



## OVERVIEW

September 2008 marks the 5th anniversary since the setting up of the Sikh Federation (UK). During this period, we have won the respect of all the major UK political parties as a result of the way we have conducted ourselves and our campaigns.

Our strengths and standing in the community is widely recognised by Sikhs, politicians, non-Sikh groups and the media. In this respect the Sikh Federation (UK) as an organisation is unrivalled in the British Sikh community.

Unlike many others the Federation is not prepared to compromise or water down its aims and objectives and for this reason there is a constant pro-Indian Government lobby. The extent to which the UK Government has been prepared to acknowledge working with the Federation therefore remains a challenge.

Each year a member of the Shadow Cabinet has attended the Annual Convention we organise and pledged support for our work and backing for some of our key campaigns. There is however still some way to go for the pledges of support to be turned into concrete action and results. In the near future, we will probably see a change of government. One benefit of this may be delivery on the pledges made.

The last two years has also seen the importance of the organisation grow on the international stage. Increasingly Sikhs in mainland Europe and other parts of the world look to the Sikh Federation (UK) to take the lead in political lobbying internationally and guiding them on national campaigns to obtain equal rights for Sikhs.

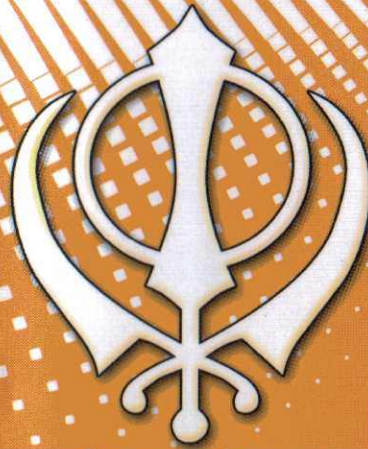
The next few years present a critical period for the organisation to develop and consolidate its position in the UK by working with all the major political parties and continuing to lead major international campaigns.

International co-operation with like minded organisations is increasingly resulting in more governments seeing the advantages of having a permanent Sikh voice on the international stage. Many realise the Sikhs as a Nation have much to offer the world. This would be greatly enhanced with the re-establishment of an independent sovereign Sikh State.

**Bhai Amrik Singh, Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK)**

### Sikh Federation (UK)

Tanglewood House, Pine Walk, Chilworth, Southampton SO16 7HQ  
 email: [info@sikhfederation.com](mailto:info@sikhfederation.com) website: [www.sikhfederation.com](http://www.sikhfederation.com)



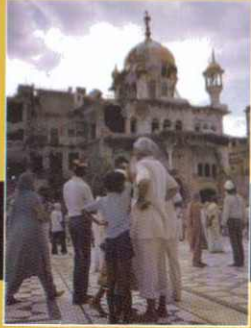
# SIKH FEDERATION (UK) ANNUAL REPORT

## HIGHLIGHTS 2007 - 2008

- International Sikh Convention
- First World Sikh Summit in City Hall, London
- Human Rights Watch, Director honoured at Sikh Lobby in UK Parliament
- Remembrance event in Ypres, Belgium
- Finalisation of the Sikh Agenda for the Canadian Government
- Programme in Germany to emphasise the independence of the organisation
- World Sikh Lobby at the United Nations
- Sikh Freedom Lobby in Brussels
- Successful Sikh Lobby in UK Parliament (July 2008)
- Working with Liberty to secure victory in the South Wales school Kara case
- Series of programmes in Greece to secure support for lobby network
- International meeting in Paris to monitor progress on the dastar cases

Working for justice and freedom





# 25th

## ANNIVERSARY OF JUNE 1984

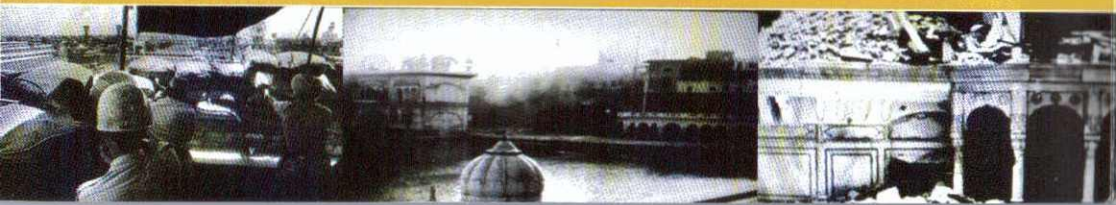
In June 1984 the Indian army launched an assault on the Darbar Sahib Complex, where the Akaal Takht, Sikh Reference Library and historic artefacts were destroyed or damaged beyond repair.

To maximise casualties the unprecedented action ordered by Indira Gandhi using artillery and tanks was deliberately timed to coincide with the anniversary of the martyrdom of the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Dev Ji. Not surprisingly there were huge numbers of pilgrims in attendance, which resulted in thousands of innocent Sikhs being killed in cold blood, many with their hands and feet bound, including women and children.

Over 125 other Gurdwaras, including forty historic Gurdwaras throughout Panjab were simultaneously attacked using massive fire power. Thousands of Sikhs were arrested, tortured, and killed, including children. Sikhs throughout the world were outraged by the brutal attack by the Indian authorities, which in effect laid the foundation stone for an independent Sikh State, Khalistan.

In 2009 the Sikh Federation (UK) working with others is organising a series of events and other activities to mark the 25th anniversary. There are expected to be at least half a dozen events or activities with meetings to be scheduled in the coming months to firm up on initial plans and ideas.

Many Sikh organisations and Gurdwaras in the UK have approached the Sikh Federation (UK) and pledged to work with them to organise these events to raise awareness. Each Sikh organisation or Gurdwara wishing to be formally part of the Campaign 84 team is urged to contact the Federation [info@sikhfederation.com](mailto:info@sikhfederation.com) to obtain details of meetings in the coming months or to obtain a Campaign 84 application form that should be returned by **15 December 2008**.



### Sikh Federation (UK)

Tanglewood House, Pine Walk, Chilworth, Southampton SO16 7HQ  
email: [info@sikhfederation.com](mailto:info@sikhfederation.com) website: [www.sikhfederation.com](http://www.sikhfederation.com)



### Contents

**BUILDING A STRONGER POLITICAL VOICE** 4-12

**DEFENDING AND PROMOTING THE SIKH IDENTITY** 13-21

**SILK FEDERATION (UK) ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE** 22-35

**CAMPAINING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS** 36-42



# BUILDING A STRONGER POLITICAL VOICE

## 10,000 gather to hear concerns of Sikhs from across the globe

The International Sikh Convention last September at Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Sedgley Street, Wolverhampton attracted around 10,000 Sikhs, with speakers from around a dozen countries.



Sangat at the International Sikh Convention



Harinder Singh Khalsa, Khalsa Action Committee and former Ambassador for Norway

The Sikh Federation (UK) was praised by many speakers from abroad for taking the lead on the International stage in bringing like-minded Sikhs together and trying to secure greater rights for the Sikhs. The main speaker from Punjab was Harinder Singh Khalsa, a member of the Khalsa Action Committee, and the former Ambassador for Norway who resigned in protest following the 1984 Indian army attack on the Golden Temple Complex.

Other prominent speakers included: Surinderpal Singh, the Vice-Chair of the World Sikh Council – America Region. One issue that emerged very clearly is the issue of the Sikh identity and Sikh sovereignty are two sides of the same coin. Speakers from Europe included Harpreet Singh, the President of Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara, Dublin and President of the Irish Sikh Council who brought a delegation from Dublin to the International Sikh Convention and World Sikh Summit. Other speakers from Europe included: Lukhvinder Singh Malhi (Germany), Joga Singh (Norway), Gurvinder Singh (Italy), Ajai Singh (Greece), Resham Singh (Belgium) and Jatinder Singh (Netherlands).

## Leading UK politicians praise Sikh Federation (UK) and back its key campaigns

Sayeeda Warsi who was recently appointed the Shadow Minister for Community Cohesion began her speech at the International Sikh Convention in Panjabi and spoke passionately about the importance of Guru Nanak Ji to other faiths and her family attachment to Punjab. She spoke of the many concerns of the Sikh community associated with the Sikh identity and the critical importance for Sikhs to be separately monitored at the next Census.



Sayeeda Warsi, Shadow Minister for Community Cohesion and the youngest person in the House of Lords

She also attacked what she termed 'secular' extremists who were challenging the fundamental religious freedoms of people of different faiths. Sayeeda is the first Asian Shadow Minister and became the youngest person in the House of Lords when she took her seat in October.



Rob Marris MP, the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for UK Sikhs, also spoke about the challenge to the Sikh identity in the UK and abroad and the excellent work and research done by the Sikh Federation (UK) on the Census 2011. He indicated that he had asked for a meeting with the Office for National Statistics later in the month to push the need for Sikhs to be separately monitored.



Rob Marris MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for UK Sikhs

However, his most vocal and thought provoking support was for the initiative being launched at the Convention and the World Sikh Summit whereby human rights violators since 1984 – Indian politicians, police officers and army personnel could and should be brought to justice when they travel abroad. He said it was the duty of all foreign governments that uphold International law to arrest and prosecute those guilty of torture and genocide. He pledged to take the matter up with the UK Government.

John Spellar MP, the former Minister for Transport, Armed Forces and Northern Ireland who spoke at the World Sikh Summit also backed this initiative. He commented this was an excellent way to move the matter forward as it provided a practical means to highlight the significance of the human rights problem in Punjab and to ensure Sikhs get some form of justice. He said given the respect with which the UK Government hold the Sikh community they were duty bound to react positively to such an initiative.



John Spellar MP, the former Minister for Transport, Armed Forces & Northern Ireland

## Historic 'round table' discussions at the World Sikh Summit in London

The first World Sikh Summit organised by the Sikh Federation (UK), the first and only Sikh political party in the UK, took place in London last September. The venue for the Summit was the world famous City Hall and it was supported by Ken Livingstone, the Mayor of London.



City Hall, London - Venue for the 1st World Sikh Summit

Ironically 60 years after Indian independence the main delegates were seated at a Round Table in the Main Chamber at City Hall. The purpose of the Summit was to raise awareness on the range of challenges faced by Sikhs, share best practice on how the challenges are or could be addressed, and agree a common strategy and an action plan for the future of the Sikh Nation.

At the four hour pre-Summit meeting the seven key challenges set out below were agreed and were summarised at the Summit by Bhai Amrik Singh, Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK). It was also agreed at the pre-Summit meeting that the first three key challenges should be covered at the first World Sikh Summit in London, and the others at future Summits:

1. Promoting and protecting the Sikh identity and recognition of Sikhs as a separate Qaum
2. Securing justice abroad for human rights violations and genocide committed against Sikhs



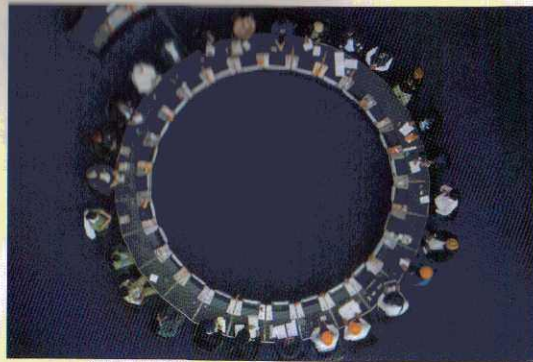
3. Building a stronger political lobby where we live

4. Creating the vision, practical building blocks and administrative structure for the re-establishment of an independent sovereign Sikh State

5. Dealing with anti-Sikh parchar i.e. Deras

6. Securing the release of Sikh political prisoners and opposing the death penalty in India

7. Punjab related challenges – the water crisis, the use of drugs, demographic challenge etc.



Delegates seated at the Round Table in the Main Chamber at City Hall

## Action points from the World Sikh Summit in London

### Promoting and protecting the Sikh identity and recognition of Sikhs as a Qaum

The three speakers regarding the first key challenge were Surinderpal Singh, the Vice-Chair of the World Sikh Council - America Region, Harpreet Singh, the President of the Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara, Dublin and President of the Irish Sikh Council and Sukhvinder Singh from the UK. The actions that emerged were:

1. The need to engage with National Governments and International institutions – EU Parliament and EU Commission, United Nations etc, to:

- Raise awareness about the Sikh articles of faith;
- Introduce an agreed International Code of Practice for Sikh articles of faith; and
- Seek recognition of the Sikhs as a Qaum.

2. Work towards establishing a 25-member International Sikh Advisory Board (ISAB) that can work with national Governments and International institutions to work on the above. In addition, to the 25-member ISAB, members will be co-opted from each country, in particular European countries not represented on the core group. An ad hoc group has been established to start work on the International code of practice.

### Prosecution of those involved in genocide and torture

The three speakers regarding the second key challenge were Harinder Singh Khalsa, a member of the Khalsa Action Committee, and the former Ambassador for Norway, Kavneet Singh, head of the World Sikh Council sub-committee for human rights and Dabinderjit Singh from the UK. The actions that emerged were:

1. A 1984 Justice and Freedom Centre is being opened in the UK. Similar initiatives are expected in the USA & Canada.

2. A database of wanted human rights violators is being established and witness statements are expected to be collected for up to 500 Indian politicians, police officers, army personnel and 'cats'. Cases will then be prepared against a carefully selected group where prosecutions are likely to be successful and presented to a number of foreign Governments for them to take forward when the relevant individuals enter their jurisdiction.



Early indications in the UK and Europe where progress has been greatest is if the commitments that have been given at meetings with politicians and officials are kept a number of Indian politicians and hundreds of police officers, army personnel and 'cats' could face the prospect of imprisonment when they travel abroad.



UK delegates at the first World Sikh Summit

3) A coalition of Sikh lawyers from across the globe will be tasked with analysing the evidence collected and select cases where prosecutions are likely to be most successful. Several leading human rights organisations e.g. Human Rights Watch, have agreed to work with the International Sikh community to ensure what is proposed can help bring some justice to the victims of torture and genocide.



Sikhs listening to delegates at the World Sikh Summit

The early reaction to this announcement has already been one of fear. As one MP remarked: 'When Governments are in possession of the evidence that has been promised how many Indian politicians, police officers, army personnel and 'cats' that have the blood of Sikhs on their hands will risk travelling abroad.'

### Building a stronger political lobby where we live

Narinderjit Singh of the Sikh Federation (UK) spoke regarding the last of the three challenges tackled at the first World Sikh Summit. The actions that emerged were:

1. In September 2001 a Sikh Agenda for the UK Government was developed and has been successfully used to promote issues of concern to the Sikh community. In Canada the Sikh Federation (UK) helped develop a draft agenda earlier this year that attracted considerable national media interest. The agenda will be finalised and released within 12 months. There have also been discussions regarding a Sikh Agenda for the US Government that it is hoped will be developed and released around the time of the next Presidential elections.

2. Sikhs in each country were urged to develop their national Sikh Lobby Networks e.g. Sikh Lobby Network (Canada), Sikh Lobby Network (USA) that feed into the World Sikh Lobby Network. The logic is the administrative set up for the re-establishment of an independent sovereign Sikh State, Khalistan will materialise from this set up.



Sikhs attending the World Sikh Summit



## Next World Sikh Summit to focus on Khalistan

One of the most important points to emerge is the next World Sikh Summit should focus on developing the vision, practical building blocks and administrative structure for the re-establishment of an independent sovereign Sikh State, Khalistan.

It was decided that all Sikhs organisations throughout the world that have Khalistan as their declared objective should be asked to attend the next World Sikh Summit and explain:

1. what work they have done in the last 3-5 years to further the cause for Khalistan;
2. what work they are currently undertaking and planning to undertake in the next 3-5 years; and
3. present their proposals on specific aspects of the vision, practical building blocks and administrative structure so these can be considered and developed

One of the first and most significant matters that needs to be clarified is which organisations have Khalistan as one of their declared objectives and which organisations are sympathetic towards this objective, but have fallen short of making this declaration.

Organisations that are working towards Khalistan will be sent an open invite to come and address the three issues above. It will be interesting to see which organisations come forward and explain their positions so progress can be made on the Khalistan objective. The Sangat will make its own mind up regarding those that stay away and not share details of their work, plans and thoughts on the future strategy.

## Foreign Secretary asked to explain what discussions took place with US Government on new security screening policy

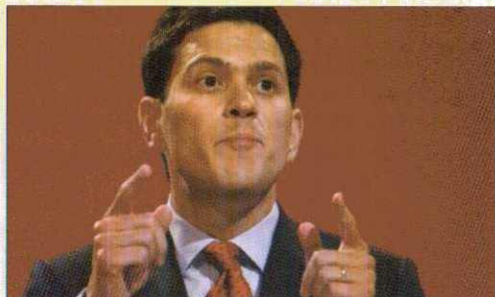
At the International Sikh Convention, Rob Marris MP heard first hand from representatives of the World Sikh Council – America Region about the new security screening policy at US airports and the discrimination being experienced by turban wearing Sikhs.

Rob Marris MP wrote to Rt Hon David Miliband MP, the Foreign Secretary and expressed his displeasure at the 4 August 2007, change in policy by the Transportation Security Administration in the USA whereby Sikh passengers with turbans are being pulled aside for secondary searches.

He wrote to the Foreign Secretary to express his concerns that Sikh travellers to the USA will and are being singled out based on their religion and has asked what discussions have taken place on this issue, between the UK Government (on behalf of UK Sikhs), and the USA Government. Rob Marris stated the practical implementation of the new policy means that those screening are conducting religious profiling, which is worrying.



Delegates at the first World Sikh Summit



Rt Hon David Miliband MP, Foreign Secretary

## Lord Chancellor approached on prosecution of members of the Indian security forces involved in human rights abuses when they visit UK

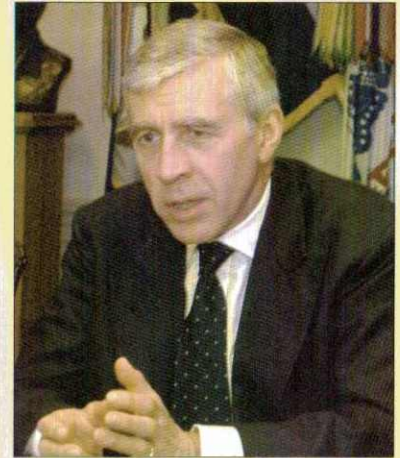
Following the International Sikh Convention and World Sikh Summit, Rob Marris MP, wrote to Rt Hon Jack Straw MP, the Minister for Justice and the Lord Chancellor about human rights abusers in the UK.

In his letter dated 21 September Rob Marris MP referred to the events of 1984 and the mass violation of human rights and complicity of the Indian security services. He pointed out that under UK law, an individual who is accused of gross breaches of human rights abroad, can be arrested, tried, convicted and imprisoned in the UK.

Since the UK is signatory to many human rights agreements he has enquired about the steps that need to be taken in relation to members of the security forces in India who stand accused of human rights abuses in Punjab since 1984, if and when they visit the UK.

Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK), said:

'Indian politicians, police officers, army personnel and 'cats' with the blood of Sikhs on their hands will increasingly fear travelling abroad as they face possible arrest and imprisonment. Our actions are not confined to the UK; we also have a dialogue across Europe via the European Commission.'



Rt Hon Jack Straw MP, Minister for Justice & Lord Chancellor

## Sikhs thank Mayor for his continued support for Sikh campaigns and events

The Sikh Federation (UK) held a meeting with the Mayor of London at City Hall on the eve of the London Mayoral elections. The Mayor was presented with a silver shield by Bhai Amrik Singh and Bhai Narinderjit Singh, Chair and General Secretary of the Sikh Federation (UK) for the work he has done to support the Sikh community.

Ken Livingstone, said the meeting was an opportunity to discuss a range of issues that are of concern to the Sikh community, such as the right to practise one's religion and Sikh identity. Opportunities offered by the Olympic Games for the Sikh community, including employment, training and skills, as well as the sporting and cultural benefits were also discussed.



Ken Livingstone presented with a silver shield by Bhai Amrik Singh and Bhai Narinderjit Singh

In a press release following the meeting the Mayor said: 'It is important that the Sikh and other communities are properly represented at every level of government and it is essential that members of the Sikh community exercise their right to vote. Sikh organisations have a key role to play in promoting registration, whilst monitoring can help us assess progress made in terms of employment and representation. This is why the Greater London Authority gives the opportunity for employees to describe their ethnic as well as religious group as being Sikh on recruitment and



monitoring forms. I am committed to ensuring that the Sikh community – as with others – is able to participate fully and benefit from London's continuing success.'

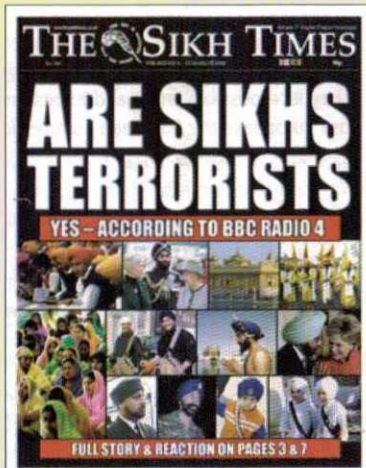
The Mayor of London has backed the separate recognition and monitoring of Sikhs, the Sikh Identity Conference in 2006 and the first World Sikh Summit in September 2007. The Mayor has also backed campaigns to defend the freedom of religious and cultural expression, and most recently in the case of a 14-year-old Welsh school girl who has been excluded from school for wearing a Kara. The Mayor pledged to continue to support Sikh campaigns and events.

The Federation also provided the Mayor with useful information for him to consider why it is not appropriate to support a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Parliament Square. Prior to the meeting the Mayor's Office were made aware of factual information on [www.gandhism.net](http://www.gandhism.net). It is almost certain the idea of a statue of Gandhi, which has also been strongly opposed by Westminster City Council, is now permanently off the agenda.

### Sikh Federation (UK) refuses to co-operate with makers of BBC radio 4 programme due to its obvious bias and sensationalism

On 26 February 2008 BBC Radio 4 aired a programme titled: Sikh extremism. The programme was described as follows: 'With attention focussed on Islamist extremism, Armadeep Bassey asks whether the authorities are doing enough to counter the activities of UK-based Sikh groups supporting the violent campaign for an independent homeland in the Punjab.'

The Sikh Federation (UK) as an organisation and individuals associated with it decided when approached not to cooperate with the making of the above programme as it was biased and maligning the entire community. Despite being constantly harassed the decision of the organisation proved to be the correct one. The Federation made its views clear about the programme before it was aired to both the Producer: David Lewis and the Editor: David Ross and encouraged complaints to be sent to the BBC and OFCOM. A meeting was also held with the Head of BBC News on 11 April to ensure something similar is not repeated.



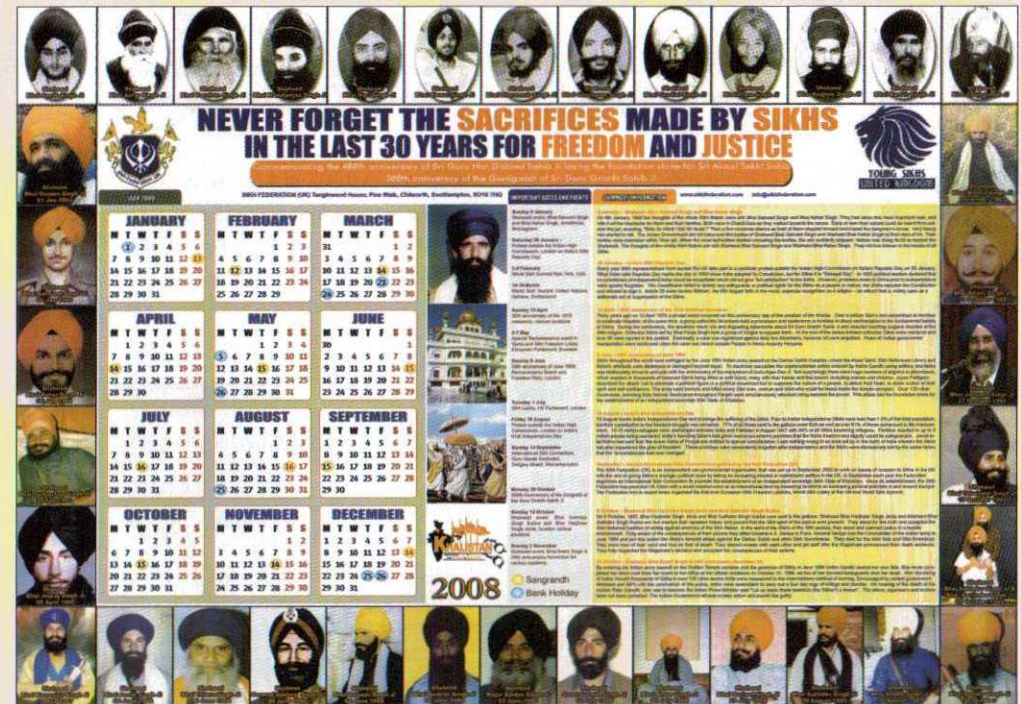
Front page of the Sikh Times relating to the BBC Radio 4 programme

### London Evening Standard smear campaign

On the eve of the London Mayoral elections many Sikhs and non-Sikhs were surprised to see Sikhs were used in the 3-page article in the London Evening Standard to smear Ken Livingstone.

The innocent victims of the media in a highly charged political environment were Dabinderjit Singh, the Sikh Federation (UK) and the Sikh community itself. The article was however ignored by the rest of the mainstream media because of its bias.

The article concerned Dabinderjit Singh's appointment as a Non Executive to the Transport for London (TfL) Board where he served since September 2006. Many have asked if the London Evening Standard (Andrew Gilligan) were so concerned about the appointment, why did the Standard wait 20 months before running the story.



Sikh Federation (UK) and Young Sikhs (UK) 2008 Year Planner was reproduced in the Standard

Dabinderjit Singh became one of the youngest civilians to receive an OBE in December 2000 for his outstanding work at the National Audit Office, where he became its youngest Director; promotion of Equal Opportunities; services to the public and contribution in representing the British Sikh community.

The fact that he wore a jacket with the ISYF emblem at his investiture at Buckingham Palace when he received his OBE from the Queen in December 2000, a few months before the ISYF was banned is irrelevant in terms of the high regard in which he is held professionally and by many in the community that respect his unflinching efforts to help and advice those in need.

There were a number of inaccuracies in the article. For example, Dabinderjit Singh was not in receipt of a salary of £22k for his role on the TfL Board as reported. Instead a higher sum of £24k to reflect his contribution to the work of the TfL Board was being donated directly by TfL to charity at his request.

The article also included a number of other glaring inaccuracies. Andrew Gilligan reported that Inderjit Singh Reyat was a member of the ISYF. However, it is well known this is not the case and although this was pointed out to him he chose to ignore it.

The reporter also stated Dabinderjit Singh met for a one-to-one meeting with the Mayor on 4 September 2006 before being appointed later that month to the TfL Board. Andrew Gilligan was told he was head hunted, went through a series of interviews as part of the selection process and had already been appointed to the TfL Board by the 4 September 2006. The one-to-one meeting that day was merely to welcome him to the Board. In fact GLA records show Ken Livingstone also met Eva Lindholm, just before Dabinderjit Singh to also welcome her to the TfL Board.

The article also stated Dabinderjit Singh was present at Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall in January 2008 when a



dispute occurred. However, this is another untruth as Dabinderjit Singh was in Canada for 3 weeks at that time.

Andrew Gilligan even had the audacity to suggest the unsolved murder of the Des Pardes editor was the work of the ISYF. The fact that it is an unsolved murder did not stop such a wild and unfounded allegation against those that belonged to the ISYF, who are unable to defend themselves.

Atma Singh was named as one of the sources of information. What has not been highlighted in the article is Atma Singh, a former President of the Indian Overseas Congress, is believed to have been sacked by the GLA and subsequently lost his unfair dismissal employment tribunal. Following the tribunal it was disclosed he was incompetent and had put the lives of Londoners in danger following 7/7.

### Successful Sikh Federation (UK) Shaheedi programme

In May the Sikh Federation (UK) organised a highly successful Shaheedi programme at Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Slough. A large Sikh Federation (UK) banner behind the stage read 'Never Forget 1984' and around 15 large pictures of some of the Shaheeds since 1984 were around the Diwan Hall.

The first speaker Sanjay Suri, a journalist who witnessed the events of November 1984 whilst working for the Indian Express set the tone for the event that was also broadcast live across Europe via Akash Radio. He spoke passionately and in detail about what he witnessed and how he tried in vain to help innocent Sikh victims, the role of the police and authorities in trying to deny the scale of the organised killings. It was a powerful account that was later explained to the Sangat by Bhai Harbinder Singh, who managed the stage for the event.

Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK) spoke next. He touched upon the lobbying work of the Federation in the UK, Europe and at the United Nations. He also spoke about the legitimacy of the Sikh demand for Khalistan and how the Indian authorities were getting increasingly concerned with Sikhs in Canada, USA and elsewhere following the example of the Federation in getting more involved in lobbying and forming contacts with politicians.

Fiona Mactaggart MP, a former Home Office Minister, spoke next about the importance of protecting human rights and touched upon a number of subjects ranging from the Sikh identity to her opposition to anti-terror legislation. In thanking Fiona Mactaggart MP, Dabinderjit Singh reminded her that human rights were an issue for Sikhs in Punjab, in Europe and in the UK. Specific reference was

made to the recent release of Bhai Kulbir Singh Barapind and how he had been falsely imprisoned for 12 years in the US, deported to India and following a further two years in prison in Punjab had now been released as there was insufficient evidence for him to be prosecuted.

Bhai Amrik Singh presented the elderly father of Shaheed Jaswant Singh Khalra with a siropa. Bhai Gurjeet Singh, Khalsa Human Rights then spoke of the continued assistance that is being provided to Shaheed families. Sarika the 14 year old girl excluded from Aberdare Girl's School in South Wales for wearing her Kara then addressed the Sangat after spending time with several hundred Sikh children at the Punjabi school.



Bhai Amrik Singh presenting the father of Shaheed Jaswant Singh Khalra with a siropa



Sanjay Suri, a journalist who witnessed the events of November 1984



Fiona Mactaggart MP, a former Home Office Minister



## DEFENDING AND PROMOTING THE SIKH IDENTITY

### Sikh Federation (UK) takes lead on "Kara" case

Over the last 12 months the Sikh Federation (UK) has been busy tackling the high profile case of the 14-year old South Wales Sikh girl who was forced to take Aberdare Girls School to the High Court in order to allow her to wear a Kara to school. The Federation has been involved with this case since October 2007 when the family approached it via Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Sedgley Street, Wolverhampton.

### LIBERTY Protecting Civil Liberties Promoting Human Rights

The Federation helped in the case in many ways, such as, introducing Liberty to the family to fight the legal battle and involving specialist organisations such as the National Assembly Against Racism (NAAR) to broaden the campaign. The Federation also obtained the support of former Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone and the Coalition to defend freedom of religious and cultural expression which was set up in June 2007.

Winning over political support of MPs, MEPs, AMs and the local MP Ann Clwyd by using the influence of other politicians, getting the local education authority to withdraw support for the school, organising a successful protest outside the Welsh Assembly which resulted in new guidance being issued to schools the same week and organising the successful petition that was submitted to 10 Downing Street just before the case was heard in the High Court were some of the other activities involved in this campaign.

Ken Livingstone, Former Mayor of London, said: "Sarika's repeated suspension shows a flagrant disregard for her freedom of religious conscience, at the cost of her education. She should not be made to choose between her faith and her schooling. Sarika must be allowed to return to her education immediately and wear her Kara at school as an expression of her faith."

**Support Sarika**  
Support Sarika Singh's right to study and wear the Kara®

Sarika Singh is a 14 year old girl who attends Aberdare Girl's School in South Wales. She wears a 'Kara' to school, a visible article of faith that represents her belief. Because of this Sarika had been repeatedly excluded from school. Prior to her exclusion, Sarika was put into isolation and taught separately from other students, as a result of her refusal to remove her Kara. While in isolation she was not allowed to talk to any of her friends, to go to the bathroom without a teacher or to take part in school activities or clubs after school. It is very concerning that Sarika was taught in isolation because of her beliefs. Following her exclusion from 5th November the family with the help of Liberty is being forced to seek a judicial review as the school is demanding she remove the Kara. Despite attempts to resolve the matter through meetings, the school has not been forthcoming. Anna Fairclough, of the human rights group Liberty which is providing legal representation has said: "The school's reaction to our client's desire to modestly observe her faith has not only been discriminatory but defies common sense. Unfortunately, the school's uniform policy appears to mean that no Sikh can attend the school without compromising their beliefs."

"The Kara is a fundamental part of the Sikh religion. It is not a piece of jewellery, but it is an article of faith and expression of religious belief."

You may want to contact the following:  
**Email the school:**  
td@aberdaregirls.co.uk

**Sarika's MP Rt Hon Ann Clwyd MP**  
clwyda@parliament.uk

**First Minister Rhodri Morgan**  
rhodri.morgan@wales.gsi.gov.uk

**Sikh Federation (UK)**  
info@sikhfederation.com

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AGAINST RACISM**  
Coalition to Defend Freedom of Religious and Cultural Expression

Sign the online petition in support of Sarika at [www.supportsarika.co.uk](http://www.supportsarika.co.uk)



Campaign leaflet for the Kara case



## Sikh pupil excluded over bangle

BBC News - 7th Nov 2007

The Sikh Federation UK said that the bangle was an "article of faith" and Sikhs had no choice but to wear it.

Jagtar Singh, secretary of Sikh Federation UK claimed the school was breaching the 1976 Race Relations Act in its treatment of Sarika.

"The department for education and schools in England have said that if a headteacher or governing body were to deny a Sikh child one of their articles of faith such as the bangle then they would be breaking the law," he said.

"If you are a practising Sikh, you have no choice; you have to have the Kara. It is the one symbol that virtually every single Sikh wears."

Her mother said the Sikh Federation had supported them & she would do "whatever it takes".

## Ann Clwyd MP tables motion in UK Parliament

The Federation exerted pressure for an Early Day Motion (EDM) to be tabled in the House of Commons. The Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for UK Sikhs, Rob Marris MP and one of the Vice Chairs, John Spellar MP met with Rt. Hon Ann Clwyd MP. This resulted in her agreeing to issue a Press Release and put down EDM 530 in December (see below). Around 80 different MPs supported this and a similar EDM on the same issue.



Rt. Hon Ann Clwyd MP

### EDM 530 – Race Relations Act 1976

That this House takes serious note of the continued refusal of the Governing Body of Aberdare Girls' School to permit a 14 year-old Sikh girl from wearing to school her Kara, a small Sikh bangle that is an article of her faith; is concerned to learn the punishment for the girl for her insistence on wearing her modest Kara was at first keeping her in isolation for nine weeks and then on 5th November, excluding her from school; and calls upon the UK Government to work with the Welsh Assembly and to do everything within its power to ensure the girl is immediately reinstated as her treatment clearly amounts to discrimination and contravenes the Race Relations Act 1976.

## Protest outside the Welsh Assembly

The Federation took the lead when organising a protest for Sarika's right to wear her Kara at school. The protest took place outside the Welsh Assembly in Cardiff on 15 January where over 200 people participated including members of the Welsh Assembly (AMs), students, trade unions, anti-racist groups, civil liberty and human rights activists.



Welsh Assembly



The aims of the protest included allowing the young girl to return to school as soon as possible wearing the Kara while the courts reached a decision, the Local Education Authority to withdraw its support for the school, to pressure the Welsh Assembly to release guidance to schools to remind them to comply with the law.

After a successful protest it was great to see the Local Education Authority soon withdrew its support for the school which meant they were acting in isolation. After the protest an assembly Government spokesperson said new guidance associated with school uniform policies would be available by the end of the week.



Protest outside the Welsh Assembly

## Petition handed in at 10 Downing Street

On 13 June 2008 a petition organised by the Sikh Federation (UK) and the National Sikh Resource Centre was handed in at 10 Downing Street by Sarika's family.

The petition had the support of around 150 Gurdwaras and over 200 Sikh organisations in the UK. It was also supported by an estimated 70 non-Sikh organisations, including civil liberty and anti-racist groups, as well as trade unions. In addition to this, the petition was supported by elected representatives – councillors, MPs and MEPs from across the political spectrum and from different parts of the country.

The petition called on the Prime Minister to intervene to stop the racial discrimination and continued exclusion of Sarika by the head teacher and governors in Aberdare Girls' School in South Wales.



Amitpal Singh with Sarika delivering the petition at 10 Downing Street



## Bangle girl asks PM to intervene

South Wales Echo  
Jun 13 2008

The Sikh girl excluded from her South Wales school for wearing a religious bangle will

present a petition to Downing Street today.

Sarika Singh, 14, and her family are calling on the Prime Minister to intervene in the row, which has gone all the way to the High Court.

The teenager was excluded from Aberdare Girls' School in November last year for wearing the traditional Kara steel bangle.

The petition has been organised by the Sikh Federation (UK) and National Sikh Resource Centre.



## Case heard at the High Court in London

Sarika's High Court case took place on the 17th – 19th June 2008 where the 14-year-old claimed unlawful discrimination. It was claimed that Aberdare Girls' School breached race, equality and human rights laws by not allowing Sarika to wear the Kara. The hearing was to look at whether the schools decision of not allowing Sarika Singh to wear her Kara was justified.

The Sikh Federation (UK) were represented all three days to hear the facts and to support the family. During the hearing the judge was shown a picture of cricketer Monty Panesar wearing the Kara whilst spin balling for England.



Monty Panesar who wears his Kara playing cricket



Barrister, Helen Mountfield

It was said that the Kara means as much to Sarika as it does to Mr Panesar. Sarika in her statement stated "the Kara reminds her to do good for all, and it's a constant reminder to remember and thank God for everything she has."

During the hearing the judge appeared to be rather impressed by the submission of Sarika's Barrister, Helen Mountfield. The judge on the final day commented on the fact that he acknowledged the support of the Sikh community and he was impressed at the number of people attending court.

## Judgement delivered in favour of wearing the Kara

On 29 July 2008 the judgement came where Mr. Justice Silber concluded Sarika was subjected to indirect discrimination on the grounds of race and religion, which were committed by the defendants when they refused to allow her to attend school wearing the Kara. In addition, the school had failed to comply with its duties under the Race Relations Act. Sarika should be able to return to the school in September 2008 wearing her Kara. The school were refused permission to appeal by the Judge. The school was also ordered to pay 95% of the legal costs, estimated to be around £100,000.

The Judge stated in his judgement: 'Wearing the Kara on a wrist is regarded universally by observant Sikhs as a matter of exceptional importance and it symbolises their loyalty to the teaching of their Gurus. The Kara is the symbol most commonly worn by Sikhs as an external identification of Sikhism.'

The Judge also stated the school's have a clear obligation to be committed to "fostering respect for people of all cultural backgrounds" and having a curriculum which "celebrates diversity and educates against racism".



Sarika addressing the media outside the High Court after the verdict



## Sikh Federation (UK)

### Press statement outside the High Court after the verdict

"We are delighted with the decision today. Common sense has prevailed and resulted in a victory against secular extremists.

This case has demonstrated that discrimination of Sikhs is totally unacceptable. Sikhs are protected under the Race Relations Act 1976 and there are serious consequences for individuals and organisations that breach the law.

Following the historic *Mandla v Lee* case of 1983 in the House of Lords, 25 years later the British courts have again confirmed the Sikh identity is protected and must be respected.

Due to misunderstandings or ignorance, similar situations are arising within schools and working environments, which are usually resolved within a matter of days once those concerned understand that Sikhs are protected under the law. The action in the high court was avoidable if those in positions of responsibility had acted accordingly."

## THE INDEPENDENT

### High Court backs girl barred from wearing bangle

Independent  
30 July 2008

The ruling is a major victory for Sikh

campaigners. Aberdare Girls' School will have to readmit Sarika with her Kara unless it seeks permission to appeal from the Court of Appeal.

Under British law Sikhs, like Jews, are defined as a race as well as a religious group from a landmark 1983 ruling by the House of Lords that enshrined the right for Sikh boys to wear turbans in school. Dabinderjit Singh, a leading figure from the Sikh Federation, said: "Twenty-five years later we have had to return to the courts to fight for a new generation."



## Sikh Lobby in UK Parliament results in action

On 1 July Sikhs organised a successful lobby in the UK Parliament titled: Proud to be Sikh – Make the Sikh voice heard. The three issues covered on the lobby were:

- Need for a nationwide Government code of practice regarding Sikh articles of faith to ensure wider understanding and awareness to prevent any unnecessary restrictions and discrimination in the post 9/11 era.
- Recognition and monitoring of Sikhs as a distinct category by all public bodies to ensure Sikhs are equally treated as regards employment, appropriate representation and are provided a fair share of public services.
- The recent indiscriminate attacks on innocent Sikhs in India by police and armed forces.

It was most refreshing to see a cross section of the Sikh community with not just some of the old familiar faces and activists, but more youngsters and a sizeable turnout of women. Politicians also picked up on this and welcomed the broader representation of British Sikhs.

The meeting was chaired by Rob Marris MP, the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for UK Sikhs. The first speaker was Anna Fairclough, the lawyer working for Liberty who explained the background to the Kara case in Aberdare Girl's School in South Wales and some of the arguments presented in the legal challenge in the High Court in London between 17-19 June. Protection of Sikhs from discrimination under the Race Relations Act 1976 and the 1983 House of Lords *Mandla v Lee* case were the basis for the arguments in court. Despite some complications in this specific case given Sarika Singh's background and biological parents those present in the High Court believe the judgement expected later this month will be favourable.

The next main speaker was Paramjit Singh Dhanda a Minister in the Department for Communities and Local Government. Paramjit has become a relatively smooth talker and being from the Sikh community is aware of some of the things members of the community would like to hear. In between his smooth talking he touched upon the 'difficulties' of producing a Code of Practice. He was also cautious in talking about guidance covering only the Kirpan in Government buildings.

Sikh activists and the APPG for UK Sikhs took serious note of what was said and the limited scope and constant delays in introducing a wider code of practice covering all Sikh articles of faith. A proposal was put forward whereby the APPG for UK Sikhs working with grassroots Sikh organisations will re-take the initiative on behalf of the community for agreeing and introducing a wider code of practice with the UK Government at the earliest opportunity.

On the need for monitoring of Sikhs as a distinct category in the Census 2011 so all public bodies need to ensure Sikhs are equally treated as regards provision of public services Paramjit Singh Dhanda suggested there were some



Cross section of the Sikh community taking part in the Sikh Lobby



Sikh Lobby in Committee Room 14 on 1 July 2008



Anna Fairclough, the lawyer working for Liberty on the Kara case addressing the gathering at the Sikh lobby

within the Sikh community that did not agree with this approach. This along with the demands of several other groups appears to be part of the 'official' reason why the ONS are reluctant to have a distinct category for Sikhs in the Census 2011. Several of the politicians present were made aware that specific written consultation carried out by ONS in this area did not support this view as there was unanimous support in the Sikh community for monitoring of Sikhs as a distinct category.

The politicians present were left in no doubt about the strength of feeling in the Sikh community that the Sikh case was entirely different to other groups given the legal precedence, results of the consultation exercise by ONS and cross party political support. It was proposed ONS should be invited to meet with the APPG for UK Sikhs to explain its position to elected representatives. Parliamentary questions are also to be tabled to establish the facts regarding those for and against monitoring of Sikhs as a distinct category in the Census 2011. Another idea being considered is a Judicial Review challenge against the ONS if it ignores the *Mandla v Lee* case and the results of its own consultation and fails to allow monitoring of Sikhs as a distinct category in the Census 2011 so all public bodies ensure Sikhs are equally treated as regards provision of public services.

The third issue raised in the lobby was the recent indiscriminate attacks on innocent Sikhs in India by police and armed forces following the killing of Bhai Balkar Singh who was shot dead in Mumbai on 20 June 2008. Images of the attacks on Sikhs were circulated to politicians who agreed to raise an Early Day Motion expressing their concern on the treatment of Sikhs and calling on the UK Government to raise the matter with the Indian authorities. Simon Hughes MP, the President of the Liberal Democrats and Vice-Chair APPG for UK Sikhs who also spoke said he would publicly raise the matter with the Foreign Secretary in either Parliamentary Questions or during debate. Labour MPs also agreed to take up the matter at a personal level with Foreign Office Ministers.

Virendra Sharma the MP for Ealing Southall also attended the Sikh Lobby for the first time and expressed his full support on all the issues raised. Responding to a question from Sikhs Simon Hughes also said he would keep up pressure on Paramjit Singh Dhanda's continued detention. Politicians that took part in the lobby included: Rob Marris, Simon Hughes, Paramjit Dhanda, Mark Todd, Mike Gapes, David Kidney, Alan Keen, Fiona Mactaggart, John Hemmings, Ken Purchase, Virendra Sharma, Adam Holloway and Doug Naysmith. Boris Johnson, the new Mayor of London, Dominic Grieve, the new Shadow Home Secretary and several Labour Ministers sent their apologies.



Virendra Sharma MP Ealing Southall expressing his full support for the issues raised

Some of the Sikhs that spoke during the lobby were: Balvinder Kaur, Chair of the Sikh Women's Alliance; Dabinderjit Singh, National Co-ordinator for the Sikh Secretariat; Gurmukh Singh, Administrative Secretary for the British Sikh Consultative Forum; Harbhajan Singh, Sikh Federation, Leicester; Harjinder Singh, Sikh Care Society Heathrow; Councillor Jagir Kaur Sekhon OBE; Kashmir Singh, General Secretary of the British Sikh Federation; Mejinderpal Kaur, Director of United Sikhs; Det Chief Inspector Pal Binder, Secretary of the Metropolitan Police Sikh Association; Ranjit Singh, General Secretary Council of Khalistan; Sukhvinder Singh, Adviser to the Sikh Federation (UK) and Councillor Tanmanjeet Singh Dhese. Around half a dozen youngsters also spoke at various times during the lobby.



Paramjit Singh Dhanda MP, Minister in the Department for Communities and Local Government



## Parliamentary questions tabled by Rob Marris MP following the Sikh Lobby

The following Parliamentary Questions came as a direct result of the Sikh Lobby on 1 July 2008. The first three relate to monitoring and the last to recent violence and arrests of Sikhs in Panjab.

1. To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, for which ethnic groups not included in the current Census 2011 Test questionnaire consultation on ethnic group, national identity, religion, and language there were the most requests for inclusion in the Census 2011.
2. To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many of the Sikh organisations which responded to the Census 2011 Test questionnaire consultation on ethnic group, national identity, religion, and language were (a) in favour of and (b) against the inclusion of Sikhs as a separate ethnic group on the Census 2011 itself.
3. To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many responses to the consultation on the Census 2011 questionnaire the Office for National Statistics received from (a) organisations representing Sikhs and (b) all organisations on possible questions in the 2011 Census on (i) ethnic group, (ii) National identity, (iii) religion and (iv) language.
4. To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the government of India on the recent (a) violence against Sikhs in India and (b) mass arrests of Sikhs in India.

## MPs urge UK Government action on recent killing and arrest of Sikhs in India

An Early Day Motion (EDM) was tabled in the UK Parliament by John Hemmings MP just before the Summer recess. EDM 2104 was produced due to the overwhelming outrage against the continued oppression of Sikhs.

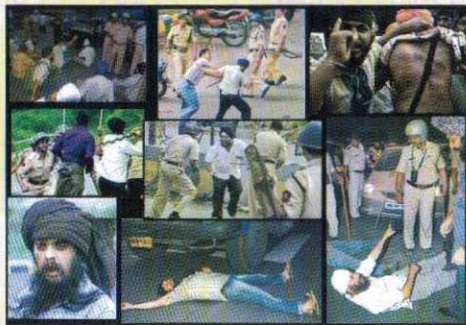
The recent attacks against Sikhs follows protests by Sikhs against the killing of an innocent unarmed Sikh Balkar Singh on 20 June. Another Sikh protester Harmander Singh was then killed on 18 July. The armed forces and police in Mumbai brutally attacked innocent Sikh protestors, as was evident through media reports and photographs.

Rob Marris MP has also tabled a Parliamentary Question asking what protest action is being taken by the UK Government against India.

Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK) said: 'We are pleased to see a successful partnership being built between the Sikh Federation (UK) and MPs from all the main political parties and that UK MPs are genuinely concerned with issues that concern British Sikhs.'



John Hemmings MP



Recent indiscriminate attacks on innocent Sikhs

## EDM 2104 - Death of Balkar Singh and Sikhs in India

That this House notes with grave concern an unarmed Sikh, Balkar Singh, was shot dead in Mumbai on 20th June, with the killing resulting in widespread protests by Sikhs in cities throughout Punjab, Haryana and in Mumbai; is deeply concerned that since the incident the Indian armed forces and police have beaten and attacked unarmed Sikh men, women and children and thousands of Sikh activists in Punjab have been arrested to try and suppress peaceful protests; further notes that Bal Thackeray the chief of Shiv Sena, a right wing nationalist group, is fuelling the situation by reminding the Sikh minority of the anti-Sikh pogroms of November 1984 and that this is causing considerable distress to British Sikhs; and for this reason urges the Government to act immediately by raising its concerns with the Indian authorities.

## Discrimination of Sikh employee at Asda comes to an end

A Sikh graduate recently employed at an Asda Supermarket was requested to return to work after being told by managers to either remove his Kirpan or risk losing his job.

On successful recruitment at the supermarket and completion of induction training, Mr Singh informed management that he was a practising Sikh, therefore carried the 5 K's. After having attended two full days of training at the supermarket, he went in for his first day of work and was asked to see the Assistant Store manager, who informed him that he would have to remove his Kirpan but Mr Singh refused to do so. As a consequence, the manager did not allow him to go onto the shop floor. He was told to either take off the Kirpan, wear a plastic one or to leave.

Mr Singh contacted the Sikh Federation (UK) and National Sikh Resource Centre and was advised to contact his local MP and make him aware of the situation. The National Sikh Resource Centre wrote to the supermarket explaining the significance of the Kirpan to a practising Sikh, explaining how the law permits him and all Sikhs to wear and practice their religion in the fullest form. It was also explained that there may be a breach of authoritative position under the 1976 Race Relations Act and that it is justified under the Criminal Justice Act 1988 and Offensive Weapons Act 1996 for a baptised Sikh to carry a Kirpan.



Through consultation and educating the supermarket, Mr Singh has now been given his job back and Asda has changed its policy in relation to the Kirpan. It is pleasing to see that Asda has changed its mind, and the fact that they recognise Sikh employees have rights and are afforded protection under the law.

Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK) welcomed the outcome and described this as a positive step forward by Asda that other employers should note.

This again is another case which shows the need for a Sikh Code of Practice which needs to be adopted by the UK government to stop potential discrimination cases arising against British Sikhs in the 21st century.

## International meeting in Paris to monitor progress on the dastaar cases

When this booklet went to press the Sikh Federation (UK) was facilitating a meeting of Sikh representatives across Europe in Paris later this month to assess progress on the dastaar cases in France that are currently lodged in the European Court of Human Rights.

Due to local differences between Sikhs in France, limited communication between the legal team, the different factions in France and one or two opportunists with ulterior motives there is a danger that a less than united effort in terms of legal approach and well-thought through arguments will result in Sikhs in France failing to succeed in the European Court.



# SIKH FEDERATION (UK) ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

## Sikhs from across Europe take part in Remembrance Sunday In Ypres, Belgium

On 11 November, Armistice Day hundreds of Sikhs from Belgium, UK, Netherlands, France, Germany and Norway gathered in the Belgian town of Ypres to commemorate the sacrifices of Sikh soldiers who fell in the First World War.

There was an excellent turnout of Sikhs who participated in the 'poppy parade', a yearly ceremonial walk of thousands from the centre of Ypres up to the Menin Gate, where the names of numerous Sikhs who sacrificed their lives are individually listed. This year Sikhs had their largest turnout and formed almost a quarter of the poppy parade. Sikhs are the only civilians that are given the privilege of participating in the poppy parade in such large numbers.

Sikhs walked behind five Sikhs, each carrying the Sikh national flag, the Nishan Sahib. An estimated 10,000 people watched and filmed the poppy parade. The distinct and separate visible identity of the Sikh Nation received a huge positive exposure. Sikhs were given special permission to carry the five Nishan Sahibs that were brought by Sikhs from the UK. The Nishan Sahibs and the Keshri Dastaars, that Sikhs were requested to wear, made a massive impact and were the talk of the parade with not only ordinary people, but the European television, press and radio showing a huge interest.

The Last Post – the traditional (British) salute to the fallen warrior – was heard at 11am. 11 wreaths were laid by around 25 Sikh representatives from different countries across Europe. Thomas Wise, a UK MEP, especially made the trip to accompany UK Sikhs. He also put down a wreath under the Menin Gate to pay tribute to Sikhs who sacrificed their lives so the people of Europe could live in freedom.

The Menin Gate Memorial is perhaps the most visited Great War Memorial on the Western Front. Every night of the year, without exception, policemen close the road to traffic at 8.00 p.m. and then stand at the salute while buglers from the Ypres Fire Brigade play "The Last Post". This happens whatever the weather and there is always someone there to watch. The people living near the Menin Gate often open their doors and stand on their doorsteps to join in this daily act of Remembrance in honour of the young and brave who came from all over the world to die in the defence of their town. During the summer battlefield-tour months, there may be many hundreds of visitors attending the ceremony.



Sikhs from across Europe taking part in the 'poppy parade' in Ypres, Belgium



Sikhs walking behind five Sikhs carrying Nishan Sahibs (Sikh national flags)



Harjinder Singh providing interviews to European television, press and radio

Its large Hall of Memory contains the names of 54,896 Commonwealth soldiers who died without graves, incised into vast panels. As bodies are found even to this day, although not a frequent event, when identified they receive a proper burial, and the name is removed from the Menin Gate.



Sikhs holding a large banner next to the Candlelit Vigil of Remembrance

The full day of activities also comprised a visit to Bedford House Cemetery and the Monument in Hollebeke where Sikhs did Ardaas and Langar was served. The day ended with a meeting in Ypres of Sikh delegates from across Europe to discuss proposals for the 90th anniversary in 2008. Thousands of postcards were distributed by members of the Sikh community to highlight the importance of the Sikh identity.

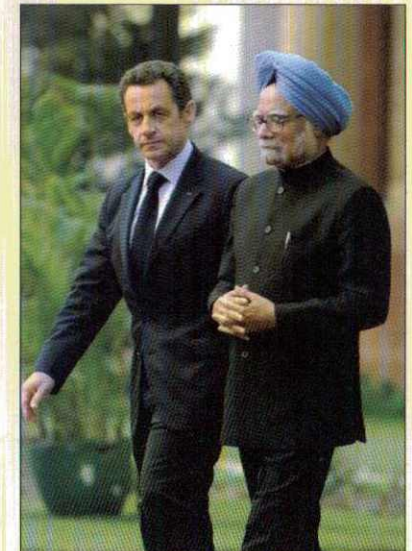
## Sikh Federation (UK) urge Sikh leadership in Punjab to unite and take up dastaar issue during French President's India Visit

The Sikh Federation (UK) called on the entire Sikh leadership in Punjab not to miss the opportunity of exerting pressure regarding the dastaar issue prior on the French President, Nicholas Sarkozy visiting India on 24 January. Manmohan Singh invited the French President as his special guest of honour for the 26 January Republic Day celebrations.

Bhai Amrik Singh said: 'We urge those in the Punjab Government, SGPC, the Khalsa Action Committee, the newly formed Panj Pardanhi leadership of Shromani Akali Dal (Amritsar), Simranjit Singh Mann and all others concerned with the right of Sikhs to wear the dastaar to show they are united in demonstrating Sikhs are deeply concerned with the discriminatory laws of the French Government.'

'The situation has now been going on for years and it is time for Sikhs to see if they can come together and leave the Indian Prime Minister and French President in no doubt that Sikhs will continue in their campaign until they are victorious.'

Bhai Amrik Singh pointed out: 'The right of Sikhs to wear the dastaar is not just about Sikh school children, but also when Sikhs are forced to produce photographs without the dastaar to obtain passports and driving licences in France. It is ridiculous that Sikhs are being put through this humiliation, when the Indian Prime Minister himself knows the identity of a Sikh is only complete with the dastaar.'



Nicholas Sarkozy visiting India



# THE VANCOUVER SUN

## Sikh leader seeks support for 'Sikh Agenda'

Kim Bolan, Vancouver Sun (extract)  
February 17, 2008

BRITISH COLUMBIA - A British Sikh leader who has advocated the delisting of banned groups has been on a Canadian speaking tour to drum up support for a new lobby group to advance the so-called "Sikh Agenda."

Dabinderjit Singh told The Vancouver Sun he met with 250 to 300 Sikhs in B.C. and Ontario to finalize the seven-point agenda, which includes reversing the ban on two organizations and support for the creation of a separate Sikh country called Khalistan.

Singh said a lobby group has been formed to get commitments from Canadian politicians for at least some of the agenda points, particularly during an election campaign.

Most of the agenda is about issues affecting Sikhs in their countries of residence, such as increased political representation, government funding for Sikh schools and groups and in Canada, working with police to tackle the gang and drug problems, he said.

But Singh said the decision was made after his Canadian meetings to keep the delisting of the two organisations on the agenda - albeit in a reduced way.

"The most controversial issue is the proscription or the banning of the two organizations," Singh said in a wide-ranging interview. "There is no longer a separate point but a sub-point under human rights as it is a legitimate human rights concern."

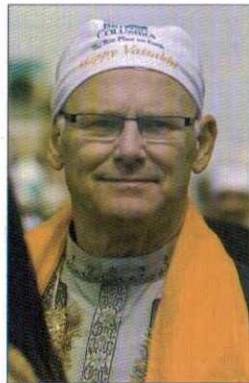
Singh is an adviser to the Sikh Federation (U.K.), a group that published a 2008 calendar with photographs of "martyrs". But the tall, eloquent Brit who (received an OBE from) the Queen insists the only objective of the federation and like-minded Canadian Sikhs is to put forward a political platform that advances the human rights of Sikhs around the world.

Singh spoke at a forum on Feb. 9 organized by

Surrey's Dasmesh Darbar temple.

The forum, held at the Grand Taj banquet hall, drew interested Sikhs from the U.S., Australia, Toronto, Edmonton and Calgary. A day later, he spoke at the Dasmesh Darbar temple, where he said that politicians should have to commit to supporting some of the Sikh Agenda before getting to speak at temples or events like the coming Vaisakhi parade.

"What you need to do is sit down with politicians in advance of giving them time on the stage and say, 'Look, we have an agenda,'" Singh explained. "In Canada, everyone turns up to Vaisakhi."



Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day at Vaisakhi celebrations this year

Singh said his U.K. group came out with its Sikh Agenda in 2001 and has continued to lobby politicians on several fronts. Now Sikhs in Canada want to develop the same approach by having a more organized platform to put to politicians, he said.

The Canadian Sikh Agenda will be formally released at the end of March, Singh said. The lobby

group plans to open at least two Sikh resource centres - one in B.C. and one in Ontario - with government funding if possible. And three national spokesmen for the agenda will be introduced within a few weeks, Singh said.

The agenda also includes support for the creation of a separate Sikh nation called Khalistan.

"Self-determination is a human right for each individual no matter what country you live in," Singh said.

He said he met with politicians, their staff and community members in his three-week stay in Canada, which ended in Vancouver last Thursday.

## Sikh Federation (UK) only based in UK, but recognised as leading the way on Sikh campaigns at the European and World level

Frankfurt - On the back of recent meetings in Canada with Sikhs from the USA, Canada and Australia the Sikh Federation (UK) has held a series of meetings and discussions over several days in Frankfurt, Germany with all leading Sikh organisations across Europe. The Federation has received a universal endorsement and mandate for its national and international political lobbying on Sikh issues.

At the Sikh Center Gurdwara, Frankfurt the Federation confirmed that it was an independent Sikh organisation based only in the UK and that it has no branches or sister organisations in any other country. It also confirmed it is autonomous and not connected to any one individual or political party in Punjab. Instead it will continue to remain totally independent, but free to maintain political contacts and provide support to any legitimate Sikh organisations or projects in Punjab that are beneficial to Sikhs or furthering the Sikhs political struggle for an independent sovereign Sikh State.



Bhai Dabinderjit Singh speaking at Sikh Center Gurdwara, Frankfurt



Sangat listening to the Sikh Federation (UK) programme at Sikh Center Gurdwara, Frankfurt

This public announcement was deliberately made at the largest Gurdwara in Germany so Sikhs there were left in no doubt that those in Germany who have for a number of months misused the Sikh Federation name and suggested an endorsement from the UK were misleading Sikhs. Those in Germany using a variation of the Sikh Federation name and logo are believed to be breaking the law as the name and logo are understood to be registered and legally protected throughout Europe.

An equally important announcement in Frankfurt was the Sikh Federation (UK) reaffirmed its commitment to encourage all leading Panthic Sikh organisations in each country to work together to make the forthcoming World Sikh Lobby at the United Nations in Switzerland on 14-16 March a success. All leading Panthic Sikh organisations were also alerted about one or two named individuals that were trying to sabotage the UN event who have been previously exposed for their activities. Panthic Sikh organisations took serious note of the actions of these individuals and suggested they should be boycotted.

Similarly the Sikh Federation (UK) encouraged Sikhs gathered from across Europe to start to contact MEPs regarding the Sikh Freedom Lobby at the European Parliament, Brussels with just over two months remaining until 7 May.



# NATIONAL POST

## Khalistani movement resurgence feared - India tells Ottawa Sikh separatism reappears in Canada

Kim Bolan, National Post and Vancouver Sun (extract) - March 11, 2008

VANCOUVER - The Indian government has raised concerns in Ottawa over an apparent resurgence of the Sikh separatist Khalistan movement in Canada, The Vancouver Sun has learned.

The Indian High Commission and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade held discussions late last week about the fact that there is a renewed effort in Canada to delist banned groups that were formed to fight for Khalistan.



Dr Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister

And Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said last week that his government is concerned about "credible information" it has obtained showing that the remnants of Khalistan groups in Canada, the U.K., Germany and Pakistan are regrouping.

The Sun revealed last month that a British Sikh leader toured Canada recently to promote the so-called "Sikh agenda," which includes lobbying to delist banned organisations as well as getting political support for Khalistan.

A senior official with the Indian High Commission confirmed Monday that the issue was raised by

India as recently as "three days ago" with Canadian officials.

And he said India specifically mentioned the recent Canadian visit of Dabinderjit Singh, who travelled to B.C. and Ontario and met with 300 people about his campaign to develop his "Sikh Agenda."

"We have taken up this issue specifically and other issues related to the resurgence of certain pro-Khalistan elements," diplomat Rajiv Sahi said from Ottawa Monday. "We do believe there is a certain resurgence of this movement here."

There has been an increase of pro-Khalistan imagery and commentary within the Sikh communities of B.C. and Ontario over the last year.

The Indian prime minister expressed his concerns in a letter to the head of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee - the group that governs Sikh temples around the world.

Singh was responding to a request by the SGPC to remove the remaining names on a blacklist of Khalistanis living in Canada and other foreign countries.

continued...



Avtar Singh Makkar, President, Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC)

# NATIONAL POST

It was important to maintain the blacklist, Singh said, because "the government and our agencies have credible information of efforts being made by extremist groups to revive militancy in Punjab."

"Much of this is concentrated in countries abroad, like the U.K., Germany, Canada and especially Pakistan, where such groups receive a great deal of encouragement from remnants of extremist groups as well as support from other hostile forces."



Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day

Canadian officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs did not return phone calls Monday.

But Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day said law enforcement agencies in Canada "remain vigilant" about any resurgence in the movement.

Liberal Public Safety critic Ujjal Dosanjh said Canada has to do more to combat the resurgence that has alarmed the Indian prime minister.

"If another country is so concerned about the resurgence of Khalistanis in places such as Canada, our government has an obligation to respond to their presence in our midst and their resurgence in our midst," he said.

"The way we are going right now in Canada, my worry is the identity politics are taking hold whether in the name of multiculturalism or otherwise, and these kinds of developments that may be aimed at 15,000 miles away are very, very dangerous for Canada in the long run," Dosanjh said of the Khalistanis. "These guys that are here are not welcome in India and yet they are able to function in a place like Canada with total impunity. It is mind-boggling."

Dosanjh said the fact Singh is speaking out publicly shows the problem is serious.

"Canada has to be responsible both domestically and internationally on these issues," Dosanjh said.

## Sikh protest outside European Parliament results in action

Sikhs were disappointed that for the third year in succession the European Parliament were unable to properly accommodate those taking part in the Sikh Freedom Lobby.

In the first year the Indian Government representatives in Brussels were exposed for pressuring the administration as they were nervous about the lobby raising issues to expose the human rights violations in India and gain support for the Sikh freedom movement.

Last year although Sikhs were still not given free access to the European Parliament, alternative arrangements were made at London House and the Eastman Building in the EU Parliament for MEPs to address and meet Sikhs.

This year the Eastman Building was eventually



Sit down protest outside the European Parliament



provided, but only after Sikhs and MEPs caused disruption at the start of the day in the presence of the media. MEPs from the UK Independence Party (UKIP), including Tom Wise, Derek Clark, Gerard Batten and Michael Natrass took the lead with this.

Sikhs met with, listened and asked questions of a number of MEPs in the Eastman Building including Derek Clark, Robert Evans, Baroness Sarah Ludford and Liz Lynne. However, the day finished with a sit down protest outside the European Parliament, which resulted in widespread media coverage, including on Central TV news. This year delegates not wearing the Kirpan were also denied entrance to Parliament and there was a strong feeling that direct action was necessary.

A number of MEPs, including Robert Evans, Liz Lynne, Derek Clark and Fiona Hall joined protesters, made speeches and gave media interviews. Liz Lynne MEP, Vice-President of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee and member of the Human Rights Subcommittee, said:

"This decision is outrageous. In the UK the right to wear the Kirpan is enshrined in law, as it should be across the EU. Sikhs have made an outstanding contribution to the wealth and diversity of society . . . across Europe, and to treat EU citizens in this way is totally unjustified. I wrote last week to President Pöttering of the European Parliament hoping to ensure entrance for my constituents but to no avail. I now hope to lead a cross party campaign on this issue to ensure this discrimination cannot be allowed to continue here or anywhere else. The Sikh faith should be recognised throughout the EU, Kirpans are widely regarded as a religious symbol, not a threat, and to refuse entry to those wearing them is discrimination pure and simple."



Liz Lynne MEP, Vice-President of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee with Sikh delegates

### Sikh freedom lobby in European Parliament secures debate on linking trade with India with its human rights record

Human rights violations have been a key theme of each of the last three Sikh Freedom Lobbies in the European Parliament. When addressing Sikhs in the Eastman Building Baroness Sarah Ludford, the Vice Chair of the Human Rights Sub Committee was asked about the failure of the European Union to challenge India on its human rights record.

Baroness Ludford left the lobby to return later to inform the Sikh Federation (UK) representatives that the Foreign Affairs Committee and Human Rights Sub Committee had agreed to consider India's Human Rights record in October. The Sikh Federation (UK) was asked to arrange a European-wide delegation of Sikhs to attend the sub committee



Baroness Sarah Ludford, the Vice Chair of the Human Rights Sub Committee

meeting. The debate will seek to link trade with India with its human rights record. The EU is India's largest trading partner with about 25 percent of Indian exports coming to EU countries and also provides the most foreign investment to India. Last year two-way trade between India and the EU totalled about euro38 billion.

Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair Sikh Federation (UK), said: 'this is an opportunity for Sikhs across Europe to demonstrate they can influence the 35 elected representatives on the human rights sub committee. It is time for Sikhs across Europe who have agreed to work with the Federation to take action. We will provide support and guidance to those in mainland Europe.'

The Sikh Federation (UK) working with Sikhs in other EU countries is targeting members on the human rights sub committee from 8 of the 27 EU countries that comprise 25 of the 35 members. These include the UK (5 members, including two vice-chairs), Italy (7 members), France (3 members, including the chair and one vice-chair), Spain (3 members), Germany, Belgium and Portugal (with 2 members each) and Greece (1 member).

### Sikh Federation (UK) to set up All Party Sikh Group in European Parliament

UK MEPs have agreed to take the lead in setting up an All Party Sikh Group in the European Parliament that will champion Sikh causes. From early indications it will have at least 50 MEPs. The first issue they are taking up is the right of Sikhs to enter the European Parliament wearing their Kirpans.

The majority of MEPs will be from the UK, but the group is also expected to have MEPs from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. The Federation is also in the process of setting up a European-wide Sikh Liaison Group that will work with the All Party Sikh Group.

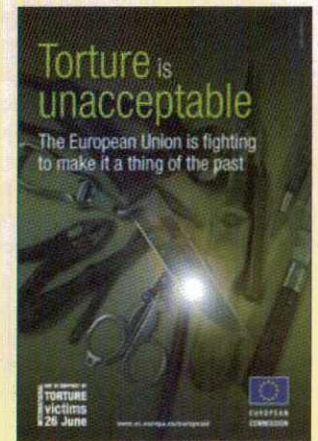
### 3-Day Sikh educational tour of Europe and lobby proves huge success

The National Sikh Resource Centre operated by the Sikh Federation (UK) organised a 3-Day Sikh Educational Tour of Europe and Lobby. The tour comprised a combination of visits to Gurdwara Singh Sabha, Paris and Gurdwara Guru Nanak Sahib, Brussels, a visit to see the Menin Gate war memorial in Ypres, along with a special exhibition in the In Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres that recognised the contribution of Sikhs. The tour concluded with the Sikh Freedom Lobby in the European Parliament in Brussels on the third day.

The coach load of 55 Sikhs from the UK that took part stayed in bed and breakfast hotel accommodation with ensuite facilities in Paris and Brussels. During the tour the group also had time to take in the sites in Paris with a night tour and river boat cruise on the River Seine. A lot was packed into the three extremely long days and the Sikhs – men, women and children that took part had an excellent time.



Participants in the 3-Day Sikh Educational Tour of Europe and Lobby



EU Human Rights Sub Committee expected to take tough stand against India





The Memorandum focused on five key developments in the last twelve months. These included:

- the continued challenge against the visible Sikh identity – not only in mainland Europe, but in the UK, Canada and USA
- the 123-page October 2007 Human Rights Watch report - 'India: Time to Deliver Justice for Atrocities in Punjab - Investigate and Prosecute Perpetrators of 'Disappearances' and Killings'
- the need to stop the imminent deportation of four Sikh human rights activists (hijackers) from Switzerland
- ending the death penalty in India – Professor Davinderpal Bhullar's case and those of Jagtar Singh and Balwant Singh, who became the latest in a line of Sikhs to be sentenced to death by hanging by the Indian authorities were raised
- bringing human rights violators to justice using national laws incorporating Article 5.2 of the UN Convention against Torture, including UN assistance to prevent those involved in torture and genocide from leaving the country in which they reside

### Four Sikhs to be deported from Switzerland receive political and international Sikh support for their campaign

The three-day World Sikh Lobby finished on 16 March with an international human rights conference at Gurdwara Sahib Switzerland, Langenthal. Many non-Sikh speakers spoke at the event and reiterated their support for the four Sikh activists threatened with deportation from Switzerland.

The non-Sikh speakers included: Elisabeth Scheffeldt, President of the Swiss Peoples Party (SP) in Schlieren, Elisabeth Derisiotis, Béatrice Bürgin and Wafaâ Jafrane Brajkovic who are all elected SP representatives, Dr Christoph Peter Baumann, Stefan Martin and writer Frieda Habegger. They all spoke passionately in support of the four Sikh activists threatened with deportation and also raised concerns about their families and the human rights situation in India. The non-Sikh speakers demonstrated that the four Sikhs have considerable political and other support in Switzerland.

As many will be aware it recently emerged that Frieda Habegger a writer was on board the 1981 plane that was hijacked in protest by Sikhs after the incident at Chowk-Mehta, in September 1981, in which the police fired upon and killed innocent Sikhs. She has provided the Sikhs with a huge boost in their campaign to remain in Switzerland explaining her personal experiences on Swiss national television and the circumstances surrounding their protest actions.



Writer Frieda Habegger with Master Karan Singh

Sikh speakers at the event included: Joaban Singh, Switzerland, Dabinderjit Singh, UK, Parvkar Singh, Canada, Mohinder Singh, Belgium, Tajinder Singh, Italy and Javinder Singh, UK. Master Karan Singh managed the Gurdwara stage throughout the event. The speakers spoke not only about the four Sikh activists, but also about the Sikh human rights rally and meetings at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on 14 March. The speeches were in German, English and Panjabi so non-Sikhs as well as Sikhs were better informed of the situation.



Parvkar Singh from Canada while speaking delivered a stark warning to those undermining the sacrifices of the four Sikhs for their own personal agendas or working at the behest of the Indian authorities. He reminded the congregation that we only need to look to Sikh history to see the fate of traitors of the Sikh Panth.

### Sikh activists pledge not to rest until human rights violations in India are fully exposed on the international stage

Sikh representatives that organise the annual World Sikh Lobby pledged that they were determined to make the recently established links with independent human rights experts at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva work to expose India's human rights violations.

The statement came after a meeting in Geneva with those representing the Special Rapporteur on human rights while countering terrorism. The meeting took place just before India's human rights record came under its first-ever Universal Periodic Review (UPR) with the UNHRC.



UN Human Rights Council session in Geneva

The 3-hour UPR was web cast live against India's wishes and by being made publicly available has exposed the new system of universal periodic review that commenced at the start of the week is flawed, as it grants excessive control over the outcome to the state under review.

In theory holding debates on countries was supposed to help activists to shine an international spotlight on human rights violations, and to challenge government responses that are inadequate or false. However, the three-hour session on India offered little in the way of proper scrutiny. The most significant criticism of the proceeding was the session ignored the detailed NGO submissions, such as from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch regarding subjects such as torture and extrajudicial killings.

The most important outcome was that certain government representatives, such as, Peter Gooderham (UK Government), Terry Cormier (Canadian Government), Anna Chambers (US Government), Nathalie Kohli (Swiss Government) and a number of other Western democracies posed difficult questions for India. All four challenged Swashpawan Singh, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations and many concluded that the responses to the points raised were inadequate.

It will not be lost on those that watched the 3-hour session that it was countries where Sikhs have been lobbying the most – UK, Canada, USA and Switzerland that are taking the lead in challenging India. However, other countries are slowly picking up on some of the key issues e.g. use of torture by the police and armed forces. India will be concerned by these latest developments by those lobbying both nationally and through the UN. It is clear that India is trying to counter the Sikh lobby by using Sikh faces to defend India's position.



## UN feedback suggests World Sikh Lobby is making a significant impact

In the last 4 weeks Sikhs from the UK, Canada, USA, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Belgium and Netherlands that took part in the World Sikh Lobby in Geneva on 14 March have as promised continued dialogue with around ten UN Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts. Apart from the successful meetings that took place that day there have been many written exchanges and talks.



UN Human Rights Council session in Geneva

The most significant exchanges have taken place with the Special Rapporteur for Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of Indigenous People. The Special Rapporteur for Torture and Special Rapporteur for Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary executions have also asked for meetings in New York.

On 10 April a meeting took place in Geneva with the assistant to the Special Rapporteur on human rights while countering terrorism. Sikh representatives were informed that the World Sikh Lobby in Geneva on 14 March had proved very productive and led to the entire team working for the Special Rapporteurs to meet and assess how the information provided by Sikhs from across the globe could be put to best use in the context of India.

Sikh representatives at the meeting included Kuldip Singh Chaheru, Balbir Singh, Dabinderjit Singh, Master Karan Singh and Harminder Singh Khalsa. The meeting commenced with Sikh representatives reiterating that India was the only country that did not support the resolution at the UN General Assembly regarding the protection of human rights while countering terrorism. This highlighted a fundamental weakness in India's respect for and approach to human rights.

In the meeting that lasted over an hour the Sikh delegation discussed India's continued widespread use of draconian anti-terror legislation against Sikhs. It was mentioned the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act (TADA), which expired in 1995 and which Nigel Rodley, the UN Rapporteur condemned as "disturbing and completely unacceptable" continues to be used to hold political prisoners.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), enacted in March 2002, which replaced the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (POTO) in 2001 was also referred to. It was pointed out the act is similar to TADA in its provisions for detentions, summary trials, and the use of testimony obtained under duress. In addition, POTA provides for special courts to try offences, places the burden of proof at the bail stage on the accused, allows confessions made to a police officer admissible as evidence, extends the period of remand from 15 to 60 days, and sets mandatory sentences for terrorism-related offences.

The false cases against Professor Davinderpal Singh Bhullar, Balbir Singh Bains and Paramjit Singh Dhaddi were discussed in the context of counter-terrorism along with the extensive use of police cats by the Indian authorities to kill innocents and discredit the Sikh freedom movement. The practices of successive Director Generals of Police in Punjab, such as, the bullet for bullet policy were mentioned. UN officials requested details of specific cases that the Rapporteur could use to have a dialogue with the Indian authorities that could then be used to request a special investigation.



## Sangat across Greece pledge support for Sikh Federation (UK) projects and political leadership on the international stage

In August the Sikh Federation (UK) took part in five programmes over three days in Greece following an invitation from the Sangat in Greece. The respect shown to those from the UK, the turnout at each programme and the attention paid by the Sangat regarding the issues raised was most impressive. Much of this respect dates back to 2001 when those belonging to the Federation helped set up the first Gurdwara in Karanidi.



Sangat for the Sikh Federation (UK) programme at the Greece-wide programme nears Thiva

Programmes took place at five different Gurdwaras, including Gurdwara Sarbat Da Bhala, Karanidi, Sri Guru Nanak Darbar, Athens and Gurdwara Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji, Megara. The other two programmes were in Gurdwaras in Crete and near Thiva. Despite each of the Gurdwaras spending large sums on developing and maintaining the Gurdwaras and wages being relatively low for Europe representatives decided to donate 2,000 Euros towards the work and projects of the Sikh Federation (UK).



Sangat for the Sikh Federation (UK) programme at Sri Guru Nanak Darbar, Athens

Not only were the Sangat informed of the work and projects of the Sikh Federation (UK) but those responsible at each Gurdwara shared some of their concerns and the challenges they face in Greece. By the end of the visit the Sikh Federation (UK) had set up a network of Sikh contacts for lobbying on local and national issues, at the European level and on the international stage at the UN.

The local concerns included: the lack of recognition of Gurdwaras as places of worship in Greece, restrictions on openly wearing the Kirpan, lack of voting rights for residents, failure of the Indian High Commission in Athens to providing travel documents etc.

Although the Sikhs in Greece are less well established than in many other European countries and lack those that are fluent in Greek the enthusiasm and commitment shown suggests they will quickly move ahead of Sikhs in many other countries in terms of political lobbying. The Sikh Federation (UK) has therefore agreed to use political contacts in the UK and in Europe to make initial contact with Greek politicians and the Government to take up relevant concerns. The National Sikh Resource Centre has started undertaking some research to help Sikhs in Greece secure more rights.

Similar requests have been received by the Sikh Federation (UK) from Sangat in several other countries in mainland Europe that realise they must learn to stand up for their own rights with the support of Sikhs from the UK – namely the Federation. Sangat are increasingly becoming aware that if they are to protect the future of their children they need to become more politically active where they live and stop looking to the Indian authorities for support. Sikhs in mainland Europe also realise there is increasing logic in them supporting the need for an independent sovereign Sikh State, Khalistan as they would be much better represented where they live.



Sangat for the Sikh Federation (UK) programme at Gurdwara Sarbat Da Bhala, Karanidi



# CAMPAIGNING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

## Sikh Federation (UK) honour human rights watch in UK parliament

Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK) presented Brad Adams, the Asia Director at Human Rights Watch, with a silver plate which the Federation reserve for those that make a significant contribution on behalf of the Sikh community.

Former Foreign Secretary, Rt. Hon Margaret Beckett MP along with a number of other former and current Ministers as well as numerous MPs came to listen to Brad Adams, the Asia Director at Human Rights Watch, who on 18 October 2007 released a 123-page report titled: 'India: Time to Deliver Justice for Atrocities in Punjab - Investigate and Prosecute Perpetrators of 'Disappearances' and Killings'.

Ministers that attended the meeting included, Ben Bradshaw, the Minister of State (Health Services); Minister for the South West; Pat McFadden - Minister of State, Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform; Claire Ward – a Treasury Minister and Paramjit Singh Dhanda the Minister for Community Cohesion.

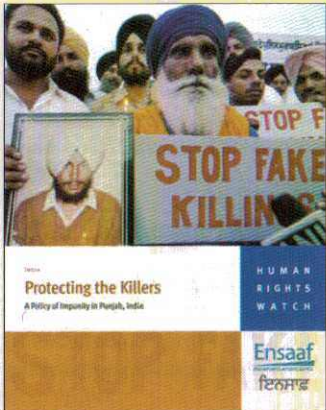
Other former Ministers that attended the meeting included: Rt. Hon Elliot Morley MP, Minister for Fisheries, Water & Nature Protection and later,

Minister for Environment & Climate Change; Rt. Hon John Spellar MP, former Minister for the Armed Forces, Minister for Transport and later, Minister for Northern Ireland; and Fiona Mactaggart MP, former Minister at the Home Office.

Other prominent MPs, that attended the meeting included Simon Hughes MP, the President of the Liberal Democrats & Rob Marris MP the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for UK Sikhs.



Bhai Amrik Singh presents Brad Adams, Asia Director at Human Rights Watch with a silver plate



Human Rights Watch report



Sikhs listening to Brad Adams at the Sikh Lobby Day

## 500 Indian politicians, police officers, police 'cats' and army personnel to be targeted for exclusion from travel outside India

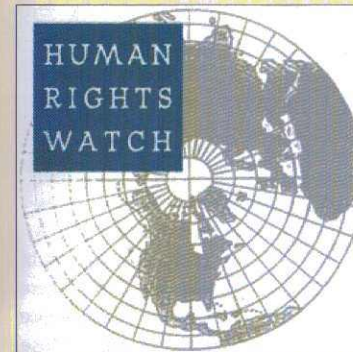
On the 23rd anniversary of the anti-Sikh pogroms of November 1984 the Sikh Federation (UK), working with leading Sikh organisations in the USA, Canada, Australia and other parts of Europe has started work on the setting up of a database of wanted human rights violators.

At the lobby in the UK Parliament the Federation pledged that relevant information and witness statements are to be collected for up to 500 Indian politicians, police officers, army personnel and police 'cats'. Those that will be identified will be those involved in torture, genocide and crimes against humanity and police 'cats' that were used by the police to kill innocent people to both discredit the Sikh freedom movement and justify extrajudicial killings by the Indian authorities.

At the lobby in the UK Parliament it was suggested by Brad Adams, the Asia Director at Human Rights Watch that the level of proof required to successfully prosecute individuals from India when they travel abroad would require considerable evidence and resources.



Former Ministers Rt. Hon Margaret Beckett MP along with Rt. Hon Elliot Morley MP listen to Brad Adams



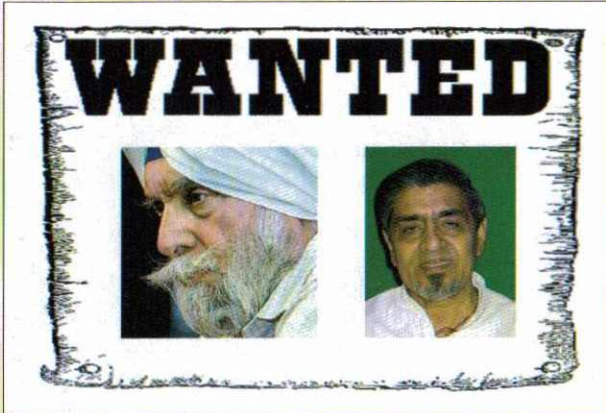
It was suggested by leading politicians, several ex-Ministers, that the strategy should involve diplomatic pressure on the Indian Government to put its own house in order with respect to human rights violations by governments in the UK and the rest of Europe. This could be combined with the second element of the strategy. Namely, to provide Governments across the globe with details of the 500 Indian politicians, police officers, police 'cats' and army personnel involved in torture, genocide and crimes against humanity, that could be used to prevent those individuals leaving India. This was likely to prove the most effective method of bringing about pressure for change.

Human Rights Watch has agreed to work with the Sikh Federation (UK) to assist with providing guidance on the type of information that should be collected for both prosecutions and to provide to governments so the 500 to be targeted can be successfully excluded from Europe and other parts of the world. Amnesty International and other leading human rights groups are being approached to assist with this process.

It is hoped that a number of Indian politicians and hundreds of police officers, army personnel and police 'cats' will either be prevented from travelling abroad or will fear that if they travel abroad they could face the prospect of arrest, prosecution and imprisonment when they leave India. In a letter by a Home Office Minister, received on the eve of the Sikh lobby by Rob Marris MP, the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for UK Sikhs, it was confirmed that certain individuals involved in torture and other human rights violations could either be excluded from entering the UK or could be asked to leave if they have entered.



## KPS Gill tops list of those that may be prevented from visiting the UK and Europe



Wanted for human rights violations - KPS Gill & Jagdish Tytler

in Parliament suggested there was considerable stigma attached with being excluded from travelling to a country like the UK, other EU countries, the US or Canada. For example, he suggested to politicians present that it would be a positive development if the UK Government and others in Europe were to tell India that the likes of KPS Gill, the former police chief in Punjab, that he would no longer be allowed to visit any of the 27 EU countries.

At the Sikh lobby it was disclosed that on 8 October and again on 23 October Lord West of Spithead, the Home Office Minister responsible for Security and Counter-terrorism, wrote to say 'the Government is fully committed to meeting its obligations under international law and continues to support strongly international efforts to bring perpetrators of crimes against humanity to justice.'



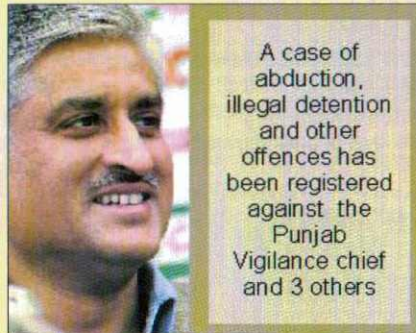
Lord West of Spithead, the Home Office Minister responsible for Security and Counter-terrorism

The Home Office Minister confirmed the 'jurisdiction to prosecute offences of torture exists under Section 134 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988. Where allegations are made against individuals visiting or resident in the UK, the police and immigration authorities will take all possible steps to investigate those matters and, where appropriate, refer a case for prosecution or removal from the UK. It is the Government's policy that the United Kingdom should not provide safe haven to anyone found responsible for major human rights abuses or serious crimes abroad.'

A Federation spokesman said: 'We want to make sure EU countries do not allow those that have the blood of Sikhs on their hands to be allowed to leave the relative safety of India.'

At the Sikh lobby in the UK Parliament in October 2007 Sikhs came one step closer in securing the ban of KPS Gill from Europe. Bhai Amrik Singh, Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK), said 'he is at the top of the twenty most wanted for crimes of torture, genocide and other human rights violations'. Others believed to be in the top twenty of Indian politicians, police officers, army personnel and police 'cats' that have committed crimes against Sikhs are the Congress MP Jagdish Tytler, SSP Swaran 'Ghotna' and Mohammed Izhar Alam.

Brad Adams, the Asia Director at Human Rights Watch, speaking at the All Party Parliamentary Group for UK Sikhs meeting



Sumedh Saini another of those wanted for atrocities

## British MPs call for immediate release of Paramjit Singh Dhaddi

The Sikh Federation (UK) welcomed a motion in the UK Parliament by MPs concerning the continued detention of Paramjit Singh Dhaddi.

On 23 December 2007, Paramjit Singh, a British citizen, completed 1 year in prison in Nabha jail awaiting trial. The motion tabled by Labour MP Ken Purchase urged the UK Government to call for the immediate release of Paramjit Singh who has been falsely imprisoned and tortured.

EDM 523 reproduced below has requested the Foreign Secretary to take urgent action on this matter and has been signed by Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Scottish National Party MPs.

Bhai Amrik Singh said: 'It is outrageous that the Indian authorities torture and continue to hold innocent Sikhs without trial. We will continue to push for Paramjit Singh's immediate release so he can be re-united with his family in the UK.'



Paramjit Singh Dhaddi, British citizen falsely imprisoned & tortured since 23 December 2006

### EDM 523 - ARREST AND DETENTION OF PARAMJIT SINGH IN THE PUNJAB

That this House notes the many and continuing representations to the Foreign Secretary made by British Sikhs on behalf of Paramjit Singh, a British citizen; notes that his detention in the Punjab has now continued for one year causing great concern for his safety; is dismayed that the Foreign Secretary has not given the same expeditious consideration to Paramjit's detention in a Punjab prison as he appears to have given to the plight of Ms Gibbons in a Sudanese prison; and, in the absence of the Punjab authorities providing any credible explanation for Paramjit's detention, calls on the Government to press for his immediate release.

## When will it be the right time to lift the ban on the International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF) in the UK?

Seven years ago following Indian Government pressure on the UK authorities the ISYF along with 20 other organisations was declared "illegal" and banned from undertaking all activities in the UK.

Political contacts, including Ministers, and civil liberties groups have confirmed that the decision in 2001 to ban organisations like the ISYF was made solely to appease foreign governments, such as the Indian Government, who were keen to stop political opposition abroad.

One Labour MP commented: 'If the Indian authorities hoped the ban would stop political opposition from Sikhs



abroad, deflect publicity away from the human rights record in India and silence calls for an independent Sikh State they were clearly mistaken.'

'British Sikhs have shown a remarkable resilience and demonstrated they know how to lobby and build close working relations with leading UK politicians from across the political spectrum.'

'In the last couple of years British Sikhs have taken this lobby on to the European and international stage and from the evidence of recent activities it is clear they have developed useful contacts with leading human rights organisations and are starting to make inroads at the UN.'

In the debates that took place seven years ago MPs highlighted a number of serious concerns about the process that was used for proscribing organisations under the Terrorism Act 2000. The proscription process was described as a "travesty", "too fragile a basis on which to proscribe an organisation" and "unfair".

The ISYF received considerable support from MPs during the debate in the House of Commons in March 2001 and it was acknowledged that mistakes could have been made with respect to the ISYF. The validity of intelligence information supplied by the Indian Government was discredited and shown to be both inaccurate and misleading.

This led to an all-party delegation of MPs, including Ministers, meeting with the Home Secretary on 1 May 2001 to discuss lifting the ban on the ISYF. It was indicated that an application for lifting the ban should be submitted and this would be given appropriate consideration. The 120+ page application was submitted on 9 July 2001. The Home Secretary had 90 days in which to respond. However, 9/11 put paid to an immediate lifting of the ban on any organisation.

Given the passage of time it is understood the UK authorities have in the last couple of years considered during their 6-monthly reviews, whether the time was right to lift the ban on the ISYF. It is understood the ISYF is at the top of the list of organisations where the ban could be lifted. However, each time the Indian authorities are believed to have applied pressure for the ban not to be lifted.

The Indian authorities are concerned Sikhs in the UK, Canada, USA and elsewhere are gradually becoming more politically active where they live and winning the argument in the Sikh struggle to regain their lost sovereignty, independence and political power. Scare stories, plots and talk of unrest in Punjab instigated by the Indian authorities are no longer having the same impact on foreign governments who better understand the reality of the situation.

Whether the ban on the ISYF in the UK will be lifted in the next 12-18 months depends on the degree to which the UK Government wish to be seen by Sikh activists and the community at large as continuing to appease the Indian Government. One thing is however clear that the ban can not be justified by the prevailing situation in Punjab.



Image from Canada: In 2008 it still remains illegal in the UK to show support for the ISYF

## Remembrance march a success but need for a new approach for 25th anniversary

On Sunday 8 June thousands of Sikhs from across the UK gathered in Hyde Park in central London from 11.30am to commemorate the 24th anniversary of the June 1984 Indian army assault on the Golden Temple Complex.

A remembrance march of thousands commenced at 1.30pm from Hyde Park. The march wound its way through the streets of central London – Park Lane, Piccadilly, Regent Street, Haymarket, Trafalgar Square, Pall Mall, Whitehall and finished in Whitehall Place. Youngsters – many associated with the Sikh Federation (UK) – were well prepared and made the most of the remembrance march to raise awareness in the absence of a Freedom Rally in Trafalgar Square.

The main organisers this year left much to be desired and had it not been for the vocal efforts of youngsters and postcards and banners produced by the Sikh Federation (UK) many would have left disappointed. Representatives from many Gurdwaras from across the UK, including those from Gravesend, Slough, East London, Bristol, Coventry, Wolverhampton, Leicester and Leeds suggested a proper organisation Committee comprising two representatives from each Panthic organisation and each supporting Gurdwara should make all arrangements for the 25th anniversary, which is expected to be one of the largest protests to date.

Remembrance March poster designed by the Sikh Federation (UK)



Young Sikhs taking part in the Remembrance March in central London

## Sikhs win Khalistan debate on BBC, Hindu fanatics lose argument and resort to swearing, nastiness and terrorist threats



On Monday 14 April the BBC decided to hold a debate on whether or not there should be a separate Sikh State, Khalistan. Nihal presented the show on BBC Asian Network between 9-10am. The two invited to speak on the subject were Jagdeesh Singh, a Sikh activist from Slough and Deshpal Panesar, an employment law barrister from London.

Jagdeesh Singh put the case for the break up of India and gave a historical Sikh perspective. Whereas Deshpal Panesar – an Indian nationalist – argued Sikhs had flourished in India, although he later admitted Sikhs had 'had a hard time'.

In total there were 19 other contributors that took part in the discussion or sent texts or emails that were read out on air. The BBC tried to ensure a balance between those for and against a separate Sikh State, but the Khalistanis clearly came out on top.



Gurjeet Singh a leading figure in the Sikh Federation (UK) and from Leicester was the first caller and described the discrimination Sikhs have experienced since 1947 and the lack of justice for the last 30 years since 13 April 1978. One thing that is often misinterpreted that both Gurjeet Singh and Jagdeesh Singh explained was that a sovereign Sikh State would be a home where people of all faiths have freedoms.

Hardeep Singh from Berkshire a graduate in Medical Biology from Brunel University in London and a media correspondent for Panjab Radio then explained the significance of the actions taken by the Indian authorities in 1984 in advancing the case for Sikh independence and Khalistan. He also corrected Nihal who in the introduction referred to Hindu/Sikh riots instead of state sponsored pogroms.

Someone from Leicester named Jagdeesh then explained he was against India breaking up and believed the status quo must be maintained. He was a poor speaker with a limited knowledge of freedom movements who not surprisingly refused to accept Sikhs and others should have the freedom to secure their independence.

Dabinderjit Singh then spoke of the broken promises to Sikhs following Indian independence and the Sikhs refusal to sign the Indian constitution that does not even recognise Sikhs as a separate faith. He argued the continued gross violation of the human rights of Sikhs in the last 30 years reinforced the need for Sikh independence. He also explained the paramount importance in the 9/11 era of Sikhs throughout the world having a Sikh voice to represent their interests. This in part addressed the presenter who asked a number of the callers if they would go and live in an independent Sikh State if it was created.

Other pro-Khalistan speakers before the debate was due to end at 10am included Harbhajan Singh from Leicester, Jagvir Singh from Bristol and Hardeep Singh from Walsall. The only other two callers were a Muslim Panjabi called Ross who argued Panjabis were already independent and someone who called himself Daljit Sahota from Derby. He said he was not in favour of Sikh independence, but also admitted he or his family had not really been impacted on by the events of 1984.

The BBC took the unusual step to extend the debate beyond 10am and invited two controversial callers called Ash and Paul. Ash a Hindu Panjabi was clearly upset and said he was opposed to the carving up of India. He said he had a nasty side and 'pledged' to take up arms that would 'make Al Qaeda look like a little baby'.

Paul then continued with a barrage of abuse towards Sikhs that had spoken in favour of Sikh independence. He called them 'crazy', 'nutters', accused them of 'talking bloody nonsense', said they should have their 'heads examined' and that they had 'mental problems'.

The BBC also read out 6 email messages that were mostly in support of Sikh independence and the arguments that had been put forward. The debate was ended by the BBC reading out an emailed statement from Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK), which is reproduced below:

'The Indian authorities have systematically discriminated against the Sikhs since 1947 and subverted or suppressed all legitimate political demands for greater autonomy. In the last 30 years the Indian authorities have unleashed a rein of terror through gross violation of human rights of Sikhs in an attempt to extinguish the calls for freedom and Sikh independence.

Sikhs first secured political power in the form of an independent state in 1710, after suffering centuries of foreign invasions and alien domination. The larger sovereign Sikh state was established in 1799 and was recognised by all the world powers. The Sikhs, after the two Anglo-Sikh wars, lost their kingdom and the Punjab came under British rule in 1849. However, in giving up power Sikhs were party to several Treaties with the British.

Sikhs are clear about their nationhood, but it is denied by the Indian State and the Indian political class which are not prepared to allow the Sikhs their national rights.'

Given what Nihal, the presenter who is Sri Lankan and a Buddhist, had just heard from Ash and Paul after 10am he finished by saying Bhai Amrik Singh had put the Sikh case very eloquently.



## SECURING JUSTICE FOR SIKH VICTIMS OF TORTURE

The Sikh Federation (UK) working with UK politicians, Human Rights Watch (HRW) and REDRESS, is determined to obtain justice for Sikh victims of torture.

In the last 12 months relevant UK politicians and Ministers have been approached to ensure there is the political will to arrest, detain and prosecute those from India involved in the torture of Sikhs. An alternative is excluding those involved in torture from entering the UK. Discussions have also taken place with the police to determine the information required from victims of torture and their families, how their confidentiality will be protected and how the information will be corroborated by the police.

The next stage to hold accountable the Indian Government and individuals who perpetrate torture is for Sikh victims of torture and their families to come forward and supply relevant information. The police will then corroborate this evidence and if and when the torturer enters the UK he can be arrested, questioned, detained and prosecuted.

Since 1988 UK law allows those who have tortured outside the UK to be prosecuted when they visit the UK. Organisations like REDRESS, a London based human rights organisation that helps torture survivors obtain justice and reparation can provide legal assistance to individuals and the Sikh community.

The following is a list of some of those most wanted for acts of torture against Sikhs: **K.P.S. Gill, O.P. Sharma, Ex DGP Sarbdeep Singh Virk, DIG Izhar Alam, SSP Swaran Singh Ghotna, Sumedh Saini- Vigilance Chief, SSP Parmraj Singh Umranangal, Mohammed Mustafa, SSP Alok Nath Angra, H.S. Chahal, Dinkar Gupta, Ex DGP P.C. Dogra, Parmjit Singh Khaira, R.P. Singh Intelligence, Shiv Kumar, Kamaljit Singh Dhillon DSP and IG D.P. Chatopadhai.**

Sikh victims of torture and their families who are willing to come forward and supply relevant information about torturers - anything from statements, photographs, videos, letters, voice recordings, paper articles, pictures etc. - should contact the National Sikh Resource Centre on [sikh\\_resource\\_centre@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sikh_resource_centre@yahoo.co.uk) or write to the 1984 Justice and Freedom Centre, PO Box 150, Leicester, LE5 4DS.

We are also looking to extend the UK practice across the 27 EU countries that should have similar national laws and working with like-minded Sikhs in Canada, USA and Australia to ensure they have a similar system in place so the policy of exclusion or prosecution spreads around the globe.

**REDRESS**  
seeking reparation for torture survivors



HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
WATCH