



World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR)

A representative body of Sikh institutions of America founded 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. New England Sikh Study Circle, Boston, MA
11. Sikh Gurdwara of Michigan, Rochester Hills, MI
12. Sikh Society of Michigan, Madison Heights, MI
13. Guru Nanak Foundation of Jackson, MS
14. Sikh Gurdwara of North Carolina, Durham, NC
15. Garden State Sikh Association, Bridgewater, NJ
16. Guru Nanak Sikh Society of Delaware Valley, Sewell, NJ
17. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Glenrock, NJ
18. Sikh Sabha of New Jersey, Lawrenceville, NJ
19. Gurdwara Baba Deep Singh, Las Vegas, NV
20. Sikh Cultural Society Inc., Richmond Hills, NY
21. Sikh Cultural & Edu. Society of Western NY, Buffalo, NY
22. Sikh Religious Society of Dayton, Dayton, OH
23. Guru Nanak Found. of Greater Cleveland, Richfield, OH
24. Guru Gobind Singh Sikh Society, Bedford, OH
25. Guru Nanak Religious Soc. of Central Ohio, Columbus, OH
26. Sikh Sadh Sangat, Easton, PA
27. Philadelphia Sikh Society, Millbourne, PA
28. Tristate Sikh Cultural Society, Monroeville, PA
29. Mid South Sikh Sabha, Memphis, TN
30. Sikh Center of Gulf Coast, Houston, TX
31. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Richardson, TX
32. Sikh Gurdwara of North Texas, Garland, TX
33. Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Fairfax, VA
34. Sikh Association of Central Virginia, VA
35. 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 Heritage Foundation, Long Island, NY
5. Sikh Educational & Religious Foundation, Dublin, OH
6. Sikh Youth Federation of USA, Toledo, OH
7. Academy of Guru Granth Studies, Arlington, TX

WSC-AR Participates in World Assembly of Religions for Peace in Kyoto, Japan; Chairperson Elected to International Governing Board; Kirpaan Issue Resolved Amicably With Japanese Hosts

Three representatives of the World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR) traveled to Kyoto, Japan in the last week of August to participate in the VIIIth World Assembly of Religions for Peace on the theme “**Confronting Violence and Advancing Shared Security**”, August 26-29, 2006. WSC-AR representatives also attended the World Youth Assembly, August 21-25 in Hiroshima, and the World Women Assembly, August 24-25 in Kyoto.

Over 800 religious representatives of all major world religions from over 100 countries across the world participated in this gathering held every 5 to 7 years by the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP). The WCRP is the world’s largest coalition of religious representatives and their communities working together for peace.

The Chairperson of WSC-AR, Dr. Manohar Singh, was elected by the world assembly to its international Governing Board to represent the Sikh community worldwide. The WSC-AR youth representative, Mr. Ipninder Singh, was elected as Co-Convener of the North American Interreligious Youth Network, while the WSC-AR woman representative, Mrs. Raj Kaur, was elected to the International Women Working Committee.



Photo Caption: Mr. Ipninder Singh, WSC-AR youth representative of Palatine Gurdwara Sahib of Chicago & Co-convener of North American Interreligious Youth Network, attends the VIIIth World Assembly of Religions for Peace (*Photo courtesy of WSC-AR*)

Dr. Manohar Singh, Chairperson of WSC-AR remarked “The Sikh community is pleased to be represented on this highest decision making body of the world’s largest international multifaith coalition focusing on peacemaking.” He added that “the recognition of representative and elected Sikh organizations as a voice for the Sikh community is commendable, and we look forward to working with our sister national and international religious organizations in promoting peace with justice.”

The Sikhs attending the Assembly’s opening ceremony on August 26 were allowed to carry their Kirpaans. The opening ceremony was addressed by Honorable Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan. WSC-AR representatives had worked in advance with the WCRP International and Japanese staff as well as the Sikhs attending the conference so that the Sikh right to bear the Kirpaan would be respected and accommodated. Other notable speakers at the opening ceremony were Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, Mohammed Khatami the former President of Iran, and Dr. William Vendley the Secretary General of WCRP.

The three member WSC-AR voting delegation consisted of Dr. Tarunjit Singh (Columbus, Ohio), Mr. Ipninder Singh (Chicago, Illinois), and Mrs. Raj Kaur (Long Island, New York). Dr. Tarunjit Singh, Chair of WSC-AR Interfaith Committee and Treasurer of Religions for Peace – USA (US chapter of WCRP), had worked in the past year with WCRP in arranging for the Sikh delegation worldwide. Mr. Ipninder Singh, youth representative of Palatine Gurdwara Sahib of Chicago and WSC-AR youth liaison to Interfaith Youth Core, provided outstanding leadership to the international and North American youth delegation. Mrs. Raj Kaur, Vice-President of Sikh Heritage Foundation, was a key Sikh participant in the Women Assembly. In addition, one business delegate each from India, UK, Australia, and Kenya participated. Three additional Sikh observers attended from UK.

WSC-AR Sikh participation and leadership was interwoven into the entire World Assembly. Some additional noteworthy Sikh events and developments of the assembly are listed below:

- At the opening ceremony of the World Assembly on August 26, Dr. Tarunjit Singh, Chair of WSC-AR Interfaith Committee, participated along with other faith representatives in reading the Principles for Multi-Religious Cooperation to “address common problems like war, poverty, and care of the earth.”
- At the Youth Assembly in Hiroshima, WSC-AR youth representative Mr. Ipninder Singh offered a Sikh prayer along with other Sikh youth representatives at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park on the evening of August 22 in a moving ceremony highlighting the devastation caused by the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima.
- The Sikhs attending the World Assembly gathered over lunch on August 27 for the Sikh caucus and agreed to further strengthen and promote Sikh participation at the local and regional levels in WCRP. The Sikh caucus meeting was co-convened by Dr. Tarunjit Singh, Treasurer of RFP-USA, and Dr. Tarlok Singh, Honorary President of WCRP from Kenya, at the request of WCRP.
- One of the co-conveners of the Hindu caucus invited the Sikh community to join in the Hindu caucus. In response, the WSC-AR Sikh representative kindly advised the Hindu caucus co-convenor that “Sikhs are an independent world religion. The invitation made is objectionable to the Sikh community since it seeks to undermine our faith and make it subservient to the Hindu community.”
- In the spirit of reconciliation and healing prevalent at the World Assembly, the Chair of WSC-AR Interfaith Committee met with Ms. Ela Gandhi of South Africa, granddaughter of Mohandas Gandhi, and shared with her the written remarks of her grandfather that were offensive to the Sikh faith. Mrs. Gandhi expressed empathy for the Sikh feelings and shared that her grandfather was not a saint and had made many mistakes in his life. It was agreed that more conversation between the Sikh community and Gandhi scholars as well as activists were needed. so that Sikh sensitivities could be respected.
- Dr. Tarunjit Singh, as one of the five voting delegates of RFP-USA, attended a six nation gathering of religious representatives from South and North Korea, China, Japan, Russia, and USA on August 28 to express concern at the denial of visas by the Japanese government to six members of the North Korean delegation to the World Assembly. The gathering, attended by world media, further affirmed that religious leaders have a significant role to play in achieving

peace and stability in Northeast Asia, especially the Korean peninsula. The US delegation at the meeting pledged to work across religious and national boundaries to foster trust and peace in the region.

- At the North American regional caucus held on the evening of August 28, Mr. Ipninder Singh, WSC-AR youth representative, reported on behalf of the North American youth delegation along with Naomi Greenspan, Program Associate for the Union for Reform Judaism.
- The first meeting of the newly elected Governing Board of WCRP was held on August 29 and attended by a representative of WSC-AR to ensure a Sikh voice on this international multifaith decision making body.
- The closing ceremony of the World Assembly held on August 29 included a rousing thank you to the hundreds of Japanese volunteers. Mr. Anantdeep Singh, Sikh representative from Amritsar, along with other youth presented messages of gratitude to the Japanese youth volunteers.

The VIIIth World Assembly of Religions for Peace ended with a breathtaking closing video which included selected comments and interviews from the Assembly. The video highlighted prominently the remarks of Dr. Tarunjit Singh, Chair of WSC-AR Interfaith Committee that “As people of many faiths, our paths are complimentary to one another and not in competition. This world assembly provides a safe space for people of so many diverse faiths from across the world to come together to build relationships across religious boundaries and to rededicate ourselves to our own faith values as peacemakers of the world.”

The World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP) also commonly known as Religions for Peace (RFP) is the world’s largest coalition of religious representatives and their communities working together for peace. RFP-USA is the national chapter of WCRP in United States. WSC-AR is a member of RFP-USA. More information on WCRP can be obtained at www.wcrp.org, and for RFP-USA at www.rfpusa.org.

The World Sikh Council - America Region (WSC-AR) is a representative and elected body of Sikh Gurdwaras and institutions in the United States. Its members include 42 Gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship) and other Sikh institutions across the nation. WSC-AR works to promote Sikh interests at the national and international level focusing on issues of advocacy, education, and the well-being of all humankind. For more information, please visit www.worldsikhcouncil.org.

The following photos in jpeg format, suitable for publication, can be obtained by e-mailing <contact@worldsikhcouncil.org>:



Photo 1 Caption: Over 800 religious representatives from over 100 countries attend the VIIIth World Assembly of Religions for Peace in Kyoto, Japan, Aug 26-29, 2006. (Photo courtesy of WSC-AR)



Photo 2 Caption: Mr. Ipninder Singh, WSC-AR youth representative of Palatine Gurdwara Sahib of Chicago & Co-convenor of North American Interreligious Youth Network, attends the VIIIth World Assembly of Religions for Peace (Photo courtesy of WSC-AR)



Photo 3 Caption: US delegation to World Assembly meets with Korean delegation to discuss peace initiatives in Korean Peninsula. From right to left: Dr. Tarunjit Singh, Chair of WSC-AR Interfaith Committee; Mr. Doug Mills, Associate General Secretary of United Methodist Church; Rabbi Amy Small, Immediate Past President of Jewish Reconstruction Association; Rev. Bud Heckman, Executive Director of Religions for Peace – USA; Rev. William Sinkford, President of Unitarian Universalist Association; and Dr. Jin-Heung Byun, Secretary General of Korean Conference on Religion and Peace. *(Photo courtesy of WSC-AR)*



Photo 5 Caption: Mr. Anantdeep Singh, Sikh delegate from Amritsar, hangs a Sikh message of peace for the world. *(Photo courtesy of WSC-AR)*



Photo 4 Caption: Mrs. Raj Kaur, Vice-President of Sikh Heritage Foundation & WSC-AR representative on International Women Coordination Committee, meets with other members of committee. *(Photo courtesy of WSC-AR)*



Photo 6 Caption: Dr. Tarunjit Singh, Chair of WSC-AR Interfaith Committee meets with Professor Hans Kung, Eminent Theologian & President of Global Ethic Foundation. *(Photo courtesy of WSC-AR)*



Photo 7 Caption: Dr. Tarunjit Singh, Chair of WSC-AR Interfaith Committee, meets with Ms. Ela Gandhi of South Africa, granddaughter of Mohandas Gandhi, to discuss in a spirit of reconciliation and healing the offensive remarks of Mr. Gandhi against the Sikh community. *(Photo courtesy of WSC-AR)*