

PRESS RELEASE FROM COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN

KHALISTAN CONFERENCE HELD IN BIRMINGHAM, UK on 6 MAY 2007

SIKH STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION TO BE REVITALISED

UNITED FRONT OF NATIONS TO TACKLE INDIAN COLONIALISM

Sikh leaders, UK Parliamentarians and representatives from other freedom seeking nations gathered at a key Conference in Birmingham, UK on 6 May 2007 and delivered a clear message to India that the Sikhs remain fully committed to secure their freedom, in accordance with their rights in international law, through peaceful and democratic means. The support of Kashmiris, Nagas and the Assamese will serve as an acute reminder to the international community that India is a failed state which has only retained hegemony over the homelands of these peoples through the use of military force. It is but a matter of time before its illegal and unjust approach towards these nations collapses and the cause of freedom and human rights prevails.

The Conference was hosted by the Council of Khalistan and took place at 'Khalsa House', Gurdwara Baba Deep Singh Shaheed. It was addressed by leaders of all the major Sikh organisations which campaign for self-determination and a sovereign state of Khalistan in the Sikh homeland. Speaker after speaker warned the Indian Government that there could be no solution to the Indo-Sikh conflict until Khalistan was liberated. In addition, those responsible for the genocide directed at the Sikhs within India over the last twenty five years or so should not think they will remain immune; it remains the intention of every right thinking person that those criminals be brought to justice. The martyrs of the struggle were honoured; they had not lost their lives in vain - history showed that the Sikhs always overcome injustice and oppression.

There could be no doubt that the Sikhs, as a Nation, possess the right of self-determination as set out in the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted by the United Nations in 1966. India's refusal to accept that those provisions of the ICCPR which deal with self-determination applies to nations held captive within its borders has been officially rebuked by states such as France and the Netherlands. The UN itself has asked India to withdraw from that position but India has failed to do so. The problems caused by this colonialist approach are there for all to see in Punjab, Kashmir, Nagalim, Assam, Manipur, Bodoland and other regions. India must realise that it will never secure legitimacy until it reaches settlements with the nations concerned.

Professor Tim Kaping of the Naga Support Centre (UK) read out a forceful message from the Naga leader Th Muivah in which he extended full support to the liberation of Khalistan and offered the Sikh Nation ongoing co-operation in securing its legitimate goal. He said it was vital to demonstrate to the world who was the aggressor in Nagalim, Khalistan, Kashmir and elsewhere. It was not those nations who had militarily occupied the homelands of others, committed genocide, stolen precious natural resources, enacted laws which do not comply with internationally accepted humanitarian standards and started a nuclear arms race in South Asia. The Indian state must never be allowed a UN Security Council permanent seat whilst committing these crimes under international law.

Muhammad Ghalib of Tehreek-e- Kashmir pointed out that the same systematic and massive human rights abuses by the Indian state were being inflicted in Kashmir as they have been in Punjab. He said that such tactics would never succeed in breaking the will of freedom loving nations who can and must work together to defeat the evil of colonialism. Dr Mukul Hazarika of Assam Watch urged the affected nations to form a united front and of the need to expose India's misdeeds in the international arena.

Lord Ahmed, member of the British House of Lords, gave a rousing speech supporting the Sikhs - "a brave Nation" - and their right to national self-determination in the form of a sovereign Khalistan. As Chair of 'Parliamentarians for National Self-determination' (PNSD) he promised to extend full support for the Sikhs as well as other nations to promote their campaign for freedom. He said self-determination was the bedrock of all human rights as well as freedom itself. It is our duty to promote this in a principled and peaceful manner. He announced the formation of a Sikh Advisory Panel to PNSD initially comprising Amrik Singh Sahota OBE, Chain Singh (France), Retired Justice Ajit Singh Bains (Punjab), Manmohan Singh Khalsa, Kashmir Singh and Balbir Singh.

Ranjit Singh read out a message of support from the local Member of Parliament, Khalid Mahmood, in which he said that self-determination was the only means of conflict resolution in regions such as Punjab and Kashmir. He asked why, if the UK can contemplate a referendum on Scottish independence and if Montenegro could successfully hold a plebiscite on independence, the Indian state could not offer similar democratic processes to the Sikhs, the Kashmiris and others?

Speakers from Sikh organisations included Amrik Singh Sahota, OBE (Council of Khalistan), Amrik Singh Gill (Sikh Federation, UK), Avtar Singh (Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar), Manmohan Singh Khalsa (Dal Khalsa), Gurmej Singh Gill (Govt. in Exile), Joga Singh, Kashmir Singh (British Sikh Federation), Sukhvinder Singh (Akaash Radio), Gurdial Singh Deol (Shiromani Akali Dal), Sewa Singh Lalli and others. All of them spoke of the need to renew the struggle in an effective manner in accordance with the Sikh national interest, underpinned by international law. They appreciated the generous support of other nations and pledged that the Sikhs will themselves extend political support to them in common cause. The speakers at the Conference also paid rich tribute to the late Dr Jagjit Singh Chohan who had made a great contribution to the cause by giving political direction to the Sikhs at a time of real crisis.

Veteran Khalistani campaigner Charan Singh Panchhi thanked the speakers and delegates and pledged that 'Khalsa House' would remain committed to supporting the Khalistan cause. The following Resolutions were unanimously passed:-

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE CONFERENCE

1. This Conference re-affirms the resolve of the Sikh Nation to secure, in accordance with its freely expressed wishes and its rights under international law, an independent sovereign Sikh state of Khalistan in the Sikh homeland. This historic decision was formally adopted by the national gathering (Sarbat Khalsa) in 1986. No political settlement of the Indo-Sikh conflict can occur until the Sikh right of self determination is fully respected and Khalistan is liberated.
2. This Conference salutes the sacrifices of the thousands of martyrs who have laid down their lives in defending the Sikh Nation from the brutal and cowardly onslaught of the Indian state since 1978. We also honour the memory of hundreds of thousands of Sikhs who have been arbitrarily killed by security forces and politically orchestrated mobs simply because they

were Sikhs living in a state which has adopted the fascist Hindutva ideology as its established political credo. These sacrifices will be not be in vain. The Sikhs will, as history shows, emerge victorious.

3. As has been well documented by international human rights bodies, India has resorted to genocide in its efforts to extinguish the Sikh struggle for freedom. The murder of thousands of Sikhs in extra-judicial fake encounters by security forces, as well as mass killings by the army itself, followed by secret cremations of the victims, as well as the use of illegal detentions and torture are a matter of public record. This Conference deplors the failure of the UN to hold the Indian state to account for such grotesque abuses of human rights. It notes the same failures in relation to similar abuses directed at the people of Kashmir, the Nagas, Assamese, the people of Manipur, the Bodos and other nations held captive within the Indian state. We resolve to work politically with those nations in order to protect our national rights and to end the evil of Indian colonialism.
4. We applaud the cross party group 'Parliamentarians for National Self-Determination' (PNSD) for providing a platform to promote self-determination as a means of peaceful conflict resolution and as a means of securing justice on the basis of international law. We pledge to work with PNSD in advancing the cause of self-determination for the Sikhs as well as other nations. We welcome the announcement today of the Sikh Advisory Panel of the PNSD, which will work alongside other PNSD working groups such as the Kurdish, Naga and Kashmiris groups.
5. This Conference pays tribute to the great contribution of the late Dr Jagjit Singh Chohan who had the vision to call for a sovereign Sikh state, based on the legitimate aspirations and rights of the Sikh Nation, long before the demand for Khalistan became internationally publicised during the infamous military assault on the Golden Temple complex in 1984. We pass on our heartfelt condolences to his family and mourn the loss of one of the key figures of the struggle for Khalistan.
6. In contrast, not only this conference but history too will condemn the desertion and foolishness of those such as Parkash Singh Badal and Captain Amrinder Singh, who having once called for the creation of an independent Sikh state, have now handed a propaganda victory to the extremist right wing Hindu forces during and in the aftermath of the recent Punjab elections, by embarrassingly abandoning the riparian river water rights of Punjab, its only natural resource.
7. We further condemn as an exercise in futility and corruption, the recent and so-called Punjab 'elections', which the Indian Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh himself un-ashamedly described as being devoid of any Sikh political aspiration, and during which all leading proponents of Khalistan were subject to charges of sedition and faced long-term imprisonment.
8. This conference congratulates Alex Salmond and Elfyn Llwyd for their leadership and success in the Scottish and Welsh elections respectively and we look forward to working ever more closely with the Scottish and Welsh Nationalists within PNSD, to further the cause of self-determination of emerging independent states, for whom they have become a source of inspiration.
9. The Sikhs are confident that Punjabis of all creeds will prosper in an independent, egalitarian Khalistan in which the barriers of caste will be instantly removed, and which may further inspire the dismantling of an empire in which 3% caste Brahmins control one-fifth of the World's population and resources.
10. International criminal proceedings, such as the Nuremberg Trials, should be established to punish those Indian leaders, officials and security personnel who have committed crimes against humanity and genocide in Punjab and elsewhere so that the rule of law can be restored and justice served.

ENDS