



SIKHS RAISE CASE FOR SELF-DETERMINATION AND AN INDEPENDENT KHALISTAN DURING 81ST SESSION OF UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(New York, United States: 12 Assu, Nanakshahi 558 | September 28, 2026 CE) – A delegation of Sikh Federation International took part in an international conference on self-determination held on the sidelines of the 81st session of the UN General Assembly at the United Nations headquarters in New York today.

The conference, “Right of Return and Decolonization”, provided an important opportunity to engage with UN diplomats, international experts and human rights advocates on practical approaches to decolonisation, justice and political rights. Visible Sikh presence at the UN headquarters during the 81st session of the UN General Assembly also offered valuable opportunities to exchange ideas and solutions with participants from across the world.

Sikh representatives delivered forceful speeches centred on Sikh self-determination, the right of return and the future of an independent Khalistan. They highlighted the Declaration of Khalistan 40 years ago on 29 April 1986 and the countless sacrifice of the Sikh people as a clear expression of Sikh political will for sovereignty.

Dabinderjit Singh, Chief Executive for political engagement at the Sikh Federation (UK), said the Sikh struggle for self-determination must be understood through colonial annexation, Partition and the violence of 1984. He said the British annexation of the sovereign Sikh confederacy in 1849 was an illegal act of colonial conquest later rendered unlawful under the United Nations Charter of 1945.

Singh stated that post-1947 India represented not liberation but “a transfer of power from the British to a centralized Hindu-majority state,” and said promises of autonomy made to Sikhs were discarded. Singh told those gathered that India’s reservation to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) effectively denied self-determination to people in India, and said the UN Human Rights Committee had repeatedly rejected India’s interpretation, including in its review in July 2024.

Jasjit Singh, of Sikh Federation America, addressed the relationship between decolonisation, self-determination and the right of return. He emphasised that decolonisation must not simply replace one form of political domination with another, but must enable peoples to determine their political, economic, social and cultural future free from domination or coercion. Singh situated the right of return within this broader framework, highlighting the generations of Sikh families affected by migration, separation, political violence, imprisonment and exile, while maintaining deep spiritual, cultural and familial connections with Punjab.



Prabjot Singh, legal counsel for Sikh Federation Canada, spoke about the international law of self-determination and the mechanisms the Indian state uses to persecute and repress exiled Sikh leadership in order to obstruct their ability to maintain their connections with Sikh shrines, family ties, and participate in the public life and future of our homeland.

He said that self-determination is foundational to the meaningful enjoyment of other civil and political rights, and emphasised that self-determination is the only path to lasting peace in South Asia because it is essential to recognize the dignity and agency of diverse peoples in the region rather than compelling them to live within political structures imposed upon them by colonial powers. He outlined that the pursuit of self-determination for the Sikh people is ultimately grounded in a vision of global order that ensures dignity, justice, and prosperity for all peoples as envisioned in the Sikh principle of sarbat da bhala.

The conference was organised by the Baku Initiative Group and brought together experts and leading activists from around the world who are striving for decolonisation, self-determination and human rights. SFI delegates used the platform to call international attention to the ongoing struggle of the Sikh people for an independent Khalistan, and the challenges faced by Sikh dissidents in exile across the diaspora.