



World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR)

A representative body of Sikh institutions of America founded under the patronage of Siri Akal Takhat Sahib

P.O. Box 3635, Columbus, Ohio 43210, USA

Phone: 614-210-0591, Fax: 419-535-6794

E-mail: contact@worldsikhcouncil.org, Website: www.worldsikhcouncil.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 8, 2005

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. Guru Nanak Foundation of Jackson, MS
13. Sikh Gurdwara of North Carolina, Durham, NC
14. Garden State Sikh Association, Bridgewater, NJ
15. Guru Nanak Sikh Society of Delaware Valley, Sewell, NJ
16. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Glenrock, NJ
17. Sikh Sabha of New Jersey, Lawrenceville, NJ
18. Sikh Cultural Society Inc., Richmond Hills, NY
19. Sikh Cultural & Edu. Society of Western NY, Buffalo, NY
20. Sikh Religious Society of Dayton, Dayton, OH
21. Guru Nanak Found. of Greater Cleveland, Richfield, OH
22. Guru Gobind Singh Sikh Society, Bedford, OH
23. Guru Nanak Religious Soc. of Central Ohio, Columbus, OH
24. Tristate Sikh Cultural Society, Monroeville, PA
25. Mid South Sikh Sabha, Memphis, TN
26. Sikh Center of Gulf Coast, Houston, TX
27. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Richardson, TX
28. Sikh Gurdwara of North Texas, Garland, TX
29. Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Fairfax, VA
30. Sikh Association of Central Virginia, VA
31. Sikh Religious Society of Wisconsin, Brookfield, WI

Other Sikh Institution Members:

1. Siri Guru Granth Sahib Found., Anaheim, CA
2. Sikhs Serving America, Topeka, KS
3. Sikh Youth Federation of North America, White Plains, NY
4. Sikh Educational & Religious Foundation, Dublin, OH
5. Sikh Youth Federation of USA, Toledo, OH
6. Academy of Guru Granth Studies, Arlington, TX

Contact: Dr. Tarunjit Singh, Secretary General
614-210-0591, contact@worldsikhcouncil.org

WSC-AR Strongly Condemns India's Denial of Justice to Victims of 1984 Pogroms of Sikhs; Calls Upon World Community to Demand Transparency, Accountability, and Restitution from India

The World Sikh Council - America Region (WSC-AR) condemns in the strongest possible terms the newly released Nanavati Commission report which investigated the 1984 massacre of thousands of Sikh men, women, and children across India as well as the subsequent Action Taken Report as a front for its genocidal attempts against the Sikh people.

The Commission's report has effectively exonerated the vast majority of Indian political leaders alleged to have organized the pogroms and identified by survivors, witnesses, and citizen reports. The few political leaders indicted by the Nanavati Commission have essentially been cleared of murder charges by the Action Taken Report of the Government of India.

We urge the world community, the United Nations, and international human rights organizations to demand transparency, accountability, and restitution from India, which claims to be the world's largest functional democracy.

“The planned brutal lynching, massacres, and ethnic cleansing of Sikhs more than twenty years ago, and the inability of ten commissions of inquiry and various political parties in power at the federal level to fix responsibility for this pogrom indicates that justice delayed to Sikhs in India is indeed justice denied,” said Mr. Amolak Singh, Chairperson of WSC-AR.

“The Sikh community’s repeated appeals for transparency, accountability, and restitution to the Indian Government have been ignored as not being in the interest of peace. We honor the victims of state terrorism and pray for the survivors who are still suffering,” said Dr. Anahat Kaur, Vice-Chairperson of WSC-AR.

“The release of this cover-up report rubs salt into the wounds of a traumatized Sikh community. However, this moment is also an opportunity for Indians of conscience to stand up and demand that their nation act to end impunity against religious minorities and provide justice to those affected by such pogroms,” said Dr. Tarunjit Singh, Secretary General of WSC-AR.

The assassination of the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984, allegedly by two Sikh members of her security force, triggered a planned and premeditated orgy of violence and ethnic cleansing against Sikhs in India’s capital city of New Delhi and across the country. Sikh homes were identified by lynching mobs from government issued voter lists.

Ms. Barbara Crossette, the New York Times Bureau Chief in Delhi from 1988 to 1991, writes in “India’s Sikhs: Waiting for Justice” published in the World Policy Journal, Summer 2004: “Almost as many Sikhs died in a few days in India in 1984 than all the deaths and disappearances in Chile during the 17-year military rule of Gen. Augusto Pinochet between 1973 and 1990.... Not only Chile, but also Argentina, Peru, Mexico, South Africa, and Ethiopia, among other nations, have been addressing atrocities from decades past. India, in refusing to confront its bloody recent history, stands in glaring contrast to these nations.”

Printed media and citizen commission reports show that following the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984, thousands of Sikh men and women were killed and raped across India for a period of at least two weeks. These reports show that during this pogrom, thousands of Sikh men were lynched and murdered, some necklaced with tires soaked in kerosene and set afire by jubilant mobs, and thousands of Sikh women were publicly raped, many in front of their male relatives.

A published citizen’s commission report states one Sikh woman’s harrowing experience: “The women were herded together into one room. Some of them ran away but were pursued to the nearby nallah (stream) where they were raped. Their shrieks and cries for help fell on deaf ears. From among the women held in the room, hoodlums asked each other to select whomsoever they chose. All the women were stripped and many dishonored. She herself was raped by ten men. Their lust satisfied, they told the women to get out, naked as they were. For fear of their lives they did so, hiding their shame as best as possible. Each begged or borrowed a garment from relenting neighbours and sought shelter wherever they could.” (Delhi: 31 October to 4 November 1984, Report of the Citizen’s Commission, January 1985, pp. 18-19.)

The Indian Government estimated the number of persons killed in Delhi alone during the first three days of November 1984 at nearly 2,700. A list of 3,870 names of Sikhs killed was published by Indian Express, November 1, 1989. The total for the country is estimated to be about 20,000, with 10,000 in Delhi alone. Several citizen commission reports have documented that the leaders of India’s ruling

Congress Party and officials of the Government organized and encouraged these massacres of Sikhs to “teach the Sikhs a lesson.”

The massacre and faked encounter killings of Sikhs has continued since 1984 in India. In the last 20 years, more than a quarter million Sikhs are reported to have been killed.

“On the strength of...constitutional features, India claims to be the largest functional democracy in the world where wide-spread human rights abuses, systematic persecution of estranged communities and suppression of political dissent cannot occur. However, the experiences of the Sikhs in Punjab show that as a demonised community targeted for abuse by the authorities, they had no protection from the leaders of the supposedly independent institutions, including the judiciary, either in shielding their fundamental rights against imminent violations or in obtaining acknowledgement and legal restitution of wrongs. Freedom of discourse remained an empty promise which even the higher judiciary joined the chorus to turn the page and obliterate the victims’ memory on the grounds that a public discussion and scrutiny focusing on past abuses and the role of institutions would undermine the interests of peace and social order,” writes Mr. Ram Narayan Kumar, et. al. in a May 2003 report titled *Reduced to Ashes* (Volume One) published by the Asia Forum for Human Rights. (www.punjabjustice.org/report/report.htm)

Dr. Anahat Kaur, Vice-Chairperson of WSC-AR further added, "The Sikh experience in India demonstrates a relentless pattern of religious persecution under the guise of democracy while flouting the ideals of peace, justice, and human rights." She added, "These actions hardly seem worthy of a democratic nation.”

WSC-AR is a representative and elected body of Sikh Gurdwaras and institutions in the United States. Its members include 31 Gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship) and 6 other Sikh institutions across the nation.
