

The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians since 1948 as well as tens of thousands of Christians throughout the country, over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, 2,000 to 5,000 Muslims in Gujarat, tens of thousands of Muslims elsewhere in India, and tens of thousands of Assamese, Bodos, Dalits, Manipuris, Tamils, and others. An Indian newspaper reported that the police in Gujarat were ordered to stand aside in that massacre and not to get involved, a frightening parallel to the Delhi massacre of Sikhs in 1984. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide."

Indian police arrested human-rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalsa after he exposed their policy of mass cremation of Sikhs, in which over 50,000 Sikhs have been arrested, tortured, and murdered, then their bodies were declared unidentified and secretly cremated. He was murdered in police custody. His body was not given to his family. The police never released the body of former Jathedar of the Akal Takht S. Gurdev Singh Kaunke after SSP Swaran Singh Ghotna murdered him. No one has been brought to justice for the Khalsa kidnapping and murder or for the murder of Jathedar Kaunke. Yet according to a report by the Movement Against State Repression (MASR), 52,268 Sikhs are being held as political prisoners in India without charge or trial, some since 1984!

Recently, a new wave of violence has erupted against Christian churches. States are enacting laws prohibiting Hindus from converting to any other religion. Missionary Graham Staines was murdered along with his two sons, ages 8 and 10, by a mob of militant, fundamentalist Hindu nationalists who set fire to the jeep, surrounded it, and chanted "Victory to Hanuman," a Hindu god. None of the people involved has been tried. The persons who have murdered priests, raped nuns, and burned Christian churches have not been charged or tried. The murderers of 2,000 to 5,000 Muslims in Gujarat have never been brought to trial.

"Only in a free Khalistan will the Sikh Nation prosper and get justice," said Dr. Aulakh. "India's illegal occupation of our homeland, Khalistan, must end," he said: "India should act like a democracy and allow a free and fair plebiscite on independence for all the nations of South Asia," Dr. Aulakh said. "We must free Khalistan now."

#### SIKHS CELEBRATING 307TH ANNIVERSARY OF REVELATION OF KHALSA NATION BY GURU GOBIND SINGH SAHIB

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 26, 2006.—Sikhs all over the world have been celebrating Vaisakhi Day, the anniversary of the revelation of the Khalsa Panth by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. There have been parades in Washington, D.C., Vancouver, Stockton, Seattle, London, and many other cities. There will be an annual Sikh Day parade in New York on April 29. Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, will be speaking at the New York parade. In previous years, Dr. Aulakh's speeches have been punctuated by chants of "Khalistan Zindabad."

Vaisakhi Day is one of the most joyous days in the Sikh calendar, celebrating the emergence of the Khalsa Panth as a distinct people. Sikhs have been celebrating with devotion and reverence. Guru Gobind Singh proclaimed the sovereignty of the Sikh Nation: "In grieve Sikhin ko deon patshahi." Every morning and evening Sikhs recite "Raj Kare Ga Khalsa," meaning "the Khalsa shall rule," and "Khalsa Bagi Yan Badshah," meaning "either the Khalsa is in rebellion or

the ruler." Sovereignty is the birthright of all people, and it is the heritage of the Sikh nation. As former Akal Takht Jathedar Professor Darshan Singh has said, "If a Sikh is not a Khalistani, he is not a Sikh."

"We must remind ourselves of our heritage by raising slogans of 'Khalistan Zindabad' and beginning a Shantmai Morcha to liberate our homeland, Khalistan," said Dr. Aulakh. "Whoever is honest and dedicated in leading that Shantmai Morcha deserves our support."

India is stepping up its efforts to repress the Sikh Nation's demand for freedom. Recently, Sardar Daljit Singh Bittu, leader of the Shiromani Khalsa Dal, was arrested for making a speech. Sikh activist Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan was arrested after he said on India's Zee TV that Khalistan will be free by 2007. Leaders of Dal Khalsa have been arrested for leading marches, making speeches, and raising the Khalistani flag. In January, Sikh farmers were expelled from Uttaranchal Pradesh and their land was seized. They were beaten up by the police. Their homes were bulldozed by paratroopers. Their homes in many cases were built using their life savings and by their own hands.

"It is evident that the Indian government is scared of the increasing amount of peaceful activism in Punjab in support of Khalistan," said Dr. Aulakh. "The Ume of Khalistan's liberation is near. India will fall apart soon," he said. "This office has worked unwaveringly for a sovereign Khalistan for over 20 years," he noted.

History shows that multinational states such as India are doomed to failure. Countries like Austria-Hungary, India's longtime friend the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and others prove this point. India is not one country; it is a polyglot like those countries, thrown together for the convenience of the British colonialists. It is doomed to break up as they did. "We only hope that the breakup will be peaceful like that of Czechoslovakia and not violent like that of Yugoslavia," said Dr. Aulakh.

The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians in Nagaland, over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir, tens of thousands of Christians and Muslims throughout the country, and tens of thousands of Tamils, Assamese, Manipuris, and others. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide."

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#### A TRIBUTE TO MAYOR ROBERTA COOPER

#### HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mayor Roberta Cooper for her 26 years of dedicated service to the City of Hayward, California. On June 15, 2006, the City of Hayward will host a farewell dinner to honor her as she retires from office at the end of her term on June 6, 2006.

The Mayor has been instrumental in the initiation and development of many projects in Hayward including a new City Hall, B Street Marketplace and Parking Structure, Albertson's Shopping Center, Atherton Place Condominiums, City Walk Condominiums, Fire Station 1 at C and Main, and the Theater Complex at Foothill & B coming in 2007. All of the mentioned projects were related to Hayward's downtown redevelopment.

Other areas of Hayward have also benefited from her exemplary leadership including the development of Fire Station 9, Oliver Sports Park of Hayward, Eden Shores Development, Harder Road Railroad Under-crossing, the Twin Bridges neighborhood and the accompanying Mission Foothills of Hayward Golf Course and the Route 238 Corridor Improvement Project.

Mayor Cooper is a longtime resident of Hayward. Prior to assuming the helm of the city's leadership as Mayor, she was an educator. She taught in the Hayward Unified School District from 1968 until her retirement in 1994.

She was elected to the Hayward City Council in 1988 and re-elected to the Council in 1992. She was elected Mayor in April 1994, re-elected in 1998 and reelected again in March 2002.

Mayor Cooper serves on many public agencies focused on economic development, capital improvement, transportation, the environment and city governance. She involves herself in community service with equal interest and dedication. A host of non-profit organizations have benefited from her leadership, such as The Kids Breakfast Club, Literacy Plus Project, Hayward's Human Services Commission and the Eden Youth Center.

She lists among her personal pet projects the Hayward New Start, a Tattoo Removal Program, the Hayward Honor Band, and cHime-In.

I join Mayor Cooper's constituents, friends and admirers in congratulating her on a job well done. She plans to use her time to garden, read, learn to use her home computer and travel. I hope she accomplishes all this and much more as she embarks on a well-deserved retirement.

Thank you to my friend, Bertie Cooper, for all you have done to make a difference in our community.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT MARK A. PLEASANTS

#### HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sergeant Mark A. Pleasants, currently

the Non-Commissioned Officer of Broadcast Production, assigned to the 99th Communications Squadron at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada.

Since joining the United States Air Force in 1990, Sergeant Pleasants has reached impressive degrees of achievement and has a distinguished record of service. Having served in such foreign locales as Portugal, Germany and San Vito, Sergeant Pleasants has earned a number of accolades. In 1994 and 1995, while serving at Kaiserlautern in Germany, Sergeant Pleasants earned two Air Force level awards for his reporting and won the regional and worldwide Air Force talent competitions as a singer and announcer. In 1996, while assigned to the Air Force News Agency's Regional News Center at Ramstein Air Base, he was a key member pioneering the two most award winning shows in Air Force history; Air Force Prime Time and AFNEWS: On Assignment. Sergeant Pleasants was reassigned to the 99th Communications Squadron at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada in 2003 where he immediately applied his expertise in Television and Production to revamp an inactive television program called Eye on Nellis. Through his efforts, the program developed into a monthly 30-minute news show reaching 14 million homes around the world and has won recognition as Best Commander's Access Channel in the Air Force.

Sergeant Pleasants' career is celebrated by a number of awards and commendations, having won the Air Force Commendation Medal three times, the Air Force Achievement Medal four times, Air Force Level Recognition thirteen times, and the National Defense Medal twice.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor Sergeant Mark A. Pleasants for his distinguished record of service and his commitment to providing quality news service to the Air Force community. I wish him the best in his future endeavors.

#### CONGRATULATING DR. ANN VOGEL

#### HON. GIL GUTKNECHT

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 26, 2006*

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Ann Vogel of New Ulm, Minnesota, on receiving the Sertoma Club's Service to Mankind Award.

The Sertoma Club is an organization that strives to better people's lives through philanthropic activities. Since 1960, the Sertoma Foundation has positively influenced the lives of its members and hundreds of communities internationally. Sertoma primarily focuses on service projects assisting the more than 50 million people with speech, hearing and language disorders. Sertoma also sponsors community projects to promote freedom and democracy, to assist youth, and to benefit a variety of other local community needs. Every year Sertoma clubs raise more than \$20 million for these local community service projects.

The Sertoma Club also recognizes the efforts of citizens who volunteer their time and service to the local community. The Service to Mankind Award, the highest honor a non-Sertoma member can receive, is awarded to an individual who has gone above and beyond the call of duty.

This year, The Service to Mankind Award was given to Dr. Ann Vogel by the New Ulm Sertoma Club. Dr. Vogel devotes her time to working at the Open Door Health Center in Mankato, a non-profit organization that seeks to provide care to uninsured and underinsured people in southern Minnesota. Additionally, Dr. Vogel led the funding drive for the Friends of German Park, a group dedicated to the redevelopment of the community area; while also dedicating her time as a storyteller with Bavarian Blast. Her community involvement also includes volunteering at Heritagefest and the Oak Hills Assisted Living Center.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Dr. Ann Vogel for receiving this commendable award. Her commitment to public service is greatly appreciated and an inspiration to all.

#### SIKHS CELEBRATE VAISAKHI, REVELATION OF SIKH NATION

#### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 26, 2006*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Sikhs on celebrating their important holiday, Vaisakhi Day, around the world. There were marches in Washington, Vancouver, London, and many other cities around the world. There will be a parade April 29 in New York, the annual Sikh Day event.

Vaisakhi Day marks the revelation of the Sikh Nation as a distinct entity by guru Gobind Singh in 1699. At that time, he proclaimed the Sikhs sovereign. Today, Sikhs struggle to reclaim this lost birthright as Indian troops occupy their country, Khalistan. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Sikhs declared themselves independent in 1987, but Indian troops to the tune of half a million continue to occupy Khalistan.

Recently, several Sikh activists have been arrested for simply making speeches, raising flags, or holding peaceful marches in support of Khalistan. Is this democracy, Mr. Speaker? Is this how a free country conducts itself?

Mr. Speaker, without the most basic freedoms, such as freedom of speech and self-determination, how can the Sikhs hope to survive as a people? In India, it is now illegal in many parts of the country to join another religion besides Hinduism. The intent to establish a Hindu state is clear.

We can help put an end to these practices as we congratulate the Sikhs on Vaisakhi Day. We must cut off our aid and our trade with India. Although there is a burgeoning middle class, half the country lives under the international poverty line. Losing our dollars would have a significant effect on India. And we must stand up for the principles on which America was founded.

About the same time in the calendar as Vaisakhi Day is the birthday of Thomas Jefferson, who wrote that government is legitimately founded on "the consent of the governed" and that "whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

Clearly, that time has come for too many of the minorities of South Asia—the Sikhs of

Khalistan, the Muslims in Kashmir, the predominantly Christian Naga community, and so many others. Let us help them to achieve the basic right of self-determination by putting our Congress on record in support of a free and fair plebiscite in these places on the question of independence. By doing so, we will be helping to achieve freedom, stability, peace, dignity, and prosperity for all the peoples and nations of South Asia.

Mr. Speaker, I request the permission of the House to add the Council of Khalistan's press release and open letter on Vaisakhi to the RECORD at this time.

#### SIKHS WILL CELEBRATE VAISAKHI DAY

APRIL 14

Happy Vaisakhi Day to you and your family and the Khalsa Panth. On April 14, the Sikh Nation will be observing the 307th anniversary of the day Guru Gobind Singh established the Khalsa Panth. The Guru granted sovereignty to the Sikh Nation, saying "In Grief Sikhini Ko Deon Patshahi." We must remind ourselves of our heritage by raising slogans of "Khalistan Zindabad" and beginning a Shantmai Morcha to liberate our homeland, Khalistan. Whoever is honest and dedicated in leading that Shantmai Morcha deserves our support. Every morning and evening we recite, "Raj Kare Ga Khalsa." Now is the time to act on it. Do we mean what we say every morning and evening?

The flame of freedom continues to burn brightly in the heart of the Sikh Nation. No force can suppress it. Within the past few days, Dal Khalsa and the Shiromani Khalsa Dal announced that they are uniting for sovereignty for Khalistan. This was met with chants of "Khalistan Zindabad." Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, whose own Legislative Assembly proclaimed the sovereignty of Punjab when he cancelled the water agreements, has ordered the leaders of Dal Khalsa and the Shiromani Khalsa Dal placed under police watch for their speeches. Kanwarpal Singh Dhani of the Guru Asra Trust, and Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan were arrested this month for making speeches in support of Khalistan. Dr. Chohan said, "Khalistan will be free." In January of last year and again in June of last year Sikh activists, mostly from Dal Khalsa, were arrested merely for raising the Khalistani flag and making pro-Khalistan speeches. During his recent visit to India, President George W. Bush walked over to Sukhbir Singh Badal and said, "Give my best wishes and regards to your people from the people of America." Even the President of the United States is aware of our situation. "I wish you could visit Punjab," said Sukhbir Singh. When Khalistan is free, that will happen. President Bush has said, "Freedom is the birthright of every man, woman, and child." These events show that the movement to free our homeland is on the rise. It has gotten the attention of the world. The movement to liberate our homeland is stronger than it has ever been and it has frightened the Indian regime. Now is the time to rededicate ourselves to the liberation of Khalistan.

The Indian government is reacting to the rising tide of freedom for the Sikh Nation. Earlier this year, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh apologized to the Sikh Nation for the Delhi massacres of November 1984 that killed over 20,000 Sikhs. It is good that he apologized and it clearly shows India's responsibility, but what good does it do the Sikh Nation? Where are the apologies for the Golden Temple attack and the other atrocities? Where is the compensation for the victims' families?

In January, Sikh farmers were expelled from Uttaranchal Pradesh and their land was