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*To transform underprivileged and minority communities and individuals into informed and vibrant members of society through civic, educational and personal development programmes.*

26/04/2006

**EXTREMELY URGENT**

**FAO** Sir Ian Blair  
Metropolitan Police  
New Scotland Yard  
10 Broadway,  
London,  
SW1

cc:  
Kashmir Singh  
Coordinator  
National Council of Gurdwaras

Sewa Singh  
Birmingham Gurdwara Council

Council of Gurdwaras Bristol

Sadhu Singh  
Council of Gurdwaras Coventry  
c/o Guru Nanak Parkash Gurdwara

Surinder Singh  
Council of Gurdwaras South East

Dr Sadhu Singh  
Wolverhampton Gurdwara Council

Gurmukh Singh  
Secretary  
British Sikh Consultative Forum

Dr Indarjit Singh  
President  
Network of Sikh Organisations

Dabinderjit Singh  
Sikh Secretariat

Sikh Federation (UK)

Harmander Singh  
Sikhs In England

Dr Jasdev Singh  
Sikh Human Rights Group

See full cc list below:

Dear Sir Ian

### **Knife Detection Equipment at Train Stations in the UK**

We write in relation to the above and the implications of this proposal for the Sikh community.

Under Operation Shield we understand that knife detection equipment has already been placed in some train stations across the country, with a view to install them at all train stations.

UNITED SIKHS ([www.unitedsikhs.org](http://www.unitedsikhs.org)) is concerned that such knife detection may indirectly discriminate Sikhs using these public services.

This issue has also been raised by Dabinderjit Singh of the Sikh Federation (UK) at a meeting with Transport for London (TFL), the GLA and the Sikh Alliance of TFL held at City Hall on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006.

Initiated Sikhs are required to wear a sheathed sword namely the “**Kirpan**” at all times as a tenet of their faith. Please refer to the enclosed DVD entitled ‘**Sikhs We Are**’ and a power point presentation available for download at the following URL:

[http://unitedsikhs.org/downloads/30oct05\\_united\\_sikhs\\_slideshow\\_on\\_sikh\\_religious\\_rights.ppt](http://unitedsikhs.org/downloads/30oct05_united_sikhs_slideshow_on_sikh_religious_rights.ppt). Both resources provide further information about the Sikh faith, particularly explaining the importance of the Kirpan for Sikhs.

As you are aware, Sikhs are lawfully permitted to wear the Kirpan by virtue of **s.139 (5)(b) and (c) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988** which permits people to be in possession of a blade or a point in a public place provided this is for religious reasons or as part of a national costume. Sikhs are further permitted to wearing this article of faith by virtue of **Article 13** of the **Treaty of Amsterdam 1999** and **Article 9** of the **European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)** as incorporated by the **Human Rights Act 1998** which protects the right of individuals to practise their chosen religion. **Article 9 (1)** of the **ECHR** states:

**Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either**

**alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest** his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, **practice and observance**.

In light of this we are confident that you will ensure that Sikhs are not discriminated against through these search and detection methods currently undertaken by your officers at train stations.

UNITED SIKHS urges you to issue a public assurance to the Sikh community, to ensure that they will not suffer from any form of prejudice as a result of these methods.

We also ask that you inform us of all courses of action taken to ensure that Sikhs wearing a Kirpan are not unduly discriminated. This includes information regarding:

- The procedures and policies implemented by the Police in relation to knife detection methods.
- Awareness and training given to Police officers regarding the Kirpan and knife detection.
- Guidance given to officers regarding searching Sikhs wearing a Kirpan.

Should you require further information or resources, especially for the training and education of Police Officers, please do not hesitate to contact us for any material you may need.

We have every confidence that you will address this issue with due decorum and ensure that the Sikh community are treated fairly and are not unwitting victims in the campaign for a safe society, which the Sikh community fully recognises and supports.

We are also writing to the British Transport Police, West Midlands Police and the Association of Chief Police Officers regarding this issue.

We look forward to hearing from you soon with the above mentioned assurances.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact on the number below, Rishipal Singh, who is monitoring the effect of Operation Shield on the Kirpan wearing members of the Sikh community.

Yours sincerely

Mejindarpal Kaur  
Director  
International Civil and Human Rights Advocacy  
UNITED SIKHS  
Tel: 07841 142 103

Full list of Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations that have been notified of this letter by public advertisement:

National Council of Gurdwaras  
Birmingham Gurdwara Council  
Wolverhampton Gurdwara Council  
Council of Gurdwaras Bristol  
Council of Gurdwaras Southeast  
British Sikh Consultative Forum  
Network of Sikh Organisations  
Sikh Secretariat  
Sikhs In England  
Sikh Human Rights Group  
Sikh Federation (UK)  
Sikh Care Society Heathrow  
British Sikh Women Organisation  
Sikh Women's Association  
Young Sikhs (UK)  
National Council of Gurdwaras  
Young Sikhs (Derby)  
Sikh Federation (Birmingham )  
Awaze Qaum International  
British Sikh Consultative Forum  
Khalsa Human Rights  
Young Sikhs (Coventry)  
Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara, Gravesend  
Young Sikhs (Southall)  
Sikh Youth Association, Leicester  
Young Sikhs (Bedford)  
Ladies Federation, Leicester  
Nanak Parkash Gurdwara, Coventry  
Leamington Sikh Federation  
Oadby Sikh Women's Federation  
Wolverhampton Young Sikhs  
Southampton Sikh Welfare Association  
Southall Sikh Federation  
Sikh Welfare Association UK  
Young Sikhs (East London)  
East Midlands Sikh Women's Federation  
Gurdwara Guru Hargobind Ji, Coventry  
Sikh Federation (Gravesend)  
Guru Tegh Bahadur Gurdwara, Leicester  
Bhai Amrik Singh Shaheedi Fund  
Leicester Sikh Federation  
Sikh Resource Centre, Leicester  
Leicester Young Sikhs  
Ladies Sikh Federation  
Guru Nanak Sikh Temple, Wolverhampton  
Walsall Sikh Federation  
Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Willenhall  
Sikh Federation (Coventry)  
Khalsa Youth Club  
Council of Sikh Gurdwaras Coventry  
Young Sikhs (Nottingham)  
Stafford Sikh Federation  
Singh Sabha Sikh Temple, Bristol  
Warwick Sikh Federation

Young Sikhs (Birmingham)  
Gravesend Sikh Education and Youth Group  
Sikh Federation (Bedford)  
Dashmesh Darbar Gurdwara East London  
Sikh Federation (East Ham)  
Gurdwara Nanaksar, Walsall  
Young Sikhs (Gravesend)  
Khalsa Satsang Jatha, Southampton  
Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Leicester  
Young Sikhs (Southampton)  
Federation of Sikh Organisations (Leicester)  
Gurdwara Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, Tividale  
Sikh Federation (Slough)  
Singh Sabha Maidenhead  
Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Stoke on Trent  
Luton Young Sikhs  
Leicester Sikh Centre  
Huddersfield Sikh Federation  
Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Bristol  
Sikh Arts and Cultural Association  
Young Sikhs (Slough)  
Sikh Parents Association, Leicester  
Gurbani Sangeet Centre  
Leamington Young Sikhs  
Sikh Education Council. Leicester  
Nanaksar Gurdwara, Stafford  
Guru Nanak Gurdwara Sports, Leicester  
Walsall Sikh Forum  
Bristol Young Sikhs  
Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Slough  
Sikh Education & Voluntary Association (SEVA)  
Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Scunthorpe  
Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Newcastle  
Sikh Recreation and Learning Centre  
Guru Nanak Gurdwara Youth Club, Leicester  
Guru Nanak Sikh Temple, Telford  
Sikh Heritage Society, Leicester  
Kingston Young Sikhs  
Sikh Community Centre, Leicester  
Guru Nanak Sikh Museum  
Punjabi Radio Listeners Club, Leicester  
Sikh Resource Centre, Bristol  
Sikh Federation (Wolverhampton)  
Sikh Federation (Derby)  
Panjab Times  
Des Pardes Newspaper  
The Sikh Times  
Walsall Young Sikhs  
SikhLionz.com, West Midland  
Sikhstudent.org  
BOSS  
Akash Radio  
Punjab Radio  
Sukhsagar Radio  
Amritbani Radio  
Sunrise Radio