


Proclamation Request Form

Request for the issuance of proclamations is governed by Council Policy. Requests must be received at least **six (6) weeks** in advance of the requested issuance date and may be emailed ClerksApprovalRequests@london.ca or mailed to City Hall, P.O. Box 5035 London, ON N6A 4L9.

<u>Name of Organization</u> LONDON SIKH SOCIETY
<u>Proclamation Name</u> Sikh Genocide Awareness Week
<u>Date of Proclamation Requested</u> November 1st, 2023
<u>Proclamation Type</u> (day, week or month) Week
Organization's Direct Connection to London (provide specific details) The London Sikh Society is a proud local non-profit charitable Sikh organization, serving Londoners since 1984 with compassionate humanitarian services, social and faith awareness programs. In the challenging times of COVID, the London Sikh Society stepped up in the difficult time of COVID and served our local communities with necessities, medical supplies, and empowerment. LSS also provides a free seven-day kitchen to Londoners, regardless of race, colour, gender or religion. We focus on inclusion and equality, and everyone is welcome.
<u>Required Supporting Documents:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Detail information on the Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Detail information on the Event <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmation of authorization from the Organization to submit request
<u>Category</u> (public awareness campaigns, charitable funding campaigns, arts and cultural celebrations) Public Awareness Campaign
<u>Requester Name</u> Prabh Gill (London Sikh Society)
<u>Requester Address</u> Clarke Rd, London, ON N5W 5W5
<u>Requester Phone Number and Email</u>
The undersigned confirms that I am the Official Representative of the Organization requesting the Proclamation and that by signing this Application, I acknowledge and agree that my organization complies with all City of London's Policies and By-laws.  _____ Signature
<u>08/16/2023</u> _____ Date
Notice of collection of personal information Personal information collected on this form is collected under the authority of the <i>Municipal Act, 2001</i> , S.O. 2001, c. 25 and may also be used for purposes related to the Issuance of Proclamations Policy and Proclamation Request Form. Questions about this collection should be addressed to Manager, Records and Information Services, 3rd floor, City Hall, 300 Dufferin Ave., London, ON N6A 4L9. Tel: 519-661-2489 ext. 5590, email: eskalski@london.ca .

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

1ST SESSION, 42ND LEGISLATURE, ONTARIO
69 ELIZABETH II, 2020

Bill 177

An Act to proclaim Sikh Genocide Awareness Week

Mr. G. Singh

Private Member's Bill

1st Reading February 26, 2020

2nd Reading

3rd Reading

Royal Assent



EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bill proclaims the first seven days of November in each year as Sikh Genocide Awareness Week.

An Act to proclaim Sikh Genocide Awareness Week

Preamble

Ontario is home to a dynamic and vibrant Sikh community and one of the largest Sikh populations outside of South Asia. The Sikh community has deep roots in Ontario and plays a vital role in strengthening our province's social, political and economic fabric.

Despite thriving and contributing as a community in Ontario and globally, Sikhs are still impacted by the genocide and other atrocity crimes perpetrated by the Government of India. These crimes have caused ongoing physical and mental trauma, as well as intergenerational trauma. These traumas are intensified by India's entrenched culture of impunity, its refusal to hold the perpetrators accountable or even acknowledge its crimes and the denial of reparations.

There is a long history of the Indian government discriminating against Sikhs and perpetrating gross human rights violations against them and other minorities. Atrocities against Sikhs intensified most notably in June 1984, when India's armed forces, upon orders from prime minister Indira Gandhi, launched Operation Blue Star, a continuous, nearly week-long military attack on Sikhs in the Harmandir Sahib (popularly known as the Golden Temple), the Akal Takht Sahib, their surrounding complexes and over 70 other Gurdwaras across Punjab. During Operation Blue Star, the government sealed Punjab's borders and imposed a media blackout, evicting foreign journalists and censoring all reporting. The impact of this total assault was devastating, with security forces killing thousands of Sikhs and destroying major Sikh heritage sites and artifacts, including serious damage to Gurdwaras and the destruction of rare documents and manuscripts. This destruction included the demolition of the Akal Takht Sahib, a major Sikh religious institution, and the burning and looting of the Sikh Reference Library, resulting in the loss of irreplaceable historical resources.

Shortly afterwards in November 1984, following the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the state orchestrated genocidal killings of thousands of Sikhs throughout India and, in particular, its capital, Delhi. Relying on voter registration lists and property records as part of a premeditated plan to identify their victims, state-organized mobs ruthlessly targeted Sikhs, committing horrific violence, including dousing Sikhs in kerosene and other combustible chemicals, placing tires around their necks, and setting them on fire. State-organized mobs also perpetrated extreme sexual violence against Sikh women, detaining many against their will for days. Further, state-organized mobs destroyed Sikhs' businesses, homes, and places of worship, displacing thousands. Throughout this carnage, police and politicians aided the mobs by directing them towards Sikhs and by directly participating in the violence.

Following these genocidal acts, India's security forces further subjected Sikhs to a widespread and systematic campaign of torture, unlawful killings and enforced disappearances, in Punjab and other states, that lasted well over a decade. The late Jaswant Singh Khalra (recognized as a defender of human rights by Amnesty International) exposed thousands of incidents of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, torture and secret mass cremations of Sikhs. His work, based on government records, demonstrates that security forces perpetrated gross human rights violations that were both widespread, having occurred throughout Punjab, and systematic, having targeted the Sikh population.

The widespread and systematic enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, torture and secret mass cremations of Sikhs in Punjab and beyond amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

These atrocity crimes, alongside the attacks of June 1984 and the November 1984 Sikh genocide, speak to a larger and persistent campaign of genocide against Sikhs by the state of India.

Acknowledging this genocide is a significant first step in community healing. By recognizing these international crimes, we demonstrate our collective commitment to pursuing a world characterized by our shared and universal values of truth, justice and respect for human rights in order to prevent such genocides, crimes against humanity and other atrocity crimes from recurring.

Therefore, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

Sikh Genocide Awareness Week

1 (1) The first seven days of November in each year are proclaimed as Sikh Genocide Awareness Week.

Same

(2) During that week, all Ontarians are encouraged to educate themselves and reflect on, as well as create awareness of, the Sikh genocide and other genocides that have occurred throughout the world.

Commencement

2 This Act comes into force on the day it receives Royal Assent.

Short title

3 The short title of this Act is the *Sikh Genocide Awareness Week Act, 2020*.