

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

June 2017 Bulletin 79

Meetings/Events

3rd June 2017: Sikh Council UK hosted a BhaiBhan Singh 1984 list Press Conference lead by the S.Harinder Singh (educator, thinker and activist) from USA. Context: The 120-page list was prepared by SardarBhan Singh, the then secretary of ShiromaniGurdwaraParbhandak Committee (SGPC). S.Bhan Singh sent the list to Dr. Joyce Pettigrew (Northern Ireland) in November 1985. Several years ago, she entrusted it to Harinder Singh (USA). The list in Gurmukhi script details includes the martyrs' name, fathers name, address, age, their children and attester. This can be found on www.1984.org. Indeed the *"The list of 706 innocent Sikhs murdered by the State tells us a few things. Inaccuracies in Indian government's causality citations, SGPCs' preparedness and then discontinuation of the 1984 listings, and the need for open and just data-based dialogue on 1984 genocide,"* Sikh Council UK calls upon the UK government and all parties to initiate an inquiry into the 1984 Sikh Genocide. The Council is committed to work on this matter, with all interested Sikh and human rights organisations.

10th and 11th June: Two days of intense discussions took place facilitated by senior representatives of Sikh Council UK including 2 members of the Board of Jathedars, with Committee members and sangatof Vilvoorde. This was part of mediation meeting relating to longstanding disputes. Subsequently it was unanimously agreed that individuals will rise above their differences and work towards building community cohesion and improving governance. The meeting was held as a result of the closure of Guru Nanak GurdwaraVilvoorde Brussels for over 8 months, due to internal disputes. It became apparent that both parties had made numerous allegations against each other to the Mayor of Vilvoorde. It is intended that a general meeting will be held during September 2017 to agree a new constitution, revised financial procedures and processes for dealing with complaints, handling disputes and disciplinary matters. Meanwhile the campaign for the re-opening of the Gurdwara Sahib is to continue by the sangat and committee with support of Sikh Council UK.

Media

Following the Press conference of 3rd June 'Bhan Singh 1984 list' representatives of Sikh Council UK and Harinder Singh appeared on all 3 media channels in highlighting the need to collate all lists relating to 1984 in one central point to start obtaining an insightful understanding on the scale of the Massacre at Sri Harmander Sahib.

Snap General Election result:

9 June 2017-Sikh Council UK congratulated Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesei first turban wearing Sikh in history to be elected to the House of Commons. and Preet Kaur Gill first Sikh woman in Parliament.

Queens' Honours Awards Birthday List 2017-UK

Sikh Council UK was delighted to announce the Queens' Honours Awards Birthday List 2017-UK which included the following two Sikh Council UK members

- S. Surinder Singh Jandu has been awarded an (Member of the British Empire (MBE) for Services to Community Cohesion. He has made a huge contribution to both the Sikh and the non-Sikh communities of South East London over very many years through various organisations including the a local Race Equality Council. He has also served on the Executive of the Sikh Council UK as the Membership Secretary for six years and was appointed on to the Board of Jathedars on 6th May 2017.
- S. Mohinder Singh Sangha has been awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) for Services to both the Sikh and non-Sikh communities of Leicestershire over an extended period. He is also a prominent and active member of the Sikh Council UK's Board of Jathedars since 2011.

Interfaith Marriages (Anand Karaj)

Interfaith Marriages: During this period Sikh Council UK has received over six requests by individuals and three requested from separate gurdwaras on the interfaith marriage guidelines

23rd June 2017 Sikh Council UK had to issue a statement due to the level of violation of the Sikh RehatMaryada taking place relating to interfaith marriages at some Gurdwara Sahibs.

"It is concerning to learn of two interfaith Anand Karaj ceremonies taking place this weekend, these are in direct violation of the Sikh RehatMaryada. The actions of the management committees of the organising institutions are considered to be irresponsible in that they are generating tensions amongst the sangat and creating an atmosphere of fear and anxiety for the couple and guests on their most special and sacred days. Equally; the families of the couples should know better than to try and collude in organising multiple weddings or sacred ceremonies contradictive to the religious codes. On this occasion, we are however urging everyone to remain calm and that no protests should take place. We expect the families of the wedding couples and organising committees to take serious note of Sangats' disquiet at the violation of the RehatMaryada - this is an indication of your collective failure to guide and ensure that the couples special and sacred day remains just so. Finally, we can confirm that it would appear that one of the committees may have been misled and will be meeting with Sikh Council UK officials to improve their processes. "

Kirpan proposal-Italy

A group of Sikhs including an organisation called Indian Sikh Community Centre from Italy presented Singh Sahib GianiGurbachan Singh JiJathedarSri AkaalTakhat Sahib Ji with a flexible prototype kirpan manufactured by an Italian firm intended for approval by 5 Sahibaans for use in Italy. This has come about following the ban on Kirpan wearing in Italy. This matter has caused an uproar as the Kirpan presented has not been well received by the wider sikh community and the fact that the singh sahibaans had not rejected the concept of a flexible Kirpan outright.

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Casework

Following an incident at Drayton Manor Park in which Sikhs wearing kirpan were denied access into the Park Sikh Council UK started the process of taking the matter up with the park management.

A parent contacted Sikh Council UK when her child was denied access to school wearing a kirpan. The child was initially offered a space in an Academy in Manchester but was later refused having declared that he was wearing a Kirpan. Sikh Council UK took this matter up with the Academy and progressed this matter their Board of Directors in addressing the issue (in progress)

In a separate incident, also in a Manchester a school a child in a different school was also denied access having took Amrit over the Vaisakhi period. The school were prompt in their take up of our concerns and immediately accepted the child back into school by making some adjustments to their current policies to reflect accommodation of Kirpan wearing Sikhs.

Sikh Council UK was contacted by some students that were due to undertake their Pharmaceutical Pre-Registration Exam where General Pharmaceutical Council were utilising a number of venues for the assessments to take place however not all the venues of their choice allowed kirpan wearing amritdhari students to access their premises. This caused much distress and panic amongst Sikhs who wore kirpans as their bookings for certain venues was already done and the dates for the assessments was fast approaching. GPhC issued guidelines from each venue highlighting which venues were accepting amritdharis within their policy guidelines. One of the venues happened to be the Old Trafford which was already been pursued separately by Sikh Council UK as one of the 92 football clubs across UK in liaison with 'Kick it Out' football association. The students effected were allowed on some sites with a letter from Sikh Council UK. Beyond this the remaining venues are since being pursued by Sikh Council UK in addressing the issue of access for Sikhs wearing a Kirpan.

Sikh Council UK took up a matter with New Zealand Border force in which aamritdharisikh travelling to New Zealand was stopped, questioned and returned back to UK from Dubai Airport before he could board his connecting flight. It later emerged the Immigration Officers were acting on a complaint sent to them by some other sikhs in New Zealand about why they allow so many amritdharis to enter New Zealand for a samagam. The complainant branded the amritdharisikhs as trouble and ones to be cautious of. The whole matter was dealt with very poorly by the Border Force team as they took an unnecessarily aggressive and intimidating approach towards the Sikhs travelling. (work in progress)

Sikh Council UK was contacted by a school in Hounslow, in which they queried the possible removal of a kara during physical sport. Sikh Council UK took the opportunity to provide the school with information about the importance of the kara and that as an organisation we would never be in a position to advocate its removal regardless of the situation. Instead Sikh Council UK shared options of possible ways to accommodate the Kara during such sports

Sikh Council UK wrote to a school in Leeds who had taken a decision to remove the Panjabi Language off their curriculum despite a large percentage of their pupils being made up of the Sikh/Panjabi community.

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Moreover; there is an excellent track record of 100% A*-C grades for pupils taking Panjabi at GCSE level at the school and there was a renewed promise in 2010 by the previous Headteacher to secure the future of Panjabi at the school.

Sikh Council UK was asked to appear in crown court as expert witness to a case of two bogus gurdwaras in Leeds operating above an off licence. The premises were instead used for illegal trafficking. Both sites were owned by the same proprietor who was running it as a family business. Subsequently; the individual was sentenced to 9 years' imprisonment and other members of his family were also sentenced to varied number of years.

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