

Ligue européenne pour la protection des droits de l'homme

Madame Chair, trust and social cohesion are impossible when minority communities are arbitrarily subject to state-sanctioned violence as a matter of policy. In India, the Sikh community continues to face systematic erasure, criminalization, and state violence in order to absorb the Sikh people into the homogenizing project of the Indian nation. This leads to a violent reality, which includes endemic torture and deaths in custody, extrajudicial killings in Punjab and the diaspora, and entrenched impunity for perpetrators of violence. For Sikh human rights defenders and political dissidents, these overlapping threats converge to target individuals based on their religious identity and political opinion. As a British national arbitrarily detained in Punjab and subjected to torture, [inaudible] has now spent over eight years in Indian prisons without being convicted of any crime. His case is emblematic of a broader pattern: the targeting of Sikh dissidents advocating for self-determination and an independent Khalistan. These political opinions and activities expose individuals and their families to police reprisals, intimidation, and custodial violence. In order to talk about trust and social cohesion, the government of India must stop the political assassinations of Sikh activists around the world, and immediately release [inaudible] along with all Sikh political prisoners being jailed because of their support for an independent Khalistan. Thank you.