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UNITED SIKHS LAUNCH MULTI-DIMENSIONAL STRATEGY TO REMOVE CANADA'S BAN ON RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS



Recognize the Human Race as One

In response to the passage of a new secularism law, which prohibits public civil servants in positions of authority from wearing religious symbols at their workplace, UNITED SIKHS today launched a plan to formally remove the ban. Citing human rights violations, including discrimination and infringement on religious freedom, the global humanitarian organization will challenge the law through various means.

"We will pursue multiple avenues of opposition to this discriminatory ban and challenge its validity to the fullest extent of the law," said Jagdeep Singh, UNITED

SIKHS CEO and Executive Director for North America. "Canada has always been a beacon of diversity and inclusion, which this legislation goes against entirely. We look forward to an expeditious removal of the law as we work with the support of the global Sikh community, fellow organizations and government officials who oppose this shameful ban."

Through its Right to Turban program, UNITED SIKHS successfully won global legal battles for the right to wear articles of faith in schools, the workplace, prisons and other public places. This includes cases filed in India, Belgium, France, Australia and America.

In 2014, a United States federal court ruled in favor of UNITED SIKHS legal advocates, who argued that a Sikh college student must be allowed to enroll in the U.S. Army Reserve Officer Training Corps without shaving his beard, cutting his hair, or removing his turban.



In 2004, France passed a law that banned religious signs in schools and the ban on religious head wear for identity photographs. UNITED SIKHS fought and won three cases that were filed before the UN Human Rights Committee in 2008 against the French turban ban, both in school and on ID documents.

Similarly, in Belgium, Sikh school children were not

allowed admission into GO schools in the Flemish area, unless they removed items / articles of faith associated with or required by their religion. UNITED SIKHS won cases in the Belgium Supreme Court, which held that the GO Schools were wrong to ban the Sikh turban in their schools.

Elsewhere in the world, UNITED SIKHS have marked a trend continuing whereby reli-

gious freedom is seen as a challenge to secularity.

In 2016, Sidhak Singh, age 5, was denied admission into a Christian school in Melbourne, Australia, because he kept unshorn hair and wore a patka (a type of turban worn by Sikh children). UNITED SIKHS engaged attorneys who successfully fought the ban at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, which held that the school had discriminated against the Sikh boy by not allowing him to keep his hair unshorn covered by a patka. The school then amended its uniform rules to accommodate all religious signs, including the hijab.

"Our International Civil and Human Rights Advocacy team will employ methodologies from other cases we have argued around the world to challenge the new law in Canada," Jagdeep Singh continued. "Every human has a right to worship freely and express religious principles

through symbols or clothing."

Any assistance through the UNITED SIKHS International Civil & Human Rights Advocacy directorate is the result of contributions from our generous donors. To donate, please visit: <https://unitedsikhs.org/donate/>.

Associated with the United Nations Dept. of Public Information UNITED SIKHS is a global humanitarian charity that advocates for civil and human rights across 10 chapters. Our International Civil & Human Rights Advocacy helps advance the economic, social and spiritual empowerment of minorities and other marginalized groups and individuals in need, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social status, age or ability. We achieve this by protecting and enforcing the civil and human rights of minorities and marginalized groups in the Americas, Europe and Asia.

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