



Nicola Sturgeon MSP  
First Minister of Scotland  
St Andrew's House, Regent Road  
EH1 3DG

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear First Minister,

### **Sikhs in Scotland Support Farmers Protest in India**

Scottish Sikhs have been experiencing a great deal of anxiety, pain and worry as we watch 250 million ordinary farmers in India on strike against the Indian government as part of the biggest protest in history against three agricultural reform bills that were passed in September without their consultation, threatening their livelihood and economic prosperity.

This issue has galvanised the Indian diaspora, especially those of a Sikh background. This is directly relevant to people in Scotland who have familial links in India, or who may own ancestral agricultural land, which is at risk of privatisation.

Over 86% of Indian farmers are classed as small or marginal landholders with nearly 50% of India's population depending on farming and agriculture for employment. Small scale farming is also important to food and nutrition security for rural populations. To protect incomes in this sector a guaranteed minimum price is available to farmers for some crops, which provides a fair livelihood for them and agricultural workers. The new laws proposed by Prime Minister Modi eradicating these protections will have a direct impact on the livelihoods of millions of farmers in India on a scale we cannot comprehend. Scottish Sikhs are firmly standing in Solidarity with the protestors and the Farmers Unions.

In demonstrating their rights, farmers have been attacked by police water cannons, tear gas and brute force being against hundreds of thousands of peacefully protesting farmers. It has also been widely reported that the Indian Government has, through its national security agencies, been intimidating protesters and volunteer groups with summons being issued for investigation including the UK registered international aid charity, Khalsa Aid.

This is a time of great distress for the Scottish Sikh community and we need your Government to amplify our concerns to the Indian Government as well as reassuring our community of the human right to protest peacefully. Considering that many Scottish citizens have family and friends directly facing this danger, your public condemnation of state violence in India is sought alongside a message to promote every Indian's fundamental right to engage in peaceful protest, whether in Scotland or abroad.

On behalf of Sikhs in Scotland,

Charandeep Singh  
Executive Director  
Sikhs in Scotland

*Cc: Deputy First Minister, John Swinney MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs, Michael Russell MSP*



Regd. Charity  
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