



14 May 2015

# Statement

## **Sikh Council UK has become aware of serious allegations involving misrepresenting the activities of Sikh Council UK via the internet and social media.**

Secretary General of Sikh Council UK, Gurmel Singh said, "It would seem that one or more persons have resorted to this method of criticising Sikh Council UK perhaps out of fear, envy or their history. I am actually amused by this unwarranted attack by one or more persons who choose to remain anonymous rather than raise these matters directly with the Sikh Council UK in a professional manner."

Administrative Secretary of Sikh Council UK, Jagtar Singh Gill said, "Those associated with the Sikh Council UK or aware of its work and successes will recognise the myths being circulated some of which may border on untruths. It would appear that the author/s may have limited comprehension of working within the political and democratic process in Great Britain and appear to want to transpose a different type of politics on the British political scene."

Spokesperson and Head of Political Engagement for Sikh Council UK, Gurinder Singh Josan said, "Sikh Council UK is a politically neutral body that works with politicians of all parties. Prior to the general election, the Secretary General had personally written to a number of politicians across all political parties to thank them for their particular support in addressing issues affecting Sikhs in the last parliament. Paul Uppal just happened to be one of those politicians."

He added, "The Sikh Council UK's pragmatic and reasoned approach to building influence through developing relationships and acknowledging those who work to support us on Sikh issues has been a success. The passage of the amendment to the Employment Act 1989 by Parliament to allow turban wearing Sikhs to work in all workplaces has been achieved through this approach and without the need for demonstrations, petitions, letter writing campaigns and large lobbies. Whilst this has been an issue since the 1990's I assume it was not tackled earlier either due to lack of knowledge, courage or prioritization."

Assistant Administrative Secretary of Sikh Council UK, Ranjit Singh Seehra said, "We have noted that for the first time since 1992 there are no Sikh MP's in this parliament. We were particularly saddened to hear that there may have been negative campaigns against some Sikh candidates by fellow Sikhs during the election. If this is true it is most regrettable. Whilst it is important for political parties to act on improving Sikh representation, it is important for the community to positively play its part too."

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Coordinator of Affiliate Organisations for Sikh Council UK, Surinder Singh Jandu said, "Sikh Council UK has actively taken up the issue of destitute Panjabis without legal status in the UK and the sexual exploitation of women in the south east London area. We have dealt with these issues head on without fear and have been successful in securing limited resources towards this work. The beneficiaries of this work are the many many individuals and their families who have been supported through the desperate situation they unfortunately found themselves in with respect and dignity. We make no apology for this work."

Chair of the Indian Sub-Continent Affairs Sub Committee of Sikh Council UK, Cllr Gurdial Singh Atwal said, "The Sikh Council UK initially took the position of seeking full disclosure as the desired outcome when the documents relating to 1984 were accidentally disclosed by UK government in January 2014. As it currently stands myself and others are supportive of both an independent public inquiry into the role of the then UK government and an international inquiry into the Sikh genocide. The Sikh Council UK is committed towards establishing the truth and will continue to support all credible endeavors which seek to establish the truth about 1984, justice for the victims and the formal recognition of the Sikh genocide. Since the publication of Sir Jeremy's report and the initial discussions, the UK government has thus far refused to engage in any further discussions towards agreeing a process (such as an independent public inquiry) towards this outcome."

Secretary General of Sikh Council UK Gurmel Singh added, "The Sikh Council UK has been set up to act out of a paradigm of courage and hope. Its culture is to maintain relationships, engage in dialogue, build networks and coalitions in the best interest of the Panth. The Board of Jathedars, with representatives of all major Jathebandis present have specifically asked Sikh Council UK to build dialogue with all agencies including where appropriate and necessary and in a transparent manner with the Indian authorities in the UK. We make no apologies for constructive engagement with agencies, government and politicians in the UK and abroad when securing positive outcomes for Sikhs. This approach actually means the Sikh Council UK is now ideally positioned to take advantage of the relationships we have developed with politicians of all parties in the current UK parliament and to carry on with its political engagement work in ensuring UK and European Sikh issues are addressed."

**END**

**Notes for Editors:**

- The Sikh Council UK is the largest representative body of Sikhs in the UK.
- The organisation is recognised as the national advocate for British Sikhs in the UK and at the European Union
- It is a membership based, democratic and representative organisation.

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