

**A RESOLUTION TO URGE THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA TO
ACKNOWLEDGE NOVEMBER AS SIKH HERITAGE MONTH**

Primary Sponsor:

Megan Law, Internal Vice President

Co-Sponsors:

Alicia Verdugo, Cultural Affairs Commissioner
Jonathan Valenzuela Mejia, General Representative 3
Eva Jussim, External Vice President
Evan Curran, Facilities Commissioner
Naomi Hammonds, President

Supporting Organizations:

UCLA Sikh Student Association (SSA)
UCLA Jakarta Movement Chapter (JMC)
UCLA Bhagat Puran Singh Health Initiative (BPSHI)
Giddhe Diyan Ranyian (GDR)

WHEREAS, November marks the birth of the founder of Sikhi, Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Sikhs around the world commemorate November by initiating Nagar Kirtans, holding Akhand Paths (a non stop reading of Guru Granth Sahib Ji), and continue the tradition started by Guru Nanak Dev Ji of Langar; and,

WHEREAS, Langar is the foundational Sikh revolutionary space and where Sikhs come together to discuss the revolutionary ideas of the house of Nanak; it's a safe space for all the oppressed people of the world, to share a meal with the Khalsa and learn about the revolutionary struggle so that they too can take part; and,

WHEREAS, Sikhs have been living in the United States for more than 120 years; and,

WHEREAS, during the early 20th century, thousands of Sikh Americans worked on farms, in lumber mills, on the railroads, and in mines throughout California and the continental US; and,

WHEREAS, Sikhi is the fifth largest religion in the world, and today, there are more than 30 million Sikhs worldwide, and an estimated 750,000 Sikh Americans, with nearly 500,000 living in California alone; and,

WHEREAS, Sikh Americans pursue diverse professions and make rich contributions to the political, social, cultural, and economic vibrancy of the United States, including significant contributions to agriculture, information technology, small businesses, the hotel industry, trucking, health, technology; and,

WHEREAS, Sikh Americans distinguished themselves by fostering respect among all people through faith and service, as well as a commitment to truth and justice; and,

WHEREAS, on October 14, 1912, the first Sikh Gurdwara in the United States, Gurdwara Sahib Sikh Temple, was founded by Professor Teja Singh of the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society; and,

WHEREAS, Sikh Gurdwaras have been a beacon for the local community through their fostering of selfless service and community building; and,

WHEREAS, there are parks named in honor of the Sikh Community in California such as Jaswant Singh Khalra Park in Fresno, Singh and Kaur Park in Elk Grove, and Singh Park in Livingston; and,

WHEREAS, the Sikh genocide began on November 1, 1984, after the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the capital territory of Delhi; and,

WHEREAS, it occurred in the states of Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa, Jammu and Kashmir, Chhattisgarh, Tripura, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Maharashtra; and,

WHEREAS, the Sikh genocide lasted three days, and over 30,000 Sikhs were brutally murdered, or died as they were hacked and burned alive in their homes; and,

WHEREAS, on July 20, 2023, the California State Assembly unanimously passed Assembly Joint Resolution 2, as a “measure [to] condemn the November 1984 anti-Sikh violence in India as genocide and would urge the United States Congress to formally recognize and condemn the November 1984 anti-Sikh violence in India as genocide.”

WHEREAS, eyewitnesses, journalists, and human rights activists have compiled evidence showing that government and law enforcement officials organized, participated in, and failed to intervene to prevent the killings through direct and indirect means; and,

WHEREAS, as recently as 2011, mass graves have been discovered in the villages of Hondh Chillar and Pataudi in Haryana, and many more will continue to be discovered in the future as Indian government officials and police continue to flout impunity; and,

WHEREAS, the "Widow Colony," the Tilak Vihar neighborhood in New Delhi, still houses thousands of Sikh women who were forced to bear mass rape and witness the hacking, burning, and murdering of their husbands, fathers, and sons, and who are still calling for justice against the perpetrators; and,

WHEREAS, many Sikhs made the United States their home after escaping persecution at the hands of the Indian Government after facing a genocide in 1984, and Sikhs continue to build new roots, partnerships, and possibilities in the United States; and,

WHEREAS, innocent Sikhs in India and around the world, such as Jagtar Singh Johal, are unlawfully abducted, faced with unlawful detention, tortured, and have their human rights trampled upon under draconian and fascist laws in India; and,

WHEREAS, the recent assassination of Canadian citizen, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, on Canadian Soil by Indian Government agencies in June 2023 and the continued threats, intimidation, infiltration and espionage by Indian Government agencies into Sikh-American organizations, Gurdwaras, and other institutions deserves condemnation and a full inquiry; and,

WHEREAS, Sikhs around the world will continue to stand up for justice and raise issues such as #SikhGenocide1984, #FreeJaggiNow, and #FarmersProtest; and,

WHEREAS, the Undergraduate Students Association (USAC) at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) is committed to educating our communities about the world's religions, the value of diversity, acceptance, and a culture of mutual understanding; and,

WHEREAS, today, USAC seeks to further the diversity of its community and afford all residents the opportunity to better understand, recognize, and appreciate the rich history and shared experiences of Sikh Americans and student body organizations at UC Los Angeles, such as the Jakara Movement Chapter, Sikh Student Association, Bhagat Puran Singh Health Initiative; and,

WHEREAS, recognizing the state-sponsored violence that targeted Sikhs across India in 1984 is an important and historic step towards justice, accountability, and reconciliation, which should be an example to other governments; and,

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, USAC condemns the November 1984 anti-Sikh violence in India as genocide; and,

THEREFORE LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, that the USAC supports the efforts of the Sikh Community at University of California, Los Angeles to establish November as Sikh Heritage Month and the official month of remembrance for the Sikh Genocide; and,

THEREFORE LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, that the USAC calls on the University of California, Los Angeles and the UC system to acknowledge November as Sikh Heritage month on the academic calendar; and,

THEREFORE LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the USAC encourage students to support their Sikh peers on campus and to better understand, as well as educate other members of the student body on, the historic principles of Sikhi and the value of diversity they bring, in order to bring all to a mutual understanding of their grassroots; and,

THEREFORE LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, USAC recognizes November as "Sikh Heritage Month"; and,

THEREFORE LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED THAT, copies of this resolution shall be sent to UC President Michael Drake, Chancellor Gene Block, Provost, and Executive Vice Chancellor Darnell Hunt, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Monroe Gordon Jr., Interim Vice

Provost, Equity Diversity, and Inclusion Anna Spain Bradley, Vice Provost of Academic Personnel Michael S. Levine, the Office of the UC Regents, *The Daily Bruin*, *The Los Angeles Times*.