

ON THE ISC FRONT

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The fourth quarter, October – December 2025, was marked by significant outreach and commemorative initiatives undertaken by the International Sikh Confederation (ISC). The Confederation continued to strengthen its governance framework and expand its engagement with national and international stakeholders.

A joint meeting of the Global Sikh Council (UK), the International Sikh Confederation (ISC), Chandigarh, and Kendri Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Chandigarh was held on 5th December, 2025, at the ISC Headquarters to deliberate on pressing Panthic issues and formulate a collaborative strategy. The meeting, graced by Senior Advocate Navkiran Singh, brought together key representatives including Amritpal Singh Sachdeva, Dr. Birendra Kaur, Sardar Kanwal Pal Singh, Dr. Khushhal Singh, Dr. Jaspal Kaur Kaang, and Sardar Inderpreet Singh. Participants expressed deep concern over the challenges confronting the Sikh community and unanimously agreed to work jointly for safeguarding the interests of the Panth, promoting awareness, and evolving effective solutions for Punjab and the global Sikh diaspora. The meeting also discussed the framework for uniting Sikh bodies on a common platform to enhance coordination, representation, and strategic advocacy, concluding with a commitment to formalize an actionable joint programme in the near future.

An important highlight of this quarter was the series of communications and representations made to dignitaries and institutions regarding the 350th Martyrdom Anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, who sacrificed his life to uphold the principles of freedom to religion, compassion, and human dignity. The ISC has undertaken significant initiatives to commemorate the same:

- The ISC has advanced two proposals to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, to honour the supreme sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib on the occasion of his 350th Martyrdom Anniversary. In its communication, ISC has respectfully urged the Government of India to institutionalize an annual Kirtan Darbar at the Red Fort, New Delhi. Such an event would serve as a lasting homage to Guru Sahib's legacy, while fostering interfaith harmony, reflection of cultural, and national unity.

- In a further initiative, ISC has sought the Prime Minister's support in proposing to the United Nations that 24th November be observed as an International Day to mark Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib's martyrdom. Suggested titles included *International Day for Freedom to Religion/ Faith* and *International Day to Stop Forced Conversions*, both reflecting the Guru's unparalleled stand

for human dignity, pluralism, and universal rights. These proposals underscore ISC's commitment to ensuring that Guru Sahib's timeless message of compassion and courage receives recognition not only at the national level but also on the global stage, positioning India as a champion of religious freedom and moral conviction.

- A proposal has been submitted to Shri Gulab Chand Kataria, Hon'ble Governor of Punjab and Administrator of Chandigarh, for the organization of a Kirtan Darbar at a prominent public venue, such as, Leisure Valley or near the Chandigarh Emblem. This spiritually significant event, featuring renditions of Gurbani by eminent ragis and scholars, is envisioned as a solemn tribute to Guru Sahib's legacy and as an opportunity to reinforce Chandigarh's identity as a city that celebrates diversity, spirituality, and cultural heritage.

- ISC also proposed commemoration of the 350th Martyrdom Anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib to HWPL (Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light), a South Korean-based International peace NGO known for promoting World Peace and advocating for International law, notably the Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War (DPCW). HWPL graciously honoured this request during its Interfaith Dialogue Meeting on 25th November, 2025, with diverse Faith representatives participating therein. HWPC paid tribute to Guru Sahib's legacy as below:

The 350th anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur's sacrifice marks one of the most extraordinary events in human history. He gave his life not only for his own community but also to protect the religious freedom of those from another faith, defending freedom of religion and conscience, centuries before the United Nations defined Fundamental Human Rights.

His sacrifice is more than a religious event - it is a historic demonstration that every human being has the right to choose their belief and faith freely. For this reason, he is honored not only within Sikhism, but across various religions, academic fields, and international institutions.

- The ISC also took a proactive role in safeguarding the sanctity of Sikh values in public discourse. A formal representation was submitted to *The Tribune*, expressing concern over its misleading headline on 26th November, 2025, titled "*Operation Sindoor legacy of Guru's valour: Modi.*" distorting the legacy of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib. ISC emphasized the responsibility of the press to uphold accuracy and respect in matters of faith and heritage.

- A landmark initiative by the International Sikh Confederation (ISC): the launch of a Series of Conclaves titled, "*The Way Forward*".

In solemn tribute to the 350th Martyrdom Anniversary of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, the first Conclave was held on 20th December, 2025, at the People's Convention Centre, Chandigarh, which focused on the pressing issue of *Religious Conversions in Punjab*.

This gathering brought together a distinguished panel of eminent personalities from diverse fields, i.e., former judges, senior advocates, journalists, scholars, and Sikh institutional leaders. The Conclave was graced by Singh Sahib Prof Manjit Singh, Former Jathedar Sri Akal Takht Sahib, as Chief Guest. The deliberations were rooted in Sikh ethos and constitutional values, aiming to explore constructive responses to the growing concerns around religious conversions.

The Conclave reaffirmed Guru's legacy as the eternal beacon of religious freedom. The deliberations emphasized the need for institutional accountability, urging Sikh institutions to actively guide the youth and wider public in translating Sikh values into everyday life. Panelists highlighted the vital role of Sikh thinkers and preachers in responsibly shaping public understanding for promoting communal harmony as per Guru's powerful message.

The Conclave further recommended that the Government of Punjab strengthen communities through education, cultural engagement, and economic empowerment as safeguards against exploitation. Any move towards an anti-conversion law stands fundamentally at odds with Sikh philosophy, which upholds freedom of conscience, dignity of choice, and respect for all faiths. Sikh teachings reject coercion in matters of belief and affirm that spirituality must arise from inner conviction, not external factors.

In his concluding remarks, Prof Manjit Singh, emphasized the importance of upholding Sikh values and strengthening our institutions. He further said that an individual's character is shaped by three pillars – Family, School, and Religious places. He urged that these must be made strong if we wish to instill Sikh values in the coming generations. He stressed that our preachers be made conversant with recent technologies, including AI. He appealed for unity beyond ego and self promotion, so that efforts may truly serve the Panth. He further envisioned that organizations should unite to form a caravan, moving forward with shared purpose and commitment to the Panth and its future.
