

## **Written evidence submitted by the Sikh Press Association (INR0090)**

### **Priorities for the FCO**

The priorities for the UK Foreign Policy are clearly putting the rights of British citizens abroad behind trade. This has been surmised by MPs like Martin Docherty-Hughes (SNP Dunbartonshire) regarding support for his constituent Jagtar Singh Johal (Brit detained arbitrarily in India) and other commentators on UK foreign policy. The FCO should either change this policy or be clear the priority is trade with foreign nations, otherwise public mistrust of the FCO will only increase.

### **Relationship of FCO with other govt departments on strategy**

The FCO need to be taking more direction from MPs that are acting on behalf of APPGs and constituents. This will help the FCO become a more personable and therefore respected and revered UK institution.

### **UK allies, and how they shape or contribute to the FCO's strategy**

Whilst India is justifiably recognised as an ally of the UK and thus the FCO, the FCO should recognise India is jeopardising the perception of the FCO with their treatment of British citizens such as Jagtar Singh Johal. The FCO's strategies and profile will continue to be tarnished without adequate addressing of this issue.

### **Case study – Jagtar Singh Johal**

The case study of Jagtar Singh Johal shows the FCO are failing to get British citizens basic rights. In Jagtar Singh's case, this includes – freedom from torture, an independent medical to verify health, a private meeting with the consulate without foreign authorities (Indian police) presence and regular meets with Jagtar himself and especially his family.

With his family being accessible in the UK, it is disgraceful that two out of three Foreign Secretaries did not meet Jagtar Singh in the last (near) three years, whilst Jeremy Hunt only met with Jagtar Singh once. Other reps of the FCO have not filled this role either. This is being documented and publicized widely.

### **Resource priorities, and areas that the FCO has deprioritized**

As noted in several media articles, human rights of British citizens abroad no longer seems to be a priority for the FCO and this must change to avoid permanent tarnishing of the FCO reputation. This means ensuring regular interaction between someone like Jagtar Singh Johal and his family, and directly answering questions on his situation to the public.

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