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Title: Issues of Sikhs in foreign countries leading to widespread discrimination of Sikhs worldwide.

*DR. RATTAN SINGH AJNALA (KHADOOR SAHIB) : Sir, I want to bring to your notice an important issue concerning the Sikh religion. I am ventilating the agony of Sikhs. Sir, Sikhism is a comparatively new religion. It was founded about 545 years ago. But, I am happy to note that Sikhs are found in all countries. Sir, the turban is a religious symbol of Sikhs.

श्री अर्जुन राम मेघवाल (बीकानेर): महोदय, मैं अपने को श्री अजनाला द्वारा उठाए गए विषय से सम्बद्ध करता हूँ।

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): May I just respond to what the hon. Member has said?

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I entirely share the sentiments expressed by the hon. Member and other Members also in the House about the incident at the Milan Airport yesterday. We will always uphold the *Izzat*, dignity and honour of our people abroad.

The incident has been condemned by us and we will ensure that our sentiments are effectively conveyed to the Italian authorities. Security measures are necessary, but have to be implemented with care and respect. We had conveyed this to the Italian authorities earlier and they had expressed their regret at the earlier incident. It is also my understanding that they have taken some steps, but obviously they had not been enough. We will ask that this incident had to be probed by them.

I would also like to inform the House that our Ambassador in Italy had already taken up the matter with the Italian authorities. Our views have also been conveyed to Italian representatives in Delhi, and again we will reinforce this today also.

Today, the Ministry has summoned the Italian Ambassador in Delhi and expressed our great distress and unhappiness over what has happened through this incident. We also conveyed to them our deep distress. The Ambassador has informed that not only he himself regrets and sympathizes, but he would also convey this matter to the Government.

We also asked the Ambassador to convey our unhappiness and distress to the highest authority in the Italian Government.

Sir, I may say that 'turban' is not a mere piece of cloth. It is a symbol of the nation. We attach the greatest respect to it. Whenever there is an insult to the 'turban', it is a national insult. Thank you. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI HARSIMRAT KAUR BADAL (BHATINDA): I would also request the hon. Minister to ask the Consulate that if at all a Sikh is harassed and if he sends out a message, then they should come to his aid. It is because this gentleman was harassed one week earlier, and after one week, again, the same officer harassed him.

SHRI E. AHAMED: That is why we expressed our very, very great unhappiness and distress. They have promised that it would be conveyed to the Government, and also they have informed us that they would also be taking steps to probe this matter.

SHRIMATI HARSIMRAT KAUR BADAL: They should depute a person to look into these things.

डॉ. रतन सिंह अजनाला : महोदय, मैं मंत्री जी को धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूँ।