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Parliamentary Briefings on Human Rights in India with Bhai Jaspal Singh Manjhpur

(Ottawa, ON: 18 Maghar, Nanakshahi 556 / December 3, 2024) - Sikh Federation (Canada) was honoured to host Bhai Jaspal Singh Manjhpur, a distinguished lawyer and human rights defender, for several briefings and a reception on Parliament Hill last week.

We met with Parliamentarians across party lines to raise the ongoing repression of Sikhs in Punjab, as well as the direct impacts of these violations on Sikhs in Canada. Bhai Jaspal Singh's first-hand accounts of India's violations and their impacts on Sikh activists in Canada highlight the need to immediately suspend all security and intelligence agreements with India.

Sikh Federation (Canada) is proud that we were able to ensure that he was also honoured for his work in Canada's House of Commons where he received a standing ovation.

Advocate Manjhpur led a Parliamentary briefing and reception that was attended by a number of Parliamentarians including Minister Kamal Khera, MP Matthew Green, MP Parm Bains, MP George Chahal, MP Sukh Dhaliwal, MP Iqwinder Gaheer, MP Randeep Sarai, and MP Sonia Sidhu. He also met with members of the Canadian Conservative Party, including Deputy Leader, MP Tim Uppal, MP Garnett Genuis, and MP Jasraj Singh Hallan.

In addition to Parliamentarians, he also met and discussed opportunities for cooperation with political analysts and human rights organizations, including the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group and Amnesty International's Canada section.

Jaspal Singh Manjhpur is a distinguished lawyer and human rights defender renowned for his work defending political dissidents and religious minorities subject to systemic discrimination by the Government of India. He is also an active advocate for policy reform, participating in numerous advocacy initiatives and publishing reports on human rights in India.



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As legal counsel for dozens of political prisoners, Jaspal Singh has an intimate understanding of the tools that India uses to clamp down on dissent and political expression. He is often invited by media outlets around the world to provide his expertise on various topics, including human rights in India, systemic discrimination in India's judiciary, and draconian amendments that were recently made to India's criminal justice system. He has been featured in stories on these topics published by The Economist, Globe & Mail, The Wire, Vice News and many others.

Bhai Jaspal Singh's briefings complemented national conversations about foreign interference and the extrajudicial killings of Sikh activists, as he briefed Parliamentarians on the targeting of Sikh activists through India's security agencies and judiciary itself. His insights outlined how the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) is used as a political tool to physically, mentally, socially, and economically break political activists through fabricated evidence, endemic torture and custodial deaths, as well as arbitrary detention.

He detailed how India uses its legislation and state institutions to violate the human rights of Sikhs, and how Canada's own agencies have been complicit and continue to be at risk of being manipulated by their Indian counterparts. Public evidence demonstrates that Indian diplomats and intelligence agencies are actively engaging in conduct to influence government decision-making in order to persuade Canadian policy makers and agencies to criminalize and prosecute Sikh political advocacy in Canada under the guise of "countering extremism".

In order to safeguard against this violence and these ongoing threats, Jaspal Singh's insights highlight that it is imperative that officials pay careful attention to how India's agencies operate domestically to understand how international partners like Canada can be implicated in violations.

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