

# Human Rights Commission Charter

Whereas the International Khalsa Council passed a motion for advisement to the SSSC recommending the establishment of a Human Rights Commission on 4/24/2020, and

Whereas the SSSC Governance Committee agrees with the importance of establishing a Human Rights Commission, and

Whereas multiple constituent organizations have spoken of the importance of establishing a Human Rights Commission,

Therefore the SSSC establishes a Human Rights Commission with a charter and membership as listed in Appendix A.

The recommended funding is for one year from the Special Projects Fund (which will be replenished from other SSSC/UI sources). The commission will create a 3-year business plan and apply for future funding from CCC Grants. This will be in conjunction with the work of Dobie Associates.

## Appendix A

# Human Rights Commission Charter

### **Purpose:**

To identify and focus on global Human Rights issues that are relevant to the 3HO/Sikh Dharma community and advise the SSSC and its affiliates about those issues. Identify other organizations that are working on these same human rights issues and collaborate with them. The Commission will sit under SSSC.

### **Initial Focus:**

#### **The first issue of focus is Marriage Equality for LGBTQ Sikhs couples:**

- Support marriage equality for LGBTQ Sikhs within our Dharmic community by implementing marriage equality by Sikh Dharma ministers.
- Lobby for marriage equality around the world.
- Interface with existing Sikh groups that are working on equality for LGBTQ Sikhs to find ways we can collaborate. Example: sarbat.net
- Create a working team to focus on security issues and a plan to assist and educate communities on how to prevent and/or deal with security concerns related to implementing marriage equality.
- Consult with OPA to identify security concerns in India or the Sikh diaspora regarding implementation of marriage equality

### **Other Goals of the Commission**

- Identify other causes and human rights issues around the world.
- Identify and develop relationships with various Sikh and other organizations that are working on Human Rights issues.
- Collaborate with existing Sikh Human Rights Groups such as Khalsa Aid, Wonder Aid, Sikh Coalition, SALDEF, etc...
- Promote dharmic tools to advance human rights

### **Staffing & Funding**

- Fund salary to coordinate this work.
- Funding for the operations.
- Recommended funding source - initial funding for one year from Special Projects Fund (which will be replenished from other SSSC/UI sources). The commission will create a 3-year business plan and apply for future funding from CCC Grants. This will be in conjunction with the work of Dobie Associates.

### **Suggested initial composition:**

- 2 SSSC board members
- SDI CEO (or designee)
- Sikhnet CEO (or designee)

- KRI CEO (or designee)
- 3HO CEO (or designee)
- 3HO Europe CEO (or designee)
- Khalsa Council Representative
- LGBTQ Representative
- Representatives of affected population (as issues come forward)

Advisors:

- ODC Representative
- OPA Representative
- SSSC Executive Director or designee

**Who brought this:** Motion for advisement from the Khalsa Council April 24, 2021

Sponsor - Awtar Kaur

Second - Viriam Singh

**Background/History:**

***MOTION FOR ADVISEMENT:***

On April 24, 2021 Khalsa Council approved a motion for advisement to the SSSC stating:

*Whereas The International Khalsa Council affirms our core Sikh values which strongly include the values of equality*

*Whereas the International Khalsa Council affirms its belief in marriage equality for all people*

*And whereas the International Khalsa Council believes in human rights for the LGBTQ+ community*

*Therefore (in addition to Motion #1), the International Khalsa Council requests that the SSSC fund a Human Rights Commission that would, among other issues, begin by lobbying for and realizing Marriage Equality for Sikhs around the world.*

- *Collaborate with Sikhs about marriage equality and the spiritual inclusivity of Sikhism as a whole.*
- *Create a network of communities in support of marriage equality both within and outside the SDI ministry with which people can connect.*
- *Create a full time position (possibly 2) for working on educating, lobbying, and furthering the mission of marriage equality.*
- *SDI will submit to SSSC for funding to put towards this cause specifically.*
- *Collaborate with LGBTQIA+ organizations within and outside Sikh Dharma*

***Steps taken so far:***

In an SSSC Regular meeting on May 5, 2021 the board tasked the governance committee to:

1. to work on the proposal before coming back to the Board. Governance would facilitate reaching out to the various entities (KC, DEI and OPA)
2. Consult with the Office of Public Affairs on this topic for feedback.
3. Ensure security plans and an intelligence apparatus are in place.

Meeting with SDI Board Wednesday, July 21, 2021:

- Requested to clarify the purpose
- After the meeting the Governance Committee decided this commission would be best placed in SSSC vs SDI as this work would encompass other nonprofits.
- SDI preferred that the Commission sit under the SSSC.