



# ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2025

SEWA • GLOBAL IMPACT • UNITY





## **Message From Global UNITED SIKHS Team**

The word gratitude captures but a modicum of the profound emotions that go out toward every single donor and supporter who has stood with us since UNITED SIKHS was founded in 1999. UNITED SIKHS, its staff and volunteers, consistently, year after year, receive one form or another of accolade or recognition for their selfless service to humanity. The Sikh community's continued trust speaks volumes about our shared commitment to uphold every precious ounce of faith you have reposed in us.

While wars and conflicts often bring the worst of humanity to the fore, you allowed the spirit of goodness to triumph by standing with us as we served people affected by crises in Ukraine, Armenia, and Gaza. Each time a natural disaster struck, you enabled us to rush to the aid of victims, without discrimination and on all sides. It did not matter where the suffering was, Panjab, Turkey, Morocco, Kyiv, or Hawaii, you brought hope to those in despair.

This spirit of solidarity was powerfully reflected during the devastating floods in Punjab, India. As entire villages were submerged and livelihoods destroyed, your support enabled UNITED SIKHS to provide emergency relief, including food, clean drinking water, medical assistance, and rehabilitation support to affected families. Beyond immediate aid, we worked closely with local communities to support recovery and resilience, ensuring that vulnerable households were not left behind in the aftermath of the floods.

There was no lack of effort when it came to empowering the Sikh community either. Through Project Kirti in India, you helped generate sustainable incomes, enabling households struggling with poverty to restore their dignity and livelihoods. In Pakistan, you ensured that families bereaved by despicable hate crimes did not have to struggle alone. Likewise, the UMEED (Hope) Helpline in the United States allowed the despondent and vulnerable to reach out, knowing there was someone ready to listen and help alleviate their pain.

In a year marked by a troubling surge in hate crimes, we delivered casualty and emergency medical response trainings and provided legal resources through our confidential 24/7 UMEED Helpline. Our legal team also supported numerous individuals facing workplace discrimination, travel restrictions, and visa-related challenges.

We are infinitely and incessantly grateful to our volunteers, who never tire of seeking ways to make the world a better place. And to donors like you, who have entrusted us with their dasvandh, a tenth of their hard-earned earnings, our gratitude truly knows no bounds.

The road ahead looks bright. On this journey, your trust and generosity remain the lifeblood of UNITED SIKHS. We humbly seek your continued support so that we may further strengthen and expand our humanitarian, advocacy, and community empowerment efforts in the years to come.

May humanity continues to thrive through donors like you.

# Preface

## **Purpose and Relevance to United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms**

This report is submitted as a civil society contribution to international human rights monitoring and accountability mechanisms, including the United Nations Special Procedures, Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, and relevant treaty bodies. It provides a systematic, evidence-based assessment of the civil, political, religious, cultural, and social rights of Sikh communities across multiple jurisdictions.

Sikhs constitute a distinct religious minority with a long-standing global presence. Despite this, violations affecting Sikh communities particularly in relation to freedom of religion or belief, non-discrimination, minority rights, security, and access to justice remain insufficiently documented within international reporting frameworks. Where documentation does exist, it is often fragmented, country-specific, or subsumed under broader racial, ethnic, or religious categories, resulting in the underrepresentation of Sikh-specific concerns.

This report seeks to address that gap by presenting a comparative, cross-regional analysis grounded in international human rights law, including but not limited to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), and the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.

## **Relevance to Special Rapporteurs**

The findings contained in this report are particularly relevant to the mandates of the:

- Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief
- Special Rapporteur on minority issues
- Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance
- Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions
- Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism
- Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy

The report documents patterns of state action and inaction, including discriminatory laws, lack of legal recognition, failures to protect religious sites, restrictions on religious manifestation, misuse of national security frameworks, digital censorship, and inadequate investigation of hate crimes affecting Sikh individuals and institutions.

## **Scope, Structure, and Reader Expectations**

This report provides a comparative global assessment of the human rights conditions affecting Sikh communities during the reporting period. Each country profile evaluates state practice across a consistent set of indicators, including:

- Constitutional and legal recognition of Sikhism
- Protection of freedom of religion or belief in law and practice
- Exposure to discrimination, harassment, and hate crimes
- State protection of religious sites and community safety
- Access to education, employment, healthcare, and civil documentation
- Immigration, asylum, residency, and citizenship barriers
- Digital rights, surveillance, and censorship affecting Sikh expression
- Availability of effective remedies and accountability mechanisms

Where relevant, case studies are included to illustrate systemic issues and recurring violations. The report also documents civil society interventions, including legal advocacy and humanitarian responses, and concludes with recommendations framed in line with UN human rights standards.

This report is not intended to:

- Rank states or assign legal culpability
- Replace judicial findings or asylum determinations
- Serve as an emergency incident reporting mechanism

Rather, it is designed to inform constructive dialogue, support mandate-holder communications, and contribute to evidence-based recommendations within UN processes.

## **Methodology and Analytical Framework**

A standardized methodology has been adopted to ensure consistency, comparability, and credibility across diverse political, legal, and cultural contexts. Given the wide variance in state approaches to minority recognition and religious regulation, a uniform analytical framework is essential for identifying structural patterns and assessing compliance with international obligations.

The methodology integrates:

- Uniform civil and religious rights indicators applied across all countries
- Qualitative data drawn from community testimonies, case documentation, and field observations
- Contextual legal and policy analysis referencing domestic law and international norms
- Comparative assessment to identify both best practices and systemic gaps

This approach allows the report to capture jurisdiction-specific realities while situating them within broader international human rights standards.

## **Data Collection and Sources**

Data for this report has been collected on a continuous, annual basis through a global documentation process coordinated by UNITED SIKHS, a civil society organization with consultative engagement at international forums.

Primary sources include:

1. **Global Civil Rights Surveys**

Surveys are administered year-round through organizational platforms, enabling Sikh individuals and families across regions to report experiences of discrimination, restrictions on religious practice, safety concerns, and institutional treatment.

2. **Field-Based Documentation**

Trained volunteers collect data during in-person engagement at:

- Gurdwaras and other places of worship
- Community centers and educational institutions
- Religious and cultural events
- Humanitarian, legal, and advocacy outreach activities

3. **Case Documentation and Observational Evidence**

Verified incidents and recurring patterns are documented through legal advocacy, humanitarian response efforts, and civil rights monitoring conducted by the organization and its partners.

4. **Contextual Verification**

Where feasible, community-reported data is corroborated through analysis of domestic legal frameworks, public records, judicial decisions, media reporting, and information from partner organizations, consistent with UN civil society reporting standards.

This mixed-methods approach ensures that the report reflects lived experiences of rights holders while maintaining methodological rigor appropriate for UN review processes.

## **Relevance to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)**

This report is intended to function as a UPR stakeholder submission and complementary civil society shadow report. It identifies areas where states have failed to fully implement accepted UPR recommendations, highlights emerging concerns since previous review cycles, and provides evidence-based inputs for future recommendations.

The findings are particularly relevant to UPR themes related to:

- Freedom of religion or belief
- Protection of religious minorities
- Non-discrimination and equality before the law
- Prevention and investigation of hate crimes

- Misuse of national security legislation
- Digital rights and freedom of expression

### **Living Document and Ongoing Engagement**

This report is conceived as a living document. As legal frameworks, political environments, and security conditions evolve, future editions will update findings, refine methodologies, and expand engagement with affected communities.

The overarching objective is to contribute constructively to UN human rights mechanisms by ensuring that the experiences of Sikh communities are visible, documented, and addressed within international accountability frameworks, in line with the principles of equality, dignity, and non-discrimination

# ASIA

**AFGHANISTAN**  
**(2023-2025)**  
**COUNTRY PROFILE**

**Head of Government:** Haibatullah Akhundzada

**Total Population:** Approximately 44 million (as of March 2025)

**Number of Gurdwaras:** 1

(Gurdwara Karte Parwan in Kabul is the last remaining operational Gurdwara in the country.)

**Sikh Population in Afghanistan:**

The Sikh population has drastically declined over the decades. In the 1970s, there were around 700,000 Hindus and Sikhs. This number fell to approximately 100,000 by the 1990s, and current estimates suggest fewer than 7,000 remain, with some sources indicating the population could be as low as 3,000.

**Currently Recognizes Sikhism as a Distinctive Religion by the State:** Yes

**Form of Government:** De facto theocratic regime under the Taliban (authoritarian)

(Not recognized as a legitimate democratic government by the international community.)

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index:** 3.8

**Introduction**

The Sikh community in Afghanistan has historically been a vibrant minority but now faces severe civil rights challenges, including discrimination, persecution, and violence. Extremist groups have targeted Sikhs, leading to tragic incidents such as the March 2020 attack on a Kabul gurdwara that resulted in 25 deaths (Kumar, 2017). Beyond such violence, Sikhs encounter systemic discrimination in accessing education, employment, and public services, coupled with societal hostility that pressures many to emigrate. Practicing their religious and cultural traditions openly is fraught with difficulties, exemplified by resistance to their cremation ceremonies. In addition, there are other minorities in Afghanistan that face similar patterns of persecution who have also suffered from systemic discrimination, violence, and displacement under both past and current regimes<sup>1</sup>. Compounding these issues is the Afghan government's inadequate protection of minority groups, exacerbating the risks and hardships faced by Sikhs, whose population has dwindled from an estimated 100,000 in the 1990s to around 1,300 in recent years (Bhattacharya, 2020).

**Case Study**

On June 18, 2022, Gurdwara Karte Parwan, the central Sikh place of worship in Kabul, Afghanistan, was attacked by heavily armed terrorists associated with the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP). The

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://unama.unmissions.org/unama-reports>

assailants initiated the assault around 6:00 am local time, detonating approximately 20 explosive devices within the Gurdwara, leading to its complete destruction. This was followed by a protracted four-hour gun battle. The attack resulted in the deaths of a Sikh devotee, a Gurdwara security guard, and a member of the Taliban forces, with seven others sustaining injuries.

Eyewitness accounts highlight the gravity of the situation. Talwindar Singh, who had previously been evacuated to Mexico under political asylum facilitated by UNITED SIKHS, remarked on the profound loss: "The Gurdwara has been demolished and completely destroyed, a place which was sacred to us. Bhai S. Sawinder Singh ji martyred his life while saving the Gurdwara and Sangat. We will never forget this moment of extreme grief." He further noted that one of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji's Swaroops was rescued during the attack.

At the time of the assault, three saroops (holy scriptures) of Guru Granth Sahib Ji were present in the Gurdwara. All were safely evacuated amidst the chaos. This incident underscores the escalating threats faced by religious minorities in Afghanistan and represents a significant affront to international peace and human dignity. The global Sikh community, alongside international organizations, has condemned this act of terror, emphasizing the need for concerted efforts to protect vulnerable communities and uphold the sanctity of religious sites worldwide<sup>2</sup>.

## **Parameters to consider for settlement in Afghanistan**

Settling in Afghanistan as an individual poses significant legal, economic, and security risks. While religious freedom is theoretically allowed, discrimination, safety concerns, and limited community support make it a challenging prospect. The lack of economic opportunities, restrictions on citizenship, and the declining minority population further complicate long-term settlement. It is crucial for anyone considering moving to Afghanistan to assess security risks, explore legal options carefully, and establish strong community or international support networks.

There are multiple critical factors to consider, given the complex historical, political, and social landscape of the country if an individual wants to settle in Afghanistan. Afghanistan has a small but historically significant Sikh and Hindu population, though their numbers have dwindled due to persecution, security concerns, and emigration. Below is a breakdown of key factors relevant to an individual's settlement in Afghanistan.

### **1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>3</sup>**

An individual planning to settle in Afghanistan must navigate visa and residency laws, which may include:

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Afghanistan offers different types of visas, including work, investment, and residency permits. Individuals may need to apply under specific categories such as business or religious leadership.
- **Work Authorization:** Employment opportunities for immigrants in Afghanistan are limited, and obtaining work permits could be challenging, particularly due to socio-political instability.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Afghanistan allows naturalization under strict conditions, including long-term residency and investment. However, Sikhs and Hindus have historically faced bureaucratic challenges in obtaining Afghan citizenship.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/deadly-attack-on-gurdwara-karte-parwan-kabul-afghanistan/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.afghanistanconsulate.ca/consular-affairs/visa-application.html>

- **Legal Documents:** Birth certificates, property ownership papers, and identity cards may be difficult to obtain due to systemic discrimination.
- **Integration vs. Identity:** Balancing integration into Afghan society while preserving Sikh identity can be difficult due to social pressures and discrimination<sup>4</sup>.
- **Pathway to Citizenship:** Afghan citizenship laws make it difficult for Sikhs to be recognized as equal citizens, and many struggle to obtain national identity documents.

## 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>5</sup>

Afghanistan, being an Islamic state, poses challenges for religious minorities, including Sikhs.

- **Religious Freedom:** Although the Afghan constitution provides some protection for religious minorities, in practice, Sikhs have faced restrictions and persecution.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** Historically, Afghanistan had multiple Gurdwaras, but many have been destroyed or abandoned. Some still exist in Kabul, Jalalabad, and Ghazni, but safety remains a concern.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Sikh men wearing turbans and maintaining unshorn hair may face societal prejudice or security risks, especially in rural areas.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Access to vegetarian food and maintaining religious dietary restrictions can be challenging in a meat-heavy Afghan cuisine culture.

## 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>6</sup>

- **Job Market:** Economic instability, political uncertainty, and a lack of Sikh representation in government or large businesses make employment difficult.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Sikhs have historically worked in trade, herbal medicine, and small businesses. However, discrimination and bias could hinder opportunities in formal sectors.
- **Income Levels:** Due to discrimination, immigrants may find themselves restricted to low-paying jobs or self-employment.
- **Cost of Living:** Given security concerns, individuals may need to live in more secure, urban areas, which are often more expensive.

## 4. Social & Community Support<sup>7</sup>

- **Presence of a Sikh Community:** The Afghan Sikh population has drastically declined, with only a few hundred individuals remaining, mostly in Kabul.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Sikhs have historically faced societal discrimination, including being called derogatory names, being forced to pay the "jizya" (a tax on non-Muslims), and being restricted from public offices.
- **Celebration of Festivals:** Sikhs may find it difficult to celebrate key religious events such as Gurburab openly, due to security concerns and restrictions on religious gatherings. Most important day that leads to processions require security and safety from the government.

## 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>8</sup>

- **Children's Schooling:** Immigrants' children in Afghanistan have faced bullying and exclusion in government schools. Private schooling may be an alternative, but it is expensive.
- **Cultural Education:** With a declining Indian population, there are few resources for Sikh children to learn about their heritage and language.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Minority population may face discrimination in public hospitals, leading to reliance on private healthcare, which can be costly.

## 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <https://prresearch.us/2016/11/19/ignored-identities-the-status-of-hindus-and-sikhs-in-afghanistans-legal-system/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sikhnet.com/news/plight-afghan-sikhs?>

<sup>6</sup> <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/afghan-hindus-and-sikhs-still-struggling?>

<sup>7</sup> <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/afghan-sikhs-and-hindus-face-discrimination-school?>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.southasiamonitor.org/spotlight/afghanistan-dangerous-place-religious-minorities-particularly-sikhs?>

<sup>9</sup> <https://modern diplomacy.eu/2022/11/23/hate-speech-in-social-media-fall-of-the-islamic-republic-of-afghanistan/>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** Although Afghanistan's laws theoretically protect minorities, enforcement is weak. Minority population often face systemic discrimination in legal matters, such as property rights.
- **Safety Concerns:** The minority community has been targeted by extremist groups, including bombings in Sikh Gurdwaras in the past. Personal safety is a significant issue. There are no guarantees that this may not happen again. UNITED SIKHS case study reference.
- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** Property ownership and inheritance rights are often denied or contested for Sikh families, making long-term settlement difficult.
- **Turbans & Airport Security:** Immigrants travelers and residents may face extra scrutiny at checkpoints and airports due to security profiling.

#### 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>10</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Sikhs in Afghanistan may face surveillance or online harassment.
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Anti-Sikh rhetoric on social media can contribute to real-world discrimination.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** Discussions on Sikh rights or persecution in Afghanistan may be censored or suppressed on Afghan social media platforms.

#### 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>11</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents of Hate Crimes:** Sikhs in Afghanistan have been victims of violent attacks, including targeted bombings.
- **Government Response & Law Enforcement Action:** Afghan authorities have been slow to act against perpetrators of hate crimes against Sikhs.
- **Case Studies of Discrimination:** Many Sikhs have fled Afghanistan due to discrimination, violence, and economic hardship.<sup>12</sup>

### Contribution of United Sikhs

United Sikhs through their network of volunteers, supporters, the United Nations and the State Department has been able to make contributions to supporting the Sikh community and other minorities in Afghanistan, including<sup>13</sup>:

1. **Humanitarian Assistance:** Providing emergency relief to families affected by violence, such as the 2020 Gurdwara attack in Kabul.
2. **Advocacy:** Actively engaging with international organizations like the UN to advocate for the protection and rights of Afghan minority population.
3. **Resettlement Support:** Assisting with the documentation and relocation of Afghan minority population, including helping 141 individuals resettle in Mexico.
4. **Preservation of Sikh Heritage:** Advocating for the protection of historical Gurdwaras in Afghanistan amidst ongoing violence.

Through these efforts, UNITED SIKHS has played a key role in protecting Afghan minority population and helping them find safety.

### Recommendations

- **Collaborate with the international and intergovernmental agencies:** In light of the ongoing attacks against Sikhs due to their distinct appearance, identity, culture, and faith, particularly in

<sup>10</sup> <https://modern diplomacy.eu/2022/11/23/hate-speech-in-social-media-fall-of-the-islamic-republic-of-afghanistan/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-52029571?>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/6/18/deadly-attack-on-sikh-temple-in-kabul-leaves-community-in-fear?>

<sup>13</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/save-afghan-sikhs-a-global-response/?>

countries where governmental protection is insufficient or absent, it is imperative that we continue to collaborate with international and intergovernmental organizations to advance a global humanitarian diplomacy framework. This approach is essential for providing humanitarian assistance and restoring the livelihoods of the affected individuals and their families. Historically, diplomatic efforts have yielded positive outcomes, such as the successful relocation of 141 Sikhs to a safer country through the efforts of UNITED SIKHS. However, there is still a significant need for further action.

- **Condemn acts of violence for all targeted minorities:** We call upon international and intergovernmental bodies to not only unequivocally condemn these violent acts but also to take decisive steps in establishing effective mechanisms of accountability and security measures aimed at preventing future attacks.
- **Urge the international community to outreach to the local government:** Furthermore, we urge the Government of Afghanistan to ensure the safety and security of the remaining Sikh community members, who face direct and imminent terrorist threats. We also request that the Afghan authorities take all necessary measures to preserve the sanctity of the historical Gurdwaras in Kabul, Jalalabad, and Ghazni. Given the ongoing threats and the inability of the Taliban-led government to provide adequate protection for minority communities, UNITED SIKHS maintains its position on the necessity of facilitating the resettlement of Afghan Sikhs to third countries where they can reside in safety and dignity.

# PAKISTAN

2023-2025

## COUNTRY PROFILE

**Head of Government:** Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (since March 2024)<sup>14</sup>

**Total Population:** Approx. 241 million (March 2025)<sup>15</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** Around 150 historical and functional gurdwaras, with key sites including Gurdwara Janam Asthan (Nankana Sahib) and Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib (Kartarpur Corridor)<sup>16</sup>

**Sikh Population in Pakistan:** Estimated 20,000–30,000 individuals, mostly concentrated in Punjab (Nankana Sahib, Lahore) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Peshawar, Kurram, Orakzai).<sup>17</sup>

**Recognition of Sikhism by the State:** Sikhism is officially recognized as a minority religion. Sikhs are eligible for reserved seats in provincial assemblies and can freely manage their gurdwaras through the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) and Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (PSGPC), although administrative challenges remain.<sup>18</sup>

**Form of Government:** Federal parliamentary republic; Islam is the state religion, but constitutional provisions guarantee minority rights under Articles 20 and 36.<sup>19</sup>

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index: 40.0**

### Introduction

Though Pakistan is home to sacred Sikh heritage sites, including Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the Sikh minority continues to face systemic discrimination and security threats. Issues include forced conversions, desecration of Gurdwaras, underrepresentation in public life, and hate crimes. Despite constitutional recognition, the gap between de jure rights and de facto conditions is stark.<sup>20</sup>

### Case Study<sup>21</sup>

**Nankana Sahib Mob Attack (2020):** On January 3, 2020, a violent mob attacked Gurdwara Janam Asthan in Nankana Sahib, threatening to raze the shrine and expel the Sikh community. The incident,

---

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/3/3/shehbaz-sharif-set-to-become-pakistans-new-pm-after-controversial-election>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/pakistan-population/>

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Gurdwaras\\_of\\_Pakistan](https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Gurdwaras_of_Pakistan)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.daijiworld.com/news/newsDisplay?newsID=829821>

<sup>18</sup> <https://gprjournal.com/fulltext/constitutional-rights-of-religious-minorities-in-pakistan>

<sup>19</sup> <https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/171759.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/attack-on-nankana-sahib-gurdwara-sgpc-to-send-4-member-delegation-to-pakistan/articleshow/73097964.cms>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/pakistan>

allegedly triggered by tensions surrounding an interfaith marriage, drew international condemnation but no meaningful judicial accountability followed.

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in Pakistan

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>22</sup>

- Visa access for Sikhs is primarily through pilgrimage visas (e.g., Kartarpur Corridor) or work/study permits.
- Citizenship is possible for long-term residents, though dual nationality policies are restrictive.
- National identity cards list religion, and Sikhs are officially categorized as a recognized minority.

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>23</sup>

- Sikhism enjoys official minority status, allowing for public religious practice and festivals.
- Major gurdwaras are open to local and international pilgrims, including those from India under bilateral agreements.
- Challenges include gurdwara property management disputes under the ETPB and incidents of forced conversions in rural areas.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>24</sup>

- Sikhs are primarily engaged in trade, agriculture, and small businesses in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- Economic marginalization exists, though Sikh traders maintain influence in local markets (e.g., Peshawar).

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>25</sup>

- Active community networks exist via the PSGPC and Sikh NGOs.
- Social acceptance varies; urban centers are more tolerant, while rural regions face occasional discrimination.

### 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>26</sup>

- Sikh children attend public and private schools; Punjabi and Gurmukhi instruction is limited but available informally.
- Access to higher education improving, with Sikh students enrolling in major universities (e.g., Lahore, Peshawar).

### 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>27</sup>

- The Constitution guarantees freedom of religion (Article 20) and minority rights (Article 36).
- While Sikhs face occasional blasphemy accusations and property disputes, state protection has improved post-2014 (Army Public School attack reforms).

### 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>28</sup>

- Open internet access with occasional government censorship of political content; Sikh religious material is generally accessible.
- Digital platforms used to organize Nagar Kirtans and heritage advocacy.

---

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/9/big-moment-indian-sikhs-on-historic-pilgrimage-to-pakistan>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/gurdwara>

<sup>24</sup> <https://hrcp-web.org/hrcpweb/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2024-State-of-human-rights-in-2023-EN.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> <https://etpb.gov.pk/shrines/pakistan-sikh-gurdwara-parbandhak-committee-psgpc/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/2024.04.16-WAYRF-report.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Pakistan-FoRB-Advocacy-Analysis-biref-2021-ENG.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/pakistan/freedom-net/2023>

## 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>29</sup>

- Incidents of targeted violence have occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (e.g., killings of Sikh shopkeepers in 2021–2022), prompting security measures.
- Government monitors minority rights through the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the National Commission for Minorities.

## Contributions of UNITED SIKHS in Pakistan<sup>30</sup>

- **Humanitarian Relief:** Emergency assistance has been provided to Sikh families affected by hate crimes, targeted killings, and community displacement, particularly in conflict-prone areas like Peshawar and Nankana Sahib, offering financial, medical, and psychosocial support during periods of acute vulnerability.
- **Legal Advocacy:** Engagement with UN Special Rapporteurs on freedom of religion or belief, as well as human rights and minority issues, has been instrumental in highlighting the plight of Sikhs in Pakistan. This includes the submission of detailed shadow reports on incidents of forced conversions, disappearances, and state inaction, contributing to international pressure and accountability mechanisms.
- **Preservation of Heritage:** Continued efforts have been made to safeguard Sikh heritage sites, including advocating for legal protection of historic Gurdwaras threatened by encroachment, neglect, or vandalism. Notable efforts include documentation of threats to Gurdwaras in Lahore, Sialkot, and Nankana Sahib, and calls for independent oversight over site management and preservation.
- **Community Resettlement:** Direct assistance has supported asylum seekers and displaced Sikh families in navigating complex legal and immigration systems, particularly those fleeing sectarian violence or systemic discrimination. This includes casework, referrals, legal filings, and collaboration with international partners to secure safe relocation to countries like Canada, the U.S., the UK, and Mexico, building on successful models used for Afghan Sikh refugee.

## Recommendation

In light of escalating hostility and the persistent lack of institutional protection for Sikh minorities in Pakistan, there is an urgent need for the establishment of a coordinated global humanitarian framework to facilitate the relocation of at-risk Sikh families to third countries with strong minority rights protections. International bodies must issue firm condemnations and apply diplomatic pressure on Pakistan to address systemic failures, including impunity for hate crimes, denial of identification documents, and the neglect of sacred Sikh heritage sites. Simultaneously, Pakistan must undertake meaningful institutional reforms to ensure legal accountability, equitable access to civil documentation, and the protection of religious freedoms. In support of these efforts, expanded humanitarian resettlement pathways should be pursued in collaboration with countries such as Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Mexico, drawing on successful precedents in the relocation of displaced Sikh communities from conflict-affected regions.

---

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.rferl.org/a/pakistan-minority-sikhs-flee-khyber-pakhtunkhwa/32614334.html>

<sup>30</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Annual-Report-2023.pdf>

# CHINA

## (2023–2025)

### COUNTRY PROFILE

**Head of Government:** Xi Jinping

**Total Population:** Approx. 1.41 billion (as of March 2025)<sup>31</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** No officially recognized Gurdwaras (Unofficial prayer spaces may exist in diplomatic quarters or among expatriates.)<sup>32</sup>

**Sikh Population in China:** Estimated in the low thousands, mostly temporary residents such as students, professionals, or traders

**Currently Recognizes Sikhism as a Distinctive Religion by the State:** No

**Form of Government:** One-party authoritarian state under the Chinese Communist Party (Highly centralized, with restrictions on religious and civil liberties)<sup>33</sup>

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index:**32.5

#### Introduction

Sikhism is not among the five officially recognized religions in China. Consequently, the Sikh community, which is largely composed of short-term migrants or students, operates without formal recognition or protection. China's strict religious regulation—rooted in state control and the suppression of non-state-sanctioned religious practices—limits the ability of Sikhs to openly express and practice their faith. Turbans, unshorn hair, and public religious gatherings attract scrutiny in a state that closely monitors religious and ethnic identities<sup>34</sup>.

While physical safety for foreigners is not a prominent concern, spiritual and cultural rights are significantly compromised. Instances of surveillance, restrictions on congregation, and the lack of Gurdwaras underscore the difficulties Sikhs face. Public discourse on Sikh civil rights is virtually absent in Chinese media, and digital censorship further silences advocacy.<sup>35</sup>

#### Case Study

In 2023, a group of Sikh postgraduate students in Guangzhou faced bureaucratic hurdles when attempting to conduct a private Vaisakhi celebration. They were denied access to a public community hall and warned by local authorities against organizing unregistered religious gatherings. Though no legal charges were

---

<sup>31</sup> [https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/statistics/202503/01/content\\_WS67c2695cc6d0868f4e8f02ae.html](https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/statistics/202503/01/content_WS67c2695cc6d0868f4e8f02ae.html)

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.uscirf.gov>

<sup>33</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/china/freedom-world/2024>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.usccb.org/resources/clamp-down-religious-freedom-china-june-2024>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-religion-or-belief/country-visits-and-reports>

brought forward, participants reported being monitored online and visited by local police, with instructions to refrain from holding “unauthorized cultural activities.”

The event drew attention to the subtle but pervasive suppression of minority religious expression in China. Despite the peaceful nature of the gathering, the Chinese government’s sensitivity to unsanctioned assemblies—especially involving foreign religious symbols—led to increased scrutiny. One student shared anonymously, “We’re not even asking for visibility—just the right to quietly pray and celebrate.”

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in China

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>36</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Long-term residency is extremely limited. Visas are granted for work (Z), study (X), and business (M), but religious workers face rejection unless state sanctioned.
- **Work Authorization:** Requires employer sponsorship. Religious attire or visible Sikh identity may complicate hiring in certain sectors.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** China rarely grants citizenship to foreigners, especially those with religious affiliations. Dual citizenship is banned.
- **Legal Documents:** Identity documents must align with official classifications. There is no framework for religious self-identification as Sikh.

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>37</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Only five religions are recognized. Sikhism is not, and activities outside state-run religious bodies are discouraged or illegal.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** No public gurdwaras exist. Sikh prayers are conducted discreetly in private or diplomatic settings.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Turbans and kara are not banned but can attract suspicion in public, particularly during heightened security periods.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Vegetarian options are available in urban centers, but language and cultural barriers can complicate dietary observance.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>38</sup>

- **Job Market:** Opportunities exist in academia, tech, and foreign business. Knowledge of Mandarin is often essential.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Multinational firms are more tolerant, but domestic companies may lack cultural awareness.
- **Income Levels:** Varies by city and industry; expat packages may offer parity with global standards.
- **Cost of Living:** Major cities like Shanghai and Beijing are expensive; religious or ethnic neighborhoods do not exist for community support.

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>39</sup>

- **Presence of a Sikh Community:** Very limited; mostly students or businesspeople. No organized local support structures.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Social discrimination is subtle, often expressed through state controls rather than open hostility.
- **Celebration of Festivals:** Public celebration of Sikh festivals is virtually impossible. Private gatherings are allowed only under tight restrictions.

### 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.uscirtf.gov/countries/china>

<sup>37</sup> [http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/lawregulations/201911/20/content\\_WS5ed8856ec6d0b3f0e9499913.html](http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/lawregulations/201911/20/content_WS5ed8856ec6d0b3f0e9499913.html)

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/campaigns/china-98/religion.htm>

<sup>39</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/china/freedom-world/2024>

<sup>40</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/china/freedom-world/2024>

- **Children’s Schooling:** International schools are accessible in urban hubs. State schools are secular and restrict religious dress or identity.
- **Cultural Education:** No Sikh institutions exist; children must rely on online or foreign sources for religious learning.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Healthcare is adequate but lacks cultural sensitivity. Faith-based needs are not considered.

## 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>41</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** No specific protections exist for Sikhs. Freedom of belief is constitutionally permitted but practically controlled.
- **Safety Concerns:** Physical safety is generally maintained, but there are risks of state surveillance and arbitrary detention under security laws.
- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** Sikh religious identity is not protected under Chinese law. Legal redress for faith-based discrimination is limited.
- **Turbans & Airport Security:** Security screenings may require removal of turbans. Exemptions for religious articles are not recognized.

## 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>42</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** All online activity is monitored. Religious communication may be flagged.
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Not openly documented, but online discourse on minority faiths is censored.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** Topics related to minority rights, especially religious freedoms, are routinely censored or blocked.

## 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>43</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents of Hate Crimes:** No official data on hate crimes. Civil society watchdogs are prohibited.
- **Government Response & Law Enforcement Action:** Government maintains strict control on public order; redress for minority grievances is rare.
- **Case Studies of Discrimination:** While systemic discrimination is evident in censorship and surveillance, few public cases exist due to suppression.

## Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>44</sup>

Due to China’s closed civic environment, UNITED SIKHS has not maintained an operational presence in mainland China. However, key contributions include:

1. **Advocacy:** Monitoring and reporting on religious restrictions globally, including China’s suppression of non-sanctioned religions.
2. **Global Coalition Building:** Raising Sikh issues in UN forums and engaging diplomats in advocating for the rights of religious minorities in China.
3. **Support for Diaspora:** Assisting Sikhs in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other adjacent regions who face pressures due to Beijing’s religious policies.
4. **Digital Awareness Campaigns:** Educating global Sikh youth about the challenges of religious practice in authoritarian environments.

## Recommendations

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.uscifr.gov/countries/china>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.usccb.org/resources/clamp-down-religious-freedom-china-june-2024>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/east-asia/china/report-china/>

<sup>44</sup> <https://ichra.unitedsikhs.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2023-ANNUAL-CIVIL-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf>

- **Engage in Multilateral Diplomacy:** Advocate at the UN and international forums for the recognition of Sikhism as a legitimate, non-political faith with a historical global presence.
- **Monitor and Report Restrictions:** Work with digital rights organizations to track censorship and religious surveillance of Sikhs and other minorities in China.
- **Preserve Sikh Identity Through Online Education:** Develop secure online platforms for religious education and community support for Sikhs residing temporarily in China.
- **Condemn Religious Suppression:** Call on international governments to publicly address China's systematic exclusion of minority faiths and push for reforms to recognize Sikh religious identity.
- **Prepare Crisis Protocols:** Given China's arbitrary detentions and opaque legal system, issue travel advisories and community protection protocols for Sikh visitors and residents.

# MALAYSIA

## (2023–2025)

### COUNTRY PROFILE

**Head of Government:** Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim

**Total Population:** Approx. 34 million (as of March 2025) <sup>45</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** Approximately 120 registered Gurdwaras  
(Located across Peninsular Malaysia, notably in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Perak) <sup>46</sup>

**Sikh Population in Malaysia:** Estimated 100,000–120,000; one of the most organized Sikh diasporas in Asia <sup>47</sup>

**Currently Recognizes Sikhism as a Distinctive Religion by the State:** Partially  
(Often listed under “Other Religions” in state data; not uniformly recognized in policy frameworks) <sup>48</sup>

**Form of Government:** Federal constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary democracy  
(Islam is the official religion; protections exist for religious minorities with limitations) <sup>49</sup>

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index: 67.5**

#### Introduction<sup>50</sup>

Malaysia is home to a vibrant and well-established Sikh community, with roots dating back to British colonial times. Sikhs in Malaysia have historically contributed to civil service, education, law enforcement, and military sectors. The country’s federal constitution guarantees freedom of religion, enabling Sikhs to practice their faith openly including managing Gurdwaras, conducting Nagar Kirtans, and running Punjabi schools

However, systemic challenges persist. Sikhism is often lumped under the “Others” category in official documents, limiting its visibility in public policy. Issues also arise around religious attire in schools’ interfaith marriages and inheritance within dual legal systems (civil and sharia), and the limited availability of formal Sikh representation in national policymaking

#### Case Study<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> <https://open.dosm.gov.my/dashboard/population>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.snsn.my>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.mgc.org.my>

<sup>48</sup> <https://open.dosm.gov.my/dashboard/population>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.sprm.gov.my/admin/files/sprm/assets/pdf/penguatkuasaan/perlembagaan-persekutuan-bi.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.snsn.my>

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2025/07/07/rm140000-allegedly-swindled-in-selangor-religious-school-con/183058>

In 2024, a public school in Selangor prohibited a Sikh student from wearing the kara, citing a blanket rule against non-uniform accessories. The school refused to recognize it as a religious article, prompting national outcry from Sikh groups. UNITED SIKHS and other civil society organizations intervened, highlighting constitutional protections. Following advocacy and media coverage, the Ministry of Education issued a directive reaffirming that religious symbols like the kara are permitted. This incident underscored the continued need for religious sensitivity training in state institutions and highlighted a broader trend of policy ambiguity toward non-Muslim minorities.

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in Malaysia

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>52</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Malaysia provides employment, student, spousal, and long-term residency visas without religious discrimination
- **Work Authorization:** Valid work permits are issued through employer sponsorship. Religious workers, particularly foreign clergy, must sometimes undergo extra scrutiny from religious bodies like JAKIM
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Citizenship is possible through naturalization but rarely granted. Malaysia does not allow dual citizenship
- **Legal Documents:** Identity cards (MyKad) classify non-Muslims under "Others." Sikhism is not specifically listed, which can complicate access to certain entitlements

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>53</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Constitutionally protected, though Islamic supremacy affects interfaith rights and legal access
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** High availability of Gurdwaras across all major cities and towns
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Religious symbols such as turbans and kara are generally accepted but may occasionally face institutional misinterpretation (e.g., in schools or prisons)
- **Dietary Preferences:** Vegetarianism and Sikh dietary restrictions are well understood and supported, particularly through langar in Gurdwaras

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>54</sup>

- **Job Market:** Sikhs are employed across all sectors—legal, medical, public service, and private industry
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Generally inclusive, though underrepresentation exists in senior government roles
- **Income Levels:** Comparable to national averages; many Sikh families are in the middle or upper-middle income groups
- **Cost of Living:** Urban areas are more expensive, but access to religious institutions and community networks offsets integration barriers

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>55</sup>

- **Presence of a Sikh Community:** Strong community networks include youth programs, elder care, and interfaith platforms
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Social acceptance is high, but subtle bias surfaces in political rhetoric and administrative treatment
- **Celebration of Festivals:** Public celebrations such as Nagar Kirtans are allowed with police permits and are often attended by diverse communities

---

<sup>52</sup> <https://minorityrights.org/country/malaysia/>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.snsn.my>

<sup>54</sup> <https://data.who.int/countries/458>

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.sprm.gov.my/admin/files/sprm/assets/pdf/penguatkuasaan/perlembagaan-persekutuan-bi.pdf>

## 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>56</sup>

- **Children’s Schooling:** Access to public, private, and international schools. Sikh religious education is offered through Gurdwaras and private Punjabi classes
- **Cultural Education:** Gurdwara Sahib-based programs support Punjabi and Gurmat education.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Malaysia provides high-quality healthcare, though limited cultural training may affect sensitivity to Sikh patients

## 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>57</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** Anti-discrimination laws exist but are inconsistently enforced. Sharia law may override civil rights in mixed-faith families
- **Safety Concerns:** Physical safety for Sikhs is high. No patterns of violent targeting have been reported.
- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** Civil courts handle Sikh legal issues, but complications arise when cases involve Muslim relatives
- **Turbans & Airport Security:** Generally respected. Malaysia Airports have protocols for religious accommodations

## 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>58</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** No religious profiling in government surveillance. Monitoring focuses more on political dissent
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Occasional incidents occur but are not widespread.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** No systematic censorship of Sikh topics online.

## 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>59</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents of Hate Crimes:** Data is rarely disaggregated by religion. Civil society plays a key role in tracking
- **Government Response & Law Enforcement Action:** Police and human rights bodies like SUHAKAM are responsive, but outcomes vary.
- **Case Studies of Discrimination:** Issues have been documented in schooling, legal inheritance, and religious registration.

## Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>60</sup>

Due to Malaysia’s relatively open civic environment, UNITED SIKHS has actively supported the local Sikh community in the following ways:<sup>61</sup>

1. **Legal Advocacy:** Provided representation and guidance in religious rights cases, such as school dress code incidents
2. **Policy Engagement:** Consulted with Malaysian interfaith councils and parliamentary committees on minority protections
3. **Youth Development:** Partnered with Gurdwaras and educational bodies to provide leadership programs and youth camps
4. **Humanitarian Aid:** Coordinated flood relief and COVID-19 support initiatives that reached both Sikh and non-Sikh populations

## Recommendations

---

<sup>56</sup> <https://minorityrights.org/country/malaysia/>

<sup>57</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/malaysia/freedom-net/2024>

<sup>58</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/malaysia/freedom-net/2024>

<sup>59</sup> <https://suhakam.org.my/publications/research-thematic-reports/>

<sup>60</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org>

<sup>61</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/taking-to-the-skies-and-reaching-out-to-the-forgotten-communities-of-malaysia/>

- **Strengthen Legal Recognition:** Advocate for Sikhism to be officially listed in government identity records and forms.
- **Standardize Religious Rights Protections:** Encourage the Ministry of Education and Home Affairs to adopt clear, enforceable policies protecting Sikh articles of faith.
- **Advance Interfaith Legal Protections:** Push for clarity and safeguards around inheritance, custody, and marriage rights for Sikhs in mixed-faith families.
- **Improve Cultural Training in State Institutions:** Ensure police, school administrators, and healthcare workers are sensitized to Sikh identity and rights.
- **Monitor and Document Discrimination:** Establish a formal mechanism to collect and report cases of religious bias affecting the Sikh community.

**INDIA**  
**(2023–2025)**  
**Country Profile**

**Head of Government:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi

**Total Population:** Approx. 1.42 billion (as of March 2025)<sup>62</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** Over 25,000, with major historical and religious significance in Punjab and across India<sup>63</sup>

**Sikh Population in India:** Approx. 22 million (1.7% of the national population)<sup>64</sup>

**Currently Recognizes Sikhism as a Distinctive Religion by the State:** Yes — constitutionally and demographically recognized<sup>65</sup>

**Form of Government:** Federal parliamentary democratic republic

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index: 58.8**

## **Introduction**

India is the birthplace of Sikhism and home to the largest Sikh population globally. Sikhism is one of the religions officially recognized by the Indian state and is listed separately in national censuses. Gurdwaras, Sikh schools, and cultural institutions are widespread and play an active role in community life. However, despite this formal recognition, the Sikh community in India has faced systemic political repression, targeted surveillance, and social stigmatization particularly following the 1984 pogroms and, more recently, the farmers' protests of 2020–2021<sup>66</sup>

The use of national security laws such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and the National Security Act (NSA) against Sikh activists and youth, the labeling of dissent as "Khalistani separatism," and digital censorship of Sikh narratives highlight the contested space for religious and political expression<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.focus-economics.com/country-indicator/india/population/>

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.indiaculture.gov.in/annual-reports>

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.macrotrends.net/global-metrics/countries/ind/india/population-growth-rate>

<sup>65</sup> <https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/right-to-freedom-of-religion-articles-25-28/>

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/india>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-asia/india/report-india/>

## Case Study<sup>68</sup>

In March 2023, the Indian government launched a statewide crackdown in Punjab to apprehend Amritpal Singh, a controversial Sikh preacher. During the operation, internet services were shut down across Punjab, affecting over 27 million people. Hundreds of Sikh youth were detained without charges under the NSA, and activists, journalists, and their families faced home raids and surveillance

A Sikh journalist from Ludhiana shared:

*“We were not protesting or rioting — we were reporting. But just being a Sikh voice on a sensitive issue made us targets.”*

This event spotlighted the broader issue of shrinking space for Sikh civil society, and how religious identity can intersect with political repression in the name of national security.

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in India

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>69</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Diaspora Sikhs may apply for OCI (Overseas Citizen of India) status, which allows residency and property ownership.
- **Work Authorization:** Indian citizens and OCIs face no religious restrictions on employment.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Available by birth, descent, or naturalization. However, the **Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)** has raised fears about exclusionary criteria (
- **Legal Documents:** Sikh identity is recognized in Aadhar, passports, voter ID, and census forms

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>70</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Guaranteed under Article 25 of the Constitution, but often undermined by state surveillance and crackdowns on perceived dissent
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** Sikh places of worship are accessible nationwide, especially in Punjab, Delhi, and Maharashtra
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Turbans, kara, kirpan, and other articles of faith are protected and publicly accepted, though occasionally policed in sensitive areas
- **Dietary Preferences:** Vegetarianism is widespread and well-supported in religious and public settings.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>71</sup>

- **Job Market:** Wide-ranging opportunities exist across sectors. Many Sikhs are represented in agriculture, military, transport, and trade.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Religious attire is permitted in government and private offices. Discrimination is more class or caste-based than religion-specific.
- **Income Levels:** Vary by region. Punjab’s agrarian economy has declined, while urban Sikh professionals have excelled in metros
- **Cost of Living:** Relatively affordable compared to global standards; higher in Tier 1 cities.

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-65063620>

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.ifri.org/en/papers/making-sense-indias-citizenship-amendment-act-2019-process-politics-protests>

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/india>

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4418111>

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-asia/india/report-india/>

- **Presence of a Sikh Community:** Strong, especially in Punjab, Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Uttarakhand.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Social bias exists in some areas; state suspicion of vocal or political Sikh identity is a growing concern
- **Celebration of Festivals:** Sikh holidays (e.g., Gurpurab, Baisakhi) are public holidays in Punjab and celebrated nationally.

#### 5. Education & Family Considerations

- **Children's Schooling:** Sikh-run schools and colleges are widespread. SGPC and private institutions offer religious instruction.
- **Cultural Education:** Widely available through gurdwaras, Khalsa schools, and digital platforms.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Quality care is available, especially in Punjab. Sikh-run hospitals offer culturally competent services

#### 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>73</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** Laws exist but are inconsistently enforced. Hate crimes and communal violence lack accountability
- **Safety Concerns:** High-profile activists face digital surveillance, arbitrary detention, or being branded as "anti-national"
- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** Guaranteed, but conditional on political non-dissent.
- **Turbans & Airport Security:** Generally respected, though manual checks may occur without consistent religious exemptions

#### 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>74</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Surveillance tools like Pegasus have reportedly targeted Sikh journalists and human rights defenders
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Anti-Sikh slurs and misinformation circulate online; platforms are slow to moderate.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** Has increased; posts about Khalistan, human rights, or protests are frequently removed or shadow-banned

#### 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>75</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents of Hate Crimes:** India lacks disaggregated hate crime data for Sikhs.
- **Government Response & Law Enforcement Action:** Often unresponsive; bias in investigation or prosecution is reported
- **Case Studies of Discrimination:** Farmers' protest participants and journalists were labeled as terrorists or foreign agents

### Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>76</sup>

UNITED SIKHS remains active in India through legal advocacy, education, and humanitarian projects:

1. **Legal Aid:** Provided counsel in UAPA cases, police brutality claims, and religious profiling incidents.
2. **Protest Support:** Documented and defended civil rights during the farmers' movement (2020–2021).
3. **Healthcare and Relief:** Ran COVID-19 relief drives and rural medical outreach programs in Punjab

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/india>

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.accessnow.org/internet-shutdowns-2024/>

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/india>

<sup>76</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org>

4. **Community Education:** Offers training on constitutional rights, humanitarian law, and digital safety for Sikh youth and activists.

## **Recommendations**

- **Establish Legal Defense Networks:** Build infrastructure to respond to detentions under UAPA and NSA.
- **Monitor Internet Censorship:** Collaborate with global watchdogs to track and challenge digital suppression of Sikh narratives.
- **Defend Religious Identity Protections:** Ensure turban and kirpan rights are upheld in all public spaces.
- **Advocate for Disaggregated Data:** Push for hate crime tracking by religion and caste to expose anti-Sikh violence.
- **Support Legal Reforms:** Monitor and challenge the use of security laws that criminalize Sikh civil society engagement.

# DUBAI (UNITED ARAB EMIRATES)

2023–2025

## COUNTRY PROFILE

**Head of Government:** Vice President and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum (Ruler of Dubai)<sup>77</sup>

**Total Population:** Approx. 3.6 million (Dubai Emirate; March 2025)<sup>78</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** 1 recognized (Guru Nanak Darbar, Jebel Ali); several private prayer halls in labor accommodations and residential areas<sup>79</sup>

**Sikh Population in Dubai (and UAE):** Estimated 50,000–60,000 individuals; primarily migrant workers, business owners, and professionals<sup>80</sup>

**Recognition of Sikhism by the State:** No formal recognition as a separate religion; classified under “Other” in official records; permitted to practice freely under federal laws on religious tolerance<sup>81</sup>

**Form of Government:** Federal absolute monarchy with constitutional framework; Islamic law influences public policy and cultural norms

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index: 63.8**

### Introduction

Dubai hosts one of the largest Sikh populations in the Middle East, concentrated around labor camps, professional sectors, and trading hubs. The establishment of the Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara in 2012 marked a milestone for Sikh visibility in the Gulf region, providing both a spiritual center and a hub for community service. While the UAE constitution ensures freedom of worship within designated spaces, public religious expression outside approved facilities is regulated.<sup>82</sup>

Dubai’s strong economy and status as a global trade and aviation hub attract Sikh professionals, entrepreneurs, and migrant workers from Punjab and other parts of India. The government’s emphasis on interfaith harmony and tolerance has fostered relative safety and acceptance, though lack of official recognition means Sikhs rely heavily on community-run initiatives for cultural and religious needs<sup>83</sup>.

---

<sup>77</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohammed\\_bin\\_Rashid\\_Al\\_Maktoum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohammed_bin_Rashid_Al_Maktoum)

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.globalmediainsight.com/blog/uae-population-statistics/>

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.gurudwaradubai.com/2012/01/>

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.globalmediainsight.com/blog/uae-population-statistics/>

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/international-religious-freedom-report-for-2019-united-arab-emirates>

<sup>82</sup> <https://u.ae/en/about-the-uae/culture/tolerance/tolerance-initiatives>

<sup>83</sup> <https://gulfmigration.grc.net/media/pubs/book/GRM%202017%20-%20Volume%20-%20Definitive%20-%202018-06-15.pdf>

## Case Study<sup>84</sup>

During the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2022) and subsequent recovery phases, Sikh volunteers at Guru Nanak Darbar served over 10,000 meals daily to individuals impacted by lockdowns, including workers of diverse faiths. The initiative gained praise from UAE authorities and international media, highlighting Sikh principles of seva (selfless service) and reinforcing community goodwill.

A volunteer noted:

“The Gurdwara became a sanctuary not only for Sikhs but for anyone in need. In a city built on diversity, langar reminded everyone that humanity has no boundaries.”

This event demonstrated the strength of Sikh community organization in Dubai and opportunities for enhanced collaboration with UAE interfaith initiatives.

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in Dubai

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>85</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Residency linked to employment, business ownership, or sponsorship; student visas available via recognized universities.
- **Work Authorization:** Employment contracts define residency; workers cannot stay without valid employment visa.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** No automatic citizenship; extremely limited options for naturalization.
- **Legal Documents:** No specific recognition of Sikh faith; no prohibition on turban, kara, or other articles of faith.

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>86</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Permitted within approved worship spaces; public preaching is restricted.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** Guru Nanak Darbar serves as the primary center; private prayer spaces exist in worker accommodations.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Turbans widely accepted; no restrictions on visible articles of faith.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Vegetarian and Indian cuisine widely available; langar at Gurdwara serves free meals daily.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>87</sup>

- **Job Market:** Strong opportunities in construction, hospitality, trade, aviation, finance, and IT.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Multicultural environment; Sikh identity generally well accepted.
- **Income Levels:** Tax-free salaries; high cost of living but competitive wages.
- **Cost of Living:** Housing and schooling expensive; food and transportation affordable relative to income.

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>88</sup>

- **Presence of Sikh Community:** Large, organized around Guru Nanak Darbar; active in business and charity sectors.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** General tolerance; positive relations with authorities and other communities.

---

<sup>84</sup> <https://gulfnews.com/uae/government/serving-free-meals-to-one-and-all-three-times-a-day-1.1980016>

<sup>85</sup> <https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/visa-and-emirates-id/residence-visas/golden-visa>

<sup>86</sup> <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2074130.html>

<sup>87</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@arabstates/@ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms\\_912980.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@arabstates/@ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_912980.pdf)

<sup>88</sup> <https://news-middleeast.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/sikhs-and-latter-day-saints-in-uae-unite-in-service?imageView=Latter-day-Saints-and-Sikhs-Dubai-3.jpg>

- **Celebration of Festivals:** Major events (e.g., Gurpurab, Vaisakhi) celebrated at Gurdwara with official permissions.

#### 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>89</sup>

- **Children’s Schooling:** Indian curriculum schools widely available; English-medium education common.
- **Cultural Education:** Gurdwara offers Punjabi and kirtan classes for children.
- **Access to Healthcare:** World-class healthcare facilities; insurance mandatory through employers.

#### 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>90</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** UAE laws promote tolerance but discourage public criticism of religion.
- **Safety Concerns:** One of the safest cities globally; low crime rates.
- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** Free worship in designated spaces; no state persecution reported.
- **Turbans & Airport Security:** Turban respected; screening protocols in line with international practice.

#### 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>91</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Regulated internet; calls on apps like WhatsApp may be restricted (VoIP bans).
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Rare; strict cybercrime laws prevent overt hate.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** No reported censorship on Sikhism; general media restrictions apply.

#### 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>92</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents of Hate Crimes:** Rare; community well-integrated.
- **Government Response & Law Enforcement Action:** Authorities responsive and promote interfaith tolerance campaigns.
- **Case Studies of Discrimination:** Minimal; occasional visa or labor disputes not faith-specific.

#### Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>93</sup>

- **Humanitarian Relief:** Partnered with Guru Nanak Darbar during COVID-19 and natural disasters (e.g., Kerala floods, Lebanese crisis) to coordinate aid shipments from Dubai.
- **Advocacy for Minority Rights:** Participated in UAE’s annual Tolerance Summits to highlight Sikh values.
- **Student and Worker Support:** Provides counseling, legal aid, and emergency funds for migrants facing labor or housing challenges.
- **Community Networking:** Strengthens links between Dubai Sikhs and global diaspora.

#### Recommendations

- **Expand Cultural Education Programs:** Develop Punjabi and Sikh heritage classes for children in collaboration with Guru Nanak Darbar.
- **Strengthen Diaspora Engagement:** Build bridges between Dubai Sikh professionals and global Sikh networks.
- **Formalize Crisis Response Teams:** Utilize Dubai’s logistics hub to support regional humanitarian efforts (e.g., Middle East, Africa).

---

<sup>89</sup> <https://web.khda.gov.ae/en/>

<sup>90</sup> <https://u.ae/en/about-the-uae/culture/tolerance/anti-discriminationanti-hatred-law>

<sup>91</sup> <https://tdra.gov.ae/en/approved-equipments>

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/our-work/preventing-hate-and-discrimination/hate-crime-tracking-and-prevention/>

<sup>93</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/ichra/>

- **Enhance Visibility of Sikh Values:** Participate in UAE's interfaith and Expo events to showcase Sikh contributions to service and harmony.
- **Support Labor Rights Advocacy:** Assist low-income Sikh workers in navigating labor laws and welfare programs.

# IRAN

## 2023–2025

### COUNTRY PROFILE

**Head of Government:** President Masoud Pezeshkian (since August 2024)<sup>94</sup>

**Total Population:** Approx. 88 million (March 2025)<sup>95</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** Only 1 known functional Sikh gurdwara (Tehran) and 1 historical shrine (Zahedan), used occasionally by visiting Sikh pilgrims and small resident families<sup>96</sup>

**Sikh Population in Iran:** Estimated 50–100 individuals, primarily transient workers and businesspersons of Punjabi origin; most Sikh presence is historical (pre-1979), with current community very small and scattered<sup>97</sup>

**Recognition of Sikhism by the State:** Sikhism is not officially recognized among Iran’s “protected religions” (Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism). However, Sikhs are generally permitted to practice privately and maintain gurdwaras with local permissions. Religious freedoms are subject to Islamic Republic laws and monitored by state authorities; kirpan possession faces strict restrictions under weapons laws.<sup>98</sup>

**Form of Government:** Theocratic Islamic republic with elected presidency and supreme religious leadership; limited religious freedoms outside officially recognized faiths.<sup>99</sup>

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index: 28.8**

#### Introduction

Sikh presence in Iran dates to the late 19th and early 20th centuries when Punjabi traders and soldiers traveled through Persia on routes to Afghanistan and Central Asia. While historically active in trade hubs like Zahedan and Tehran, the community has sharply declined since the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Today, only a handful of Sikh families remain, with occasional visits by Indian Sikh diplomats, businessmen, and pilgrims traveling to Central Asian routes. Festivals like Vaisakhi and Gurburab are observed privately within the gurdwara premises in Tehran.<sup>100</sup>

#### Case Study<sup>101</sup>

During the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2021), the small Sikh community in Tehran provided food parcels to stranded Indian students and laborers unable to return home due to travel restrictions. Support was

---

<sup>94</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/7/6/iran-presidential-election-run-off-2024-results-live>

<sup>95</sup> <https://population.un.org/wpp/>

<sup>96</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikhism\\_in\\_Iran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikhism_in_Iran)

<sup>97</sup> <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/iran>

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/547499-IRAN-2023-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf>

<sup>99</sup> [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iran\\_1989](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iran_1989)

<sup>100</sup> <https://greyartmuseum.nyu.edu/2015/12/a-brief-history-of-20th-century-iran/>

<sup>101</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/sikh-pandemic-food-support>

coordinated with the Indian Embassy and local NGOs. The seva (service) demonstrated resilience despite the community's limited size and resources.

A community elder shared:

*"Even though we are few, Sikh values of service remain strong. We served anyone in need — students, workers, even Iranian neighbors — quietly but with love."*

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in Iran

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>102</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Limited pathways; mostly business or student visas. Long-term residency difficult; permanent settlement uncommon for non-Muslims.
- **Work Authorization:** Restricted; mostly possible for foreign technical workers, traders, or students. Employment for foreigners tightly regulated.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Naturalization rare; Iranian law prioritizes Muslim applicants. Dual citizenship not recognized.
- **Legal Documents:** Sikh identity not recognized; nationality listed on official papers (e.g., Indian or Afghan).

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>103</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Limited; Sikhs are not among officially protected minorities. Private worship is tolerated, but public processions (e.g., Nagar Kirtans) are not allowed.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** One functional gurdwara in Tehran; historical shrine in Zahedan occasionally used. No new gurdwaras permitted.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Turbans tolerated but can attract scrutiny; kirpan strictly prohibited by weapons laws.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Vegetarian food available but limited; Indian groceries scarce outside Tehran.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>104</sup>

- **Job Market:** Limited for foreigners; small-scale trade, embassy work, and technical assignments most common.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Low exposure to Sikh identity; employment opportunities largely linked to diplomatic or international trade communities.
- **Income Levels & Cost of Living:** Lower wages compared to Gulf or Europe; moderate cost of living, though economic sanctions impact availability of goods.

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>105</sup>

- **Presence of Sikh Community:** Very small, mostly transient workers or diplomats.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Low-profile existence; general tolerance but under state surveillance.
- **Celebration of Festivals:** Gurburab and Vaisakhi observed privately within gurdwara compounds.

### 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>106</sup>

- **Children's Schooling:** No Sikh schools; international schools exist in Tehran but expensive.
- **Cultural Education:** Limited; Punjabi and Sikh studies conducted informally within family or embassy circles.

---

<sup>102</sup> <https://en.mfa.ir/portal/viewpage/4008/citizenship>

<sup>103</sup> <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/iran>

<sup>104</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iran/publication/iran-economic-monitor>

<sup>105</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/ir/refugees-iran>

<sup>106</sup> [https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/UNSDCF\\_Iran%20Republic%20of-2023-2027.pdf](https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/UNSDCF_Iran%20Republic%20of-2023-2027.pdf)

- **Healthcare Access:** Public healthcare available but often limited for foreign nationals; private clinics in Tehran are preferred.

#### 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>107</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** Protections primarily for recognized minorities (Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians); Sikhs not covered.
- **Safety Concerns:** Generally safe for foreigners if apolitical; restrictions on religious expression and kirpan possession.
- **Airport Security:** Turbans permitted; kirpan strictly prohibited and subject to confiscation.

#### 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>108</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Internet heavily monitored; restricted access to certain websites (e.g., social media).
- **Online Hate Speech & Censorship:** No targeted hate speech against Sikhs, but heavy censorship of religious content outside official Islam.

#### 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>109</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents:** No formal tracking for Sikh-related hate crimes; low visibility means few reported cases.
- **Government Response:** Limited; minority issues often not addressed unless through diplomatic channels (e.g., Indian Embassy).

#### Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>110</sup>

- **Humanitarian Relief:** Coordinated support for stranded Sikhs during COVID-19 with food and repatriation assistance.
- **Advocacy for Minority Rights:** Engaged Indian and Iranian authorities for religious accommodation and protection of gurdwara property.
- **Support for Migrants and Students:** Assisted in legal aid and welfare for Sikh students and traders in Tehran.
- **Community Networking:** Connects the tiny Sikh community with regional Sikh networks in the Gulf and Afghanistan for cultural and spiritual support.

#### Recommendations

- **Preservation of Heritage:** Advocate for protection of historical Sikh sites (e.g., Zahedan gurdwara).
- **Diplomatic Engagement:** Work with Indian and Iranian authorities to secure limited religious freedoms and kirpan allowances for ceremonial use.
- **Support for Transient Sikhs:** Provide welfare services for students, business travelers, and pilgrims.
- **Documentation of History:** Record oral histories and archival materials about Sikh contributions to Iran's trade and transport history.

<sup>107</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/iran/report-iran/>

<sup>108</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/iran/freedom-net/2023>

<sup>109</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/iran/freedom-net/2023>

<sup>110</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/ichra/>

# IRAQ

## 2023–2025

### COUNTRY PROFILE

**Head of Government:** Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani (since October 2022)<sup>111</sup>

**Total Population:** Approx. 45 million (March 2025)<sup>112</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** No known active gurdwaras; historical evidence suggests temporary prayer spaces used by Sikh soldiers during the British colonial period (WWI–WWII).<sup>113</sup>

**Sikh Population in Iraq:** Fewer than 50 individuals, mostly transient workers, traders, or embassy personnel. No permanent Sikh community remains after the mass departures in the late 20th century due to political instability and conflict.<sup>114</sup>

**Recognition of Sikhism by the State:** Sikhism is not officially recognized among Iraq's religious minorities (Islam, Christianity, Yazidism, Mandaicism). Private worship is possible but extremely limited. Religious expression is subject to Iraqi law and influenced by regional sectarian dynamics; kirpan possession would be strictly prohibited.<sup>115</sup>

**Form of Government:** Federal parliamentary republic; Islam is the official state religion, and laws are influenced by Islamic jurisprudence, providing limited protections for unrecognized minorities.<sup>116</sup>

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index:23.8**

#### Introduction

Sikh presence in Iraq has been historically tied to British Indian Army deployments during the World Wars and small trade links through Basra and Baghdad. After the fall of the monarchy and decades of conflict, the Sikh population diminished significantly, leaving no organized community today. Any current Sikh presence is temporary, linked to Indian or multinational workers in energy, construction, and diplomatic sectors. Public religious events such as Nagar Kirtans are non-existent, and religious practice, if any, occurs privately among transient individuals or within embassy premises.<sup>117</sup>

#### Case Study<sup>118</sup>

During the 2014–2017 conflict with ISIS, UNITED SIKHS collaborated with humanitarian partners to deliver food and emergency aid to displaced communities in northern Iraq (Sinjar and Mosul). Although

---

<sup>111</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/27/iraq-lawmakers-approve-govt-of-prime-minister-designate-sudani>

<sup>112</sup> <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/iraq-population/>

<sup>113</sup> [https://www.fairobserver.com/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce\\_uploads/2024/01/Make-Sence-2023-1xmxco.pdf](https://www.fairobserver.com/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce_uploads/2024/01/Make-Sence-2023-1xmxco.pdf)

<sup>114</sup> <https://acninternational.org/religiousfreedomreport/reports/country/2023/iraq>

<sup>115</sup> <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/iraq/>

<sup>116</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/iraq>

<sup>117</sup> <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/voices-of-the-first-world-war-mesopotamia>

<sup>118</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2014/08/iraqis-displaced-isis-attacks-sinjar-desperate-aid/>

the Sikh population was negligible, this outreach highlighted Sikh principles of seva (selfless service) beyond the community's own boundaries.

A volunteer noted:

*"There were no Sikhs to serve here, only human beings in need. Seva knows no boundaries — Iraq was a test of humanity, not identity."*

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in Iraq

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>119</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Limited to work contracts, diplomatic assignments, or short-term business visas. Long-term residency extremely rare for non-Muslims.
- **Work Authorization:** Possible in oil, construction, and security sectors; heavily dependent on employer sponsorship.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Naturalization nearly impossible for non-Muslims; dual citizenship allowed only for Iraqi nationals returning from abroad.
- **Legal Documents:** No recognition of Sikh religious identity; only nationality is recorded on documents.

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>120</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Restricted; Sikhism is not recognized under Iraqi law. Worship possible only in private or within diplomatic compounds.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** No functional gurdwaras; historical prayer halls used during the British period have disappeared.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Turbans tolerated but uncommon; kirpan strictly prohibited under Iraqi weapons laws.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Indian groceries and vegetarian food are scarce; limited availability in Baghdad and Basra markets catering to expatriates.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>121</sup>

- **Job Market:** Limited opportunities for Sikhs; mostly in energy (oil), construction, or diplomatic service.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Sikh identity largely unknown; neutral treatment due to small numbers.
- **Income Levels & Cost of Living:** Oil sector offers competitive salaries; cost of living varies — moderate in Baghdad, higher in Erbil.

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>122</sup>

- **Presence of Sikh Community:** Essentially absent; isolated individuals rely on embassy or expatriate networks.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Low direct discrimination due to invisibility; religious minorities face general risks in sectarian conflict zones.
- **Celebration of Festivals:** No public celebrations; private observances only.

### 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>123</sup>

- **Children's Schooling:** No Sikh or Indian schools; limited international schools in Baghdad and Erbil.
- **Cultural Education:** Non-existent; families must rely on private teaching.

---

<sup>119</sup> <https://www.rivermate.com/guides/iraq/work-permits-and-visas>

<sup>120</sup> <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/iraq>

<sup>121</sup> [https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2010/11/open-for-business\\_g1g11c3b/9789264095830-en.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2010/11/open-for-business_g1g11c3b/9789264095830-en.pdf)

<sup>122</sup> <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/our-work/preventing-hate-and-discrimination/combating-transnational-repression/>

<sup>123</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/iraq/what-we-do/education>

- **Healthcare Access:** Basic public healthcare available; private hospitals preferred by expatriates for quality and safety.

#### 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>124</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** Protections extend mainly to recognized minorities; Sikhs are unprotected.
- **Safety Concerns:** High security risks due to political instability, terrorism, and militia activity; travel advisories recommend caution.
- **Airport Security:** Turbans allowed; kirpan strictly prohibited and likely confiscated.

#### 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>125</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Limited protections; government monitoring of communications is common.
- **Online Hate Speech & Censorship:** Broad internet censorship; no targeted hate speech against Sikhs recorded.

#### 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>126</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents:** No formal tracking for Sikhs due to negligible community size.
- **Government Response:** Limited; minority protections apply only to recognized groups (e.g., Christians, Yazidis).

#### Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>127</sup>

- **Humanitarian Relief:** Delivered emergency aid during ISIS conflict to displaced Yazidis and other vulnerable groups, demonstrating Sikh humanitarian principles.
- **Advocacy for Minority Rights:** Highlighted need for broader religious protections in Iraq through UN and interfaith forums.
- **Support for Expatriates:** Provided guidance to Sikh workers in oil and construction sectors on legal and safety considerations.
- **Community Networking:** Links Sikh professionals in Iraq to regional networks in the Gulf and India for cultural and religious support.

#### Recommendations

- **Heritage Documentation:** Record and preserve archival accounts of Sikh soldiers and traders in Iraq during the colonial era.
- **Humanitarian Partnerships:** Continue relief efforts for vulnerable communities, showcasing Sikh values in interfaith spaces.
- **Diplomatic Engagement:** Work with Indian and Iraqi authorities to secure rights for transient Sikh workers (e.g., religious items, safety provisions).
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Provide safety briefings and legal resources for Sikhs entering Iraq on work or diplomatic assignments.

---

<sup>124</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/English.pdf>

<sup>125</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/iraq/freedom-net/2024>

<sup>126</sup> <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/how-the-sikh-communitys-experiences-with-hate-crimes-shows-why-data-collection-is-so-important>

<sup>127</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org>

# EUROPE

# UNITED KINGDOM

## 2023-2025

### COUNTRY PROFILE

#### Head of State

His Majesty King Charles III

#### Head of Government

The Right Honourable Rishi Sunak, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, appointed on October 25, 2022<sup>128</sup>

#### Total Population

Approximately 67 million (based on the 2021 Census estimate)<sup>129</sup>

#### Religious Demographics

According to the 2021 England and Wales Census, the leading religious affiliations include Christianity (46.2%), Islam (6.5%), Hinduism (1.7%), and Sikhism (0.9%). A significant portion of the population over one-third identifies as having no religion (37.2%)<sup>130</sup>.

#### Sikh Population

As of the 2021 Census, approximately 524,000 Sikhs reside in England and Wales, constituting 0.9% of the population. Including Scotland and Northern Ireland, the 's total Sikh population is estimated to exceed 550,000<sup>131</sup>. This makes the United Kingdom home to one of the largest Sikh communities outside India, with significant representation in urban centres and growing political and civic engagement.

**Currently Recognizes Sikhism as a Distinctive Religion by the State:** Yes

**Form of Government:** Constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary democracy

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index:** 80.0

#### Introduction

The United Kingdom (UK), a sovereign state located off the northwestern coast of mainland Europe, comprises four constituent countries: England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Internationally renowned for its historical legacy, cultural contributions, and leadership in global governance, the UK is an active member of international bodies such as the United Nations, NATO, the G7, and the Commonwealth of Nations. It upholds a diverse and multicultural societal fabric, characterized by a blend of metropolitan

---

<sup>128</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/people/rishi-sunak>

<sup>129</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/>

<sup>130</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/religionenglandandwalescensus2021>

<sup>131</sup> <https://www.sikhfeduk.com/>

hubs and rural landscapes. The UK has played a pivotal role in shaping modern democratic principles, literature, and scientific innovation.

## Case Study

### 1. Recent Legal and Policy Developments Impacting Civil Rights (2023)

#### Rwanda Asylum Plan<sup>132</sup>

In November 2023, the UK Supreme Court ruled that the government's proposal to transfer asylum seekers to Rwanda was unlawful. The court determined that Rwanda did not meet the standards of a safe third country, leading to the plan's suspension. Sikh advocacy groups expressed concern about the broader implications of the UK's asylum policies, particularly their potential adverse effects on vulnerable refugee populations, including members of religious and ethnic minorities.

#### Public Order Act 2023<sup>133</sup>

Enacted in April 2023, the Public Order Act significantly expanded governmental powers to limit peaceful demonstrations. Introduced in response to environmental protests, the legislation has been widely criticized for undermining civil liberties such as freedom of expression, assembly, and association. Sikh organizations and activists engaged in social justice movements and international advocacy have reported negative repercussions due to these expanded restrictions.

#### Illegal Migration Act 2023<sup>134</sup>

Passed in July 2023, this legislation restricts access to asylum and modern slavery protections for individuals entering the UK through irregular means. The act has been condemned by human rights groups for contravening international obligations and for the disproportionate impact it may have on refugees, including Sikhs fleeing political or religious persecution.

#### Windrush Compensation Scheme<sup>135</sup>

Ongoing criticism has been directed at the government's administration of the Windrush compensation scheme, intended to redress harm caused to Black Britons affected by wrongful immigration enforcement.

---

<sup>132</sup> Supreme Court of the United Kingdom. (2023, November 15). *Judgment: R (on the application of AAA) v Secretary of State for the Home Department*. Retrieved from: <https://www.supremecourt.uk>

<sup>133</sup> Liberty UK. (2023, April). *Public Order Act 2023: What You Need to Know*. Retrieved from: <https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk>

<sup>134</sup> Refugee Council. (2023, July). *Response to the Illegal Migration Act 2023*. Retrieved from: <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk>

<sup>135</sup> The Guardian. (2023, August 2). *Windrush victims still waiting for compensation amid delays and distrust*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com>

Sikh claimants have also reported delays and challenges in navigating the compensation process, revealing broader systemic barriers in access to justice.

## **Anti-Boycott Bill**

In June 2023, the UK government introduced legislation aimed at restricting public institutions—including universities and local councils—from supporting boycotts related to foreign policy concerns, including human rights issues. This bill has been perceived as an effort to stifle lawful activism and could indirectly affect Sikh groups involved in international human rights advocacy.<sup>136</sup>

## **2. UK–India Relations and Sikh Community Concerns: Trade, Extremism, and Human Rights (2025)<sup>137</sup>**

In July 2025, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi signed a historic UK-India Free Trade Agreement aimed at boosting economic ties, despite ongoing tensions over Sikh rights and extremism. Modi urged stronger UK action against Khalistani groups, while British officials raised concerns about the detention of Scottish Sikh activist Jagtar Singh Johal in India. At the same time, UK Sikhs continue to face rising hate crimes and are pressing for recognition of their contributions, including calls to revive discussions on a Sikh regiment. The developments underscore the challenge of balancing trade and security priorities with human rights and diaspora concerns.

## **Parameters to Consider for Settlement in the United Kingdom**

### **1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>138</sup>**

The United Kingdom offers structured immigration and citizenship pathways accessible to religious minorities, including Sikhs.

- **Visa & Residency:** Sikhs can apply under multiple routes, such as the Skilled Worker visa, Student visa, Family visa, or Religious Worker visa. Humanitarian protections are also available in specific cases.
- **Work Rights:** Visa holders with work authorization can be employed across sectors. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits religious and racial discrimination in employment and public life.
- **Citizenship:** Sikhs can apply for British citizenship after five years of residency and one year of Indefinite Leave to Remain, with no religious barriers. Many Sikh Britons are politically active and hold public office.
- **Legal Documents:** Sikh migrants face no religious restrictions in obtaining national insurance numbers, NHS access, or property rights. Multilingual support is available through government and civil society services.
- **Integration & Identity:** The U.K. promotes religious freedom under its multicultural policies. Sikhs freely observe their faith while contributing to civic life. Youth often navigate both British and Sikh cultural identities.

### **2. Religious and Cultural Considerations<sup>139</sup>**

---

<sup>136</sup> Human Rights Watch UK. (2023, June). *UK Anti-Boycott Bill Threatens Free Speech and Accountability*. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org>

<sup>137</sup> [https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/jul/24/starmer-modi-uk-india-free-trade-agreement-deal-signed?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/jul/24/starmer-modi-uk-india-free-trade-agreement-deal-signed?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>138</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/>

<sup>139</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). (2023). *Understanding the Equality Act*.

- **Freedom of Religion:** The UK recognizes Sikhism as a legally distinct religion, protected under the *Equality Act 2010* and the *Human Rights Act 1998*. Sikhs have the legal right to practice and manifest their religion, including the wearing of articles of faith such as the kirpan.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** The UK hosts a substantial number of gurdwaras, especially in cities like London, Birmingham, Leicester, and Glasgow, serving as vital spiritual and community centers for Sikhs.
- **Dress Code and Identity:** Sikh articles of faith—turban, kara, and kirpan—are generally respected across society. Nonetheless, incidents of profiling, particularly in law enforcement and airport settings, continue to arise.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Religious dietary needs, including vegetarian and halal/kosher options, are commonly accommodated in public institutions such as hospitals, schools, and correctional facilities, although consistency varies by region.

### 3. Employment and Economic Factors<sup>140</sup>

- **Job Market:** The UK offers employment opportunities across sectors like healthcare, transport, IT, construction, and education. Sikh professionals and entrepreneurs are especially active in retail, logistics, and small business enterprises.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Anti-discrimination legislation protects Sikh workers, but reports of unconscious bias, unequal advancement, and religious microaggressions indicate that workplace inclusion remains uneven.
- **Income and Economic Mobility:** Sikhs in the UK have demonstrated economic resilience and upward mobility, but newly arrived migrants may face underemployment or non-recognition of overseas qualifications.
- **Cost of Living:** Major cities like London and Birmingham have high living costs, which may be offset by access to public healthcare and educational subsidies. Affordable housing remains a key concern for new settlers<sup>141</sup>.

### 4. Social and Community Support<sup>142</sup>

- **Sikh Community Presence:** With over 430,000 Sikhs in the UK (0.7% of the population), the community is visible and active in politics, media, law, and social advocacy. British Sikhs have served in Parliament, local councils, and senior civil service roles.
- **Discrimination and Acceptance:** Despite institutional protections, Sikhs continue to experience hate crimes, racial profiling, and cultural misunderstanding. Advocacy organizations like UNITED SIKHS (UK Chapter), Sikh Council UK, and the Sikh Network provide vital support.
- **Cultural Celebrations:** Public events such as Vaisakhi parades, Nagar Kirtans, and Gurburab commemorations are widely celebrated and supported by local councils and interfaith partners, highlighting Sikh contributions to British society.<sup>143</sup>

### 5. Education and Family Considerations<sup>144</sup>

- **Schooling:** Public schools are legally obligated to accommodate religious attire and observances. While most institutions comply, occasional cases of bullying or cultural ignorance persist.
- **Cultural Education:** Gurdwaras, community centres, and supplementary schools offer Punjabi language, Sikh history, and moral instruction for youth, aiding in cultural preservation.

---

<sup>140</sup> Migration Observatory. (2023). *Employment Outcomes of Migrant Communities*.

<sup>141</sup> Citizens Advice Bureau. (2023). *Access to Services for New Migrants*.

<sup>142</sup> Sikh Council UK. (2023). *Directory of Gurdwaras in the UK*.

<sup>143</sup> British Parliament. (2010). *Equality Act 2010*; and *Human Rights Act 1998*.

<sup>144</sup> Department for Education UK. (2023). *Faith Schools in England and Wales*.

- **Healthcare Access:** The National Health Service (NHS) provides universal healthcare. Although accessible to all, challenges persist regarding language interpretation, religious sensitivity, and gender-specific care in some health settings.<sup>145</sup>

## 6. Legal Rights and Safety<sup>146</sup>

- **Anti-Discrimination Laws:** The UK enforces robust anti-discrimination laws through the *Equality Act 2010*, which explicitly protects individuals against religious and racial discrimination across employment, education, and public services.
- **Personal Safety:** The UK is generally safe, but hate crimes targeting religious minorities—including Sikhs—have been documented. Some incidents involve mistaken identity (e.g., turbans misidentified as symbols of other faiths).
- **Security Profiling:** Profiling at borders, during law enforcement encounters, or under national security scrutiny remains a concern for Sikhs with visible markers of faith. Community reporting and legal channels are available to challenge such practices.

## 7. Digital and Technological Rights<sup>147</sup>

- **Online Presence:** Sikh activists and organizations in the UK use digital platforms for advocacy, faith promotion, and global diaspora solidarity. Social media has played a key role in mobilizing around issues such as farmer protests and civil liberties.
- **Digital Harassment:** Online abuse, trolling, and hate speech targeting Sikh voices are increasing. Existing laws allow for redress, but enforcement remains inconsistent, especially across transnational platforms.
- **Freedom of Expression:** The UK protects free speech, including political and religious expression. However, recent legislative proposals, such as the anti-boycott bill, have raised concerns about limitations on lawful advocacy.<sup>148</sup>

## 8. Hate Crimes and Discrimination Monitoring<sup>149</sup>

- **Incident Reporting:** National and local mechanisms (e.g., police reporting units, Equality and Human Rights Commission) allow for the documentation of hate crimes. Nonetheless, underreporting—particularly among minority groups—remains a concern.
- **Law Enforcement Response:** While specialized hate crime units exist in some police forces, the quality of response and cultural sensitivity varies by region. Partnerships with Sikh community organizations are critical for trust-building.
- **Advocacy Case Studies:** UK-based Sikh organizations regularly publish reports and engage with Parliament to address systemic inequality, religious freedoms, and civil rights violations.

## Contribution of UNITED SIKHS in the United Kingdom<sup>150</sup>

UNITED SIKHS has significantly contributed to the protection and promotion of Sikh civil rights in the United Kingdom through legal action, community engagement, and policy advocacy. The organization works to ensure equal treatment, religious freedom, and the well-being of British Sikhs facing discrimination or marginalization.

### 1. Civil Rights Advocacy

UNITED SIKHS has played a prominent role in safeguarding Sikh religious identity and civil liberties by:

- Advocating for religious freedom, including protections for the turban and kirpan in workplaces, schools, and public services.

<sup>145</sup> British Medical Association (BMA). (2023). *Cultural Competency in Healthcare*.

<sup>146</sup> Sikh Education Service. (2023). *Language and Culture in Diaspora*.

<sup>147</sup> Human Rights Watch UK. (2023). *Analysis of the Anti-Boycott Bill*.

<sup>148</sup> The Sikh Network. (2023). *Digital Advocacy and Diaspora Activism*.

<sup>149</sup> National Police Chiefs' Council. (2023). *Hate Crime Reporting and Response Strategies*

<sup>150</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/advocacy/uk>

- Challenging discriminatory practices through media outreach and legal interventions.
- Collaborating with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to improve the enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010<sup>151</sup>.

## 2. Legal Support and Representation

The organization strengthens legal access for the Sikh community by:

- Providing pro bono legal services in cases involving faith-based discrimination and hate crimes.
- Supporting asylum seekers and refugees, particularly from conflict regions, by offering legal representation and advocacy in immigration tribunals.
- Conducting legal literacy workshops on rights under the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998<sup>152</sup>

## 3. Community Education and Empowerment

UNITED SIKHS fosters social inclusion and intercultural understanding through:

- Anti-racism education programs in schools and local councils aimed at reducing implicit bias.
- Public awareness initiatives highlighting Sikh contributions to British society, promoting civic pride.
- Youth development programs that encourage participation in local governance and public service.

## 4. Policy Advocacy

The organization engages directly with UK policymakers to build an inclusive legal and political environment by:

- Submitting policy recommendations to select committees and local authorities on religious accommodation, hate crime data collection, and police accountability<sup>153</sup>
- Lobbying for standardized policies on religious expression in schools, prisons, and airports to prevent inconsistencies and discrimination.
- Partnering with interfaith networks to broaden the impact of minority rights campaigns.

## 5. Support Services and Emergency Relief

In times of crisis and need, UNITED SIKHS provides direct community support through:

- Operating a UK-based civil rights helpline for urgent legal, social, or emotional assistance.
- Offering trauma-informed counseling for victims of hate crimes and systemic racism.
- Delivering emergency humanitarian aid, including during the COVID-19 pandemic when food and hygiene supplies were distributed to affected Sikh and broader communities<sup>154</sup>.

## 6. Advocating Against Transnational Repression

UNITED SIKHS has also taken a firm stance against threats posed to diaspora communities by foreign actors by:

- Monitoring transnational repression, especially the targeting of Sikh activists by hostile governments.
- Urging UK security agencies to investigate foreign surveillance and misuse of international tools like Interpol Red Notices<sup>155</sup>
- Advocating for stronger legal protections for at-risk Sikh individuals engaged in peaceful activism or journalism.

## Recommendations

---

<sup>151</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). *Equality Act 2010 Guidance*. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com>

<sup>152</sup> UNITED SIKHS Legal Aid Programs. See: UNITED SIKHS Annual Report (latest), or visit <https://unitedsikhs.org>

<sup>153</sup> UK Parliament Committees, Public Submissions Archive. See: Home Affairs Select Committee on Hate Crime

<sup>154</sup> “COVID-19 Community Aid – UNITED SIKHS UK Response,” UNITED SIKHS Relief News, 2020.

<sup>155</sup> House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee. *The FCDO’s Role in Blocking Interpol Abuse*, UK Parliament, 2023. <https://committees.parliament.uk>

- **Strengthen Multilateral Engagement Through U.K. Foreign Policy and Diplomacy**

The United Kingdom, as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and a key player in global human rights diplomacy, should expand its collaboration with international and intergovernmental organizations to safeguard religious and ethnic minorities—including Sikhs—facing systemic persecution abroad. The U.K. has demonstrated leadership through its *Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime* and *Refugee Resettlement Schemes*, including support for Afghan nationals at risk<sup>1</sup>. Building on this foundation, the U.K. should help establish and promote a Global Humanitarian Diplomacy Framework aimed at enabling emergency humanitarian assistance, safe relocation, and long-term resettlement options for at-risk communities.

- **Condemn Violence Against All Targeted Minorities and Enforce Accountability Measures**

The U.K. government should consistently and unequivocally condemn acts of violence against religious minorities—such as the targeted killings of Sikhs in conflict zones—and mobilize international pressure to uphold human rights standards. In addition to diplomatic condemnation, the U.K. should lead initiatives through multilateral forums such as the *United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)* and the *Commonwealth Secretariat* to develop robust accountability mechanisms, including international sanctions and legal recourse for victims.

- **Use Bilateral and Commonwealth Diplomacy to Urge Local Governments to Act**

The U.K. should leverage its diplomatic influence, particularly through the *Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)* and its embassies, to engage directly with governments—such as Afghan authorities—on the protection of religious minorities. Specifically, the U.K. should:

- Advocate for the safety and civil rights of the remaining Sikh and Hindu populations in Afghanistan;
- Support the preservation of historical Sikh Gurdwaras in Kabul, Jalalabad, and Ghazni; and
- Push for safe exit corridors and legal migration options for individuals and families under direct threat.

Given the ongoing persecution and instability, the U.K. should continue and expand targeted humanitarian and resettlement schemes for Afghan Sikhs and other endangered minorities, building upon the \*Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS).

- **Institutionalise Partnerships with Civil Society and Diaspora Organisations**

The U.K. government should formally engage with civil society groups such as UNITED SIKHS, The Sikh Federation (UK), City Sikhs, and local Gurdwara councils to develop inclusive policy responses and improve refugee sponsorship and integration efforts. These organizations play a vital role in identifying vulnerable individuals, providing legal support, and facilitating cultural and psychological integration for new arrivals.

# UKRAINE

## (2023–2025)

### COUNTRY PROFILE

**Head of Government:** President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

**Total Population:** Approx. 37 million (as of March 2025; accounting for wartime displacement) (*End Note 4*)

**Number of Gurdwaras:** 1 (Kharkiv) before the 2022 invasion; status uncertain post-conflict

**Sikh Population in Ukraine:** Fewer than 500, mostly students and transient businesspeople

**Currently Recognizes Sikhism as a Distinctive Religion by the State:** No official recognition; general religious freedom exists <sup>156</sup>

**Form of Government:** Unitary republic with a semi-presidential system; democratic with wartime restrictions

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index:52.5**

#### Introduction

Ukraine historically maintained a permissive environment for religious minorities, including Sikhs, despite not officially recognizing Sikhism as a distinct religion<sup>157</sup>. The Sikh population is minimal and primarily comprises international students (especially from Punjab) and some businesspersons. Although the Ukrainian constitution protects religious freedoms, the Russian invasion beginning in 2022 created significant instability. Sikh residents have faced evacuation challenges, loss of worship spaces, and limited community support amid ongoing conflict<sup>158</sup>.

Despite these challenges, Ukraine's civil society remains resilient. Compared to authoritarian states, the legal framework permits private worship and assembly. However, Sikh community activity has been severely curtailed due to security, displacement, and infrastructure damage<sup>159</sup>.

#### Case Study

In February 2022, at the outbreak of war, Sikh students studying in Kyiv and Kharkiv were caught in rapidly escalating violence. A Kharkiv-based Sikh Gurdwara, used by students for daily prayers, was shuttered and

---

<sup>156</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/constitution-of-ukraine/168071f58b>

<sup>157</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/constitution-of-ukraine/168071f58b>

<sup>158</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/ukraine-relief-fund/>

<sup>159</sup> [https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD\\_2023\\_699%20Ukraine%20report.pdf](https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_699%20Ukraine%20report.pdf)

later repurposed as an emergency shelter during shelling<sup>160</sup>. Several students documented their harrowing journeys out of eastern Ukraine, many walking for hours to reach Lviv or border checkpoints with minimal food or security support<sup>161</sup>.

One Sikh medical student from Vinnytsia reported:

*“We had no community resources and relied entirely on student WhatsApp groups to coordinate food and shelter. Our turbans made us visible foreigners—sometimes that helped, sometimes it didn’t.”*<sup>162</sup>

This ordeal highlighted the intersection of religious minority status, racial profiling, and crisis-induced displacement within a country under siege.

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in Ukraine

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>163</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Student visas are common. Temporary residence permits can be obtained for work or study.
- **Work Authorization:** Generally available post-graduation but limited due to war economy and job market volatility.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Naturalization is possible but requires 5+ years residency and language proficiency.
- **Legal Documents:** No field for “Sikh” in identification documents; however, no prohibition on visible faith markers.

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>164</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Protected constitutionally (*End Note 1*). Sikhs may practice freely, though infrastructure is lacking.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** Only one known Gurdwara pre-2022. Post-war access is limited or uncertain.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Turbans and kara are accepted in public and official settings.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Vegetarianism is poorly understood but manageable in urban centers.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>165</sup>

- **Job Market:** Severely impacted by war. Opportunities in humanitarian work and tech exist in western Ukraine.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Limited understanding of Sikh identity; however, no overt discrimination reported.
- **Income Levels:** Lower than EU averages; job security is tenuous due to instability.
- **Cost of Living:** Affordable, especially in western regions. Kyiv remains costly despite war-time migration.

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>166</sup>

- **Presence of a Sikh Community:** Virtually non-existent outside university towns.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Some incidents of profiling during crisis evacuation, but generally a tolerant society.

---

<sup>160</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/ukraine-relief-fund/>

<sup>161</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-64973574>

<sup>162</sup> <https://sikhaid.unitedsikhs.org/current-project/>

<sup>163</sup> <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

<sup>164</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/ukraine-relief-fund/>

<sup>165</sup> <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

<sup>166</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-64973574>

- **Celebration of Festivals:** Private observance possible; public events rare and undocumented.

## 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>167</sup>

- **Children’s Schooling:** Public schools accessible, but instruction is in Ukrainian. Few international school options outside Kyiv.
- **Cultural Education:** No Sikh institutions. Children rely on online tools or parental education.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Basic healthcare is available but fragmented due to war. Faith-sensitive care is unavailable.

## 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>168</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** No targeted protections for Sikhs, but legal framework supports religious freedom
- **Safety Concerns:** Safety varies by region. Western Ukraine is safer, while eastern areas remain volatile
- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** Sikhism lacks state recognition but is not persecuted. Legal recourse is theoretically available.
- **Turbans & Airport Security:** Airport screenings may involve additional checks, but religious articles are usually respected.

## 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>169</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Reasonably protected in peacetime; wartime surveillance has increased.
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Minimal documentation; not a significant concern historically.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** No known censorship of Sikh-related content

## 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>170</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents of Hate Crimes:** No official disaggregated data for Sikhs.
- **Government Response & Law Enforcement Action:** Wartime priorities limit responsive capacity
- **Case Studies of Discrimination:** None documented post-2022; minor profiling incidents during mass evacuations

## Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>171</sup>

Despite lacking a permanent presence in Ukraine, UNITED SIKHS has played a critical humanitarian and advocacy role:

1. **Emergency Evacuation Support:** Coordinated safe passage for Sikh students and residents during the 2022 invasion, including via Romania and Poland
2. **Diplomatic Liaison:** Engaged embassies and international bodies to expedite border clearances for visible minorities.
3. **Humanitarian Relief:** Provided food, emergency kits, and spiritual support through partner NGOs.
4. **Documentation of Religious Displacement:** Monitored and archived testimonies of displaced Sikhs for global awareness campaigns

## Recommendations

<sup>167</sup> [https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD\\_2023\\_699%20Ukraine%20report.pdf](https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_699%20Ukraine%20report.pdf)

<sup>168</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/constitution-of-ukraine/168071f58b>

<sup>169</sup> [https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD\\_2023\\_699%20Ukraine%20report.pdf](https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_699%20Ukraine%20report.pdf)

<sup>170</sup> <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

<sup>171</sup> <https://sikhaid.unitedsikhs.org/current-project/>

- **Establish Crisis Response Infrastructure:** Develop standing evacuation and aid protocols for Sikhs in conflict zones like Ukraine.
- **Secure Worship Spaces in Western Ukraine:** Collaborate with Ukrainian interfaith to rebuild or repurpose safe prayer halls
- **Promote Visibility in Refugee Policy:** Ensure Sikh identity and dietary/religious needs are acknowledged in refugee processing systems.
- **Strengthen Digital Education:** Provide online platforms for displaced youth to continue Sikh religious learning.
- **Advocate for Religious Minority Protections:** Encourage Ukraine to formally recognize Sikhism and adopt inclusive religious data practices

**FRANCE**  
**2023–2025**  
**COUNTRY PROFILE**

**Head of Government:** [President Emmanuel Macron](#)

**Total Population:** Approx. 67 million (as of April 2025)

**Number of Gurdwaras:** Over 10, including major ones in Paris, Bobigny, and Marseille

**Sikh Population in France:** Estimated 30,000–40,000 (concentrated in Île-de-France and northeastern industrial zones)

**Currently Recognizes Sikhism as a Distinctive Religion by the State:** No. Recognized under broader category of “religious associations” with partial legal protections

**Form of Government:** Unitary semi-presidential constitutional republic

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index: 65.0**

### **Introduction**

France is home to one of Europe’s larger Sikh communities. While France’s secular model (“laïcité”) constitutionally ensures religious freedom, its rigid application in public life often marginalizes visible religious minorities like Sikhs<sup>172</sup>. The absence of formal recognition of Sikhism complicates issues of religious expression, education, and representation. Sikh communities in France are well-established but face ongoing tensions related to identity visibility, especially around the turban ban in schools and photo ID policies.

While not impacted by war or displacement like Ukraine, France poses different challenges for Sikh civil rights—namely, legal restrictions on faith symbols, rising Islamophobia (which affects all visible religious groups), and growing right-wing political sentiment. Despite these challenges, France offers stable infrastructure, strong institutions, and legal pathways for advocacy.

### **Case Study<sup>173</sup>**

In 2004, France enacted a law prohibiting conspicuous religious symbols in public schools<sup>174</sup>. This law led to the exclusion of Sikh students who wear the turban. Since then, several Sikh families have relocated to neighboring countries (UK, Belgium) to secure faith-compatible education.

---

<sup>172</sup> <https://franceintheus.org/IMG/html/secularism.html>

<sup>173</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/PressReleases/PRSRLS-14-12-2012-01.html>

<sup>174</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/veiled-meaning-the-french-law-banning-religious-symbols-in-public-schools/>

In 2023, UNITED SIKHS supported the legal case of a Sikh taxi driver in Lyon who was barred from renewing his license because his ID photo included a turban. Although the turban is protected under international religious freedom standards, French authorities denied the appeal, citing national security regulations (End Note 3). The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) declined to intervene.

Such incidents demonstrate the disconnect between France’s theoretical religious liberty and the practical enforcement of its secular laws.

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in France

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>175</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** France offers various long-term visas for students, workers, and family reunification.
- **Work Authorization:** Work permits are available but subject to quotas and labor market needs.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Naturalization possible after 5 years’ residence (2 if schooled in France); French language and integration required.
- **Legal Documents:** No explicit field for “Sikh”; documents permit visible markers unless in ID photos .

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>176</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Protected by law but constrained in public institutions due to laïcité
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** Numerous Gurdwaras in urban centers.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Turban restricted in public schools and official documents.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Vegetarianism is understood and widely accommodated.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>177</sup>

- **Job Market:** Stable but competitive. Sectors like transport, construction, and tech show opportunities.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Mixed; private sector tolerant but bias persists in hiring processes.
- **Income Levels:** High compared to EU average.
- **Cost of Living:** High, especially in Paris. Lower in provincial cities.

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>178</sup>

- **Presence of a Sikh Community:** Established networks exist in Paris, Bobigny, and Strasbourg.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Incidents of profiling and casual racism reported, especially post-2015 terror attacks (End Note 4).
- **Celebration of Festivals:** Vaisakhi and Gurburabs celebrated publicly with local support.

### 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>179</sup>

- **Children’s Schooling:** Public education is high-quality but turban ban applies (End Note 2). Private Sikh schooling options are limited.
- **Cultural Education:** Gurdwaras often run weekend Punjabi and Gurmat classes.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Strong public healthcare; minimal faith-sensitive services.

### 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>180</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** General protections exist under anti-discrimination statutes.
- **Safety Concerns:** Urban centers safe, though sporadic hate incidents have occurred

---

<sup>175</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/PressReleases/PRSRLS-14-12-2012-01.html>

<sup>176</sup> <https://franceintheus.org/IMG/html/secularism.html>

<sup>177</sup> [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/06/oecd-employment-outlook-2024-country-notes\\_6910072b/france\\_b842dc68.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/06/oecd-employment-outlook-2024-country-notes_6910072b/france_b842dc68.html)

<sup>178</sup> [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/06/oecd-employment-outlook-2024-country-notes\\_6910072b/france\\_b842dc68.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/06/oecd-employment-outlook-2024-country-notes_6910072b/france_b842dc68.html)

<sup>179</sup> [https://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr/sites/default/files/2023-10/ddd\\_rapport\\_discriminations-origine\\_2020\\_synthese\\_EN\\_20200921.pdf](https://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr/sites/default/files/2023-10/ddd_rapport_discriminations-origine_2020_synthese_EN_20200921.pdf)

<sup>180</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/veiled-meaning-the-french-law-banning-religious-symbols-in-public-schools>

- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** No formal recognition, but legal recourse possible under broader religious liberty laws.
- **Turbans & Airport Security:** Generally respected with some cases of secondary screening

#### 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>181</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Well-protected under GDPR.
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Monitored; hate speech laws enforced.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** No known state censorship.

#### 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>182</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents of Hate Crimes:** No specific tracking for Sikhs; incidents grouped under “race/religion.”
- **Government Response & Law Enforcement Action:** Active in public messaging, slower in grassroots enforcement.
- **Case Studies of Discrimination:** Multiple ID-photo-related denials; documented school exclusion cases post-2004

### Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>183</sup>

UNITED SIKHS has maintained an active advocacy presence in France, including:

1. **Legal Advocacy:** Represented Sikh litigants in French courts over religious freedom, ID photo, and school-access disputes.
2. **Community Empowerment:** Organized Know Your Rights sessions for migrant Sikhs and transport workers.
3. **International Representation:** Raised Sikh issues in France at UN Human Rights Council and EU Parliament.
4. **Monitoring Discrimination:** Documented French policy impacts on Sikh identity through annual civil rights reports

### Recommendations

- **Advocate for Turban Rights in Schools:** Partner with French interfaith coalitions to challenge the 2004 law under ECHR principles.
- **Increase Legal Recognition:** Lobby for formal recognition of Sikhism in France’s religious classification system.
- **Build Private Educational Institutions:** Support independent schools to accommodate religious dress.
- **Strengthen Youth Support:** Develop digital platforms for Sikh students navigating French secular policies.
- **Enhance Hate Crime Tracking:** Push for disaggregated data collection on faith-based discrimination against Sikhs.

---

<sup>181</sup> <https://gdpr-info.eu>

<sup>182</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/reports/>

<sup>183</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/sikhs-win-turban-case-against-france-at-the-un/>

**BELGIUM**  
**2023–2025**  
**COUNTRY PROFILE**

**Head of Government:** Prime Minister Alexander De Croo

**Total Population:** Approx. 11.8 million (as of March 2025)<sup>184</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** 20+ gurdwaras, primarily in Antwerp, Brussels, and Ghent<sup>185</sup>

**Sikh Population in Belgium:** Approx. 15,000–20,000 (less than 0.2% of population)<sup>186</sup>

**State Recognition of Sikhism:** Not officially recognized as a distinct religion by the Belgian state

**Form of Government:** Federal parliamentary constitutional monarchy

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index:72.5**

**Introduction**

Belgium hosts a small but well-established Sikh community, primarily composed of economic migrants from Punjab. While religious freedom is constitutionally guaranteed, Belgium does not formally recognize Sikhism among its list of “recognized religions,” which affects funding for religious institutions and access to chaplaincy in prisons, hospitals, and schools. Despite this, gurdwaras operate freely, and there is a moderate level of religious tolerance in everyday life.

However, Sikhs in Belgium face unique challenges in relation to the right to wear religious articles, especially the turban, and in gaining full legal recognition of their religious identity. Instances of discrimination have occurred in employment, law enforcement, and education, often tied to misunderstandings about Sikh religious practices.<sup>187</sup>

**Case Study<sup>188</sup>**

In 2023, a young Sikh man in Flanders was denied entry to a vocational school unless he removed his turban. Despite legal appeals, the school upheld its “neutrality” policy, citing uniformity and safety concerns.

---

<sup>184</sup> <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/8/b/34243.pdf>

<sup>185</sup> <http://www.theinterfaithobserver.org/journal-articles/2014/6/15/dharmic-religion-finally-finding-a-place-in-european-interfa.html>

<sup>186</sup> <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/8/b/34243.pdf>

<sup>187</sup> <http://www.theinterfaithobserver.org/journal-articles/2014/6/15/dharmic-religion-finally-finding-a-place-in-european-interfa.html>

<sup>188</sup> <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/milel/issue/89206/1577264>

A community leader in Brussels noted: “We are not asking for privilege, only for recognition. The turban is not a fashion choice — it is our identity.”

The case reignited debate around Belgium’s strict secularism in public institutions and underscored the invisibility of the Sikh community in broader religious rights discourse.

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in Belgium

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>189</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Available through work, family reunification, or asylum pathways.
- **Work Authorization:** No religious barriers exist to employment for legal residents.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Generally available after 5 years of legal residence, language proficiency, and civic integration.
- **Legal Documents:** No specific mention of Sikh identity; religion is not recorded in national ID documents.

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>190</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Protected under Belgian law<sup>1</sup>, but Sikhism is not among the six state-recognized religions.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** Limited but active; gurdwaras in Antwerp and Brussels serve as community hubs.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Turban and kirpan rights are not consistently protected; legal challenges persist in schools and public jobs.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Vegetarian options are widely available; halal/kosher systems can help Sikhs navigate religious diets.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>191</sup>

- **Job Market:** High competition; discrimination based on religious attire reported, especially in customer-facing jobs.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Varies by region and sector. The turban is not universally accepted in police, military, or civil service.
- **Income Levels:** Middle-income standard; Sikh entrepreneurs have established a presence in trucking and small businesses.
- **Cost of Living:** Moderate to high; Brussels and Antwerp are among the pricier areas.

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>192</sup>

- **Presence of a Sikh Community:** Concentrated in Antwerp and Brussels; community is tight-knit but underrepresented.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Racial profiling and religious stereotyping persist; gurdwaras serve as safety nets.
- **Celebration of Festivals:** Vaisakhi and Gurdurbas are celebrated in gurdwaras but not recognized as public holidays.

### 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>193</sup>

- **Children’s Schooling:** Public education is secular; Sikh identity not always accommodated in uniform policies
- **Cultural Education:** Gurdwaras offer Punjabi and Gurmat classes; limited access to Sikh-centered curriculum in mainstream education

---

<sup>189</sup> <https://www.fedasil.be/en/asylum-belgium>

<sup>190</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/sikhs-raise-religious-freedom-issues-in-the-belgian-media/>

<sup>191</sup> <https://ichra.unitedsikhs.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2023-ANNUAL-CIVIL-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf>

<sup>192</sup> [https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/cp\\_belgium\\_eng](https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/cp_belgium_eng)

<sup>193</sup> <https://www.fedasil.be/en/asylum-belgium>

- **Access to Healthcare:** Belgium has strong public healthcare; culturally sensitive care is emerging but not guaranteed.

## 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>194</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** Anti-discrimination laws exist, but enforcement is inconsistent for smaller minorities
- **Safety Concerns:** No major extremist threats; racial profiling during ID checks reported by young Sikh men
- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** Formally equal, but non-recognition of religion affects funding and access to institutional representation<sup>3</sup>.
- **Turbans & Airport Security:** Manual checks are common; security staff often unaware of religious significance

## 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>195</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Belgium follows EU GDPR regulations; high standard of digital protections.
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Anti-migrant or Islamophobic rhetoric may spill over to affect Sikhs; limited community-level redressal.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** Minimal state censorship, but Sikh activism receives little visibility in mainstream media.

## 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>196</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents of Hate Crimes:** Belgium does not disaggregate hate crime data by religion beyond major groups<sup>7</sup>.
- **Government Response & Law Enforcement Action:** Mixed record; limited awareness of Sikh-specific concerns in police and legal systems<sup>7</sup>.
- **Case Studies of Discrimination:** Denial of religious accommodations in schools and jobs; invisibility in interfaith policy dialogues<sup>5</sup>.

## Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>197</sup>

UNITED SIKHS has supported the Sikh community in Belgium through legal guidance, community mobilization, and advocacy:

- **Legal Support:** Provided assistance in turban discrimination cases and religious accommodation appeals<sup>5</sup>.
- **Human Rights Training:** Conducted workshops for Sikh youth on EU rights frameworks and legal protections.
- **Interfaith Engagement:** Advocated for Sikh inclusion in dialogues with Belgian religious affairs departments<sup>6</sup>.
- **Emergency Relief:** Assisted migrant families during COVID-19 and supported food drives in Antwerp.

## Recommendations

- **Seek Official Religious Recognition:** Push for formal state recognition to unlock funding, legal protections, and access to public chaplaincy.
- **Defend Religious Identity Protections:** Promote turban and kirpan accommodation in schools, workplaces, and security screenings

<sup>194</sup> <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/milel/issue/89206/1577264>

<sup>195</sup> [https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/cp\\_belgium\\_eng](https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/cp_belgium_eng)

<sup>196</sup> <https://fra.europa.eu/en/themes/hate-crime>

<sup>197</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/sikhs-raise-religious-freedom-issues-in-the-belgian-media/>

- **Monitor Discrimination Cases:** Develop community-led documentation mechanisms for Sikh-specific hate incidents
- **Promote Civic Education:** Expand Sikh youth engagement in local politics and civic forums
- **Collaborate with EU Institutions:** Advocate for inclusion of Sikh rights within broader European anti-discrimination and religious freedom agendas

# ITALY

## 2023–2025

### COUNTRY PROFILE

**Head of Government:** Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni<sup>198</sup>

**Total Population:** Approx. 59 million (as of April 2025)<sup>199</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** Over 10, primarily in Novellara, Brescia, Rome, and Latina<sup>200</sup>

**Sikh Population in Italy:** Estimated 70,000–80,000, concentrated in northern industrial and agricultural zones (notably Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy, and Lazio)<sup>201</sup>

**Currently Recognizes Sikhism as a Distinctive Religion by the State:** No; Sikh organizations register under broader religious association laws<sup>202</sup>

**Form of Government:** Parliamentary representative democratic republic<sup>203</sup>

**United Sikh Index: 65.0**

#### Introduction

Italy hosts one of Europe's largest Sikh populations, primarily composed of Punjabi migrants working in agriculture, logistics, and industry. While Italy constitutionally guarantees religious freedom, the state has not formally recognized Sikhism as a distinct religion, which limits legal protections and public service accommodations<sup>204</sup>.

Unlike the rigid secularism of France, Italian secularism permits visible religious identity in public life, allowing the wearing of turbans and kirpans in schools, workspaces, and most public institutions. However, systemic challenges particularly labor exploitation, informal housing, and bureaucratic barriers to permanent residence continue to impact migrant Sikhs disproportionately. Nonetheless, Italy provides relatively inclusive infrastructure and potential for advocacy progress<sup>205</sup>

#### Case Study

---

<sup>198</sup> <https://www.governo.it/en>

<sup>199</sup> <https://demo.istat.it/data/previsioni/Population-and-households-projections-EN.pdf>

<sup>200</sup> <https://www.worldgurudwaras.com/gurdwara-singh-sabha-reggio-emilia/>

<sup>201</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/interactive-publications/migration-2024>

<sup>202</sup> <https://www.strasbourgconsortium.org/content/blurb/files/Italy.pdf>

<sup>203</sup> [https://www.cortecostituzionale.it/documenti/download/pdf/The\\_Constitution\\_of\\_the\\_Italian\\_Republic.pdf](https://www.cortecostituzionale.it/documenti/download/pdf/The_Constitution_of_the_Italian_Republic.pdf)

<sup>204</sup> <https://www.governo.it/en>

<sup>205</sup> <https://demo.istat.it/data/previsioni/Population-and-households-projections-EN.pdf>

In 2012, Italy's Supreme Court ruled in favor of a Sikh man's right to wear the kirpan, emphasizing that it constituted a religious symbol, not a weapon. The court cited constitutional protections and recognized the unique spiritual function of the kirpan, although implementation still varies locally.<sup>206</sup>

In 2023, UNITED SIKHS and local NGOs documented widespread labor rights violations among Sikh farmworkers in Latina province, including wage theft, unsafe living conditions, and threats from employers. Complaints were filed with regional authorities, and investigations began, though enforcement outcomes remained uneven.<sup>207</sup>

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in Italy

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>208</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Italy offers various permits for work, family reunification, and humanitarian protection. Many Sikhs enter via agricultural sponsorships or seasonal labor programs.
- **Work Authorization:** Permits often tied to employer contracts; lack of regularization exposes many Sikhs to labor abuse.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Available after 10 years of legal residence. Requirements include language proficiency, criminal background checks, and financial stability.
- **Legal Documents:** Turbans are **permitted in ID photos** provided the face is visible. Italian Interior Ministry guidance protects this accommodation.

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>209</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Constitutionally protected. **Turban, kirpan, and other articles of faith** are legally accepted in public life
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** Over 10 established Gurdwaras, primarily in agricultural hubs like Novellara, Brescia, and Rome.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** No bans on religious attire in schools or workplaces.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Vegetarianism is accommodated; langar practices widely observed in Sikh centers.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>210</sup>

- **Job Market:** Many Sikhs work in agriculture, logistics, and small businesses. Migrant labor is essential to Italy's food economy.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Variable—industrial jobs are open, but exploitation in agriculture remains an issue.
- **Income Levels:** Sikh workers earn below the Italian average, especially in the agricultural sector. Income is more stable in trucking and logistics roles
- **Cost of Living:** Moderate in northern rural zones; higher in cities like Milan and Rome.

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>211</sup>

- **Presence of a Sikh Community:** Strong communal structures exist with Gurdwaras, Punjabi schools, and aid societies.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Racial profiling and casual racism reported, but **no national surge in hate crimes** comparable to other EU states

---

<sup>206</sup> <https://www.worldgurdwaras.com/gurdwara-singh-sabha-reggio-emilia/>

<sup>207</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/interactive-publications/migration-2024>

<sup>208</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/migrant-integration/migrant-integration-hub\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/migrant-integration/migrant-integration-hub_en)

<sup>209</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/united-sikhs-advocates-for-passing-of-the-transnational-repression-policy-act/>

<sup>210</sup> [https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information-europe/labour-market-information-italy\\_en](https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information-europe/labour-market-information-italy_en)

<sup>211</sup> [https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Lunaria+NGO+Report+on+Racial+Discrimination+in+Italy+\(2023\)%3B+No+disaggregation+for+Sikh+faith&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Lunaria+NGO+Report+on+Racial+Discrimination+in+Italy+(2023)%3B+No+disaggregation+for+Sikh+faith&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8)

- **Celebration of Festivals:** Vaisakhi, Gurpurabs, and Nagar Kirtans celebrated openly. Events receive municipal support in places like Novellara and Rome.

#### 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>212</sup>

- **Children’s Schooling:** Public schools allow **religious dress**, including turbans. Schooling is free and secular, with high literacy rates.
- **Cultural Education:** Gurdwaras run weekend Punjabi, Gurmat, and tabla/kirtan classes.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Italy’s public healthcare is high quality and free; faith-sensitive services (e.g., gender-specific care) are available on request but not systematized.

#### 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>213</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** Sikh rights are protected under **Italy’s anti-discrimination and religious liberty statutes**
- **Safety Concerns:** Urban and rural regions are mostly safe. Hate crimes against Sikhs are rare but not officially disaggregated in national statistics.
- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** No formal recognition, but the kirpan ruling and ID photo guidelines offer some precedent for legal protections.
- **Turbans & Airport Security:** Italian aviation authorities accommodate religious screening, often allowing private pat-downs and respecting Sikh identity

#### 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>214</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Strong EU protections under the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**.
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Illegal under Italian and EU law. Platforms must remove hate content upon request.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** No known cases of state censorship or platform-based suppression.

#### 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>215</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents of Hate Crimes:** Italy does not collect **disaggregated data** on anti-Sikh violence. Cases are grouped under broader “religious or racial discrimination” categories
- **Government Response & Law Enforcement:** Responsive in cases of labor abuse; less active in addressing subtle religious or racial profiling.
- **Case Studies of Discrimination:** Legal victories like the **kirpan ruling** contrast with the still-prevalent systemic **labor exploitation** of Sikh farmworkers

#### Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>216</sup>

1. **Legal Advocacy:** Supported landmark cases on religious rights (e.g., kirpan), labor justice, and identity accommodations.
2. **Community Empowerment:** Conducted “Know Your Rights” workshops, particularly for migrant workers and transporters.
3. **International Representation:** Raised Italy-related issues at the UN Human Rights Council and European Parliament.
4. **Monitoring Discrimination:** Published updates on Sikh worker exploitation, state-level religious freedoms, and biometric identity challenges.

#### Recommendations

<sup>212</sup> Ministry of Education – Circular on Religious Symbols in Schools (2015); Sikh case studies

<sup>213</sup> <https://leglobal.law/countries/italy/employment-law/employment-law-overview-italy/04-anti-discrimination-laws/>

<sup>214</sup> <https://www.enac.gov.it/en/>

<sup>215</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/interactive-publications/migration-2024>

<sup>216</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/united-sikhs-advocates-for-passing-of-the-transnational-repression-policy-act/>

- **Formal Recognition of Sikhism:** Pursue recognition through the Italian Ministry of Interior's religious registry to enable Sikh chaplaincy and data collection.
- **Labor Rights Enforcement:** Collaborate with unions and civil society to protect Sikh workers from abuse.
- **Expand Faith-Based Education:** Invest in after-school Punjabi/Gurmat programs; explore private religious schooling models.
- **Enhance Hate Crime Tracking:** Advocate for disaggregated data on faith-specific hate incidents affecting Sikhs.
- **Foster Interfaith Partnerships:** Work with Catholic, Muslim, and Jewish groups to challenge anti-immigrant and xenophobic narratives.

# GREECE

## 2023–2025

### COUNTRY PROFILE

**Head of Government:** Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis<sup>217</sup>

**Total Population:** Approx. 10.2 million (as of April 2025)<sup>218</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** Approximately 6–8, primarily in Athens and Thessaloniki<sup>219</sup>

**Sikh Population in Greece:** Estimated 20,000–25,000, primarily concentrated in Athens, central Greece, and agricultural districts in the Peloponnese<sup>220</sup>

**Currently Recognizes Sikhism as a Distinctive Religion by the State:** No; Sikh institutions operate as private associations under Greek religious registration frameworks<sup>221</sup>

**Form of Government:** Parliamentary republic

**United Sikh Index:** 56.3

#### Introduction<sup>222</sup>

Greece hosts a modest but growing Sikh population, primarily composed of economic migrants from Punjab who work in agriculture, construction, and informal sectors. While the Greek constitution guarantees religious freedom under Article 13, the practical application of such protections is uneven. The Greek Orthodox Church retains a privileged legal status, and religious minorities including Sikhs often face bureaucratic and social barriers to recognition and expression.

Despite the lack of formal recognition, Greek secularism tends to be more permissive than French-style *laïcité*, allowing turbans and kirpans in most public contexts. However, challenges persist, especially in the realms of labor rights, immigration regularization, and integration policy. Civil society interventions and diaspora solidarity networks are crucial for improving Sikh conditions.

#### Case Study<sup>223</sup>

In 2021, Sikh workers in Manolada, a region known for its strawberry farms, were subject to exploitation and unsafe conditions. Local NGOs documented wage withholding, informal contracts, and racist abuse.

---

<sup>217</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/greece-elections-mitsotakis-prime-minister-44dc24e2287630910eb03e30449e2e93>

<sup>218</sup> <https://www.greeceinnumbers.gr/en-gb/Population/Households%20and%20families>

<sup>219</sup> [https://homing.soc.unitn.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/southall-wp\\_bertolani\\_revised.pdf](https://homing.soc.unitn.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/southall-wp_bertolani_revised.pdf)

<sup>220</sup> <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/blog/2023/updated-census-figures-severely-undercount-u-s-sikhs/>

<sup>221</sup> [https://www.minedu.gov.gr/publications/docs2018/Law\\_4301\\_Organization\\_of\\_the\\_legal\\_form\\_of\\_religious\\_communities\\_in\\_Greece.pdf](https://www.minedu.gov.gr/publications/docs2018/Law_4301_Organization_of_the_legal_form_of_religious_communities_in_Greece.pdf)

<sup>222</sup> <https://www.greeceinnumbers.gr/en-gb/Population/Households%20and%20families>

<sup>223</sup> [https://homing.soc.unitn.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/southall-wp\\_bertolani\\_revised.pdf](https://homing.soc.unitn.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/southall-wp_bertolani_revised.pdf)

Legal complaints were filed, and international attention revived calls for improved migrant protections under EU law.

Separately, in 2024, UNITED SIKHS intervened in an airport profiling case involving a young Sikh man subjected to invasive searches at Athens International Airport. After advocacy and public outcry, the Hellenic Police revised internal protocols for religious screenings, allowing private screenings and training on turbans/kirpans.

## Parameters to Consider for Sikh Settlement in Greece

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>224</sup>

- **Visa & Residency Permits:** Greece offers regularization programs and seasonal work permits, often accessed via agricultural sponsorships. However, delays and documentation gaps are common.
- **Work Authorization:** Employment is often informal; legal work requires employer sponsorship or self-employment registration, which is administratively complex.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Naturalization is available after 7 years of continuous legal residence. Language proficiency and civic knowledge tests are required.
- **Legal Documents:** Turbans are permitted in ID photos, though not explicitly codified in Greek law. Judicial precedent is minimal.

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>225</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Protected under the constitution. Sikh institutions must register as "religious legal entities" or cultural associations.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** Gurdwaras exist in Athens (Nea Manolada, Kato Patisia) and Thessaloniki, often housed in converted warehouses or community buildings.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** No formal bans on turbans or kirpans, but inconsistent enforcement at border controls and in official processes.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Vegetarianism is generally accommodated in private life. Langar is regularly held but not recognized by state food programs.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>226</sup>

- **Job Market:** Sikhs work primarily in agriculture, construction, and informal sectors like recycling.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Variable. Reports of discrimination and wage theft are frequent in rural zones.
- **Income Levels:** Migrant Sikh workers earn significantly below national averages, often below the minimum wage.
- **Cost of Living:** Moderate in rural zones, but housing in Athens is increasingly unaffordable.

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>227</sup>

- **Presence of a Sikh Community:** Active Gurdwaras and Punjabi associations support migrant needs. Informal networks provide housing, legal aid, and translation.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Racial profiling and Islamophobic misidentification occur, especially in Athens and smaller towns.
- **Celebration of Festivals:** Vaisakhi and Gurburabs are publicly celebrated. In 2024, a Nagar Kirtan in Athens drew over 3,000 attendees with police facilitation.

---

<sup>224</sup> <https://migration.gov.gr/en/ukraine/>

<sup>225</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/a-humanitarians-busmans-holiday-united-sikhs-and-athens-gurdwara-deliver-essentials-to-syrian-refugees/>

<sup>226</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/eu-immigration-portal/employed-worker-greece\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/eu-immigration-portal/employed-worker-greece_en)

<sup>227</sup> [https://en.mitos.gov.gr/index.php/ΔΔ:Naturalisation\\_of\\_expatriates\\_residing\\_abroad](https://en.mitos.gov.gr/index.php/ΔΔ:Naturalisation_of_expatriates_residing_abroad)

## 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>228</sup>

- **Children's Schooling:** Public schools are free and allow religious dress, but integration challenges persist due to language and cultural gaps.
- **Cultural Education:** Gurdwaras offer Punjabi language and Gurmat classes. No formal state curriculum includes Sikh history or religion.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Greece's public healthcare system is strained but accessible; undocumented migrants face barriers unless covered by humanitarian programs.

## 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>229</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** Greek and EU law prohibit discrimination based on religion, but enforcement mechanisms are underdeveloped.
- **Safety Concerns:** Hate crimes exist but are underreported. No disaggregated data on anti-Sikh bias.
- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** Lack of formal recognition inhibits legal recourse on faith-specific matters like chaplaincy, education, and prison services.
- **Turbans & Airport Security:** Airport staff are inconsistently trained. Requests for private screenings are sometimes denied.

## 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>230</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Strong protections via EU's GDPR framework.
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Illegal, but enforcement weak. Platforms slow to remove hate content.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** No known instances of state censorship; however, Sikh content receives minimal public or press visibility.

## 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>231</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents:** Greece lacks structured hate crime data collection specific to Sikhs. NGOs fill gaps through informal reporting.
- **Government Response & Law Enforcement:** Variable; responsive in high-profile cases but inconsistent for routine abuses.
- **Case Studies:** 2021 farmworker abuse in Manolada remains a landmark example of systemic labor and racial injustice.

## Contribution of UNITED SIKHS in Greece<sup>232</sup>

1. **Legal Advocacy:** Intervened in airport profiling and ID policy challenges; filed amicus briefs in European Court of Human Rights cases concerning religious minorities.
2. **Community Empowerment:** Launched migrant worker awareness campaigns in Peloponnese and Athens.
3. **International Representation:** Raised migrant Sikh rights issues in Greece at the European Parliament and UN Human Rights Council sessions.
4. **Monitoring Discrimination:** Published alerts on labor abuses, religious profiling, and institutional neglect of Sikh religious identity.

## Recommendations

---

<sup>228</sup> <https://www.minedu.gov.gr/publications/docs2020/2021-08>

<sup>31</sup> [English\\_Circular\\_on\\_Houses\\_of\\_Prayer\\_Temples\\_and\\_Places\\_of\\_Worship\\_in\\_general.pdf](#)

<sup>229</sup> <https://ecre.org/greece-refugees-criminalized-while-authorities-commit-crimes-with-impunity/>

<sup>230</sup> <http://www.dpa.gr/en>

<sup>231</sup> <https://hatecrime.osce.org/national-frameworks-greece>

<sup>232</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/docs/kyr/KYRReligiousAccomodationPamphlet.pdf>

- **Pursue Formal Recognition of Sikhism:** Advocate for inclusion in Greece’s religious entity registry to enable funding, chaplaincy, and equal treatment.
- **Combat Labor Exploitation:** Partner with labor unions and Greek human rights NGOs to secure wage protection and workplace dignity for Sikh migrants.
- **Institutionalize Cultural Education:** Support creation of licensed Punjabi schools and weekend religious study programs.
- **Improve Data Collection:** Lobby for hate crime tracking mechanisms that disaggregate by religious identity.
- **Train Law Enforcement:** Establish faith-sensitivity training modules for airport staff, police, and immigration officers.

# TURKEY

## 2023–2025

### COUNTRY PROFILE

**Head of Government:** President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

**Total Population:** Approx. 85 million (as of March 2025)<sup>233</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** 1 known (Istanbul, private prayer hall); no formal gurdwaras recognized by the state<sup>234</sup>

**Sikh Population in Turkey:** Estimated 200–300 individuals, mostly students, migrant workers, and businesspeople<sup>235</sup>

**Recognition of Sikhism by the State:** No official recognition; Sikhs are classified under “other religions” in state data<sup>236</sup>

**Form of Government:** Unitary presidential republic; secular constitution with increasing religious influence on public policy<sup>237</sup>

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index:41.3**

#### Introduction

Turkey has historically provided general freedom of religion under its secular constitution, although minority religious groups such as Sikhs do not receive formal recognition. The Sikh community in Turkey remains small, concentrated mainly in Istanbul and Ankara, and comprises transient populations including students, professionals, and seasonal workers. While legal frameworks allow private worship, limited infrastructure and cultural unfamiliarity with Sikh practices create barriers to visibility and support. In recent years, Turkey’s geopolitical position as a transit hub for refugees and international students has indirectly increased the presence of Sikhs, particularly those using Turkey as a corridor between South Asia and Europe. However, fluctuating visa policies, rising nationalism, and economic instability have impacted migrant and minority experiences, including access to religious facilities and legal protections<sup>238</sup>.

#### Case Study<sup>239</sup>

---

<sup>233</sup> <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=World-Population-Day-2025-54078&dil=2>

<sup>234</sup> <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CPRT-108JPRT20429/html/CPRT-108JPRT20429.htm>

<sup>235</sup> <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Kategori/GetKategori?p=nufus-ve-demografi-109&dil=2>

<sup>236</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/historic-victory-sikhs-to-be-counted-as-separate-ethnic-group-in-u-s-census-2020/>

<sup>237</sup> <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CPRT-108JPRT20429/html/CPRT-108JPRT20429.htm>

<sup>238</sup> <https://acninternational.org/religiousfreedomreport/reports/country/2023/turkey>

<sup>239</sup> <https://sikhaid.unitedsikhs.org/united-sikhs-humanitarian-relief-after-turkey-earthquake/>

During the 2023 earthquake in southern Turkey, Sikh humanitarian volunteers from Europe and the Middle East provided aid in Hatay and Gaziantep. Sikh students in Istanbul organized food drives and temporary shelter for displaced migrants affected by the disaster. One volunteer recalled:

*"We were few in number, but our langar tradition became a bridge—locals and refugees alike joined hands in cooking and distribution. It was the first time many had seen a Sikh, and it helped foster respect and curiosity."*

This event highlighted the intersection of Sikh humanitarian values with Turkey's broader civil society response, showcasing opportunities for interfaith collaboration despite structural challenges.

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in Turkey

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>240</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Student and work visas are available but require sponsorship or enrollment; tourist visas are short-term.
- **Work Authorization:** Permits are tied to employer sponsorship; informal labor common in service sectors.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Naturalization requires 5 years of residence and Turkish language proficiency.
- **Legal Documents:** No option to list "Sikh" in official documents; no prohibition on visible articles of faith.

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>241</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Constitutionally guaranteed though minorities face practical challenges in securing worship spaces.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** One informal prayer hall in Istanbul; no official gurdwaras.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Turbans and kara are generally tolerated; occasional profiling at airports or borders.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Vegetarian food is available in major cities but poorly understood in rural areas.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>242</sup>

- **Job Market:** Turkey's economy faces high inflation; opportunities exist in hospitality, construction, and international trade.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Limited awareness of Sikh identity; minimal overt discrimination reported.
- **Income Levels:** Salaries are lower than EU standards; cost of living moderate outside Istanbul.
- **Cost of Living:** Rising due to inflation; affordable compared to Western Europe.

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>243</sup>

- **Presence of Sikh Community:** Small and scattered; informal networks among students and workers.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** General tolerance; occasional misunderstandings due to low visibility of Sikh faith.
- **Celebration of Festivals:** Private observance possible; no public celebrations recorded.

---

<sup>240</sup> <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/general-information-about-turkish-visas.en.mfa>

<sup>241</sup> <https://talkabout.iclrs.org/2021/06/15/freedom-of-religion-and-belief-in-turkey-recent/>

<sup>242</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/turkey/overview>

<sup>243</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/ohchr-reports/ohchr-report-2024.pdf>

## 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>244</sup>

- **Children’s Schooling:** Public schools available; instruction in Turkish; few international schools in Istanbul and Ankara.
- **Cultural Education:** No Sikh-specific institutions; reliance on family or online platforms.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Public healthcare is accessible; private healthcare is better for non-Turkish speakers.

## 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>245</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** General protections exist but no Sikh-specific provisions.
- **Safety Concerns:** Generally safe; protests or political unrest occasionally disrupt urban centers.
- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** No persecution; recognition issues limit institutional representation.
- **Turbans & Airport Security:** Extra screening possible but religious articles are usually respected.

## 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>246</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Increasing government surveillance on social media; not targeted at Sikhs specifically.
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Limited evidence of anti-Sikh hate online.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** No reported censorship related to Sikhism.

## 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>247</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents of Hate Crimes:** No Sikh-specific data; rare, isolated incidents.
- **Government Response & Law Enforcement Action:** Police generally responsive; cultural awareness of Sikhism is low.
- **Case Studies of Discrimination:** Minor profiling at borders; no large-scale incidents reported.

## Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>248</sup>

Though lacking a permanent office in Turkey, UNITED SIKHS has provided critical assistance through:

1. **Earthquake Relief (2023):** Coordinated food and aid distribution in affected regions.
2. **Advocacy for Religious Recognition:** Engaged with interfaith councils to highlight Sikh presence in Turkey.
3. **Student Support:** Provided emergency funds and legal assistance for Sikh students facing visa and housing challenges.
4. **Community Networking:** Facilitated online platforms connecting Sikhs in Turkey with global diaspora support.

## Recommendations

- **Establish Formal Worship Spaces:** Partner with local authorities and interfaith groups to secure recognized prayer halls.
- **Strengthen Minority Visibility:** Advocate for inclusion of Sikhs in minority religious data and cultural awareness initiatives.
- **Develop Crisis Response Protocols:** Prepare for natural disasters or political unrest impacting Sikh migrants and students.
- **Enhance Digital Learning Tools:** Provide online Sikh education for families in the absence of local institutions.

---

<sup>244</sup> [https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/turkey\\_education\\_vision\\_2023.pdf](https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/turkey_education_vision_2023.pdf)

<sup>245</sup> [https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD\\_2023\\_696%20Türkiye%20report.pdf](https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_696%20Türkiye%20report.pdf)

<sup>246</sup> [https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2022/12/the-protection-and-promotion-of-civic-space\\_c8a8caac/d234e975-en.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2022/12/the-protection-and-promotion-of-civic-space_c8a8caac/d234e975-en.pdf)

<sup>247</sup> <https://hatecrime.osce.org/reporting/turkiye/2023>

<sup>248</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/turkey-earthquake-relief-united-sikhs-collaborating-with-govt-agencies-for-relief-operations/>

- **Build Community Networks:** Encourage stronger diaspora connections to support students and migrant workers.

# RUSSIA

## 2023–2025

### COUNTRY PROFILE

**Head of Government:** President Vladimir Putin (since 2012; current term following 2024 elections)<sup>249</sup>

**Total Population:** Approx. 144 million (March 2025)<sup>250</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** Fewer than 5 recognized Sikh prayer halls; most located in Moscow and St. Petersburg, with small informal gatherings in Ural and Siberian regions<sup>251</sup>

**Sikh Population in Russia:** Estimated 2,000–3,000 individuals; primarily Punjabi-origin traders, students, and professionals concentrated in major cities<sup>252</sup>

**Recognition of Sikhism by the State:** Not formally recognized as a distinct religion; Sikhs are grouped under “other faiths” in census data. Limited formal representation in government multicultural initiatives; practice of Sikh articles of faith tolerated but not explicitly protected under Russian federal law<sup>253</sup>

**Form of Government:** Federal semi-presidential constitutional republic with centralized authority; strong state oversight of religious organizations; secular legal framework<sup>254</sup>

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index:40.0**

#### Introduction

Russia hosts a small but historically significant Sikh community, with migration dating back to the early 20th century through trade and educational exchanges. Modern Sikh presence is largely shaped by students pursuing medical and engineering degrees, small business owners, and professionals in Moscow, Kazan, and St. Petersburg. While Sikhism is not formally recognized as a separate faith, Sikhs are able to practice in small community settings, often using rented halls for gurdwara services. Multicultural initiatives in Russia focus primarily on Russian Orthodox, Islam, and Judaism, with limited outreach to smaller communities like Sikhs. Nonetheless, Sikh festivals such as Vaisakhi are observed privately or within embassy-organized events.<sup>255</sup>

#### Case Study<sup>256</sup>

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Sikh community members in Moscow organized langar and distributed food packages to international students facing hardships. Despite limited institutional support, these

---

<sup>249</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics\\_of\\_Russia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Russia)

<sup>250</sup> <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=1455>

<sup>251</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/reports/>

<sup>252</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/russia>

<sup>253</sup> <https://www.mea.gov.in/population-of-overseas-indians.htm>

<sup>254</sup> <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=145>

<sup>255</sup> [https://www.delmi.se/Media/ndkodj0s/2024\\_11-webb.pdf](https://www.delmi.se/Media/ndkodj0s/2024_11-webb.pdf)

<sup>256</sup> <https://www.scribd.com/document/690656120/The-Sikh-World>

grassroots efforts highlighted the Sikh ethos of seva (selfless service) and strengthened community bonds among South Asian migrants.

A community volunteer recalled:

*"In Moscow, we had no gurdwara kitchen — only home kitchens. But we shared what we had, because Sikh values travel with us wherever we go."*

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in Russia

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>257</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Work, student, and business visas available; permanent residency possible after 5 years, but process is bureaucratic.
- **Work Authorization:** Permits tied to employer sponsorship; self-employment visas limited.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Possible after 5 years of residency, Russian language proficiency required; dual citizenship generally restricted.
- **Legal Documents:** No option to list “Sikh” on census; identity documents follow general foreign national categories.

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>258</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Constitutionally guaranteed, but subject to strict federal oversight (registration of religious groups mandatory).
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** Limited; two main prayer halls in Moscow and St. Petersburg, occasional kirtan programs at Indian cultural centers.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Turbans tolerated in public spaces; kirpan carrying not legally recognized and may face restrictions under weapons laws.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Vegetarian and Indian groceries available in larger cities; limited options in smaller regions.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>259</sup>

- **Job Market:** Opportunities in oil & gas, IT, education, trade, and healthcare; language barriers limit scope for newcomers.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Awareness of Sikh identity low; cultural diversity mainly concentrated in Moscow and Kazan.
- **Income Levels:** Competitive wages in energy and IT sectors; cost of living moderate compared to Western Europe.
- **Cost of Living:** Moscow and St. Petersburg are expensive; regional cities more affordable.

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>260</sup>

- **Presence of Sikh Community:** Very small; community bonds informal but active during festivals and emergencies.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Limited awareness of Sikhism; occasional profiling due to turbans or beards.
- **Celebration of Festivals:** Vaisakhi and Gurburab observed in private or at Indian embassy events rather than public parades.

### 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>261</sup>

- **Children’s Schooling:** Russian-medium public schools; limited English curriculum outside Moscow.

---

<sup>257</sup> [https://www.refworld.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/2023\\_russia\\_law\\_on\\_citizenship\\_amend2024\\_en.pdf](https://www.refworld.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/2023_russia_law_on_citizenship_amend2024_en.pdf)

<sup>258</sup> <https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/USCIRF%202024%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

<sup>259</sup> <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/51e229cb3b4abfa22db1d93b5354c496-0570062024/original/Refugee-Employment-PS4R-Study.pdf>

<sup>260</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/ar/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/eur460222006en.pdf>

<sup>261</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migration/overview>

- **Cultural Education:** No formal Punjabi schools; community relies on home teaching or online programs.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Universal healthcare exists but quality varies; private care preferred by many expatriates.

#### 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>262</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** Anti-extremism laws protect minorities in theory, but enforcement inconsistent.
- **Safety Concerns:** Political tensions and xenophobia affect some migrant groups; Sikhs generally low-profile.
- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** No kirpan exemptions; turbans permitted but not accommodated in uniformed professions.
- **Airport Security:** Turbans may be subject to manual inspection; limited awareness of Sikh religious practices.

#### 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>263</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Heavily monitored internet; foreign nationals' communications subject to state oversight.
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Rarely addressed; no targeted protections for Sikhs.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** Sikh content not censored, but broader internet restrictions apply.

#### 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>264</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents of Hate Crimes:** Data limited; few formal reports of anti-Sikh incidents.
- **Government Response & Law Enforcement Action:** Hate crimes addressed inconsistently; strong focus on ethnic Russian identity in state narratives.
- **Case Studies of Discrimination:** Isolated harassment cases reported by students; resolved through community or embassy mediation.

#### Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>265</sup>

- **Humanitarian Relief:** Assisted South Asian students in Russia during COVID-19 and during geopolitical tensions affecting remittances and travel.
- **Advocacy for Minority Rights:** Engaged Russian civil society groups on religious freedom and migrant rights.
- **Student and Worker Support:** Provides emergency aid, legal advice, and cultural orientation for newcomers.
- **Community Networking:** Links small Russian Sikh population with larger diaspora in Europe and Central Asia.

#### Recommendations

- **Increase Cultural Visibility:** Advocate for Sikh recognition in census and multicultural programs.
- **Expand Community Infrastructure:** Support establishment of permanent gurdwara facilities in Moscow.
- **Strengthen Legal Awareness:** Educate Sikhs on Russian laws regarding religious symbols and migration compliance.
- **Develop Youth Outreach:** Offer online Punjabi and kirtan classes to second-generation Sikhs.

<sup>262</sup> <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/RussianFederation.html>

<sup>263</sup> <https://rsf.org/en/russia-52-ngos-urge-un-challenge-restrictions-online-expression-and-digital-privacy>

<sup>264</sup> <https://hatecrime.osce.org/national-frameworks-russian-federation>

<sup>265</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Global-Summary-Report.pdf>

- **Enhance Interfaith Collaboration:** Partner with Russian Orthodox and Muslim groups for humanitarian and cultural initiatives.

**AUSTRIA**  
**2023-2025**  
**COUNTRY PROFILE**

**Head of Government:** Chancellor Karl Nehammer (since 2021)

**Total Population:** Approx. 9.2 million (March 2025)<sup>266</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** Around 4–5 recognized Sikh gurdwaras, primarily in Vienna, Salzburg, and Linz<sup>267</sup>

**Sikh Population in Austria:** Estimated 2,500–3,000 individuals, predominantly Punjabi-origin migrants engaged in transport, small business, and service sectors<sup>268</sup>

**Recognition of Sikhism by the State:** Not separately recognized; Sikhs are grouped under “other religions” in census data. Religious freedoms protected under Austrian constitutional law, but Sikh-specific articles of faith (kirpan) are not explicitly covered in legislation.<sup>269</sup>

**Form of Government:** Federal parliamentary republic; secular state with robust human rights protections and strong EU legal frameworks for minorities<sup>270</sup>

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index: 71.3**

### **Introduction**

Austria hosts a small but steadily growing Sikh community, with migration increasing since the 1990s due to labor mobility, trucking businesses, and family reunification. The majority of Sikhs reside in Vienna, with smaller communities in Graz and Salzburg. While Sikhism is not separately categorized in Austrian official statistics, Sikhs freely practice their faith, operate gurdwaras, and participate in interfaith initiatives coordinated with other South Asian communities. Major festivals like Vaisakhi and Gurburab are celebrated at local gurdwaras and occasionally in public cultural events.<sup>271</sup>

---

<sup>266</sup> <https://www.statistik.at/en/statistics/population-and-society/population/population-stock/population-at-beginning-of-year/quarter>

<sup>267</sup> <https://www.worldgurudwaras.com/location/austria/>

<sup>268</sup> [https://amnesty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/AIR-english\\_2024-04-20.pdf](https://amnesty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/AIR-english_2024-04-20.pdf)

<sup>269</sup> <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/0/2/38012.pdf>

<sup>270</sup> [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2019-eu-charter-in-austria\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-eu-charter-in-austria_en.pdf)

<sup>271</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/WEBPOL1085152025ENGLISH.pdf>

## Case Study<sup>272</sup>

During the 2015 European refugee crisis, Austrian Sikh gurdwaras and volunteers provided langar, clothing, and shelter to refugees transiting through Vienna and Salzburg railway stations. Their service drew positive recognition from humanitarian organizations and local media, highlighting Sikh values of seva (selfless service) and solidarity with vulnerable groups.

A volunteer reflected:

*"People arrived with nothing but hope. We could not change the world, but we could feed them and show compassion — that is what Sikhi teaches us."*

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in Austria

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>273</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Multiple pathways include EU Blue Card, work permits, student visas, and family reunification; residency possible after 5 years.
- **Work Authorization:** Permits tied to employment contracts; self-employment visas available under strict financial conditions.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Naturalization after 10 years (reduced to 6 in some cases); dual citizenship is generally restricted.
- **Legal Documents:** No option to list “Sikh” in census; identity documents list nationality only.

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>274</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Protected under Austrian constitution and EU human rights law; religious attire is generally respected.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** Gurdwaras present in Vienna, Linz, and Salzburg; additional informal prayer halls in regional areas.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Turbans widely accepted; kirpan may face legal restrictions due to Austrian weapons laws.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Indian and vegetarian groceries widely available in urban centers; langar served weekly in gurdwaras.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>275</sup>

- **Job Market:** Opportunities in transport (especially trucking), hospitality, construction, and healthcare.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Multicultural workplaces in Vienna; lower awareness of Sikh identity outside major cities.

---

<sup>272</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Final-Report-5-Mar..pdf>

<sup>273</sup> <https://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/austrian-embassy-ottawa/travel-information-on-austria/entrance-and-residence/settlement-and-residence>

<sup>274</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/reference/annualreport/usdos/2017/en/118438>

<sup>275</sup> [https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information-europe/labour-market-information-austria\\_en](https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information-europe/labour-market-information-austria_en)

- **Income Levels:** Competitive wages; cost of living moderate compared to Western Europe but rising in Vienna.
- **Cost of Living:** Vienna expensive; smaller cities like Linz more affordable.

#### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>276</sup>

- **Presence of Sikh Community:** Small but active; centered around Vienna gurdwaras.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Generally positive environment; isolated incidents of misunderstanding around religious articles.
- **Celebration of Festivals:** Vaisakhi processions (Nagar Kirtans) occasionally organized in Vienna; well-received by local authorities.

#### 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>277</sup>

- **Children's Schooling:** Free public education with strong German-language programs; English-medium schools limited.
- **Cultural Education:** Punjabi and kirtan classes run by gurdwaras; limited formal cultural infrastructure.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Universal healthcare system; migrants included after registration.

#### 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>278</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** Robust protections under Austrian equality and anti-discrimination laws.
- **Safety Concerns:** Low crime rates; isolated xenophobic incidents monitored by government agencies.
- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** Turbans accommodated; kirpan restrictions exist under weapons legislation.
- **Airport Security:** Turbans respected in screening; kirpan prohibited in airports and flights.

#### 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>279</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Strong privacy laws under EU GDPR; freedom of expression generally protected.
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Monitored under Austrian criminal law; prosecutions for incitement possible.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** No specific censorship; open internet access.

#### 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>280</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents of Hate Crimes:** Monitored by Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior and EU Fundamental Rights Agency.

---

<sup>276</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Household\\_budget\\_survey\\_statistics\\_on\\_consumption\\_expenditure](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Household_budget_survey_statistics_on_consumption_expenditure)

<sup>277</sup> <https://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com/reports-2021/?cpage=13>

<sup>278</sup> <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/KYR-Sikh-Kirpan-FPS.pdf>

<sup>279</sup> [https://www.edps.europa.eu/data-protection/data-protection\\_en](https://www.edps.europa.eu/data-protection/data-protection_en)

<sup>280</sup> <https://fra.europa.eu/en/themes/hate-crime>

- **Government Response & Law Enforcement Action:** Strong condemnation of hate crimes; active monitoring of far-right extremism.
- **Case Studies of Discrimination:** Rare incidents involving misunderstandings of Sikh identity (e.g., kirpan) resolved via legal and community advocacy.

### Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>281</sup>

- **Humanitarian Relief:** Provided aid to refugees during the 2015 crisis and COVID-19 pandemic, including langar and clothing drives.
- **Advocacy for Minority Rights:** Engaged with Austrian interfaith councils and EU minority rights forums to represent Sikh concerns.
- **Student and Worker Support:** Offers assistance to new migrants in navigating legal documentation, residence permits, and community integration.
- **Community Networking:** Connects Austrian Sikhs with broader European Sikh networks, including Germany and Italy.

### Recommendations

- **Increase Sikh Visibility:** Advocate for Sikh representation in Austrian census and multicultural events.
- **Strengthen Community Infrastructure:** Support development of Punjabi language and cultural education programs.
- **Legal Awareness:** Provide guidance on kirpan regulations and migrant rights under Austrian and EU law.
- **Youth Engagement:** Encourage youth programs to connect second-generation Sikhs to heritage and Austrian civic life.
- **Expand Interfaith Partnerships:** Build bridges with Catholic and Muslim communities for humanitarian and cultural collaborations.

---

<sup>281</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/disaster-relief-sikh-aid/>

# PORTUGAL

2023–2025

## COUNTRY PROFILE

**Head of Government:** Prime Minister Luís Montenegro (since 2024)<sup>282</sup>

**Total Population:** Approx. 10.3 million (March 2025)<sup>283</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** Around 2–3 recognized Sikh gurdwaras, primarily in Lisbon and Porto<sup>284</sup>

**Sikh Population in Portugal:** Estimated 3,000–4,000 individuals, largely Punjabi-origin migrants engaged in agriculture, construction, transport, and retail businesses<sup>285</sup>

**Recognition of Sikhism by the State:** Sikhism is not separately recognized in official statistics; Sikhs are grouped under “other religions.” Religious freedoms are protected under Portugal’s constitution, but Sikh-specific articles of faith (e.g., kirpan) are not explicitly addressed in legislation.<sup>286</sup>

**Form of Government:** Semi-presidential parliamentary republic; secular state with strong constitutional protections for human rights and religious freedoms under EU frameworks<sup>287</sup>

### UNITED SIKHS Rating Index: 72.5

#### Introduction

Portugal hosts a modest but gradually expanding Sikh community, with significant migration since the late 1990s due to agricultural labor opportunities in the Ribatejo and Alentejo regions, as well as service sector jobs in Lisbon and Porto. Sikhs freely operate gurdwaras and celebrate major festivals such as Vaisakhi and Gurburab, often involving interfaith participation and outreach to Portuguese society.<sup>288</sup>

#### Case Study<sup>289</sup>

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Sikh gurdwaras in Lisbon provided free meals (langar) and food parcels to migrant workers and local Portuguese families affected by unemployment. This act of service received recognition from local municipalities and media, highlighting Sikh values of seva (selfless service) and solidarity with marginalized communities.

---

<sup>282</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lu%C3%ADs\\_Montenegro](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lu%C3%ADs_Montenegro)

<sup>283</sup> [https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine\\_main](https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_main)

<sup>284</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikhism\\_in\\_Portugal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikhism_in_Portugal)

<sup>285</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikhism\\_in\\_Portugal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikhism_in_Portugal)

<sup>286</sup> <https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewHTML.asp?FileID=11607&lang=EN>

<sup>287</sup> <https://www.parlamento.pt/sites/EN/Parliament/Documents/Constitution7th.pdf>

<sup>288</sup> [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/11/international-migration-outlook-2024\\_c6f3e803/full-report/portugal\\_d44fe0e7.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/11/international-migration-outlook-2024_c6f3e803/full-report/portugal_d44fe0e7.html)

<sup>289</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/united-sikhs-feeds-over-1-million-during-covid-19-crisis/>

A community leader noted: *"In serving food during the crisis, we built bridges of understanding — Sikh values resonate with Portugal's tradition of compassion and hospitality."*

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in Portugal

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>290</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Pathways include work permits, EU Blue Card, student visas, and family reunification; residency typically possible after 5 years.
- **Work Authorization:** Permits tied to employment; agricultural and construction sectors commonly hire migrants.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Naturalization possible after 5 years of residence (one of the shortest in EU); dual citizenship permitted.
- **Legal Documents:** Sikh faith not listed separately in census; identity documents record nationality only.

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>291</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Protected under Portuguese constitution; visible religious attire (turbans) generally accepted.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** Gurdwaras located in Lisbon (Amadora area) and Porto; smaller prayer spaces in agricultural regions.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Turbans respected; kirpan may face restrictions under Portuguese weapons laws.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Indian groceries widely available in Lisbon and Porto; gurdwaras provide weekly langar.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>292</sup>

- **Job Market:** Opportunities in agriculture, hospitality, transport, and construction; some Sikhs run small businesses.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Multicultural workforce, particularly in Lisbon; awareness of Sikh identity is limited but improving.
- **Income Levels:** Wages lower than Western Europe but cost of living also moderate; Lisbon housing costs rising.
- **Cost of Living:** More affordable than Austria or Germany; rural areas cheaper than urban centers.

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>293</sup>

- **Presence of Sikh Community:** Small but active; concentrated around Lisbon and Porto gurdwaras.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Generally positive social environment; isolated incidents of misunderstanding around religious articles.
- **Celebration of Festivals:** Vaisakhi and Gurburab observed at gurdwaras; occasional public cultural events.

### 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>294</sup>

- **Children's Schooling:** Free public education; Portuguese is the medium of instruction; English-medium schools are private.
- **Cultural Education:** Gurdwaras conduct Punjabi and kirtan classes; limited institutional support for Sikh culture.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Universal National Health Service; accessible to legal residents and migrants after registration.

---

<sup>290</sup> [https://www.sef.pt/en/Documents/LeideImig\(Lei29\\_2012\)EN.pdf](https://www.sef.pt/en/Documents/LeideImig(Lei29_2012)EN.pdf)

<sup>291</sup> <https://www.parlamento.pt/sites/EN/Parliament/Documents/Constitution7th.pdf>

<sup>292</sup> [https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-06/ip246\\_en.pdf](https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-06/ip246_en.pdf)

<sup>293</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/sixth-report-on-portugal/1680b6668d>

<sup>294</sup> <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/public-health/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1389057/full>

## 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>295</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** Protected under equality laws; active anti-discrimination mechanisms under EU directives.
- **Safety Concerns:** Portugal is considered one of Europe's safest countries; occasional xenophobic incidents addressed by law enforcement.
- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** Turbans permitted; kirpan treated as a potential weapon under law.
- **Airport Security:** Turbans respected during screening; kirpan prohibited on flights.

## 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>296</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Strong protections under EU GDPR; online expression generally free.
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Punishable under Portuguese criminal law; oversight by police cybercrime units.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** No specific censorship; open internet access maintained.

## 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>297</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents of Hate Crimes:** Monitored by Portuguese Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination (CICDR) and EU agencies.
- **Government Response & Law Enforcement Action:** Strong condemnation of hate crimes; proactive multicultural policies in Lisbon.
- **Case Studies of Discrimination:** Rare cases involve lack of awareness about Sikh practices; resolved through community advocacy.

## Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>298</sup>

- **Humanitarian Relief:** Provided food and aid during the COVID-19 pandemic and migrant labor crises in southern Portugal.
- **Advocacy for Minority Rights:** Represents Sikh concerns in Portuguese and EU multicultural councils.
- **Student and Worker Support:** Assists migrants with documentation, residence permits, and community integration.
- **Community Networking:** Links Portuguese Sikhs with broader European Sikh diaspora, especially in Spain and France.

## Recommendations

- **Enhance Sikh Visibility:** Advocate for recognition of Sikhism in census data and multicultural platforms.
- **Expand Community Infrastructure:** Support Punjabi language and Sikh heritage education programs for youth.
- **Raise Legal Awareness:** Provide guidance on kirpan regulations and migrants' legal rights in Portugal.
- **Youth Engagement:** Encourage cultural programs to bridge first- and second-generation Sikhs with Portuguese society.
- **Strengthen Interfaith Dialogue:** Collaborate with Catholic and Muslim communities on social and humanitarian initiatives

---

<sup>295</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text\\_en.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf)

<sup>296</sup> <https://gdpr-info.eu>

<sup>297</sup> <https://hatecrime.osce.org/reporting/portugal/2023>

<sup>298</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Global-Summary-Report.pdf>

# GERMANY

2023–2025

## COUNTRY PROFILE

**Head of Government:** Chancellor Olaf Scholz (since 2021)<sup>299</sup>

**Total Population:** Approx. 84 million (March 2025)<sup>300</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** Around 35–40 Sikh gurdwaras, concentrated in major cities including Frankfurt, Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne, and Munich<sup>301</sup>

**Sikh Population in Germany:** Estimated 25,000–30,000 individuals, predominantly Punjabi-origin migrants engaged in transport, manufacturing, IT, small business, and service sectors<sup>302</sup>

**Recognition of Sikhism by the State:** Sikhism is not separately recognized in census data; Sikhs are categorized under “other religions.” Religious freedoms are protected under Germany’s Basic Law (Grundgesetz), but specific articles of faith like kirpan are subject to regional weapons legislation and legal disputes.<sup>303</sup>

**Form of Government:** Federal parliamentary republic; secular state with strong constitutional protections for human rights and religious freedoms, guided by both German Basic Law and EU frameworks.<sup>304</sup>

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index: 75.0**

### Introduction

Germany is home to one of the largest Sikh populations in continental Europe, with migration beginning in the 1960s through labor agreements and expanding after the 1980s due to family reunification, asylum applications, and skilled migration programs. The community is well-established, operating numerous gurdwaras and active associations that engage in cultural, interfaith, and humanitarian work. Sikh festivals such as Vaisakhi and Gurburab are celebrated widely, often involving public processions (Nagar Kirtans) in cities like Frankfurt and Hamburg.<sup>305</sup>

### Case Study<sup>306</sup>

During the 2015–2016 European refugee crisis, German Sikh gurdwaras in Hamburg and Frankfurt organized continuous langar services and distributed blankets, food, and emergency supplies to refugees

---

<sup>299</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olaf\\_Scholz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olaf_Scholz)

<sup>300</sup> [https://www.destatis.de/EN/Themes/Society-Environment/Population/Current-Population/\\_node.html](https://www.destatis.de/EN/Themes/Society-Environment/Population/Current-Population/_node.html)

<sup>301</sup> [https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Sikhism\\_in\\_Germany](https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Sikhism_in_Germany)

<sup>302</sup> <https://www.migpolgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/2024-DE-Country-report-ND-final-for-web.pdf>

<sup>303</sup> <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/KYR-Sikh-Kirpan-FPS.pdf>

<sup>304</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/democracy-and-human-rights/fundamental-rights-in-the-eu>

<sup>305</sup> [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2023/10/international-migration-outlook-2023\\_0faed233.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2023/10/international-migration-outlook-2023_0faed233.html)

<sup>306</sup> <https://www.hamburg.de/resource/blob/39904/4d88cc6b4b9893d3868116fe8ef8dc68/hamburg-integration-concept-data.pdf>

from Syria, Afghanistan, and other conflict zones. Their efforts received commendations from municipal councils and German humanitarian organizations.

A volunteer reflected:

*"When people came to Germany with nothing, we could not solve their problems, but we could serve them with dignity — this is what Sikhi teaches us, and German society appreciated this deeply."*

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in Germany

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>307</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Pathways include EU Blue Card, work visas, student permits, and family reunification; permanent residency typically after 5 years.
- **Work Authorization:** Tied to employment contracts; opportunities strong in engineering, IT, transport, and skilled trades.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Naturalization possible after 8 years (reduced to 6 for well-integrated migrants); dual citizenship permitted under recent reforms (2024).
- **Legal Documents:** Sikh faith not separately listed; identity documents show nationality only.

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>308</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Protected under Article 4 of the Basic Law; visible religious attire (turbans) widely accepted.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** Gurdwaras located in major urban centers; well-networked with Indian and Punjabi diaspora organizations.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Turbans respected; kirpan may face legal restrictions depending on federal state (Länder) regulations.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Indian and vegetarian groceries widely available; langar served daily or weekly in most gurdwaras.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>309</sup>

- **Job Market:** Strong demand in engineering, transport (trucking), healthcare, and IT sectors; entrepreneurship (small retail and restaurants) common.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** High multicultural awareness in major cities; less exposure to Sikh identity in rural areas.
- **Income Levels:** Competitive wages; higher cost of living in Munich, Frankfurt, and Hamburg.
- **Cost of Living:** Moderate to high; varies significantly between urban and rural areas.

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>310</sup>

- **Presence of Sikh Community:** Large, organized community with active cultural associations.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Generally positive social environment; occasional profiling or misunderstanding of Sikh articles of faith.
- **Celebration of Festivals:** Public Nagar Kirtans and interfaith events held in multiple cities; well-received by local authorities.

### 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>311</sup>

- **Children's Schooling:** Free public education; German is the medium of instruction; international schools available in major cities.

---

<sup>307</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/446f2fda-529a-49e0-a50f-1131dc04d35e\\_en?filename=2024\\_EMN\\_AMO\\_2.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/446f2fda-529a-49e0-a50f-1131dc04d35e_en?filename=2024_EMN_AMO_2.pdf)

<sup>308</sup> <https://www.acninternational.org/religiousfreedomreport/reports/country/2023/germany>

<sup>309</sup> [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/06/oecd-employment-outlook-2024-country-notes\\_6910072b/germany\\_08ee101a.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/06/oecd-employment-outlook-2024-country-notes_6910072b/germany_08ee101a.html)

<sup>310</sup> <https://www.sustainability-conference.org/en/hsc24>

<sup>311</sup> <https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/en>

- **Cultural Education:** Punjabi schools and kirtan classes often run by gurdwaras; active youth camps and cultural programs.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Universal healthcare system; migrants included upon registration and insurance enrollment.

## 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>312</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** Strong protections under the Basic Law and General Equal Treatment Act (AGG).
- **Safety Concerns:** Germany is generally safe; isolated xenophobic incidents monitored by law enforcement.
- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** Turbans permitted; kirpan classified under weapons law — exemptions vary by state.
- **Airport Security:** Turbans respected; kirpans prohibited on flights.

## 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>313</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Robust protections under EU GDPR and German Federal Data Protection Act (BDSG).
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Addressed under German Network Enforcement Act (NetzDG) and criminal codes.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** No specific censorship; open internet access maintained.

## 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>314</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents of Hate Crimes:** Monitored by Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency and reported to EU Fundamental Rights Agency.
- **Government Response & Law Enforcement Action:** Active programs against far-right extremism; strong legal penalties for hate crimes.
- **Case Studies of Discrimination:** Rare but include misunderstandings of kirpan in schools or workplaces, often resolved through legal advocacy.

## Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>315</sup>

- **Humanitarian Relief:** Provided aid to refugees during 2015 crisis and COVID-19 pandemic, including langar, blankets, and legal aid.
- **Advocacy for Minority Rights:** Engaged with German interfaith councils, UN human rights bodies, and EU forums to highlight Sikh issues.
- **Student and Worker Support:** Assists new migrants with visa documentation, legal rights, and integration into German society.
- **Community Networking:** Connects German Sikhs with broader European Sikh diaspora in UK, France, and Italy.

## Recommendations

- **Advocate Sikh Recognition:** Push for inclusion of Sikhism in religious demographic data and public awareness campaigns.
- **Legal Awareness:** Educate community on kirpan laws and state-specific religious accommodations.
- **Youth Engagement:** Support Punjabi language schools and interfaith initiatives to connect youth to heritage and civic life.

<sup>312</sup> <https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/EN/homepage/homepage-node.html>

<sup>313</sup> [https://futurefreespeech.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Report\\_The-Free-Speech-Recession-Hits-Home\\_30112023.pdf](https://futurefreespeech.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Report_The-Free-Speech-Recession-Hits-Home_30112023.pdf)

<sup>314</sup> <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-projects/the-impact-of-the-german-netzdg-law/>

<sup>315</sup> [https://ichra.unitedsikhs.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/final\\_Annual-Report-2022.pdf](https://ichra.unitedsikhs.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/final_Annual-Report-2022.pdf)

- **Expand Cultural Infrastructure:** Develop Sikh museums, cultural centers, and public exhibitions to increase visibility.
- **Strengthen Alliances:** Collaborate with Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities on humanitarian and anti-discrimination projects.

# Netherlands

## 2023–2025

### COUNTRY PROFILE

**Head of Government:** Prime Minister Dick Schoof (since July 2024)<sup>316</sup>

**Total Population:** Approx. 17.8 million (March 2025)<sup>317</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** Around 6–8 Sikh gurdwaras, concentrated in The Hague, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and Eindhoven<sup>318</sup>

**Sikh Population in the Netherlands:** Estimated 15,000–18,000 individuals, primarily Punjabi-origin migrants working in transport, agriculture (greenhouse horticulture), logistics, retail, and IT services<sup>319</sup>

**Recognition of Sikhism by the State:** Sikhism is not separately recognized in national census data; Sikhs are included in “other religions.” Religious freedoms are guaranteed under the Dutch Constitution (Articles 6 and 7), and visible articles of faith (turbans, kara) are respected; kirpan is restricted under Dutch weapons law but exemptions may be considered for religious use.<sup>320</sup>

**Form of Government:** Constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary democracy; secular state with strong protections for human rights and religious freedoms under both Dutch Constitution and EU frameworks.<sup>321</sup>

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index: 77.5**

#### Introduction

The Netherlands is home to a medium-sized Sikh community that has grown since the 1970s, with migration initially linked to agricultural work in greenhouse farming and later expanding into transport, logistics, and retail sectors. The community is well integrated, with gurdwaras serving as cultural and religious hubs in cities like The Hague, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam. Public celebrations of Vaisakhi and Gurburab are common and occasionally feature interfaith participation and cultural events supported by local municipalities.<sup>322</sup>

#### Case Study<sup>323</sup>

During the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2021), Dutch Sikh gurdwaras collaborated with local charities in Rotterdam and The Hague to provide free langar meals and food distribution services to both migrant

---

<sup>316</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dick\\_Schoof](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dick_Schoof)

<sup>317</sup> <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/visualisations/dashboard-population/population-counter>

<sup>318</sup> [https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Sikhism\\_in\\_Netherlands](https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Sikhism_in_Netherlands)

<sup>319</sup> <https://www.sikhfeduk.com/assets/files/sikh-manifesto-24.pdf>

<sup>320</sup> [https://www.equalrightstrust.org/ertdocumentbank/ERR8\\_Jenny\\_Goldschmidt.pdf](https://www.equalrightstrust.org/ertdocumentbank/ERR8_Jenny_Goldschmidt.pdf)

<sup>321</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/netherlands/freedom-world/2024>

<sup>322</sup> <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/WMR-2022.pdf>

<sup>323</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org>

workers and Dutch families facing economic hardship. This effort was widely covered in Dutch media and recognized by municipal councils as an example of grassroots multicultural solidarity.

A volunteer stated:

*"Serving langar was more than feeding people — it helped show Dutch society what Sikhi stands for: compassion, equality, and service to humanity."*

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in the Netherlands

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>324</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Entry pathways include work visas (highly skilled migrant program), EU Blue Card, student permits, and family reunification; permanent residency generally possible after 5 years.
- **Work Authorization:** Permits tied to employment; opportunities abundant in logistics, agriculture, and tech hubs.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Naturalization after 5 years of legal residence; dual citizenship is generally not allowed except under specific circumstances (e.g., refugees).
- **Legal Documents:** Sikh faith not separately listed in demographic records; nationality only is reflected on identity cards.

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>325</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Protected under Dutch Constitution Article 6; turbans and other visible articles are generally accepted in public life.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** 6–8 gurdwaras spread across major cities; The Hague and Rotterdam host the largest Sikh congregations.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Turbans respected; kirpan restricted under Dutch Weapons Act, but exemptions sometimes granted for ceremonial wear.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Indian groceries and vegetarian options widely available in multicultural urban areas; gurdwaras regularly serve langar.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>326</sup>

- **Job Market:** Demand for labor in logistics (Rotterdam port), greenhouse horticulture, agriculture, IT, and transport sectors.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Generally multicultural and tolerant; Sikh identity well-accepted in urban centers, less known in rural areas.
- **Income Levels:** Higher average wages than many EU countries; cost of living moderate-high in Amsterdam and The Hague.
- **Cost of Living:** Urban centers expensive (housing costs rising), rural areas more affordable.

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>327</sup>

- **Presence of Sikh Community:** Active but smaller than in Germany or UK; organized around gurdwaras and cultural associations.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Low incidence of hate crimes; occasional lack of awareness about Sikh practices.
- **Celebration of Festivals:** Vaisakhi and Gurdpurab publicly celebrated; Nagar Kirtans held in Rotterdam and The Hague with municipal cooperation.

---

<sup>324</sup> <https://practiceguides.chambers.com/practice-guides/corporate-immigration-2024/netherlands>

<sup>325</sup> <https://acninternational.org/religiousfreedomreport/reports/country/2023/netherlands>

<sup>326</sup> [https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information-europe/labour-market-information-netherlands\\_en](https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information-europe/labour-market-information-netherlands_en)

<sup>327</sup> [https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/AIDA-NL\\_2023-Update.pdf](https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/AIDA-NL_2023-Update.pdf)

## 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>328</sup>

- **Children's Schooling:** Free public education system; Dutch is primary language; English widely taught; international schools available in major cities.
- **Cultural Education:** Punjabi classes and kirtan programs held at gurdwaras; no formal state-sponsored Sikh cultural programs.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Universal healthcare system; migrants included through mandatory health insurance schemes.

## 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>329</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** Protected under Dutch Equal Treatment Act (AWGB) and EU directives.
- **Safety Concerns:** Netherlands is among the safest EU countries; hate crimes monitored by police and reported to EU FRA.
- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** Turbans fully accommodated; kirpan treated as restricted blade but religious exemptions possible in ceremonial contexts.
- **Airport Security:** Turbans respected; kirpan prohibited on flights.

## 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>330</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Strong protections under EU GDPR; freedom of expression upheld online.
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Governed by Dutch criminal law and EU digital services regulations; hate content actively removed from platforms.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** No targeted censorship; open digital environment.

## 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>331</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents of Hate Crimes:** Monitored by Dutch Police, Anti-Discrimination Services (ADV), and reported to EU FRA.
- **Government Response & Law Enforcement Action:** Strong legal penalties for hate crimes; national campaigns promoting tolerance and diversity.
- **Case Studies of Discrimination:** Rare and usually addressed quickly through legal or advocacy channels.

## Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>332</sup>

- **Humanitarian Relief:** Provided food aid and legal assistance to migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic and supported asylum seekers in Dutch reception centers.
- **Advocacy for Minority Rights:** Participated in Dutch interfaith forums, EU anti-discrimination panels, and UN minority rights sessions addressing Sikh identity concerns.
- **Student and Worker Support:** Provides guidance on visa processes, workplace rights, and integration for Sikh students and workers in Dutch cities.
- **Community Networking:** Links Dutch Sikhs with European Sikh diaspora, particularly in Belgium, Germany, and the UK.

## Recommendations

- **Enhance Sikh Representation:** Advocate for Sikh inclusion in national census data and multicultural policy frameworks.

---

<sup>328</sup> <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/mipaa20-report-netherlands.pdf>

<sup>329</sup> <https://hatecrime.osce.org/reporting/netherlands/2023>

<sup>330</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-code-conduct-countering-illegal-hate-speech-online\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-code-conduct-countering-illegal-hate-speech-online_en)

<sup>331</sup> <https://www.article19.org/resources/does-the-digital-services-act-protect-freedom-of-expression/>

<sup>332</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/united-sikhs-feeds-over-1-million-during-covid-19-crisis/>

- **Legal Awareness Campaigns:** Educate community on kirpan laws and religious accommodations in schools and workplaces.
- **Youth and Cultural Programs:** Support Punjabi language and Sikh heritage initiatives for second-generation Sikhs.
- **Interfaith Engagement:** Strengthen alliances with Christian, Muslim, and Jewish groups for humanitarian and cultural programs.
- **Community Infrastructure Development:** Encourage creation of Sikh cultural centers and participation in Dutch multicultural festivals to boost visibility.

# AFRICA

# KENYA

## 2023–2025

### COUNTRY PROFILE

**Head of Government:** President William Ruto (since September 2022)<sup>333</sup>

**Total Population:** Approx. 56 million (March 2025)<sup>334</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** Around 10–12 Sikh gurdwaras, mainly located in Nairobi, Kisumu, Eldoret, Mombasa, and Kericho<sup>335</sup>

**Sikh Population in Kenya:** Estimated 15,000–20,000 individuals, primarily Punjabi-origin migrants and descendants engaged in business, agriculture, transport, and professional services<sup>336</sup>

**Recognition of Sikhism by the State:** Sikhism is officially recognized as a minority religion in Kenya; Sikhs are free to register religious associations and operate gurdwaras. Religious freedoms are protected under Kenya’s 2010 Constitution (Articles 8 and 32). Sikh articles of faith such as the turban and kara are widely accepted; kirpan is generally permitted but may require disclosure in sensitive security zones.<sup>337</sup>

**Form of Government:** Unitary presidential republic; secular state with constitutional guarantees of religious freedom and minority rights under the Bill of Rights in the Kenyan Constitution.<sup>338</sup>

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index:62.5**

#### Introduction

Kenya is home to one of Africa’s oldest Sikh communities, with roots tracing back to the late 19th century when Punjabi workers were brought to build the Uganda Railway during British colonial rule. Many Sikhs settled permanently, establishing businesses in transport, agriculture, and manufacturing. Today, Kenyan Sikhs are prominent in trade and philanthropy, with gurdwaras serving as cultural and spiritual hubs in

---

<sup>333</sup> <https://www.president.go.ke/administration/office-of-the-president/>

<sup>334</sup> <https://population.un.org/wpp/>

<sup>335</sup> [https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Gurdwaras\\_in\\_Africa](https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Gurdwaras_in_Africa)

<sup>336</sup> [https://www.parliament.go.ke/sites/default/files/2023-03/The\\_Constitution\\_of\\_Kenya\\_2010.pdf](https://www.parliament.go.ke/sites/default/files/2023-03/The_Constitution_of_Kenya_2010.pdf)

<sup>337</sup> <https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/kenyan-ministry-of-education-declares-that-religious-beliefs-can-enter-into-schools/>

<sup>338</sup> <https://aprm.au.int/sites/default/files/files/2023-10/agr202320231023142001strongcompression-compressed20231023142355strongcompression.pdf>

major cities such as Nairobi and Kisumu. Sikh festivals like Vaisakhi and Gurdwarab are celebrated both within gurdwaras and as public community events, reflecting their historical integration into Kenyan society.<sup>339</sup>

## Case Study<sup>340</sup>

During the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2021), Sikh gurdwaras in Nairobi and Kisumu collaborated with local charities and government agencies to provide food relief and medical supplies to vulnerable communities, including informal settlement residents and frontline workers. Their contributions were acknowledged by Kenyan media and highlighted in interfaith forums as exemplary community service.

A community leader stated:

*"For over a century, Sikhs have served Kenya through hard work and seva. In a crisis, we return to these values by feeding and helping our neighbors, regardless of background or faith."*

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in Kenya

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>341</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Work permits and investor visas available; permanent residency possible after several years of lawful stay.
- **Work Authorization:** Opportunities in agriculture, transport, trade, and manufacturing; self-employment widely permitted for investors.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Naturalization possible after 7 years of residence; dual citizenship permitted under the 2010 Constitution.
- **Legal Documents:** Sikhs are recognized as a minority community; religious identity is respected but not separately enumerated in national census data.

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>342</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Guaranteed under Articles 8 and 32 of the Kenyan Constitution; Sikh religious attire is fully accepted.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** 10–12 gurdwaras serve major Sikh hubs in Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, and Eldoret; these provide religious services and Punjabi language classes.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Turbans and kara widely accepted; kirpan permitted but occasionally requires security clearance in airports or government offices.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Indian groceries and vegetarian food are widely available in urban areas; langar provided regularly in gurdwaras.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>343</sup>

- **Job Market:** Strong opportunities in business, agriculture, logistics, and manufacturing; many Sikhs run established enterprises.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Sikh identity is widely respected; Sikh business contributions are historically recognized in Kenya's economic development.
- **Income Levels:** Cost of living is moderate compared to Europe; higher in Nairobi compared to rural areas.
- **Cost of Living:** Affordable in smaller towns; urban centers like Nairobi and Mombasa are more expensive.

---

<sup>339</sup> <https://museumofbritishcolonialism.org/2019-5-15-british-subjects-the-uganda-kenya-railway-yl367/>

<sup>340</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/disaster-relief-sikh-aid/>

<sup>341</sup> <https://immigration.go.ke/citizenship-section/>

<sup>342</sup> <https://cohesion.go.ke/images/docs/downloads/AR.pdf>

<sup>343</sup> [https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Gurdwaras\\_in\\_East\\_Africa](https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Gurdwaras_in_East_Africa)

#### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>344</sup>

- **Presence of Sikh Community:** Long-established and influential; close-knit community with active cultural associations.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Generally positive relations with Kenyan society; isolated incidents of xenophobia are rare.
- **Celebration of Festivals:** Public Nagar Kirtans and interfaith events are organized during Vaisakhi and Gurpurab, supported by local authorities.

#### 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>345</sup>

- **Children's Schooling:** Access to quality private and public schools; English is widely used alongside Swahili.
- **Cultural Education:** Punjabi language and kirtan classes held in gurdwaras; cultural heritage strongly preserved among multi-generational Sikhs.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Private healthcare facilities common in urban areas; public healthcare improving but variable in rural regions.

#### 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>346</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** Protected under the Kenyan Bill of Rights; minority religions recognized under law.
- **Safety Concerns:** Kenya faces occasional security challenges (terrorism in certain regions), but Sikh communities in urban centers remain secure.
- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** Turbans and kirpans permitted; no significant restrictions except in high-security zones (e.g., airports).
- **Airport Security:** Turbans respected; kirpans may require declaration or storage during flights.

#### 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>347</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Basic protections under Kenyan data protection law (Data Protection Act 2019); less stringent than EU standards.
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Addressed under Kenyan penal law; enforcement improving.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** No targeted censorship; open access to religious and cultural content online.

#### 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>348</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents of Hate Crimes:** Monitored by the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) and local NGOs.
- **Government Response & Law Enforcement Action:** Active promotion of interfaith harmony; hate crimes addressed through NCIC and police action.
- **Case Studies of Discrimination:** Rare; Sikh community historically regarded as integral to Kenyan society and commerce.

#### Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>349</sup>

- **Humanitarian Relief:** Provided food aid and medical supplies during COVID-19; supported flood and drought relief efforts in rural Kenya.
- **Advocacy for Minority Rights:** Engaged with Kenya's National Cohesion and Integration Commission and interfaith councils to represent Sikh perspectives.

---

<sup>344</sup> <https://interreligiouscouncil.or.ke>

<sup>345</sup> <https://www.treasury.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Education-Sector-Report-2024-latest.pdf>

<sup>346</sup> <https://www.nationalpolice.go.ke/sites/default/files/2024-10/Annual%20Report%20-%202023.pdf>

<sup>347</sup> <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/2008/12/eng@2022-12-31>

<sup>348</sup> [https://cohesion.go.ke/images/docs/downloads/Kenyas\\_National\\_Action\\_Plan\\_Against\\_Hate\\_Speech.pdf](https://cohesion.go.ke/images/docs/downloads/Kenyas_National_Action_Plan_Against_Hate_Speech.pdf)

<sup>349</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Annual-Report-2023.pdf>

- **Student and Worker Support:** Provides guidance on visas, legal documentation, and integration for Sikh migrants from India and the UK settling in Kenya.
- **Community Networking:** Links Kenyan Sikhs with East African Sikh communities in Uganda and Tanzania for cultural and humanitarian projects.

## Recommendations

- **Enhance Sikh Heritage Visibility:** Promote Sikh contributions to Kenya's history (e.g., Uganda Railway) in museums and public education.
- **Youth Engagement Programs:** Strengthen Punjabi cultural and language programs for second- and third-generation Sikhs.
- **Legal Awareness:** Provide guidance on property rights, visas, and kirpan regulations in high-security zones.
- **Interfaith Collaborations:** Partner with Christian, Muslim, and Hindu groups for humanitarian and cultural initiatives.
- **Community Infrastructure Expansion:** Support the restoration and preservation of historic gurdwaras in Nairobi and Kisumu.

# **NORTH AMERICA**

# CANADA

## 2023-2025

### COUNTRY PROFILE

#### Head of State

His Majesty King Charles III

#### Head of Government

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada, sworn in on March 14, 2025.<sup>350</sup>

#### Total Population

Approximately 38.8 million (based on the 2021 Census)<sup>351</sup>.

#### Religious Demographics

According to the 2021 Census conducted by Statistics Canada, the leading religious affiliations include Christianity (53.3%), Islam (4.9%), Hinduism (2.3%), and Sikhism (2.1%). A growing portion of the population—over 34.6%—identified as having no religious affiliation<sup>352</sup>.

#### Sikh Population

As of the 2021 Census, more than 770,000 individuals in Canada identified as Sikh, making up approximately 2.1% of the national population<sup>4</sup>. This makes Canada home to one of the largest Sikh communities outside India. The population is concentrated in Ontario and British Columbia, with strong civic engagement and representation in government, including ministerial roles at the federal level<sup>353</sup>.

**Currently Recognizes Sikhism as a Distinctive Religion by the State:** Yes

**Form of Government:** Constitutional monarchy with a federal parliamentary democracy

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index: 82.5**

#### Introduction

Canada is widely recognized as one of the most welcoming countries for immigrants, with a long-standing policy of multiculturalism and an immigration system that emphasizes skilled labor, family reunification, and humanitarian support. It offers numerous pathways for newcomers, including economic immigration programs, refugee resettlement, and provincial nominee streams. Immigrants make up nearly a quarter of Canada's population, contributing significantly to its economy, cultural diversity, and demographic growth. The country promotes integration through access to universal healthcare, education, and legal protections, while encouraging the preservation of cultural identities within a framework of shared Canadian values.

---

<sup>350</sup> <https://pm.gc.ca>

<sup>351</sup> <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm>

<sup>352</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810038801>

<sup>353</sup> <https://www.statcan.gc.ca>

## Case Study

### Civil Rights Concerns

#### Transnational Repression and the Assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar

In 2023, the Sikh community in Canada was significantly impacted by the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar—a prominent Sikh leader and advocate for the Khalistan movement—on June 18, in Surrey, British Columbia. Nijjar, who was also the president of a gurdwara and a small business owner, was fatally shot in the parking lot of the Sikh temple. His killing, which Canadian authorities reported involved multiple gunshot wounds, sparked fears of transnational repression and raised diplomatic tensions between Canada and India. (Pathi & Cohen, 2023)

Allegations surrounding Indian government involvement in the incident intensified community anxieties regarding safety and political freedom. While some members of the Sikh diaspora expressed continued trust in Canadian safety, others voiced concern about potential targeting by foreign state actors (Pathi & Cohen, 2023)

The recent case involving Canada and India highlights tensions between diaspora rights and foreign policy. Following the 2023 killing of Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Columbia, which Canada alleged involved Indian agents, bilateral relations deteriorated, leading to diplomatic expulsions and service suspensions.

#### Prejudice, Discrimination, and Racism<sup>354</sup>

Sikhs in Canada continue to experience visible and systemic discrimination, exacerbated by the distinct religious symbols they wear, such as the turban and the five articles of faith. These identifiers often subject them to misidentification and targeted bias, particularly in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, where the turban became a focal point of misdirected hostility.

Incidents of anti-Sikh hate crimes persist, with youth being especially vulnerable. A notable case in March 2023 involved Gagandeep Singh, an international student who was physically assaulted and humiliated in a racially motivated attack. The act, which included the removal of his turban and being dragged by his hair, was condemned as a grave violation of personal dignity (Brewer, Singh, & Lyons, 2023)

The 2023 Hate Crime Report by the OSCE-ODIHR recorded 4,777 hate crimes in Canada. Of these, 2,194 were motivated by racial, ethnic, linguistic, or anti-immigrant biases, and 113 incidents targeted religious groups including Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, and practitioners of Traditional Indigenous Spirituality.

---

<sup>354</sup> OSCE-ODIHR. (2023). *Hate Crime Reporting – Canada*. Retrieved from: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/reporting/canada/2023>

## Quebec (Canada) – Provincial Case Study<sup>355</sup>

*(Religious Freedom, Secularism, and Sikh Civil Rights)*

### Case Study: Quebec’s Bill 21 and Its Impact on Sikh Religious Freedom (2019–2025)

In June 2019, the Government of Quebec enacted Bill 21 (An Act Respecting the Laicity of the State), which prohibits certain public sector employees— including teachers, police officers, judges, and prosecutors — from wearing visible religious symbols while performing their duties. Although framed as a secularism measure, the law has had a disproportionate impact on visible religious minorities, particularly Sikhs, Muslim women who wear hijab, and Jewish men who wear kippahs.

For Sikh men and women, the turban and kara are mandatory articles of faith. Bill 21 has therefore effectively barred observant Sikhs from accessing or advancing in public-sector employment in Quebec, especially in education and law enforcement. Sikh teachers have reported being forced to relocate to other provinces, abandon career pathways, or remove religious symbols under protest.

The law was shielded from constitutional challenge through Quebec’s invocation of the notwithstanding clause (Section 33) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Although multiple civil society organizations and minority groups launched legal challenges, Quebec courts upheld the law’s application, citing the province’s legislative authority. In April 2024, Quebec renewed the use of the notwithstanding clause to extend Bill 21’s legal protection.

International human rights bodies have expressed concern that Bill 21 undermines freedom of religion, equality rights, and access to employment. Sikh organizations argue that the law institutionalizes religious discrimination, contradicting Canada’s broader commitments under international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

This case illustrates the tension between provincial secularism policies and federal multicultural and human-rights frameworks, highlighting how sub-national legislation can significantly curtail minority rights even within democratic systems.

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in Canada

### 1. Immigration Requirements & Citizenship requirements<sup>356</sup>

Canada offers a comprehensive, rights-based immigration and citizenship framework that allows individuals, including members of the Sikh community, to settle, work, and integrate into Canadian society with full legal protections and equal access to civic participation.

- **Visa and Residency Permits**

Canada provides multiple immigration streams, including the *Express Entry system* (Federal Skilled Worker, Canadian Experience Class), *Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs)*, family

---

<sup>355</sup> Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA), *Challenge to Quebec’s Bill 21 and its impact on religious minorities*, Legal briefs and public statements, 2019–2024.

<sup>356</sup> Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). (2024). *Immigrate to Canada – Programs Overview*.

sponsorship, international student visas, and humanitarian or religious worker pathways. Sikh applicants are eligible to apply under any category that matches their professional qualifications, education, family relationships, or religious roles.

- **Work Authorization**

Permanent residents and most temporary visa holders are legally entitled to work in Canada. Employment rights are protected under the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and relevant provincial legislation, which prohibit discrimination based on religion, race, or ethnicity. Sikh Canadians are employed in sectors ranging from transportation and healthcare to politics and public administration.

- **Citizenship Pathways**

Individuals can apply for Canadian citizenship after meeting residency requirements typically three years out of the last five—as well as language and civic knowledge standards. Sikhs face no legal barriers to naturalization and are active in civic life, with visible participation in federal and provincial legislatures, city councils, and civil society organizations.

- **Legal Documents and Civil Registration**

There are no religious restrictions on obtaining legal documents such as birth certificates, Social Insurance Numbers (SIN), provincial health insurance, driver's licenses, or property deeds. While some newcomers may encounter language-related or administrative delays, support is widely available through community legal clinics, settlement agencies, and multilingual government services.

- **Integration vs. Identity**

Canada's multiculturalism policy actively supports the preservation of religious and cultural identity alongside social integration. Sikh Canadians openly practice their faith—including wearing turbans and keeping articles of faith—while participating fully in public life. Younger generations often navigate dual identities, balancing Canadian values with traditional Sikh teachings.

- **Equal Access to Citizenship and Rights**

Canada upholds constitutional equality and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, granting all citizens regardless of religion equal rights to vote, own property, access public services, and hold office. Sikh Canadians have exercised these rights extensively, contributing to business, education, advocacy, and governance across the country.

## 2. Religious and Cultural Considerations<sup>357</sup>

- **Freedom of Religion:** Protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Sikhs have the constitutional right to practice their religion. Legal precedents have upheld the right to wear religious articles like the kirpan in public institutions, though security concerns can sometimes generate public debate.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** Canada is home to a significant network of gurdwaras, especially in provinces such as British Columbia, Ontario, and Alberta. These function as vital religious, social, and cultural hubs for Sikh communities.
- **Dress Code and Identity:** Articles of faith such as turbans, kara, and kirpan are widely accepted. Nevertheless, cases of misunderstanding or profiling particularly at airports, in schools, or during police interactions—continue to surface.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Vegetarian and religious dietary needs are generally respected in schools, hospitals, correctional facilities, and other public institutions. This aligns with Canada's multicultural and inclusive ethos.<sup>358</sup>

## 3. Employment and Economic Factors<sup>359</sup>

---

<sup>357</sup> Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). (2024). *Immigrate to Canada – Programs Overview*.

<sup>358</sup> UNITED SIKHS. (2023). *Sikh Economic Contributions Report*.

<sup>359</sup> Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2022). *Religious Accommodation in Employment*.

- **Job Market:** Canada's robust economy provides employment across sectors such as healthcare, transportation, education, trade, and technology. Many Sikhs have established successful careers and businesses, particularly in the trucking, logistics, and retail industries.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Anti-discrimination statutes at federal and provincial levels protect against employment bias. However, instances of subtle prejudice, cultural misunderstanding, or limited awareness persist in some work environments.
- **Income and Economic Mobility:** Sikh Canadians have historically demonstrated economic mobility and entrepreneurial success. However, challenges such as foreign credential recognition and underemployment can hinder new immigrants.
- **Cost of Living:** High living costs in urban centers like Toronto and Vancouver may be mitigated through access to public healthcare, subsidized education, and community support networks.<sup>360</sup>

#### 4. Social and Community Support<sup>361</sup>

- **Sikh Community Presence:** The Sikh population in Canada, now over 770,000 strong (2021 Census), forms one of the largest and most active Sikh diasporas globally. Sikh Canadians have representation in government, media, and civil society.
- **Discrimination and Acceptance:** While multiculturalism is a national value, Sikhs have faced hate crimes, racial profiling, and discrimination. Community organizations, including UNITED SIKHS, play a key role in legal advocacy, awareness, and support.
- **Cultural Celebrations:** Sikh festivals such as Vaisakhi, Gurburab, and Nagar Kirtans are celebrated publicly with increasing participation from diverse communities and political leaders, reinforcing Sikh cultural visibility.

#### 5. Education and Family Considerations<sup>362</sup>

- **Schooling:** Canada's public education system is inclusive. Accommodations for religious attire and observances are generally respected, though incidents of bullying or cultural insensitivity occasionally arise.
- **Cultural Education:** Gurdwaras and community organizations provide Punjabi language instruction, Sikh history, and youth development programs, helping younger generations retain cultural identity.
- **Healthcare Access:** All residents have access to public healthcare services, with provincial variations. Cultural competency in healthcare is improving, though issues such as language interpretation and gender-sensitive care remain areas for progress.

#### 6. Legal Rights and Safety<sup>363</sup>

- **Anti-Discrimination Laws:** Canada enforces a suite of anti-discrimination protections, including the Canadian Human Rights Act and provincial human rights codes. These laws prohibit discrimination based on religion, race, ethnicity, and national origin.
- **Personal Safety:** Canada is generally a safe country, but hate crimes targeting visible minorities, including Sikhs, have occurred. Law enforcement agencies are becoming more responsive, and reporting mechanisms are accessible.
- **Security Profiling:** Sikhs may face profiling at borders or during law enforcement encounters due to visible markers such as turbans or beards. Public advocacy and legal recourse are essential to combat these issues.

#### 7. Digital and Technological Rights<sup>364</sup>

- **Online Presence:** Sikh Canadians engage in digital advocacy, religious expression, and community organizing through various platforms. Social media has amplified visibility on civil rights and diaspora issues.

---

<sup>360</sup> Statistics Canada. (2022). *Census Profile – Sikh Population*.

<sup>361</sup> Statistics Canada. (2022). *Census Profile – Sikh Population*

<sup>362</sup> Health Canada. (2023). *Equity in Healthcare Access*.

<sup>363</sup> Sikh Heritage Month Foundation. (2023). *Community Celebrations Overview*.

<sup>364</sup> Canadian Race Relations Foundation. (2023). *Youth Identity in Diaspora Communities*.

- **Digital Harassment:** Online hate speech and trolling remain challenges, especially during geopolitical conflicts or communal tensions. Legal tools for reporting abuse are available but enforcement can be inconsistent.
- **Freedom of Expression:** Canada upholds freedom of speech, allowing open discussion of Sikh identity, human rights, and political concerns (e.g., Khalistan or religious freedoms) without censorship.

#### **8. Hate Crimes and Discrimination Monitoring<sup>365</sup>**

- **Incident Reporting:** Systems such as the Canadian Human Rights Commission, provincial human rights tribunals, and local police departments enable reporting of hate incidents. Underreporting, however, remains a barrier to justice.
- **Law Enforcement Response:** Police responses to hate crimes have improved, and there is increasing cultural awareness training for officers. Community-police partnerships are crucial for trust-building.
- **Advocacy Case Studies:** Organizations like UNITED SIKHS, the World Sikh Organization of Canada, and Sikh Heritage Month Canada have documented hate incidents and lobbied for policy reform and greater legal protections.

### **Contribution of United Sikhs<sup>366</sup>**

#### ***UNITED SIKHS' Strategic Responses and Programs***

##### **Civil Rights Advocacy**

UNITED SIKHS remained at the forefront of civil rights advocacy by:

- Collaborating with governmental and non-governmental organizations to address discrimination.
- Organizing forums and discussions to spotlight civil rights concerns.
- Launching media campaigns to foster public understanding of Sikh civil liberties.

##### **Legal Support Services**

The organization provided legal representation in court cases involving discrimination and violations of religious freedom. It also conducted workshops and legal clinics to inform community members of their rights and worked with legal experts to develop educational resources.

##### **Community Education and Outreach**

Through awareness campaigns, UNITED SIKHS empowered individuals to resist and report discriminatory practices. These efforts also aimed to cultivate a broader cultural understanding and societal inclusivity.

##### **Policy Advocacy**

The organization actively engaged with policymakers, advocated for anti-discrimination legislation, and submitted recommendations on issues including religious freedoms, hate crimes, and equal opportunities.

##### **Support and Emergency Services**

Recognizing the psychological toll of discrimination, UNITED SIKHS offered trauma-informed counseling and financial aid, including temporary shelter. A community helpline was maintained to provide immediate support for affected individuals.

### **Governmental Measures and Observation**

---

<sup>365</sup> Department of Justice Canada. (2023). *Freedom of Expression and Public Discourse*.

<sup>366</sup> UNITED SIKHS. (2023). *Annual Report on Civil Rights Advocacy and Community Support*. Retrieved from: <https://unitedsikhs.org>

**Addressing Transnational Repression:** Canada's national security infrastructure acknowledges threats posed by foreign governments to diaspora communities. Intelligence agencies actively protect individuals at risk, including independent assessments of Interpol Red Notices to prevent misuse for political repression.<sup>367</sup>

### *Anti-Racism and Hate Crime Strategies*

The Government of Canada launched several initiatives to combat systemic discrimination:

- **Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2024–2028**, which focuses on equity in justice, public safety, and socio-economic systems.<sup>368</sup>
- **Canada's Action Plan on Combating Hate**, a multi-sectoral initiative aimed at empowering communities, protecting victims, and enhancing social trust.

Further, legislative amendments to the Criminal Code have been introduced to strengthen responses to hate speech and crimes.<sup>369</sup>

## **Recommendations**

### **• Strengthen Multilateral Engagement Through Canadian Diplomacy**

Given Canada's established role in international humanitarian efforts and its leadership in promoting human rights, it is recommended that Canada expand its collaboration with international and intergovernmental agencies to support religious and ethnic minorities—including Sikhs—facing persecution abroad. Building on its refugee resettlement programs and global peacebuilding efforts, Canada can help develop and champion a *Global Humanitarian Diplomacy Framework* aimed at protecting vulnerable communities, facilitating emergency resettlement, and rebuilding livelihoods. Canada has already demonstrated such leadership by welcoming Sikh refugees from Afghanistan and should continue to institutionalize and scale these efforts through coordination with partners like the UNHCR, IOM, and regional civil society actors.

### **• Condemn Violence Against All Targeted Minorities and Advance Accountability Mechanisms**

Canada should continue its tradition of publicly condemning acts of violence and hate crimes against religious minorities worldwide, including targeted attacks on Sikhs in regions of active conflict. Beyond symbolic gestures, Canada is encouraged to work with international bodies such as the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) to develop mechanisms for accountability, including sanctions, diplomatic interventions, and support for transitional justice initiatives in countries where minority groups are under attack.

### **• Leverage Canada's Bilateral and Multilateral Channels to Engage Local Governments**

Canada should use its diplomatic relationships, particularly through its missions and foreign aid channels, to engage governments—such as the Afghan authorities—on the safety and rights of religious minorities. Specifically, the Canadian government should urge the de facto leadership in Afghanistan to:

---

<sup>367</sup> Freedom House. (2023). *Canada: Transnational Repression Host Country Case Study*. Retrieved from: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/transnational-repression/canada>

<sup>368</sup> Department of Justice Canada. (2021). *Government of Canada Takes Action to Protect Canadians Against Hate Speech and Hate Crimes*. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-justice/news/2021/06/government-of-canada-takes-action-to-protect-canadians-against-hate-speech-and-hate-crimes.html>

<sup>369</sup> Government of Canada. (2024). *Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2024–2028*. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/combating-racism-discrimination.html>

- Ensure the physical safety and civil rights of the remaining Sikh community members;
- Protect and preserve historical Sikh Gurdwaras in Kabul, Jalalabad, and Ghazni, which hold immense cultural and spiritual value; and
- Allow for safe passage and emigration options for those under direct threat.

Given the Taliban's inability or unwillingness to protect minority groups, Canada should maintain and expand its special humanitarian programs for Afghan Sikhs and Hindus, building upon the success of previous resettlement initiatives facilitated by organizations such as UNITED SIKHS.

• **Institutionalize Civil Society Partnerships**

The Canadian government should work more closely with organizations to co-develop community-informed policy responses, refugee sponsorship initiatives, and post-arrival support programs. Civil society plays a critical role in identifying at-risk individuals, preparing sponsorship applications, and assisting with long-term integration.

# MEXICO AND ITS BORDERS

2023-2025

## COUNTRY PROFILE

### **Head of State (Mexico)**<sup>370</sup>

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, in office since December 1, 2018.

### **Total Population**<sup>371</sup>

Approximately 126 million (2021 estimate)

### **Religious Demographics**<sup>372</sup>

Mexico is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic (about 78%), followed by various Christian denominations. Religious minorities—including Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs—make up less than 1% of the population

### **Sikh Presence**<sup>373</sup>

Mexico does not have an established Sikh population. However, in recent years, it has become a critical transit corridor for Sikh asylum seekers, primarily from India and Afghanistan, seeking refuge in the United States. These individuals often arrive on tourist or humanitarian visas and travel north to cities such as Tijuana, Mexicali, and Ciudad Juárez to request asylum at the U.S. border.

While there is no official census of Sikhs in Mexico, civil society organizations estimate that hundreds to a few thousand Sikhs pass through Mexico annually. Many face detention, language barriers, and religious discrimination in shelters and processing facilities that lack cultural or religious accommodations.

**Currently Recognizes Sikhism as a Distinctive Religion by the State:** Yes

**Form of Government:** Federal republic with a presidential system of government

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index:** 47.5

### **Introduction**

Mexico, officially the United Mexican States, is a federal republic located in southern North America, bordered by the United States, Guatemala, and Belize, with coastlines along the Pacific Ocean and Gulf of Mexico. It is the most populous Spanish-speaking country, with over 126 million people, and operates as a presidential system with 32 federal entities. Mexico is a major economic power in Latin America, closely integrated into global trade through agreements like the USMCA. While rich in cultural and natural resources, the country faces persistent challenges including inequality, corruption, organized crime, and migration pressures. Its strategic location

---

<sup>370</sup> <https://presidente.gob.mx>

<sup>371</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/>

<sup>372</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/>

<sup>373</sup> <https://www.acnur.org/mx>

and diverse heritage make it a key regional and international actor.

## **Immigration Crisis at the U.S.–Mexico Border**

The humanitarian crisis at the U.S.–Mexico border continues to intensify, driven by inadequate and fragmented immigration policies, overcrowded facilities, and insufficient humanitarian safeguards. Recent reports of two young children dying shortly after crossing into the United States with their asylum-seeking parents illustrate the tragic consequences of this ongoing emergency<sup>374</sup>. These incidents reflect broader systemic failures, including delayed asylum processing, lack of adequate shelter and medical care, and increased vulnerability of migrants—particularly women and children<sup>375</sup>. The crisis underscores the pressing need for comprehensive immigration reform grounded in international human rights standards, protection obligations, and coordinated regional cooperation<sup>376</sup>.

### **Case Study**

#### **The Tragic Case of 6-Year-Old Gurpreet Kaur<sup>377</sup>**

On the morning of June 11, a group of migrants, including six-year-old Gurpreet Kaur, was left by smugglers near an interstate on the Mexican side of the U.S. border and instructed to walk northward—an area approximately 17 miles west of Lukeville, Arizona, known for its extreme remoteness and infrequent crossings. According to CNN, as the journey progressed, both Gurpreet and another child, aged eight, began to struggle with the harsh conditions. The group eventually separated, with Gurpreet's mother and another woman venturing off to search for water, leaving the two children in the care of the other woman.

By the next morning, June 12, a U.S. Border Patrol agent, while tracking footprints in the desert sand, encountered the two women who had gone for water and was informed that the rest of their group was missing. Despite extensive search efforts, authorities tragically discovered Gurpreet's remains later that day. It took more than 24 hours of continued searching to locate the other woman and child, who were found alive but suffering from severe dehydration and were subsequently hospitalized. The exact circumstances of the group's separation remain unclear, underscoring the deadly risks migrants face in such unforgiving terrain.

#### **The Drowning of 23-Month-Old Angie Valeria<sup>378</sup>**

In another heartbreaking incident, 23-month-old Angie Valeria and her father, Óscar Alberto Martínez Ramírez, perished while attempting to cross the Rio Grande into the United States. As reported by NPR, the family—originally from El Salvador—had been seeking asylum in the U.S. after fleeing poverty. They

---

<sup>374</sup> Al Jazeera. *Two Children Die After Crossing the US-Mexico Border with Families Seeking Asylum*, April 2024. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com>

<sup>375</sup> Human Rights Watch. *US: Border Policies Put Migrants at Risk*, 2023. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org>

<sup>376</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). *Recommendations for the U.S. Government on Asylum and Border Policy*, 2023. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org>

<sup>377</sup> <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/06/24/us/border-indian-girl-death/index.html>

<sup>378</sup> <https://www.everand.com/article/414610668/A-Father-And-Daughter-Who-Drowned-At-The-Border-Put-Attention-On-Immigration>

had received humanitarian visas in Mexico and spent two months in a migrant camp near Matamoros, hoping to apply legally for asylum. Facing prolonged delays, Martínez decided to swim across the river with his daughter on June 23.

Tragically, strong currents swept both father and daughter away as Martínez attempted to carry Angie to safety. His wife, Tania Vanessa Avalos, looked on helplessly from the riverbank as the current overwhelmed them. The next day, their bodies were discovered washed ashore on the riverbank near Brownsville, Texas. A haunting photograph captured the moment: Angie nestled under her father's T-shirt, her tiny arm draped around his neck—an apparent effort by her father to shield her in their final moments.

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in Mexico

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements in Mexico<sup>379</sup>

Mexico operates a civil law-based immigration and nationality system that allows foreign nationals, including religious minorities such as Sikhs, to enter, reside, and in some cases integrate into Mexican society. However, the system presents both opportunities and challenges, particularly for asylum seekers and temporary migrants transiting toward the United States.

- **Visa and Residency Permits**

Mexico offers several categories of visas, including visitor visas (180-day stay), temporary resident visas (up to 4 years), permanent residency visas, and humanitarian visas<sup>1</sup>. Sikh migrants and asylum seekers—primarily from India and Afghanistan—have entered Mexico either with a tourist visa or applied for humanitarian protection while transiting to the U.S. border. Humanitarian visas may be granted under Article 52 of the *Ley de Migración* to individuals facing persecution.

- **Work Authorization**

Holders of temporary and permanent resident cards may legally work in Mexico upon registering with the National Institute of Migration (INM). While Mexican law prohibits employment discrimination based on religion or ethnicity, informal labor markets and limited enforcement of anti-discrimination protections create barriers, especially for non-Spanish-speaking migrants.

- **Citizenship Pathways**

Mexico allows for naturalization after five years of continuous legal residence (or two years for individuals from Ibero-American countries or those with Mexican spouses/children). While there are no formal legal restrictions on Sikhs applying for citizenship, the process requires Spanish-language proficiency, a clean criminal record, and proof of integration. In practice, very few Sikhs pursue long-term residence or naturalization in Mexico, as most view the country as a transit corridor to the United States.

- **Legal Documents and Civil Registration**

Foreigners in Mexico can obtain legal documents such as a CURP (Unique Population Registry Code), RFC (tax ID number), and public healthcare access through INSABI (Instituto de Salud para el Bienestar) once they have resident status<sup>6</sup>. However, access is often delayed due to bureaucratic inefficiencies, language barriers, and limited institutional familiarity with South Asian identity documentation.<sup>380</sup>

- **Integration vs. Identity**

Mexico does not have a significant native Sikh population, and Sikh migrants—especially asylum seekers—may face religious and cultural isolation. There are no known Gurdwaras in most border cities, and many Sikhs in migration struggle to maintain articles of faith or dietary customs while in shelters or detention<sup>7</sup>. Nonetheless, humanitarian organizations and migrant aid groups have worked to create culturally respectful support environments, particularly in cities like Tijuana and Tapachula<sup>381</sup>

---

<sup>379</sup> <https://www.gob.mx/inm>

<sup>380</sup> <https://www.gob.mx/src>

<sup>381</sup> <https://www.gob.mx/insabi>

- **Equal Access to Citizenship and Rights**

While Mexico's Constitution guarantees equality before the law, in practice, access to full rights is often hindered by administrative burdens, discrimination, and lack of culturally competent services. Sikh migrants, especially those in irregular status or in legal limbo, face disproportionate vulnerability to exploitation, detention, or deportation<sup>8</sup>. Civil society organizations—including UNITED SIKHS and Asylum Access Mexico—play a key role in supporting religious minorities through legal aid, policy advocacy, and emergency assistance.

## 2. Religious and Cultural Considerations<sup>382</sup>

- **Freedom of Religion:** Mexico's Constitution guarantees religious freedom. Sikhism is not widely known but is legally permitted and practiced without state interference.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** There are a small number of gurdwaras in major cities like Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Tijuana, serving as community centers and places of worship for the small Sikh population.
- **Dress Code and Identity:** Articles of faith such as the turban and kirpan are legally permissible but may attract public curiosity or misinterpretation, especially in rural areas.
- **Dietary Preferences:** While vegetarianism is less common in traditional Mexican cuisine, access to vegetarian food is feasible, especially in urban areas with international or health-conscious food markets.

## 3. Employment and Economic Factors<sup>383</sup>

- **Job Market:** Employment opportunities for immigrants, particularly those who do not speak Spanish fluently, may be limited to informal sectors such as trade, hospitality, or religious service.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Anti-discrimination protections exist under Mexican labor law but are **not always enforced**, especially for religious minorities in rural or conservative regions.
- **Income and Economic Mobility:** Economic growth is concentrated in urban and border zones. Skilled immigrants may face challenges due to non-recognition of foreign credentials and language barriers.
- **Cost of Living:** Mexico offers a relatively lower cost of living than Canada or the U.S., though safety concerns and access to services vary regionally.

## 4. Social and Community Support<sup>384</sup>

- **Sikh Community Presence:** The Sikh population in Mexico is estimated to be fewer than 10,000 individuals. The small community is primarily concentrated in urban areas, with limited social infrastructure.
- **Discrimination and Acceptance:** Mexico is a predominantly Catholic country but has made strides in religious tolerance. However, unfamiliar religious practices may still lead to social exclusion or stereotyping.
- **Cultural Celebrations:** Sikh festivals are celebrated privately within the community. Public religious events or processions may be rare and are generally limited to urban centers.

## 5. Education and Family Considerations<sup>385</sup>

- **Schooling:** Public education is available to immigrants and their children. Religious accommodations (e.g., wearing the turban) are generally not restricted, though awareness and acceptance may vary by region.
- **Cultural Education:** Limited infrastructure exists for Punjabi or Sikh religious education. Some gurdwaras may offer weekend language classes or religious studies.

---

<sup>382</sup> <https://www.gob.mx/inm>

<sup>383</sup> <https://files.unhcr.org/en/2023/resettlement/projected-global-resettlement-needs-2024.pdf>

<sup>384</sup> [https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/AME%20-%20Mexico%20ARR%202023\\_0.pdf](https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/AME%20-%20Mexico%20ARR%202023_0.pdf)

<sup>385</sup> <https://monitor.pluralism.ca/publication/mexico-monitor-report/>

- **Healthcare Access:** Mexico offers both public healthcare (INSABI) and private healthcare, but access for immigrants often depends on legal status. Language and documentation barriers may affect service quality

## 6. Legal Rights and Safety<sup>386</sup>

- **Anti-Discrimination Laws:** Mexican law prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion, race, and national origin under the Federal Law to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination. However, enforcement is uneven.
- **Personal Safety:** General crime and security concerns in parts of Mexico—due to drug cartels or political unrest—may pose challenges for immigrants, especially in rural or border areas.
- **Security Profiling:** Sikhs may be subject to additional scrutiny at borders or checkpoints due to unfamiliarity with the community and visible religious identifiers.

## 8. Digital and Technological Rights<sup>387</sup>

- **Online Presence:** Sikh immigrants in Mexico may use digital platforms to connect with diaspora communities, promote advocacy, and organize religious gatherings.
- **Digital Harassment:** Online hate speech is less prevalent but lacks consistent monitoring. Legal recourse exists but is limited in scope.
- **Freedom of Expression:** Mexico generally respects freedom of speech and assembly. Sikhs can express religious and political views (including on issues like religious persecution or diaspora identity) without state censorship.

## 9. Hate Crimes and Discrimination Monitoring<sup>388</sup>

- **Incident Reporting:** While Mexico has anti-discrimination laws, there is no formal national hate crime monitoring system specific to religious minorities. Reporting mechanisms rely on local police or NGOs.
- **Law Enforcement Response:** Police response to hate incidents may be slow or inconsistent, especially if officials are unfamiliar with the Sikh faith or language needs.
- **Advocacy Case Studies:** UNITED SIKHS has previously coordinated the resettlement of Sikh asylum seekers to Mexico under humanitarian protection programs, showing Mexico’s potential as a host country when supported by international advocacy

## Contribution of UNITED SIKHS in Mexico and Border Regions<sup>389</sup>

UNITED SIKHS has played a pivotal role in advocating for and supporting Sikh migrants and asylum seekers transiting through Mexico and the U.S.–Mexico border. Their contributions focus on legal advocacy, humanitarian relief, religious rights, and documentation support in high-risk zones such as Tijuana, Mexicali, and Ciudad Juárez.

### 1. Legal Aid & Asylum Support

UNITED SIKHS provides legal counseling and representation for Sikh asylum seekers navigating the complex U.S. immigration system, including CBP One appointments, detention hearings, and documentation assistance.

### 2. Humanitarian Relief

The organization supplies food, water, clothing, and hygiene kits to Sikh migrants stranded at the border.

---

<sup>386</sup> <https://www.paho.org/en>

<sup>387</sup> [https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/528267\\_MEXICO-2023-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf](https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/528267_MEXICO-2023-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf)

<sup>388</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024>

<sup>389</sup> <https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/>

In areas lacking cultural accommodations, they also ensure access to vegetarian meals and religious articles such as turbans and kara.

### **3. Religious Rights Advocacy**

UNITED SIKHS documents and challenges violations of religious freedom, including forced removal of turbans, denial of access to articles of faith, and discriminatory treatment in Mexican shelters and U.S. detention centers.

### **4. Language & Translation Services**

With few Punjabi-language resources available, UNITED SIKHS bridges communication gaps through interpretation, translation, and multilingual outreach materials to empower migrants with knowledge of their rights

### **5. Partnership with Local Shelters & NGOs**

They collaborate with local partners such as Al Otro Lado **and** Casa del Migrante to deliver culturally sensitive aid, ensure safe housing, and support gender-sensitive case management, especially for families and children.

## **Recommendations**

### **Strengthening Protections for Sikh Migrants in Mexico and Border Regions**

- **Expand Multilateral Engagement Through Mexican Humanitarian and Migration Diplomacy**  
Mexico, as a key transit and host country within the global migration corridor to the United States, should strengthen its collaboration with international and intergovernmental organizations such as UNHCR, IOM, and the OAS to protect Sikh and other minority migrants at risk. Given the increasing presence of Sikh asylum seekers transiting through Mexico, a Humanitarian Coordination Framework is urgently needed to enable timely relief, documentation, and legal support for vulnerable communities, including religious minorities facing persecution abroad.

- **Condemn Violence and Mistreatment of Religious Minority Migrants and Ensure Accountability**  
The Mexican government should condemn violence, discrimination, and abuse directed at minority migrants—including Sikhs—by criminal groups, smugglers, or corrupt officials. Mexico should enhance oversight within detention centers and migrant shelters, and partner with civil society and international human rights monitors to ensure culturally sensitive treatment. Transparency mechanisms must be introduced to investigate allegations of religious profiling, mistreatment, and neglect of Sikh detainees.

- **Utilize Bilateral and Regional Diplomacy to Advocate for Safe Transit and Protection of At-Risk Groups**

Mexico should use its diplomatic and regional influence—particularly through its engagement with the U.S., Canada, and Central American governments—to:

- Advocate for safe migration pathways and urgent protection for Sikh and Hindu asylum seekers fleeing religious persecution in India, Afghanistan, and elsewhere;
- Provide safe housing, legal assistance, and humanitarian visas under Article 52 of the *Ley de Migración*;

- Work with U.S. counterparts to ensure fair and expedited asylum processing, including safe passage through CBP One appointments and family reunification schemes.

- **Institutionalise Supportive Partnerships with Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations**

Mexico should recognize and formally collaborate with local and international organizations such as UNITED SIKHS, Sin Fronteras, Al Otro Lado, and faith-based shelters operating along the border. These organizations have demonstrated effectiveness in:

- Identifying at-risk Sikh individuals and families;
- Providing language interpretation, legal representation, and documentation assistance;
- Facilitating religious accommodations and culturally appropriate shelter options.

- **Build Capacity for Cultural Competency and Religious Sensitivity**

Training programs for INM agents, police, and shelter staff must include modules on religious sensitivity, with specific emphasis on Sikh identity, articles of faith (e.g., turban, kirpan), dietary restrictions, and the importance of family unity during processing. Sikh migrants should be guaranteed:

- The right to wear religious attire and carry articles of faith in accordance with international standards;
- Access to vegetarian meals and hygiene during detention;
- Non-discriminatory treatment in legal and administrative proceedings.

# UNITED STATES

## 2023-2025

### COUNTRY PROFILE

#### Head of State and Government<sup>390</sup>

President Donald J. Trump, serving as the 47th President of the United States, was inaugurated on January 20, 2025, after winning the 2024 U.S. presidential election.

#### Total Population<sup>391</sup>

Approximately 334 million, based on 2024 U.S. Census Bureau estimates

#### Religious Demographics<sup>392</sup>

The United States continues to exhibit broad religious diversity. As of 2024:

- **Christianity** remains the largest religion (approximately 61–63%)
- **Unaffiliated/non-religious** individuals make up around 29–30%
- **Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism** each represent 1–2%
- **Sikhism**, though not separately categorized in official census data, is increasingly recognized through public policy, military regulations, and civil rights enforcement

#### Sikh Population<sup>393</sup>

An estimated 500,000 to 700,000 Sikhs live in the United States<sup>4</sup>. Key states with large Sikh populations include:

- California (especially Central Valley and the Bay Area)
- New York, New Jersey, Texas, and Illinois

**Currently Recognizes Sikhism as a Distinctive Religion by the State:** Yes

**Form of Government:** Federal republic with a presidential system of government

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index:** 71.3

#### Introduction

The United States is a federal constitutional republic governed by a tripartite system dividing powers among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The President, currently Joseph R. Biden Jr. (inaugurated on January 20, 2021), serves as both head of state and head of government. The legislative branch comprises a bicameral Congress, consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives, which holds powers to legislate, allocate funds, and oversee national policy. The judicial branch, led by

---

<sup>390</sup> <https://www.pbs.org/>

<sup>391</sup> <https://www.census.gov/>

<sup>392</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/>

<sup>393</sup> <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/>

the Supreme Court, interprets constitutional and legal questions. A constitutionally embedded system of checks and balances ensures the distribution of power across these branches, while state and local governments exercise autonomy in regional governance<sup>394</sup>.

### **Sikhs in the United States**

Despite comprising a small fraction of the U.S. population, Sikhs face a disproportionately high rate of religiously motivated hate crimes. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), of the 1,590 religious-based hate crime incidents reported in 2021, 11.6% were anti-Sikh, making Sikhs the second most targeted religious group after Jews<sup>395</sup>. This is especially significant considering the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS, 2008) found that only 78 out of 228,182 respondents identified as Sikh—approximately 0.03% of the U.S. population at the time<sup>396</sup>.

This disproportion raises broader questions about public awareness and cultural understanding. Many Americans are unfamiliar with Sikhism, its beliefs, and its visible identity markers such as the turban and kakkars (articles of faith), which often make Sikhs vulnerable to misidentification and profiling, particularly in the aftermath of global security crises.

The impact of hate crimes is deeply communal, affecting not only victims but the broader Sikh population's sense of safety and belonging. Yet, the true scope of hate crimes remains difficult to measure due to chronic underreporting. Scholars such as Davis (2016) argue that this underreporting not only distorts data but also discourages victims from coming forward, perpetuating a cycle of silence and impunity<sup>397</sup>.

This concern is supported by Olmos (2023), who criticized the FBI's reporting process for 2021. The report showing a decrease in hate crimes was based on data from 3,255 fewer law enforcement agencies compared to the previous year, largely due to a transition to a new data collection system that, while more detailed, led to decreased participation. Although the Department of Justice has invested in improving these systems, the problem of inconsistent agency reporting remains a major obstacle to understanding and combating hate-motivated violence.

In light of these issues, legislative reform and data transparency are urgently needed to ensure the safety and dignity of religious minority communities like the Sikhs. Without reliable data and inclusive policies, the systemic threats they face will remain under-addressed and misunderstood.

### **Hate Crime in the United States**

Hate crimes against Sikhs in the United States represent a persistent and deeply troubling pattern, often driven by a combination of ignorance, prejudice, and misidentification. Due to their distinct appearance—including turbans and beards—Sikhs have frequently been mistaken for members of other groups, particularly in the aftermath of terrorist incidents, leading to targeted acts of violence. One of the most

---

<sup>394</sup> [https://commons.trincoll.edu/aris/files/2011/08/ARIS\\_Report\\_2008.pdf](https://commons.trincoll.edu/aris/files/2011/08/ARIS_Report_2008.pdf)

<sup>395</sup> <https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/more-fbi-services-and-information/ucr/hate-crime>

<sup>396</sup> <https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/hate-crime-statistics>

<sup>397</sup> <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/hatewatch/radical-right-theories-flourish-aftermath-sikh-killings/>

tragic examples remains the 2012 Oak Creek, Wisconsin gurdwara shooting, where a white supremacist fatally shot six worshippers at a Sikh place of worship.

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), hate crimes are defined as criminal offenses against individuals or property motivated in whole or in part by bias related to race, religion, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or gender identity. On October 16, 2023, the FBI released hate crime statistics for the previous year, revealing an alarming increase in anti-Sikh hate crimes, with Sikhs once again ranking as the second most targeted religious group after Jews<sup>398</sup>.

The 2022 FBI report marked an improvement in participation, with 14,631 law enforcement agencies—representing 91.7% of the U.S. population—submitting data. That year, 11,634 criminal incidents and 13,337 related offenses were classified as bias-motivated. Of these, over 11,000 were single-bias incidents, affecting 13,278 victims, while 346 multi-bias incidents involved 433 victims. The most common motivations reported were biases based on race/ethnicity/ancestry, followed by religion and sexual orientation<sup>399</sup>.

Despite progress in data collection, serious limitations remain. The voluntary nature of reporting by local and state agencies continues to hinder a full understanding of the scale and impact of hate crimes. Moreover, discrepancies between FBI-reported incidents and broader estimates raise significant concerns. For example, the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) estimates that U.S. residents experienced an average of 246,900 hate crime victimizations annually between 2005 and 2019, with the number ranging from 173,600 to 305,390 per year. In contrast, the FBI reported only 11,634 hate crime incidents in 2022. Although these figures cover different time periods and methodologies, the gap starkly illustrates how incomplete reporting distorts the national picture of hate-based violence<sup>400</sup>.

## Case Study 1

The tragic killing of **Jasmer Singh**, a Sikh man in Queens, New York, has been officially reclassified by the **New York Police Department (NYPD)** as a **hate crime**, following sustained community advocacy and legal engagement. The incident, initially not identified as bias-motivated, gained national attention due to the persistent efforts of Sikh civil rights groups and community leaders, including **UNITED SIKHS**.

In response to the initial misclassification, UNITED SIKHS launched an intensive, multi-pronged strategy involving civil rights attorneys, senior officials, grassroots organizers, and faith leaders. Their approach combined direct advocacy, legal consultation, and public mobilization to ensure the case received the scrutiny and legal designation it warranted.

Key contributors to this outcome included **Community Advisor Japneet Singh**, **Community Relations Officer Inderjeet Singh**, and various local institutions such as the **Sikh Cultural Society** and **Gurdwara**

---

<sup>398</sup> <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/civil-rights/hate-crimes#Definition>

<sup>399</sup> <https://www.justice.gov/archives/crs/highlights/2022-hate-crime-statistics>

<sup>400</sup> <https://bjs.ojp.gov>

**Baba Makhan Shah Lubana.** The unwavering determination of **Mr. Subeg Singh**, the victim’s son, played a particularly vital role in maintaining momentum and drawing sustained public attention to the case.

In close coordination with the **Queens District Attorney’s Office**, community advocates pushed for a hate crime investigation. As a result, the suspect is now facing **20 criminal charges**, including hate crime counts<sup>401</sup>.

The campaign led by UNITED SIKHS also included:

- Mobilizing public rallies and vigils.
- Holding strategic meetings with **New York City Mayor Eric Adams**, local council members, and members of Congress.
- Collaborating with **federal agencies and interfaith coalitions**.
- Providing support and counsel to Mr. Singh’s family to ensure transparency and accountability throughout the investigative and prosecutorial processes.

This case stands as a powerful example of how coordinated community action, legal pressure, and public advocacy can lead to meaningful legal outcomes and bring visibility to hate-based violence targeting the Sikh community.

## Case Study 2

### Workplace Discrimination Against Sikhs in the United States: Articles of Faith and Legal Protections

#### I. The Issue: Discrimination Based on Sikh Articles of Faith

The Five Ks—Kesh (uncut hair), Kangha (wooden comb), Kara (steel bracelet), Kachera (cotton undergarments), and Kirpan (ceremonial sword)—are fundamental articles of faith for initiated Sikhs and serve as visible, sacred expressions of religious identity. These symbols are not merely ritualistic but represent core values in Sikhism such as self-discipline, dignity, equality, and the duty to protect others. For instance, the kirpan symbolizes the Sikh commitment to uphold justice and defend the vulnerable, while the kachera signifies modesty and moral restraint.

In the United States, many Sikhs have encountered discrimination in employment and public life due to their religious appearance. Key articles of faith such as the turban, kirpan, and unshorn beard—often misunderstood by the broader public—have led to challenges in hiring, workplace integration, and public perception. Following the September 11, 2001 attacks, Sikh Americans were frequently misidentified as Muslims, resulting in overlapping religious and racial discrimination fueled by Islamophobic stereotypes.

UNITED SIKHS has documented numerous reports of workplace and school-based discrimination, where Sikh individuals were denied employment, faced harassment, or were pressured to remove articles of faith

---

<sup>401</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/31/nyregion/sikh-man-killing-hate-crime-charges.html>

due to unfounded “safety concerns” or alleged discomfort among customers or colleagues<sup>402</sup>. Sikh children have also experienced bullying and exclusion in schools as a result of their visible identity markers<sup>403</sup>.

## II. Legal Framework: The Kirpan in Law and Policy

The kirpan, a small ceremonial blade, is an essential component of the Sikh religious uniform and is worn not as a weapon, but as a symbol of spiritual commitment and moral duty. The religious significance of the kirpan has been recognized in multiple U.S. legal and policy contexts.

A landmark legal precedent was established in *Tagore v. United States* (2006), where IRS employee Kawaljit Kaur Tagore successfully challenged a federal restriction prohibiting her from entering her workplace with a kirpan. The case resulted in the U.S. government adopting new policies to accommodate Sikh federal employees wearing kirpans<sup>404</sup>.

### Federal Facilities Policy:

- **Kirpans with blades under 2.5 inches** are permitted in federal buildings protected by the Federal Protective Service (FPS). Sikhs may be asked to present their kirpan at security checkpoints but are advised not to unsheath it unless expressly required.
- **Kirpans with blades longer than 2.5 inches** require a formal exception or exemption, which may be temporary or permanent, granted by the Facility Security Committee (FSC). Approval is discretionary and must be requested in advance<sup>405</sup>.

### State-Level Protections:

Many U.S. states have recognized the kirpan’s religious nature and made exceptions to general weapons laws. For example:

- **New York** and **Ohio** courts have ruled in favor of Sikhs charged under weapons statutes, affirming the kirpan's religious symbolism and the nonviolent intent behind its use .

## III. Discrimination in Law Enforcement

Sikhs face unique barriers in law enforcement careers, where uniform policies have historically conflicted with religious mandates such as wearing turbans and maintaining unshorn hair. Despite Sikhism's emphasis on justice, equality, and service—values that align closely with public safety roles—Sikhs have often been excluded from police and military service unless they compromise their religious appearance.

These institutional barriers not only hinder diversity in public safety professions but also perpetuate systemic discrimination. In response, advocacy organizations including UNITED SIKHS have called

---

<sup>402</sup> <https://ethnicmediaservices.org/stop-the-hate/two-thirds-of-turbaned-sikh-american-boys-are-bullied-at-school>

<sup>403</sup> <https://khalsavox.com/news/a-turban-is-not-a-target-sikh-students-face-bullying-in-us-schools/>

<sup>404</sup> <https://becketfund.org/case/tagore-v-department-homeland-security/>

<sup>405</sup> <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/KYR-Sikh-Kirpan-FPS.pdf>

for religious accommodation policies across federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to ensure Sikhs can serve without being forced to abandon their faith-based identity<sup>406</sup>.

### Case Study 3

#### Discrimination in Hiring Practices Against Sikhs in Law Enforcement

Sikh Americans continue to face barriers to full participation in public service, particularly in law enforcement, due to discriminatory hiring practices. One of the primary challenges is the failure of some agencies to accommodate religious articles of faith, such as turbans, unshorn hair, beards, and the Kirpan. These practices violate equal employment principles and perpetuate a lack of religious and ethnic diversity in departments meant to protect all communities.

#### Background

Mr. Jaspreet Singh, a devout and baptized Sikh, applied for the position of Deputy Sheriff Trainee at the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office in November 2022. He progressed successfully through the selection process and received an official hire letter in July 2023. However, his employment was abruptly terminated on August 29, 2023, on the basis that he would not shave his beard or remove his Kirpan—both of which are essential to his Sikh faith.

Despite Mr. Singh's repeated efforts to explain his religious obligations and request accommodation, the department refused to grant any modifications or waivers to allow him to maintain his faith while serving. This led to the forced termination of his employment, effectively compelling Mr. Singh to choose between his religion and his career in law enforcement.

Mr. Singh's experience exemplifies a broader pattern of exclusion based on religious identity. His case illustrates how systemic failure to adopt inclusive policies disproportionately harms religious minorities seeking to contribute to public safety and service<sup>407</sup>.

#### Religious Mandate and Conflict

As a baptized Sikh, Mr. Singh is required to wear the five articles of faith (the Five Ks), including:

- **Kesh** (unshorn hair),
- **Kara** (steel bracelet),
- **Kachera** (cotton undergarment),
- **Kanga** (wooden comb), and
- **Kirpan** (a ceremonial blade representing the duty to uphold justice).

---

<sup>406</sup> <https://magazine.uc.edu/issues/0506/writingC/writing6.html>

<sup>407</sup> [https://www.ted.com/talks/jaspreet\\_singh\\_why\\_i\\_love\\_wearing\\_my\\_dastar\\_and\\_my\\_kirpan](https://www.ted.com/talks/jaspreet_singh_why_i_love_wearing_my_dastar_and_my_kirpan)

These are not optional symbols, but mandatory expressions of spiritual discipline and identity. Requiring their removal as a condition of employment constitutes a violation of religious freedom rights under U.S. constitutional and statutory law.

## **Legal and Constitutional Framework**

Under **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**, employers must provide “reasonable accommodations” for religious practices, provided such accommodations do not impose an “undue hardship” on business operations (42 U.S.C. § 2000e(j)). Courts also apply the “**compelling governmental interest**” standard in cases involving the First Amendment’s Free Exercise Clause. This means that any infringement on religious liberty must be justified by an essential and narrowly tailored public interest.

In Mr. Singh’s case, there is no demonstrable evidence that accommodating his beard or Kirpan would impair departmental effectiveness, safety, or discipline. Absent such justification, the denial of accommodation constitutes a presumptive violation of his civil rights.

## **Examples of Successful Religious Accommodation**

Numerous law enforcement agencies have implemented religious accommodations for Sikh officers, proving that inclusive policies can coexist with operational integrity:

- **Deputy Sandeep Dhaliwal, Harris County, Texas**  
In 2015, the Harris County Sheriff’s Office became one of the first major departments to accommodate Sikh officers by permitting turbans and unshorn beards while on duty. Deputy Dhaliwal became a trailblazer and a nationally respected officer before his tragic death in 2019. His service demonstrated that religious attire poses no barrier to professional excellence in law enforcement<sup>408</sup>.
- **Officer Jaskirat Singh, Milpitas, California**  
In 2014, Officer Singh was granted permission to wear a turban on duty, even though the department did not have a formal policy regarding religious dress. This case highlights the capacity of law enforcement agencies to make individualized accommodations in good faith<sup>409</sup>.

These examples reinforce that Mr. Singh’s termination was not based on any universally necessary policy, but rather a discretionary and inconsistent approach to religious accommodation. Such inconsistency undermines the claim of a compelling interest and violates equal protection principles.

## **Case Study 4**

### **Case Study: Sikh Truckers and CDL Advocacy in the United States: Defending Civil Rights and Economic Justice Against Discriminatory Licensing Rules**

#### **Background**

---

<sup>408</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2019/10/02/us/sikh-deputy-sandeep-dhaliwal-profile/index.html>

<sup>409</sup> <https://hwpi.harvard.edu/pluralismarchive/news/sikhs-fight-right-wear-turbans-beards-military-law-enforcement>

The trucking industry in the United States is a critical backbone of the economy, responsible for transporting goods across vast distances. Sikh truckers, many of whom are immigrants, form a significant portion of this workforce. Their participation is not only an economic contribution but also a reflection of the Sikh community's values of hard work, service, and resilience.

## **Overview**

UNITED SIKHS has led advocacy efforts to protect drivers from discriminatory Commercial Driver's License (CDL) cancellations. In November 2025, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) issued notices that thousands of non-domiciled CDL holders would lose their licenses on January 5, 2026, citing, among other reasons, administrative, clerical errors. This sweeping action to cancel these licenses without the due process required by California laws disproportionately impacts Sikh, Punjabi, Latino, and other immigrant drivers essential to California's freight economy. UNITED SIKHS condemned the move and mobilized advocacy and resources to challenge the policy.

On December 6, 2025, UNITED SIKHS held one of several ongoing truck drivers' workshops in Fresno, California, providing legal guidance, community support, and a platform for drivers to voice concerns. Public condemnations of the CDL cancellations and coalition engagement amplified the issue, ensuring policymakers and media recognized the devastating economic and civil rights consequences. From Fresno workshops to demand letters to the DMV's General Counsel and direct appeals to Governor Newsom, UNITED SIKHS acted swiftly to protect livelihoods. Working alongside NGOs, and inspired by the resilience of truckdrivers themselves, this collective effort secured some provisional relief. As of late 2025, courts have blocked or paused aspects of these new rules. UNITED SIKHS Supports Court Stay to Protect Sikh and Immigrant Truck Drivers. The organization welcomes the temporary court decision to pause the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) rule that would have prevented many lawfully eligible immigrant drivers from obtaining, keeping, or renewing CDLs.

## **Why This Matters?**

The FMCSA rule, issued in September 2025, would have barred asylees, refugees, DACA recipients, and other lawful immigrants from holding CDLs, regardless of their driving history or skills. This rule directly affects the Sikh trucking community, which numbers over 150,000 drivers, about one-fifth of the U.S. trucking workforce. Many Sikh immigrants entered the trucking industry to fill shortages and support the American economy, FMCSA cited road safety as the reason for the rule, but there is no evidence linking immigration status to unsafe driving. The agency itself acknowledged there is insufficient data to support this claim.

## **Discrimination and Harassment**

The harassment of Sikhs following the agency's attempt to implement the rule, has been well documented and the consequences show the rule does more harm than good. It places the Sikh and immigrant trucking community at risk while exacerbating the nationwide truck driver shortage, which FMCSA failed to consider.

## **Sikh Civil Rights Organizations Speak Out Against the FMCSA Rule**

UNITED SIKHS' statement to the Court in support of pausing enforcement of the rule was included in an amicus brief filed on October 29, 2025 by various Sikh organizations. It explained that the rule is arbitrary and discriminatory. UNITED SIKHS, the Sikh Coalition and the Asian Law Caucus emphasized that the rule targets immigrant drivers and Sikhs without evidence. The amicus brief also argued that the rule threatens livelihoods, safety, and the dignity of Sikh truckers who have long contributed to the U.S.

economy and that the public interest is harmed because removing thousands of experienced drivers increases risk on the roads. “Sikh truck drivers have become targets simply for who they are,” the UNITED SIKHS amicus statement said. Before the year 2025 ended UNITED SIKHS urged the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to take immediate and comprehensive action to restore CDLs that were confiscated, downgraded, or cancelled prior to the January 5, 2026 deadline. The organization has raised concerns that rescinding cancellation notices alone is insufficient, and that the DMV must implement a clear operational plan to reinstate licenses without requiring drivers to reapply. UNITED SIKHS has engaged directly with state authorities, consulted legal counsel, and coordinated with civil rights organizations to safeguard the rights of Sikh CDL holders impacted by inconsistent enforcement and regulatory uncertainty.

UNITED SIKHS’ advocacy team is actively present in Texas, New York, and California, meeting with communities and providing direct support. In California, the team met with truck drivers and trucking industry entrepreneurs who drove for hours because this issue impacts all their lives. California’s immigrant truckers are the backbone of our supply chain. Targeting them with mass cancellations was unjust, and destabilizing.

UNITED SIKHS urges policymakers to establish clear and fair CDL legal processes and to safeguard immigrant drivers, who are eligible under current state and federal law, from shifting policy practices that harm does not safeguard our trucking industry and workplaces. UNITED SIKHS continues to monitor and stand ready to defend truck drivers’ and trucking industry leaders’ rights through legal intervention, advocacy, and community mobilization.

## **Conclusion**

The case of Sikh truckers in the United States highlights the intersection of labor rights, religious freedom, and immigrant advocacy. UNITED SIKHS’ efforts have been instrumental in advancing dignity and equity for this vital workforce. Our advocacy underscores the importance of coalition-building and sustained engagement with policymakers to ensure that Sikh truckers can continue to serve the nation without compromising their identity.

## **Parameters to Consider for Settlement in USA**

### **1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>410</sup>**

- **Visa and Residency Permits**

The U.S. offers various visa categories, including non-immigrant visas (e.g., visitor, student, and religious worker visas), immigrant visas (family- and employment-based), and humanitarian pathways such as \*\*asylum, refugee resettlement, and Temporary Protected Status (TPS)\*\*<sup>1</sup>. Sikh migrants, particularly from India and Afghanistan, often seek asylum due to religious persecution. The affirmative and defensive asylum processes, while available, are highly complex and backlogged. Many Sikhs enter the U.S. through land borders with Mexico, requesting asylum upon arrival.

- **Work Authorization**

Asylum seekers in the U.S. may apply for work authorization (EAD) 150 days after filing their asylum application<sup>2</sup>. Lawful permanent residents (green card holders) and visa holders with employment-based statuses may work legally. Discrimination based on religion, race, or national origin is prohibited under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Nevertheless, Sikhs may face workplace bias or challenges related to religious accommodations (e.g., wearing turbans or maintaining kesh), especially in sectors unfamiliar with Sikh identity.

---

<sup>410</sup> <https://www.uscis.gov/>

- **Citizenship Pathways**

Sikh immigrants with permanent residency can apply for U.S. citizenship after five years, or three years if married to a U.S. citizen<sup>41</sup>. Applicants must pass an English and civics test and demonstrate good moral character. There are no religious barriers to naturalization. Sikh Americans are active participants in civic life, and several have been elected to public office at local, state, and federal levels.

- **Legal Documents and Civil Registration**

Sikh migrants and residents in the U.S. may obtain Social Security Numbers (SSNs), driver's licenses, state IDs, and access to healthcare and educational systems upon meeting eligibility criteria. However, newly arrived asylum seekers often experience delays in obtaining documentation due to processing bottlenecks, limited translation services, and lack of familiarity with administrative systems.

- **Integration vs. Identity**

The United States promotes religious freedom and multiculturalism through the First Amendment. Sikh Americans are legally protected in practicing their faith, including wearing turbans, carrying kirpans, and maintaining other articles of faith. However, Sikh asylum seekers and undocumented migrants—particularly along the southern border—often face religious profiling, isolation, and barriers in expressing their identity freely while in detention or shelters lacking cultural awareness.

- **Equal Access to Citizenship and Rights**

While U.S. laws guarantee equality, access to rights is often shaped by immigration status. Sikh migrants in detention or awaiting asylum decisions are at risk of prolonged detention, family separation, and limited legal protections. Civil society organizations—including UNITED SIKHS, RAICES, and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)—have been instrumental in challenging religious discrimination, providing legal aid, and advocating for humane immigration policy.

## **2. Religious and Cultural Considerations**

### **Freedom of Religion**

- Protected under the First Amendment and federal civil rights law (e.g., Title VII of the Civil Rights Act).
- Sikhs can freely practice, including wearing turbans, keeping unshorn hair, and carrying the kirpan (with some legal limitations in certain venues like airports or courthouses)<sup>411</sup>.

### **Access to Gurdwaras**

- Over 300 gurdwaras exist across the U.S., particularly in California, New York, New Jersey, Texas, and Illinois.
- Serve as centers for worship, language instruction, and community support<sup>412</sup>.

### **Dress Code and Identity**

- Sikh articles of faith are protected under law in workplaces, schools, and public institutions.
- Legal victories (e.g., in the military, police forces) have established rights to wear the dastar (turban) and kirpan in many formal settings.

### **Dietary Preferences**

- Vegetarian food is widely available in grocery stores, restaurants, and school/workplace cafeterias.
- Gurdwaras operate langars and support dietary needs of the community<sup>413</sup>.

## **3. Employment and Economic Factors**

### **Job Market**

- Immigrants can access employment in technology, healthcare, transportation, construction, and retail.
- English proficiency increases access to higher-paying roles, but Punjabi-speaking networks support job placement in early stages of resettlement<sup>414</sup>.

### **Workplace Acceptance**

---

<sup>411</sup> <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/tsa-cares>

<sup>412</sup> [https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Gurdwaras\\_in\\_North\\_America](https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Gurdwaras_in_North_America)

<sup>413</sup> <https://www.eeoc.gov/religious-discrimination>

<sup>414</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/religious-landscape-study/>

- Federal and state laws prohibit religious discrimination.
- Employers must provide reasonable accommodations for religious dress and practices, unless it causes undue hardship

#### **Income and Economic Mobility**

- Economic mobility is achievable, especially in urban areas with vocational training and credential evaluation.
- Many Sikh Americans run small businesses, franchises, or are employed in skilled trades<sup>415</sup>.

#### **Cost of Living**

- Varies widely by region. Urban hubs offer more jobs but have higher costs (e.g., New York, San Francisco).
- Affordable Sikh enclaves exist in places like Fresno (CA), Bakersfield (CA), Richmond Hill (NY), and Yuba City (CA).

### **4. Social and Community Support**

#### **Sikh Community Presence**

- U.S. Sikh population is between 500,000 and 700,000, with strong community networks.
- Organizations like UNITED SIKHS, Sikh Coalition, SALDEF, and Jakara Movement provide legal aid, advocacy, youth services, and community development<sup>416</sup>.

#### **Discrimination and Acceptance**

- Islamophobic misidentification of Sikhs persists but has decreased with awareness campaigns.
- Public acceptance has grown, though bias incidents still occur, particularly in conservative or less diverse regions.

#### **Cultural Celebrations**

- Major Sikh holidays such as Vaisakhi, Gurburabs, and Nagar Kirtans are celebrated publicly, often with participation from city officials.
- Community parades and festivals take place in NYC, Los Angeles, and the Bay Area<sup>417</sup>.

### **5. Education and Family Considerations**

#### **Schooling**

- Public education is free and available to all children, regardless of immigration status.
- Schools are legally required to accommodate religious expression (e.g., turbans, kara).

#### **Cultural Education**

- Gurdwaras offer weekend Punjabi classes, Gurmat education, kirtan, and Sikh history.
- Sikh Studies programs are growing in U.S. universities (e.g., at Harvard, UC Riverside)<sup>418</sup>.

#### **Healthcare Access**

- Healthcare access depends on immigration status and income.
- Legal residents may access Medicaid, ACA exchanges, or employer-sponsored plans.
- Community clinics and charitable services support undocumented or recent immigrants.
- Cultural competency is improving, and Punjabi-speaking doctors are found in many areas.

### **6. Legal Rights and Safety**

#### **Anti-Discrimination Laws**

- Discrimination on the basis of race, religion, or national origin is illegal under federal and state laws.
- The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and Department of Justice handle complaints.

#### **Personal Safety**

- While violent crime levels vary by city, most Sikh communities are in relatively safe areas.

<sup>415</sup><https://www.sikhcoalition.org/images/documents/fact%20sheet%20on%20hate%20against%20sikhs%20in%20america%20post%209-11%201.pdf>

<sup>416</sup> <https://pll.harvard.edu/course/sikhism-through-its-scriptures-0>

<sup>417</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna52676512>

<sup>418</sup> <https://pll.harvard.edu/course/sikhism-through-its-scriptures-0>

- Hate crime incidents still occur, with notable cases in Oak Creek (2012) and recent post-COVID incidents, prompting stronger community vigilance and law enforcement partnerships.

### **Security Profiling**

- Sikhs may face extra scrutiny at airports or border crossings, especially due to turbans or mistaken identity.
- TSA policies require respectful screening; advocacy has improved training and transparency<sup>419</sup>.

## **7. Digital and Technological Rights**

### **Online Presence**

- Active Sikh presence on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok for education, advocacy, and cultural exchange.
- Virtual sangat (congregation) is common, especially for diaspora youth.

### **Digital Harassment**

- Online hate speech occurs, but legal recourse through civil suits or tech platform complaints is available.
- Sikh advocacy groups monitor and report digital threats.

### **Freedom of Expression**

- Protected under the U.S. Constitution.
- Sikhs may voice religious, political, and social concerns, including criticism of international repression, without fear of government retaliation<sup>420</sup>.

## **8. Hate Crimes and Discrimination Monitoring**

### **Incident Reporting**

- The FBI and local law enforcement track and publish data on hate crimes, including religious bias incidents.
- Sikh groups have lobbied for better categorization of anti-Sikh incidents, which are now recognized.

### **Law Enforcement Response**

- Specialized hate crime units exist in many cities.
- **Cultural training** for police departments is widespread, often in collaboration with Sikh organizations.

### **Advocacy Case Studies**

- Cases like Oak Creek (2012) led to national reforms and community empowerment.
- Organizations have intervened in school bullying, workplace bias, and airport profiling cases successfully<sup>421</sup>.

## **Contribution of UNITED SIKHS in the United States<sup>422</sup>**

### **1. Civil Rights Advocacy and Legal Defense**

UNITED SIKHS has consistently defended the religious freedoms and civil rights of Sikh Americans and other marginalized groups across the United States. The organization has provided legal support in cases involving workplace discrimination, denial of religious accommodations, hate crimes, and profiling at transportation hubs.

- Represented Sikh individuals in Title VII employment discrimination cases where turbans, beards, and Kirpans were at issue.

<sup>419</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/sikh-american-groups-meet-with-tsa-about-turban-screening-policy/>

<sup>420</sup> FBI Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program – *Hate Crime Statist*

<sup>421</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2024/10/03/nx-s1-5136995/wisconsin-election-harris-trump-sikh-temple-oak-creek>

<sup>422</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/legal>

- Advocated with federal agencies such as the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to address racial and religious profiling.
- Led civil rights complaints and awareness campaigns to reform discriminatory travel and screening policies at U.S. airports<sup>423</sup>.

Case Example: Jaspreet Singh, a Sikh man denied employment in law enforcement for refusing to remove his beard and Kirpan, received legal support and public advocacy from UNITED SIKHS, which deemed the incident a constitutional violation.

## 2. Disaster Relief and Emergency Humanitarian Aid

In line with the Sikh principle of seva (selfless service), UNITED SIKHS has been a vital actor in disaster response efforts across the United States:

- Hurricane Katrina (2005): Provided food, water, and medical kits to evacuees in New Orleans.
- Hurricane Sandy (2012): Deployed emergency teams in New York and New Jersey to assist displaced families.
- COVID-19 Pandemic: Distributed Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), hot meals, and groceries to essential workers and low-income families in over a dozen U.S. cities<sup>424</sup>.

These operations were executed in coordination with FEMA, local municipalities, and interfaith relief coalitions.

## 3. Advocacy Against Hate Crimes

In response to rising xenophobia and racialized violence post-9/11 and in recent years:

- UNITED SIKHS has helped track, document, and litigate hate crimes against Sikh Americans.
- Collaborated with organizations like the Sikh Coalition, ACLU, and Southern Poverty Law Center to amplify policy reforms and protect civil liberties.
- Educated law enforcement through training seminars on Sikh identity and provided cultural sensitivity materials<sup>425</sup>.

## 4. Engagement with Government and International Bodies

UNITED SIKHS actively engages with domestic and international governance institutions to promote religious freedom and equal treatment:

- Participated in congressional hearings and briefings on religious profiling and airport security.
- Submitted reports to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)<sup>426</sup> documenting human rights violations.
- Advocated for inclusion of Sikh concerns in State Department Human Rights Reports.

## 5. Community Empowerment and Civic Engagement

UNITED SIKHS supports long-term empowerment of the Sikh community through:

- “Know Your Rights” workshops for immigrants, workers, and students across U.S. cities.
- Voter registration drives and training sessions on civic participation, particularly in states with large Punjabi Sikh populations like California and New York.

---

<sup>423</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org>

<sup>424</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/covid-19-response/>

<sup>425</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/united-sikhs-2022-annual-advocacy-humanitarian-aid-academy-ahaa-sikh-summit/>

<sup>426</sup> <https://www.uscirf.gov>

- Hosting youth development programs, mentorship initiatives, and leadership academies for Sikh youth to engage in civil society and governance<sup>427</sup>.

## 6. Digital Rights and Free Speech Advocacy

In response to digital censorship of Sikh voices on platforms such as Twitter (now X):

- UNITED SIKHS has filed requests to Twitter’s Global Government Affairs team seeking clarification on the arbitrary takedown of Sikh activists’ accounts, particularly in India.
- Advocated for greater transparency from social media companies and challenged censorship under opaque government orders.
- Pushed for platforms to release public reports on executive orders that suppress freedom of speech, especially those disproportionately targeting minority groups like the Sikh diaspora<sup>428</sup>.

## Recommendations

### Strengthening Protections for Sikh Migrants in the United States

#### • **Enhance Multilateral and Humanitarian Engagement in U.S. Immigration Policy**

The United States should strengthen its collaboration with international partners, including the UNHCR, IOM, and regional civil society actors, to ensure the rights and safety of Sikh and other religious minority migrants. As Sikh asylum seekers increasingly arrive at the U.S.–Mexico border, the U.S. should lead the development of a Humanitarian Protection Framework focused on:

- Timely asylum processing
- Religious accommodations in detention
- Access to legal representation for vulnerable groups facing persecution

#### • **Condemn Mistreatment and Religious Profiling of Migrants and Ensure Oversight**

The U.S. government must take stronger steps to condemn and prevent mistreatment of Sikh asylum seekers, especially in Customs and Border Protection (CBP) custody and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention. This includes:

- Investigating allegations of religious profiling, forced removal of turbans, or denial of vegetarian meals
- Establishing independent oversight bodies to monitor conditions in detention centers

#### • **Reform Border and Detention Practices to Protect Religious Minorities**

U.S. border and immigration agencies should:

- Respect religious rights under the First Amendment and Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA)
- Provide vegetarian meals, articles of faith (e.g., kirpan, turban), and gender-sensitive accommodations
- Avoid prolonged detention of asylum seekers, especially families and children

#### • **Improve U.S. Asylum Infrastructure and Due Process Protections**

The U.S. should:

---

<sup>427</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Annual-Report-2023.pdf>

<sup>428</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/united-sikhs-advocacy-prevails-in-removal-of-racist-advertisement/>

- Ensure fair and timely asylum processing, including access to CBP One appointments
- Expand legal orientation programs and provide Punjabi language interpretation during asylum interviews and court proceedings
- Eliminate barriers to family reunification and humanitarian parole, particularly for Sikh refugees from Afghanistan and India

• **Institutionalize Collaboration with Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations**

U.S. immigration authorities should formalize partnerships with organizations such as UNITED SIKHS, RAICES, Al Otro Lado, and local Gurdwaras to:

- Identify at-risk Sikh migrants
- Deliver legal aid, humanitarian support, and language access
- Provide culturally sensitive services at shelters and border reception centers

• **Expand Training in Religious Sensitivity and Cultural Competency**

Training for CBP, ICE, and asylum officers should include:

- Awareness of Sikh articles of faith (turban, kara, kirpan, unshorn hair)
- Understanding of religious dietary needs
- Best practices for non-discriminatory and respectful treatment of Sikh migrants during search, detention, and interviews.

# OCEANIA

# AUSTRALIA

## (2023-2025)

### COUNTRY PROFILE

**Head of State:** King Charles III

**Head of Government:** The Hon Anthony Albanese MP, 31st Prime Minister of Australia, sworn in on May 23, 2022.<sup>429</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** 40

**Total Population:** 25.69 million, Per the 2021 census, the top religions included Catholic (20%), Muslim (3.2%), and Hindu (2.7%).<sup>430</sup>

**Sikh Population:** As of 2021 the Sikh community in Australia comprises more than 210,000 individuals, representing approximately 0.8% of the country's total population.<sup>431</sup>

**Currently recognizes Sikhism as a distinctive religion by the state:** Yes

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index:** 77.5

#### Introduction

Australia is a federal constitutional monarchy composed of six states and two self-governing territories. The national government, officially known as the Commonwealth of Australia and referred to as the Federal Government or Australian Government, operates through a tripartite system comprising the Legislature (Parliament), the Executive, and the Judiciary. As of the 2021 census, Sikhs constitute approximately 0.8% of Australia's population, numbering over 210,000 individuals. This community has made significant contributions across various sectors, including politics, business, sports, and the arts. Despite Australia's efforts to promote cultural diversity, the Sikh community faced notable challenges in 2023.

---

<sup>429</sup> See Australian government website available at <https://www.pm.gov.au/about-prime-minister>; See also <sup>1</sup> *Cultural Diversity: Census*. (n.d.). Australian Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved January 6, 2024, from <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/cultural-diversity-census/2021>

<sup>430</sup> See *Infosheet 20 - The Australian system of government*. (n.d.). Parliament of Australia. Retrieved January 6, 2024 from [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/House\\_of\\_Representatives/Powers\\_practice\\_and\\_procedure/00\\_-\\_Infosheets/Infosheet\\_20\\_-\\_The\\_Australian\\_system\\_of\\_government](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/House_of_Representatives/Powers_practice_and_procedure/00_-_Infosheets/Infosheet_20_-_The_Australian_system_of_government)

<sup>431</sup> See *id* <https://www.sikhyouthaustralia.com/sikhism-in-australia/#:~:text=As%20of%202021%2C%20the%20Sikh,of%20the%20country's%20total%20population.>

Incidents of religious prejudice and hate crimes have been reported, alongside discrimination in workplaces and public spaces. A prominent case involved the Queensland Supreme Court overturning a law that prohibited Sikh students from carrying the kirpan—a ceremonial dagger integral to their faith on school premises. The court deemed this prohibition inconsistent with the Racial Discrimination Act 1975.

Furthermore, concerns about racial profiling and constraints on religious freedom persist. While some Australian states have introduced legislation to combat religious vilification, such as New South Wales' proposed Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Vilification) Bill 2023, the effectiveness and uniformity of these laws across the nation remain subjects of discussion.<sup>432</sup>

Addressing these issues is imperative for the Australian government to uphold principles of genuine multiculturalism, equity, and social inclusion.

## Case Study

### Hate Crimes

Members of the Sikh community in Australia have frequently been subjected to hate crimes, often due to their distinct appearance—characterized by turbans and unshorn beards—which can make them targets of religious and racial prejudice. These incidents range from verbal abuse and physical assaults to systemic discrimination, including in the workplace.

A notable example involves Jarnail Singh, a Sikh restaurant owner in Tasmania, who endured repeated instances of racial harassment over a period of several months. Singh discovered graffiti and threatening letters near his home, with messages such as “Go home, Indian.” Despite having lived in Australia for nearly 15 years, he faced ongoing hostility from members of the broader community—highlighting the persistence of xenophobia and religious intolerance.<sup>433</sup>

According to Dr. Matteo Vergani, an Associate Professor at Deakin University and an expert on the intersection of online and offline hate behaviors, Sikhs in the state of Victoria are statistically twice as likely to be victims of hate crimes or discrimination compared to the general population. This heightened vulnerability is attributed not only to their visible religious identity, but also to instances of mistaken identity, where Sikhs are erroneously associated with Muslims—thereby inheriting the racialized animus often directed toward Muslim communities.<sup>434</sup>

---

<sup>432</sup> [https://www.sbs.com.au/language/hindi/en/article/hindu-sikh-and-muslim-communities-support-nsws-proposed-law-against-religious-vilification/bqa0d6nxn?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.sbs.com.au/language/hindi/en/article/hindu-sikh-and-muslim-communities-support-nsws-proposed-law-against-religious-vilification/bqa0d6nxn?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>433</sup> *‘Go home Indian’: Sikh restaurateur racially targeted in Australia.* (2023, November 17). The Economic Times NRI. Retrieved January 6, 2024, from <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/nri/latest-updates/go-home-indian-sikh-restaurateur-rationally-targeted-in-australia-report/articleshow/105265908.cms>

<sup>434</sup> Singh, M. (2020, June 15). *Research looks at hate crimes reported by Sikhs in Victoria.* SBS Punjabi. <https://www.sbs.com.au/language/punjabi/en/podcast-episode/research-looks-at-hate-crimes-reported-by-sikhs-in-victoria/ga3xwvut3>

These patterns of hate underscore the urgent need for systemic responses, including better education, hate crime monitoring, and protective legislation, to safeguard minority communities and uphold Australia's commitment to multicultural inclusion.

## **Discrimination and Religious Prejudice**

### **The Kirpan and Legal Protections for Religious Freedom in Australia<sup>435</sup>**

The *kirpan* is one of the Five Ks (*panj kakaar*), the essential articles of faith that all initiated Sikhs are required to observe. The term “kirpan” derives from the Punjabi words *kirpa* (mercy) and *aan* (honor), symbolizing a “weapon of defense” that reflects the Sikh commitment to upholding justice, protecting the vulnerable, and demonstrating moral integrity. Worn not as a weapon but as a sacred symbol, the kirpan is an integral part of a Sikh's religious identity and uniform (Sikh Coalition, n.d.).

Despite its deeply rooted religious significance, the kirpan has been a focal point of controversy in numerous countries, including Australia, particularly in relation to public safety regulations and institutional policies. Employment discrimination remains a common issue<sup>436</sup>, as religious attire such as turbans and kirpans may conflict with workplace dress codes or occupational health and safety rules (AHRC, 2021). Additionally, racial profiling especially under counter-terrorism frameworks—disproportionately affects Sikhs and other religious minorities who maintain a distinct physical appearance (Vergani, 2023).

A significant legal advancement occurred in 2023 when the Queensland Supreme Court overturned a law under the Weapons Act 1990 that had prohibited Sikh students from wearing the kirpan in schools. The court ruled that the ban contravened the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (RDA), a cornerstone of Australian anti-discrimination law (Human Rights Law Centre, 2023). Enacted on June 11, 1975, the RDA prohibits discrimination since race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin in a range of public domains, including employment, education, accommodation, and the provision of goods and services. It also makes it unlawful to publicly offend, insult, humiliate, or intimidate individuals based on race, aligning Australia's legal obligations with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) (Australian Government, 1975; UN OHCHR, 1965).

This ruling reinforced the principle that Sikh students must be afforded the same rights and freedoms as their peers and underscores the necessity of extending such religious protections into other areas of public life most notably, the workplace. By upholding the right to religious expression, Australia strengthens its commitment to multiculturalism, equality, and the protection of fundamental human rights.

## **Parameters to consider for settlement in Afghanistan**

---

<sup>435</sup> Please see Weapons Act of 1990 available at: <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/pdf/inforce/current/act-1990-071>

<sup>436</sup> For brief background on the RDA, see Racial Discrimination Act of 1975 (RDA) <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A00274/2015-12-10/text> <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/about-racial-discrimination>

## 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>437</sup>

Australia offers a structured and rights-based immigration and citizenship framework that allows individuals, including members of the Sikh community, to settle, work, and integrate into society with legal protections and opportunities for civic participation.

- **Visa and Residency Permits:**  
Australia provides a wide array of visa categories, including skilled migration, student visas, family reunification, humanitarian visas, and religious worker permits<sup>1</sup>. Sikhs may apply under any of these streams based on eligibility criteria such as skills, education, family ties, or religious leadership roles.
- **Work Authorization:**  
Holders of permanent residency and many temporary visas (e.g., subclass 482, 485) are authorized to work. Employment rights are protected under the *Fair Work Act 2009*, which prohibits discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, or cultural background.
- **Citizenship Pathways:**  
Foreign nationals can apply for Australian citizenship after fulfilling residency requirements, typically four years (including at least 12 months as a permanent resident). There are no religious restrictions, and many Sikhs have successfully become citizens and participate actively in public life.
- **Legal Documents and Civil Registration:**  
There are no religious or ethnic barriers to accessing Medicare cards, birth certificates, driver's licenses, or property ownership documents. Language and procedural hurdles may arise for newcomers, but multilingual and legal support services are widely available.
- **Integration vs. Identity:**  
Australia's multicultural framework protects religious freedoms and cultural practices, allowing Sikhs to retain their identity while participating in broader Australian society. Younger generations may encounter personal and cultural tensions while navigating dual identities.
- **Equal Access to Citizenship and Rights:**  
Australia upholds legal equality, granting all citizens regardless of religion full access to civil rights, including voting, owning property, and holding office. Sikh Australians have utilized these rights to engage in business, advocacy, and governance.<sup>438</sup>

## 2. Religious and Cultural Considerations<sup>439</sup>

- **Freedom of Religion:** Protected under the *Australian Constitution* and the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, Sikhs are legally entitled to practice their faith freely. Public institutions generally respect religious symbols, including the kirpan, although security regulations sometimes prompt debates.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** Australia is home to numerous gurdwaras, particularly in cities with large Sikh populations such as Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane. These serve as centers of worship, community, and cultural preservation.<sup>440</sup>
- **Dress Code and Identity:** Sikh attire—including turbans and kara—is broadly accepted in public life. However, there have been instances of misunderstanding or bias, particularly in schools, airports, or law enforcement contexts.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Vegetarian and religious dietary requirements are accommodated across many public and private institutions, including schools, hospitals, and prisons, reflecting Australia's multicultural ethos.

## 3. Employment and Economic Factors<sup>441</sup>

---

<sup>437</sup> <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au>

<sup>438</sup> <https://humanrights.gov.au/>

<sup>439</sup> <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/projects/sharing-stories-faith-communities>

<sup>440</sup> <https://sikhcouncil.org.au/gurdwaras/>

<sup>441</sup> <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/projects/religious-freedom>

- **Job Market:** Australia’s stable economy offers diverse opportunities across sectors such as healthcare, education, engineering, and trade. Many Sikhs run successful businesses or are employed in professional fields.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Anti-discrimination laws mandate equal opportunity in employment. Nevertheless, incidents of subtle bias or limited cultural literacy among employers have been reported.
- **Income and Economic Mobility:** Sikhs in Australia often achieve upward mobility. However, newly arrived migrants may initially face financial constraints, underemployment, or recognition issues with overseas qualifications.
- **Cost of Living:** Major urban areas, where Sikh communities are concentrated, are expensive. Affordable housing and public services help mitigate costs for low-income or newly arrived families.

#### 4. Social and Community Support<sup>442</sup>

- **Sikh Community Presence:** Australia has a vibrant and growing Sikh population, estimated at over 210,000 as of the 2021 Census. The community plays an active role in civil society and has institutional representation.
- **Discrimination and Acceptance:** While Australia promotes inclusivity, Sikhs have experienced hate crimes and racial prejudice, often linked to their visible identity. Advocacy groups and community organizations, including **UNITED SIKHS**, work actively to combat such challenges.
- **Cultural Celebrations:** Sikh festivals such as Vaisakhi and Gurburab are celebrated publicly in major cities, with community parades, political participation, and interfaith events demonstrating growing acceptance.

#### 5. Education and Family Considerations<sup>443</sup>

- **Schooling:** Public and private schools generally accommodate Sikh students and their religious needs. Bullying and cultural insensitivity, while not systemic, have been reported in isolated cases.
- **Cultural Education:** Gurdwaras and community centers often provide Punjabi language and Sikh history classes for children.
- **Healthcare Access:** Public healthcare is universally accessible through Medicare. Cultural competency is improving, though issues such as gender-specific care and language interpretation remain relevant.

#### 6. Legal Rights and Safety<sup>444</sup>

- **Anti-Discrimination Protections:** Australia enforces strong legal safeguards through the *Racial Discrimination Act*, *Equal Opportunity Acts* (at the state level), and the *Fair Work Act*, which collectively make racial and religious discrimination unlawful.
- **Personal Safety:** Although Australia is generally safe, Sikhs have faced instances of hate crimes, including verbal abuse and physical attacks. Police responses are improving, but continued community engagement and advocacy are essential.
- **Security Profiling:** Sikhs may encounter additional scrutiny in airports and interactions with law enforcement, often due to mistaken identity or lack of awareness about Sikh appearance.
- **Citizenship Access:** The legal pathway to permanent residency and citizenship is well-established. Sikh Australians have actively participated in civic life and have held elected positions at both state and national levels.
- **Cultural Integration:** Sikh communities successfully maintain their cultural identity while integrating into broader Australian society. However, younger generations may face challenges in navigating cultural and identity dynamics.

---

<sup>442</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/census>

<sup>443</sup> <https://www.sikhcouncil.org.au>

<sup>444</sup> <https://humanrights.gov.au/>

- **Property and Legal Rights:** Sikhs face no religious restrictions in owning or inheriting property, and legal support is available for resolving disputes or addressing discrimination.<sup>445</sup>

#### 7. Digital and Technological Rights<sup>446</sup>

- **Online Presence:** Sikhs in Australia engage freely in online expression and advocacy. Social media platforms are used to mobilize around religious rights and cultural events.
- **Digital Harassment:** Hate speech and online abuse remain challenges, particularly during times of political tension. Legal frameworks exist, but enforcement remains uneven.
- **Freedom of Expression:** Australia does not censor Sikh issues; in fact, digital platforms have enabled greater visibility for civil rights campaigns and diaspora advocacy.

#### 8. Hate Crimes and Discrimination Monitoring<sup>447</sup>

- **Incident Reporting:** National and state-level human rights commissions maintain hate crime and discrimination reporting mechanisms. However, underreporting remains a concern.
- **Law Enforcement Response:** Police responses to hate incidents have improved, though cultural sensitivity and training vary by jurisdiction.
- **Advocacy Case Studies:** Organizations such as UNITED SIKHS, Sikh Council of Australia, and Australian Human Rights Commission have documented cases of discrimination and advocated for stronger protections.

#### Contribution of United Sikhs<sup>448</sup>

UNITED SIKHS has played a vital role in supporting the Sikh community in Australia through a diverse range of humanitarian, cultural, and advocacy initiatives:

1. Humanitarian Aid:<sup>449</sup>
  - Launched *Guru Nanak's Free Community Kitchen* during COVID-19 in West Melbourne, providing hundreds of meals and grocery packs weekly to vulnerable communities.
2. Cultural Preservation:
  - Hosted major events such as *Sikh New Year* celebrations and *Turban Day* at Federation Square to promote Sikh identity, history, and interfaith understanding.
3. Civil Rights Advocacy:<sup>450</sup>
  - Offered legal support in high-profile cases (e.g., Baljinder Singh Thukral) and publicly condemned hate crimes to raise awareness and demand stronger protections.
4. Environmental Engagement:
  - Participated in *World Environment Day* campaigns, promoting environmental awareness within the Sikh community through tree planting and energy-efficiency advocacy.
5. Educational Initiatives:
  - Provided Punjabi language and culture classes for children, supporting intergenerational knowledge and cultural continuity.

#### Recommendation

To effectively address the prevailing civil rights challenges experienced by members of the Sikh community in Australia, a proactive and multi-dimensional strategy is essential. Such a strategy must prioritize the

---

<sup>445</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/>

<sup>446</sup> <https://www.sikhyouthaustralia.com/>

<sup>447</sup> <https://humanrights.gov.au/>

<sup>448</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/press>

<sup>449</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/>

<sup>450</sup> <https://unitedsikhs.org/press>

protection and promotion of both individual dignity and collective rights. The following recommendations offer a framework for systemic reform:

- **Legislative Strengthening**

A critical step toward comprehensive protection is the amendment of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (RDA)* to explicitly encompass religious discrimination. While the RDA currently provides safeguards against discrimination based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin, its limited applicability to religious identity leaves a significant gap in legal protections. Including religion as a protected attribute within the RDA would ensure greater equity and legal recourse for Sikh individuals who encounter prejudice or exclusion based on visible expressions of their faith, such as wearing turbans or kirpans. This legislative reform would also align Australia's domestic legal framework with evolving international human rights standards and reflect the multicultural character of its society.

- **Enhanced Reporting Mechanisms**

Equally imperative is the establishment and strengthening of mechanisms for reporting discrimination, harassment, and hate crimes. These systems should be both well-publicized and accessible to ensure that members of the Sikh community are aware of their rights and feel safe in coming forward with complaints. A centralized and nationally coordinated infrastructure comprising confidential hotlines and user-friendly online reporting platforms should be developed to enable timely and effective responses to civil rights violations.

# NEW ZEALAND

## 2023–2025

### COUNTRY PROFILE

**Head of Government:** Prime Minister Christopher Luxon (since 2023)<sup>451</sup>

**Total Population:** Approx. 5.3 million (March 2025)<sup>452</sup>

**Number of Gurdwaras:** Over 20 recognized gurdwaras across Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch, and regional centers<sup>453</sup>

**Sikh Population in New Zealand:** Estimated 50,000–60,000 individuals; predominantly of Punjabi origin, with significant concentrations in Waikato (Hamilton) and South Auckland<sup>454</sup>

**Recognition of Sikhism by the State:** Formally recognized as a distinct faith; Sikhism included in national census and multicultural initiatives; articles of faith protected under New Zealand human rights legislation<sup>455</sup>

**Form of Government:** Unitary parliamentary constitutional monarchy; strong democratic institutions; secular legal framework with emphasis on cultural inclusion<sup>456</sup>

**UNITED SIKHS Rating Index:83.8**

#### Introduction

New Zealand hosts one of the fastest-growing Sikh communities in the Southern Hemisphere, with migration accelerating over the past two decades due to skilled work visas, agricultural opportunities, and student pathways. Sikh contributions are visible in dairy farming, transport, small businesses, and increasingly in professional sectors such as healthcare and IT.

The New Zealand government's progressive policies on multiculturalism and religious freedom have enabled Sikhs to practice their faith openly. Gurdwaras serve as cultural anchors, offering Punjabi language classes, kirtan instruction, and social services such as free meals (langar) and migrant settlement assistance. Major Sikh festivals, including Vaisakhi and Gurpurab, are celebrated publicly and attract participation from local officials and other faith groups.<sup>457</sup>

---

<sup>451</sup> <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/people/christopher-luxon-0>

<sup>452</sup> <https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/population-clock/>

<sup>453</sup> [https://www.allaboutsikhs.com/beta/gurudwaras-in-new-zealand/#google\\_vignette](https://www.allaboutsikhs.com/beta/gurudwaras-in-new-zealand/#google_vignette)

<sup>454</sup> <https://www.berl.co.nz/economic-insights/migration-engine-driving-new-zealands-population-growth>

<sup>455</sup> [https://nzpri.aut.ac.nz/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/56223/Religious-Diversity-in-NZ-Workplaces.pdf](https://nzpri.aut.ac.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/56223/Religious-Diversity-in-NZ-Workplaces.pdf)

<sup>456</sup> <https://www.parliament.nz/mi/get-involved/features/the-sovereign-s-role-in-new-zealand/>

<sup>457</sup> <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/topic/sikhism/>

## Case Study<sup>458</sup>

During the 2019 Christchurch Mosque attacks, Sikh gurdwaras across New Zealand mobilized to provide langar, transportation, and shelter to those affected. This interfaith response showcased Sikh values of seva (selfless service) and earned widespread recognition from New Zealand's government and media. The event strengthened Sikh-Muslim relations and underscored the community's role in promoting harmony during crises.

A community leader recalled:

*"We opened our doors to everyone — faith didn't matter. It was about standing together as New Zealanders in the face of tragedy."*

## Parameters to Consider for Settlement in New Zealand

### 1. Immigration & Citizenship Requirements<sup>459</sup>

- **Visa and Residency Permits:** Multiple pathways available — skilled migrant visas, work-to-residence, student visas, and family reunification.
- **Work Authorization:** Open work rights for partners of skilled migrants; pathways to permanent residency common after two years.
- **Citizenship Pathways:** Eligible after five years of residence; dual citizenship permitted.
- **Legal Documents:** Sikh identity fully recognized; option to list “Sikh” on census and immigration forms.

### 2. Religious & Cultural Considerations<sup>460</sup>

- **Religious Freedom:** Protected by law; Sikhism is an officially recognized religion.
- **Access to Gurdwaras:** Over 20 gurdwaras, with major centers in Auckland, Hamilton, and Wellington.
- **Dress Code & Identity:** Turbans, kara, and kirpans protected under human rights law; exemptions exist for security screening.
- **Dietary Preferences:** Indian groceries and vegetarian food widely available; gurdwaras serve langar daily or weekly.

### 3. Employment & Economic Factors<sup>461</sup>

- **Job Market:** Opportunities in dairy, horticulture, construction, transport, healthcare, and IT.
- **Workplace Acceptance:** Strong anti-discrimination policies; multicultural workplaces common.
- **Income Levels:** Average salaries moderate; cost of living rising but lower than Australia.
- **Cost of Living:** Housing expensive in Auckland but more affordable in regional centers (Hamilton, Tauranga).

### 4. Social & Community Support<sup>462</sup>

- **Presence of Sikh Community:** Growing, well-organized; active associations support migrants and host cultural events.
- **Discrimination & Acceptance:** Generally positive; occasional incidents of racism addressed quickly by authorities.
- **Celebration of Festivals:** Vaisakhi parades (Nagar Kirtan) in Auckland and Hamilton draw thousands, supported by local councils.

---

<sup>458</sup> [https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism/files/2118451e-vt-mod4-religious\\_sites\\_final-web.pdf](https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism/files/2118451e-vt-mod4-religious_sites_final-web.pdf)

<sup>459</sup> <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/international-migration-january-2024/>

<sup>460</sup> <https://www.parliament.nz/media/8087/kirpan-authorisation-bill.pdf>

<sup>461</sup> <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/work/finding-work-in-new-zealand/main-job-sectors-in-new-zealand/>

<sup>462</sup> <https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/world-of-cultures/all-events/>

## 5. Education & Family Considerations<sup>463</sup>

- **Children's Schooling:** Public and private schools with strong English-medium education; Sikh students excel academically.
- **Cultural Education:** Gurdwaras run Punjabi schools and kirtan classes; Sikh Awareness initiatives in mainstream schools.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Universal healthcare system; additional private insurance optional.

## 6. Legal Rights & Safety<sup>464</sup>

- **Religious Discrimination Laws:** Strong protections under the Human Rights Act and Employment Relations Act.
- **Safety Concerns:** Low crime rates; safe environment for families.
- **Legal Rights for Sikhs:** Kirpan exemptions granted for religious observance; recognized in workplaces and schools.
- **Turbans & Airport Security:** Screening protocols accommodate religious headwear respectfully.

## 7. Digital & Technological Rights<sup>465</sup>

- **Digital Privacy & Security:** Robust privacy protections; open internet access without censorship.
- **Online Hate Speech & Cyber Discrimination:** Addressed under the Harmful Digital Communications Act.
- **Censorship of Sikh Issues:** No censorship; Sikh advocacy freely conducted.

## 8. Hate Crimes & Discrimination Monitoring<sup>466</sup>

- **Tracking Incidents of Hate Crimes:** Monitored by police and human rights commissions; low incidence rate.
- **Government Response & Law Enforcement Action:** Strong, with public condemnations and policy reviews after incidents.
- **Case Studies of Discrimination:** Isolated incidents of racial abuse; resolved through community-police collaboration.

## Contribution of UNITED SIKHS<sup>467</sup>

- **Humanitarian Relief:** Supported communities during Christchurch attacks and COVID-19 lockdowns with food and aid.
- **Advocacy for Minority Rights:** Engaged in consultations on hate speech reforms and religious exemptions for kirpan.
- **Student and Worker Support:** Assists new migrants with settlement, legal guidance, and cultural orientation.
- **Community Networking:** Connects New Zealand Sikhs to global diaspora through youth and interfaith programs.

## Recommendations

- **Expand Cultural Education Programs:** Partner with schools to promote Sikh history and values.
- **Strengthen Diaspora Engagement:** Encourage professional networking among Sikhs in agriculture, transport, and tech sectors.
- **Formalize Crisis Response Teams:** Build on Christchurch model to support communities during disasters.

---

<sup>463</sup> <https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/publications/corporate-documents/annual-report-2023>

<sup>464</sup> <https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/GPI-2024-web.pdf>

<sup>465</sup> <https://netsafe.org.nz/our-work/reports-and-research>

<sup>466</sup> <https://www.lawcom.govt.nz/assets/Publications/IssuesPapers/NZLC-IP55-Summary-Easy-Read-Part1.pdf>

<sup>467</sup> <https://ichra.unitedsikhs.org/report/>

- **Enhance Visibility of Sikh Values:** Increase participation in Waitangi Day and multicultural festivals.
- **Support Youth Initiatives:** Develop leadership and mentorship programs for second-generation Sikhs.

## References

- “Afghanistan Conflict: Militants in Deadly Attack on Sikh Temple in Kabul.” *BBC News*, March 25, 2020. Accessed July 24, 2025. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-52029571>.
- African Peer Review Mechanism. *African Governance Report 2023: Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa*. 2023. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://aprm.au.int/sites/default/files/files/2023-10/agr202320231023142001strongcompression-compressed20231023142355strongcompression.pdf>.
- Ahmed, Hilal. *Making Sense of India’s Citizenship Amendment Act 2019: Process, Politics, Protests*. Paris: Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI), 2020. Accessed August 15, 2025. <https://www.ifri.org/en/papers/making-sense-indias-citizenship-amendment-act-2019-process-politics-protests>.
- Ali, Muhammad Usman. “Sikh Community between Integration and Assimilation: A Case Study of Belgium.” *Milel ve Nihal* 21, no. 2 (2024): 331–348. <https://doi.org/10.17131/milel.1577264>.
- Al Jazeera. “Two Children Die after Crossing the US–Mexico Border with Families Seeking Asylum.” April 2024. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com>.
- Amnesty International. *Amnesty International Report 2020/21*. London: Amnesty International, 2021. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/English.pdf>.
- Amnesty International. *Russian Federation: Violent Racism Out of Control*. London: Amnesty International, 2006. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.amnesty.org/ar/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/eur460222006en.pdf>.
- Amnesty International. *The State of the World’s Human Rights*. London: Amnesty International, April 2025. Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://amnesty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/AIR-english\\_2024-04-20.pdf](https://amnesty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/AIR-english_2024-04-20.pdf).
- Amnesty International. *The State of the World’s Human Rights*. London: Amnesty International, April 2024. Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://amnesty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/AIR-english\\_2024-04-20.pdf](https://amnesty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/AIR-english_2024-04-20.pdf).
- “Amritpal Singh: Sikh Separatist Arrested after Weeks on the Run.” *BBC News*, April 23, 2023. Accessed August 15, 2025. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-65063620>.
- Ministry of Culture, Government of India. “Annual Reports.” 2025. Accessed August 15, 2025. <https://www.indiaculture.gov.in/annual-reports>.
- Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (UAE). “Approved Equipment.” Accessed August 18, 2025. <https://tdra.gov.ae/en/approved-equipments>.
- Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Belgium). “Asylum in Belgium.” Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.fedasil.be/en/asylum-belgium>.
- Article 19. “At a Glance: Does the EU Digital Services Act Protect Freedom of Expression?” February 11, 2021. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.article19.org/resources/does-the-digital-services-act-protect-freedom-of-expression/>.
- Balaghi, Shiva. “A Brief History of 20th-Century Iran.” *Grey Art Museum*, New York University. Accessed August 18, 2025. <https://greyartmuseum.nyu.edu/2015/12/a-brief-history-of-20th-century-iran/>.
- Baubérot, Jean. “The Secular Principle.” Embassy of France in the United States. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://franceintheus.org/IMG/html/secularism.html>.
- Bhattacharya, Sanchita. “Afghanistan a Dangerous Place for Religious Minorities, Particularly Sikhs.” *South Asia Monitor*, May 27, 2020. Accessed July 24, 2025. <https://www.southasiamonitor.org/spotlight/afghanistan-dangerous-place-religious-minorities-particularly-sikhs>.

- British Medical Association. *Cultural Competency in Healthcare*. London, 2023.
- British Parliament. *Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998*. London, 2010.
- “‘Big Moment’: Indian Sikhs on Historic Pilgrimage to Pakistan.” *Al Jazeera*, November 9, 2019. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/9/big-moment-indian-sikhs-on-historic-pilgrimage-to-pakistan>.
- Museum of British Colonialism. “British Subjects: The Uganda–Kenya Railway.” June 16, 2019. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://museumofbritishcolonialism.org/2019-5-15-british-subjects-the-uganda-kenya-railway-y1367/>.
- Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. *Canada Hate Crime Report 2023*. Warsaw: OSCE, n.d.
- Canadian Race Relations Foundation. *Youth Identity in Diaspora Communities*. Ottawa, 2023.
- Cesaretti, Laura. “The Continuing Struggle for Religious Freedom by Italy’s Sikh Community.” *The Wire*, June 13, 2017. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://thewire.in/external-affairs/sikhs-in-italy>.
- Chappell, Bill. “A Father and Daughter Who Drowned at the Border Put Attention on Immigration.” *NPR*, June 26, 2019. Accessed July 28, 2025. <https://www.npr.org/2019/06/26/736177694/a-father-and-daughter-drowned-at-the-border-put-attention-on-immigration>.
- Çinar, Özgür Heval. “Freedom of Religion and Belief in Turkey: Recent Challenges and Recommendations in the Context of European Integration.” *Blog of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies*, June 15, 2021. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://talkabout.iclrs.org/2021/06/15/freedom-of-religion-and-belief-in-turkey-recent/>.
- Citizens Advice Bureau. *Access to Services for New Migrants*. London, 2023.
- Directorate of Immigration Services (Kenya). “Citizenship.” Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://immigration.go.ke/citizenship-section/>.
- Islamic Republic of Iran Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “Citizenship.” Accessed August 18, 2025. <https://en.mfa.ir/portal/viewpage/4008/citizenship>.
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. “Clamp Down on Religious Freedom in China.” June 2024. Accessed August 8, 2025. <https://www.usccb.org/resources/clamp-down-religious-freedom-china-june-2024>.
- Sikh Coalition. “Combating Transnational Repression.” Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/our-work/preventing-hate-and-discrimination/combating-transnational-repression/>.
- Parliament of Kenya. *The Constitution of Kenya, 2010*. Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://www.parliament.go.ke/sites/default/files/2023-03/The\\_Constitution\\_of\\_Kenya\\_2010.pdf](https://www.parliament.go.ke/sites/default/files/2023-03/The_Constitution_of_Kenya_2010.pdf).
- The State Council of the People’s Republic of China. *Constitution of the People’s Republic of China*. November 20, 2019. Accessed August 8, 2025. [http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/lawregulations/201911/20/content\\_WS5ed8856ec6d0b3f0e9499913.html](http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/lawregulations/201911/20/content_WS5ed8856ec6d0b3f0e9499913.html).
- Assembleia da República (Portugal). *Constitution of the Portuguese Republic*. 2005. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.parlamento.pt/sites/EN/Parliament/Documents/Constitution7th.pdf>.
- Constitution of the Russian Federation. *The Constitution of the Russian Federation*. Accessed August 20, 2025. <http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-01.htm>.
- Council of Europe. *Constitution of Ukraine*. 1996. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://rm.coe.int/constitution-of-ukraine/168071f58b>.

- Consulate General of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Vancouver. “Visa Application Guidelines.” Accessed July 19, 2025. <https://www.afghanistanconsulate.ca/consular-affairs/visa-application.html>.
- Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA). *Challenge to Quebec’s Bill 21 and Its Impact on Religious Minorities: Legal Briefs and Public Statements, 2019–2024*. Toronto, 2024.
- Council of Europe. *ECRI Report on Portugal (Sixth Monitoring Cycle)*. June 18, 2025. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://rm.coe.int/sixth-report-on-portugal/1680b6668d>.
- Courea, Eleni. “Starmer and Modi Hail ‘Historic Day’ as UK–India Trade Deal Is Signed.” *The Guardian*, July 24, 2025. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/jul/24/starmer-modi-uk-india-free-trade-agreement-deal-signed>.
- “COVID-19 Community Aid: United Sikhs UK Response.” *United Sikhs Relief News*, 2020.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. “Cultural Diversity: Census 2021.” June 28, 2022. Accessed July 24, 2025. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/cultural-diversity-census/2021>.
- German Federal Statistical Office. “Current Population of Germany.” Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://www.destatis.de/EN/Themes/Society-Environment/Population/Current-Population/\\_node.html](https://www.destatis.de/EN/Themes/Society-Environment/Population/Current-Population/_node.html).
- Turkish Statistical Institute. “Data Portal for Statistics.” Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Kategori/GetKategori?p=nufus-ve-demografi-109&dil=2>.
- European Data Protection Supervisor. “Data Protection.” Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://www.edps.europa.eu/data-protection/data-protection\\_en](https://www.edps.europa.eu/data-protection/data-protection_en).
- Défenseur des Droits. *Discrimination and Origins: The Urgent Need for Action (Executive Summary)*. Paris, 2020. Accessed August 19, 2025. [https://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr/sites/default/files/2023-10/ddd\\_rapport\\_discriminations-origine\\_2020\\_synthese\\_EN\\_20200921.pdf](https://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr/sites/default/files/2023-10/ddd_rapport_discriminations-origine_2020_synthese_EN_20200921.pdf).
- UK Department for Education. *Faith Schools in England and Wales*. London, 2023.
- Department of Justice Canada. *Freedom of Expression and Public Discourse*. Ottawa, 2023.
- Department of Justice Canada. “Government of Canada Takes Action to Protect Canadians against Hate Speech and Hate Crimes.” June 2021. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-justice/news/2021/06/government-of-canada-takes-action-to-protect-canadians-against-hate-speech-and-hate-crimes.html>.
- Government of the Netherlands. “Dick Schoof.” 2024. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.government.nl/government/members-of-cabinet/dick-schoof>.
- New Zealand Parliament. *Draft for Consultation: Kirpan Authorisation Bill*. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.parliament.nz/media/8087/kirpan-authorisation-bill.pdf>.
- Government of Dubai – Executive Council. “Dubai Rulers.” October 19, 2016. Accessed August 17, 2025. <https://web.archive.org/web/20161019075927/http://tec.gov.ae/en/dubai-government/rulers-of-dubai>.
- Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. *Report on the Follow-up to the Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) in the Netherlands*. 2021. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/mipaa20-report-netherlands.pdf>.
- Ekhtyar, Hijratullah. “Afghan Sikhs and Hindus Face Discrimination at School.” *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, July 28, 2011. Accessed July 24, 2025. <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/afghan-hindus-and-sikhs-still-struggling>.
- Elinder, Mikael, Oscar Erixson, and Olle Hammar. *War Policies and Migration Aspirations in Russia*. Stockholm: DELMI, 2024. [https://www.delmi.se/Media/ndkodj0s/2024\\_11-webb.pdf](https://www.delmi.se/Media/ndkodj0s/2024_11-webb.pdf).

- Equality and Human Rights Commission. *Equality Act 2010: Guidance*. London. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com>.
- European Commission. “EU Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online.” Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-code-conduct-countering-illegal-hate-speech-online\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-code-conduct-countering-illegal-hate-speech-online_en).
- European Commission. *Türkiye 2023 Report*. Brussels, 2023. Accessed August 19, 2025. [https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD\\_2023\\_696%20Türkiye%20report.pdf](https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_696%20Türkiye%20report.pdf).
- European Commission. *Ukraine 2023 Report*. Brussels, 2023. Accessed August 19, 2025. [https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD\\_2023\\_699%20Ukraine%20report.pdf](https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_699%20Ukraine%20report.pdf).
- European Council on Refugees and Exiles. *Netherlands 2023 Update*. December 31, 2023. Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/AIDA-NL\\_2023-Update.pdf](https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/AIDA-NL_2023-Update.pdf).
- European Migration Network. *Asylum and Migration Overview 2024*. July 2025. Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/446f2fda-529a-49e0-a50f-1131dc04d35e\\_en?filename=2024\\_EMN\\_AMO\\_2.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/446f2fda-529a-49e0-a50f-1131dc04d35e_en?filename=2024_EMN_AMO_2.pdf).
- European Union. *Country Report on Non-Discrimination: Germany 2024*. 2024. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.migpolgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/2024-DE-Country-report-ND-final-for-web.pdf>.
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. *The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights*. 2019. Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2019-eu-charter-in-austria\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-eu-charter-in-austria_en.pdf).
- Aid to the Church in Need International. *Germany Report 2023*. 2023. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.acninternational.org/religiousfreedomreport/reports/country/2023/germany>.
- Al Jazeera. “‘Big Moment’: Indian Sikhs on Historic Pilgrimage to Pakistan.” November 9, 2019. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/9/big-moment-indian-sikhs-on-historic-pilgrimage-to-pakistan>.
- Amnesty International. *Human Rights in China*. 2025. Accessed August 8, 2025. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/east-asia/china/report-china/>.
- Amnesty International. *Human Rights in India*. 2025. Accessed August 15, 2025. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-asia/india/report-india/>.
- Amnesty International. *Human Rights in Iran*. 2025. Accessed August 8, 2025. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/iran/report-iran/>.
- Australian Human Rights Commission. “Freedom of Religion.” Last modified July 1, 2020. Accessed July 25, 2025. <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/rights-and-freedoms/projects/freedom-religion>.
- European Council on Refugees and Exiles. “Greece: Refugees Criminalized While Authorities Commit Crimes with Impunity.” March 10, 2023. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://ecre.org/greece-refugees-criminalized-while-authorities-commit-crimes-with-impunity/>.
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. “Hate Crime.” Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://fra.europa.eu/en/themes/hate-crime>.
- Eurostat. “Household Budget Survey – Statistics on Consumption Expenditure.” February 2025. Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Household\\_budget\\_survey\\_-\\_statistics\\_on\\_consumption\\_expenditure](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Household_budget_survey_-_statistics_on_consumption_expenditure).
- Fargues, Philippe, and Nasra Shah, eds. *Migration to the Gulf: Policies in Sending and Receiving Countries*. Gulf Research Center, 2018. Accessed August 18,

2025. <https://gulfmigration.grc.net/media/pubs/book/GRM%202017%20-%20Volume%20-%20Definitive%20-%202018-06-15.pdf>.

- Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (Germany). “Home Page.” Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/EN/homepage/homepage-node.html>.
- Ferrari, Alessandro, and Silvio Ferrari. *Religion and the Secular State: The Italian Case*. Strasbourg Consortium, n.d. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.strasbourgconsortium.org/content/blurb/files/Italy.pdf>.
- Freedom House. *Canada: Transnational Repression Host Country Case Study*. 2023. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/transnational-repression/canada>.
- Freedom House. *China: Freedom on the Net 2023 Country Report*. 2023. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/china/freedom-world/2024>.
- Freedom House. *Iran: Freedom on the Net 2024 Country Report*. 2024. Accessed August 15, 2025. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/iran/freedom-net/2023>.
- Freedom House. *Iraq: Freedom on the Net 2024 Country Report*. 2024. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/iraq/freedom-net/2024>.
- Freedom House. *Malaysia: Freedom on the Net 2024 Country Report*. 2024. Accessed August 15, 2025. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/pakistan/freedom-net/2023>.
- Freedom House. *Netherlands: Freedom in the World 2024 Country Report*. Accessed August 15, 2025. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/netherlands/freedom-world/2024>.
- Freedom House. *Pakistan: Freedom on the Net 2023 Country Report*. 2023. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/pakistan/freedom-net/2023>.
- Ghosh, Bobby. “Iran’s Sikhs Get a Better Deal than Many Other Minorities.” *Quartz*, July 21, 2022. Accessed August 18, 2025. <https://qz.com/573080/irans-sikhs-get-a-better-deal-than-many-other-minorities>.
- Global Centre for Pluralism. *Global Pluralism Monitor: Mexico*. 2024.
- Goiana-da-Silva, Francisco, Juliana Sá, Miguel Cabral, et al. “The Portuguese NHS 2024 Reform: Transformation through Vertical Integration.” *Frontiers in Public Health* 12 (May 2024). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1389057>.
- Government of Canada. *Canada’s Anti-Racism Strategy 2024–2028*. 2024. <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/combating-racism-discrimination.html>.
- “‘Go Home Indian’: Sikh Restaurateur Racially Targeted in Australia.” *The Economic Times*, November 17, 2023. Accessed July 24, 2025. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/nri/latest-updates/go-home-indian-sikh-restaurateur-racially-targeted-in-australia-report/articleshow/105265908.cms>.
- Hamburg, Free and Hanseatic City of. *We, the City of Hamburg! Participation, Intercultural Opening and Cohesion*. September 2017. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.hamburg.de/resource/blob/39904/4d88cc6b4b9893d3868116fe8ef8dc68/hamburg-integration-concept-data.pdf>.
- Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. *State of Human Rights in 2023*. Edited by Farah Zia. 2024. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://hrp-web.org/hrpweb/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2024-State-of-human-rights-in-2023-EN.pdf>.
- Human Rights Watch. *US: Border Policies Put Migrants at Risk*. 2023. <https://www.hrw.org>.
- Hussain, Abid. “Shehbaz Sharif Elected Pakistan PM for Second Term after Controversial Vote.” *Al Jazeera*, March 3, 2024. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/3/3/shehbaz-sharif-set-to-become-pakistans-new-pm-after-controversial-election>.
- Sikh Coalition. “Hate Crime Tracking and Prevention.” Accessed August 18, 2025. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/our-work/preventing-hate-and-discrimination/hate-crime-tracking-and-prevention/>.

- United Sikhs. “A Humanitarian’s Busman’s Holiday: United Sikhs and Athens Gurdwara Deliver Essentials to Syrian Refugees.” August 9, 2016. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://unitedsikhs.org/a-humanitarians-busmans-holiday-united-sikhs-and-athens-gurdwara-deliver-essentials-to-syrian-refugees/>.
- Aid to the Church in Need International. *Iraq Report 2023*. 2023. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://acninternational.org/religiousfreedomreport/reports/country/2023/iraq>.
- Al Jazeera. “Iraq’s Parliament Approves New Government.” October 27, 2022. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/27/iraq-lawmakers-approve-govt-of-prime-minister-designate-sudani>.
- Al Jazeera. “Deadly Attack on Sikh Temple in Kabul Leaves Community in Fear.” June 18, 2022. Accessed July 24, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/6/18/deadly-attack-on-sikh-temple-in-kabul-leaves-community-in-fear>.
- Amnesty International. “Iraqis Displaced by ISIS Attacks in Sinjar ‘Desperate’ for Aid.” August 5, 2014. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2014/08/iraqis-displaced-isis-attacks-sinjar-desperate-aid/>.
- Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs. “Immigration and Citizenship.” Accessed July 25, 2025. <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au>.
- CEPS (Centre for European Policy Studies). “The Impact of the German NetzDG Law.” Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-projects/the-impact-of-the-german-netzdg-law/>.
- CNN. Kaur, Harmmeet. “Houston Deputy Sandeep Dhaliwal Was Determined to Make a Difference.” October 2, 2019. Accessed August 4, 2025. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/10/02/us/sikh-deputy-sandeep-dhaliwal-profile/index.html>.
- Constitute Project. “Iran (Islamic Republic of) Constitution of 1979 (Revised 1989).” Last modified 1989. Accessed August 18, 2025. [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iran\\_1989](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iran_1989).
- FocusEconomics. “India Population.” Last modified 2025. Accessed August 15, 2025. <https://www.focus-economics.com/country-indicator/india/population/>.
- Institute for Economics & Peace. *Global Peace Index 2024: Measuring Peace in a Complex World*. June 2024. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/GPI-2024-web.pdf>.
- International Commission of Jurists. *Violations of the Right to Freedom of Religion or Belief in Pakistan*. July 2021. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Pakistan-FoRB-Advocacy-Analysis-biref-2021-ENG.pdf>.
- International Labour Organization. *Promoting Social Justice through a Just Transition*. Geneva: International Labour Organization, 2024. Accessed August 18, 2025. [https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@arabstates/@ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms\\_912980.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@arabstates/@ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_912980.pdf).
- International Organization for Migration. *World Migration Report 2022*. Geneva: IOM, 2021. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/WMR-2022.pdf>.
- Jewish Virtual Library. “International Religious Freedom Report for 2019 – United Arab Emirates.” June 10, 2020. Accessed August 17, 2025. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/international-religious-freedom-report-for-2019-united-arab-emirates>.
- Jodhka, Surinder S. “Beyond ‘Crises’: Rethinking Contemporary Punjab Agriculture.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 41, no. 16 (2006): 1530–37. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4418111>.
- Kaur, Sargunjit. “Sikhs Fight for Right to Wear Turbans, Beards in Military, Law Enforcement.” *Pluralism Project Archive*, Harvard University. July 11, 2009. Accessed August 4, 2025. <https://hwpi.harvard.edu/pluralismarchive/news/sikhs-fight-right-wear-turbans-beards-military-law-enforcement>.

- Kaur, Valarie. “One Year after Oak Creek, Why the FBI Tracking Hate Crimes Is a Victory.” *NBC News*, August 5, 2015. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna52676512>.
- Kenya National Treasury. *Education Sector Medium Term Expenditure Framework*. October 2024. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.treasury.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Education-Sector-Report-2024-latest.pdf>.
- Khushal, Mohammad Imran. “Hate Speech in Social Media: Fall of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.” *Modern Diplomacy*, November 23, 2022. Accessed July 24, 2025. <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2022/11/23/hate-speech-in-social-media-fall-of-the-islamic-republic-of-afghanistan/>.
- Know Your Rights: Religious Accommodation. United Sikhs. n.d. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://unitedsikhs.org/docs/kyr/KYRReligiousAccomodationPamphlet.pdf>.
- Kosmin, Barry, and Ariela Keysar. *American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS 2008)*. Hartford, CT: Trinity College, 2009.
- OECD. *International Migration Outlook 2023*. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1787/b0f40584-en>.
- OECD. *International Migration Outlook 2024: Portugal*. Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/11/international-migration-outlook-2024\\_c6f3e803/full-report/portugal\\_d44fe0e7.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/11/international-migration-outlook-2024_c6f3e803/full-report/portugal_d44fe0e7.html).
- United Sikhs. “International Civil and Human Rights Advocacy.” Accessed August 18, 2025. <https://unitedsikhs.org/ichra/>.
- United Sikhs (ICHRA). “Public Statement Condemning the Harassment and Discrimination at the Denver Airport Directed against Sikh Passengers.” September 27, 2024. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://ichra.unitedsikhs.org/public-statement-condemning-the-harassment-and-discrimination/>.
- United Sikhs. “Know Your Rights: Wearing a Kirpan into a Federal Building.” 2013. Accessed August 4, 2025. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/KYR-Sikh-Kirpan-FPS.pdf>.
- World Health Organization. “Italy.” Last modified 2023. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://data.who.int/countries/380>.
- Worldometer. “Iraq Population (2025).” Last modified 2025. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/iraq-population/>.
- Access Now. *Lives on Hold: Internet Shutdowns in 2024*. Last modified February 24, 2025. Accessed August 15, 2025. <https://www.accessnow.org/internet-shutdowns-2024/>.
- Aid to the Church in Need International. *Netherlands Report 2023*. 2023. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://acninternational.org/religiousfreedomreport/reports/country/2023/netherlands>.
- Al Jazeera. “Iran Election Run-off 2024 Results Updates: Pezeshkian Wins Presidency.” July 6, 2024. Accessed August 18, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/7/6/iran-presidential-election-run-off-2024-results-live>.
- European Commission. “Migrant Integration Hub.” Last modified July 10, 2025. Accessed August 19, 2025. [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/migrant-integration/migrant-integration-hub\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/migrant-integration/migrant-integration-hub_en).
- European Union. “Labour Market Information: Austria.” Last modified December 2024. Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information-europe/labour-market-information-austria\\_en](https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information-europe/labour-market-information-austria_en).
- European Union. “Labour Market Information: Italy.” Last modified December 2024. Accessed August 19, 2025. [https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information-europe/labour-market-information-italy\\_en](https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information-europe/labour-market-information-italy_en).

- European Union. “Labour Market Information: Netherlands.” Last modified February 2024. Accessed August 19, 2025. [https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information-europe/labour-market-information-netherlands\\_en](https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information-europe/labour-market-information-netherlands_en).
- Eurostat. *Migration and Asylum in Europe: 2024 Edition*. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/interactive-publications/migration-2024>.
- Law Commission of New Zealand. *Hate Crime Laws Review: Part 1 – Consultation Paper Summary*. February 2025. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.lawcom.govt.nz/assets/Publications/IssuesPapers/NZLC-IP55-Summary-Easy-Read-Part1.pdf>.
- Lenz, Ryan. “Radical Right Theories Flourish in Aftermath of Sikh Killings.” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, August 9, 2012. Accessed August 4, 2025. <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/hatewatch/radical-right-theories-flourish-aftermath-sikh-killings/>.
- Madry, Kylie, and Valentine Hilaire. “Mexico’s Sheinbaum Wins Landslide to Become Country’s First Woman President.” *Reuters*, June 3, 2024. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/mexicans-vote-election-seen-crowning-first-female-president-2024-06-02/>.
- Makkar, Sahlil. “Hindu, Sikh and Muslim Communities Support NSW’s Proposed Law against Religious Vilification.” *SBS Hindi*, July 17, 2023. Accessed July 24, 2025. <https://www.sbs.com.au/language/hindi/en/article/hindu-sikh-and-muslim-communities-support-nsws-proposed-law-against-religious-vilification/bqa0d6nxn>.
- National Bureau of Statistics of China. “Statistical Communiqué of the People’s Republic of China on the 2024 National Economic and Social Development.” *State Council of the People’s Republic of China*, February 28, 2025. Accessed August 8, 2025. [https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/statistics/202503/01/content\\_WS67c2695cc6d0868f4e8f02ae.html](https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/statistics/202503/01/content_WS67c2695cc6d0868f4e8f02ae.html).
- National Cohesion and Integration Commission (Kenya). *Annual Report and Financial Statements 2022/2023*. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://cohesion.go.ke/images/docs/downloads/AR.pdf>.
- National Cohesion and Integration Commission (Kenya). *Kenya’s National Action Plan against Hate Speech*. Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://cohesion.go.ke/images/docs/downloads/Kenyas\\_National\\_Action\\_Plan\\_Against\\_Hate\\_Speech.pdf](https://cohesion.go.ke/images/docs/downloads/Kenyas_National_Action_Plan_Against_Hate_Speech.pdf).
- National Police Chiefs’ Council. *Hate Crime Reporting and Response Strategies*. 2023.
- National Police Service (Kenya). *Annual Report 2023*. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.nationalpolice.go.ke/sites/default/files/2024-10/Annual%20Report%20-%202023.pdf>.
- New York Times. Nolan, Erin. “Man Accused in Fatal Beating of Sikh Driver Faces Hate Crimes Charges.” October 31, 2023. Accessed August 4, 2025. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/31/nyregion/sikh-man-killing-hate-crime-charges.html>.
- OECD. *OECD Employment Outlook 2024: Country Notes – Germany*. July 9, 2024. Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/06/oecd-employment-outlook-2024-country-notes\\_6910072b/germany\\_08ee101a.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/06/oecd-employment-outlook-2024-country-notes_6910072b/germany_08ee101a.html).
- OECD. *OECD Employment Outlook 2024: Country Notes – France*. July 9, 2024. Accessed August 19, 2025. [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/06/oecd-employment-outlook-2024-country-notes\\_6910072b/france\\_b842dc68.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/06/oecd-employment-outlook-2024-country-notes_6910072b/france_b842dc68.html).
- OECD. *The Protection and Promotion of Civic Space: Strengthening Alignment with International Standards and Guidance*. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2022. Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2022/12/the-protection-and-promotion-of-civic-space\\_c8a8caac/d234e975-en.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2022/12/the-protection-and-promotion-of-civic-space_c8a8caac/d234e975-en.pdf).

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Open for Business: Migrant Entrepreneurship in OECD Countries*. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2010. Accessed August 19, 2025. [https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2010/11/open-for-business\\_g1g11c3b/9789264095830-en.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2010/11/open-for-business_g1g11c3b/9789264095830-en.pdf).
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. *Institute on Religion and Public Policy: Religious Freedom in Belgium*. October 7, 2008. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/8/b/34243.pdf>.
- OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). *Hate Crime Reporting: Canada*. 2023. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://hatecrime.osce.org/reporting/canada/2023>.
- OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). *Netherlands Hate Crime Report 2023*. 2023. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://hatecrime.osce.org/reporting/netherlands/2023>.
- OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). *Portugal Hate Crime Report 2023*. 2023. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://hatecrime.osce.org/reporting/portugal/2023>.
- OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). *Türkiye Hate Crime Report 2023*. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://hatecrime.osce.org/reporting/turkiye/2023>.
- Statistics New Zealand. “Main Job Sectors in New Zealand.” Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/work/finding-work-in-new-zealand/main-job-sectors-in-new-zealand/>.
- World Health Organization. “Malaysia.” Last modified 2024. Accessed August 15, 2025. <https://data.who.int/countries/458>.
- Associated Press. Paphitis, Nicholas. “Conservative Mitsotakis Sworn in as Greece’s Prime Minister While Far-Right Sees Election Surge.” *Associated Press*, June 26, 2023. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://apnews.com/article/greece-elections-mitsotakis-prime-minister-44dc24e2287630910eb03e30449e2e93>.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. “Religious Affiliation in Australia.” Last modified April 7, 2022. Accessed July 25, 2025. <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/religious-affiliation-australia>.
- Australian Government Federal Register of Legislation. “Racial Discrimination Act 1975.” Last modified January 29, 2016. Accessed July 25, 2025. <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A00274/2015-12-10/text>.
- BBC News. Purohit, Jugal. “Russia-Ukraine Invasion: Indians Are Braving War to Study in Ukraine.” March 17, 2023. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-64973574>.
- Business and Economic Research Limited (BERL). Reid, Amanda. “Migration: The Engine Driving New Zealand’s Population Growth.” June 16, 2025. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.berl.co.nz/economic-insights/migration-engine-driving-new-zealands-population-growth>.
- BYJU’S. “Right to Freedom of Religion (Articles 25–28).” Accessed August 15, 2025. <https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/right-to-freedom-of-religion-articles-25-28/>.
- Census 2021 (UK Office for National Statistics). “Religion, England and Wales: Census 2021.” Last modified November 29, 2022. Accessed July 26, 2025. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/bulletins/religionenglandandwales/census2021>.
- European Parliament. “Protecting Fundamental Rights within the Union.” Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/democracy-and-human-rights/fundamental-rights-in-the-eu>.
- Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB), Government of Pakistan. “Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (PSGPC).” Last modified 2023. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://etpb.gov.pk/shrines/pakistan-sikh-gurdwara-parbandhak-committee-psgpc/>.

- Government of Italy. “Presidency of the Council of Ministers.” Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.governo.it/en>.
- Government of Australia. “About the Prime Minister.” Accessed July 24, 2025. <https://www.pm.gov.au/about-prime-minister>.
- Government of New Zealand, Statistics New Zealand. “Population Clock.” Last modified March 31, 2025. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/population-clock/>.
- Human Rights Watch. “Religious Repression in China.” Accessed August 8, 2025. <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/campaigns/china-98/religion.htm>.
- Instituto Nacional de Estatística (Portugal). “Resident Population.” Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine\\_indicadores&contecto=pi&indOcorrCod=0012903&selTab=tab0](https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_indicadores&contecto=pi&indOcorrCod=0012903&selTab=tab0).
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI). “Población.” Accessed July 27, 2025. <https://www.inegi.org.mx/temas/estructura/>.
- Lusa News Agency. “Presidente Deu Posse ao Primeiro-Ministro e Ministros do XXIV Governo Constitucional.” April 2, 2024. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.lusa.pt/article/42615724/presidente-deu-posse-ao-primeiro-ministro-e-ministros-do-xxiv-governo-constitucional>.
- Mexico News Daily. Rainsford, Cat. “Mexico in Numbers: Religion.” December 7, 2023. Accessed July 27, 2025. <https://mexiconewsdaily.com/culture/mexico-in-numbers-religion/>.
- Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. “Population of Overseas Indians.” Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.mea.gov.in/population-of-overseas-indians.htm>.
- Netsafe (New Zealand). “Reports and Research.” Last modified July 30, 2025. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://netsafe.org.nz/our-work/reports-and-research>.
- OpenDOSM (Department of Statistics Malaysia). “The Population of Malaysia.” Last modified July 31, 2025. Accessed August 9, 2025. <https://open.dosm.gov.my/dashboard/population>.
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Potz, Richard. *Religious Freedom and the Concept of Law and Religion in Austria*. July 10, 2009. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/0/2/38012.pdf>.
- Pakistan Population (LIVE). “Pakistan Population.” *Worldometer*. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/pakistan-population/>.
- Refugee Council (UK). *Response to the Illegal Migration Act 2023*. July 2023. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk>.
- Reporters Sans Frontières. “Russia: 52 NGOs Urge UN to Challenge Restrictions to Online Expression and Digital Privacy.” June 28, 2018. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://rsf.org/en/russia-52-ngos-urge-un-challenge-restrictions-online-expression-and-digital-privacy>.
- Statistics Austria. “Population at Beginning of Year/Quarter.” Last modified 2025. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.statistik.at/en/statistics/population-and-society/population/population-stock/population-at-beginning-of-year/quarter>.
- Statistics Netherlands. “Population Counter.” Last modified 2025. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/visualisations/dashboard-population/population-counter>.
- Statistics Portugal. See Instituto Nacional de Estatística.
- Turkish Statistical Institute. “Results of the Address Based Population Registration System, 2024.” Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=The-Results-of-Address-Based-Population-Registration-System-2024-53783&dil=2>.
- United States Census Bureau. “Population and Housing Unit Estimates.” Accessed August 4, 2025. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest.html>.
- United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. “Religious Freedom Conditions in China.” Accessed August 8, 2025. <https://www.uscifr.gov/countries/china>.

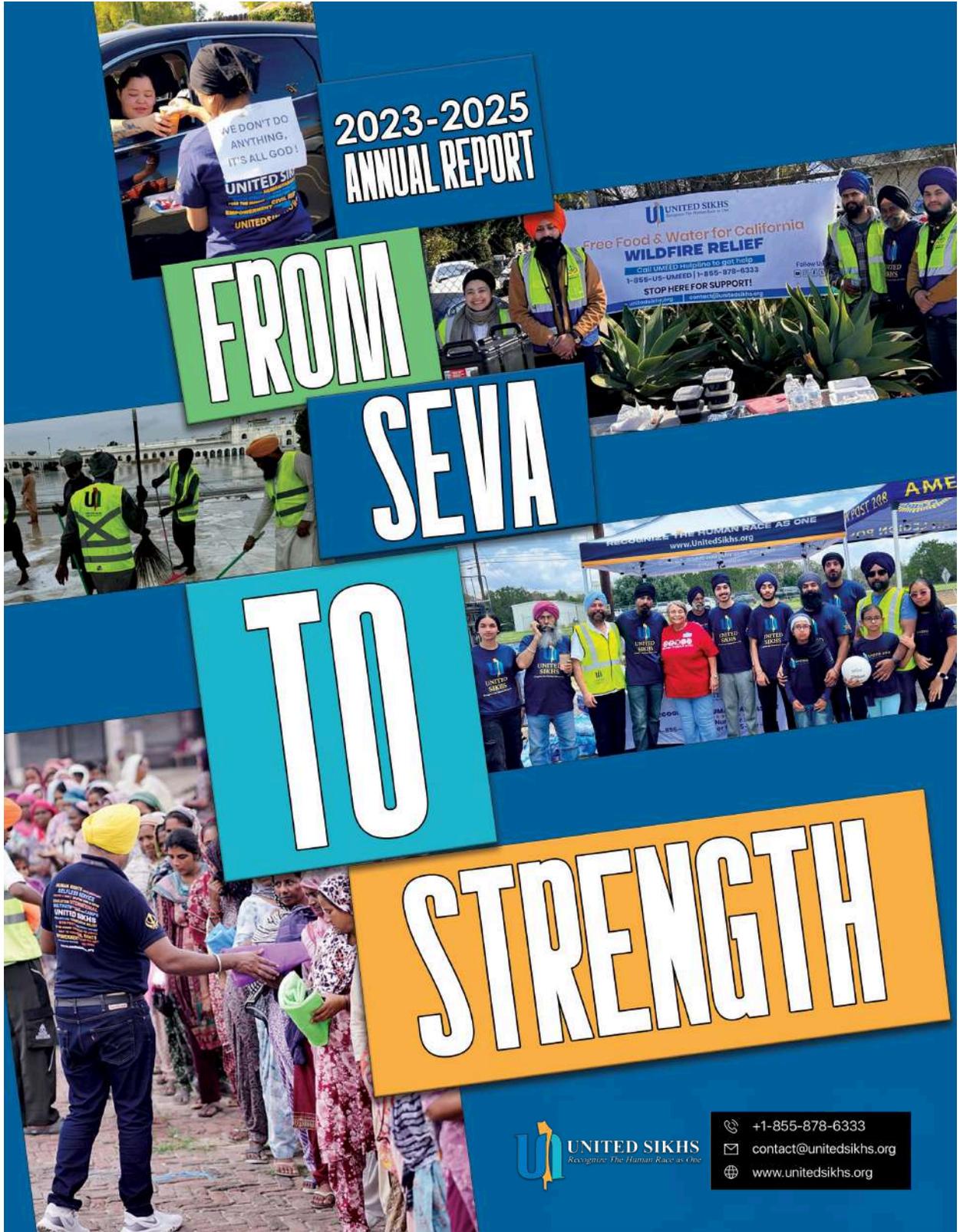
- United States Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs. “Russia International Travel Information.” Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/RussianFederation.html>.
- USA.gov. “Presidents, Vice Presidents, and First Ladies.” Accessed August 4, 2025. <https://www.usa.gov/presidents>.
- World Bank Group. “Population, Total – Kenya.” Last modified 2024. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=KE>.
- Worldometer. “Russia Population (2025).” Last modified 2025. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/russia-population/>.
- Young Pioneer Tours. “Religions and Ethnicities in Turkey in 2025.” Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.youngpioneertours.com/religions-and-ethnicities-in-turkey/>.
- Saseendran, Sajila. “Serving Free Meals to One and All Three Times a Day.” *Gulf News*, November 1, 2018. Accessed August 18, 2025. <https://gulfnews.com/uae/government/serving-free-meals-to-one-and-all-three-times-a-day-1.1980016>.
- Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. *Gobierno de México*. Accessed July 28, 2025. <https://www.gob.mx/sre>.
- “Austria: Settlement and Residence.” Austrian Embassy Ottawa. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/austrian-embassy-ottawa/travel-information-on-austria/entrance-and-residence/settlement-and-residence>.
- Shapiro, Ari, Karen Zamora, and Mia Venkat. “How the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin Is Doing 12 Years after Tragedy.” *We, the Voters* podcast, October 4, 2024, audio, 8:13. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://www.npr.org/2024/10/03/nx-s1-5136995/wisconsin-election-harris-trump-sikh-temple-oak-creek>.
- Sharma, Vaishali. “A Turban Is Not a Target: Sikh Students Face Bullying in US Schools.” *Khalsa Vox*, June 7, 2023. Accessed August 4, 2025. <https://khalsovox.com/news/a-turban-is-not-a-target-sikh-students-face-bullying-in-us-schools/>.
- Shayegan, Ehsan, and Yahya Ammaar. *Ignored Identities: The Status of Hindus and Sikhs in Afghanistan’s Legal System*. Poresh Policy Research Institute, 2016.
- Shoichet, Catherine. “US Border: Parents of Indian 6-Year-Old Who Died Speak Out.” *CNN*, June 24, 2019. Accessed July 27, 2025. <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/06/24/us/border-indian-girl-death/index.html>.
- Siddique, Abubakar, and Maliha Amirzada. “‘Fear and Anxiety’: Pakistan’s Minority Sikhs Flee Restive Province in Face of Rising Violence.” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, September 28, 2023. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://www.rferl.org/a/pakistan-minority-sikhs-flee-khyber-pakhtunkhwa/32614334.html>.
- United Sikhs. “Sikh Aid: Global Disaster Relief.” Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://unitedsikhs.org/disaster-relief-sikh-aid/>.
- The Sikh Coalition. *A National Sikh School Climate Report*. 2024. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/2024.04.16-WAYRF-report.pdf>.
- Sikh Council UK. *Directory of Gurdwaras in the UK*. 2023.
- Sikh Education Service. *Language and Culture in Diaspora*. 2023.
- Sikh Federation (UK). *The Sikh Manifesto 2024–2029*. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.sikhfeduk.com/assets/files/sikh-manifesto-24.pdf>.
- “Sikh Gurdwaras and Places of Worship: For NRI and Indians in the US.” *GaramChai*. Accessed August 4, 2025. <http://www.garamchai.com/gurudwara.htm>.
- Sikh Heritage Month Foundation. *Community Celebrations Overview*. 2023.
- Office for National Statistics (UK). “Sikh Identity, England and Wales: Census 2021.” December 15, 2023. Accessed July 26,

2025. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/articles/sikhidentityenglandandwales/census2021>.

- “Sikhism by Country 2025.” *World Population Review*. Accessed August 10, 2025. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/sikhism-by-country>.
- “Sikhism through Its Scriptures.” Harvard University. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://pll.harvard.edu/course/sikhism-through-its-scriptures-0>.
- Sikhnet Team, and Pritpal Singh. “The Plight of Afghan Sikhs.” *Sikhnet*, June 5, 2012. Accessed July 24, 2025. <https://www.sikhnet.com/news/plight-afghan-sikhs>.
- The Sikh Network. *Digital Advocacy and Diaspora Activism*. 2023.
- “Sikhs and Latter-day Saints in UAE Unite in Service.” *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, January 21, 2024. Accessed August 18, 2025. <https://news-middleeast.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/sikhs-and-latter-day-saints-in-uae-unite-in-service>.
- “Sikhs in Pakistan on Verge of Becoming Extinct Minority Group.” *Daijiworld*, May 3, 2021. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://www.daijiworld.com/news/newsDisplay?newsID=829821>.
- Singh, Manpreet. “Research Looks at Hate Crimes Reported by Sikhs in Victoria.” *SBS Punjabi*, June 15, 2020. Accessed July 25, 2025. <https://www.sbs.com.au/language/punjabi/en/podcast-episode/research-looks-at-hate-crimes-reported-by-sikhs-in-victoria/ga3xwvut3>.
- Singh, Pashaura, and Arvind-Pal Singh Mandair, eds. *The Sikh World*. Routledge Worlds Series. London: Routledge, 2023.
- Statistics Canada. *Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population*. Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa, November 15, 2023. Accessed July 25, 2025. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca>.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2024*. Geneva: UNHCR, 2023.
- United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. *2024 Annual Report*. Washington, DC, May 2024.
- Vaisse, Justin. “Veiled Meaning: The French Law Banning Religious Symbols in Public Schools.” *Brookings*, March 1, 2004. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/veiled-meaning-the-french-law-banning-religious-symbols-in-public-schools/>.
- “Voices of the First World War: Mesopotamia.” *Imperial War Museums*. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/voices-of-the-first-world-war-mesopotamia>.
- Wilson, Anita, Samina Saeed, and Aziz Ur Rahman. “Constitutional Rights of Religious Minorities in Pakistan.” *Global Political Review* 5, no. 1 (2020): 316–325. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2020\(V-I\).34](https://doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2020(V-I).34).
- World Bank. *Refugee Employment: Perspectives for Businesses, Policymakers, and Intermediaries*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2024. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/51e229cb3b4abfa22db1d93b5354c496-0570062024/original/Refugee-Employment-PS4R-Study.pdf>.
- United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. *World Population Prospects 2024*. Accessed August 18, 2025. <https://population.un.org/wpp/>.
- Human Rights Watch. *World Report 2024: Pakistan*. 2024. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/pakistan>.
- “World Sikh Organization Condemns Invitation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for G7 Summit.” *The Times of India*, June 17, 2025. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/world-sikh-organization-condemns-invitation-to-prime-minister-narendra-modi-for-g7-summit/articleshow/121682427.cms>.
- “Why I Love Wearing My Dastaar and My Kirpan.” TEDxYouth@Brum video, 12:08. Posted by TEDx Talks, September 26, 2019. Accessed August 4, 2025. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sRFd\\_SVwn4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sRFd_SVwn4).

- Editors of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. “Gurdwara.” September 2, 2014. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/gurdwara>.
- Bureau of Justice Statistics. “Home Page.” Accessed August 4, 2025. <https://bjs.ojp.gov>.
- “Sikhism in Australia.” *Sikh Youth Australia*. Accessed July 24, 2025. <https://www.sikhyouthaustralia.com/sikhism-in-australia/>.
- Human Rights Watch. *World Report 2024: Iraq*. Accessed August 4, 2025. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/iraq>.
- Minority Rights Group. “Malaysia.” Last modified January 2018. Accessed August 15, 2025. <https://minorityrights.org/country/malaysia/>.
- United Sikhs. “COVID-19 Emergency Relief Mission.” April 21, 2020. Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://unitedsikhs.org/covid-19-response/>.
- Liberty. *Public Order Act 2023: What You Need to Know*. April 2023. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk>.
- European Commission. *2023 Country Report: Portugal*. June 2023. Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-06/ip246\\_en.pdf](https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-06/ip246_en.pdf).
- OpenDOSM. “Kawasanku.” Last modified August 30, 2023. Accessed August 10, 2025. <https://open.dosm.gov.my/dashboard/kawasanku>.
- Statistics New Zealand. “International Migration: January 2024.” March 14, 2024. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/international-migration-january-2024/>.
- Stats NZ. “International Migration: January 2024.” March 14, 2024. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/international-migration-january-2024/>.
- L&E Global. “Anti-Discrimination Laws in Italy.” October 22, 2024. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://leglobal.law/countries/italy/employment-law/employment-law-overview-italy/04-anti-discrimination-laws/>.
- European Court of Human Rights. “Belgium.” January 2025. Accessed August 19, 2025. [https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/cp\\_belgium\\_eng](https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/cp_belgium_eng).
- European Commission. “Employed Worker in Greece.” April 1, 2025. Accessed August 19, 2025. [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/eu-immigration-portal/employed-worker-greece\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/eu-immigration-portal/employed-worker-greece_en).
- “Work Permits and Visas in Iraq.” *Rivermate*, April 27, 2025. Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://rivermate.com/guides/iraq/work-permits-and-visas>.
- Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras. *Act 23/2007 of July 4, as Amended by Act 29/2012 of August 9*. August 9, 2012. Accessed August 20, 2025. [https://www.sef.pt/en/Documents/LeideImig\(Lei29\\_2012\)EN.pdf](https://www.sef.pt/en/Documents/LeideImig(Lei29_2012)EN.pdf).
- United Sikhs. “Press Releases.” Accessed July 25, 2025. <https://unitedsikhs.org/category/press-release/>.
- “Visas and Immigration.” *UK Government*. Accessed July 26, 2025. <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration>.
- World Bank. “Migration & Remittances Overview.” Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migration/overview>.
- Sikh Coalition. “About Sikhs.” Accessed August 4, 2025. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/about-sikhs/>.
- Human Rights Watch. *World Report 2024: Mexico*. Accessed August 4, 2025. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/mexico>.
- Human Rights Watch. *World Report 2024: Russia*. Accessed August 4, 2025. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/russia>.
- “Sikhism in Germany.” *Sikhi Wiki*. Accessed August 7, 2025. [https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Sikhism\\_in\\_Germany](https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Sikhism_in_Germany).

- “Sikhism in the Netherlands.” *Sikhi Wiki*. Accessed August 7, 2025. [https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Sikhism\\_in\\_Netherlands](https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Sikhism_in_Netherlands).
- Human Rights Watch. *World Report 2023: India*. Accessed August 15, 2025. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/india>.
- World Bank Group. *Iran Economic Monitor*. Accessed August 18, 2025. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iran/publication/iran-economic-monitor>.
- United Sikhs. “Current Project.” Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://sikhaid.unitedsikhs.org/current-project/>.
- UNICEF Iraq. “Education.” Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.unicef.org/iraq/what-we-do/education>.
- Fair Observer. *Make Sense of 2023*. 2023. Accessed August 19, 2025. [https://www.fairobserver.com/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce\\_uploads/2024/01/Make-Sence-2023-1xmxco.pdf](https://www.fairobserver.com/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce_uploads/2024/01/Make-Sence-2023-1xmxco.pdf).
- Greece in Numbers. “Population.” Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://www.greeceinnumbers.gr/en-gb/Population>.
- United Sikhs. “Reports.” Accessed August 19, 2025. <https://unitedsikhs.org/reports/>.
- “Christopher Luxon.” *NZ History*. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/people/christopher-luxon-0>.
- President of Russia. “Presidents of Russia.” Accessed August 20, 2025. <http://en.kremlin.ru/structure/president/presidents>.
- “Sikhism News.” *New Zealand Herald*. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/topic/sikhism/>.
- “World of Cultures.” *OurAuckland*. Accessed August 20, 2025. <https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/world-of-cultures/all-events/>.
- Sikh Coalition. “Fact Sheet on Post-9/11 Discrimination and Violence against Sikh Americans.” Accessed August 7, 2025. <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/images/documents/fact%20sheet%20on%20hate%20against%20sikhs%20in%20america%20post%209-11%201.pdf>.



2023-2025  
ANNUAL REPORT

FROM  
SEVA

TO

STRENGTH

**U** UNITED SIKHS  
*Recognize The Human Race as One*

+1-855-878-6333  
contact@unitedsikhs.org  
www.unitedsikhs.org