



World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR)

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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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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

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WSC-AR To Decline Invitation to White House Event for Commemorating Sikh Faith, Will Work With White House to Resolve Kirpaan Issue for Future Events

The Chairman of World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR) has been invited to a White House event to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the installation of Granth Sahib, to be held at the Eisenhower building on August 18th. WSC-AR appreciates the sentiments of the Executive Branch to recognize such a historic event in the Sikh faith.

Mr. Kuldeep Singh, Chairman of WSC-AR, has decided not to attend the event as it involves compromising the principles of the very faith that we profess. In a phone conversation, a White House staffer informed WSC-AR that due to security issues no Sikh will be allowed to enter the building without first removing their Kirpaan. The WSC-AR has explained the significance of the Kirpaan and that asking Sikhs to remove their Kirpaan is not only offensive but is to deny them their legitimate right to practice their faith.

The Kirpaan is one of the five articles of the faith required to be worn by all formally initiated Sikhs. The Kirpaan (literally meaning “bringer of mercy”) is symbolic of the Sikh pledge to resist oppression and injustice but never to use weapons to attack anyone or to initiate a confrontation.

The White House staffer that the WSC-AR spoke with was duly concerned and explained that Dr. Rajwant Singh, as organizer of the event, will be calling the invited guests and

request that they wear a medallion with a small Kirpaan image in it instead of their usual Kirpaan. WSC-AR reiterated its objection and asked if there were any other options open to resolve the issue. The staffer responded that a special request for an exemption to the rule could be made but she was quite confident that it would not be approved given the short time frame. She was helpful in suggesting that the issue may be discussed in advance for future events to avoid the current unfortunate situation.

It is surprising that the White House was not even aware of the Kirpaan issue until asked by WSC-AR, but we are gratified that there is genuine concern. Sikhs have been preferentially victimized post 9/11 and have had many difficulties with law enforcement agencies. WSC-AR appreciates the White House concern and looks forward to working with the Executive Branch and other branches of our government in the future.

On September 1, 1604, Siri Guru Arjan Sahib formally installed the Granth Sahib (a compilation of Gurbani up to that time) at Siri Harmandar Sahib, Amristar in the South Asian region of Punjab. Later, the bani of Siri Guru Tegh Bahadar Sahib was added and in 1708 Siri Guru Gobind Singh Sahib bestowed guruship on the Granth Sahib. Since then, Sikhs refer to it as Siri Guru Granth Sahib and consider it to be the divine word of God.

WSC-AR is a representative and elected body of Sikh Gurdwaras and institutions in the United States. Its members include 28 Gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship) and 8 other Sikh institutions across the nation.