

Sikh Council UK hosts Panthic Meeting

Press Release

Leicester - 4 September 2017

Sikh Council UK hosted a large panthic gathering at Guru Tegh Bahadur Gurdwara in Leicester on Saturday 2 September. The meeting was attended by over a hundred delegates representing Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations from across the country including London, the South East, West Midlands, East Midlands, North-West and North-East.

Following wide ranging discussion on key issues current in the Sikh community the meeting approved seven resolutions ranging from the Sikh response to the ongoing consultation by the British Government regarding caste legislation to opposing any campaigns for the return of the Koh-i-noor diamond and the remains of Maharaja Daleep Singh from the UK to India or Pakistan.

The resolutions included mandates for Sikh Council UK to establish a professional multi-skilled team to support the capacity building of Gurdwaras and to work on developing an accord/compact through consensus building to promote intra-community unity and prevent disharmony. The resolutions are reproduced in full below.

The meeting was chaired by Secretary General Elect of Sikh Council UK Jagtar Singh with the assistance of Secretary General Gurmel Singh, Assistant Secretary General Sukhwinder Singh Padda and Spokesperson Jagjit Singh.

Following the meeting Jagtar Singh said "We were very encouraged by the number of delegates in attendance from up and down the country including a number of newcomers who had not previously attended Sikh Council UK meetings. We were pleased with the positive engagement and contribution of all who attended the meeting and we are committed to commence work on the resolutions adopted straight away".

The resolutions approved were as follows -

- 1. The reference to the Sikh faith in connection with caste in the Explanatory Notes of the Equality Act 2010 is offensive to Sikhs and we call upon the Government to change the Explanatory Notes to remove all reference to Sikh faith.*

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.

2. *As case law has already provided appropriate legal protection for caste discrimination within the existing provisions of the law we favour a case law based approach. We object to the inaccuracies contained in the research produced by the National Institute for Economic and Social Research.*
3. *Sikh Council UK is mandated to establish an impartial one stop shop professional support and coordinating arrangement for Gurdwara committees as part of capacity building of our community institutions and to liaise with relevant bodies towards addressing issues and spear heading innovative developments*
4. *This Panthic meeting reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the Anand Karaj Guidance and calls upon Sikh Council UK to consult on solutions for improving processes and securing positive outcomes in the coming months*
5. *British Sikhs oppose campaigns for the return of the Koh-i-noor diamond to India or Pakistan and resolve that it should remain available for viewing by the public and in a secure location until such time that there is a guarantee that the diamond would be in a safe and sole possession of Sikhs*
6. *We the British Sikhs oppose any campaign to remove the remains of Maharajah Duleep Singh to India or Pakistan. Exhuming the remains is not a Sikh religious necessity.*
7. *Sikh Council UK work towards developing a written accord/compact through consensus building as to how the Sikh institutions, organisations and media will conduct themselves to prevent distraction from our aspirations and disharmony*

– END –

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