

Statement from Sikh Council UK Operations Team

13 February 2017

Dear colleague

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

We are writing in response to several issues being brought to our attention during the past couple of months. Taken collectively these are matters of significant concern due to their adverse impact on community cohesion and reputation within the mainstream society.

There have been reports of violence within Gurdwaras, the police entering Gurdwara premises, contentious programmes, inflammatory speeches, threats of self-immolation, threats of violence, the raising of differences in doctrinal views in provocative terms, fake news social media postings, footage of ritual slaughter of animals and other such matters bringing the community into disrepute, exposing internal differences for others to exploit and endangering community cohesion.

These incidents have mainly arisen concerning matters on which there are historical differences of views within the Sikh faith and which have traditionally been recognised and tolerated as being part of a diversity of practices within the community in connection with the Sikh Rehit Maryada.

Sikh Council UK is the largest representative body of Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations in the UK and our mandate and aspiration is to seek to bring the UK Sikh community together in the best traditions of the Sarbat Khalsa model promoting cooperation, consensus and unity whilst respecting religious freedom and embracing diversity.

In that context there have been calls for the Sikh Council UK to intervene or comment in these cases. The Sikh Council UK is constitutionally mandated to mediate in cases of disputes where all parties are agreeable to such intervention and we remain willing always to seek to bring parties together.

We are appealing to all Sikhs to resist undertaking those activities or raising those matters of doctrinal difference or dispute in a manner which heighten tensions and lead to divisions and instead to focus on those activities which will lead to unity, progress and the betterment of the community.

Sikh Council UK does not and will not tolerate or condone criminal violence or intimidation or the incitement of the same by anyone in the name of promoting any one view on Sikh doctrine however sincerely that view is held. It is important for all of us to take responsibility to work

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towards panthic ekta and community cohesion. Let us make real and put into practice the wisdom and teachings we have from Sri Guru Granth Sahib:

ਸਾਝ ਕਰੀਜੈ ਗੁਣਹ ਕੇਰੀ ਛੋਡਿ ਅਵਗਣ ਚਲੀਐ ॥

Let us share our virtues and abandon our faults to walk on this path

END

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