



Sikh Federation (UK)

Never flinch from performing righteous deeds

Andy Burnham's government warned it must address Sikh community concerns or Labour will pay a heavy price at the next General Election

- **Anti-Sikh hate crimes:** Sikh Federation (UK) Convention from 11-13 September coincides with the 25th anniversary of 9/11.
- **Home Office failings:** Government accused of failing to recognise the massive scale of Anti-Sikh hate crimes and address systemic failures in securing justice for Sikh victims. [P SEP]
- **Oldbury rape case:** Tomorrow marks one year since the police has failed to arrest and charge anyone over the racially aggravated rape of a young Sikh woman in Oldbury. [P SEP]
- **Henry Nowak case:** Government criticised for failing to respond to calls for a statutory public inquiry into the "catastrophic multi-agency failures" surrounding the murder of Henry Nowak, that has brought the Sikh community into disrepute unnecessarily.

EMBARGOED UNTIL 8 SEPTEMBER 2026

London – 7 September 2026

A National Sikh Convention organised by the Sikh Federation (UK) is expected to attract more 10,000 Sikh participants over three days when it begins on Friday 11 September in the West Midlands.

Sikhs gathered from across the UK at Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Sedgley Street, Wolverhampton, will be told on the final day of the Convention, Sunday 13 September, that Andy Burnham's government must address Sikh community concerns - particularly where Labour made specific promises in opposition - or face a heavy price at the next General Election.

The Sikh community's concerns are set out in the third edition of the [Sikh Manifesto](#), published ahead of the last general election in June 2024. These concerns include tackling Anti-Sikh hate crimes, ensuring proper ethnic recognition of Sikhs (and Jews) by public bodies, and introducing a statutory Code of Practice to combat Sikh identity discrimination.

The Convention opens on the 25th anniversary of 9/11, which triggered attacks on Sikhs around the world through what became widely known as "mistaken identity".

Keir Starmer, while Labour Leader in opposition, said successive governments had failed the Sikh community and pledged in a video message a Labour government would recognise and tackle Anti-Sikh hate crimes, especially crimes targeting Sikhs because of their visible identity.

Over the last 12 months, the Sikh Federation (UK) has exposed systemic failings in several high profile cases of Anti-Sikh hate crime cases, alongside a sharp rise in attacks against Sikhs following police errors, CPS mistakes, and bigoted political commentary during and after the murder trial of Henry Nowak.

Wolverhampton assault on two elderly Sikh taxi drivers in their 60s and 70s

The horrific attack in August 2025 demonstrates that Anti-Sikh hate crimes are not receiving the same priority as other forms of hate crime, and that the wheels of justice turn too slowly. Although the attackers were arrested on the scene, there were witnesses and video footage, the perpetrators were not charged until January 2026.

When the three men appeared in court in April 2026, they denied the offence and the trial has been scheduled for 10 September 2029. In England and Wales, a GBH case where the defendant pleads not guilty plea would typically be expected to conclude within 9 to 18 months of the offence or arrest. Many have therefore been shocked that this trial will begin for more than four years after the attack, particularly given that the victims are two elderly men.

Serious physical assault and racially aggravated rape of a young Sikh woman in Oldbury

Tomorrow marks the first anniversary of the attack on the young Sikh woman as she was on her way to work at around 8.30am. The police initially failed to disclose the racial element of the attack and the fact that she was viciously raped.

The Sikh community were forced to protest within a week of the attack. A man was arrested later that day, but was quietly released on bail a few days later. The Sikh community offered a £10,000 reward for information leading to charges and convictions, later increased to £20,000 following a donation from a philanthropist.

A month later, in mid-October a man and woman were arrested in connection with the rape, but were also bailed. Police said at that time that they were doing "everything possible" to bring those responsible for the racially-motivated rape of the young Sikh woman to justice. A year later the West Midlands Police has still not identified those responsible.

Dabinderjit Singh OBE, the Chief Executive for Political Engagement at the Sikh Federation (UK) said:

"We are shocked that Ministers and officials have failed over the last 12 months to engage directly with us on Anti-Sikh hate crimes, despite cross-party support and two well-attended lobbies of Parliament.

"Government and officials need to deal with criticism and scrutiny. It is totally unacceptable to claim we are on an unofficial Home Office "blacklist" at the request of the Indian government.

"It is appalling that government is discriminating against Sikhs, failing to engage and burying its head in the sand on this and other issues.

"The Home Office has been far too slow to acknowledge that many Anti-Sikh hate crimes are recorded instead as racially aggravated hate crimes or Anti-Muslim hate crimes.

"It has been over ten months since we suggested to the Policing Minister, via MPs, that anonymised person-level Census data should be used to better analyse hate crime victims so that all communities can have better-quality information.

"We believe the government now know the true scale of Anti-Sikh hate crimes, hidden elsewhere in the data, may be twenty times higher than officially reported.

"Anti-Sikh hate crimes may be greater than Antisemitic crimes given the relative size of the Sikh community and our visible identity.

"Ministers and officials are reluctant to disclose the scale of Anti-Sikh hate crimes because it would show that policy and resource allocation decisions over at least the last decade have ignored Anti-Sikh hate crimes."

Tomorrow also marks three months since the Sikh Federation (UK) called for a statutory public inquiry into the "catastrophic multi-agency failures" surrounding the murder of Henry Nowak. The organisation has had direct and repeated private contact with Henry Nowak's family during this period, but has received no acknowledgement or response from government on the serious issues raised.

We will be writing tomorrow to the Home Secretary, Justice Secretary and Attorney General - the latter two new to their roles - to ask why there has been no response over the past three months, particularly as further concerns have emerged. We will continue to press for a substantive response to the issues raised in our call for a public inquiry as the fallout for the Sikh community remains a significant issue.

Dabinderjit Singh added:

"Certain concerns have been communicated directly with Andy Burnham in writing and in person over the past three months.

"The Labour government under his leadership has no excuse for failing to make progress on these issues over the next 12 months.

"We recognise that some issues are more complex and involve managing sensitive diplomatic ties with the Indian government, but promises made must be honoured."

Release and return of Jagtar Singh Johal

Jagtar Singh Johal is approaching his 9th year in arbitrary detention in an Indian prison. The Labour leadership pushed for his release and return while in opposition, but Keir Starmer missed opportunities to make progress over the past two years.

Dabinderjit Singh added:

"Jagtar's torture and continued arbitrary detention in an Indian prison reflects poorly on the UK government's ability to stand up for an innocent British-born Sikh and his family.

"This is a high priority case for the Foreign Secretary, Ed Miliband, and there is significant cross-party pressure to secure Jagtar's return.

“Andy Burnham and the new Foreign Secretary need to accept quiet diplomacy has failed. It is time to significantly increase pressure, including public criticism of the Indian authorities’ treatment of Jagtar unless he is released and returned without further delay.”

Judge-led public inquiry into Margaret Thatcher’s Anti-Sikh actions in the 1980s

The Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister are aware of the strength of feeling of the Sikh community on this issue. We understand the matter remains “under consideration” by the Foreign Secretary, who is examining a range of options. Labour MPs who have not confirmed backing for a judge-led inquiry have faced significant pressure in the past 12 months with a no platform policy and that pressure is expected to intensify as the next General Election approaches.

The Labour leadership faces a major dilemma, as it knows this issue will not go away. It is increasingly being criticised for appearing to protect Margaret Thatcher’s controversial negative actions in the 1980s towards the Sikh community. Conservative figures and Foreign Office officials appear to be the most opposed to a judge-led public inquiry, because there are expected to be some shocking revelations.

Although Labour knows such an inquiry would focus on the actions of the Thatcher-led Conservative government in the 1980s, Foreign Office officials insist the current BJP government of India strongly opposes it. The argument is that a judge-led public inquiry would expose Indian government actions against Sikhs in the 1980s. This is striking, given that the BJP is in effect protecting Congress, which was in power for much of this period.

Transnational repression by the Indian government targeting Sikh activists

The UK Government is aware of the threat posed by the Indian government to the rule of law and Britain’s sovereignty, and is under pressure to act with the Five Eyes partners. The Sikh Federation (UK) will continue campaigning with the family of Avtar Singh Khanda to secure an inquest and public inquiry into his suspicious death on 15 June 2023.

It is clear from what has emerged over the last three years that the UK Government know much more about the targeting Sikh activists in the UK and elsewhere than it is prepared to acknowledge publicly. A particular concern is that the authorities - and the Labour government - appear to have little appetite to confront known agents of the Indian government targeting Sikh activists, despite the National Security Act 2023 coming into effect in December 2023.

Pressure will continue to build for the authorities to use this legislation and adopt zero tolerance towards agents of the Indian government operating in the UK. The new Labour leadership must develop the political will to tackle transnational repression and foreign interference by the Indian government robustly. If it fails to do so, it will lack credibility, be accused of running scared from the Indian government, and the issue will come back to haunt it.

ENDS

Jaspal Singh
Lead Executive
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