

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

2nd September 2017 Sikh Council UK hosted a large panthic gathering at Guru Tegh Bahadur Gurdwara, Leicester. The meeting was attended by over a hundred delegates representing Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations from across UK.

The resolutions approved in the meeting 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.
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

10th September 2017 Representatives of Sikh Council UK laid a wreath in attendance at the 120th anniversary service held in central London of the gallant, courageous fallen few during the battle of saragahi.

16th September 2017 Sikh Council UK wrote to Home Minister of India Rajnath Singh of the Bharatiya Janta Party and Director General of Prisons Sudhir Yadav Tihar Jail Panjab requesting urgent intervention with concerns of deteriorating health and alleged lack of treatment of Sikh Prisoner Jagtar Singh Hawara suffering from serious spinal injuries and is at risk of permanent damage and paralysis if he does not receive adequate medical treatment.

24th September 2017 A unique seminar was hosted Sikh Council UK at Guru Nanak Gurdwara Smethwick, delivered by Phil Miller (freelance journalist and researcher), known to the Sikh Community through his discovery of the 1984 disclosures.

Phil shared his experiences of how the 1984 disclosure discovery was made, and what has happened since in terms of the government and community response, the subsequent findings that he published and the methods he used, as well as why this history is still so important today for British Sikhs and British people in general.

As part of the ongoing campaign Sikh Council UK wrote to the Office of National Statistics to reaffirm the case for a separate Sikh ethnic tick box in the Census 2021.

Reference: currently over 83,000 Sikhs identified their ethnic background as Sikh in the last census in 2011 despite there being no designated provision for this. The ONS undertook consultations of stakeholders in respect of the next census in 2015 and 2016 and concluded there was demand and earlier this year tested the use of a separate Sikh ethnic tick box and are currently undertaking further research before making a recommendation in the next three to four months that will be reflected in the Census White Paper 2018.

During the Caste consultation process conducted by UK Government Sikh Council UK on behalf of the Sikh community took exception regarding the reference to the Sikh faith in connection with caste in the Explanatory Notes of the Equality Act 2010 as this is offensive to Sikhs and called upon the Government to change the Explanatory Notes to remove all reference to Sikh faith. There has been a lack of any positive response to this request.

Moreover: the overwhelming consensual voice of the community in the consultation is for a case law which already provides appropriate legal protection for caste discrimination within the existing provisions of the law. The immensely favoured agreement is a case law based approach. In addition to Sikh Council UK made it known that the community object to the inaccuracies contained in the research produced by the National Institute for Economic and Social Research. Submissions were done by national organisations and members of the community prior to closing date for the Consultation 18th September 2017.

24th September 2017 Sikh Council UK issued the following Press Statement following an attack on an individual at a Mosque in Greater Manchester; "Sikh Council UK condemns the cowardly hate crime on Dr Nasser Kurdy. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family and we wish him a speedy recovery. We are heartened to read his comments showing compassion and forgiveness towards the attackers who were motivated by hate and attacked him outside of his mosque".

Casework:

An Academy in North Yorkshire worked well with representatives of Sikh Council UK in developing guidance on wearing of a Kirpan by Sikh Pupils. The matter came to light when an amritdhari was refused access into the academy for wearing a kirpan, on the day he attended for an induction. The academy refused entry and cancelled his admission forcing the family to look elsewhere so late in the day. This led to a number of months of no schooling for the child as admission in other schools at such late stage was difficult to find. As a result of a number of face to face meetings by representatives of Sikh Council UK ranging from Head of school and later with the Board of Directors. A better understanding was developed of the mandatory requirements for

Sikh Council UK, Station House, G46 Old Warwick Road, Leamington Spa, CV31 3NS

info@sikhcounciluk.org t:07867 608417

<https://twitter.com/SikhCouncilUK>

www.sikhcounciluk.org

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sikh-Council-UK-SCUK>

initiated Sikhs and embracing health and safety aspects the school adopted a suitable policy. The pupil has since been re-admitted to the academy.

Representatives of Sikh Council UK are currently in discussions with a school in Slough in relation to access by amrithdari sikh wearing a Kirpan. The outcome is pending although there has been a positive and forthcoming approach by the school. This case has implications as the pupil affected by refusal of access wearing a kirpan is fairly young therefore, any eventuality relating to health and safety needs to be carefully considered and mitigated prior to final agreements.

Representatives of Sikh Council liaised with a school in Birmingham where a pupil was denied access wearing a kirpan. Senior officials of the school were reminded of the already existing policy of Birmingham Council of Education thus progressing the matter for a quick solution was fairly straightforward, thereon. The pupil is back in school wearing a kirpan.

Sikh Council UK was approached by a head of school with concerns that a Sikh parent had indicated that their child would not be covering their Kara with a sweatband during P.E as this is contradictive to the Sikh faith. Sikh Council UK suggested that an opportunity to be created in speaking to the parent by SCUk reps to better understand their perspective as we are not aware of such implications. Sikh Council UK is of the view that safety while wearing of a Kara in physical activities must be considered and measures should be taken to minimise any risk to person or others.

In a proactive approach Sikh Council UK was asked by a Head of school in Walsall to provide a guidance documents for wearing of a Kara by Sikhs. This was provided and the school contacted SCUk to inform us they had updated their existing guidance policy guidance accordingly.

Sikh Council UK provided an individual travelling to Germany with the EU Regulation document. The person had experienced some issues travelling prior to this trip in which he was asked to remove his turban by airport security during searches. The individual was able to eventually make his point and convince the officers about the existing legislation but wished to have the document on person to avoid a re-occurrence.