve the Census Order to be presented to Parliament in 2020, which the Sikh community expects will include a Sikh ethnic tick box option following their judicial review challenge

At the time of publishing the Sikh Manifesto, a hearing was taking place in the High Court on 12 and 13 November 2019 to consider a judicial review claim brought by the Sikh Federation (UK), supported by over 150 Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations, against the Cabinet Office. The claim requested the court to grant a declaration that it would be unlawful for the Cabinet Office to lay a Census Order before Parliament that excludes the Sikh ethnic group tick box option. The judgement will come a few weeks after the High Court hearing and could come before the 12 December 2019 General Election.

If the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Cabinet Office find a way of avoiding the inclusion of a Sikh ethnic tick box option in the draft Census Order following the High Court judgement, Sikhs will continue to campaign against this injustice and discrimination with the support of MPs. The Cabinet Office Minister responsible has stated it will not be possible to have the draft Census Order amended in Parliament, but this will not stop the Sikh community using all means available to show MPs and the UK Government its disquiet. A large-scale campaign leading up to the Census 2021 encouraging Sikhs to tick “Other” and write “Sikh” if the option of a Sikh ethnic tick box is not made available, will signal the level of dissatisfaction of Sikhs to the ONS and government, and their rejection of the tick box options offered.

MPs elected need to pressure public bodies via the ONS to take immediate action to systematically collect data on Sikhs to help make decisions on improvements to services, allocation of resources, and meeting duties under the Equality Act 2010

On the assumption that the Census Order approved by Parliament in the early part of 2020 includes the option of a Sikh ethnic tick box, MPs will have a good reason to pressure the Cabinet Office to get central government bodies to immediately start collecting data on Sikhs as an

ethnic group. This will allow inclusion of Sikhs in the Prime Minister’s annual Race Disparity Audit and avoid a several year wait until the Census 2021 ethnic group categories become imbedded.

In addition, MPs will want to target the Department for Education, Department for Health, and Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government so schools and other educational establishments, local NHS bodies, and local authorities are able to meet their duties towards Sikhs under the Equality Act 2010. As Sikhs are legally recognised as an ethnic group there is an argument that public bodies should already be collecting and using data on Sikhs for developing policies and making decisions on improvements to service planning and resource allocation. Targeted legal action against public bodies for failing to monitor Sikhs as an ethnic group irrespective of the Census categories for ethnic groups cannot be ruled out.

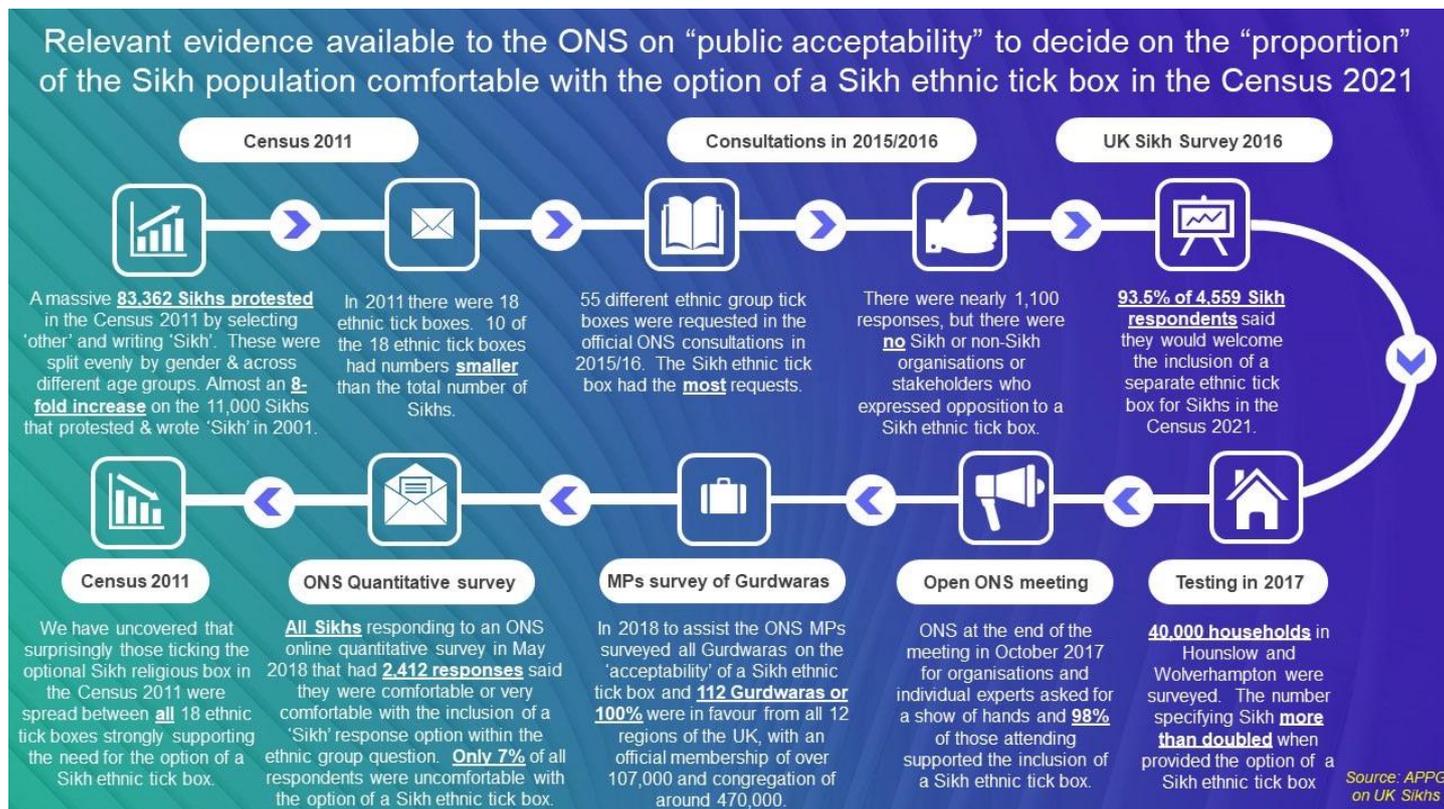
Background

Separate ethnic tick box for Sikhs in the Census 2021

In 1983, the *Mandla v Dowell-Lee* case saw the House of Lords use a set of criteria from the Race Relations Act (1976) (since subsumed into the Equality Act 2010) to define Sikhs as a distinct ethnic group. The criteria used stated that to be a distinct ethnic group, the said group needs to have a long shared history which the group consciously keeps as distinct from other groups and has its own culture and traditions. Supplementary criteria concerning language, geographical origins, literature, and history of persecution were also used to come to the conclusion that Sikhs are a distinct ethnic group. Yet, despite this, the law of the UK is not being implemented in the case of the Census and other official statistics.

The Census ethnic group categories are critical in guiding public bodies on those who need to be monitored for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010. Census data is used as the key barometer for public service planning and allocation of resources. Therefore, Sikhs, as other ethnic groups, need to be counted in order to receive relevant and fair services. The Census 2021 could be the last of its kind. The ONS is researching the use of administrative data to improve the way Census-type statistics can be produced in future. Therefore, the Census 2021 may be the only opportunity to robustly count the number of Sikhs in the UK.

It is often cited that ‘what gets counted gets done’ when we consider why we need a Census or national monitoring processes. Policy-makers currently refer to the Census categories and data as a default position to understand the make-up of the nation. Inaccuracies and omissions in the Census impact more than just getting the figures right for recording purposes, although this in itself is important. The ethnicity question in the Census is a compulsory one unlike the religion question.



In a massive show of protest, in the Census 2011 over 83,000 Sikhs rejected the tick boxes offered for the ethnic group question and ticked “Other” and wrote “Sikh”. The overwhelming evidence collected and made available to the ONS over the last five years on “public acceptability” and the proportion of the Sikh population comfortable with the Sikh ethnic tick box option in the Census 2021 is shown below.

The ONS has accepted that the census data from the optional religious question could significantly under-report the number of Sikhs. 20 million respondents in the UK Census 2011 either chose not to answer the religious question or indicated “no religion”. In 2011, this meant in some local authorities over half the population did not answer the religious question or indicated “no religion”. Conservative estimates suggest over 200,000 Sikhs in the UK may have been under counted in official statistics in 2011.

The trend of answering “no religion”, perversely the first option in the religious question, is expected to continue to increase in the Census 2021 making any data on religion collected much less useful to decision makers. Incomplete and inaccurate information means that the real needs and contributions of individuals and communities are hidden which is to the detriment of those very people who have given so much to the UK.

40,000 public bodies need to monitor Sikhs as a distinct ethnic group

Public bodies are not fully aware of the extent of barriers that Sikhs face as a distinct religio-ethnic community. British Sikhs face obstacles, for example, in securing

employment, progressing into senior jobs, and accessing healthcare, due to their specific needs. It is also difficult to analyse the full contribution of Sikhs, as a community, to economic growth in different sectors. The ONS itself recognises that there is evidence to suggest that Sikhs are experiencing significant disadvantage in several areas of life including employment, housing, health and education. Sikhs are particularly concerned with ensuring accurate data on the Sikh community to inform policies and funding at the local level.

Public bodies monitor ethnicity across all services, whereas religious statistics are rarely used for this purpose as there is a massive problem with completeness of data. Separate Sikh ethnic monitoring should be the basis for government policy and decisions: for allocation of resources and community development programmes through central government departments and agencies and locally delivered services.

MPs should push ONS to update its guide for the collection and classification of ethnic group, national identity and religion data in the UK to recognise Sikhs are an ethnic group as well as a religion. It is imperative that the classification guidance to public bodies states that Sikhs should be measured as an ethnic group in order to deliver better informed services.



SECTION 3 - STATUTORY CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE FIVE KAKAARS (SIKH ARTICLES OF FAITH) AND DASTAAR (SIKH TURBAN)

A Code of Practice has been produced by Sikh organisations in conjunction with government bodies to reflect current law and best practice. The Code takes account of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 and the launch of the Code is awaiting publication of the statutory guidance supporting the Act that covers the Kirpan where consultation ended on 9 October 2019. The next UK Government need to launch the Code of Practice on the five Kakaars and Dastaar to reduce discrimination in the workplace and public spaces, but eventually shift to a Code on a statutory basis if problems persist.

Key priorities:

UK Government launch of the Code of Practice on the five Kakaars and Dastaar in 2020

When Sajid Javid was the Home Secretary he agreed to launch the Code of Practice. Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour leader also approached the Chair of the APPG for British Sikhs to take part in the launch. Others who had agreed to take part in the launch were the Women and Equalities Minister, the Chief Executive of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and senior officials in the Government Equalities Office. The launch of the Code of Practice was delayed primarily due to the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 and associated statutory guidance that has yet to be published. EU Exit and several Ministerial changes have added to the delay.

The plan is for the Code of Practice to be launched by the new UK Government with cross-party support in the first half of 2020. The launch will need to be supported by a campaign to promote the Code and raise awareness. It is hoped the Code of Practice will help **reduce discrimination of Sikhs in the workplace and public spaces**. However, if the Code of Practice needs to be put forward on a statutory basis this will be taken forward with government in the next five years.

Non-statutory guidance for Sikhs and non-Sikhs on Gurdwara protocols, respect and understanding of Sikh religious practices

After the Code of Practice has been launched and published phase two of the project will be to work with government and the APPG for British Sikhs to produce non-statutory guidance on a range of issues including: protocols when visiting Gurdwaras, appropriate terminology so as not to cause offence, respect for Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and Sikh religious ceremonies and practices.

Background

Sikhs have always faced discrimination because of their visible identity, but more and more Sikhs, especially younger Sikhs have since the 300th anniversary of the creation of the Khalsa in April 1999 adopted the five Kakaars and Dastaar. Following 9/11 and heightened security the challenges to the Sikh identity across the globe have increased. In the UK, Sikhs continue to experience problems and discrimination with several of the five Kakaars, the Kesh, Kara and Kirpan as well as the Dastaar.

Sikhs are protected from racial as well as religious discrimination

Sikhs are both an ethnic and a religious group, so they are protected from racial as well as religious discrimination. This principle was decided by the House of Lords (the *Mandla v Dowell-Lee* case [1983] 2 AC 548). There are numerous different pieces of legislation that protect Sikhs from discrimination, these include general equalities and anti-discrimination legislation, i.e. Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998, and some specific legislation that provides for the wearing of the five Kakaars and Dastaar.

The lack of understanding of the above pieces of legislation and the rights of Sikhs to practise their religion has inadvertently led to tensions between the rights of individuals and the rights of organisations and institutions. A number of organisations working with the Sikh community have case studies, to demonstrate where Sikhs have been discriminated against. There have been a number of cases, such as the case of *Watkins-Singh v Aberdare Girls' High School*, where the courts recognised a Sikh's right to wear a Kara at school.

After 9/11 Sikhs in the UK have had increased difficulties, especially regarding the wearing of the Kirpan with a much greater focus on security. These difficulties arose in the workplace and even public spaces, such as supermarkets and shopping centres. A number of buildings operated by government and the private sector also introduced restrictions. Sikhs continue to experience discrimination related to wearing the Kara in schools and the workplace.

Need for a Statutory Code of Practice

The need for a Statutory Code of Practice was first raised in Parliament in 2005 following increased difficulties for Sikhs following the 9/11 attack and heightened security measures. In 2010, the EHRC produced non-statutory 'Guidance on the wearing of Sikh Articles of Faith in the workplace and public spaces'. This was a helpful step forward in official recognition of the Sikh religious identity in the UK. Whilst the guidance has provided clarity and promoted greater understanding it has not prevented Sikhs from repeatedly experiencing discrimination.

Progress in the last 5 years

In December 2016, a roundtable discussion was held between officials from several Government Departments and representatives from the Sikh community, facilitated by the Sikh Network. It was suggested by the Government Equalities Office that with the focus on EU Exit it would be better if the guidance developed by the EHRC were updated, as there had been several new pieces of legislation, since it was first published. This could then be released and endorsed by the government.

The EHRC was approached and confirmed that they did not have the resources to update the guidance, but would support the Sikh community updating the guidance. The guidance was drafted with direct input from half a dozen Sikh organisations, facilitated by the Sikh Network. The draft was then circulated to around 25 recognised Sikh organisations, such as the Sikh Missionary Society UK, for comment before being shared with around a dozen government departments and other public bodies to check for factual accuracies or any omissions to produce a final draft.

The delay in launching the Code of Practice has been primarily due to the need to tackle the Offensive Weapons Bill that included clauses directly impacting on Sikhs. This included 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. Simply possessing the large Kirpan would have meant virtually all Sikh families being criminalised and those found in possession of a large Kirpan facing a prison sentence of up to one year.

Sikh organisations successfully worked with the APPG for British Sikhs and Home Office Ministers to introduce the phrase “religious reasons” into law with regards to the sale, use and possession of the Sikh Kirpan. It took almost a year for the Offensive Weapons Bill to receive Royal Assent in May 2019. In August 2019, the Home Office published draft statutory guidance with specific references to the small and larger Kirpan and completed consultations on 9 October 2019. The statutory guidance has yet to be published but is expected to include useful references to the Kirpan that will be incorporated into the Code of Practice.

Eventually what may be required is the Code to become statutory, which will cover all existing pieces of legislation that allow Sikhs to practice their faith both in the workplace and public spaces. This will raise awareness of the rights of Sikhs to practise and follow their faith. It will also provide useful information for balancing the needs of individuals and service users with those of employers and public services within the UK legal framework.

Non-statutory guidance for Sikhs and non-Sikhs on Gurdwara protocols, use of appropriate

terminology and respect and understanding of Sikh religious ceremonies and practices

Many non-Sikhs visit the Gurdwara and participate in Guru Ka Langar (free food kitchen). It is estimated over 5,000 free meals are served to non-Sikhs each week or more than a quarter of a million each year. There are also times when representatives of various public bodies may need to visit a Gurdwara and need to be aware of the various protocols that must be observed.

Official, non-statutory guidelines developed between the UK Government, the APPG for British Sikhs and the Sikh community would be helpful in raising awareness and avoiding any difficulties. The guidelines could cover etiquette to be observed when visiting the Gurdwara and would include the following points:

- Those unable to enter a Gurdwara as they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or are in possession of cigarettes or tobacco
- What you need to do when entering the Gurdwara
- How to respect Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (the Sikh holy scriptures)
- Participating in Guru Ka Langar
- Modest dress code

Increasingly, politicians and officials are becoming more familiar with using correct terminology, such as Kakaars, Kirpan, Dastaar and even Sri Harmandir Sahib Ji. However, a guide of correct terminology will be produced as part of the non-statutory guidance, so reference is correctly made to Gurdwaras, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and other phrases so no offence is caused to Sikhs through ignorance.

Another area that will be covered by the guidance that has caused immense confusion is the distinction between the Anand Karaj (the Sikh religious wedding ceremony that can only be between two Sikhs) and interfaith marriage that is one of personal choice and nothing to do with the Sikh faith.



SECTION 4 – HATE CRIMES TARGETING SIKHS AND OUR RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

The UK Government need to formally recognise “Anti-Sikh hate” that became a worldwide phenomenon after 9/11 and view it in a similar fashion to Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. “Anti-Sikh hate” is widespread and based on ignorance and misinformation about the Sikh identity and Sikh way of life. Politicians, parts of government and civil servants need to understand why some of their actions towards Sikhs are increasingly viewed as offensive, xenophobic and unacceptable. These two issues need to be addressed first, as only then will it be possible for government and the police to be taken seriously in addressing the massive under-reporting of Sikh hate crimes and how “Anti-Sikh hate” can be confronted.

Key priorities:

Recognition of “Anti-Sikh hate” in a similar fashion to Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

“Anti-Sikh hate” is hostility to, hatred of, or prejudice against Sikhs and the Sikh way of life. In part it stems from mistaken identity or ignorance, but it is exacerbated by extremely poor media reporting sometimes confusing Sikhs with Muslims. At other times it is institutionalised, deliberate and pre-meditated from those that are part of the establishment and who wish to control the Sikh minority from asserting their rights or prevent them from criticising or exposing government. **The UK Government has intentionally been almost entirely focused on Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and deliberately ignoring “Anti-Sikh hate”.**

Actions of politicians, parts of government and civil servants towards Sikhs increasingly viewed as offensive, xenophobic and unacceptable

There are numerous examples from recent years where Ministers, parts of the government and civil servants have taken unnecessary negative actions towards Sikh community representatives for raising legitimate concerns that at best can be described as offensive and unacceptable. These actions demonstrate a prejudice that must be considered as “Anti-Sikh hate”. There have however, also been exceptions where Ministers have appreciated the issues raised and responded with positive actions to try and solve problems. Unfortunately, some civil servants’ xenophobic views and attitudes have dominated preventing progress on several key areas of concern. After the General Election there will be an opportunity for an urgent paradigm shift in the relationship between Ministers, officials and Sikh community representatives to restore Sikh community confidence that is at an all-time low.

Addressing the massive under-reporting of Sikh hate crimes and how “Anti-Sikh hate” can be confronted

In the UK Sikh Survey 2016, the largest survey of its kind with over 4,500 Sikh respondents, more than 1 in 5 (or 21%) asserted they had experienced a hate crime in the last 12 months. This suggested Sikhs may experience over 100,000 hate crimes. However, hate crime data suggested only a very tiny fraction, 1 in 1,000, are reported and registered as Sikh hate crimes by the police. The latest UK Sikh Survey that is ongoing and whose results will be released just before the General Election suggests the 21% that experienced a hate crime in the last 12 months in 2016 has grown to over 30% in 2019.

Background

The phenomenon of attacks and hate towards Sikhs has become a massive issue worldwide since the 9/11 terror attack, especially for Sikh men with turbans and beards. Whenever a terror incident takes place those that look different are often subject to racism. If an incident happens in the UK there is a spike in hate crimes and Sikh Gurdwaras have also been targeted. The colour of a persons’ skin is one important aspect, but when you combine this with uncut hair i.e. beard and a turban, Sikh men have become targets through what has rightly or wrongly become known as “mistaken identity”.

“Anti-Sikh hate” has not been adequately acknowledged by the UK Government

Even after racism and race-related hate crime was unleashed during the 2016 UK EU membership referendum Sikhs were barely mentioned in the government’s plan for tackling hate crime, [Action Against Hate](#), that was published in July 2016. Subsequently, it emerged later in the year that 10 Downing Street had removed from the plan a case study of the attempted beheading of a Sikh dentist in a racially-motivated machete revenge attack by far-right extremist, Zack Davies for the murder of Lee Rigby by Islamic extremists as the original case study was deemed inconsistent with government priorities on hate experienced by Muslims, Jews and Christians.

The government was criticised by several Sikh organisations and the faith Minister repeatedly promised to Sikh representatives that the refreshed hate crime action plan to be issued two years later would not make the same mistake. However, the faith Minister was left embarrassed when more senior Ministers advised by officials decided to repeat the mistake by focusing simply on Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism.

Sikh hate crimes being reported have increased by 60% in the last 12 months without government support to increase reporting

The most recent hate crime data published by the Home Office in mid-October 2019 shows hate crimes reported are up 10%, but Sikh hate crimes reported have increased by a massive 60% in the last 12 months. The recent increased reporting of hate crimes has been achieved by

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Sikh community organisations like the Sikh Network and Sikh Federation (UK) raising awareness and encouraging reporting to the police.

There has been no real input or resources dedicated by government or the police directed towards Sikhs to increase reporting of hate crimes. Instead, government resources have approached Tell Mamma to increase hate crime reporting linked to Islamophobia and the Community Security Trust (CST) to increase hate crime reporting linked to Anti-Semitism. Tell Mama has received over £1 million since 2012 and the CST receives annual funding of £13.4 million from government as part of the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant that in part addresses the reporting of Anti-Semitic hate crimes.

Government has unacceptably been sitting on resources for almost 2 years aimed at targeting increased reporting of Sikh hate crimes

Following considerable pressure in January 2017 the government appeared to be making its first effort at correcting the lack of attention to Sikh hate crime reporting. Sajid Javid as the Communities Secretary announced that the government would be funding a programme aimed at improving the reporting of hate crimes by Sikhs and Hindus with a proportion of the £375,000 grant allocated to True Vision, the police's online portal for reporting hate crimes.

Earlier this year the Sikh Network following a hate crime workshop with government officials in February 2019 submitted a proposal at their request for very modest government funding to support gathering of data on Sikh hate crimes, the reasons for under-reporting, and increased reporting via the UK Sikh Survey 2019 that has a specific focus on Sikh hate crimes. The government responded to say it had no resources to support the Sikh Network, which then continued its work without government support.

However, in a meeting in July 2019 between True Vision and representatives from several Sikh organisations, True Vision confirmed they had not used any of the funds allocated for the Sikh community, whilst a few months earlier the Sikhs has been told by MHCLG there were no resources available.

Data emerging from the UK Sikh Survey 2019 suggests government need to have a major rethink on reporting of Sikh hate crimes

Apart from the increase in the number of Sikhs experiencing hate crime increasing from 21% in 2016 to 30% in 2019 other alarming statistics are emerging from the UK Sikh Survey 2019. These require the government and the police to have a major rethink. 80% of Sikhs that have experienced hate crimes have responded to indicate they have not reported these to the police. 9 out of 10 said this was because it was either a "waste of time" or "no

positive outcome was expected". More worryingly, 90% of the 1 in 5 of respondents that have indicated they have reported hate crimes are not showing up in police crime records.



**Number of Sikhs
experiencing hate crime
is increasing from 21% in
2016 to 30% in 2019**

SECTION 5 – ADDITIONAL STATE FUNDED SIKH FAITH SCHOOLS OR ACADEMIES

Central and local government need to do much more to support the formation of Sikh faith schools or academies that are some of the best performing schools in the UK, are renowned for their good results, and are being heavily oversubscribed. Around 7,000 or over one-third of all state-funded schools in England and Wales are faith schools, but there are only 13 or 0.2% that are Sikh faith schools. In comparison, there are almost ten times as many Jewish schools at around 120, although the Sikh population is 60% higher. In recent years, the number of Sikh faith schools or academies being established has significantly slowed and many Sikh parents are unable to send their children to a Sikh faith school.

Key priority:

There is a need for additional state funded Sikh faith schools or academies so more Sikh parents can send their children to a Sikh faith school

With only 13 Sikh faith schools around 95% of Sikh parents are being denied the right to have their children educated in line with the principles of the Sikh faith. In comparison, there are very many Church of England, Roman Catholic and Jewish schools that most parents from these faiths have a genuine choice of whether or not to send their children to a school of their faith.

Background

Faith schools make a significant contribution to the educational system. Many are the best performing schools in the country. Parents of all faiths value these schools for the quality of education and for their strong values.

The UK's first Sikh faith school was established as an independent school in 1993 in Hayes and joined the state-maintained sector in 1999. There are currently around 7,000 state faith schools or one-third of all schools. However, there are only 13 or 0.2% that are Sikh faith schools. In comparison there are almost ten times as many Jewish schools at around 120, although the Sikh population is 60% higher.

The number of Sikh schools would have been even smaller had the community not benefited from the free school academy initiative that was launched in 2010. This initiative accounts for the majority of the current 13 Sikh faith and ethos schools established in the UK. The Sikh community being a minority community has faced a number of prejudices and other challenges to establish Sikh faith schools. Central Government, MPs and Local Government must appreciate these challenges and work together in the next five years to deliver more schools particularly in areas

where the demand is high such as Sandwell, Leicester, Gravesend, Ealing and Southampton.

Sikh faith and ethos schools are some of the best performing schools in the UK, they are renowned for their good results, and are being oversubscribed due to strong community engagement. Sikh faith schools support the nurturing of pupils personally, socially and academically to achieve their full potential through promoting high standards of behaviour, underpinned by a strong pastoral system. Education has been the foundation of the Sikh faith, as the literal translation of the word 'Sikh' is a lifelong learner. The Sikh Gurus expressed that the spiritual and secular life should coexist. For Sikhs, education not only prepares students for work and life in society, but also supports spiritual growth. Education is understood by Sikhs to raise aspirations and personal standards, encourage self-awareness and humility, and inspire all to seek a greater purpose in life.

Sikh faith and ethos schools are based on the core teachings of the Sikh faith which promotes inclusivity and equality for all human beings

Sikh faith schools are based on the key principle of treating others in the same way we would like to be treated ourselves. According to Sikh religious philosophy the Divine spark is within all human beings, so it does not make sense to regard oneself as being better than others. We are all the same, according to Sikh teachings, regardless of background, creed, gender or caste. The Sikh faith promotes equality in the most practical of all areas of life.

The all-inclusive policy of Sikh faith and ethos schools is based on the egalitarian principles of the Sikh faith. It is clearly portrayed through the fact that the Sikh place of worship, the Gurdwara, is open to all. The distribution of karah prasad (a sweetmeal) and langar (free food kitchen) in the Gurdwara highlight that all visitors to the Gurdwara are equal. Hence, Sikh values within a school reflect Sikhi enshrined principles of liberty, fraternity and equality which ensure no discrimination takes place in respect of gender, faith or ethnicity. The Sikh Scriptural authority, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, is the only world scripture that contains the teachings from contributors of more than one faith. In this respect, Sikh ethos is positive towards claims of truth in all faiths. It is truly inclusivist in acknowledging that all religious paths lead to the same goal. Hence many Sikhs are involved in interfaith matters around the globe.

Sikh faith and ethos schools serve the wider community and are not limited to enrolling Sikh students alone. The core values in Sikh ethos schools are assimilated within the British values of wider society

THE SIKH MANIFESTO

The philosophical foundation of Sikh faith and ethos schools is based on the tenets of Sikhi. These encourage good citizenship through the principle of Sarbat da Bhalla which translates into considering the welfare of humanity as a whole. Equality, integrity and hard work are central to the Sikh way of life.

These values ensue from three fundamental concepts in Sikhi which ensure that Sikhs assimilate within wider society as good citizens. The Sikh concept of Nam Japna (meditation on the Name of God) encourages self-reflection and mental well-being. The Sikh concept of Kirt Karo (hard and honest work) guides Sikh faith/ethos schools to place emphasis on every child to work to the best of their ability through a nurturing and encouraging environment. The Sikh concept of Vand ke Shako (to share) encourages Sikhs to share knowledge, skills, wealth and other resources for the betterment of the wider society, both Sikh and non-Sikh. The concept of the unity of God according to Sikh teachings is one which sees the world and every material aspect of creation as existing within the Divine.

These principles also extend to the wider community by encouraging parents to become fully involved with the life of Sikh ethos schools through both curricular and extra-curricular activities.

There are fewer Sikh faith and ethos schools than the schools of other faiths

The British Sikh community needs further support in opening Sikh ethos schools. Sikhs, as a community, proudly assert their British Sikh identity which allows the assimilation of both British as well as Sikh values in the everyday lives of Sikhs in Britain.

Sikh faith and ethos schools welcome support from public funding to ensure that teaching is high quality, which in turn promotes high moral values amongst pupils. Sikh ethos schools accept pupils of all faiths as well as pupils who profess no faith. The emphasis in Sikh ethos schools is to promote equality of learning for every pupil.



SECTION 6 – RELIGIOUS FREEDOMS AND RIGHTS OF MINORITIES IN INDIA WITH A RISE IN HINDU EXTREMISM AND RESTRICTIONS ON SIKHS PRACTISING THEIR FAITH ACROSS THE GLOBE

The UK Government needs to tackle the support of Indian Hindu nationalist groups and their sister organisations based in UK. These groups are responsible for an organised campaign of alienation against Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, Jains, low-caste Hindus and tribal communities in India. There are numerous cases of Hindu extremism in the form of harassment, intimidation and violence against minority groups. The UK Government should work, on the international stage, with other countries to address this rise of Hindu extremism in India (Hindutva) that is a major threat to global stability.

Religious freedoms also apply to all across the globe. Sikhs are a religious minority in India, the UK, Canada, the USA and every other country of the world. As such, they face widespread discrimination and violent attacks because of their visible identity. British Sikhs expect the UK Government to work with them to lead on educating and assisting governments to respect the religious freedoms of Sikhs.

Key priorities:

MPs need to urge the UK Government to work with other countries to urgently address the rise of Hindu extremism in India (Hindutva). They also need to curtail UK-based aid organisations who are funding Hindu extremist organisations in India.

Over the last decade, conditions for religious minorities in India have deteriorated and crimes committed against them are not being adequately accounted for or prosecuted. Prime Minister Narendra Modi seldom makes statements decrying mob violence, and certain members of his political party have affiliations with Hindu extremist groups and use inflammatory language about religious minorities publicly.

MPs need to push the UK Government to work with Sikh community representatives to lead internationally on educating and assisting governments to respect the religious freedoms of Sikhs.

Five years ago, the Sikh Manifesto in this area focused on religious freedoms for Sikhs living in France and Belgium. The issue of religious freedoms of Sikhs is now a worldwide phenomenon, especially in the post 9/11 era. In the UK Sikhs have successfully campaigned for their rights and are constantly on the guard against ignorant officials and addressing media bias. The EU referendum result in 2016 has however changed the UK influence with respect to countries in mainland Europe. Nonetheless, there is an

opportunity for Sikh community representatives to work with the UK Government to promote religious freedoms of Sikhs across the globe when it is developing new relationships.

Background

India's history since partition is that the central government or state governments have encouraged mob violence against religious minorities. Most notably we have had the Sikh Genocide in November 1984, extra-judicial killing of thousands of Sikhs in the ten years that followed and the Gujarat massacre of Muslims in 2002. Investigations and prosecutions of those involved in large-scale violence have been ineffective or absent.

The Supreme Court of India and fact-finding commissions have noted common characteristics and causes of such violence, including incitement to violence against religious minorities by politicians or religious leaders. Crimes remain unsolved and there has been no proper due process, accountability or justice for victims of largescale attacks.

Role of Hindutva/Hindu extremist organisations

A multifaceted campaign by Hindu nationalist groups to alienate non-Hindus or lower-caste Hindus is a significant contributor to the rise of religious violence and persecution. Religious and other minorities who have been targeted by this campaign, face challenges ranging from acts of violence or intimidation, to the loss of political power, limits to accessing education, housing, and employment.

Groups such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sang (RSS), Sangh Parivar and Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) in India have expanded the ideology of Hindutva, or "Hinduness," which has three pillars - common nation, race, and culture with a singular focus on the rights of Hindus. Early leaders of the RSS wrote how they were inspired by Nazi Germany. V.D Savarkar, who is credited with coining the term 'Hindutva' refers to the RSS's vision of India as a Hindu only state (the Hindu Rashtra), claimed that "Germany had every right to resort to Nazism, and Italy to Fascism'. He goes on to liken India's Muslims to "Jews in Germany."

The Hindutva movement points to the rise in the Muslim population from constituting 10 percent of the national population in 1951 to 14 percent in 2011. Which in their view necessitates "mitigation" against the growing Muslim community. While some Hindutva groups want greater influence of Hindu principles in the state's decision-making process, more extreme elements have stated they would like to see all non-Hindus expelled, killed, or converted to Hinduism.

Some members of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) often described as the political arm of the RSS have known affiliations with Hindu extremist groups and have used discriminatory language about religious minorities.

SECTION 7 – RELEASE OF JAGTAR SINGH JOHAL AND PERMANENT AND UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF OTHER SIKH POLITICAL PRISONERS FROM INDIAN JAILS

The UK Government must use all powers available, including action through the United Nations, to secure the release and return to the UK of Jagtar Singh Johal, a British national who in November 2017 was abducted and tortured by Indian police and is being held in an Indian jail awaiting trial with no substantial evidence presented against him in over 140 court appearances. The UK Government also need to work with other countries to urge the Indian authorities to action the permanent and unconditional release of all Sikh political prisoners that have been held in Indian jails, some for over 25 years, for their resistance to the state-sponsored Sikh Genocide of 1984.

Key priorities:

Release and return to the UK of British national Jagtar Singh Johal

It is unacceptable that Jagtar Singh Johal continues to be held in an Indian jail. MPs elected in the General Election need to join Jagtar's MP from West Dunbartonshire, currently Martin Docherty-Hughes and the APPG for British Sikhs in pressuring the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Indian authorities to demand Jagtar be released and reunited with his family in Scotland.

Permanent and unconditional release of all Sikh political prisoners being held in Indian jails

Sikh political prisoners held in Indian jails is an issue that Sikhs have been raising with MPs and the UK Government for the last 20 years with the most notable case being that of Professor Devinderpal Singh Bhullar. Many Sikh political prisoners have completed their sentences, but they remain in Indian jails whilst the Indian authorities hold them for political reasons and the present Modi-led BJP government use them as political pawns to try and silence Sikh voices in the Diaspora calling for justice and Sikh independence.

Background

The issue of Sikh political prisoners is one that the Sikh community across the globe has been raising for decades. The case of Jagtar Singh Johal, a young British national, Sikh activist that no one had heard of until November 2017, who was abducted and tortured by Indian police and remains in jail without conviction, has once again highlighted the plight of Sikh political prisoners.

Many long-standing MPs will be familiar with the case of Professor Devinderpal Singh Bhullar who was illegally deported from Germany in 1995 and was sentenced to death upon his return to India in a highly controversial

judgement where the presiding judge actually ruled he was innocent. Following a 13-year campaign his death penalty was finally commuted in 2014 in part, as he was suffering from schizophrenia. Prisoners like him remain in Indian jails and at best are released for short periods on parole for a few weeks but then forced to return to prison.

The case of Jagtar Singh Johal

On 4 November 2017, British citizen Jagtar Singh Johal (Jaggi) was bagged and abducted from the streets of Punjab, India by plain clothed police officers in broad daylight, whilst shopping with his newlywed wife. For the first ten days Jagtar's exact location was unknown, Punjab police (Indian authorities) had told the family that he was in Faridkot, however in actuality he was being held in a remote police station in a different area. The UK Government were also not informed about Jagtar's whereabouts during this period.

During this time, Jaggi was subject to third degree torture, which included beatings, electrocution, and having his legs stretched beyond their limits. The following is an excerpt from a hand-written letter by Jagtar explaining the torture he was subject to:

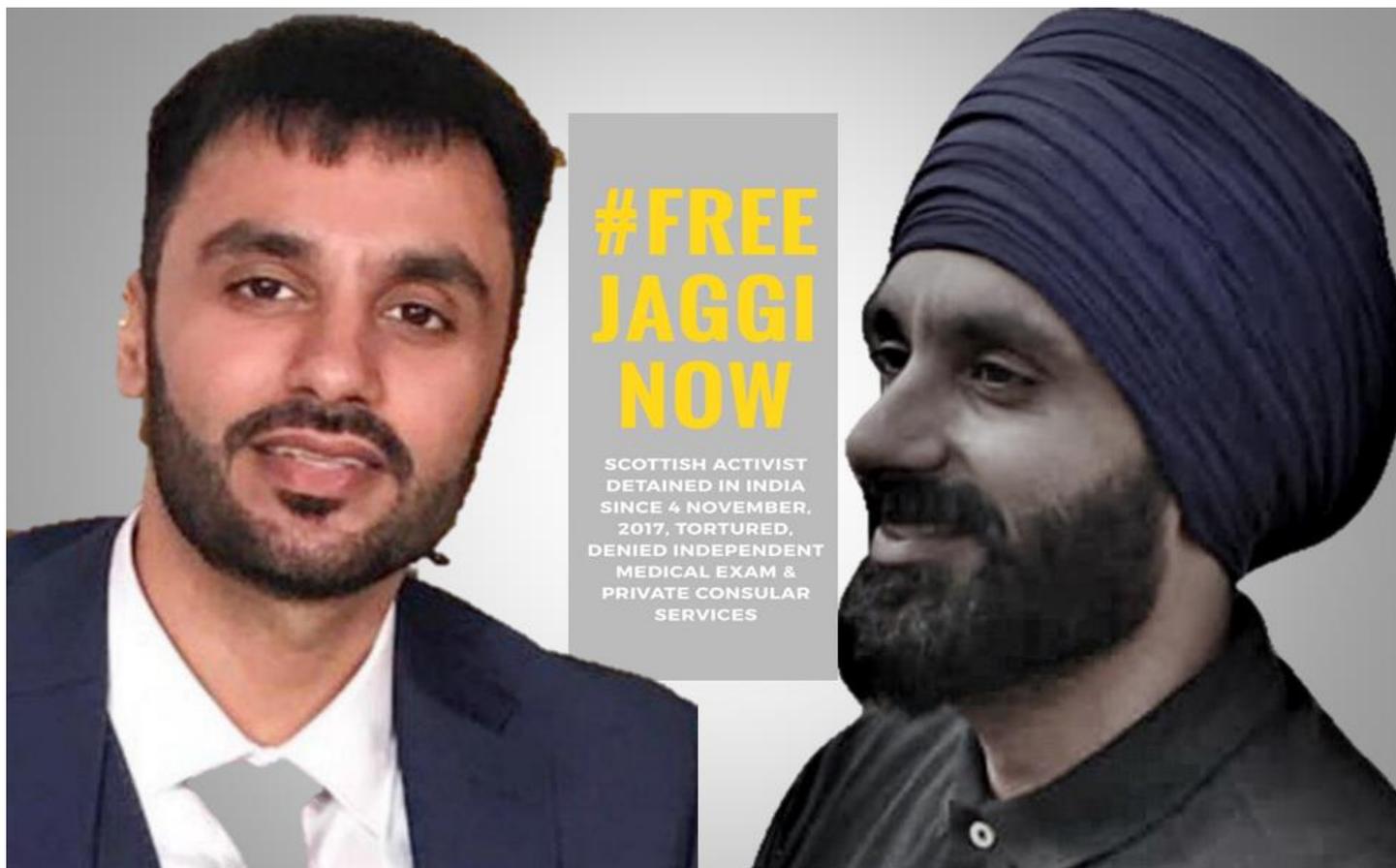
“Electric shocks were administered by placing the crocodile clips on my ear lobes, nipples and private parts. Multiple shocks were given each day... I was left unable to walk and had to be carried out of the interrogation room. Since then I have had problems urinating.”

Within days of his abduction senior officials in Punjab held a press conference declaring that Jagtar was guilty of being involved in “targeted killings”. The Indian authorities labelled Jagtar guilty prior to any trial taking place and subjected him to a “trial by media”.

More than two years later no conviction has been handed down and there is only one on-going trial. Several other cases are still at pre-trial preliminary hearing stages and no official charge has been framed. There have been over 106 pre-trial preliminary hearings and over 34 trial hearings, in which no evidence has been produced against Jagtar.

The Sikh community has played an active role in creating an international awareness **#FreeJaggiNow** campaign and written thousands of letters to over 250 MPs. The campaign has seen supporters from around the globe, including members of the APPG for British Sikhs and politicians from Canada commenting on the issues raised in Jagtar's case. Jagtar's MP Martin Docherty-Hughes has used every opportunity to raise his case in Parliament and meet with Ministers to keep up the pressure.

Within days of launching the campaign, the case of Jagtar Singh Johal was discussed in Parliament, with the former Prime Minister, Theresa May commenting on the case and the, then Foreign Minister, Rory Stewart, taking a stance that if a British national had been tortured then Britain would take “extreme action” however, since then the



Government has been unsuccessful in intervening or ensuring Jagtar's release from prison.

The UK Government need to continue to push for an investigation into the allegations of torture. Jagtar has been arbitrarily held for over two years without charge and his basic human rights as a British national have been violated by the Indian authorities. This raises much wider issues and all MPs with Sikh constituents must pressure the UK Government to intervene and work with other countries and the United Nations that has taken up his case, to ensure that Jagtar is released and returned to the UK as soon as possible.

Permanent and unconditional release of all Sikh political prisoners being held in Indian jails

Sikh political prisoners who resisted the state-sponsored Sikh Genocide in 1984 and campaigned for a Sikh homeland still languish in Indian jails and some have been held for over 25 years. Although many of the Sikh political prisoners have long completed the sentences handed down to them, they remain in Indian jails whilst the Indian authorities hold them for political reasons.

Many Sikh organisations have been advocating for the release of Sikh political prisoners and in recent years there have also been several high-profile campaigns involving hunger strikes that have resulted in some releases under certain conditions. The Sikh political prisoners have under the current Modi-led BJP government, with its alliance with the Badal-led Shiromani Akali Dal, become political pawns

used to try and silence Sikh voices in the Diaspora calling for justice and Sikh independence.

There are currently dozens of high-profile Sikh political prisoners, including one on death row, 20 lifers, 8 senior citizens whose health has deteriorated, and many others held in various states across India. The list is maintained by leading human rights lawyers in India and does not include youth detained in recent years for advocating for a Sikh homeland.

By continuing to detain Sikh political prisoners that have completed their sentences this becomes a violation of the individual's human rights and the UK Government should accordingly be requested by MPs to intervene to ensure their release. It is imperative that the UK Government work with other countries to take a firm stand on the permanent and unconditional release of all Sikh political prisoners.



SECTION 8 – INDEPENDENT PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO THE ACTIONS OF THE UK GOVERNMENT AND ITS’ MOTIVATIONS FOR ANTI-SIKH MEASURES IN THE 1980S IN THE UK PRE AND POST THE 1984 SIKH GENOCIDE

An independent judge-led public inquiry is required to investigate the UK Government’s advice and assistance to the Indian authorities in planning a military attack on the Sikhs’ holiest shrine in Amritsar in June 1984. There is a need for the inquiry to restore wider community confidence by establishing the facts and acknowledging the mistakes that were made in giving controversial advice and assistance that were to have been kept secret. The inquiry would also investigate the range of anti-Sikh measures taken in the UK in the 1980s pre and post the 1984 Sikh Genocide to restrict the democratic freedoms of the minority British Sikh community.

Key priority:

An independent judge led public inquiry is necessary to establish the facts, restore community confidence and learn from the mistakes that were made that should never be repeated

The details of the specific military advice given has still not been revealed. The Conservative Government has refused all requests to make the SAS officer’s report public suggesting there is something to hide. An independent judge-led inquiry will establish the reasons, including commercial interests, for the actions of the UK Government in providing advice and assistance to the Indian authorities in planning a military attack on Sri Harmandir Sahib (often referred to as the Golden Temple Complex) that led to the massacre of thousands of innocent Sikh pilgrims. In the June 2017 snap election, the Labour Party included this commitment in its main manifesto and is expected to do so again.

The Sikh Federation (UK) in November 2017 published the [“Sacrificing Sikhs”](#) investigative report based on around half the papers that the government has been prepared to release to date. The report summarises the anti-Sikh measures the UK Government took in the 1980s. A Freedom of Information tribunal ruled against the Cabinet Office in June 2018 and declared a very high public interest and concluded the internal review by the Cabinet Secretary ordered by David Cameron in January 2014 was rushed and limited in scope. The tribunal considered the Sacrificing Sikhs report and the ruling against the Cabinet Office provided further evidence of the need for an independent judge led public inquiry.

Background

In January 2014, top secret government papers were accidentally released to the National Archives under the

30-year rule. They revealed that a British special forces officer visited Amritsar in February 1984 to advise the Indian army ahead of an attack on Sri Harmandir Sahib and the surrounding complex in which thousands of pilgrims were massacred.

The then Prime Minister David Cameron hastily commissioned an in-house review by his Cabinet Secretary which claimed that the British advice was an isolated incident that had limited impact on the subsequent attack. The Sikh Federation (UK) raised serious concerns on limitations of the in-house review before it was published and presented to Parliament in February 2014.

The period of the review conducted by Sir Jeremy Heywood was intentionally selected for the period December 1983 to June 1984 to allow it to overlook a considerable amount of context which clearly demonstrates the paramount importance of arms sales to India in the build up to Operation Blue Star. In February 2014, Heywood downplayed the situation and concluded that the “military advice was a one-off”, a position repeated by Number 10. This has now been shown to be untrue as the in-house review was not as rigorous or thorough as claimed, and Parliament and the wider public have been misled.

Sacrificing Sikhs investigative report based on the government’s own papers

There were inherent limitations with the in-house review as it was deliberately rushed and too narrowly focused. The Conservative government that has been in power since 2014 is understandably reluctant to investigate Britain’s role in India’s repression of Sikhs in the 1980s. The [“Sacrificing Sikhs”](#) report produced by Phil Miller for the Sikh Federation (UK), provides evidence that raises serious concerns about the veracity of the UK Government’s official narrative. This report is not an attempt to 're-write history' rather, it is the Conservative government itself, through its ongoing censorship, who seems to be distorting and manipulating history to suit its own ends.

Despite warnings a year earlier of disastrous consequences and a “blood bath”, Margaret Thatcher sent an SAS officer to advise on attacking the Sikhs’ holiest site. In April 1983 the British High Commissioner Sir Robert Wade-Gery warned the UK government of the disastrous consequences of “any attempt by the government to use force to enter the Golden Temple precincts.” Yet within a year of a warning of a “blood bath”, Margaret Thatcher had sent a special forces officer to advise the Indian army on how to attack the holy site and demonstrated Britain’s

complete lack of sensitivity and support for a military solution.

Furthermore, the review conducted by Sir Jeremy Heywood was incomplete and rushed despite claims that many thousands of files had been reviewed. The FCO files released on 20 July 2017 show in correspondence from March 1985 that the British Army advised the Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army, General Vaidya who planned Operation Blue Star in June 1984. The March 1985 letter shows he received a confidential briefing from the British Army earlier in 1984 about counterinsurgency and internal security equipment to help deal with domestic unrest from Sikhs in Punjab. This was deliberately missed by Heywood in his review.

The legacy of a British involvement was not limited to 1984 however. The conclusions reached in the report inevitably diverge from the official narrative, precisely because it considers facts that the government wanted to remain hidden at the time, and still do to this day. Extensive research by the Sikh Federation (UK) has found that British involvement in India's repression of Sikhs in 1984 went much further than the UK government has ever officially acknowledged. Merely scratching the surface on the issue, the narrow investigation window offered by David Cameron and Sir Jeremy Heywood highlights the extent of the cover up.

Repressive measures against Sikhs were carried out in the UK to appease Indian government and secure arms deals. The Indian government made astonishing requests of Britain. For example, the Indian government asked Britain, unsuccessfully, to intern all UK Gurdwara presidents in early June 1984. In a meeting on 8 June 1984, none other than M K Rasgotra, the Indian Foreign Secretary implied to the British High Commission in Delhi that British police should shoot dead Sikh protestors in London. However, other repressive measures were carried out to appease Indian government concerns, such as extensive Special Branch surveillance of peaceful Sikh protests, banning religious marches and demonstrations, measures to disrupt a Sikh Sports tournament, an extradition treaty and deporting a Sikh activist who went on to be tortured in India.

Further concerns arise in respect of the aid budget being utilised by the government to subsidise defence sales to India. There are extensive documents that show the efforts to persuade India to sign a contract with Westland helicopters and the use of aid money. There is also evidence to suggest that India was influencing day to day television programming being produced in the UK. In

October 1983, the Foreign Office at a meeting with Thames Television dissuaded one of the program's producers from including India in a documentary on abusive regimes.

Following coverage of Indira Gandhi's assassination, the BBC Chairman responded to pressure from Margaret Thatcher, giving the BBC's assistant director-general "strict instructions" on "special clearance" needed "from him" on who could broadcast on the BBC. A week after the assassination, on 8 November, the BBC Director-General wrote a letter to the Indian High Commissioner, apologising for broadcasting an interview signalling that the free expression of Sikhs in the UK had been curtailed and that the British press was muzzled or at best controlled by the state on behalf of a foreign power in respect of Indian affairs during the period.

The in-house review also stated no other form of UK military assistance, such as equipment or training, was given to the Indian authorities in relation to Operation Blue Star. This was repeated several times by the Foreign Secretary, William Hague in Parliament. This has also been proved not to be true.

It is important there is an independent judge led public inquiry to get to the truth, however painful, of what happened in the 1980s. The inquiry will send a positive signal to the law-abiding British Sikh community, the wider public and Parliamentarians so all can learn from it and ensure it never happens again.

Freedom of Information tribunal ruling against the Cabinet Office

The Cabinet Office has withheld vital records examined in the Heywood review. A Freedom of Information request for these records was first submitted on 30 December 2014. There were considerable and unacceptable delays by the Cabinet Office at each stage of the process and an appeal to the Information Tribunal with a three-day hearing was eventually held in March 2018. In June 2018 the tribunal ruled:

- *That there was "a high public interest" in disclosure – partly in response to the "strength of feeling of the Sikh community in the UK and beyond" – and set aside objections from the Foreign Office, which said declassification could adversely affect the UK's relations with India.*

More than 35 years after the event there remains a reluctance to release relevant information that will expose the UK and Indian governments.

SECTION 9 – INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF THE 1984 SIKH GENOCIDE AND UN-LED INQUIRY

The UK Government should officially recognise the following acts, individually and collectively, as the 1984 Sikh Genocide:

- *the attack on Sri Harmandir Sahib and the mass killings of thousands of Sikh worshippers in June 1984;*
- *the killings and disappearances of tens of thousands of Sikhs across the Sikh homeland in the months that followed the attack on Sri Harmandir Sahib; and*
- *the systematic and deliberate killing of innocent Sikhs in cities across northern India in November 1984.*

The Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI), Supreme Court of India and Indian Ministers have in the last 12 months referred to killings of Sikhs in November 1984 as “crimes against humanity” and a genocide. The UK Government should work with other UN members to achieve backing for a UN-led inquiry into the 1984 Sikh Genocide. As successive governments in India have failed and are incapable of delivering justice.

Key priorities

UK Government recognition of the 1984 Sikh Genocide

The UK Government needs to officially recognise the following acts as the 1984 Sikh Genocide: the events of June 1984, the subsequent extra-judicial killings of thousands of Sikhs across Punjab and the systematic and deliberate killings of innocent Sikhs in November 1984. According to the 2011 WikiLeaks cable leaks, the United States was convinced of Indian National Congress' complicity in the 1984 Sikh Genocide and called it "opportunism" and "hatred" by the Congress government, of Sikhs.

UN-led inquiry into the 1984 Sikh Genocide

The UK Government needs to work with other countries to support and obtain backing for a UN-led inquiry into the 1984 Sikh Genocide. The UN inquiry should be like the UN Security Council International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) which addressed the crimes committed during the Rwanda Genocide. In the meantime, the UK Government needs to back relevant UN rapporteurs and independent experts to carry out investigations into the torture, disappearances, false encounters, extra-judicial executions and police deployment of criminals, goons, gangsters and smugglers to impersonate Sikh 'militants', widely known as the 'Black Cats'. The current ruling party of India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has

demonstrated since it came to power five years ago, a lack of desire to establish the truth and provide justice to the victims of this massacre.

Background

The term genocide was coined in 1943 by the Jewish-Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin who combined the Greek word 'genos' (race or tribe) with the Latin word 'cide' (to kill).

Genocide - The intentional action to destroy a people (usually defined as an ethnic, national, racial, or religious group) in whole or in part.

Article Two of the UN Convention on Genocide 1948, defines genocide as 'any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such':

- Killing members of the group;
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its' physical destruction in whole or in part;
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; or
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Using the above definition, the following acts, individually and collectively, in 1984 amount to genocide:

1.Operation Bluestar

Operation Bluestar, as defined by the Indian authorities, began on 1 June 1984. Up to 150,000 Indian army troops were sent to the northern Indian state of Punjab, the Sikh homeland, equipped with helicopter gunships and tanks. Punjab was cut off from the rest of the world. 24-hour curfews were imposed, all telephone and telex lines cut, all Indian journalists were expelled and orders to shoot on site were widely carried out. As the Christian Science Monitor stated on 8 June 1984 'the whole of Punjab, with its 5,000 villages and 50 major cities, was turned into a concentration camp'.

Over 125 other Sikh shrines were simultaneously attacked on the false pretext of apprehending 'a handful of militants' lodged inside the Sri Harmandir Sahib or Golden Temple Complex in Amritsar. The Indian army unleashed a terror, unprecedented in post-independence India. Tanks let loose a barrage of highly explosive shells, which destroyed the Akal Takht, the temporal seat of the Sikhs. The timing chosen for the attack was when Sikhs were marking the Martyrdom of the Fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Dev Ji when it was known tens of thousands of pilgrims would be in Amritsar. Thousands of innocent Sikh pilgrims – men, women and

children were killed, some shot at point blank range with their hands tied behind their backs with their turbans. An estimated ten thousand pilgrims never returned to claim their shoes.

2. Operation Woodrose

The Indian military operation that followed Operation Bluestar resulted in tens of thousands of Sikhs, overwhelmingly young men, being detained for interrogation and subsequently tortured and many killed. According to Dr. Sangat Singh, from the Joint Intelligence Committee, approximately 100,000 youth were taken into custody within the first four to six weeks of the operation and that many of them were not heard of again.

Wikileaks revealed that the US Embassy in Delhi wrote in December 2005 of the existence of "Black Cats". It stated Mohammad Izhar Alam, the Additional Director General of Punjab Police "assembled a large, personal paramilitary force, 150 men known as "Black Cats" or "Alam Sena" (Alam's Army). The group had reach throughout Punjab and is alleged to have had carte blanche in carrying out possibly thousands of staged encounter killings."

3. November 1984 systematic killings of innocent Sikhs across India

The systematic and deliberate killings of an estimated 30,000 Sikhs (most burnt alive) in November 1984 in 18 states and over 130 cities across India. Sikhs on public roads were burnt alive, dragged out from trains and lynched on the railway platforms and set on fire. Property worth millions was looted and destroyed. Hundreds of Sikh women were gang raped by goons, police officers and civil administrators. Small children were ruthlessly killed by pulling their legs apart while their mothers were being raped. More than 300,000 Sikhs were displaced and rendered homeless. Hundreds of Gurdwaras and our living Guru, Guru Granth Sahib Ji was burnt and desecrated in a systematic and planned way across India.

In 2011, Human Rights Watch reported that the Government of India had "yet to prosecute those responsible for the mass killings". The Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh in late December 2014 referred to what happened to the Sikhs in November 1984 as a 'genocide' and that 'justice would be meted out to the victims only when the perpetrators of the crime are punished' and 'that until these persons are punished, victims will not get relief'.

The Delhi High Court in its December 2018 judgement, while convicting former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar had held that the massacre of Sikhs in November 1984 amounted to "crimes against humanity". Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said this was a "vindication of justice" and the Delhi High Court's judgment is an "extremely welcome development". "For many of us who are witnesses, it was perhaps the worst kind of genocide that

we ever saw. Congress governments in that period repeatedly indulged in cover-up exercises."

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) equated the 1984 Sikh massacre with the Genocide of Jews by Nazis in evidence it filed in the Supreme Court in March 2019 in the same case. In May 2019 Prime Minister Narendra Modi referring to the killing of Sikhs in November 1984 stated that it was a "big, horrendous genocide". He continued: "Congress has several blemishes, but one blemish which would not go even after 50 generations is of the 1984 massacre." These legal and political admissions make it straightforward for the UK Government and MPs to refer to the killings of Sikhs in 1984 as the 1984 Sikh Genocide.

35 years later there have been no independent inquiries in India into what happened in June 1984 or what followed. India's judicial system and ten commissions have failed to bring justice to the victims of November 1984. After 35 years many of the organisers and perpetrators of the genocide roam free, in addition they have been promoted and hold positions of power. A UN-led inquiry is needed into the atrocities committed by the Indian authorities in 1984.

For over 35 years UN rapporteurs and independent experts as well as Amnesty International have been denied access to Punjab to investigate widespread allegations of torture, disappearances, false encounters and extra-judicial executions. If India wishes to be taken seriously at the UN it must remove such restrictions, improve its human rights record and sign and ratify a range of UN conventions.

35 years on from these tragic incidents, although the pain of injustice is still strong with Sikhs across the globe, there is also a genuine hope of restitution and reconciliation, so that future Sikh generations can move forward and live without fear and with freedom.

As in many international examples of political or racial conflicts where peaceful resolutions have been successful, the first step has always been international admission of the truth by the country concerned, the release of all political prisoners who in some cases have been incarcerated for over 25 years and a general amnesty for those that have cases pending. This is where the UK Government and the international community have a responsibility to find viable solutions following the



SECTION 10 - APPLICATION OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE SIKHS

The UK Government and MPs must accept the general principle that self-determination is a basic human right that applies to the Sikhs and international law allows for the Sikhs to exercise that right. The UK Government must join countries such as France, Germany, the Netherlands and Pakistan to challenge India at the UN to withdraw its 'reservation' that self-determination does not apply to the people within India. The 'reservation' relies on the territorial integrity argument, which is the principle that nation-states should not attempt to promote secessionist movements or to promote border changes in other nation-states. The UK Government has a historic and moral responsibility to make the case that given India's widespread human rights violations on minority groups, the territorial integrity argument should cease to apply. It must also accept its responsibility towards resolving the conflict Sikhs have in the Indian sub-continent given direct British responsibility over the 1947 Partition and drawing a line through the Sikh homeland.

Key priorities

Principle of self-determination and its applicability to Sikhs

The UK Government and MPs must accept the general principle that self-determination is a basic human right and it applies to the Sikhs. There is a need to acknowledge the Anglo-Sikh friendship treaties, admiration and appreciation of the Sikhs loyalty, huge contribution and sacrifices in the World Wars. In addition, the UK Government presided over discussions prior to the creation of India and Pakistan in 1947, which included the specific offer of a separate Sikh homeland and a ten-year agreement of military assistance and support for the Sikh administration.

The UK Government has a historic and moral responsibility towards the Sikhs to help, through diplomatic means, resolve a conflict that continues. Whilst not committing itself to any outcome, the UK Government should acknowledge the international law which allows for the Sikhs to exercise the right to self-determination. Self-determination is a contested concept and its relevance and application in a particular context has always been the outcome of political processes. Thus, its assertion as a claimable right is of legal significance. However, demands for its application remain in the political realm.

India must withdraw its reservation against the right to self-determination

The UK Government must join other countries and challenge India at the UN Human Rights Committee to withdraw its 'reservation' that self-determination does not apply to the people of India. It has lost the right to rely on the territorial integrity argument by oppressing people

within its territory, including the minority Sikh community and has failed to respect the political and human rights of the Sikhs.

Background

Acceptance of the general principle – Self-determination is a basic human right founded in international law on which other human rights depend. The UN Human Rights Committee has stressed that the right of self-determination is fundamental to the protection of individual rights. All nations belonging to the UN are obliged to respect this right.

Sikhs satisfy the definition of a people or a nation - The Sikhs, with a unique spiritual and temporal philosophy (the Miri-Piri principle), together with a distinct linguistic and cultural tradition, developed into an indigenous, freedom loving sovereign nation that 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 world powers as a subject of international law and was party to several Treaties with the British. As well as being recognised as a people or a nation by others, the Sikhs crucially in the context of the criterion of self-identification see themselves as such. Whilst the Sikhs are clear about their nationhood, they find that it is denied by the Indian state.

India must withdraw its 'reservation' that self-determination does not apply to the people of India

- On ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1966, India made a 'reservation' to the effect that the right of self-determination pertains only to 'peoples under foreign domination'; it is not relevant with regard to 'sovereign independent states or to a section of a people or nation – which is the essence of national integrity'. France, Germany, the Netherlands and Pakistan objected to the 'reservation' claiming self-determination applies to all peoples; but India insisted on making that 'reservation'.

Subsequently, the UN Human Rights Committee has stated in its review of India's compliance with Article 1, which deals with self-determination, that it 'invites the State party [India] to review these 'reservations' and declarations with a view to withdrawing them, to ensure progress in the implementation of the rights . . .' India has not made any such withdrawal. India's position is contrary to the law of self-determination. Whilst India may have an expedient interpretation of the law to suit its own needs, it is nevertheless bound by international law and the international community must insist that the law is upheld.

Neither the Indian Constitution nor any statute expressly defines the right to self-determination or explains the position of India on the right to self-determination. While remaining silent on the issue, India's constitutional and statutory position does not prohibit the possibility of claims for the right to self-determination and secession of territories from India. Despite the absence of any specific reference to this right in the Constitution or in statutes, it

cannot be argued that this right cannot be claimed. On the contrary, there is a clear possibility of claiming the right to self-determination, and the Supreme Court of India has ruled in favour of the possibility of cession of territory by India.

India has lost the territorial integrity argument by oppressing peoples within its territory - A part of the general limitation on the right of self-determination is the specific limitation of territorial integrity. The 1970 Declaration of Principles of International Law provides that the right of self-determination shall not 'be construed as authorising or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States'. This limitation is an extension of the desire in most societies to create a social and legal system which is relatively stable.

However, the territorial integrity limitation cannot be asserted in all situations. The Declaration of Principles of International Law provides that only 'States conducting themselves in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of people' can rely on this limitation.

The 'territorial integrity' objection to groups seeking to exercise self-determination by means of secession is only arguable if a state has not oppressed the peoples living within it and where those peoples have had their political and human rights respected in the constitutional set-up in that state. The level of oppression of the Sikhs in Punjab and elsewhere in India (especially during the period 1984 to 1995) has been severe. The systematic violations of "individual" human rights such as genocide and other crimes against humanity, such as extra-judicial killings, disappearances, torture, rape and illegal detention has left Sikhs traumatised. Observers of the Sikh situation will be aware that the 'territorial integrity' objection cannot be afforded to India.

Britain's historic and moral responsibility towards the Sikhs

The Anglo-Sikh relationship has existed for over 200 years and based on a number of friendship treaties. The British rulers of India studied the Sikh religious history and their proud military tradition, which won the respect of the British military commanders, politicians and scholars alike. Hundreds of thousands of Sikhs answered the call of Britain and the Allies in both World Wars with over 83,000 turban-wearing Sikhs sacrificing their lives, with over 109,000 wounded. The Sikhs played a leading role in the struggle for independence from the British. They made sacrifices wholly out of proportion to their demographic strength (the Sikhs made up less than 2% of the Indian population). Out of 2,125 killed, 1,550 (73%) were Sikhs, out of 2,646 deported for life to the Andaman Islands, 2,147 (80%) were Sikhs and out of 127 sent to the gallows, 92 (80%) were Sikhs. The Sikhs were therefore the third party with whom the British negotiated for the transfer of

power and offered a separate Sikh homeland and a ten-year agreement of military assistance and support for the Sikh administration.

The Sikh leadership at the time accepted promises and solemn assurances made by the leaders of India, but the latter reneged on these promises. When India adopted its first Constitution and was declared a Republic on 26 January 1950 Sikhs refused to sign, accept or endorse the Constitution, contending it did not have any legal safeguards for the culture, language and religion of the Sikhs.

Internal v External self-determination

The right of self-determination can take a variety of forms, from autonomy over most policies and laws in a region or part of a state; to a people having exclusive control over only certain aspects of policy; such as education, social and/or cultural matters. The type of arrangements applicable to any given situation will usually depend on the constitutional order of the state concerned.

The right of self-determination does not imply that independence, or secession from an independent state, is the only, or even the necessary and appropriate, means of exercising the right. There may be other structures or arrangements that satisfy the demands of those who exercise the right of self-determination.

The Sikhs have, since 1947, made substantial efforts aimed at securing 'internal self-determination' within India. That is a matter which has been recorded in a great deal of literature. The Sikh demands for autonomy or internal self-determination were not only rejected by the Indian state; Indian politicians responded by criminalising Sikh aspirations and trying to neutralise them by using force (state terrorism), eventually on a massive scale. India incorrectly labels self-determination activists as extremists.

Experts on self-determination assert that when internal self-determination is violently rejected and crushed with state terror, the oppressed peoples or nations have little option but to seek remedy via external self-determination. The international law formulation on self-determination underpins that view. That is the basis on which the Sikhs themselves have raised the demand for an independent state.

The classic mechanism for implementing the right to self-determination is the use of a plebiscite. This was seen in the original UN resolutions on Kashmir in 1948 and the more recent UN-led independence process for East Timor or the referendum in Scotland. The Sikhs have not, of course, been offered the opportunity, but it is interesting to note that the former UK Indian High Commissioner, Kuldeep Nayar has admitted that if, after the horrors of 1984, the Sikhs were given a plebiscite they would have gone for an independent state.

How to use the Sikh Manifesto

| | Individuals | Gurdwara / Organisation | MP or PPC |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Encourage each Sikh voter to register by the 26 November 2019 deadline. Postal vote deadline is the same day | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 All read share and become familiar with the Sikh Manifesto | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Make sure each of the main candidates has a hard copy or pdf version of the Sikh Manifesto | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Invite the main candidates to the Gurdwara to discuss the Sikh Manifesto | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Ask each of the main candidates to clarify the <u>position of their party</u> with respect to the 10-points in the Sikh Manifesto | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 Ask each of the main candidates to clarify their <u>personal position</u> with respect to the 10-points in the Sikh Manifesto | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 Invite local media to give your views on the party and candidate that is likely to best serve the local Sikh community. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 Ask each candidate to make public statements via video or social media to their manifesto commitments | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 Track the commitments made by the candidates and share with the Sikh Network | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 Encourage all Sikhs to turn out to Vote and have your say | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Keep us posted at: info@thesikhnetwork.com

THE
SIKH MANIFESTO

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