

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN,
Washington, DC, June 28, 2007.

Hon. PARKASH SINGH BADAL,
Chief Minister of Punjab,
Chandigarh, Punjab, India.

DEAR CHIEF MINISTER BADAL: I am writing to you regarding the recent arrest warrant for Dr. Sukhpreet Singh Udhoke and the arrests of Sardar Simranjit Singh Mann and his associates. As you know, both were involved in peaceful political action, which is protected under the Indian constitution, at the time the warrants for their arrests were issued by your government. Dr. Udhoke's offense was publishing articles critical of you. Sardar Mann's was protesting and placing a picture of a Sikh martyr at the statue of the brutal, genocidal Beant Singh, who presided over the murders of over 50,000 Sikhs. Mann had previously been arrested for the dangerous crimes of making a speech and raising a flag.

You have been in opposition. You have engaged in political activities while in opposition. What would you think if you were arrested for those activities? That is exactly what your government is doing to S.S. Mann and proposes to do to Dr. Udhoke as soon as you can find him.

When did the right to protest peacefully disappear in Punjab, Khalistan? Are you determined to prove the late General Narinder Singh right that "Punjab is a police state"?

On behalf of the 25 million strong Sikh Nation in Punjab, in India, and around the world, I am writing to demand the withdrawal of the arrest order against Dr. Udhoke and his associates and the immediate release of Simranjit Singh Mann and his associates. I do not do this for political reasons; Mann has been a vocal critic of this office and has cooperated with the Indian government. But if you truly believe in democracy—the system that put you back in power earlier this year—then you cannot in good conscience arrest people for dissent.

Indeed, Mann's arrest shows what can happen to a Sikh even if he cooperates with the Indian government, as you have done throughout your political career to the detriment of the Sikh Nation. One day, your utility to them will be exhausted and they may then have you thrown in jail for a peaceful political activity—simply because you are a Sikh. Who will you turn to defend you then? To this office?

Yet while you seem intent on prosecuting peaceful dissent, you are unwilling to take action against those who commit murder and other serious crimes. Is that because of your alliance with the BJP, which is the political arm of the pro-Fascist, militant Hindu nationalist, anti-Sikh RSS?

When you were elected in 1997, you promised the Sikhs of Punjab that you would appoint a commission to inquire into the atrocities in Punjab and prosecute the police officers who murdered Sikhs. Instead, you protected SSP Swaran Singh Ghotna, who murdered Akal Takht Jathedar Gurdev Singh Kaunke.

Just recently, Gurmit Ram Rahim Singh was fraudulently dressing as Guru Gobind Singh, performing baptisms that are reserved for the Panj Piaras, and advertising it in the newspaper. This was a desecration of the Sikh religion and a fraud. Yet you met with Ram Rahim to ask for his political support. But you couldn't even succeed in persuading this corrupt baba to support you! Yet when he perpetrated this fraud, you protected him until the political pressure to prosecute him got too intense. He still has not been arrested, nor has an arrest warrant been issued. I guess the jails are too crowded from holding the likes of Dr. Sukhbir Singh Udhoke and Simranjit Singh Mann.

In 1978, during your Chief Ministership, the Nirankari cult had a meeting and desecrated

the Guru Granth Sahib. Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his supporters peacefully protested outside. Your police fired on the protestors, killing 13 of them, then your police escorted the Nirankari leader, Gurbachan Singh, safely out of Punjab.

Apparently, you were not through trying to destroy Sant Bhindranwale. According to letters reprinted in the book Chakravayuh: Web of Indian Secularism, you, along with Harcharan Singh Longowal and the late Gurbachan Singh Tohra, invited the Indian government to attack the Golden Temple in June 1984 to kill Sant Bhindranwale. 37 other Gurdwaras were attacked simultaneously. Over 20,000 Sikhs were killed in those attacks. Their blood is on your hands, Mr. Chief Minister.

Furthermore, your government in your previous term was the most corrupt in Punjab's history. You creatively invented a new term for bribery; "fee for service." No fee, no service. The sale of government offices was standard operating procedure. Your wife even developed the handy skill of being able to tell how much money was in a bag just picking it up.

Furthermore, your operatives are calling this office repeatedly and harassing me about my website because it exposes you. You may be able to suppress the freedom of Sikhs in Punjab, but you cannot stop the Sikh diaspora from exposing your brutal and corrupt acts. Remember that Sikhs have a long memory of those who are traitors and murderers and who cooperate with the oppressors of the Sikh Nation. K.P.S. Gill's turban is still preserved in Belgium. When Khalistan is free, it will be on display so that the Sikh Nation will never forget those who committed atrocities against us.

Punjab's water is being taken away by non-riparian states without compensation. At least your predecessor, who is from the Congress Party, the enemy of all Sikhs, tried to do something about it. He cancelled the water agreements. The bill passed by the Legislative Assembly expressly affirmed the sovereignty of Punjab.

Under your rule, the economy of Punjab is deteriorating. Sikh farmers are committing suicide because they cannot make a living, due to the fact that your friends in Delhi force them to pay exorbitant prices for fertilizer and seeds, but forces them to sell their crop at substandard prices. And you, who as Chief Minister and head of the Akali Dal are supposed to protect the interests of the Sikhs, sit there and kowtow to these criminals.

Even though the government of Pakistan said it would build a road to Kartapur, where Guru Nanak went to his heavenly abode, with no visas, your government has refused to build the Punjab side of the road so that Sikhs can go freely to this sacred site.

From these actions, it is clear where your loyalties lie, and they are not with the Sikh Nation or with the Sikh religion or with the people of Punjab, but with the violent, pro-Fascist, murderous Hinducrat thugs from Delhi who sponsor you and your career. But remember the warning I gave you earlier; when they are through with you, when you no longer have any usefulness to them, they will dispense with you as they have dispensed with so many other Sikhs who have served them.

That is why it is incumbent on every Sikh to engage in the "long struggle" to free Khalistan. Only then will Sikhs such as Dr. Udhoke, Sardar Mann, and even the likes of you be protected from the violent and brutal whims of the oppressive Hindustani regime. It is crucial to protect the Sikh religion and the Sikh Nation from this oppression by liberating Khalistan today, in accord with our declaration of October 7, 1987. For your good,

Mr. Badal, I urge you to get on the right side of history today. Or would you rather be remembered as an enemy of the Sikh Nation?

Sincerely,

GURMIT SINGH AULAKH,
President, Council of Khalistan.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 31, 2007

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from this Chamber yesterday. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 758, 759, 760, 761, and 762.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "POVERTY MEASUREMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT"

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 31, 2007

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the "Poverty Measurement Improvement Act." This legislation is designed to improve the way our Nation counts various antipoverty benefits we currently provide low-income families—to better understand both who is poor and how effective those antipoverty efforts are.

The Ways and Means Committee and its Income Security and Family Support Subcommittee, on which I serve as ranking member, has recently held a series of hearings on poverty, reviewing the cost of poverty, how U.S. poverty measurement differs from other countries, and possible solutions to poverty.

As several Members noted in those hearings, one of the first failings of our current poverty measure is the fact it does not count tens of billions of dollars in taxpayer funded assistance provided to reduce poverty for literally millions of families each year.

This omission limits the usefulness of today's poverty measure. It also devalues the sacrifices of taxpayers who pay for those benefits with their hard-earned tax dollars. And it increases the apparent number of families in poverty.

On August 1 the Income Security Subcommittee will hold another hearing on how poverty is measured in the U.S. Several witnesses will suggest counting the value of more antipoverty benefits to determine whether families are poor or not. That is exactly what the "Poverty Measurement Improvement Act" would do. Major assistance not counted today includes food stamps, public housing, earned income tax credits, and health coverage. These also constitute the fastest growing portions of our Nation's safety net designed to help low-income families escape poverty. So unless we act, more and more of our effort to alleviate poverty will be ignored each passing year.

Consider what this means for families.

Let's say the Jones family of four has an annual income of \$30,000—all from wages. Current rules count wages as income for purposes of judging whether a family is poor.

Since the poverty threshold for a family of four is about \$20,000, and the income of the Jones family is above that level, the Jones family is officially "not poor."

Now let's say their neighbors the Smith family also is a family of four. The Smith family also has a total of \$30,000 in annual income. But the Smith's income comes from multiple sources—\$18,000 from wages, plus a total of \$12,000 in housing, health care, food stamp, and earned income tax credit benefits provided by taxpayers. Under current rules, none of the \$12,000 in taxpayer benefits provided the Smith family is counted as income. So since their \$18,000 in wages falls short of the \$20,000 poverty threshold for a family of four, the Smith family is "officially" poor.

This makes little sense.

The "Poverty Measurement Improvement Act" would direct the Census Bureau to report on poverty as measured three ways. First, Census would retitle the current official poverty rate as the "partial benefits poverty rate," which is what it is. The second measure, called the "full benefits poverty rate" would include means-tested food, housing and health care benefits as income. The final measure, called the "full benefits and taxes poverty rate," would also add in the value tax credits like the EITC, and subtract taxes paid.

This legislation would help us better understand both who is poor and the effectiveness of current antipoverty benefits. And it would put income from earnings and income from government benefits on the same level, so that the Jones and Smith families would be recognized as having the same disposable incomes, regardless of its source.

More needs to be done to help families lift themselves out of poverty. That means pressing on with more of what works to reduce poverty. As we saw in the progress against poverty following the 1996 welfare reform law, that starts with promoting more full-time work instead of welfare dependence. And it includes promoting more healthy marriage, which also reduces poverty and welfare dependence for the long run.

But we also should do a better job understanding how current antipoverty efforts are working, and the effect of means-tested benefits in improving the incomes and wellbeing of families. The "Poverty Measurement Improvement Act" I am introducing today does just that, and I urge all Members to support it.

IRAN SANCTIONS ACT OF 1996 AMENDMENTS

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2007

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I opposed this bill, much as I opposed the "Iran Freedom Support Act" last year, because it threatens the united international diplomatic front that's needed to block Iran's nuclear weapons program. Instead of sanctioning Iran, this bill will sanction allies in Europe and Asia.

I do not object to efforts to punish "sham" subsidiaries that are set up specifically to evade U.S. sanctions on Iran. However, the U.S. government already has this authority under the International Emergency Economic

Powers Act and the language in H.R. 957 is clearly meant to extend sanctions to overseas subsidiaries that are legally and legitimately incorporated outside of the United States. Passage of this bill will set back our diplomatic efforts with regards to Iran and only serve to diminish our global influence on this very important issue.

RECOGNIZING THE STONE GARDENS HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 31, 2007

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise today to applaud the efforts of Mr. Albert Blitstein and the Mitzvah Corps of Stone Gardens in Menorah Park who decided to commemorate the Holocaust with a living memorial. With donations from Mr. Blitstein's children and the residents of Stone Gardens, a memorial consisting of six weeping cherry trees representing the six million men, women, and children of the Jewish faith who perished during the Holocaust, was planted in a peaceful and reflecting setting.

A published author, Mr. Blitstein provided the quote that was placed on the commemorative plaque:

This living memorial is dedicated to the six million Jews who died in the Holocaust. It is to verify that we will never forget them. The six living trees planted in their memory are called weeping cherry trees. Although six decades have passed since the Holocaust, we still weep for them.

I join with the residents of the Stone Gardens, family, friends and the Stone Garden Mitzvah Corps in dedicating the Stone Gardens Holocaust Memorial. As a world community may we never forget the lives of those who died and may their memories never stray far from our minds as we affirm that we will never forget.

On behalf of the United States Congress and the residents of the Eleventh Congressional District, Ohio, I salute the Stone Gardens Mitzvah Corps for their dedication and generosity in the construction of this great memorial. May the Stone Gardens Holocaust Memorial be a lasting reminder and a living tribute to those who perished in one of the world's greatest tragedies.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF SCLC

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 31, 2007

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, we are here tonight to pay tribute to an historic American institution. This August the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the SCLC, will celebrate its 50th anniversary.

The SCLC is one of the oldest and most influential civil rights organizations in American history. From its storied beginning, under the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the SCLC has practiced the cornerstone of its founding principles: nonviolence in the fight for civil and human rights.

Originating from the Montgomery Bus Boycott that began after Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat, the SCLC has been a stalwart in the struggle for equal rights and human dignity for all.

The bus boycott organized under the leadership of Dr. King and Ralph David Abernathy signaled to Black America the beginning of a new phase in the long struggle in what has come to be known as the modern civil rights movement.

Bombings, threats, and arrests could not dissuade church leaders from all over the Deep South from coming together and organizing under a simple mission and platform.

At its first convention in Montgomery, Alabama in August 1957, the Southern Leadership Conference adopted the current name, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the newly-formed group issued a document declaring that civil rights were essential to democracy, that segregation must end, and that all Black people should reject segregation absolutely and nonviolently.

Founders at these early meetings adopted nonviolent mass action as the centerpiece of their strategy against segregation and inequality. Additionally, the organization made the determination to open up the SCLC movement to people of all races, religions, and backgrounds.

At that time in American history there were many of us who questioned solely using non-violent protest as a tactic in the fight for civil rights. However, today there can be no question that the strategy was effective.

One of the most dramatic moments in America history occurred during a SCLC campaign in Birmingham, Alabama. On May 2, 1957 more than 1,000 Black school children joined in the peaceful demonstrations where hundreds were arrested. The following day, 2,500 more students showed up, and Public Safety Commissioner Bull Connor met them with police dogs and high-pressure fire hoses.

That evening, television news programs showed the nation, and the world, scenes of fire hoses knocking down school children and dogs attacking individual demonstrators, who had no means of protecting themselves.

Public outrage led the Kennedy administration to intervene more forcefully. A settlement was announced on May 10, under which the downtown Birmingham businesses would desegregate and eliminate discriminatory hiring practices, and the city would release the jailed protesters.

During this turbulent episode, the brutal response of local police and "Bull" Connor stood in stark contrast to the nonviolent civil disobedience of the activists, and public sentiment came down on the side of justice.

Madam Speaker, I take pride in doing my part to continue the work of Dr. King and other prominent SCLC members and moving the civil rights agenda forward.

Tonight my colleagues and I would like to salute the efforts and hard work of the SCLC. The world is a better place today because of their actions throughout these past fifty years. I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations and gratitude for the legacy the SCLC has established, here in America and around the globe.