

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-3098
ANSWERED ON- 27/03/2025

VIOLATION OF RELIGIOUS RIGHTS OF SIKH DEPORTEES FROM US

3098. SHRI HARBHAJAN SINGH

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state: -

- (a) whether the Ministry is aware that Sikh people, particularly from Punjab, were deported from US to India recently without their turbans;
- (b) if so, whether the Ministry had taken up the matter with the US authorities in this regard;
- (c) whether the Ministry had discussed the issue of violation of human rights and religious sentiments during the deportation with the US authorities; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (d)The Government of India has registered its concerns with the U.S. Government regarding the need to accommodate religious sensitivities and food preferences of Indian nationals who are being deported to India. In response, the U.S. authorities have conveyed that deportees on the three chartered flights that arrived on 5th, 15th & 16th February 2025 respectively were not instructed to remove any religious head coverings and that the deportees did not request any religious accommodation during the flights, aside from requesting for vegetarian meals. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) also conveyed that some of the detainees arrived at the U.S. border without turbans.

The Ministry has strongly registered its concerns with the U.S. authorities on the treatment meted out to deportees on the flight that landed on February 5th, particularly with respect to use of shackles, especially on women. The U.S. side has confirmed that no women or children were restrained on the deportation flights that landed in India on February 15th and 16th respectively. This has been confirmed and recorded by our agencies after interviewing the deportees on their arrival in India. The Ministry of External Affairs remains engaged with the U.S. side regarding humane treatment of deportees during such operations.
