

Recent cases of the kirpan in the workplace - successful interventions by Sikh Council UK

Press release – 17 February 2017

A Sikh employee has been permitted to wear the kirpan in the workplace of an international telecommunications company based in the City in London following initially being refused to right to wear it on ostensible security grounds.

The individual had taken the momentous decision to become an Amritdhari (an initiated/baptised) Sikh and as such he was following the mandatory Sikh code of conduct requiring him to carry the five articles of Sikh faith on his person at all times.

He informed his employer of the circumstances following which his employer initially refused consent. Sikh Council UK along with other member organisations intervened and provided details concerning Sikh articles of faith following which the employer conceded and has since adopted a policy permitting the individual to wear his kirpan in the workplace.

This is the second such case recently where the Sikh Council UK has successfully intervened in connection with the wearing the kirpan in the workplace. The other case involved two Sikhs employees initially being stopped for wearing kirpans at a large international airport based in the South-east. The airport has now adopted a policy around the wearing of the kirpan by employees in the workplace in consultation with the Sikh Council UK.

Jagtar Singh, Secretary General Elect of Sikh Council UK, said: “It is unfortunate that cases such as these still occur too often for our liking, especially in large multi-national organisations. However, we are pleased with the outcomes in these cases, which has meant these Sikhs are now able to practice their faith whilst at work”.

He added “Casework like this is a regular feature of the work of Sikh Council UK and we frequently receive queries seeking our assistance in such matters. Subject to capacity we of course seek to assist any Sikh who faces any issues at work or elsewhere in connection with their articles of faith. If any Sikh is facing any such problems they are requested to get in touch with us without delay”.

END

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Note for Editors: 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 in the European Union.