



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. Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society, Stockton, CA
2. Gurdwara Sahib Fremont, Fremont, CA
3. Guru Nanak Sikh Mission, Livingston, CA
4. Sikh Gurdwara of LA, North Hollywood, CA
5. Sikh Gurdwara Riverside, Riverside, CA
6. Colorado Singh Sabha, Denver, CO
7. Guru Singh Sabha of Augusta, Augusta, GA
8. Sikh Study Circle of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA
9. Sikh Religious Society of Chicago, Palatine, IL
10. Sikh Society of South, New Orleans, LA
11. New England Sikh Study Circle, Boston, MA
12. Singh Sabha of Michigan, Canton, MI
13. Sikh Gurdwara of Michigan, Rochester Hills, MI
14. Sikh Society of Michigan, Madison Heights, MI
15. Guru Nanak Foundation of Jackson, MS
16. Sikh Gurdwara of North Carolina, Durham, NC
17. Sikh Sabha of Upper Valley, Hanover, NH
18. Garden State Sikh Association, Bridgewater, NJ
19. Guru Nanak Sikh Society of Delaware Valley, Sewell, NJ
20. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Glenrock, NJ
21. Sikh Sabha of New Jersey, Lawrenceville, NJ
22. Gurdwara Baba Deep Singh, Las Vegas, NV
23. Sikh Cultural Society Inc., Richmond Hills, NY
24. Sikh Cultural & Edu. Society of Western NY, Buffalo, NY
25. Sikh Religious Society of Dayton, Dayton, OH
26. Guru Nanak Found. of Greater Cleveland, Richfield, OH
27. Guru Gobind Singh Sikh Society, Bedford, OH
28. Guru Nanak Religious Soc. of Central Ohio, Columbus, OH
29. Sikh Sadh Sangat, Easton, PA
30. Philadelphia Sikh Society, Millbourne, PA
31. Tristate Sikh Cultural Society, Monroeville, PA
32. Mid South Sikh Sabha, Memphis, TN
33. Sikh Center of Gulf Coast, Houston, TX
34. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Richardson, TX
35. Sikh Gurdwara of North Texas, Garland, TX
36. Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Fairfax, VA
37. Sikh Association of Central Virginia, VA
38. 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 International & National Events

(Photos suitable for publication are available upon request from contact@worldsikhcouncil.org)

The World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR) recently participated in four international and national meetings in the United Kingdom, Mexico, and the United States of America. In the last few months, WSC-AR provided leadership to:

- World Sikh Summit, London, UK, September 15-17;
- International Interreligious Encounter, Monterrey, Mexico, September 21-24;
- Sikh-Catholic National Retreat, Washington, US, September 28-30;
- Religion and Foreign Policy Workshop, New York, US, July 17-18.

World Sikh Summit, London, UK, September 15-17

WSC-AR's Vice-Chairperson Mr. Surinderpal Singh and Chair of the Human Rights and Religious Freedom Committee, Mr. Kavneet Singh, attended the World Sikh Summit organized by the Sikh Federation (UK), September 15-17, in England. Sikh representatives from UK, USA, India, France, Germany, Norway, Italy, Greece, Belgium, Ireland, and the Netherlands attended the meeting.

Mr. Surinderpal Singh was the key speaker to address Sikh identity and its preservation. Mr. Kavneet Singh addressed the gathering on the lack of religious freedom for Sikhs in India and the efforts of the Indian State to protect officers responsible for state terrorism against the Sikh community. The gathering affirmed that the issue of Sikh identity and Sikh sovereignty were the two sides of the same coin.

The September 17 meeting of the Summit was held at City Hall in London and was supported by Mr. Ken Livingstone, the Mayor of London. Earlier, a preparatory meeting held on September 16 at Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Wolverhampton was attended by about 10,000 Sikhs.

Mr. Surinderpal Singh remarked, "The international gathering in the United Kingdom was an opportunity for the Sikh community worldwide to take stock of its current affairs and strategically plan its future as a global religious community."

(Note - Photos 1 and 2 refer to this event.)

International Interreligious Encounter, Monterrey, Mexico, September 21-24

Dr. Anahat Kaur, Chair of WSC-AR's Education Committee, represented the Sikh faith at the International Interreligious Encounter held September 21-24 in Monterrey, Mexico. The gathering was a part of the global Monterrey Forum 2007 (attended by about 6,000 persons) and organized by the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions.

Dr. Anahat Kaur delivered a key presentation on the Sikh faith as an independent, divinely revealed, monotheistic faith. She emphasized the divinity of the Gurus, the divinity of the human soul, and the divine nature and oneness of all creation. She also explained how this translates into the engaged daily life of a Sikh, guided by God through the Siri Guru Granth Sahib and the Guru Panth, via the Sikh Rehit Maryada (code of daily living). She also served as a panelist on several forums including The Role of Religion and Spirituality in Society, Reproductive Issues, and Terrorism, highlighting the role of state terrorism using the plight of the Sikhs in India as an example.

At the forum, she declared "We often hear religion blinds people to reality, that it is confining and restrictive. We hear that religion is coercive and the root of violence and conflict. I argue the exact opposite. True religion liberates us and brings us together in God's love."

In her remarks delivered at the forum, she added "The starvation of 55,000 Muslims in Bosnia is not sanctioned by Christianity nor is the massacre of Africans in the Sudan by Arab Muslims approved by Islam. Oppression of Baha'is in Iran is not condoned by Islam nor does Hinduism permit wanton murder of Muslims and Sikhs in India. These conflicts are not the fault of religion. Greed, anger, and revenge have made religion their instrument. We must change that. Let us not use conflict to abuse religion. Rather, let us use religion to resolve conflict...If we wish to follow God's message of love, if we wish to avoid religious conflict and the consequent misery, we must not regard God as a parochial possession and must learn to respect faiths other than our own."

(Note - Photo 3 refers to this event.)

Sikh-Catholic National Retreat, Washington, US, September 28-30

Representatives of the World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR) and the US Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) met September 28-30 at St. Paul's College in Washington, DC for a three-day Sikh-Catholic bilateral national interreligious retreat.

The objective of this retreat was for the Sikh and Catholic communities to further deepen dialogue and trust among the two communities. The theme was "Honoring holiness in and out of our traditions."

The Sikh and Catholic delegations were comprised of about 8 representatives from each community with about half of the participants being young adults (age 35 and younger).

The Catholic delegation was headed by Rev. Canon Francis Tiso, Associate Director of USCCB's Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs. The Sikh delegation was led by Dr. Tarunjit Singh, Chair of the Interfaith Committee of WSC-AR.

The retreat began on Friday, September 28, with a presentation on interfaith understanding in Sikh belief, history and practice by Dr. Tarunjit Singh. The next day, Rev. Canon Francis Tiso shared an overview of the spiritual path of a Catholic. This was followed by a Sikh biographical presentation about Bhai Kanhiya by Mr. Yashpal Singh and on Bhagat Puran Singh by Mr. Savraj Singh. Mr. Neil Sloan then presented the Catholic biographical sketch of Saint Gianna Molla. Sikhs and Catholics prayed together from their faiths. On Sunday morning, the Sikh and Catholic young adults led in a shared worship service.

Both communities concurred that the dialogue was beneficial in building deeper trust among the two faiths and is looking forward to holding its next retreat in early 2009 on the tentative proposed theme of "Nature of God: Convergence, Divergence, & Our Spiritual Paths."
(Note - Photos 4 to 6 refer to this event.)

Religion and Foreign Policy Workshop, New York, US, July 17-18

WSC-AR's Secretary General Mr. Manmohan Singh attended the Religion and Foreign Policy Workshop organized by the Council of Foreign Relations (US), July 17-18, in New York. National religious representatives as well as notable academics from many universities and institutes from the United States, as well as fellows and journalists attended the workshop.

Mr. Manmohan Singh attended the sessions on Challenges for US Foreign Policy, The Greater Middle East, Africa, Darfur and Beyond: Preventing Mass Atrocities, and The Role of Religious Actors in US Foreign Policy. There was significant dialogue and understanding of the Islamic presence in all these sessions, with concentration on the role of youth in shaping the future. Mr. Eboo Patel, Executive Director of Interfaith Youth Core, presented strong views on Islamic dialogue and used this occasion for the release of his new book "Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation." Mr. Manmohan Singh noted the progress made by other religious groups in the world, specifically the Sikhs who have also faced such events and circumstances. He remarked, "similarly Sikh young adults need to be engaged so that we are appropriately represented in all such future discussions. The shaping of the future can only be influenced through participation."

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 45 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 well-being of humankind.

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



Photo 1 Caption: World Sikh Summit at City Hall, London (UK) held on September 17, 2007. (Photo courtesy of WSC-AR)



Photo 4 Caption: Sikh and Catholic participants gather at St. Paul's College in Washington, DC for a Catholic-Sikh National Retreat. (Photo courtesy of WSC-AR)



Photo 2 Caption: WSC-AR representatives attend World Sikh Summit in London. Shown are Mr. Surinderpal (left) and Mr. Kavneet Singh (right) of WSC-AR, and in the middle is Ajaib Singh of Greece. (Photo courtesy of WSC-AR)



Photo 5 Caption: Catholic and Sikh young adults at the retreat. (Left to right: Julie Heldt, Savraj Singh, Upneet Kaur, Neil Sloan, Anhad Singh, and Stephanie Almozara) (Photo courtesy of WSC-AR)



Photo 3 Caption: Dr. Anahat Kaur (middle) at International Interreligious Encounter in Monterrey, Mexico. (Photo courtesy of Gobierno del Estado de Nuevo León)



Photo 6 Caption: Sikh-Catholic retreat discussions (Left to right: Rev. Canon Francis Tiso, Anhad Singh, Neil Sloan) (Photo courtesy of WSC-AR)