

Sikh Federation UK
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West Midlands
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Dear friends,

I want to commend the Sikh Federation and the Sikh Network for the work done on producing the Sikh Manifesto. I discussed it with my local Gurdwara in Leicester and local Sikh organisations during the election and believe it is a very important statement both of the Sikh commitment to politics and to the agenda that the community wants to see. I know from representing a multi faith city like Leicester what an important contribution the Sikh community makes to Britain and I am a supporter of the values the Sikh community holds dear – values like equality, hard work and service to fellow citizens.

As I said at the BAME hustings for the Labour leadership in Harrow recently, I think it is unacceptable that there is not a single Sikh Labour MP and in recent years we have gone backwards on Sikh representation. If I win the Labour leadership I will have an ongoing and open dialogue with representatives of the Sikh community and other faiths and will work together on issues of common interest. Although we have many good Sikh councillors and a Sikh MEP we must ensure there are Labour Sikhs in both houses of Parliament in future.

The freedom of religion we have in Britain is precious and I will defend it strongly. I want to ensure that the Sikh articles of faith – the 5ks – are properly respected so that Sikhs can practice their faith freely without some of the difficulties experienced elsewhere in Europe.

I support the campaign to have a monument to commemorate the tremendous Sikh sacrifice in two world wars and believe a suitable prominent site in London should be found for this.

I am very conscious of the continuing pain over the events of 1984. I want to work with the community to find a way to ensure the full truth is told about these events which resulted in the deaths of so many innocent Sikhs in India.

The Sikh Manifesto forms an important basis for dialogue between the community and all of us in politics. I want my Labour leadership to be open and inclusive. I think it is a great mistake in politics to take any community for granted or to believe that because someone's parents or grandparents voted Labour, they will too. Every vote has to be earned and worked for. As society's aspirations and expectations change, so must Labour move with the times. I know that at the recent election some people wondered if Labour was still for them.

I don't want people wondering that in the future. I want to offer a fresh start so that people who share our values, whatever income group they are in, can vote Labour with pride and confidence. And if I am elected I will champion the values I believe are shared between the Labour Party and the Sikh community.

Yours sincerely,



Liz Kendall MP