

Date:

Dear

I am writing as your constituent to request you to take action about a series of 11 incidents of sacrilege involving the desecration in the Panjab of the the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, the eternal Sikh Guru, over a period of three weeks since 12th Oct 2015.

It pains me and my family that there has been a deafening silence about these incidents of sacrilege from the Prime Minister of India, who heads a country that has seen the birth of many religions, including the Sikh faith.

India's constitution, as a vanguard of the largest democracy, has also failed in the Panjab state to uphold the freedom of speech and expression, as well as the right to assembly, as Police takes action against peaceful protesters following the sacrilege incidents, in violation of International Law.

My family and I urge you to write to the Indian Prime Minister requesting him to express his condemnation of the sacrilege and to set up a Commission of Inquiry headed by eminent judges, as the sacrilege does not only hurt sentiments of Sikhs but of all of humanity because the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is a universal sacred scripture. Reproduced below is a briefing note about the incidents of sacrilege, prepared by UNITED SIKHS (www.unitedsikhs.org), a UN associated international advocacy and humanitarian relief organisation.

Yours truly

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Briefing Note by UNITED SIKHS - Sacrilege of Sikh Scriptures, Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji across Panjab, India.

Background to Sacrilege and Reaction

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji

The Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is a sacred scripture of the world and is the Eternal Guru of the Sikhs. Because it is a holy scripture suitable of a universal religion, many world class philosophers and holy men and women consider it a unique treasure and a noble heritage for all humankind. Any sacrilege is a direct attack on Sikhs and their eternal guru. Since 12th Oct 2015, over a period of three weeks, 11 incidents of sacrilege have taken place in Punjab, and no culprits have been brought to book.

On the morning of **12 October 2015**: ‘Angs’ or pages from the holy scriptures, the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, the eternal Sikh Guru, are discovered scattered around the village of Bargari in Faridkot, Panjab. The Sikh community is shocked at this act of sacrilege. Earlier, on 2nd June a sacred Saroop of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji had been reported stolen by the local Gurdwara (Sikh place of worship) at Burj Jawahar Singh Wala, a village in district Faridkot, which is very close to the village where the sacrilege later takes place. Subsequently, posters had appeared in this village, in September, threatening desecration. Throughout this period the Police took no action to apprehend the perpetrators.

On hearing the news of the sacrilege, local Sikhs held a peaceful protest, whilst saying prayers, over the sacrilege and against the authorities, for lack of action. Police use disproportionate force with tear gas and water canon to disperse the protestors. Police without warning open fire killing two young protestors, Gurjeet Singh and Krishan Avtar Singh. Many others are left injured and hospitalised.

13 Oct. 2015, Sikhs across the world express outrage. Human rights violations continue across as civil disobedience protests escalate. Calls increase across Panjab and in the Sikh diaspora for Police to bring perpetrators to justice.

14 Oct. 2015, Peaceful protests continue across State and demands for accountability for the use of Police brute force fall on deaf ears. Police officers responsible for ordering to shoot that resulted in the two deaths and injuries to protestors, remain on duty.

15 Oct. 2015, mass resignations occur amongst the Sikh political party post holders across Panjab, people holding other key positions who speak out against the injustices are either suspended or dismissed.

20 Oct. 2015, Chief Minister of (Parkash Singh Badal) calls an emergency meeting, paramilitary forces deployed across three major cities including Amritsar.

23 Oct. 2015, Akal Takht Panj Pyarae (or The Beloved Five, chosen according to Sikh tradition whose orders are considered supreme), summon Jathedars (heads) of all 5 Takhts (Sikh temporal seats), who fail to appear. Jathedars go into hiding as crisis deepens.

25 Oct. 2015, the Head of Police DGP Saini is transferred and replaced by DGP Arora. The Police fail to take responsibility for its failures to deal with the reported incidents of sacrilege and for the disproportionate use of force by Police including in the deaths of two peaceful protestors.

International: UK, Malaysia and North America.

22 Oct. 2015, in solidarity, peaceful protest outside Indian High Commission, London. 20 arrests made by Met Police including one Met Officer reported injured. No one is charged.

Oct 27th, 2015, Similarly in Malaysia Sikhs handed a memo to the Indian High Commissioner and held a peaceful protest outside the Indian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur.

28 Oct. 2015, London Met Police Commander Chishty issues a public apology to Sikhs for the misconduct and mismanagement of the peaceful protest outside IHC.

1st Nov. 2015, UK Sikh organisations meet under the auspices of the World Sikh Summit & issue a collective resolution for the Sarbat Khalsa scheduled for 10 Nov.

2nd Nov. 2015, At a Sikh Conference, collective resolutions are passed by North America based Sikhs for the Sarbat Khalsa, reaffirming support. Prior to that, US Sikhs met the State Department on Panjab crisis.

3rd Nov. 2015, Sikh organisations join Amnesty International and others to protest outside Number 10 and hold a rally in the House of Commons, against the planned visit of Prime Minister of India to the UK.

5 Nov. 2015, Indian MPs and leader of the Indian opposition, Rahul Gandhi visit injured Sikhs and families, in Panjab.

Current status

Further 10 sacrileges of Sikh scriptures have now been documented and reported across the State.

Two young Amritdhari (initiated) Sikh brothers were falsely arrested and tortured by Police, one is critically injured, then released after international outcry. It seems Sikh Youth are being targeted in what many fear could be a repeat of the 1980's and 1990's. Amnesty International and other human rights organisations have documented past State human right violations where thousands of Sikh men and women and in particular Sikh youth across disappeared or were killed in fake Police 'encounters'.

10 Nov. 2015, Sarbat Khalsa (congregation from the global Sikh community), to be held in Amritsar, Panjab.