

CALIFORNIA STATE ASSEMBLY

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The State Assembly of California is in support of this resolution to recognize the Jathedar Gurdev Singh Kaunke as "Martyr of Sikh Nation", who was extra judicially killed by the Indian Security Forces in January 1993.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the State Assembly of California that:

1. Whereas Sikhism is the world's 5th largest religion with more than 26 million followers.
2. Whereas, for more than hundred years, the United States and the State of California has been home to people of Sikh faith and today several hundred thousand Sikhs are proud residents of the State of California.
3. Whereas Sri Akal Takht Sahib is the highest temporal seat of Sikhism and head of Sri Akal Takht Sahib, the Jathedar, is the supreme religious leader of the Sikh community.
4. Whereas Gurdev Singh Kaunke was unanimously elected and ordained as Jathedar (Head) of Sri Akal Takht Sahib by the grand assembly of Sikhs (Sarbat Khalsa) in 1986.
5. Whereas, as Jathedar (Head) of Sri Akal Takht Sahib, Gurdev Singh Kaunke selflessly worked and guided the Sikh community in the movement for right to self-determination and struggle for restoration of the Sikh religious identity which has been usurped by the Explanation II to Article 25(b) of the Indian Constitution by declaring Sikhs as "Hindus".
6. Whereas for his religious preachings and political activism, Jathedar Kaunke was extra judicially killed by the Indian Security Forces on January 01, 1993.
7. Whereas the death of Jathedar Kaunke has been recognized as "extra judicial killing" by the Punjab Human Rights Commission in its report released in December 2023.
8. Whereas more than 31 years have passed and despite overwhelming evidence showing that Jathedar Kaunke was extra judicially killed by the Indian Security forces, no action against the perpetrators has been taken by the Indian Government.
9. Whereas inaction against the killers of Jathedar Kaunke shows India's practice of impunity for the officials involved in grave human rights violations against religious minorities and political dissidents.

10. Whereas the daughter of Shaheed Jathedar Gurdev Singh Kaunke Bibi Sarabjit Kaur is the proud resident of the State of California.

NOW in the spirit of:

- promoting freedom of expression and freedom of religion as enshrined in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution;
- condemning the use of extra judicial means to silence the dissenting voices;
- honoring the Sikh community's contribution to the State of California and the United States;

The State Assembly of California resolves to recognize Gurdev Singh Kaunke, the then Jathedar (Head) of Sri Akal Takht Sahib (the highest temporal seat of Sikhism) who was extra judicially killed on January 01, 1993 in Punjab India, as "Martyr of Sikh Nation".