



UNITED
SIKHS

Recognize the Human Race as One

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Contents	Pg
About UNITED SIKHS and our mission	3
Our history and areas of service	4
Haiti Earthquake humanitarian relief	5-8
Rehabilitation o internally displaced persons (IDP), Peshawar, Pakistan	9-10
Afghan family finds asylum in Canada	11-12
Feed the hungry program & Feeding Stranded Passengers at Heathrow Airport	13-15
Panjab Flood Relief Make Poverty A History (Rescue A Family)	16-18
Haiti Water Treatment Plant	19-21
Japan Tsunami	22-23
Africa Feed the Hungry & Water Tanks (Guru Nanak Food Bank)	24-25
Olympics Langaar	26
Hurricane Sandy Rescue Work	27-28
Uttarakhand Relief Mission	29
Philippines Relief Mission	30-31
Kashmir Relief Mission	32
Malaysia Flood Relief	33-34
France & Belgium - Turban Ban UN Case	35-37
Contact Information	38



About US

UNITED SIKHS is a U.N. affiliated international non-profit, non-governmental, humanitarian relief, human development and advocacy organization, aimed at empowering those in need, especially disadvantaged and minority communities across the world. UNITED SIKHS is registered: as a non-profit tax exempt organization pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code in the USA; as a Registered Charity in England and Wales under the Charities Act 1993, Charity Number 111 2055; as a national charitable institution (ABN 24 317 847 103) with the Australian Taxation Office; and is a registered NGO in Belgium; as a non-profit organization in Canada; under the Societies Registration Act 1860 in Panjab and as a tax exempt organisation under section 80G of the Income Tax Act 1961; under the French Association Law. UNITED SIKHS is registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860 in Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, Pakistan

Our Mission

To transform underprivileged and minority communities and individuals into informed and vibrant members of society through civic, educational and personal development programs, by fostering active participation in social and economic activity.

We at UNITED SIKHS believe that the development of enlightened and progressive societies can be made possible by socially conscious groups of people who make a commitment to develop and direct human potential. Our work, efforts and achievements stand as a testament to our faith in this vision. Accordingly, UNITED SIKHS has sought to fulfil its mission not only by informing, educating and uplifting fellow beings but also by participating in cross-cultural and social dialogues to ensure that the promises and benefits of democracy are realised by all.

UNITED SIKHS is also an avenue for networking between like-minded organisations to establish and nurture meaningful projects and dialogues - whether social, cultural or spiritual- to promote harmony, understanding and reciprocity in our villages, towns and cities.

To achieve its objectives, UNITED SIKHS also participates in coalitions that share a common vision based on the belief that there is no greater endeavour than to serve, empower and uplift fellow beings. The core of our philosophy is an unwavering commitment to civic service and social progress on behalf of the common good.

Equal Opportunities Statement

UNITED SIKHS is committed to the promotion of diversity and equal opportunities amongst its employees, volunteers and project beneficiaries.

UNITED SIKHS fervently believes in the promotion of diversity and equality for the benefit of the public by promoting the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of age, colour, race, religion or belief, caste, ethnic or social origin, gender, genetic features, disability, sexual orientation or language, by advancing education in equality and diversity, and by promoting attitudes, customs and practices in favour of equality.

Promotion of diversity and equality will occur through the use of publications, the media, and public advocacy and through meeting the charitable needs of those who have suffered discrimination on the afore mentioned terms

UNITED SIKHS began in 1999 when a group of Sikhs from the New York metropolitan area banded together to assist in the socio-economic development of immigrant communities in Queens, New York.



Today, UNITED SIKHS is a grass-roots organisation with Eleven chapters in North America, Asia, Australia, Africa and Europe that pursue projects for the spiritual, social and economic empowerment of underprivileged and Minority communities across the world. UNITED SIKHS all chapters focus on three major areas of services.

1 International Civil & Human Rights Advocacy

- Transportation Security Administration
- Right To Turban
- EU Airport Security
- Anti-Bullying
- Right to wear articles of faith in France, Belgium and globally



2. Sikh Aid

- Haiti Earthquake Relief
- Pakistan/Panjab Flood Relief
- Feed the Hungry
- Hurricane Ike
- Make Poverty History
- Pakistan IDP Relief Project
- Japan Tsunami
- Sandy Hurricane
- Malaysian floods
- Indonesian floods
- Asian tsunami



3. Empowerment and Education

- Sikh Education Foundation
- Deeva (De-addiction through education empowerment vigilance and awareness)
- Sikh Awareness Through Libraries (SATL)
- Camps
- STARAE



HAITI QUAKE HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI

January, 2010 a deadly earthquake of 7.0 magnitude rocked Haiti killing hundreds of thousands of people and leaving millions homeless. UNITED SIKHS rushed emergency supplies to thousands of people left homeless by the earthquake.

As early as January 16, Retired Lt. Col. Gurbachan Singh, along with other volunteers arrived in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti to first hand assess the situation and distribute food, water, medical supplies and toys for children. UNITED SIKHS played a vital role in assisting the efforts both through fundraising and volunteering in the disaster area.

COLLECTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF SUPPLIES

Immediately following the earthquake, UNITED SIKHS began an intensive and successful period of fundraising. Volunteers spent countless hours collecting, sorting, and packing various items to be sent to Haiti. On February 21, in the presence of volunteers and local politicians, the first shipment of supplies left UNITED SIKHS office. The local community organized similar efforts and with the help of Sukhwinder Singh, UNITED SIKHS Director, a 40-foot high container filled with boxes of supplies left for Haiti.



Volunteers help sort and pack food sent in the first shipment to the disaster area.



Volunteers sort through the mountain of clothing generously donated to UNITED SIKHS Canada's humanitarian relief efforts in Haiti.



Toronto volunteers after loading the first shipment.



Montreal volunteers after loading their first shipment.





UNITED SIKHS Director Ranbir Singh speaks to local politicians, community members, and the media regarding the shipment being sent to Haiti.



Andrew Kania, Member of Parliament for Brampton West, thanks UNITES SIKHS for their humanitarian relief efforts.

SEVA IN THE DISASTER AREA

Harcharan Singh and Amritpaul Singh, arrived as part of the second volunteer team early in the relief efforts. The volunteers purchased food, water and supplies in two 20 feet trucks before heading to the UNITED SIKHS AID camp in Haiti. Despite the immensely difficult travel, the volunteers did not rest until they had prepared and served hot meals to about 500 survivors.

"We were tired after spending 30 hours on the road, but did not want to rest until we had cooked and served our first hot meals to earthquake survivors" said Harcharan Singh, UNITED SIKHS AID Langgar in-charge. "My family and Sikh community have supported me to come and serve here. I am happy that I was able to live up to my faith and expectations." He added.

"After seeing the magnitude of disaster I forgot all my pain. Here, everyone needs help. Countless survivors with serious injuries are hungry and waiting for food. I could not think of anything else but to cook hot meals and serve them," said Amritpaul Singh, UNITED SIKHS Aid volunteer.

Also, joining the UNITED SIKHS team to assist with preparing and serving langgar was popular Brampton city councillor Vicky Dhillon. , Mr. Dhillon joined the UNITED SIKHS team carrying 1,500 shirts, lots of tooth-brushes, dry food, shoes and many other supplies.



Harcharan Singh prepares food in Haiti.



Amritpaul Singh prepares langgar (hot meals) in Haiti.



UNITED SIKHS volunteer serving langgar to elderly woman and her family.



Popular Brampton City Councillor and social activist Vicky Dhillon (centre) with Canadian Forces, medics and other volunteers from UNITED SIKHS helping in Haiti relief efforts in Port au Prince.



Dr. Baljinder Singh, volunteer of UNITED SIKHS, with a patient in Port au Prince.

Daily, over 5,000 hot-meals were distributed following a request from the Mayor of Carrefour, Yvonne Gerome to increase supplies. Medical doctors, physical therapists, occupational therapists from Chicago, New York, Toronto and Seattle also played a vital role in providing medical assistance by setting up a rehabilitation camp at a nearby makeshift hospital. Volunteers also offered emotional support where they could. Charles, a little 8 years old boy came into the UNITED SIKHS camp where workers bathed him, brushed his teeth and eagerly participated in kirtan (devotional songs).

Efforts did not go unnoticed; President Barack Obama praised UNITED SIKHS relief efforts at the National Prayer Breakfast meeting in Washington DC. The president was addressing a select audience of heads of state, including the Prime Minister of Spain, and praised the relief efforts launched by different communities in Haiti



Manraj Kaur, volunteer of UNITED SIKHS from Vancouver, helps Charles colour at UNITED SIKHS' base camp.



UNITED SIKHS AID Volunteers load hot meals to give out to families and children.



God's grace is...expressed through multiple faith-based efforts. By evangelicals at World Relief. By the American Jewish World Service. By Hindu temples, and mainline Protestants, Catholic Relief Services, African American churches, the UNITED SIKHS."

- PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

Also, upon returning, UNITED SIKHS volunteers were honoured by the local sangat and leaders at the Rexdale Nagar Keetan and at City Hall. Member of Parliament, Gurbax Singh Malhi attended a ceremony honouring the volunteers and presented them with plaques.



DISTRIBUTION OF BLANKETS AND SUPPLIES TO DISPLACED FAMILIES AS WINTER APPROACHES

UNITED SIKHS provided assistance to families who were affected by the communal conflict in the (Feroz khel tribe) Orakzai Agency and (Sada) Khurram Agency by providing them with blankets and assisting Gurdwaras with essential supplies. The supplies came as the harsh winter in Pakistan continued to take its toll, especially on those who had been displaced from their homes.



Residents of Pendigeb receive blanket provided by donations from UNITED SIKHS



Residents of Khyber agency receive blanket provided by donations from UNITED SIKHS

Blankets were distributed to 87 families in need including Sikh families of Khyber, Orakzai, and Khurram Agencies and some Hindu families of Para Chinaar Khurram agency. Baba Ji Amir Singh, the leader of Sikh Sangat in Peshawar and FATA, and UNITED SIKHS volunteers Charanjit Singh Sagar and Saroop Singh distributed blankets to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from minority communities. Baba ji Amir Singh thanked UNITED SIKHS for providing blankets for IDPs and added that it will help IDPs cope with the hardships of bitter winter.

As temperatures dropped in North-West Pakistan, UNITED SIKHS also began distribution of additional relief supplies to IDPs living in Peshawar and Hasan Abdal with host communities. Supplies included medicines to Civil Dispensaries of Gurudwara Bhai Joga Singh Peshawar and Gurudwara Punja Sahib Hasanabdal and food supplies to Gurudwara Bhai Joga Singh Peshawar for Langgar. The committee members of Gurudwara Bhai Joga Singh, Amrat Singh, Baba Ji Makhan Singh and Sarbat Singh, expressed their gratitude for having important medical supplies and food rations to assist with rehabilitation efforts.

Dr. Mohammad Ali, who is in charge of the Civil Dispensary at Gurudwara Shri Punja Sahib said “We are very thankful to UNITED SIKHS for donating medicines; these were urgently needed.” He added a request for more supplies especially for common cold, fever, diarrhoea, intestinal, stomach and gastric problems as the season makes children more susceptible to these diseases.



Donated food supplies for Gurdwara Bhai Joga Singh and medical supplies for G.Bhai Joga Singh Civil Dispensary.



Dr. Mohammad Ali, in charge of the Civil Dispensary Gurudwara Panja Sahib, checks supplies donated for Sikh IDPs living with host communities.

The IDPs from Bunir and Swat are also facing difficulties in getting food rations from UN and other agencies. The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) blocked thousands of ration cards of families from these areas (which provide identification and therefore access to existing food supplies). UNITED SIKHS along with other UN agencies is coordinating with Social Welfare Department NWFP, PARRSA, NADRA and Special Support Group (SSG) to reopen these ration cards.

IDPs first began to flee from the Swat valley in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), in response to Pakistan army's military operation against the Taliban. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has reported that over 2.5 million people are displaced by this conflict, which has stretched the much needed humanitarian resources in Pakistan.



IDP men and women in Gurdwara Panja Saheb

FAMILY FINDS ASYLUM IN CANADA

WINNIPEG, CANADA

A Sikh woman and her daughter flew into Winnipeg the first week of October, after her husband was brutally killed in 2008 by a group suspected to be the Taliban, near Peshawar, Pakistan.

The pair were granted asylum by the Canadian government after the brutal slaying of the head of their family, Balwant Singh. UNITED SIKHS provided help to Harender Kaur, 42, and her daughter, Iimid Kaur, 14, since we 'found' them amongst other Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Gurdwara Panja Sahib in Pakistan, where they had taken refuge after the killing.

On 23 November 2008, a militant group, believed to be the Taliban, kidnapped Balwant Singh from his shop near Peshawar, in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). They kept him hostage before slaying him and his body was found two days later 20 km away. This left Harender Kaur and her daughter alone and destitute and they took refuge 125 km away at the Panja Sahib Gurdwara.



Harender Kaur and Iimid Kaur being met by representatives of the Sikh community in Winnipeg: From left to right in the front row: Giani Kewal Singh, President Khalsa Divan Society of Manitoba, Azizeh Ferdowsi, Resettlement Counsellor, Iimid Kaur, Harender Kaur and Ranbir Singh (UNITED SIKHS Director). Back row, left to right: Jaswant Singh, Gurpreet Kaur, Dilbagh Singh and Arvinder Kaur

In July 2009, UNITED SIKHS AID volunteers, who were in Pakistan to provide relief during the Pakistan IDP crisis, heard of Harender Kaur's plight and that they had no other family in Pakistan and wanted to be reunited with other family members in the United Kingdom.

"Our humanitarian relief volunteers got in touch with our advocacy team in the UK to contact Harender Kaur's family and to provide assistance with their asylum application," said Mejindarpal Kaur, UNITED SIKHS Legal Director based in London, who led a team of case workers and lawyers in this asylum case.

"We requested the UNHCR (*United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*), who were handling their asylum application, to reunite the duo with their family in the UK. But we were told that their chances of obtaining asylum in Canada were better. We, therefore, obtained supporting evidence from their UK family which we submitted to the UNHCR," She added.

Soon after their arrival in Winnipeg, Harender Kaur and Ilmid Kaur were honoured by the Deputy Premier of Manitoba, Hon. Eric Robinson, at a fund raising dinner for Winnipeg Mayor Candidate, Judy W Leis. At an event organized by the Sikh Society of Manitoba, they received siropas (robes of honour) from the renowned Ragi Nirmal Singh, Khalsa Hazoori Ragi of Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. This event was attended by the management of all eight Winnipeg Gurdwaras who had gathered to meet them with the congregation.

When they flew into Canada, UNITED SIKHS director Ranbir Singh, joined them in Winnipeg, where he had made arrangements for them to be warmly received by representatives of the Winnipeg Sikh community.

“We were very happy that the open hearts and minds of the Canadian government and people had given Harender Kaur and her daughter a new life after they fought a gallant and lone battle as refugees in Pakistan,” said Ranbir Singh.

“When we arrived at Winnipeg airport, we were received by community leaders, Giani Kewal Singh and Darshan Singh Brar, and their families. It has been a hectic line up of activities for the duo, as community leaders including Giani Jaswant Singh have made many arrangements to make them comfortable. We have a doctor who said he will do house visits if they need him; a driving instructor who said he will teach them driving for free; they are invited to Sikh homes for meals everyday and the list of help offered is long,” he added.



Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism) and Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister for Democratic Reform) with Harender Kaur and Her daughter Ilmid Kaur.



Harender Kaur and Ilmid Kaur being honoured by the Dy Premier of Manitoba, Hon Eric Robinson . From left to right: Giani Kewal Singh, Mr.Kavin (with microphone) , Deputy Premier, Hon. Eric Robinson, Harender Kaur, Ilmid Kaur, Mayoral Candidate, Judy W Leis. And Local M.L.A, Mr. Mohinder Sran.

FEED THE HUNGRY

MONTHLY FEED THE HUNGRY PROGRAM

Every month UNITED SIKHS volunteers spend one day of their weekend helping to feed the disadvantaged. Taking place at Parkdale Recreation Centre of downtown Toronto, the Centre becomes filled with volunteers wearing a dastar (a Sikh turban), who serve hot-meals and distribute clothes on occasion to the homeless.

“Our slogan is to ‘Recognize the Human Race as One’, it is with this spirit that I eagerly look forward to the next Feed the Hungry event” said one regular volunteer. “Everyone is so appreciative and happy to have us at the Centre. It doesn’t take much, but it goes a long way” said another volunteer after the November 13 event.

Over the years, UNITED SIKHS has mobilized numerous disaster relief missions spanning countries in Asia and North America, including the Asian Tsunami, Asian Earthquake, Hurricane Katrina, Haiti Earthquake and the Myanmar Cyclone. The 'Feed the Hungry' campaign is an extension of UNITED SIKHS' humanitarian relief work in response to the dire need for food caused by man-made crises.

"The Feed the Hungry effort is to further a 500 year old mission by Guru Nanak Sahib , the first Sikh Guru, to feed the hungry, " said Ranbir Singh, UNITED SIKHS' Director.



UNITED SIKHS VOLUNTEER TEAM SERVING FOOD AT PARKDALE RECREATION CENTRE



LONDON, UK

FEEDING STRANDED PASSENGERS AT HEATHROW AIRPORT

UNITED SIKHS responded to an SOS call for hot meals from Heathrow airport and fed stranded hungry travellers as an ash cloud spewing out of Iceland's Eyjafjallajokull volcano affected air traffic in *Europe in a way unprecedented in living memory*, grounding planes, and leaving thousands stranded.



UNITED SIKHS volunteers serving hot meals to stranded passengers at Heathrow airport.



Stranded Heathrow passengers having their hot meals.

At 7am on Monday morning, Harbans Kaur, UNITED SIKHS community Service Director, received a call from an employee at Heathrow's Terminal 3, who said that there is a lounge-full of people in the arrivals hall who haven't eaten a hot meal for days. These were passengers stranded since the flight ban caused by Iceland's ash cloud five days prior.

Immediately, a team of eight UNITED SIKHS volunteers put a plan into action and prepared lentil curry and rice. Volunteers Gurmit Singh, Narpinder Kaur and their friends purchased water bottles, fruit, chocolates, and tea, and set off to Terminal 3 to serve the people and assess the situation.

"When we got to the arrivals hall we saw a sad scene. The stranded passengers we met were from Australia, Vietnam and USA. They had run out of money and food at the airport was expensive. They had no choice but to sleep on the floor or remain sitting on the hard chairs. Some of the passengers were in transit on long haul flights and many were stranded for four days. They were bored and exhausted. They were all very pleased to be offered free hot meals by us," said Baljinder Kaur, one of the UNITED SIKHS volunteers.

As a global hub airport, Heathrow had come to a halt, becoming the temporary home of hundreds of passengers. They waited for resumption of normal flights, and became ever more hungry and tired in the process. Waiting passengers spoke of hotel rates escalating overnight, forcing them to 'sleep rough' at airports.

"I was stranded and hungry, without much money, at Frankfurt airport two days before we received the SOS due to the traffic crisis caused by the ash cloud. I knew how it felt. It mattered not that the stranded travelers at Heathrow could have bought cold sandwiches which were available at high prices in an outlet. We needed to provide solace through hot food." said Jaswinder Kaur from UNITED SIKHS.

"As we began serving the food, a big queue formed of smiling passengers who came for seconds as well. One even asked for the recipe. A lot of them wanted to know who we were. They said they had not encountered anything of this nature before," said Atinder Singh, another UNITED SIKHS volunteer.

“The spirit of selfless service spread, as one passenger immediately offered to help serve the food, and grateful airport staff assisted us in making hot drinks. A duty policeman said how happy he was to see the stranded being fed. Stranded passengers asked if we would return,” added Darshan Kaur, one of the eight volunteers who had mounted this ‘Feed the Hungry’ event at the airport.



UNITED SIKHS volunteers with the passengers they fed and a helpful policeman.

LEHRAN, SANGRUR, PANJAB, INDIA

Heavy flooding in Haryana during the month of July claimed many lives and left hundreds of acres of land inundated. Panjab Fifty village families of District Sangrur, who had lost their crops when the swollen River Ghaggar swept over their fields, received cash relief from UNITED SIKHS, whilst they awaited compensation promised by the government.

UNITED SIKHS gave Rs 5,000 to each of 70 rural families in 16 villages that had suffered extreme losses. A total of Rs 3.5 lakh was distributed in one day.

UNITED SIKHS Director, Mejjindarpal Kaur, who personally distributed the relief in 16 villages along the Ghaggar said, “We visited 16 of the 27 villages in the Lehnan subdivision where farms were destroyed and sadly we were not able to help every needy family. Most of the families were not yet in receipt of the Rs 5,000 promised by the state government because of administrative delay.”

Our team, which comprised members of a local relief organization run by the Baba Nanak Charitable trust, the Rescue and Revival Mission, led by their chairman, Inderjit Singh Jaijee, started from Village Khanauri and wound

up at Handa, where the Ghaggar leaves District Sangrur. The recipient families were identified with the help of village elders.

Amongst the aid recipients were widows of suicide victims who were affected by the floods-affected villages. All the women were the sole support of their families. We also identified 50 widows of 'suicide-farmers' in the same region, and we sought donations to provide them monthly cash assistance so that their children are not forced to drop out of school due to hardship.



UNITED SIKHS AID team arriving at a village to distribute cash aid to flood victims in Moonak, Sangrur, East Panjab.



UNITED SIKHS distributes cash to flood victims in Moonak, Sangrur, and East Panjab.

Rescue a Family is your chance to help make poverty history in Panjab. Sponsor a poor and needy family and help them survive and have a brighter future.

You will be providing relief to destitute families after the death of their main breadwinner(s) and enable them to continue to live in their own home environment. You provide money for basic necessities such as food, education and health care and provide resources they need to earn an extra income.

Without your help, the trauma the families face after the death of their loved ones is multiplied because the family members are at severe risk of being sent to orphanages and old-age homes. Orphanages often do not accept boys and girls at the same institution so brothers and sisters are separated, and the remaining family members find it difficult to keep in contact. Many more family members are left destitute and remaining male members become high suicide risks. But by giving a monthly or a one-off donation, you can help these families

CASE 1: Surjit, Baljit and Suneet Kaur

15 year old Surjit was left caring for her younger sisters, Baljit and Suneet when their father died and their mother abandoned them shortly after. They live in a village in Sangrur, one of the poorest districts in Panjab, North-West India. The lack of finances meant the girls had to leave school so that they could earn a living.



L-R (Surjit Kaur 15 Years old, Sunit Kaur 14 Years and Baljit Kaur 13 years old.)

“Rescue a Family” found a donor to “adopt” the girls by providing financial donations so that the girls can continue with their education and have enough money for their basic welfare.

CASE 2: SUKHPAL KAUR AND HER CHILDREN

Sukhpal Kaur (below) earns 10 rupees for every Kilo of milk her lone cow produces. She is struggling to support herself and her children. Her husband committed suicide in November 2005 due to desperation at his financial situation – a victim of the phenomenon of ‘rural suicides’ that is spreading across the poor districts of Panjab.

The Aim:

- Help provide financial relief for rural families whose main breadwinner(s) have committed suicide
- Encourage organic farming and traditional arts as forms of extra income
- Raise global awareness of poverty issues in Panjab
- Support innovative ways of researching and tackling poverty and development in the state



Sukhpal Kaur (centre) holding a picture of her recently deceased husband. She is stood with her daughter Rani Kaur (left) and son Gurbinder Singh (right).

Since then, Sukhpal Kaur has been left with her two children and 250,000 Rupees of debt to a loan shark – more than she will ever be able to repay. She is yet another victim of Panjab’s Green Revolution. Unfortunately, Sukhpal’s is not a rare case, but you can help.

Why?

Panjab is no longer the prosperous state it once was. Poverty is rife in districts such as Bathinda, Mansa and Sangrur, and the lack of international help for the people in these areas means the problems are simply worsening. When you go to India, where do you go? Chances are you visit many of the wonderful sights of the country in its 35 states and union territories. If you do go to Panjab, you may go to Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Chandigarh or some of the other districts from where Non-Resident Indians tend to have migrated. And although you see poverty in these districts, they are incomparable to the poverty faced by citizens of districts such as Sangrur.

“According to the former chief minister of Panjab, [Panjabi farmer’s] average daily earning is Rs 39 as against the minimum wage of Rs 69. Given the current level of input costs, crop prices, and credit conditions, these farmers are doomed to a hand-to-mouth existence at best. It is time to rethink what constitutes poverty and the poverty line”. **Inderjit Singh Jaijee, Convenor, Movement Against State Repression**

The dire need of the farmers and the increasing debts they have are leading to an unprecedented and worrying number of suicides by family breadwinners. Farmer suicides are occurring in particular in the Bathinda, Mansa, Sangrur, Gurdaspur and Amritsar districts of Panjab – the poorest areas in the state. The suicides occur because the farmers feel completely destitute.

“Most farmers have committed suicide on the day they have sold the last acre because they realise there is no more steady income, and they can no longer support their families”. **Aman Sidhu,**

This is how they get into their cycle of debt:

- They borrow money from loan sharks to buy pesticides. They cannot borrow money from banks because land is not accepted as collateral.
 - The pesticide-saturated land is stripped of nutrients and produces successively lower yields.
 - Farmers are then forced to sell their crops for less than it costs them to produce, meaning the farmers cannot repay the exorbitant sums the loan sharks ask for.
- Being trapped in this cycle drives many farmers to take their life.

HAITI WATER TREATMENT

Sikhs Open a Water Treatment Plant in Haiti Over 5000 Survivors of the 2010 Earthquake has Access to Clean Drinking Water. UNITED SIKHS honoured with a Haitian National Flag.

In its continuous efforts to rebuild and rehabilitate Haiti and provide humanitarian relief in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake, UNITED SIKHS opened a water treatment plant on March 31st 2012. This plant provides clean drinking water, by a reverse osmosis system process to over 5000 Haitians on a daily basis. The project is an effort to address the severity of a cholera epidemic and other water related illnesses that cause sickness, death and destabilize a nation.



Residents digging a well in the city of Aux Cayes.



Be Your Best Community Reverse Osmosis plant

"It is an honour to meet such a great organization that brings the first water plant to Aux Cayes. Hope you will continue working with us. We need hospitals and medical assistance for women who are dying of childbirth," stated Astrel Dolne, Deputy of Aux Caye.

United Nations' Statistics

- 600,000 Haitians still without shelter
- General population is extremely vulnerable and faces food insecurity and the threat of cholera.
- The Cholera death toll has neared 6,500 over the past year

UNITED SIKHS' finding Sanitation and the provision of safe water is a national priority.

- It takes 5 litres of well water to make 1 litre of clean bottled water.
- Average Haitian family uses 5 gallons of water per day.
- Almost 70 percent of the available fresh water gets used for irrigation in agriculture.

Luna Charles, UNITED SIKHS' relief coordinator in Haiti, worked diligently with locals to build the water treatment plant. The Deputy, City Mayor, Police Chief, Justice for Peace and Inspector of Education attended the opening ceremony in Aux Cayes. UNITED SIKHS was honoured with the Haitian National flag for its continuous humanitarian relief effort in the country. Amritpal Singh, Sikh Aid national coordinator, received the National Flag.



Children appreciating and honouring the Rice Donation



R-L: Aux Caye Judge, Police Chief at Inauguration ceremony

"If you ever need any assistance in regards to security, we will be at your service for any future projects. Thank you," said Lundi, Director of Police.

"Your organization is welcome in our country. If you need any assistance our office will support you 100 percent," said Ernst Voltaire, Mayor of Torbeck

"The Haitian people would like to extend their hands to say thank you to UNITED SIKHS for sponsoring a water treatment plant and compound for the community in Aux Cayes, " said Judy Fenel, Inspector of Education.

UNITED SIKHS distributed 20 tons of rice to over 25 orphanages and make-shift camps to enable the feeding of over an estimated 250,000 meals. Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara of Thailand donated the rice. The UNITED SIKHS Aid team shipped the rice to Haiti and set up distribution in Santo la Plaine, Port-au-Prince, Cite Soleil, Aux Cayes, Montrouis, Mirebalais and Coteaux Port Salut. Deputies in each area assisted the team in distribution.

Institution Academic Culture D'Haiti (IACH) is a UNITED SIKHS sponsored school project looked after by Ishmeet Singh. IACH is located in Karefour, Port-au-Prince and run by Director Ernso Francois with the assistance of 9 teachers. It has an enrolment of a 125 students and holds classes from KG to 6th Grade. Hero Haiti, an education focused NGO provides expert guidance to IACH.



Lun Charles and Amritpal Singh at Haiti Water Plant



Ishmeet Singh & Steve Kirby at UNITED SIKHS sponsored school

"UNITED SIKHS pays the entire salary of all teachers. We though still need better infrastructure for classrooms and more equipment to provide a more vibrant education to our children," said Mr. Ernso Francois, Director IACH.

In this turbulent situation significant humanitarian needs remain and must be addressed, we all need to step up as leaders and coordinate our efforts," said Kuldip Singh, President UNITED SIKHS

"I want everyone to remember that the humanitarian crisis is not over. We cannot forget the hundreds of thousands of jobless people who are living in camps. We shall continue to support Haiti," said Bikramjit Singh, President Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, Delta-Surrey, BC, Canada.

UNITED SIKHS volunteers continue to work on international relief efforts including bringing awareness to the immediate need of medical attention, food, water and shelter to thousands of Haitians. Your donation of any amount could help save lives and have a lasting impact on a family in need by providing food, water, temporary shelter, medical services and emotional support.

Relief services provided post 2010 Haiti Earthquake

Year	Services Provided	Expenses (USD)
2012 (Till May)	Medical Camp – Apr	7,000
	Water Treatment Plant, Aux Cayes City – Mar	39,000
	IACH School Sponsorship – Yearly	20,000
	Distribution of Clothes and Kids Toys – Feb	5,000
	Aux Cayes School teacher's Salary – May	500
	Volunteer support In-Kind	25,000
	Sub Total	\$96,500
2011	2011 IACH School Sponsorship – Yearly	20,000
	Rice Shipment & Distribution – Oct	18,000
	Distribution of Cloths and Kids Toys – Feb-Dec	7,000
	Cholera Awareness – May	2,000
	Volunteer support In-Kind	33,500
	Sub Total	\$80,500
2010	Meal Served - Jan-Apr	113,000
	Food and Supplies distributed – Apr-Aug	63,000
	Shelter provided to 5000 survivors	25,000
	Medical Supplies – Feb-Apr	85,000
	Volunteers Hours In-Kind of 85 ppl	350,000
	Sub Total	\$636,000
	Grand Total:	\$813,000

UNITED SIKHS during Tsunami Japan

UNITED SIKHS serve hot meals in shelters at Tsukuba International Congress Center and Kesennuma Sogo Taikukan Center. The threat of a worsening radiation situation in the Fukushima Prefecture remains a worrisome risk to volunteers and care providers.

Chiba, Japan: 50 days from the Earthquake and Tsunami, 127, 817 persons remained in evacuation centers in the three worst affected prefectures (i.e. Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima), still displaced by the disaster. Overall, the quake and tsunami is believed to have killed nearly 26,000 people, though only about 14,500 bodies have been found. Many likely were swept out to sea and will never be found.

As people come to terms with their loss of loved ones, homes, and livelihood, a reminder that they are not alone and that people across the globe feel their pain, helps the healing process. UNITED SIKHS volunteers, with the guidance of local authorities have traveled to shelters with this message by bringing nutritious hot meals and relief supplies. They served hot meals to 500 people at the shelter Tsukuba International Congress Center located in Tsukuba City and called as the Ibaraki-prefecture. People in this shelter came from the Fukushima and Miyagi Prefecture. pictures of relief work by UNITED SIKHS volunteers in March/April 2011



UNITED SIKHS volunteers in a Sendai shelter with relief supplies



The Volunteer team leaves for Kesennuma Sogo Taikukan in Kesennuma city

The volunteers also went to the Kesennuma Sogo Taikukan in Kesennuma city with more than 1200 people at the shelter. They distributed soap, supplies for babies, sanitary items, garments, and snacks. The UNITED SIKHS volunteers are liaising with Akita-Ken Government Officers, Red Cross Japan, Saitam-Ken DMAT, and volunteers from the Kesennuma Senior High School Volunteers to provide relief services.



UNITED SIKHS Volunteers work with local agencies: getting ready to serve " Langaar "



Young volunteers make friends at the Kesennuma city shelter

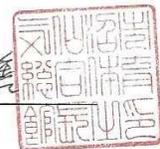
Gursharanjeet Kaur, coordinating relief efforts with two other volunteers for UNITED SIKHS in Chiba, Japan, said "With the support of the Japanese Sikh community and Sangat world-wide our operations are on-going. We thank every individual and organization who has contributed to this cause". The UNITED SIKHS Aid team procures all relief items locally with the donations from the Sangat. Additional relief items will be procured and supplied based on assessment of needs by the local team in Chiba.

ユナイテッド・シーク 様

平成23年4月10日 気仙沼市総合体育館(ケーウェーブ)にて、物資及びカレーの提供をして頂きました。

館長

梅本花



A "Thank You" Note from Kesennuma city shelter Chief

We encourage you to make monetary donations so we can continue to serve hot meals from time to time at the shelters. In these hard times for our Japanese brethren who continue to live in shelters for an extended period, " Langaar " prepared and served with love by the volunteers, brings a healing touch.

AFRICA - FEED THE HUNGRY & WATER TANKS

On January 22, 2011, UNITED SIKHS set up the first SRI GURU NANAK FOOD BANK in Kenya in response to a severe drought ravaging the nation. The food bank was inaugurated at the Vice President's Office by Her Excellency Pauline Kalonzo, and is supported by the local Sikh Sangat and organizations. Her Excellency Pauline Kalonzo presented a cheque of 100,000 Kenyan shillings in support of the effort and stated, "The initiative of Sri Guru Nanak Food Bank is much needed and will receive our full support. Guru Nanak Food Bank - can feed 1000 people on a daily basis and can stock over 3 months of reserves.



Food Trucks coming in from the Sri Guru Nanak Food Bank being flagged by Her Excellency Pauline Kalonzo and Sikh Community Leaders in Kenya

"The Sikh community of East Africa hopes that the first Guru Nanak Food Bank in Nairobi will lead to many more in the future in different parts of the world." UNITED SIKHS Director Jaswinder Kaur



Borewell in Mbita, Nyanza District, Kenya



Medical camp in Kayole, Kenya

3 Bore wells to provide drinking water to 5000 families/location (One in Mbita District, one each in Ukambani and Komarock of Machakos district). The Ukambani Borewell project was completed with the support of the Ramgarhia Youth Association (RYA) of Kenya.

The Government of Kenya has donated 2.5 Acres land for UNITED SIKHS to construct a hospital in Rusinga, Nyanza province of Kenya. Construction for Secondary School for 240 children started in 2010, likely to be completed in June 2011 at the cost of Kenyan Shillings (KES) 50,000,000 (Approximately 620,000 USD). Construction of the "Africa Hope Center" home for 120 HIV positive children. Education of 6 children from the centre is completely sponsored by UNITED SIKHS at the cost of USD 3000 per year.

UNITED SIKHS launched the "Feed The Hungry In Africa" campaign following the United Nations' call for "massive" action to save millions of people in the drought-stricken Horn of Africa region in late July 2011. The call was made during an emergency meeting of U.N. aid agencies and charities at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome.

Whilst I was speaking to the children and asking how they liked their rice and lentils one child tried to feed me with some rice with her spoon. It was amazing to see that although they are not getting food themselves they are willing to offer to others," said UNITED SIKHS Director, Sun Kaur, of her moving experience



UNITED SIKHS deliver food in areas of famine



An Orphan eating a hot meal prepared by the UNITED SIKHS team

According to the chief of the United Nations' Refugee Agency, Africa is experiencing the worst drought in 60 years leading to food shortage, malnutrition and deaths. Tens of thousands of people have died in the past few months. The Sri Guru Nanak Food Bank in Kenya, a project of UNITED SIKHS, led this campaign working in conjunction with the Government Agencies and the United Nations.



The famine in Somalia is the first official famine declared by the United Nations since 1984, when nearly a million people died in Ethiopia and neighboring Sudan. Now over 11 million people in the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti) are desperately short on food.

UNITED SIKHS spent over \$10,000 to inaugurate Sri Guru Nanak Food Bank opened in direct response to the famine. Capacity to feed 1,000 individuals on a daily basis and stores over 3 months of reserves. UNITED SIKHS provided over 10,000 hot meals.

UNITED SIKHS have provided medical assistance in Africa with over 2,000 eye surgeries has been performed and continuing regularly. The team are focussing their efforts on health and hygiene and have spent over \$6,000 spent to install water tanks in Magadi which will directly impact over 2,500 residents.



Bhai Fauja Singh Holding the Olympic Torch



Langgar 2012 Volunteers

On 21st July 2012 the eyes of the global community were on Fauja Singh, the 101 year-old marathon runner, the oldest torch bearer at London 2012, who carried carrying the Torch on the 64th day of the Olympics Torch Relay. To celebrate the wonderful achievements of this under-spoken treasure of the Sikh community, UNITED SIKHS, alongside 16 Gurdwaras and Sikhs from around the world participated in an unprecedented celebration of how Sikhs embrace diversity

Branded in yellow t-shirts, specially designed with Fauja Singh's image, each volunteer, from the Sikh community and those invited from multiple faiths and backgrounds will came together in serving the local community of East London. Thousands of roti rolls were prepared at Gurdwaras from 4am and served on the streets of London on a rolling schedule from 7am to 7pm.

The Turbaned Tornado Bhai Fauja Singh a prominent figure in sport, an inspiration for many and is applauded for being a great inspiration representing the Sikh identity around the world." My eyes have been filled with tears of joy from the moment I stepped into Seven Kings Gurdwara this morning seeing the preparations by the volunteers, then the cheers I received when holding the Olympic torch. I really appreciate all the support I have been given and this is something I will never forget." Bhai Fauja Singh.

The event was attend by guests including Sikh community leaders the Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Gurbachan Singh and Paul Uppal, MP for Wolverhampton South West, who has been backing the project since its inception, remarks, "I am happy to be a part of this fantastic event as it embodies everything that I believe in as a Sikh and as a Conservative promoting the Big Society. I am looking forward to seeing Gurdwaras from all over the country who have come together to serve others in the name of faith and community."

This was my unforgettable trip. July 21st was really a BIG day for UNITED SIKHS and whole SIKH community. And I was a part of that. I am so happy. I am so impressed by UK volunteers. I saw how they made this event successful -unbelievable. Sukhwinder Singh, UNITED SIKHS, Director Canada.

As London closed the London 2012 games with a spectacular final closing ceremony of the Olympics with the Paralympics. UNITED SIKHS celebrated the achievements of Team GB for their outstanding success in the games with over 180 medals in total at the Olympics and Paralympics games.

HURRICANE SANDY

Emergency Services

Hurricane Sandy's economic toll is poised to exceed \$20 billion after the biggest Atlantic storm slammed into the Eastern U.S., damaging homes and offices and flooding subways in America's most populated city. Sandy, spanning 900 miles, slammed into southern New Jersey at about 8 p.m. local time and brought a record storm surge of 13.88 feet (4.2 meters) into Manhattan's Battery Park. Flooding, high winds and fallen trees cut power to about 8 million customers from South Carolina to Maine, and travellers were stranded as U.S. airlines grounded more than 16,000 flights. U.S. stock trading closed in the first back-to-back shutdown for weather since 1888. Over 50 deaths have been attributed to the storm and thousands have been rendered homeless.

The storm may cut economic output by \$25 billion in the fourth quarter, according to Gregory Daco, a U.S. economist at IHS Global Insight in Lexington, Massachusetts. He said that could reduce the annual pace of growth to between 1 percent and 1.5 percent from his earlier estimate of 1.6 percent.

After direct engagement with the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and scores of VOAD agencies, UNITED SIKHS has initiated a call for warm clothing, blankets, diapers, baby formula, hygiene supplies and cleaning supplies. Also due to the closure of markets and stores there is an urgent need for fresh and hot meals as well as water.

UNITED SIKHS First Response Team is in direct contact with shelters to assess needs and Gurdwaras to facilitate the preparation of the hot meals and is also in coordination with the Red Cross.

As thousands continue to struggle with the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy in New York and New Jersey, UNITED SIKHS staff and volunteers rush to provide aid to all who have been affected.

In collaboration with the Gurdwaras in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, UNITED SIKHS Disaster Response Team is providing over 1100 meals a day to people in evacuation shelters. UNITED SIKHS is in constant communication with local and state disaster relief agencies. The procurement and delivery of specifically requested items is underway to shelters bearing the brunt of evacuees.



Delivery of food at York College, NY



Pre packed Hot Meals to be served

Over 700 hot meals have been delivered to the York College shelter in Queens, NY itself. UNITED SIKHS Director Mankanwal Singh stated, "The joy this act brought on the faces of our fellow Americans was a sight I will never forget. The evacuees were extremely grateful and overjoyed to actually eat fresh hot food and not the MRE packages. This was the first time in 4 days many of them had eaten a hot meal."



Volunteers distributing food

One of the ladies who visited to get the food for herself and her daughter spoke with UNITED SIKHS volunteers and said "I am very thankful and happy to get an actual meal. It is a pleasant change from the army rations. Thank you so much for the hot meal. Thank you and God bless you!"

UNITED SIKHS teams across the nation have been mobilized to send additional supplies to the East Coast. A shipment of 500 blankets has been shipped from California to help provide warmth for hundreds of families bracing for a bitter winter.

UNITED SIKHS teams are also collaborating with the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, the Office of Emergency Management, State VOAD's and other local organizations.

The community and local Gurdwaras have come together to assist in the preparation and delivery of hot meals and bottled water. UNITED SIKHS is grateful to the following Gurdwaras for their unflinching assistance: Sikh Cultural Society, Richmond Hill, NY, Baba Makhan Shah Lubana Gurdwara, NY, Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Glenrock, NJ, Garden State Sikh Association Gurdwara, Bridgewater, NJ, Glencove Gurdwara Saheb, Long Island, NY, Gurdwara Guru Nanak Darbar, Southington, Connecticut, Gurdwara Dashmesh Darbar, Port Reading, NJ, American Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee

UTTARAKHAND RELIEF MISSION

23rd June 2013 Thousands of lives lost and impacted along with tremendous devastation in Northern India

UNITED SIKHS AID team quickly formalized and executed its strategy of relief operations. Rishikesh materialized into the base camp for the entire rescue operation since June 23rd. With little rest, the team started the strenuous upward journey to Joshimath of bringing food, water and first aid to over a thousand stranded devotees.

“UNITED SIKHS is committed to assist in the emergency recovery of survivors and also provide long term assistance to the affected communities,” said, Devinderpal Singh (Bitta), National Relief Coordinator, UNITED SIKHS.

The UNITED SIKHS India Team first worked tirelessly in Joshimath for days giving relief materials and more importantly first aid to the rescued devotees. Such was the task that it demanded round the clock presence of our personnel to which they were on call. Since, Joshimath was done by 24th June, the team was prepared to reach Rishikesh to help the ones there but the downward journey demanded something more. Being stuck between Rudraprayag and Rishikesh due to landslides at both the ends, the team sensed the need of the hour and immediately started their first-aid camp there and then helping more than 150 stranded devotees. Many were treated for minor injuries and some for ORS. Devotees were too thankful to UNITED SIKHS for their relief work in the toughest of circumstances.



UNITED SIKHS volunteer providing medical aid

“I am thankful I to UNITED SIKHS for the first-aid provided, the pain was immense in my foot and I had no hope of any recovery as the nearest station was at least 12kms (Sri Nagar)away and the landslide made the situation bad to worse.” conveyed a devotee Harvinder Singh from Patiala, Punjab. Rajender Kumar had a similar message where he thanked the team “Thank you UNITED SIKHS for the first-aid provided at the very moment, I was not able to walk but this team just came from nowhere, stopped and started to help.

PHILIPPINES RELIEF MISSION

18th Novemeber 2013 - UNITED SIKHS Sikh Aid relief team reached Philippines and volunteers Rishiwant Singh and Kiran Singh were leading the relief efforts. Upon arrival their arrival they also met survivors who detailed their horrific experiences during and after the storm. They shared stories of the exodus which occurred two days after the winds and waters subsided. The team began to collect food supplies and the first batch of goods and supplies filled the UNITED SIKHS stock room in Khalsa Diwan Sikh Gurdwara, Manila.



Homes destroyed after Typhoon Haiyan



Children awaiting food donations



UNITED SIKHS volunteers distributing food to families

To begin the team began to feed at least 200-300 survivors on a daily basis, serving 2 meals a day. The team continued with food aid to those affected by Typhoon Haiyan and provided the following to families. 5kg rice, canned food, milk, coffee, sugar, iodized salt, antiseptic disinfectant and other essential items provided to hard hit Longingut Island Off Estancia

"The priority right now is safety of survivors. During this stage, it is critical to supply food, water and emergency supplies to survivors. After, the priority will shift to restoring critical services," said Gurvinder Singh, UNITED SIKHS Aid Director. "We need your help now."



Home - "Thank You UNITED SIKHS!"



Home - "May your kindness and support continue to all who need it"



Home - "Thank you for your donations!"



Home - "Thank you to the donors!! It's all happening now because of you. Please continue to support this mission at www.unitedsikh.org."

January 17th, 2014, UNITED SIKHS Haiyan Relief Team officially handed over the church and first eight homes to the Typhoon Haiyan Survivors in the village Crossing Lais, Binuntucan, Panay Island

UNITED SIKHS ORG.
HAIYAN RELIEF CROSSING LA-IS

FOR ONE HOUSE BUDGET								
S.NO	NAME OF ITEM	SIZE	QUANTITY	PRIZE	SUB TOTAL	TOTAL	\$	IN US\$
1	WOOD	2*5*10	4	233	932		44.05	21.16
2		2*5*16	5	373	1865		44.05	42.34
3		2*5*8	6	186	1116		44.05	25.33
4		2*2*20	15	181	2715		44.05	61.63
5	G.I.S. SHEETS	3*6*.4	18	213	3834		44.05	87.04
6	IREAN ROAD FOR BEAM		54	118	6372		44.05	144.65
7	CEMENT		17	222	3774		44.05	85.68
8	HALLO BLOCKS	4*8*12	250	12	3000		44.05	68.10
9	RIDGE ROLL		15	180	2700		44.05	61.29
10	PLYWOOD FOR BEAMS		6	650	3900		44.05	88.54
11	SAND/GRAVEL	Estimated + -			1500		44.05	34.05
12	NAILS	Estimated + -			400		44.05	9.08
13	LABOUR	1. CARP ENTER & 2 LABOUR		3 DAYS	2000		44.05	45.40
14	BAMBOO/NIPAHUT /PLYWOOD		12	650	7800		44.05	177.07
15	MISCELLANEOUS				2500		44.05	56.75
TOTAL IN PESOS					44408	44408	44.05	1008.13 US\$

NOTE:- 1. This house is studio type, without any door, window, toilet, bathroom, water supplies, electric wire, bulb or florescent light. (House size. 10feet* 16feet)

2. Whereas labour and shipping would make-up a sizable portion of the total price;

3. This construction is happening through nearly free labour and at-cost government shipping

February 6th, the organization handed over 18 new homes to those who were directly affected by the devastating disaster that has ravaged a number of Islands across the Philippines.

March 10th, the team handed over 25 new homes to the families. This brings the total to 51 homes and one church, which were reconstructed from January 2014 to March 2014 when the team has reached the ground. These new types of homes will last up to level 4 typhoons. See the material list for each house built.

Recognizing the efforts of the UNITED SIKHS, The Governor of Capiz, Panay Island said: "This has never been done by any NGO here and we are proud to say that only UNITED SIKHS are making proper homes for the village people of Panay today."

KASHMIR RELIEF MISSION

The deadly floods in Kashmir caused scenes of mayhem, displacement and uncertainty. The areas of Jammu, Srinagar, Pulwama, Shopian and Anantnag were battling one of the worst floods in decades.

The heavy rain which hauled its way into Kashmir had left over a million people displaced, without food, water and communication channels. Approximately, hundreds of thousands of people including many Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims have been affected by the deadly upheaval and remain stranded. Now government officials stated that the death toll has risen from 200 to 450, and this number will only continue to grow.

According to our UNITED SIKHS ground volunteers, the Gurdwara based in Budgam district, called Shaheed Bunga Sahib had given shelter and food to over 8,000 people. Furthermore, medical camps had also been set up in the Gurdwara where 1,000 injured victims have been treated.

A UNITED SIKHS Volunteer in Srinagar, Bhupinder Singh, explained that: "more people have come to the Gurdwara Shaheed Bunga, more than 8,000 people are currently in the Gurdwara and sanitation has become a major issue. With water receding, it is expected that more and more people are expected at the Gurdwara."



UNITED SIKHS volunteer Komal JB Singh handing blankets to families in Kashmir



UNITED SIKHS volunteer Amritpal Singh handing blankets to families in Kashmir

The UNITED SIKHS Relief team already shipped 2100 blankets to victims in Srinagar. UNITED SIKHS requested supporters for donations in order to provide essential items that many people are without. UNITED SIKHS Aid team, headed by Komal JB Singh, started the second phase of relief kit distribution on October 23, 2014. Since the second phase, over 400 families have been assisted. The relief kit consisted of mattresses, quilts, thermals, shawls and sweaters. During winter, temperatures in Kashmir hit below freezing, leaving these materials vital for survival.

MALAYSIA FLOOD RELIEF 2014

“These resilient Temiar Orang Asli (indigenous people of Malaysia) put their hands on their hearts and just smiled on receiving aid that we flew in for them. They had been left stranded following Malaysia’s worst ever floods in December 2014. They are a giving people and live by their ‘tan haq’ code: that they will never let another die of hunger even if they have little food themselves. They don’t have a word in their language for ‘Thank You’ because they see it as their duty to help another, for which they don’t expect thanks. We felt their gratefulness from their soul.” – Rishiwant Singh, UNITED SIKHS Humanitarian Aid Coordinator, Asia Pacific, who has led six flood relief air missions flown by Capt Bagawan Singh and his team since January 3rd to Jan 26th, dropping 15 tonnes of relief for the Temiar natives, who were stranded in the interiors of Malaysia



The Baaj (falcon) Flight for Humanity, which was carrying UNITED SIKHS volunteers and supplies for the Temiar natives, was caught in a low cloud that was stagnant between 1,000 to 6,000 ft. Captain Bagawan Singh, who was flying a sixth relief mission to the interiors of Malaysia, was concerned because usually the cloud rises when the sun comes up. But that was not happening. The Baaj helicopter was forced to divert to Mount Tahan, the highest peak in Peninsular Malaysia (7,000 ft above sea level) as the very unusual carpet cloud was thick as cotton.

Twice the Baaj tried to take off encircling the mountain but was just not able to find any gaps between the clouds.

“We waited about two hours and suddenly I had three bars on my mobile network. We called our ground control at the make shift Landing Zone (LZ) in Kampung Betis. They reported that gaps of blue sky were visible from the ground. We jumped into the Baaj and flew straight out for those coordinates. The Baaj of Humanity punched through the clouds and landed swiftly. We were able to reach three villages previously unreachable following landslides, well before the December floods,” said Rishiwant Singh, UNITED SIKHS Humanitarian Aid Coordinator, Asia Pacific.

Since Jan 3rd, the Baaj Flight for Humanity has dropped about 15 tonnes of food and necessary supplies and reached more than 5000 Temiar aborigines who have been cut off from civilization after the landslides and floods hit their villages. The Baaj has also ferried eight volunteer medical teams consisting of four Flying Medics per team who provided medical assistance to 1000 Temiar natives in 11 villages. This was part of a UNITED SIKHS flood relief mission that also delivered about 85 tonnes of relief supplies, by road, to the flood victims of Kelantan and Pahang states. Dr Colin Nicholas of COAC (Centre of Orang Asli (indigenous) Concerns) said, “It has been an honour to work with the UNITED SIKHS as they were not only resourceful but also had the heart to help these unfortunate Temiar who were stuck in the jungle. We hope in future they will step in again to help us if the need arises.” You may read about the Temiar aborigines at <http://www.temiar.com/temiar.html>



UNITED SIKHS would like to convey our gratitude to: Dr Kumar and Dr Kiran Jeyaraman and Dr Ranjit Kaur, Dr Palvin Singh and Dr Sanjay Sarna from our first team of collaboration with UNITED SIKHS Baaj of Humanity Flying Medics Mission. TheNanyang Foundation (Kampung Balar): Led by Dr. Tan, Dr. Subash, Brother James and Mr. Lim, assisted by Sister Kathy; Naam Medics (Kampung Simpor): Who started a free clinic in Chow Kit led by Dr. Mandeep and Dr. Rupinder; Dr. Harwant Singh and his team who visited Kampung Tameng; Special thanks to Dr Colin Nicholas of COAC as none of this would have been possible without his full support and coordination.

FRANCE - SIKHS WIN SCHOOL TURBAN BAN CASE

"The UN Human Rights Committee has made our nine year wait for justice worthwhile, since the French law was passed against religious signs in public schools in 2004. The UNHRC has once again proved to be the beacon of light for the freedom of thought, conscience and religion by upholding that the Article 18 right under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to manifest ones religion, cannot be overridden merely by pleading secularity without producing any evidence that the Sikh Turban would affect the right of other students or would affect order in the school," said Mejjindarpal Kaur, UNITED SIKHS Legal Director, who is in the fore-front of a legal campaign for French Sikhs' right to wear their turban.

Paris, France, 14 Dec 2012 – The UN Human Rights Committee has ruled that France's ban on the wearing of "conspicuous" religious symbols in schools - introduced in a law adopted in March 2004 - violated a Sikh student's right to manifest his religion, protected by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). In a decision that was sent out this week to the UNITED SIKHS legal team, in relation to a complaint made by Bikramjit Singh in 2008, the Committee accepted that the wearing of a turban is regarded as a religious duty for a Sikh and is also tied in with his identity; and that France had not justified the prohibition on the wearing of the turban.

The Committee accepted that France was entitled to uphold the principle of secularism, a means by which a State party might seek to protect the religious freedom of all its population; it recognised that the adoption of the 2004 law had responded to actual incidents of interference with the religious freedom of pupils and sometimes even threats to their physical safety.



However, the Committee went on to express the opinion that this was not enough to justify the interference with religious rights that the law represented. France had "not furnished compelling evidence that by wearing his keski (small turban) [Bikramjit] would have posed a threat to the rights and freedoms of other pupils or to order at the school. The Committee also considered that the penalty of permanent exclusion had not been shown to be necessary; and that it had been imposed not because of any harmful conduct by Bikramjit, but because he belonged to a broad category of people by their religious conduct. In the Committee's view, France had not shown "how the sacrifice of those persons' rights is either necessary or proportionate to the benefits achieved". The views were adopted on 1st Nov 2012, at the 106th session of the Committee's sitting.

Less than a year ago, the UNHRC had also concluded that France had violated the religious freedom of 76 year old Ranjit Singh when he was asked to remove his turban for his ID photograph. A UN decision is still awaited for Shingara Singh, whose passport has not been renewed by France because he refused to remove his turban for his ID photograph.

Mejindarpal Kaur, UNITED SIKHS International Legal Director told a media conference in Paris today: "Laicite or secularity is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end. The end that laicite must achieve is freedom, equality and fraternity. Likewise the Turban is a means to an end and Sikhs in France will continue to wear the turban so they may work towards a society that is free, fair and for the good of all mankind."

"We now look to France to fulfil its treaty obligations under International law. It also has a moral duty to ensure that the freedom of religion and belief is upheld for everyone who lives within its territory," she added.

Stephen Grosz of London solicitors Bindmans, who was instructed by UNITED SIKHS to represent Bikramjit Singh, said: "The UN Human Rights Committee is the first international body to examine the substantive merits of France's ban on religious symbols and clothing in schools. In this significant ruling, it has made clear that the prohibition is unjustified. France must now prevent similar violations in future, and in particular, the Committee said that it should review the law of 2004 that imposed the ban. France must also provide Bikramjit Singh with a remedy, including appropriate compensation. France has 180 days to explain to the Committee how it proposes to give effect to the decision.

Bikramjit Singh, whose religious rights the UN decided had been violated, said, "I am very pleased with the UN's decision and would like to reassure the French government that we are in favour of secularity, in its true sense. The Sikh turban stands for liberty, equality and fraternity because the right to wear a Turban is open to all - men and women, rich and poor.

"In fact, the Turban is a symbol of laicite- it does not discriminate. The Turban is not a sign of oppression. It's a practice of freedom," added Bikramjit Singh, who after being expelled from school, completed his education privately and is now a project engineer with an engineering firm in Paris.

President of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, Paramjit Singh said in a telephone interview: "Bikramjit Singh is an Indian national and it should have been the responsibility of the Indian government to protect his religious freedom abroad so that he and other Sikhs were not banned from wearing the turban in French public schools. Instead it took an NGO, UNITED SIKHS, to take up and win this case at the UN. We are very proud of UNITED SIKHS and congratulate the global Sikh community for the victory at the UN. I will personally ensure that this issue is raised at the Indian Parliament to ensure that France complies with the UN's decision and reverses the ban on the turban in schools".

"Religion and politics are two wheels that balance civil society. If one wheel comes off, society ceases to be stable. Laicite or secularity is the oil that ensures that the two wheels keep moving. Sikhs do not see laicite as the enemy. We see it as our friend to help us be good citizens." Said Shingara Singh, UNITED SIKHS-France Director.

"Our stand for the turban will not only benefit France but the whole world. It is not a coincidence that this battle of the turban is being fought in France - a country that lives by laicite. The Turban will show the world that the true meaning of laicite can only be achieved if its people are allowed to be free to practice their faith," said Gurdial Singh of the Turban Action Committee of France, who has been defending campaign relentlessly.

BELGIUM - SIKHS WIN SCHOOL TURBAN BAN CASE

15th Oct 2014, St Truiden, Belgium - The Belgian Conseil d'Etat has upheld the freedom of religion of Sikh students by overturning the ban on the Sikh Turban in a GO school, which is part of a large group of schools attended by many Sikh students in the Flemish part of Belgium.



13-year- old Sharanjit Singh was forced to remove his patka to attend a Belgian school for the past one year

"In a landmark decision dated 14th Oct 2014, which was communicated to us yesterday, the Highest Administrative Court has held that GO has the obligation to organise its education without harming the respect for diversity and plurality," said Mejjindarpal Kaur, International Legal Director of UNITED SIKHS, an international advocacy NGO that has led the legal campaign to reverse the ban on the Sikh turban.

Sharanjit Singh, then a 12 year old, brought an action in Sept 2013 against his GO school for forcing him to remove his patka (a head covering worn by young Sikhs), which he is mandated to wear, at all times, as an integral part of his Sikh faith.

"Sharanjit is a rather shy boy, afraid of doing things wrong or being excluded. Following the ban he took off his patka very much to his distress. I am very happy that the Conseil d'Etat has overturned the ban and I hope my son will be able to put the past year behind him and look ahead to a good future ," Sharanjit Singh's father, Surjit Singh, said. You may watch a short video interview in Panjabi, with Belgian Sikh boys affected by the past year's ban, at www.youtube.com/unitedsikhstv

"The Conseil d'Etat has claimed, in essence, that a school cannot simply impose a ban on wearing outward symbols of religious belief without having grounds for doing so (such as disturbing the peace, proselytising, etc.). If a school nevertheless does this, it represents an excessive breach of the internationally protected fundamental right to religious freedom (art. 9 ECHR)," said Pieter Lagae, Sharanjit's lawyer, of the law firm of *Van Steenbrugge & partners* in Merelbeke,

In the decision, the Court emphasised repeatedly that Sharanjit, and by extension, Sikh-students - had never displayed any such negative behaviour. Mr Lagae, who also represents 10 year old Sukhjot Singh, who was forced to leave another GO school because he refused to remove his patka, expects a positive decision in his case too.

"We are grateful to all those who faithfully supported us and to the Conseil d'Etat for making this robust decision," said Amarjit Kaur, the President of UNITED SIKHS-Belgium.

UNITED SIKHS thanks its lawyers, supporters, volunteers and directors for the hard earned legal victories.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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