

Sikhs rescued from Taliban

Two Sikhs, abducted for ransom by Taliban in the troubled Khyber tribal region bordering Afghanistan, were rescued by Pakistani security forces, a week after another Sikh trader was beheaded by the militants in captivity.

The operation was conducted in a remote area along the boundary between Khyber and Aurakzai tribal regions on a tip-off from Intelligence sources, a spokesman from the Inter Services Public Relations, said.

The two abducted Sikhs - Surjeet Singh and Gurvinder Singh - are safe, the spokesman said adding "many" militants were killed in the operation but did not specify the number.

Gurvinder, 16, was reunited with his family while Surjeet was admitted to a military hospital as he sustained injuries on his back. Officials said Surjeet was out of danger. It could not immediately be ascertained how he was injured.

Gurvinder was taken to his home in a procession after he was brought to the city by security forces. A special blue turban was tied on his head and he was garlanded. Flower petals were showered on him as he walked through his neighbour hood. A large number of Sikhs joined Gurvinder when he offered prayers at Gurdwara Bhai Joga Singh. Sikh elders thanked the army for rescuing the two. The Sikhs are living in peace and had no enmity with anyone, they said.

The two members of the minority community were kidnapped along with another Sikh named Jaspal Singh about 40 days ago while travelling to the Tirah region of Khyber Agency to conclude a business deal.

The beheaded body of Jaspal Singh was found in the tribal area on February 21. Sources said the body of another Sikh, Mahal Singh, was recovered on the same day in Aurakzai Agency. However, Pakistani officials have maintained that only Jaspal Singh's body was found by the authorities.

While the killings had sparked a furore in India, Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardar had directed authorities to take "stern action" against the abudctors and to prevent the recurrence of such incidents.

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New York City Council Honors Sikhs

Albany, NY: UNITED SIKHS was honored for their recent humanitarian aid efforts in Haiti and Chile, and ongoing civil rights advocacy work by the New York State and City lawmakers in May, 2010. Also, on May 17, 2010, UNITED SIKHS was honored before the New York State Assembly by the Speaker of the House of New York, by Assemblyman Lancman, and by Assemblyman Weprin for the Civil and Human Rights Advocacy and Humanitarian Relief Efforts undertaken by the organization with support from the members of the New York and national Sangat (community).

Community board member Jagir Singh Bains, who accompanied the UNITED SIKHS Team to Albany, said, "While a lot has been done, as a community and as a society, we have a long road ahead in alleviating the suffering of people affected by natural disasters and in the fight to secure Sikh civil rights. The Sikh community of New York is proud to support the work of UNITED SIKHS as they continue to serve those in need without any discrimination, and through their work in areas of humanitarian aid, as well as human and

civil rights, embody the message of Guru Gobind Singh ji to ‘*recognize the human race as one.*’”

Jaspreet Singh, Staff Attorney, who accepted the award on behalf of UNITED SIKHS, remarked, “UNITED SIKHS is committed to serving people in need, and it was a pleasure for the Sikh community to be recognized for its humanitarian relief efforts, and for the advocacy we engage in on behalf of ourselves, minorities and disadvantaged peoples.”

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Hofstra’s Guru Nanak Interfaith Prize jointly awarded to Rabbi Arthur Schneier coalition for Peace

The Guru Nanak Interfaith Prize was established in 2006 by Sr. Ishar Singh Bindra and family to recognize outstanding achievement in the promotion of interfaith harmony. It is named after the Founder of the Sikh religion and is meant to encourage cooperation between faith communities. Guru Nanak believed that all humans are born equal, regardless of color, ethnicity, nationality or gender.

The \$50,000 prize, which is bestowed every two years, recognizes significant work to increase interfaith understanding. A formal award presentation is planned for spring 2010. The first Guru Nanak Interfaith Prize was awarded in 2008 to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso.

Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY – Rabbi Arthur Schneier, president of the Appeal for Conscience Foundation, and Religions for Peace, a worldwide multi-religious coalition, have been awarded Hofstra’s Guru Nanak Interfaith Prize for 2010, President Stuart Rabinowitz announced last May.

Rabbi Schneier and Religions for Peace were chosen by a selection committee comprised of members from various faith traditions. More than sixty individuals and groups were nominated. The honorees were announced at a press conference today at Hofstra University.

“It is especially meaningful for Religions for Peace to receive an award in the namesake of the first of the ten great Gurus of Sikhism,” said Religions for Peace Secretary General William F. Vendley. “Guru Nanak Dev Ji gave shape to the notion of a ‘universal brotherhood’, which is genuinely respectful of diverse religious identities. The Bindra family, the Sikh community, and Hofstra University receive our heartfelt appreciation for honoring the many thousands of religious leaders and believers – including the heads of women of faith and youth organizations - around the world who cooperate through Religions for Peace.”

Hofstra University is a dynamic private institution where students can choose from more than 150 undergraduate and 160 graduate programs in liberal arts and sciences, business, communication, education and allied health services and honor studies, as well as a School of Law.

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‘Sikh Heritage Week’ in USA

The following Resolution has been disseminated:

“WHEREAS, Sikh Heritage Week salutes the 25 million Sikhs worldwide, 500,000 in North America, and the 25,000 throughout the Washington Metropolitan Area.

WHEREAS, Sikh Heritage Week honors the values and traditions of Punjab, a region straddling the border between India and Pakistan.

WHEREAS, Sikh Heritage Week acknowledges that the nation’s capital welcomes international contributions to the artistic, social and economic foundation of our city;

WHEREAS, Sikh Heritage Week includes the Kaur Foundation’ establishment of the Sikh Collection initiative within the Asian Division at the Library of Congress, and acknowledges the Kaur Foundation for working to create institutional inclusive environments; and WHEREAS, Sikh Heritage Week plants the seeds of Sikh awareness and provides the Kaur Foundation with a forum for ongoing dialogue between Sikh-Americans and other communities throughout the Washington Metro area;

RESOLVED, by the Council of the District of Columbia, that this Resolution may be cited as the “Sikh Heritage Week Recognition Resolution of 2009”.

Sec. 2 The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes and celebrates Sikh Heritage Week, as well as the Library of Congress and the Kaur Foundation for the valuable contribution they make in the City.

[Courtesy: Harbans Lal, Ph.D., D. Litt.]

