



28 December 2014

## Thatcher Comments on Sikhs in 1984

**The Sikh Council UK is concerned by media reports of comments made by Margaret Thatcher, the UK Prime Minister of the time in 1984. The comments are said to have been made in talks with the Irish premier, Garret FitzGerald prior to the Anglo-Irish Agreement and are detailed in newly declassified papers released by the National Archives of Ireland.**

The uncovering of these comments by Margaret Thatcher comes after the disclosure in January 2014 of UK Government involvement in the Indian army assault on Sri Harmandir Sahib known as the Golden Temple that took place in Amritsar in 1984.

Secretary General of the Sikh Council UK, Gurmel Singh said, "From these comments and documents previously disclosed we begin to understand the prevailing mood of the time. It appears this was one in which trade and bilateral relations took priority and this in turn probably led to a situation in which Sikhs in the UK were viewed with suspicion and even as some sort of threat to the UK by the Government of the time."

He added, "This would go a long way to explain how the Cabinet came to discuss withdrawing official support for a Sikh procession and could be the real reason why India was provided assistance prior to the attack on Sri Harmandir Sahib. We have been told that the Thatcher Government of 1984 was neutral in the whole process but this clearly calls that into question."

Sikhs in the UK are seeking an independent inquiry into UK Government involvement and this revelation coming just a few days after the Indian Minister of Home Affairs, Rajnath Singh, publicly acknowledged that genocide of Sikhs had occurred in India in 1984, further strengthens the case for all facts to be revealed and examined in an independent inquiry.

### END

#### Notes for Editors

The Sikh Council UK is the largest representative body of Sikhs in the UK. We are recognised as the national advocate for British Sikhs in the United Kingdom and at the European Union.

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