



KESRI LEHAR UK & KESRI LEHAR SCOTLAND
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Open Letter to Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora, Minister for Minorities Affairs, Punjab, Pakistan

Date: 25 May 2025

Subject: Urgent Appeal to Advocate for a UN-Binding Referendum on Punjab Independence and Address Transnational Repression of Sikh Activists

Honourable Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora,

We, the representatives of Kesri Lehar UK and Kesri Lehar Scotland, extend our heartfelt greetings and commend your unwavering commitment to minority rights and your recent expressions of solidarity with the global Sikh community.

Your historic role as the first Sikh Minister in the Punjab Government of Pakistan and your leadership within the Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee are sources of immense pride for Sikhs worldwide. Your advocacy for peace, brotherhood, and truth resonates deeply with our community's values.

In light of recent events, we earnestly urge you to leverage your esteemed position to advocate for the following:

1. Call for a UN-Binding Referendum on Punjab Independence:

The Sikh diaspora has long sought the right to self-determination, envisioning an independent Punjab as outlined in the map circulated by Sikhs for Justice. This proposed state encompasses Indian Punjab and adjoining regions, reflecting the historical and cultural aspirations of the people of Punjab.

We appeal to you to encourage the Government of Pakistan to formally request the United Nations to facilitate a binding referendum—open to all native residents of Punjab currently living in Punjab—allowing them to democratically express their will regarding independence, in accordance with international legal standards.

2. Address Transnational Repression and Seek Justice for Slain Activists:

The Sikh community has been deeply shaken by the targeted killings of prominent activists:

- **Hardeep Singh Nijjar**, a Canadian citizen and advocate for Sikh rights, was tragically assassinated in Surrey, British Columbia, in June 2023. Investigations have led to the arrest of three Indian nationals, highlighting concerns over foreign involvement in his death.
- **Avtar Singh Khanda**, a UK-based activist, died under suspicious circumstances in Birmingham. While officially attributed to acute myeloid leukaemia, his sudden demise amidst alleged harassment by Indian authorities raises serious questions.
- **Paramjit Singh Panjwar**, a long-time resident of Pakistan and leader within the Sikh community, was assassinated in Lahore. The circumstances suggest possible involvement of foreign intelligence agencies.

These incidents underscore a disturbing pattern of transnational repression against Sikh activists. We implore you to initiate and support efforts within the Pakistani government to:

- Conduct thorough investigations into these assassinations.
- Collaborate with international bodies to hold accountable those responsible.
- Ensure the safety and security of Sikh activists residing in Pakistan.



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Your leadership and moral authority are pivotal in addressing these pressing concerns. By championing these causes, you will not only honour the memory of those who have been lost but also fortify the rights and freedoms of Punjabis globally.

We stand ready to support and collaborate with you in these endeavours. Your actions today can pave the way for a more just and equitable future for the people of Punjab.

With profound respect and anticipation,

Kesri Lehar UK
Kesri Lehar Scotland