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Item 3: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence

The Sikh Human Rights Group congratulates the Special Rapporteur, Fabian Salvioli on the extension of the mandate on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence.

We agree with the statement in point 22 that “punishing persons who commit serious crimes is one of the most effective forms of prevention.” However, even in some of the largest democracies, perpetrators of the most heinous human rights abuses wander free creating more trauma for vulnerable communities.

We would also like to highlight the statement in point 26 that “States may not relieve perpetrators of serious human rights violations from legal responsibility through amnesties or prior legal immunities and indemnities.”

We would like to further suggest that a mechanism be set up within the United Nations through which victims of human rights abuses or their representatives can step forward and express their truth and ask for justice and reparation. The human stories of these victims should be published on an online database on the United Nations website. This promotes a sense of power within those that have been victimised.

The sense of loss and grief can never be lifted, but this is one way in which a victim can feel “heard.” It is important to note that often the main allegation of most communities who have undergone grave human rights abuses is that they are “silenced.” Allowing them this reprieve, where their stories are highlighted on an international database is one way to overcome this.