

Vaheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Vaheguru Ji Ki Fatteh!

The Pure & Sovereign Khalsa Belong to the Wonderful Enlightener God, who is Ever Victorious!

THE SIKH COMMUNITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

PRESS RELEASE

- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

March 30, 2006

BC Sikhs Respond to Williams Lake Tragedy

Immediate action required from authorities; Community determined to rebuild Sikh Temple with faith and unity.

SURREY, BC – Representatives and volunteers of British Columbia's Sikh schools, non-profit organizations, youth groups, and Gurdwaras gathered for a special emergency meeting at Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar on Tuesday to discuss the BC Sikh community's reaction to the arson attack on Gurdwara Sahib Western Singh Sabha in Williams Lake, BC on March 26. The suroop (body) of Guru Granth Sahib Jee (scripture and enlightener of Sikhs), that was present in the main hall of Gurdwara Sahib Western Singh Sabha was severely damaged by the fire and a cremation ceremony of the Guru Granth Sahib Jee will have to be done. This fact was the overwhelming cause of sadness and shock amongst the Gurdwara Sahib committee members, priests, and congregation that gathered for the meeting.

The Gurdwara Sahib building could be rebuilt in time, but the suroop (body) of the Guru Granth Sahib which was burned was devastating. Guru Granth Sahib Jee is the living light of God and the embodiment of the ten Gurus (Enlighteners) of Sikhism, from Guru Nanak Dev Jee to Guru Gobind Singh Jee. As such, the attack, in the eyes of the Sikh community, was not simply damage of property but attempted murder and assault on the living leader and teacher of the Sikhs.

The Sikh community of the Lower Mainland voiced their commitment to support the Williams Lake Sikh community in any way possible. Many individuals insisted that Gurdwara Sahibs across British Columbia, and for that matter anywhere in the world, should be equipped with a night-time security guard and 24-hour security surveillance technology, as well as alarm systems. Although reports confirm that Gurdwara Sahib Western Singh Sabha was equipped with a closed-circuit security camera, perhaps other measures could have stopped the attack.

The meeting attendants expressed their solidarity with the Williams Lake Sikh community to lobby the provincial government and the appropriate authorities to ensure justice, and more arrangements for protection of places of prayer and faith across British Columbia. Furthermore, the attendants planned to work together to raise media awareness of the gravity of the incident, not only on the basis of the arson attack on the building, but for the respect of

Guru Granth Sahib Jee. It is therefore important for the media, public and courts to recognize Guru Granth Sahib Jee as the living enlightener of Sikhs, rather than a plain book as misinterpreted in most newspaper articles.

The meeting was adjourned with plans for a small group of Gurdwara representatives to visit Williams Lake this coming weekend, as well as a large united BC Sikh community gathering in Williams Lake in April, for the cremation ceremony of the suroop (body) of Guru Granth Sahib Jee.

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Further press releases on behalf of the BC Sikh community will be issued from this source. For more information please visit the Sikh youth of BC website at <http://www.bcsikhyouth.com> or contact the Sikh youth of BC by e-mail sikhyouth@shaw.ca