

UNITED SIKHS: Iowa Flood Relief Efforts Underway

Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA - UNITED SIKHS collected donations of non-perishable food items and emergency supplies to relieve flood-affected families in Iowa, as Cedar Rapids and Iowa City recover from recent floods. Severe flooding had put Cedar Rapids and Iowa City under 12 feet of water and forced thousands to flee their homes in mid-June.

UNITED SIKHS command center in Richmond Hill, New York gathered items such as clothing, canned food, tooth brushes, first aid kits, and shoes for donation to the victims of Cedar Rapids and Iowa City. These donations were shipped to the Iowa Gurdwara where volunteers transported the material to local churches.

If you wish to make a monetary donation to assist with UNITED SIKHS Sikh Aid Iowa Disaster Relief 2008, please send all checks, payable to UNITED SIKHS, to: JAF, POB 7203, New York, NY.

[Courtesy: Kuldip Singh
Director, UNITED SIKHS]

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Headcovering in Schools

“The Court has sent a clear message that it is illegal for a school to deny education to a student because of his religious belief,” said Walter Van Steen Bruggen, the lawyer hired by UNITED SIKHS and the Guru Nanak Sikh Society of Belgium to represent five Belgian Sikh schoolboys.

Hasselt, Belgium - The
Hasselt Civil Court

overturned recently a ban on the *patka*, a Sikh head covering, which was imposed by a state school, KTA Domein Speelhof, on five Sikh schoolboys since 2005. The court said that the ban on the religious head covering was a violation of the Sikh students’ right to manifest their religion under article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights, of which Belgium is a signatory.

In a judgment handed down, Judge Madam H. Coenen said that by excluding young people because of their religious beliefs the Domein Speelhof school in St Truiden had violated their right to practice their faith.

“The Court has sent a clear message that it is illegal for a school to deny education to a student because of his religious belief,” said Walter Van Steenbrugge, the lawyer hired by UNITED SIKHS and the Guru Nanak Sikh Society of Belgium to represent the five Belgian Sikh schoolboys.

“Unlike France, there is no law in Belgium that bans religious signs in schools, yet the school in question had imposed the ban in the name of a school uniform policy that banned any head covering,” said Mejjindarpal Kaur, UNITED SIKHS legal director who had been dealing with this case since 2005.

