

## 1984: The Sikh Forum observes Anniversary

**The Sikh Forum held a public meeting in remembrance of Nov. '84 victims of carnage and to pay homage to martyrs on 7th November 2005 at Constitution Club, Rafi Marg, New Delhi.**

Ms. Brinda Karat – M.P., Rajni Kothari (author of *'Who are the Guilty'*) and well known social activist, Sh. Kuldip Nayar, S. Tarlochan Singh-M.P., Dr. Maheep Singh and Sardar H.S. Phoolka addressed the gathering.

Dr. Amrik Singh presided.

All speakers expressed their anguish that even after 21 years justice has not been given to the victims.

**Ms. Brinda Karat- M.P.** – The Nov '84 massacre was a political message from the Govt. in power to the Sikh community. Victims of Nov'84 have yet not received any justice, this is shameful for the whole country. Govt. must ponder over it as to why justice has not been given to the Sikh community even after 21 years and no action has been taken against guilty persons. She expressed pain that the hope which was penned on Nanavati Commission that it will expose truth about the massacre of the Sikhs, has been belied and that the report appears to be a compromise document. If the 'Action Taken Report' as presented to the Parliament had been accepted, then this would have been a shameful act. It is very strange that when FIR's were recorded, the names of influential political persons and others were not recorded and now it is being made as an excuse that no action can be taken against them. Further, if we accept that no action can now be taken against police persons involved in Nov'84, and have since retired, then it will be against normal course of justice. The Govt. has as yet not taken any step towards proper rehabilitation and employment of the children of the victims who have now become adults. She advised that the Home Minister should be approached before he finalizes the recommendations of the two Committees, formed after Prime Minister's speech in Parliament. As she is afraid that the coming session of Parliament will be sensational and this issue may be sidelined.

**Sardar H.S. Phoolka** – Welcomed the Govt. step to inquire into involvement of three important Congress persons by CBI, but preferred that it should be done under supervision of National Human Rights Commission, NHRC. Guilty persons must be punished, so that no political leader or party can dare create situation and take political/electoral advantage after killing hundreds of innocent persons.

**Prof. Rajni Kothari** – What happened in 1984, Govt. not only allowed this violence to happen but also encouraged it. When he and Patwant Singh went to meet Rajiv Gandhi to stop the killing of Sikhs, Rajiv said he had no time to know about it as he was busy receiving dignitaries and others who were coming to convey condolences on death of his mother. In 1984, though the main role was of Congress, but other parties were also there. He also regretted that there is erosion of citizen's responsibility. He stressed that there should be legislation on rehabilitation law covering criminal, communal and compensation aspect when a riot or carnage takes place.

**Sardar Tarlochan Singh-M.P.** – regretted that Surinder Singh Granthi who had earlier deposed before Nanavati Commission against Jagdish Tytler, and later withdrew his affidavit, is still an employee of DSGMC. Parliament is yet to express condolence and sympathy with victim of Nov'84' Carnage. He suggested that all Sikh organizations, political and others, should join together to discuss the issue and decide about next course of action.

**Sh. Kuldip Nayar** – We can not assess the pain of children, widows and dependent of the

victims and trauma they have undergone; the guilty must be punished. Guilty persons of Nov'84 are roaming about free and with dignity. This was also responsible to a large extent for the long period of unrest in Punjab. Punjabis have always stood up and fought against injustice right from the Guru's time. He recalled how Akali party was the only party, which carried out agitation against Emergency for 19 months till it was recalled. He stressed that we should record all oral history from the scattered witnesses of happenings in Punjab leading to 1984.

The following resolutions were unanimously passed:

1. Both houses of Parliament should pass a resolution of condolence and apology to the nation for the massacre of Sikhs during Nov'84.
2. Cases of Guilty persons now should be investigated under supervision of National Human Rights Commission.
3. Action against Police officers and other Administrative officials involved in Nov'84 Carnage be taken up including those who have since retired.
4. About 350 cases, closed by police as un-traced, etc. should be re-opened and investigated.
5. Oral history of the happenings in Punjab leading to 1984 Carnage be recorded and preserved.

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