

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

Meetings/Events

2nd June 2014 Secretary General of Sikh Council met for an introduction meeting with David Lelliot the Deputy British High Commissioner from Chandigarh during his visit to UK.

5th June Members of Sikh Council representative a number of Gurdwaras across UK met with John Thompson Head of Migration Policy-Home Office from across UK. The meeting was arranged due to ongoing concerns about the complex application process: high number of refusals for visas for religious worker without apparent reasons, and no appeal opportunity. Discussions are ongoing and we await progress update.

6th June 2014 Press Conference and Debate event was held on 30th Anniversary of the Sikh Genocide in India at Council House, Birmingham, organised by the Indian Sub-Continent Affairs Committee of Sikh Council UK in association with Sikh Channel event attended by Local MP's, MEP's, Councillors and Community activists.

10-13th June 2014 Sikh Council UK representatives attended the ENDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT SUMMIT at the Excel centre, London

17th June 2014 A meeting was arranged with the Chair of APPG for discussions relating to Sikh genocide.

24th June 2014 meeting with the Mike Penning Minister for Disabled people's office In relation to Sikh Councils outstanding concerns in relation to the exemptions in the new legislation coming through for exemption of having to wear other headgear hence allow Sikhs to wear Dastaars in work places.

29th June 2014 meeting with Additional Director General of Police from Chandigarh during his personal visit to UK, this was an informal follow up meeting having met them in India during the delegate visit.

Casework/Campaigns

Previously an individual approached the Council for a letter of support relating to a missing palki and some religious books following bankruptcy. This was supported with a letter. However, despite persistence of the individual for the Council to further pursue this matter anymore involvement in the case was declined.

Sikh Council UK was approached for assistance in addressing the dietary requirement of an Amritdhari Sikh prisoner who observes a strict lacto diet. The prison service including the Chaplaincy Service and Catering Management were very forthcoming in accommodating the individuals' needs.

Sikh Council issued a statement on Tweet feed in relation to Forced marriages becoming illegal as of 16th June 2014

Sikh Council UK continues to receive occasional queries in relation to hard hats cases in work places where appropriate they are provided with guidance of the changes in legislation. Hard hats and earplugs for a Council grounds maintenance worker

A request was received for a copy of the regulation of dastaar security searches at airports

An advertising company on behalf of British airways approached Sikh Council for advice on their advert which includes an image of Darbar Sahib- Council was asked for its views following a complaint.

Response: In relation to the advertisement we have taken some soundings and our view is that:

1. This year is the 30th anniversary of the Amritsar massacre of 1984 and the revelation earlier this year that the then UK government had provided military advice to the Indian government in relation to the attack on Sri Harmandar Sahib has been a matter of considerable shock to the Sikh community. We understand the sentiments being expressed by the complainant.
2. However, this particular advert is not particularly offensive as images of Sri Harmandar Sahib are often reproduced and approval is often provided by Sri Akal Takhat Sahib - the temporal authority of the Sikhs.
There are instances where use of Sikh symbols and images can cause grave offense. Examples of this include, but not limited to when used in relation to sale or use of alcohol, meat, tobacco or in relation to shoes, sexual depictions and throwaway items. This advert does not fall into any of these categories.
3. It would have been preferred for the British Airways logo to have been below the image of Sri Harmandar Sahib as a mark of respect.

A request was received for Sikh council to look at the educational resources designed for children between ages 4-11. This also included contents for lessons on Sikhism. Council has agreed to do so. Such materials will be sent in the near future.

Sikh Council received a request for a copy of the consultation document for mixed marriages from Preston with due to concerns about marriages of non Sikhs being conducted at a local Gurdwara Sahib in breach of the Maryada.

Query

A request was received from a worker from within the local authority in Bedfordshire requiring information on the Sikh Baptism.

Response

There are no times scales as to when a Sikh should take part in Amrit Sanchar (baptism/initiation ceremony). People normally go through the ceremony when they are emotionally committed towards living a spiritual life of discipline and feel able to abide by the code.

The ceremony it self can take several hours and people normally set aside the whole day and few days on either end to make the changes in ones routine.

Query

From a Journalist from the Sunday Times & PerthNow for a comment from a UK representative of the Sikh community about the role of Kirpans. Sikh Council provided a Sikh perspective on this. The query came following the an Australian school which has given a student permission to carry a Kirpan, and while most people have been supportive of that, some parents are not happy about it.

Query

The Council is getting increasing number of complaints relating to conduct of marriages of non Sikhs by some Gurdwaras in breach of the Rehat Maryada .Sometimes they involves relatives of committee members. These marriages occasionally take place during week days and often discreetly to avoid local Sangat unrest. The Council has been in liaison with Sri Akaal Takhat Sahib and has consulted on guidance at least on four occasions. The other area of concern being reported is the taking of Sri Guru Granth Sahib to outside venues and marquees for purposes of weddings once again in breach of the Adesh of Sri Akaal Takhat Sahib.

Copies of the guidance and Adesh are available from the Sikh Council UK.

Consultations.

The Ministry of Justice has published the consultation paper on marriages by non-religious belief organisations.

Section 14 of the [Marriage \(Same Sex Couples\) Act 2013](#) requires us to consult on whether the law should be changed to allow Humanists and any other non-religious belief organisations to conduct legally valid marriage ceremonies.

The consultation sets out and seeks views on the key issues and options, including which organisations are capable of meeting the definition of belief organisations provided in section 14.

We are undertaking a full public consultation for 12 weeks over the summer and require responses by the deadline of 18 September 2014.