

On the ISC Front

By Kanwal Pal Singh, General Secretary

The third quarter, July - September 2025, saw a change in the Administrative Team, as Lt Col Jagtar Singh Multani resigned on 29.07.2025. Hon'ble Convener Dr Sardara Singh Johl, Padma Bhushan and Hon'ble Co-Convener S Gurdev Singh Brar, IAS [retd] handed over the charge to a Team of three Members of the Empowered Committee. The reins of the International Sikh Confederation were handed over to the Head of the Empowered Committee, Dr Birendra Kaur as Secretary General, S Kanwal Pal Singh as General Secretary, and Dr Khushhal Singh as Advisor.

The Team officially took charge on 02.08.2025, marking the beginning of a new chapter for the Confederation. The new leadership is committed to fostering effective governance and ensuring transparent and collaborative functioning at the ISC, in alignment with its founding principles and constitutional framework. The Team visited and met Bibi Baljit Kaur, sought her blessings and wished her recovery from illness. Her tireless services and active role for the cause of the Sikh community at national and international level was put on record.

An Executive Committee Meeting of ISC was held on 12th September 2025 at 11:00 AM at the ISC Head Office, Chandigarh. The above appointments of the new Team were approved by the Executive Committee. Dr Birendra Kaur welcomed all the members and briefed them about the past functioning of the ISC. The services of Lt. Gen. Kartar Singh and Lt. Col Jagtar Singh towards ISC were appreciated. The General Secretary, S Kanwal Pal Singh informed all the members about the taking over of the administrative charge of ISC office (records, equipment, infrastructure, bank accounts) etc. The members were also briefed about the ongoing Home Work Tuition Centres (HWTC) and the CSR Project Proposal by Finovation Pvt Ltd, New Delhi.

Following issues were deliberated:

*President, SGPC, constituted a 34-Member Committee tasked with drafting rules, terms, functions, etc., for the position of Jathedar, Sri Akal Takht Sahib. ISC noted the non-inclusion of prominent Sikh organizations therein, and thereby responded to the SGPC vide letter dated 28.0.2025 (Copy of the letter by ISC is available on its website <http://www.sikhconfed.org> under the 'Updates' on the Home Page), expressing concern over the non-inclusion of prominent Sikh Institutions, Gurdwara Management Committees, etc. The letter emphasised that the left out organisations - both national and international, are all well-recognised in their respective fields, and have been serving the cause of the Guru for decades now. These have also been raising concerns, and engaging with the Issue at hand, from time to time.

The representation strongly urged for inclusion of such Bodies to ensure credibility, comprehensiveness, and global representation of the Sikh Panth. Members underscored the critical importance of ISC adopting a proactive and transparent role in safeguarding the sanctity and autonomy of Sri Akal Takht Sahib.

It was strongly felt that any process involving such a pivotal appointment must be rooted in the collective aspirations and consensus of the global Sikh *sangat*. The Committee emphasised that inclusivity must be the cornerstone of this initiative. To that end, it was proposed that voices and viewpoints of individuals and organisations who were not initially consulted be actively sought and incorporated into a Document, for the benefit of the Panth in

general and the SGPC, in particular. This would ensure that the selection process is not only representative but also reflective of the diverse perspectives within the Panthic fold. This document should then be circulated among all relevant stakeholders, including religious bodies, scholars, and community leaders, to foster transparency and build trust in the process. The Executive Committee also stressed the need for establishing clear criteria and ethical guidelines for the selection of the Jathedar, ensuring that the chosen individual embodies spiritual integrity, leadership acumen, and unwavering commitment to Sikh values.

*350th Martyrdom Day of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji is approaching. Guru Sahib made the supreme sacrifice to uphold the principles of faith, freedom, and human dignity, values which remain universally relevant in the present times. The International Sikh Confederation is of the view that we should propose and work towards getting the United Nations to declare this historic day as an “International Day for Freedom to Religion/Faith” to commemorate and spread Guru Sahib’s ultimate sacrifice for justice, human rights, and religious freedom. In this regard, we are planning to seek the valuable guidance and considered opinion of distinguished Sikh personalities and scholars. Specifically, we wish to deliberate upon:

- What should be the most appropriate name/title for the proposed International Day?
- How best can this proposal be articulated and advocated at national and international levels?

Dr Kharak Singh Trust in the name of the Founder father of ISC had earlier also worked on this issue. Reference is to earlier 2016 representation to the United Nations, later featured in UNESCO & Tudor Rose publication, *A Better World*, Page38, Vol 2, (2017). (Copy of the letter is available on website <http://www.sikhconfed.org> under ‘Updates’ on the Home Page)

***Advisory Councils:** In accordance with the Constitution of the International Sikh Confederation, six Advisory Councils have been established to guide and support key areas of its mission. These Councils are: Religious Affairs; Education & Social Affairs; Economic Affairs; International & Legal Affairs; Media, Publications & Public Relations; and Heritage Affairs. Sincere efforts would be made to activate these Councils and ensure their effective functioning. To achieve this, subject experts, scholars, and thought leaders from each respective domain would be engaged. Their involvement is expected to enrich the Confederation’s initiatives and uphold its values with informed guidance and strategic insight. Through these activities, the Team hopes to meet the Aims & Objectives of the ISC.