



World Sikh Council – America Region

A Representative Body of Sikh Institutions of America Working under the Patronage of Siri Akal Takhat Sahib

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Member Gurdwaras:

1. Gurdwara Sahib Fremont, Fremont, CA
2. Guru Nanak Sikh Mission, Livingston, CA
3. Sikh Gurdwara of LA, North Hollywood, CA
4. Sikh Gurdwara Riverside, Riverside, CA
5. Colorado Singh Sabha, Denver, CO
6. Guru Singh Sabha of Augusta, Augusta, GA
7. Sikh Study Circle of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA
8. Sikh Religious Society of Chicago, Palatine, IL
9. Sikh Society of South, New Orleans, LA
10. Sikh Gurdwara of Michigan, Rochester Hills, MI
11. Sikh Society of Michigan, Madison Heights, MI
12. Sikh Gurdwara of North Carolina, Durham, NC
13. Garden State Sikh Association, Pluckemin, NJ
14. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Glenrock, NJ
15. Sikh Cultural Society Inc., Richmond Hills, NY
16. Sikh Cultural & Edu. Society of Western NY, Buffalo, NY
17. Sikh Religious Society of Dayton, Dayton, OH
18. Guru Nanak Found. of Greater Cleveland, Richfield, OH
19. Guru Gobind Singh Sikh Society, Bedford, OH
20. Guru Nanak Religious Soc. of Central Ohio, Columbus, OH
21. Tristate Sikh Cultural Society, Monroeville, PA
22. Mid South Sikh Sabha, Memphis, TN
23. Sikh Center of Gulf Coast, Houston, TX
24. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Richardson, TX
25. Sikh Gurdwara of North Texas, Garland, TX
26. Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Fairfax, VA
27. Sikh Association of Central Virginia, VA
28. Sikh Religious Society of Wisconsin, Brookfield, WI

Other Sikh Institution Members:

1. Siri Guru Granth Sahib Found., Anaheim, CA
2. Sikh Mediawatch and Resource Task Force, Washington, DC
3. Sikhs Serving America, Topeka, KS
4. Sikh Youth Federation of North America, White Plains, NY
5. Sikh Coalition, New York, NY
6. Sikh Educational & Religious Foundation, Dublin, OH
7. Sikh Youth Federation of USA, Toledo, OH
8. Academy of Guru Granth Studies, Arlington, TX

World Sikh Council – America Region Condemns Hate Graffiti at Fresno Gurdwara, Appeals to Sikh Community to be Vigilant

The World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR) condemns the hate graffiti that was spray painted by vandals at the Gurdwara (Sikh place of worship) in Fresno, California on Saturday, March 13, 2004.

Similar incidents of hate graffiti occurred for five days in a row at the Gurdwara last year and included throwing of firecrackers, which resulted in minor damage to the place of worship.

Mr. Kuldeep Singh, Chairman of WSC-AR, said “It is deplorable that the Gurdwara has been targeted repeatedly by vandals to vent their ignorance and prejudice at Sikh Americans. Rage against Sikh Americans is not the American way.”

Mr. Singh further stressed, “Sikhs have lived in the US for nearly a century and are being increasingly woven into the fabric of America. This is our home and we are here to stay.”

The Fresno Sikh Gurdwara's response to the vandalism was most appropriate and in keeping with the traditions of the Sikh faith.

WSC-AR looks forward to collaborating with the Fresno Sikh community, interfaith groups, and law enforcements agencies in educating the general public about Sikhs and their religion, in order to reduce ignorance and prejudice.

Since September 11, 2001, the American public has been very tolerant and has shown admirable restraint in not stereotyping any minority community with collective guilt. We need to be kind and supportive of our fellow citizens in such difficult times.

However, more than 200 incidents of stereotyping, bias, hate, and prejudice against Sikh Americans and their places of worship have been reported in the media since 9/11.

We condemn any and all such incidents of bias and prejudice. We must add that rage against Muslim Americans and other religious and ethnic minorities is also unacceptable.

Traditionally, Sikh men wear a turban and have a beard as articles of their faith. Because Osama bin Laden wears turban and has a beard, some people may associate him with the Sikh community. Any association between Sikhs and bin Laden or his associates is incorrect and against the American character of freedom and justice for all.

Since the March 2003 attack on Iraq, many Sikhs have been mistaken to be Iraqis or supporters of Saddam Hussein and have been subjected to prejudiced remarks and incidents. Sikhs have no association with Iraq or Saddam Hussein.

With the first year anniversary of the war on Iraq this weekend, WSC-AR is concerned that this may possibly result in an increase in stereotyping, bias, and prejudice incidents against Sikh Americans. WSC-AR appeals to Sikh Gurdwaras, organizations, and individuals to be vigilant in the coming weeks and promptly report any incident of bias to law enforcement agencies.

WSC-AR commends local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies for their prompt and appropriate attention to reported incidents of hate and prejudice. The efforts of these agencies in investigating and pursuing the culprits are appreciated.

About 25 million Sikhs live across the world. Sikhs arrived in the US about a century ago and number about half a million today. About 30,000 Sikhs live in and around Fresno, California.

World Sikh Council – America Region is the only representative and elected body of Sikh Gurdwaras and institutions in the US. Its members include 28 Gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship) and 8 other Sikh institutions across 17 US states.

World Sikh Council – America Region works to promote Sikh interests at the national and international level focusing on issues of advocacy, education, and well-being of humankind.