



Gurmukh Singh, Garden Grove Family Man, Denied Asylum as Activists Fight Deportation

By Gabriel San Roman

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A married man and father of two young daughters in the Garden Grove School District faces the ominous prospect of being deported.

Gurmukh Singh was an activist in the separatist movement for Sikh self-determination in India when he fled to the United States 15 years ago. Subjected to kidnapping, torture and having seen family members disappear, his own loved ones fear deportation could put him at risk of continued persecution or even death.

Activists have rallied around the Garden Grove family urging supporters to [sign a petition](#) calling on Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to review and defer Singh's pending deportation.

As Congress debates immigration reform and enforcement, local activists are rallying around his cause. "Gurmukh Singh and his family are victims of discriminatory deportation policies that violate human rights and separate families," says Alexis Teodoro, an organizer with the Santa Ana immigrant youth group RAIZ that is helping the Singh family. "President Obama and ICE should exercise prosecutorial discretion and release Gurmukh so he can return to his U.S. citizen wife and U.S. born daughters."

Upon the recent first anniversary of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), the Orange County DREAM Team cited Singh's ordeal in calling for broader deferment.



Far removed from his family, Singh has been detained at the California City Correctional Center since April 24, 2013. He originally petitioned for asylum given that he survived torture in India, but it was never granted, an unfortunate fact the family points to incompetent legal representation as the reason why.

The presiding judge's decision to deny asylum was appealed by another attorney, but ultimately upheld in the Ninth Circuit court. In 2010, Singh's wife, Bobi, gained U.S. citizenship and he later attempted to normalize his status through her petition--one that was approved just last week. Unbeknownst to the family, however, Singh's foiled appeal to attain asylum resulted in a Notice to Appear form on deportation.

In April of this year, the family drove all the way to Bakersfield for a scheduled immigration interview. Two ICE officers, as Singh's daughter recounts in the above video, approached them after interviews were conducted. One took her father into custody in front of them.

"At that time my dad was begging the officials," his daughter says in terms of his request to hug his family and say goodbye. "They held him back and said 'No, you can't.'"

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