



Sikh Federation (UK)

Never flinch from performing righteous deeds

Government expected to address Anti-Sikh hate crimes and much more when Andy Burnham becomes the Prime Minister

London – 17 July 2026

On Wednesday Sikhs from throughout the UK lobbied dozens of MPs in Parliament. Over 130 different MPs had letters from constituents in advance of the lobby and around 25-30 MPs and their staff from across the political spectrum listened to Sikh concerns during a successful lobby.

Jas Atwal MP, the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for British Sikhs and a Labour MP for Ilford South excellently chaired the two hour meeting in a packed Committee Room 14.

The Sikh Network has today published the findings of a nationwide survey revealing a **deeply concerning rise in Anti-Sikh hate crimes since mid-May**. Mankamal Singh, a founder of the Sikh Network shared with Parliamentarians much of this data at the lobby.

Ministers and government officials in the Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have been offered the opportunity to discuss and reflect on the results of the Sikh Network survey. Neither has yet responded as they appear to be waiting for a new Prime Minister and new Ministers to give them a steer.

Ministers and officials in these departments should listen to the brilliant speech at the lobby given by Michael Weiger, the Chief Executive Officer at the Board of Deputies, on the respective responsibilities of different government department and global institutions on the one hand and the community impacted to tackle Anti-Sikh hate crimes across the globe.

MPs were reminded by Dabinderjit Singh OBE, the Chief Executive for political engagement at the Sikh Federation (UK) and a former Director at the National Audit Office, that Keir Starmer as leader of the Opposition told the Sikh community in a video message that successive governments since 9/11 had failed the Sikh community on Anti-Sikh hate because of their visible identity. Keir Starmer promised a Labour government would put this right, but after two years there has been little or no progress despite suggestions from the Sikh community.

Jas Singh, the Principal Adviser of the Sikh Federation (UK) passionately gave an update on the high profile Anti-Sikh hate cases from Wolverhampton, Oldbury and Walsall from last year. He also touched upon more recent violent attacks on Sikhs, including Sunday's racist murder in west London of Kirandeep Kaur, a 24-year old young mother. She was knifed to death at home in Hayes as she slept with her new born baby.

In his closing remarks Jas Atwal confirmed Sikh MPs recently had a very productive meeting with Andy Burnham and had raised with him a number of promises made to the Sikh community by the Labour leadership while in opposition that Andy Burnham needs to address after he becomes Prime Minister next week.

This included the promise to recognise and tackle Anti-Sikh hate alongside Antisemitism and Anti-Muslim hate, especially given the recent high profile cases and massive spike in the last two months that have been brought to the attention of different police forces. Andy Burnham was also asked to clarify his position on Sikh articles of faith, in particular legislation regarding the sacred Kirpan. Those at the lobby were told **Andy Burnham had confirmed he shared the view there was no need for any change to the law as regards the sacred Kirpan.**

In the lobby Sukhvinder Singh, a Lead Executive at the Sikh Federation (UK) who previously worked at the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) went into detail why there was a need for a statutory Code of Practice for Sikh articles of faith (the five Kakaars and Dastaar) to deal with ignorance and discrimination. MPs listened carefully to the proposal and **MPs that spoke backed the demand for a statutory Code of Practice for Sikh articles of faith** that Sikh community organisations have already drafted.

Another important issue raised with Andy Burnham was for Labour to **deliver the 1984 judge-led public inquiry looking at Margaret Thatcher's Anti-Sikh actions in the 1980s**, that was in previous Labour Manifestos and written promises by the Labour leadership. Andy Burnham, unlike Keir Starmer better understands the damage and negative legacy of Margaret Thatcher that must be exposed so the same mistakes by a UK government are not repeated.

Another issue discussed with Andy Burnham that was also raised at the lobby was **to seek the release and return of Jagtar Singh Johal**. Those gathered were told by Balvinder Kaur Saund, the Chair of the Sikh Womens' Alliance that Labour must get Jagtar home having been arbitrarily detained for more than eight and a half years in an Indian jail.

Several opportunities were missed by Keir Starmer in 2025 to make progress after Jagtar was acquitted in March 2025 in the only case that has come to a conclusion in court and at the time of the trade deal and his subsequent visit to India. Ten UN human rights experts have recently called on the Indian government to drop the remaining charges and release Jagtar without delay. Andy Burnham will therefore have the mandate to push for Jagtar's immediate release.

Senior politicians from across the political spectrum spoke with one voice in terms of condemning Anti-Sikh hate. This included Caroline Nokes MP, the Deputy Speaker in the House of Commons and also a Conservative MP for Southampton. What Richard Tice MP, the Deputy Leader of Reform UK said was of huge significance and interestingly he twice made reference to mistakes being made and having the humility to recognise these mistakes. Preet Kaur Gill MP, a Minister in the Department of Health and Social Care, spoke in Panjabi and applauded the Board of Deputies for taking up the proper recognition of Sikhs alongside Jews as ethnic as well as religious groups with government.

Jas Atwal MP, was supported by the three other office bearers of the APPG who all spoke passionately in support of the Sikh community, including protecting the hard fought rights to safeguard Sikh articles of faith. This included both Vice Chairs of the APPG, Joy Morrissey, the Conservative MP for Beaconsfield, Sureena Brackenridge, the Labour MP for Wolverhampton North East and Dr Lauren Sullivan, the Secretary of the APPG and Labour MP for Gravesham.

A number of other MPs also spoke, including Jen Craft the Labour MP for Thurrock who is the elected representative for Henry Nowak's family and John McDonald the Labour MP for Hayes and Harlington who spoke about the killing of Kirandeep Kaur in his constituency. The veteran Labour MP made it absolutely clear Labour would never row back on hard fought rights won by the Sikh community over the last 50 years regarding the Sikh identity.

Bhai Amrik Singh, the Chair of the Sikh Federation (UK) Strategy Board at the end of the meeting thanked all those that participated from across the country. He welcomed the issues discussed with Andy Burnham, but said the jury was out for the Labour government under new leadership as far as the Sikh community was concerned. He said Sikhs would continue to raise issues and Labour will be judged by its actions, including the extent to which it conducts proper direct community engagement.

Andy Burnham has after becoming the new leader of the Labour Party today said his top team will reflect **all** communities and he wants to do things differently. **Sikhs will judge how the Sikh community is reflected in his top team that will be announced next week.**

Sikhs at the lobby called for a complete overhaul of Government engagement with the Sikh community. Andy Burnham's new Ministers need to be radical and engage with the Sikh community and deal directly with leading Sikh community organisations that are accountable to the community they serve.

When it comes to Sikh community engagement it was pointed out by the community and MPs there has been little or no change under Labour in the last two years with the Tories being pre-occupied with appeasing India with the likes of Rishi Sunak and Priti Patel holding senior positions in government.

If Sikh community engagement does not change, Labour will be challenged and criticised as it will be recognised as ignoring the Sikh community and will continue to make mistakes and be punished at the ballot box. Labour has to demonstrate it is different under Andy Burnham as a recent personal data breach by the Home Office has exposed those Ministers and officials continue to consult are often those that have little or no credibility in the Sikh community.

ENDS

Jaspal Singh
Lead Executive
Sikh Federation (UK)