

WORKING TOWARDS A PLURALISTIC FUTURE

NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE SIKH HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP
NGO WITH SPECIAL CONSULTATIVE STATUS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

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WELCOME TO OUR OCTOBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

DIRECTORS NOTE

BY DR JASDEV SINGH RAI (SHRG DIRECTOR) (LONDON OFFICE)

The Sikh Human Rights Group (SHRG) has had a 36 year history but its only lately that we have started to go public with our many areas of interests. October gave us the opportunity to engage at the United Nations on Transnational Corporations and human rights, a subject that the SHRG has been involved in since 1996 when it first raised the issue at United Nations. The SHRG has long been campaigning for accountability of Transnational Corporations (TNCs). We are of the opinion that TNCs are more powerful than most States around the world through their economic muscle. They work through Governments to get access to labour, minerals and other natural resources in many developing countries. Often coercion, inducements and violation of rights are involved. Traditionally these have been levelled at the Government of the country. Often the Governments have a difficult choice between development and doing the bidding of the TNC or defending the environment and human rights. When they do the latter, they drive their populations into poverty.

It has been SHRG's position that the real cause of human rights violations, labour exploitation and displacement of communities are the TNCs. They should be held accountable. We along with some other NGOs have been proposing a compulsory code and/or a set of legally binding agreements. Most Transnationals and industrialised countries opposed binding instruments and instead promoted a voluntary code for TNCs that in turn TNCs pushed for. However after 2002, we were unable to attend the UN as rules for engagement had been tightened.

When we achieved Consultative Status at the UN, we were pleased to note that the TNCs and accountability issue had moved on and become a major agenda at the UN. A Working Group on Transnationals was formed. The Working Group has been drafting a Binding Legal Instrument. We are again fully engaged with the process and continue to lobby for tighter and robust accountability. This October we made two oral statements and have expanded our team engaged in the agenda.

The SHRG also has a growing number of interns who have distinguished themselves with their passion and interest in human rights. They have also contributed to this newsmagazine.

Dr Jasdev Singh Rai
SHRG Director

Dr Jasdev Singh Rai



(Dr Jasdev Singh Rai)

WELCOME TO OUR OCTOBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

EDITORS NOTE

BY MR CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT

(EDITOR AND HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER & PROJECT COORDINATOR AT THE SHRG)

Welcome to the October 2021 edition of the Sikh Human Rights Groups newsletter informing you of our ongoing work. Unfortunately, we are not able to cover everything that we do in this brief newsletter. Nevertheless, and as you will see we are engaged in a wide variety of international human rights issues to promote our founding doctrine of Pluralism.

We have also taken on a number of interns who take up research, take notes during United Nations events and conferences and write reports. Consequently, we always try to encourage them to contribute to our newsletter.

If you would like to get involved in any of our ongoing projects or for anything else then please contact us via email at info@shrg.ngo

I very much hope that you enjoy the contents of this months edition.

Mr Carlos Arbuthnott

Editor and Human Rights Officer & Project Coordinator

Mr Carlos Arbuthnott



(Mr Carlos Arbuthnott)

WORKING ON THE UN LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

BY MR ALBERT BARSEGHYAN (HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER AT THE SHRG) (GENEVA OFFICE)

From the 25th of October 2021 to the 29th of October 2021 the United Nations Intergovernmental Working Group on Business and Human Rights held its **Seventh Session** on the elaboration of an **international legally binding instrument** on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights. Officially called the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group (OEIGWG) on Transnational Corporations (TNCs) and Other Business Enterprises (OBEs) with respect to human rights, the group is focused on developing a legally binding instrument to regulate the activities of transnational corporations operating overseas in regard to human rights adherence.

Established by the United Nations Human Rights Council in its **Resolution 26/9 of 26 June 2014**, this group's mission is to translate voluntary principles of business due diligence (e.g. the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights) into legal duties.

Business activities have both positive and negative impacts on people and the planet. The Seventh Session of the group considered the negative effects of business operations on our environment, violence against individuals, communities, and human rights defenders.

The informal negotiations were aimed at working on ambiguous and vague parts of the Third Draft. There was disagreement as to the appropriate scope of businesses to be covered under the binding instrument. Whilst some States welcomed the fact that the draft text applied to all business activities, others considered the scope of businesses covered to be too broad and going against the spirit of **Resolution 26/9**. For instance, Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, Cuba, Indonesia and China suggested the definition of '**Other Business Enterprises to denote all business enterprises that have a transnational character in their operational activities, and does not apply to local businesses registered in terms of relevant domestic law**', whereas Mexico, the EU, Panama, Brazil raised concerns with this language.

Whilst State parties were mostly reluctant to extend the scope of the binding instrument to fully include environment and environmental rights, civil society organizations, argued how important it is to strengthen such provisions.

The Sikh Human Rights Group made a textual suggestion on **accountability and remedies** (please see page 5 below), as well as suggesting the inclusion of two experts from civil society in the Committee to be established under this legally binding instrument in order to strengthen transparency, impartiality and ensure civil society participation in the oversight process (please see page 4 below).

The Chair-Rapporteur Emilio Rafael Izquierdo Miño (Ecuador) invited Ambassadors in Geneva to act as '**Friends of the Chair**' and start consultations on the draft legally binding instrument during the inter-sessional period, aiming at ensuring the broadest possible, cross-regional support.

The forthcoming Eighth Session of the Working Group will be held in 2022 on the basis of the updated draft legally binding instrument. In the meantime, from the 29th of November 2021 to the 1st of December 2021, the Working Group will coordinate the Tenth Annual UN Forum on Business and Human Rights. Recognizing that this year marks the 10th anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, participants will take part in over 25 virtual sessions to discuss current business-related human rights issues under the overall theme of '**The next decade of business and human rights: increasing the pace and scale of action to implement the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights**'.

7TH SESSION OF THE OEIGWG ON A BINDING LEGAL INSTRUMENT FOR TNCS AND OBES

BY CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (LONDON OFFICE)

On Monday the 25th of October 2021 our Human Rights Officer and Project Coordinator, **Mr Carlos Arbuthnott**, made the following oral submission, regarding our concerns with the **Third Revised Draft** and **civil society engagement**, at the **7th Session of Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group for the Elaboration of an International Legally Binding Instrument on Transnational Corporations and other Business Enterprises with Respect to Human Rights** (Resolution A/HRC/26/9):

Full text:

The Sikh Human Rights Group wholeheartedly welcomes and supports the formulation and enactment of a binding legal instrument to regulate, in international human rights law, the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises.

However, we are concerned with the persistent issues of accountability and remedies. The details to which we will provide as these weeklong discussions progress.

Nevertheless, we were encouraged by the discussions held during the United Nations Human Rights Councils 48th Regular Session. In other words, we were encouraged by the fact that the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises had received but more importantly taken substantive action on over 150 reports of transnational corporations and other business enterprises committing gross human rights violations across the globe.

Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to express the desire of a myriad of relevant civil society organisations and large and small businesses, with whom we have personally consulted, that the Committee to be established under this Legally Binding Instrument will follow suit.

We further suggest that the committee consider taking two expert representatives from NGOs to strengthen transparency, impartiality and ensure civil society participation in the oversight process.

Thank you very much. That concludes my opening remarks...

To watch the full video please click [here](#)



7TH SESSION OF THE OEIGWG ON A BINDING LEGAL INSTRUMENT FOR TNCS AND OBES

BY CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (LONDON OFFICE)

On Friday the 29th of October 2021 our Human Rights Officer and Project Coordinator, **Mr Carlos Arbuthnott**, made the following oral submission regarding our proposed textual amendments to **Article 15(2)** of the **Third Revised Draft** at the **7th Session of Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group for the Elaboration of an International Legally Binding Instrument on Transnational Corporations and other Business Enterprises with respect to human rights** (Resolution A/HRC/26/9):

Full text:

Thank you very much Mr Chair Rapporteur.

As I stated in my opening remarks on Monday, the Sikh Human Rights Group wholeheartedly welcomes and supports the formulation and enactment of this binding legal instrument. However, we are concerned with issues of accountability and the enforcement of appropriate remedies by States and/or judicial bodies.

Therefore, we strongly believe along with a myriad of other civil society organisations and large and small businesses, with whom we have personally consulted, that these shared concerns could be mitigated against by this Working Group providing for the following adaptation to the latter text of Article 15 Subsection (2) – so that it reads as follows:

[...] Thereafter the States Parties shall submit supplementary reports every four years on any new measures taken and such other reports as the Committee may request **particularly on issues of accountability and remedies**.

For not only would this amendment lead to enhanced transparency and accountability between States and between States and the Committee but also civil society to whom they both serve.

This of course is said in regards to my suggestion made on Monday that the Committee to be established under the legally binding instrument consider taking two expert representatives from NGOs to strengthen transparency, impartiality and ensure civil society participation in the oversight process.

Thank you very much Mr Chair Rapporteur. That concludes my submission...

To watch the full video please click [here](#)



(Mr Carlos Arbuthnott of the SHRG making an oral statement in the 7th Session of the OEIGWG)

SHRGS ENVIRONMENTAL AND DIVERSITY SPEAKER SERIES

PROFESSOR RICK STAFFORD - BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY

BY CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (LONDON OFFICE)



Recorded live on the 30th of September 2021 this is the 8th podcast in Sikh Human Rights Groups 2021 Environmental and Diversity Speaker Series.

Topic:

'How to save our oceans and marine life from man made destruction'

Panellist:

Today you will be listening to Professor Rick Stafford from Bournemouth University.

Whose research interests cover numerous topics. For instance, a large proportion of his work is currently focused on the politics and economics of environmental issues, especially climate and biodiversity loss. It shows that 'consumer choice' is an unrealistic argument for environmental solutions, and that developed countries can not afford to continue to pursue economic growth and successfully tackle these issues, yet the Global South, with appropriate support, could contribute through 'green growth', along with significant decreases in socio-economic inequality.

More recently his work has focused on green recovery plans in the UK but plans which are also applicable to many other developed countries, and how these can contribute to climate and biodiversity solutions.

Finally, he has also worked extensively with nature-based solutions, especially in the marine environment. For example, he is particularly interested in the relatively unexplored issues of overfishing and their contribution to climate change and/or their well understood contribution to biodiversity loss. For example, he has suggested that changes to fishing practices should be implemented to benefit local communities, whether deprived fishing villages in the UK or food security issues in Africa, and that doing this will help local economies, as well as the overall ecology of the ocean.

Sikh Human Rights Group Panellist:

Dr Jasdev Rai (Director)

SHRGS ENVIRONMENTAL AND DIVERSITY SPEAKER SERIES

PROFESSOR RICK STAFFORD - BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY

BY CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (LONDON OFFICE)

Sikh Human Rights Group Hosts:

Mr Carlos Arbuthnott (Human Rights Officer and Project Coordinator)

Ms Bethan Walters (Human Rights, Communications and Media Officer)

Questions include but are not limited to:

The oceans seem limitless, but we have come to realise that they are not. Therefore, in your expert opinion what state are our oceans in today?

We have recognised for more than a century the importance of preserving land. For example, through the establishment and maintenance of national parks and other designations. Therefore, in your expert opinion, why did it take so long for State Governments, international organisations, NGOs and conservationists to turn their attention to our oceans?

What are the most prominent issues and/or challenges that we are currently facing when it comes to preserving our oceans and marine life and how can they be overcome?

Usually when people think of our oceans they won't naturally think that there are human rights issues at stake. Therefore, can you please give our listeners a slightly more enhanced insight into the myriad of human right atrocities that are occurring within our global fishing industries?

Finally, is there one small thing that we can all adopt into our daily routines that will help to preserve and nurture our failing oceans and marine life?

To watch the full video please click [here](#)



SHRGS ENVIRONMENTAL AND DIVERSITY SPEAKER SERIES

PROFESSOR ILAN KELMAN - UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

BY CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (LONDON OFFICE)



Recorded live on the 13th of October 2021 this is the 9th podcast in Sikh Human Rights Groups 2021 Environmental and Diversity Speaker Series.

Topic:

'How to save our planet from humanmade destruction'

Panellist:

Today you will be listening to Professor Ilan Kelman, a Professor of Disasters and Health at University College London in England and a Professor at the University of Agder, Kristiansand, Norway.

His overall research interest is linking disasters and health, including the integration of climate change into disaster research and health research. That covers three main areas:

- Disaster diplomacy and health diplomacy;
- Island sustainability involving safe and healthy communities in isolated locations; and
- Risk education for health and disasters.

Sikh Human Rights Group Panellist:

Dr Jasdev Rai (Director)

Sikh Human Rights Group Hosts:

Mr Carlos Arbuthnott (Human Rights Officer and Project Coordinator)

Ms Bethan Walters (Human Rights, Communications and Media Officer)

Questions include but are by no means not limited to:

What lessons have you taken away from your research with small island nations that can inform us about the most effective methods to mitigate and adapt the negative impacts of climate change? Both in terms of the physical effects and Governance gaps that are currently persisting around the globe.

SHRGS ENVIRONMENTAL AND DIVERSITY SPEAKER SERIES

PROFESSOR ILAN KELMAN - UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

BY CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (LONDON OFFICE)

Here at the Sikh Human Rights Group we are strong believers that caring for the environment and human rights are mutually inclusive. In other words, strong believers in the fact that you cannot simply look at climate change in the round and not consider the wider human rights implications and/or violations. With that being said, could you please explain to our listeners some of the most experienced human rights that are being violated due to the negative effects of climate change?

We have seen that certain parts of the globe, particularly the Southern Hemisphere, feel the effects of climate change a lot worse than the Northern Hemisphere. We have worked closely with affiliates in South Africa and Brazil, with locals whose families have lived on the land for centuries and who are arguably living the most sustainable lives but yet are feeling the negative effects of climate change the most. Therefore, could you please explain to our listeners why it is so important that the rest of the globe listens to and learns from these otherwise marginalised people?

To watch the full video please click [here](#)



WHAT DOES COP26 MEAN FOR INDIA?

MS BETHAN WALTERS (HUMAN RIGHTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA OFFICER AT THE SHRG) (LONDON OFFICE)

At the end of October, the most important climate talks since the Paris Agreement was signed will decide the fate of global climate action... So, what's in store for India, despite the expectation that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will get a less than pleasant welcoming from the Scottish hosts of the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference and talk around leaked documents from India to the United Nations.

Current pledges combined put the world on track for 2.7°C of warming, which will lead to irreversible environmental changes and extreme weather events, and for South Asia, India is in the spotlight as the world's potential next biggest polluter in the second half of this century, if China and the US reduce their carbon emissions as promised.

This 26th Conference of the Parties, i.e. COP26, is being regarded as the most important conference since 2015, when the Paris Agreement was released by the 197 members of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In 2015 in Paris, countries pledged to keep global warming well below 2° C, they intended to do this through a series of individual emissions reduction pledges known as the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

On the Agenda at COP26

Five years down the line, countries were scheduled to return to the forum and finalise a rulebook on how to implement the Paris Agreement. Some industrialised countries and civil society groups also hoped that all countries would submit more ambitious NDCs. The UNFCCC Secretariat pushed for this by asking all countries to update their NDCs.

None of this happened in 2020 due to the COVID-19 crisis, which led the UN to postpone the meeting. Negotiations are resuming this year with the same agenda. Nations will need to reach consensus on how to measure and potentially trade their carbon reduction achievements, a sticking point that prevented them from finalising the rulebook in previous years. They will also need to ratchet up their national pledges for a chance to keep global warming within 1.5°C.

Current pledges combined put the world on track for [2.7°C](#) of warming, which would lead to a slew of irreversible environmental changes and [extreme weather events](#) such as floods, heatwaves, cyclones, abnormal rains and so on... According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the UN scientific body on climate change, the world is currently [well on track](#) to reach 1.5°C of warming by 2040, and South Asian economies are among the vast majority of countries that are not doing enough to improve on this.

India's Position Before COP26

It is important to note that South Asia is home to nearly [a quarter of the world's population](#) and to some of the countries that are [most vulnerable](#) to the impacts of climate change. As COP26 is imminent, in the next round of global climate talks under the UNFCCC, South Asian nations are preparing to make a case for putting their development needs at the centre of their carbon reduction pathways.

India's climate pledges involve a reduction in the carbon intensity of its economy, meaning that emissions are expected to grow together with the country's economy, albeit at a slower pace. The country's pledges and carbon reduction policies have recently been deemed ['highly insufficient'](#) by the think tank Climate Action Tracker, which analyses countries' climate pledges against the global 1.5°C goal.

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BY MS BETHAN WALTERS (HUMAN RIGHTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA OFFICER AT THE SHRG) (LONDON OFFICE)

According to [a note](#) circulated by the COP26 Presidency, the meeting's priorities will include a push towards raising 100 billion USD per year in climate finance to help developing nations decarbonise and adapt to climate change, a goal that is still a distant prospect nearly two years [after its deadline](#). Parties will also be expected to address the gap between their NDC plans and the 1.5°C goal, the note says, encouraging all countries to develop strategies '**pointing the way to net-zero**'.

The Net-Zero Debate

In South Asia, India has been under the spotlight as the world's potential next biggest polluter in the second half of this century, if China and the US reduce their carbon emissions as they have promised. International partners have been [putting pressure](#) on the Modi administration to set a 2050 deadline for India's emissions to reach '**net-zero**', meaning it is able to absorb all the emissions it produces. As COP26 approaches, observers are waiting for the country to take a stand on this expectation, following other major economies such as [China](#), Japan, South Korea, France, and the UK.

However, Kelkar says, the example set by rich countries is not enough to inspire confidence among developing nations. While net-zero targets address a distant future, she says, '**what we need is immediate and tangible emission cuts over the next few years**'. At this year's COP, she says, '**we need to meet the [long-overdue climate finance target](#) of 100 billion USD per year, [and] we need to close years of pending negotiations on international carbon trading**'.

Reaching net-zero is '**absolutely critical for all countries, including India and its South Asian counterparts**', says Vaibhav Chaturvedi, an economist with the think tank Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), who specialises in the study of low carbon pathways. '**But it can't be by 2050 for all the countries. Countries should be given time to choose a net-zero year depending on their national circumstances**'. Negotiators from South Asia, he says, '**have to ensure that they push for equity in the net-zero debate, along with enhanced financial flows to aid climate mitigation and [adaptation](#) to this part of the world**'.

The Indian Government has not yet finalised its COP26 strategy, but recent speeches by Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav have been focusing on the need for industrialised countries to cut their own emissions, and to do so in this decade instead of setting a distant mid-century goal.

The Leak

As mentioned above, India is the world's third-largest carbon emitter, after China and the US, yet the BBC has found in leaked documents to the United Nations that India intends to continue to fuel their country with coal.

India aims for renewables and nuclear energy to account for 40% of its installed electricity capacity by 2030 – a goal it could achieve ahead of time, according to the [Climate Action Tracker](#) (CAT).

But it remains the world's second-largest consumer of coal, which still powers more than 70% of its grid. But coal will be difficult to give up, India has told the team of scientists compiling the UN report ahead of the summit in Glasgow.

The reports – which bring together evidence on how best to slow down global warming – are by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the UN body studying climate change.

WHAT DOES COP26 MEAN FOR INDIA?

BY MS BETHAN WALTERS (HUMAN RIGHTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA OFFICER AT THE SHRG) (LONDON OFFICE)

'In spite of substantial growth in the renewable energy sector in India, coal is likely to remain the mainstay of energy production in the next few decades for sustainable economic growth of the country', said a senior scientist from India's Central Institute of Mining and Fuel Research, according to the leaked documents. Please click here to learn more about - [Why India can't live without coal!](#)

CAT estimates that by 2030, India's emissions intensity will fall to 50% below 2005 levels, going past its avowed target, 35%. But India has yet to explain how it will reach net-zero emissions – nor has it said by when it plans to do so.

China, the world's biggest carbon emitter and coal consumer, has pledged to go carbon neutral by 2060. And demand for coal in the country has also flattened, possibly leaving the future of fossil fuel in the hands of Indian policymakers.

What Can South Asia Bring To The Table At COP26?

While a net-zero commitment by mid-century may be unfeasible for countries in South Asia, [Bangladesh](#) and [Nepal](#) have submitted updates to their climate pledges prior to COP26, increasing their mitigation efforts in line with the principles of the Paris Agreement. India is yet to decide whether it will come forward with a fresh set of promises at COP26, but so far lawmakers have made clear that they [won't raise](#) climate ambitions under pressure from developed countries. The country, they point out, already has some of the most ambitious clean energy goals, with [450 GW](#) of clean energy capacity to be installed by 2030.

Despite its renewable targets, [80% of India's energy needs](#) are currently met by fossil fuels, particularly coal, a figure that will likely face scrutiny in Glasgow. ***'It's important to understand the risks [of certain energy policy choices] as much as the opportunities'***, says Christopher Beaton, who leads the Sustainable Energy Consumption programme at the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). ***'I think that it's less about trying to force countries to commit to stop building coal, and more about assessing the risks that come with it'***.

In the case of India, Beaton says, there's already an oversupply of coal power capacity, which means many of these assets will eventually become stranded. Holding on to too much coal also means that adding a lot of new renewable energy capacity may not necessarily help decarbonise the economy.

'Committing to shifting public financial flows away from fossil fuels and towards clean energy is a proposition that almost every country can back', he says. ***'It's something that will definitely support a lot of the bigger picture ambitions that will be key at the COP26 table, also increasing the pace of change'***.



Since this article was written India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged the following at COP26:

- Firstly, India will increase its non-fossil energy capacity to 500 gigawatts by 2030;
- Secondly, India will fulfil 50% of its energy requirements from renewable energy sources by 2030;
- Thirdly, between now and 2030 India will reduce its total projected carbon emissions by 1 billion tonnes;
- Fourthly, by 2030 India will reduce the carbon intensity of its economy by 45%; and
- Finally, by 2070 India will achieve the target of net zero emissions.

To learn more please click [here](#) and stayed tuned in next month's edition we will be providing a detailed account of which each country has signed up to at COP26!

POSTCOLONIAL PERCEPTION: THE GLOBAL NORTH'S EVALUATION OF SOUTH ASIAN MEN

BY MS RHEA SOMAIYA (INTERN AT THE SHRG) (LONDON OFFICE)



After 200 years of colonial occupation of India, the destruction to the political and economic sphere shattered years of development and stained India with titles that have affected the rest of South Asia. However, the social implications have allowed harsh stereotypes to become factual when thinking, talking and addressing South Asia.

Whilst one cannot demonstrate the effects of colonisation wholly, I turn my attention to gender dynamics and the perception of South Asian men. Through discussions surrounding sati (widow burning) and rape for example, colonial powers have been successful in their conceptualisation of women's progression in South Asia. Through this perceived victimisation of South Asian women, it has allowed the Global North to be categorised as inherently progressive in comparison to former colonies in South Asia. Consequently, not only have South Asian women ironically been victimised as a result of their proclaimed victimisation, but South Asian men have also suffered the consequences as they are therefore portrayed as culprits, perpetrators and criminals.

This can be readily demonstrated by unreliable statistics that have surfaced and ultimately stuck to western discourse on South Asia. It has been asserted that **'84% of grooming gangs [in the UK] are Asian'** (The Guardian: Accessed 2021). From these harmful statistics that have been proven to be false, South Asian men are almost left to defend their integrity. Although gender, sexuality and sexual violence are issues in our current climate, the indication that a certain demographic are more prone to this type of behaviour is ultimately wrong. Interestingly, these notions derived from the concept that Empires had to justify colonial expansion, and, in this justification, false epistemology produced in the colonial era has been reproduced in our postcolonial world.

In taking this thought further, I assess this in relation to the notion that India is the **'Rape Capital'**. Through this postcolonial lens, one can see how colonial notions of the victimisation of South Asian women has transferred into the assertion that India is the capital of rape. In this capitalisation, South Asian men become reduced to sexual deviants, criminals and perpetrators. Essentially, one can state that because India is the 'Rape Capital', Indian men must be rapists. Through the notion that Indian men must be rapists, a whole host of issues stick to the attitude and perceptions of India and its people.

One of the issues that arises is the way in which 'culture' is attached to sexual violence in the South Asia, particularly India. The Global North are incredibly successful in using 'culture' as a tool to demonstrate ill-progressiveness. 'Culture' becomes a reason for inexcusable behaviour denoting India to a portal of 'cultural' tendencies that harm women. This notion essentially navigates the way in which sexually violent crimes in India can be streamlined to internal cultural malpractices, formulating a way to racialise...

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South Asian men. Colonisers have a long-standing asserted moral compass where they have proclaimed their superiority against other races and nations. The same logic stands where colonisers set themselves as morally superior when they framed India's crime as a part of their culture. We see to this day that when individuals partake in crime are racialised, they are framed as 'culturally deviant'.

These notions ultimately tie together to form India's postcolonial identity whereby the 'culturalisation' of India is perceived by the Global North as the only source of rational for their decisions. Through this lens, one can navigate the perception of Postcolonial South Asian men in the Global North and how this has detrimental effects not only for the portrayal of India itself but the racialised attitudes towards South Asian diaspora living in the UK.



(Ms Rhea Somaiya)



INSULATE BRITAIN

WHO ARE THEY AND WHAT DO THEY STAND FOR?

BY MS RAMNIK JHOOTI (INTERN AT THE SHRG) (LONDON OFFICE)



Insulate Britain is a recently launched campaigning organisation who are calling for a national programme to ensure homes are insulated to be low energy by 2030. The climate activists have blocked motorways close to London, including the M25 and M4. They have been called an '**offshoot of Extinction Rebellion**'. The first protest took place on the 13th of September 2021, whereby protestors blocked five junctions of the M25.

On their website, they demand two things. Firstly, that the UK Government immediately promises to fully fund and take responsibility for the insulation of all social housing in Britain by 2025. Secondly, that the UK Government immediately promises to produce within four months a legally binding national plan to fully fund and take responsibility for the full low energy and low carbon whole house retrofit, with no externalised costs, of all homes in Britain by 2030 as part of a just transition to full decarbonisation of all parts of society and the economy. **Almost 15% of the UK's total emissions come from heating our homes** and according to Insulate Britain's website, the country has 29 million homes with '**the oldest and least efficient housing stock in Europe**'. In order to meet the Paris Climate Change Agreement to stay below 1.5°C, emissions from heating powering homes must be reduced by 78% in the next 15 years. Insulate Britain claims that '**Improving the quality of our homes is fundamental to achieve the British Government's climate change, fuel poverty and water reduction targets**'.

In response to the blockades of the motorways, an **injunction was granted** to the National Highways Agency effective as of the 22nd of September 2021 and lasting until the 21st of March 2022. The injunction prohibits demonstrators from '**causing damage to the surface of or to any apparatus on or around the M25 including but not limited to painting, damaging by fire, or affixing any item or structure thereto**'. Protestors who break the injunction will be held in contempt of court, which could result in a **prison sentence of up to two years** or an unlimited fine. Speaking on LBC, the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson said: '*I think they are irresponsible crusties who are basically trying to stop people going about their day's work and doing considerable damage to the economy*'. He added that his Government '*will give the police the powers they need to stop their reckless behaviour*'. The Home Secretary, Priti Patel announced plans to increase the maximum penalties for disrupting a motorway as well as criminalise interference with key infrastructure such as roads, railways and the press. However, not all response has been negative. Green MP, Caroline Lucas stated that her party '*believes non-violent direct action is legitimate when other forms of trying to raise issues with the Government have failed*'. She also said, '*In emergency situations, we need to take emergency action and I believe that's what those people are doing*'. Also, Prince Charles declared...

INSULATE BRITAIN WHO ARE THEY AND WHAT DO THEY STAND FOR?

BY MS RAMNIK JHOOTI (INTERN AT THE SHRG) (LONDON OFFICE)

that he 'understands the frustration' of the protestors as they block motorways and major roads. The Prince of Wales expressed his sympathy for the protestors but said actions need to be taken in other ways.

Insulate Britain have defended their actions on their website by stating '**decades of inadequate response and botched programmes have led us to the point where we have a daunting task ahead of us but it is not too late to fix our homes and ensure they are the healthy, climate resilient buildings we need.**'



(Ms Ramnik Jhooti)



HOW HAS WORKING FOR THE SHRG STRENGTHENED MY CONNECTION TO SIKHI?

BY MR JAGJEET SINGH AHEER (COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA OFFICER AT THE SHRG)
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Within my household, fighting for Sikh human rights and discussing Sikh issues has always been a strong topic of interest. Throughout my childhood, we watched Sikhs campaigns against the 1984 attacks on Harmandir Sahib (Amritsar) and hate crimes against Sikhs post 9/11... and now, the farmers protests, which includes people of all backgrounds that have been protesting to repeal the new farm laws which are jeopardising their livelihoods.

I have only come to appreciate now what the Sikh Gurus were fighting and campaigning for. The truth is, the Sikh Gurus fought for everyone's rights, irrespective of what religious path they followed, their caste, their background or their social status. Whilst working with the Sikh Human Rights Group, I have been able to identify how it's values resonate with the Guru's teachings:

- The Sikh Gurus taught us to uphold the dignity of everyone, regardless of colour, gender or creed. This is the reason the Khalsa was created.
- The foundation of Sikhi is based on selfless service, Seva. Serving people without expecting anything back.
- Our Guru emphasised the beauty of our world and how we should view it; The air as our Guru, water as our father and earth, our mother.
- Our Gurus compiled the Guru Granth Sahib including divine poetry from other faiths. This emphasised their pluralist approach.
- Every Sikh stands for justice. It is seen as our living duty to protect those who cannot defend themselves; personally and politically.

Taking these lessons home helped me to realise that as Sikhs, we should fight for everyone's rights and not just Sikh rights.

But why is it is easier to fight for Sikhs rights? It's because we feel more connected to Sikh related issues as it affects us directly. Therefore, campaigning on Sikh issues should just be the start and is a great way to enter the movement of fighting for human rights. Carrying on the legacy of 'Sarbat da bhallā' - 'may good come to all', we should use our Gurus teachings to advocate for all human rights, fighting climate change, respecting our environment and fighting for a fairer society.

This is why working for the Sikh Human Rights Group has helped me to realise that the Sikh Gurus were for everyone, that's why as Sikhs, we are for everyone.

The Sikh Human Rights Group is growing and as we do, we are in search of volunteers. So if you would like to get involved in our work, in any capacity, then please get in touch with us via email at info@shrg.ngo or through our social media channels at [@shrg.ngo](https://www.instagram.com/shrg.ngo)

