

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

Meetings:

12th January 2014: A meeting of the Sikh Council UK Policy & Strategy Group took place at Smethwick.

19th January 2014 Sikh Council UK organised and facilitated a Panthic Meeting at Gurdwara Amrit Parchar Dharmik Diwan, Oldbury. The meeting took place in response to the recent disclosure of documents relating to UK Government involvement in the 1984 attack by the Indian Army on the Sri Harmandir Sahib Complex.

25th and 26th January Sikh Council UK in association with local affiliated member organisations and regional teams organised a number of regional meetings to take place across the UK. The meetings provided updates to affiliated member Gurdwara's and organisations from across the regions of the recent disclosures and the campaign for full disclosure and to receive feedback from our affiliated member organisations. Meetings were held at Guru Amar Das Gurdwara, Southall, Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Wolverhampton, Singh Sabha London East Gurdwara Seven Kings and Sikh Temple Chapel Town, Leeds.

29th January 2014 Sikh Council UK organised and led a meeting of Sikh representatives with the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Jeremy Heywood to discuss UK Government involvement in the 1984 attack by the Indian army on Sri Harmander Sahib, Amritsar.

30th January 2014 Representatives of Sikh Council UK met with representatives of Health & Safety Executive regarding our ongoing campaign to extend the exemption to wear Dastar to all workplaces

18th -25th January Representatives of the Sikh Council visited Uganda at their own expense to take part in the centenary celebrations of the Kampala Gurdwara which included issuing of four triangular stamps by Posta Uganda. This unique event is a tribute to the many Sikhs who contributed towards the development of the Ugandan nation over a century. Uganda joins Kenya, Pakistan, Canada and India as countries that have issued stamps relating to Sikhs.

Hard Hats legislation:

25th January 2014 Sikh Council UK gave a cautious welcome to news that the Government is intending to correct the anomaly to allow Sikhs to wear their dastars in all workplaces. The welcome news comes after a long campaign that began with senior representatives of Sikh Council UK first meeting and raising this as an important issue for UK Sikhs with Government officials over a year ago on 17 January 2013.

The proposed plan will extend the exemption that already exists in the Employment Act 1989 that allows Sikhs to wear their turbans in place of hard hats on construction sites to now cover most other workplaces.

Correspondence:

Sikh Council UK wrote to David Cameron Prime Minister, Nick Clegg Deputy Prime Minister and Ed Miliband Leader of Labour Party to lay out its concerns of the UK government involvement in 1984 massacre in India.

Casework:

Two separate cases have been brought to attention of Sikh Council in which individual were stopped as part of the Dastar security search while travelling through at Antigo airport they were made to remove their Dastars allegedly in an abrupt and disrespectful way. The new EU regulations were sent to the individuals to assist with their dialogue with the authorities for the said airport.

A Sikh prisoner in Vienna, Austria resorted to a hunger strike protest in a bid to get his voice heard and in objection to the disrespectful way of handling of pothi sahibs during random cell searches where sniffer dogs are also used. The matter was addressed by Sikh Council UK along with local Austria organisations by writing to the prison authorities who appeared forthcoming in acknowledging and addressing the concerns. The Sikh prisoner has since agreed to stop the hunger strike protest and has received reassurance that all organisations and individuals within Vienna will work towards a fast and satisfactory outcome in liaison with the prison authorities.

Italian Sikhs made contact with an issue relating to Kirpan. An individual faced an issue when he visited a hospital during which police were called and he was subsequently arrested. A letter of support highlighting the importance of the Kirpan was requested from Sikh Council UK. In addition to this we also provided EHRC guidelines.

Interfaith:

To mark the 100th anniversary of World War One, Sikh Council UK sponsored a multi faith calendar to use the occasion to build upon inter-faith relations throughout London.

Media:

Sikh Council UK representatives engaged with numerous TV, radio and print media including all three Sikh TV channels as well as mainstream media in the UK and across the world in relation to disclosure of documents regarding UK Government involvement in 1984.

Voluntary Return Scheme Project:

The large number of inquiries generated from limited media coverage indicates the scheme is popular and in high demand.