

# 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 JULY 2022 NEWSLETTER

## DIRECTORS NOTE

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

Our July newsletter is a bit late, mostly due to my fault. August and September have been busy months as we were preparing for the 51st Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council. That is taking place this month (September 2022) in Geneva. Our preparations included submitting written statements, planning for a side event and writing our oral statements to be delivered by our two Geneva representatives.

There is also the 11th Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights in November 2022 and a Forum on Minority Issues in early December 2022 to prepare for.

This year we have been admitted as an 'observer' to UNFCCC and consequently to COP 27. COP stands for Conference of the Parties. It is the biggest conference on climate change that takes place every year. We attended the UK section of COP 26 last year. This year the Sikh Human Rights Group (SHRG) has been lucky enough to be accepted as an observer to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, also called UNFCCC.

UNFCCC more or less is the guiding Convention under which climate change policies, actions and commitments are made. Consequently, the SHRG is hoping to represent the Sikh perspective at COP meetings.

COP meetings are held over a period of nearly two weeks. The attendance this year is expected to be around 35,000 people. It is being held at Sharm-el Sheik in Egypt with some of the biggest names in the environmental protection field being represented. **To find out more please click [here](#)**

As this is the SHRG's first proper attendance at a COP meeting, we will be networking, organising future events, planning side events, and preparing speakers.

Our other projects are getting bigger. Our Sikh Neurodiversity Network received some recognition at the United Nations when the Advisory Committee of the United Nations Human Rights Council took a keen interest and considered making it a substantive agenda.

The SHRG is now beginning to develop its position on the issue of grooming. The grooming of young Sikh girls is an issue in the UK and some other countries. While being handled at the local level, Governments do not seem to be putting many resources or labour into preventing and intervening in grooming before it damages the person. The SHRG is hoping that a United Nations commitment to ask countries for reports on their actions against grooming will assist in States committing to prevention and intervention.

The SHRG also continues its work concerning the World Trade Organization (WTO). It seeks to persuade the WTO and the United Nations to integrate the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and human rights in the Agreement on Agriculture. We have contributed a substantive academic article published in Sikh Formations by Routledge on the Small Farmers issue. The article explains how WTO policies affect small farms. The WTO is generally against subsidies.

**To read the full article entitled 'India's Three farm Laws and the Issues They Exposed' please click [here](#).**

We have also started to present weekly programmes on the Sikh Channel, a British Sikh TV network (Sky TV Channel 768). We are hoping to introduce discussions in these programmes to engage the wider public.

Please do get in touch if you wish to work with the Sikh Human Rights Group, contribute to it or simply support it.

Yours sincerely,

*Dr Jasdev Singh Rai*

# WELCOME TO OUR JULY 2022 NEWSLETTER

## EDITORS NOTE

BY MR CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (LONDON OFFICE)

(HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER & PROJECT COORDINATOR AT THE SHRG)

Welcome to the July 2022 edition of the Sikh Human Rights Group's monthly 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 domestic and international human rights issues to promote our founding doctrine of Pluralism.

We have also taken on a number of interns and volunteers who take up research, take notes during United Nations conferences and events 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 me via email at [carlos.arbuthnott@shrg.ngo](mailto:carlos.arbuthnott@shrg.ngo)

I very much hope that you enjoy the contents of this month's edition.

Yours sincerely,

*Mr Carlos Arbuthnott*



(Mr Carlos Arbuthnott)



# Don't forget to obtain your FREE ticket for our Online Neurodiversity Focus Group Re: Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha Southall.

HAVE YOUR SAY ON HOW WE CAN IMPROVE THE ACCESSIBILITY OF GURDWARAS ACROSS THE UNITED KINGDOM FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES.

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Date: 05 October 2022

Time: 18:00 - 19:00 (BST)

Location: Online (via Zoom)

To book your FREE ticket or for more information please scan the QR code below.



SCAN ME



**Let's work together to make this world a more meaningful and pleasant place for those with lifelong neurodiversity characteristics and disabilities**

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## GURDWARA SRI GURU SINGH SABHA SLOUGH

### SEN AND DISABILITIES ENGAGEMENT EVENT

This in-person event is an opportunity for those with special educational needs or disabilities of any age and those who are close to them to come together to discuss how **Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha Slough (GSGSSS)** can best support them and their families.

The Sikh Neurodiversity Network is currently establishing a network of children and adults with lifelong neurodivergent characteristics, such as Autism, and listening to their experiences and the experiences of those who are close to them. Specifically, regarding the problems that they may have encountered whilst accessing the Gurdwara or other Sikh community institutions.

After we have completed this step we will establish a network of experts within the Gurdwara who will be charged with increasing Sangat (congregation) understanding, engagement and support for those with lifelong neurodivergent characteristics or disabilities.

It is also hoped that we will run the following events at GSGSSS:

- Practitioner-led SEN education training days for GSGSSS's Granthis, Gurdwara Committee Members, Security Guards and Sangat.
- SEN engagement and support events for neurodiverse children and adults and those who are close to them. For instance, parent and carer coffee mornings, after-school drop-in sessions, monthly family days, etc...
- Youth engagement events. The primary purpose is to forge genuine and subsisting relationships between neurodiverse and neurotypical youth who currently attend the Gurdwara.

**If you like the sound of this project and you would like to become involved or you simply want to find out a little bit more information then please join us at GSGSSS on the following date:**

**Date:** 08 October 2022 (Saturday)

**Time:** 12:00 - 13:30 (BST)

**Address:** Singh Sabha Gurdwara,  
Bhai Mani Singh Learning Centre  
(New Classroom), Sheehy Way, Berkshire,  
Slough, SL2 5SS



**SIKH  
NEURODIVERSITY  
NETWORK**

**SCAN ME**



**For more information please visit the website below or scan the QR code:**

<https://shrg.ngo/neurodiversity-network/>

# ENVIRONMENTAL AND DIVERSITY SPEAKER SERIES

## UK YOUTH CLIMATE COALITION

BY MR CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (LONDON OFFICE)



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

This is the 14th podcast in Sikh Human Rights Groups Environmental and Diversity Speaker Series.

### Topic:

*'The importance of young people in our global fight to mitigate and adapt to the negative and imminent impacts of climate change'*

### Panellist:

Today you will be listening to Ms Serena Bashal. Serena has recently graduated with a Mathematics and Biology undergraduate degree. She has been engaging with United Nations Climate Change programmes as a young leader for six years at every UN Climate Change COP since COP22, working on youth advocacy, climate justice, and the energy transition among various other matters.

She was elected as the 2019 Global Focal Point to the UN Climate Change youth constituency, where she facilitated engagement for thousands of youth within the UN space. She was the Programme Coordinator for the 16th UN Climate Change Conference of Youth, the official COP26 youth conference, as well as the UK youth delegate to the Pre-COP Milan youth conference.

She also volunteers with the UK Youth Climate Coalition in their COP Working Group and works on several other climate projects in her spare time. She works in international, national and local spheres, with a variety of stakeholders from Governments to NGOs to private sector actors.

### Sikh Human Rights Group Host:

Mr Carlos Arbuthnott (Human Rights Officer & Project Coordinator)



# ENVIRONMENTAL AND DIVERSITY SPEAKER SERIES

## UK YOUTH CLIMATE COALITION

BY MR CARLOS ARBUTHNOTT (LONDON OFFICE)

Questions include but are by no means not limited to:

Serena: How important are young people in our national effort to mitigate and adapt to the negative impacts of climate change and what can secondary school and university students specifically do to help us as a society overcome the many challenges and threats of climate change?

Serena: Do you believe that the UK Government and our local authorities are doing enough to combat the climate emergency in the UK? If not what can they do or what should they be doing to address this shortfall?

Serena: In your expert opinion what are the greatest challenges that our global community faces when it comes to combating and redressing the negative impacts of climate change and how can these identified challenges be overcome?

Serena: In your opinion how effective are demonstrations?

Serena: What other methods and tools can young people use to help spread information about climate change? Specifically, regarding the ways of combating its negative effects and holding relevant stakeholders to account?

Serena: Is there one small thing that we could all adopt in our daily routines that would significantly help to mitigate and adapt to the negative impacts of climate change?

**For more information about the Sikh Human Rights Group or our COP26 Youth Engagement Initiative please visit the following website links:**

<https://shrg.ngo/>

<https://shrg.ngo/projects/cop26/>



# COP27 YOUTH ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BY MS HANNA BAJWA (INTERN AT THE SHRG) (LONDON OFFICE)

There is no question that climate change is one of the most serious global threats of this century. More than one billion people under the age of 18 live in countries at extremely high risk of climate change, meaning that their survival is significantly threatened. Therefore, it is not surprising that the youth of today are becoming increasingly involved in tackling the imminent risks and threats posed by climate change.

Last year, over 300 youth delegates representing over 140 countries gathered online at [Mock COP26](#). The statement represented the ambition and dreams of young people around the world, fighting for fairness, equality, and sustainability. In November of 2020, Mock COP organisers ran a two-week virtual youth-led conference and prepared 18 policy asks to fill the void of COP26. Their 'Phase 2' centred on getting the Mock COP26 Treaty implemented, in part or whole, by as many Member State Governments or domestic states as possible in the build-up to COP26, in Glasgow, November 2021. Currently, Mock COP is implementing 'Phase 3' which also centres around lobbying for the demands of Mock COP to be implemented in the lead-up to COP27, as all of the conclusions and recommendations of the conference remain valid. They claim that they will continue to lobby national Governments and support delegates, campaigners, and youth climate activists, to build their capacity to participate in COP27 and other important climate-related conferences and events to make meaningful contributions.

Hosting the COP27 conference in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt in November provides the perfect opportunity for the environmental group [Youth Loves Egypt](#) (YLE). YLE has had more than 45,000 volunteers participate in its clean-up campaigns and training programmes and claims that hosting the conference in Egypt could be the catalyst that Egypt needs to boost climate change awareness and action in the country and beyond. To prepare for COP27, YLE has boosted an environmental pioneers programme, which began in October 2020. It aims to train 1,500 men and women aged 18 to 30 on climate change related issues every year. YLE, which was accredited by the UN Environmental Programme in 2017, has been actively participating in climate change conferences in recent years, including COP26 in Glasgow.

From a more academic point of view, the [African Climate Ambassadors Training Programme](#) is a new digital training package. That aims to educate students on voluntary climate action, this program is offered by Ain Shams University in Egypt. It has already reached 600 students from various African universities during two sessions held in February 2022. The training programme intends to reach 1,600 students in various regions across Africa by engaging them in climate change related activities, fostering their awareness of environmental issues, and engaging them with relevant stakeholders at national, regional, and global levels. Those who have completed the training are expected to partake in a United Nations youth conference ahead of the Conference of the Parties 27 (COP27) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This programme has been enacted in response to the limited participation of youths in Africa. However, this is primarily because Governments and educational institutions have lacked the requisite knowledge, skills, resources and support to engage younger persons in climate change driven projects and conversations at local, national, regional and even global levels.

Lastly, the [Pan African Climate Justice Alliance](#), a network of more than 1,000 organisations including NGOs, foundations, indigenous communities, and farmers from 48 countries in Africa, has heightened its engagement with various segments of African society including the youth. Mr Philip Kilonzo, the head of policy, advocacy, and communication at PACJA, organised a two-hour interactive session with young digital activists across Africa to discuss how the youth can be a part of PACJA's African advocacy strategy for COP27. The purpose of PACJA, says Kilonzo, is to engage all core constituents and to harmonize narratives before COP27, so that Africa does not enter the global meeting with divided views. In addition, the meeting aimed to plan how the youth could mobilise their peers across Africa to raise the visibility of African issues before COP27. Further, Kilonzo stated that PACJA is dedicated to supporting youth participation and supporting youth groups, associations, and movements.



# SHRGS ATTENDANCE AT THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

BY MS MONICA GILL (HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER AT THE SHRG) (NEW YORK OFFICE)

In June, I had the extraordinary privilege of attending the deliberations of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. That was held in the ECOSOC wing of the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Even more honourable was that a member of our organisation was chosen to represent the NGO Major Group during the discussions.

The High-Level Political Forum is the main United Nations platform on sustainable development and it has a central role in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at an international level. The Ministerial Document will outline the courses of action that are required by large international organisations such as the United Nations, Member State Governments, NGOs, and all other relevant stakeholders to bring the Sustainable Development Goals back on track after the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was fascinating to observe how the Member States responded to various topics. Of special interest was the distinction between “domestic violence” and “intimate partner violence”. For example, a noteworthy observation was that the Holy See was siding with the majority of the Middle Eastern countries in not wanting to use the term “intimate partner violence”. It was also interesting to observe that most developed nations in attendance did not want the term “leave no country behind” included in the Declaration.

These meetings are extremely important as they provide invaluable insights into where Member State Governments' interests lie and how we as an organisation or NGO can work with them.

We will be participating in more of these events over the coming months.

To learn more about the High-Level Political Forum 2022 please click [here](#)





# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

**TO READ THE FULL REPORT PLEASE CLICK [HERE](#)**

**SIKH HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP**

(NGO WITH SPECIAL CONSULTATIVE STATUS AT THE UNITED NATIONS)

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Website: [shrg.ngo](http://shrg.ngo)  
Email: [info@shrg.ngo](mailto:info@shrg.ngo)



# New Release

**shrg**

SIKH HUMAN  
RIGHTS GROUP



**SIKH  
NEURODIVERSITY  
NETWORK**



## How is the Criminal Justice System Failing Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Website: [shrg.ngo](http://shrg.ngo)

Instagram: [shrg\\_ngo](https://www.instagram.com/shrg_ngo)

Twitter: [@shrg\\_ngo](https://twitter.com/shrg_ngo)

For more information please [click here](#)



# United Nations Engagement Opportunities 2022

A large, faint watermark of the United Nations logo is centered in the background. It features a world map with latitude and longitude lines, surrounded by a laurel wreath.

Want to contribute to a written and oral  
statement at the United Nations  
Human Rights Council?



We are currently searching for secondary school and undergraduate students to help us prepare our written and oral statements on climate change adaptation and mitigation for the United Nations Human Rights Councils 2022 Regular Sessions:

We want to empower you to have your say, at a truly international event, on how every member of our global society can overcome the many challenge and issues of climate change

Through online presentations and simple practical projects you will learn more about the United Nations and how you can become involved

Enhance your CV and UCAS applications whilst simultaneously learning more about climate change and how it can be overcome

To apply please send an expression of interest statement to:

[carlos.arbuthnott@shrg.ngo](mailto:carlos.arbuthnott@shrg.ngo)