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## **AHC CONDEMNS THE ASSASSINATION OF AVTAR SINGH KHALSA AND URGES THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT TO STOP THE SYSTEMIC ETHNIC CLEANSING OF SIKHS AND HINDUS**



**Ashburn Virginia – July 6, 2018:** The American Hindu Coalition (AHC) condemns the brutal assassination of Avtar Singh Khalsa and 16 other Afghan Sikhs and Hindus by a suicide bomber attack in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. ISIS in Afghanistan claimed credit for the attack.

Harsh Sethi, AHC President, remarked: “We are deeply saddened by the loss of Avtar Singh Khalsa who is well known to Sikh Americans as a humanitarian leader. He would have been the first Sikh to win political office in Afghanistan in that country’s election scheduled for October 20, 2018.”

Former Ambassador Pradeep Kapur, AHC Executive Committee, pointed out: “We are deeply troubled by the systemic ethnic cleansing of Sikhs and Hindus in Afghanistan by jihadists despite the billions of dollars of US Government economic aid and military support.” Mr. Kapur further added: “From a population size of over 300,000 Sikhs and Hindus native to Afghanistan before the Afghan Civil War, the number dwindled to 15,000 during the Taliban take-over of the Afghan government. Today, the population of Afghan Sikhs and Hindus is only 1,350.”

AHC will continue to monitor US foreign policy in Afghanistan, including potentially linking further economic and military aid to the Afghan Government’s protection of rights of minority religion in that country.

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