



Text File

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Committee: City Council

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WHEREAS, Sikhism is the world’s fifth largest religion with over 26 million followers worldwide and 700,000 in the United States; and,

WHEREAS, after the assassination of the Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi in 1984, the administration and police carried out methodical and intentional violence against the Sikh community throughout India; and,

WHEREAS, using voter registration lists and school registration forms, Indian officials marked homes with the letter “S” so that assailants could easily identify Sikhs and carry out acts of violence; and,

WHEREAS, over the course of several days, 5,000 Sikhs were murdered, thousands of Sikh women were raped, hundreds of Sikh houses of worship were looted and destroyed, and more than 300,000 Sikhs were displaced; and,

WHEREAS, Sikh men, who are religiously required to maintain their hair uncut, were forcibly shaved, brutally beaten, and doused in kerosene; and,

WHEREAS, evidence provided by eyewitnesses, journalist, and human rights activists revealed that Indian government and law enforcement officials played both an indirect and direct role in the violence by distributing registration lists, providing access to weapons, promising rewards or impunity for the murder of Sikhs, and destroying records; and,

WHEREAS, in 2011, mass graves were discovered in several Indian villages; and,

WHEREAS, the United Nations defines “genocide” as carrying out any of the following acts with intent to destroy a national, religious, racial, or ethnic group: “killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, and imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, or forcibly transferring children of the group to another group;” and,

WHEREAS, the grave human rights violations against the Sikh population in India directly matches the aforementioned definition of genocide; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby mourn the loss of Sikh victims during the 1984 Sikh Genocide and celebrate the contributions of the Sikh community in Pittsburgh, across the nation, and worldwide.