

The background of the entire page is a grayscale image of the Statue of Liberty. The statue is shown from the waist up, holding the torch in her right hand and the tablet in her left. The background is filled with a dense, repeating pattern of names in a light gray font, which are partially obscured by the main text.

BACKLASH

When America Turned On Its Own

*A Preliminary Report to the
2001 Audit of Violence
Against Asian Pacific Americans*

National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium

Prepared with the Assistance of:

Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

Asian Law Caucus

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Executive Summary

Findings

- 1. NAPALC and its Affiliates documented nearly 250 bias-motivated incidents targeting Asian Pacific Americans generally and South Asians particularly in the three-month period following September 11th.** This number stands in stark contrast to the approximately 400-500 anti-APA incidents annually that NAPALC has reported in previous years.
- 2. At least two APAs were murdered as part of the backlash.** Almost immediately following the terrorist attacks on September 11th, a Sikh American gas station owner was shot and killed in Mesa, Arizona by a white male who fired shots at the victim from a pickup truck and sped away. A suspect arrested by the police was reported to have said as he was being handcuffed, “I stand for America all the way.” In another incident, a 46-year-old male Pakistani American store owner was shot and killed in Dallas, Texas. There was no evidence of a robbery, and the police are investigating the incident as a hate crime.
- 3. The bias-motivated incidents included a high degree of physical violence, with approximately one in five cases involving incidents where the victims suffered bodily injury from physical assaults.** In many instances, frightened drivers reported being targeted on the road by other drivers who would point fingers at them as if they were carrying guns. The incidents involving bodily injury were mostly aggravated assaults, with perpetrators using baseball bats, metal poles, and guns as weapons. Approximately half of the incidents involved threat and intimidation, while business owners reported incidents of arson and vandalism.
- 4. An alarming number of the post 9-11 backlash incidents against APAs occurred in schools and in the workplace.** In a number of cases, students were the targets of racial slurs by their classmates, and some were even physically attacked while at school. Workplace incidents involved threatening phone calls, racial epithets inflicted by co-workers, and actual physical assaults suffered by APA victims.
- 5. Unlike previous years in which most bias-motivated incidents involved male victims and perpetrators, the post 9-11 backlash victims and perpetrators include women and men, small business owners and students, mothers and children.** The overwhelming majority of hate crime perpetrators are traditionally young men, either in their teens or early 20s, and their victims are also generally men. In the cases reported after September 11th, the perpetrators and victims included women, senior citizens, and even children.
- 6. The attacks occurred throughout the country, with a large majority of incidents involving South Asian Americans, and more particularly, Sikh Americans.** South

Asian Americans, including Indian Americans and Pakistani Americans, appear to have been targeted because they were perceived to be Arab or Muslim. Sikh Americans, a religious group whose members are mostly of South Asian descent, were particularly targeted because many of their men wear turbans and long beards, similar to the publicly perceived image of Osama Bin Laden.

7. **The media has not done enough to cover the backlash story.** While the media has generally covered individual hate crime incidents, it has largely been superficial. Moreover, in its 24-hour coverage of the attacks, the media repeatedly showed pictures of Bin Laden who had a long beard and was wearing a turban. An unfortunate consequence, however, has been that certain segments of the public have begun to identify the turbans and beards worn by Sikh American men with Bin Laden, even though the style of the turbans are not the same.
8. **Statements denouncing the backlash incidents made by public officials following the terrorist attacks were undercut by contrary government action.** President Bush denounced the backlash incidents but his message of tolerance was overshadowed by the actions of his Administration that expressly targeted Arab and Muslim Americans and openly violated their constitutional rights. Attorney General John Ashcroft initiated policies and actions that repeatedly sent a message of intolerance, suggesting that Arab Americans and Muslim Americans could and should be racially targeted as potential terrorists until proven otherwise. For example, the Department of Justice (DOJ) rounded up and imprisoned well over one thousand individuals of Arab and Muslim backgrounds without providing official charges, giving them access to attorneys or even letting their families know of their whereabouts. DOJ also publicly demanded that local police help them push 5,000 Arab and Muslim immigrants to submit to interrogations and asked universities to turn over confidential files of students with Arab names.
9. **Various APA communities have responded and reached out to the both the victims of the terrorist attacks and the victims of backlash since September 11th.** Various groups, including the Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, Hmong, and South Asian communities have held vigils, rallies, fundraisers, community events, bridge-building forums, and diversity training sessions across the country. In particular, Japanese Americans have taken the lead in reaching out to the victims of backlash, organizing vigils and rallies to speak out against the unfair targeting of Arab Americans, South Asian Americans, Muslims, and Sikhs.

Recommendations

1. **President Bush and Congress should create programs providing incentives to ensure that law enforcement comply with the Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990 and collect accurate and fully detailed data on hate violence.** Incidents of anti-Asian violence cannot be adequately addressed unless all hate crime incidents are counted and documented. Law enforcement officials must also record information regarding the ethnic background of all victims and track incidents motivated by immigrant status. In addition to recording this information, they must consistently report their annual hate crime data to the Uniform Crime Reporting Program. One possible method for encouraging agencies to act in accordance with the Hate Crimes Statistics Act might be to offer law enforcement grants for full compliance.
2. **The ability of the federal government to address hate crimes must be improved. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act (LLEEA) of 2001, would expand existing federal hate crime law and the government's capacity to address hate crimes.** The measure, which would represent the first major expansion of federal hate crimes legislation since the original law passed in 1968, was stalled in Congress in 2000. The measure would add gender, sexual orientation, and disability to the existing criterion of race in identifying hate crimes and broaden the circumstances under which federal prosecutors could get involved. The legislation would also allow federal prosecutors to seek additional penalties for hate crimes in states that lack such laws and allow state and local prosecutors working on hate crime cases to apply for federal assistance.
3. **Employers and schools must provide diversity training and implement formal policies regarding harassment.** The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Department of Education (DOE) should hold hearings to determine the extent to which employers and academic institutions have effective diversity training and harassment policies. Employers and school administrators should review and renew their efforts.
4. **The media should seek to improve its reporting of race, national origin and religion, and the hate crimes that have occurred since September 11th, by digging deeper into the issues.** For instance, the media must cover the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies and prosecutors in terms of investigating and prosecuting hate crimes. The media should also look into whether guidelines issued to airports to prevent discriminatory behavior are in fact being followed. The media must also be sensitive to the messages it puts out.
5. **Public officials, and community and religious leaders, must speak out and condemn any and all bias-motivated incidents to send a message that targeting victims based on their actual or perceived race, ethnicity, immigrant status, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability will not be tolerated.** Elected and appointed officials, whether federal, state, or local, must step forward to discourage such attacks and to support

funding for anti-bias and other related educational programming. Community, business, labor, and religious leaders, including teachers and student leaders on a local level, must also speak up.

6. **As leader of the nation's chief civil rights enforcement agency, the Attorney General must work to repeal policies and initiatives that discriminate on their face based on race, religion and national origin.** It is not enough to provide Americans with platitudes. Actions speak louder than words and the Attorney General's actions since September 11th have told Americans to fear foreigners, particularly those who are Arab or Muslim.
7. **All sectors of government and law enforcement should provide diversity and sensitivity training to their employees, as well as training for law enforcement that focuses on how to recognize, document, and report hate crimes.** Our nation is becoming increasingly diverse. As individuals who must work with diverse communities, government and law enforcement officials must receive training that enables them to deal with diverse communities in a sensitive manner. Law enforcement officials, in particular, must also be able to recognize hate crimes when they occur.
8. **Federal, state and local agencies must do all they can to improve the level of understanding and decrease acts of discrimination in housing, education, transportation, and employment.** Government agencies should do all they can to promote tolerance and understanding in their workforce and among their constituents, and aggressively enforce anti-discrimination laws.
9. **Congress should hold agencies accountable for addressing the backlash through hearings and other means.** Congress should hold hearings on the enforcement of the USA Patriot Act, immigration enforcement and other Homeland Security initiatives to ensure that racial profiling is not occurring.
10. **Federal and state agencies, foundations, and corporations should fund programs that enable community-based organizations to respond effectively to hate incidents and invest in anti-bias education efforts.** CBOs are in a unique position to promote an ongoing dialogue around the need to combat hate crimes and to foster mutual understanding between different communities. Such organizations cannot carry out this important work without adequate funding from both the federal government and private funding sources.

BACKLASH: When America Turned on Its Own

A Preliminary Report to the 2001 Audit of Violence Against Asian Pacific Americans

A Note from the Editor:

The Audit of Violence Against Asian Pacific Americans is an annual publication that is issued every winter following the release of FBI hate crime data for the previous year. Because the 2001 edition is not scheduled for publication until winter 2002, the following special section has been included as a preliminary report on the overall impact of September 11th.

Introduction

On the morning of September 11th, Asian Pacific Americans (APAs) joined fellow Americans in their shock and grief over the terrorist attacks against the World Trade Towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC. Before the enormous scope of the tragedy could be fully comprehended, a Sikh American man in New York City was chased down the street by an angry mob within a few hours after the attacks.

Since September 11th, members of the Arab, South Asian, Muslim, and Sikh communities have been targeted in backlash incidents across the nation. According to national statistics compiled by the San Francisco organization, Intergroup Clearinghouse, there have been more than 1,700 cases of discrimination against Arab Americans, South Asian Americans, Muslim Americans, and Sikh Americans as of January 2002.¹ Within the APA community, the largest group that was targeted consisted of South Asian Americans.

This special preliminary report to the 2001 Audit of Violence Against Asian Pacific Americans examines the nature of the backlash, in terms of the location and the types of incidents that occurred, as well as who the victims were. The report also investigates the response of the media, of the government and law enforcement, and of various APA communities to September 11th.

Featured in this report are regional perspective pieces written by NAPALC's Affiliate organizations, including one written by the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF), whose office is located within blocks of the World Trade Center. Following this overview feature piece are notable cases of anti-Asian violence that have occurred since the terrorist attacks. At the end of the report is a list of selected bias-motivated incidents against APA victims that were compiled by NAPALC and its Affiliates during the three-month period following September 11th.

The Nature of the Backlash

Since September 11th, backlash incidents have occurred in cities and in regions throughout the country, from California to New York, from Washington State to Florida, and a large majority of the states in between. Many victims reported being intimidated on the road by drivers and pedestrians who would point fingers at them as if to shoot. A large number of victims also claimed that they were approached, threatened, and verbally assaulted with racial slurs. Businesses were pelted with gasoline bombs, and homes and religious places of worship were vandalized.



Anti-Muslim graffiti

AP Wide World Photos

The troubling nature of the bias-motivated incidents since September 11th lies partly in the alarmingly high numbers in which they occurred. In its year-round work, NAPALC and its Affiliates track approximately 400-500 bias-motivated incidents against APAs each year. In stark comparison, in the three months following September 11th, there was a sharp rise with 243 reported incidents against APA victims.

A little less than half of the 243 incidents involved threats and intimidation of APA victims. In approximately 1 in 5 cases, the victims suffered bodily injury from physical assaults. In two known hate-motivated cases in Mesa, Arizona and Dallas, Texas, the victims were murdered. In addition to those two cases, NAPALC and its Affiliates have documented seven attempted murders since September 11th.

Nearly 80% of the incidents occurred in September 2001, most within days of the September 11th terrorist attacks. An alarming number of the post 9-11 anti-APA incidents occurred in schools (27%) and in the workplace (29%).

The Victims of Backlash

NAPALC and its Affiliates have been working to address anti-Asian violence over the past decade. The attacks after 9-11 differed in several respects with incidents that have occurred in previous years. The overwhelming majority of hate crime attackers are traditionally young men, either teenagers or in their early 20s, and their victims are also generally men. In the cases reported after 9-11, attackers included women, senior citizens, and even children. The APA victims of backlash since 9-11 have included women and men, small business owners and students, mothers and children.

Nearly all (96%) of the 243 incidents documented by NAPALC and its Affiliates involved victims of South Asian descent, mainly immigrants from India or Pakistan. In well over half of the incidents involving South Asian American, the victims were also Sikhs, a religious group that numbers 300,000 in cities across the country.² 95% of Sikhs hail from India and other parts of South Asia, although as with other religions, members of different racial and ethnic groups also are adherents.³

“Sikhism adheres to philosophical concepts rooted in living a worldly life with an active and strong sense of commitment to the world and humanity, governed and directed by a strong foundation and underpinning of spiritual awareness,” said Manjit Singh, Executive Director of Sikh Mediawatch and Resource Task Force (SMART).⁴ “Central to the tenets of Sikhism

are moral and spiritual values that lead the path to a successful worldly life. One without the other is incomplete and insufficient. Sikhism is about equality, peace and harmony with man and nature alike.”



A Sikh girl

AP Wide World Photos

Although Sikh Americans are a peace-loving people, they have been brutally and disproportionately targeted for backlash in the aftermath of September 11th. Unfortunately, some Americans have fallen into the grave misconception that all Arab Americans and Muslim Americans are terrorists, and therefore, anyone who even looks Arab or Muslim has become a potential target for violent retribution; for the Sikh American community, this has had devastating results (see Media Response section for more information).

Balbir Singh Sodhi and Swaran Kaur Bhullar were among the Sikh American victims who were violently targeted after September 11th (see their Notable Cases). In other cases, Surinder Singh Sidhu, a Sikh American storeowner in Northridge, California, was beaten with metal pipes by two men who accused him of being a terrorist. During the assault, the assailants reportedly asked the victim, “Are you (Osama) Bin Laden?” In San Mateo, California, a molotov gasoline bomb was thrown at the home of a Sikh American family. After breaking through some glass, the bomb hit the head of a three-year-old boy as he sat playing with toys on the living room sofa. Fortunately, there were no injuries as a result of the incident.

Beyond the Overt Backlash

Beyond the overt backlash incidents, there has also been a growing number of discrimina-

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A New York Perspective

By Sin Yen Ling

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

The September 11th attacks transformed New York City into a war zone, a hotbed of hate violence and police scrutiny of people perceived to be foreigners and terrorists. In the hours before 8:43 a.m., New Yorkers were preparing to go to the polls to cast their vote in the mayoral and city council primary elections. By 10:00 a.m., with news that the World Trade Center towers had collapsed, New Yorkers found themselves running from the plume that enveloped Lower Manhattan or scrambling to locate relatives and friends employed in the financial center. Against the backdrop of emergency workers shoveling for survivors, relatives searching for loved ones at makeshift triages, and major bridges and tunnels shut down, South Asian Americans, Arab Americans, and Muslim Americans were beaten, shot at, and pulled out of their cabs.



New York City on 9-11

AP Wide World Photos

In the weeks and months following September 11th, the impact on South Asian American working class and immigrant communities was tremendous. Many isolated themselves in their homes for days, fearful of going to work or sending their children to school. Others who ventured out were chased down by cars with drivers shouting “I am doing this for my country!” Straphangers watched as a Bangladeshi American subway rider was beaten senseless on a subway train. School attendance was down for South Asian American, Arab American, Muslim, and Sikh students in the New York City public schools. The New York City Board of Education initially did not acknowledge the violence, even though students were pelted with rocks while walking to school. South Asian American businesses in Richmond Hill, Jackson Heights, Flushing, and Floral Park received death threats, while others were vandalized with molotov cocktails. Mosques and temples battled a wave of hate violence while members of the Sikh American community, perceived to be Arab because of their turban and dress, were singled out in attacks in New York and across the U.S. As law enforcement failed miserably to protect these communities, they were left to protect themselves by draping the American flag in store windows or by posting stickers that said, “Proud to be an American and a Sikh.” While the American flag deflected hate for South Asian Americans, others proudly displayed it in a gesture of “patriotism.” Some who looked to the police for protection were met with indifference or anger. When AALDEF sought to report a hate incident to the police, we were told, “It’s petty, and these men are busy digging down at the World Trade Center.”

As President Bush denounced racial violence, his administration mounted a snowball campaign that eroded the civil rights of South Asian Americans, Arab Americans, and Muslim Americans. State and federal laws were passed, in response to 9-11, that validated an aggressive form of racial and immigrant profiling, where South Asian men were subjected to illegal interrogations and arrests on the streets and in their homes. The National Guard and the New York Police Department stationed throughout the city, in response to 9-11, stopped and questioned South Asian American, Arab American, and Muslim American pedestrians. Law enforcement not only inquired into their immigration status and personal background but also demanded papers proving their citizenship during these stops.

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The FBI and INS conducted house raids in communities largely populated by South Asian Americans, Arab Americans, and Muslim Americans in Brooklyn and Queens. Without search warrants, agents searched homes and confiscated personal property. Undocumented immigrant men disappeared into the night and were brought to local county jails and correctional facilities in the area. Some were sitting in jails for weeks without charging documents or notices of their removal proceedings. While waiting, detainees were thoroughly questioned by INS officials and asked to disclose information about relatives in the U.S. In order to isolate the detainees from their lawyers and families, detainees were sometimes transferred to another state in remote regions in the Midwest.

Compounding the assault on civil liberties, Attorney General John Ashcroft in November ordered local police departments to assist in the questioning of 5,000 immigrants of South Asian and Arab descent. The government selectively rounded up South Asian American, Arab American, and Muslim American men between the ages of 18 and 33, even if they had no connections to terrorist or criminal activities. Locally, 86 interviews were being conducted in the New York City metropolitan area. The local police were ordered to go directly to the interviewees' homes if they failed to reach them by phone. Some of those interviewed spoke to federal agents without legal representation. The government's action of detaining thousands of South Asian American, Arab American, and Muslim American men amounted to an indiscriminate roundup motivated by racial profiling.

The September 11th attacks had ripple effects affecting the rest of the city's APA community. In the initial months, disaster assistance was made available first to Battery Park City residents and small businesses in Tribeca, while the plight of Chinatown residents was largely overlooked. Chinatown, located within blocks from the World Trade Center, was paralyzed as the police restricted access to pedestrians and cars. Caregivers without proper identification could not attend to the elderly living on certain streets. Phone service in parts of Chinatown was cut off for five months after September 11th. Small businesses closed and laid off workers, who formed long lines at disaster assistance centers. The garment industry, employing 10,000 workers, was slammed by a shut down of several factories. In addition, Chinatown residents were subjected to noxious fumes drifting north from the World Trade Center site, and government agencies revealed little to the public about the toxicity levels in the air.

The Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) immediately began fielding complaints of hate violence against members of the Sikh, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and other APA communities across the nation. On September 15 and 22, 2001, AALDEF convened emergency community meetings to address the anti-APA backlash, the fear within immigrant communities, and the need for a broad-based coalition to respond and to take preventative action. Over 500 concerned groups and individuals were represented at these meetings.

In our efforts to challenge discriminatory policies and to protect the civil rights of Asian Pacific Americans, AALDEF is providing direct legal representation to victims of hate crimes, police misconduct, racial profiling, workplace and housing discrimination, as well as individuals subjected to the government's "voluntary" interviews and immigration detention. In conjunction with the American Civil Liberties Union and 16 other organizations, AALDEF filed the first lawsuit requesting the disclosure of basic information about the individuals who have been arrested and detained since September 11th.

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tion cases in the workplace, in housing, and in educational settings at all levels. Landlords are evicting tenants for no other reason than racial or religious bias. Students of all ages have been targets of ethnic taunts by other students and even their teachers. Workers have been subjected to hostile work environments and at times, even termination, while management has in many cases failed to address the racial insults and slurs made by co-workers.

As an example of 9-11-related employment discrimination, a Sikh American man lost his position in an anesthesiology residency program at a Cleveland, Ohio clinic, when one of the nurses complained that he had waved and laughed while footage of the destruction caused by the terrorist attacks was being replayed on a nearby television. The man denied the allegation and claimed that he had merely been greeting a colleague in the hospital.

The Response by the Media to 9-11

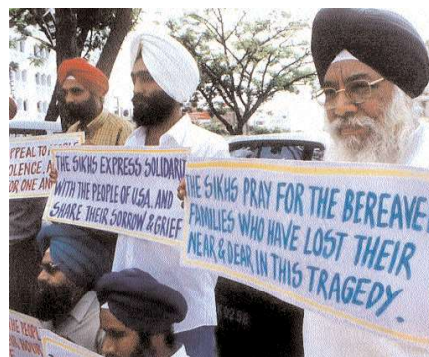
Understanding the potential for backlash, particularly against Arab Americans, some media organizations have called for responsible coverage of news stories related to September 11th. The Asian American Journalist Association (AAJA), for example, issued an advisory urging the nation's media to be responsible in its coverage of the Arab American community, reminding the public that Arab Americans, "along with all of us," were victims of the terrorist attacks.⁵

The Detroit Free Press put together an online guide aimed at helping journalists better understand Arab Americans and their culture.⁶ The guide touches on topics such as national origin, language, demographics, family, customs, religion, politics, and stereotypes.

MTV held several programs including the voices of young Arab Americans, Muslims, Sikhs, and others raising concern about the backlash and ran the Ad Council's PSA, "I am American."

While some members of the media have taken action to help stem the tide of misunderstanding and violence, there were others whose coverage of the national tragedy served to fan the flames of intolerance. Within hours after the

attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the Bush Administration speculated that the instigator was Osama Bin Laden, and the media began to repeatedly show photos of Bin Laden, wearing a long beard and a turban, in its 24-hour coverage of the attacks. An unfortunate consequence, however, has been that certain segments of the public have begun to identify the turbans and beards worn by Sikh American men with Bin Laden, even though the style of the turbans are not the same.



Sikhs protest

AP Wide World Photos

Without providing more than a superficial context, if any, the media also frequently showed images of Bin Laden supporters in Pakistan and other Asian countries cheering and applauding the attacks, thereby placing potential APA victims of backlash at risk. The media also framed the terrorists' story in an immigration context, although they were all temporary visitors, and none were legal permanent residents. Cable news also ran several interviews with only the anti-immigrant group representatives and no counter-balancing view.

In the days and months after September 11th, news organizations such as *The New York Times* came out with headlines such as "Victims of Mistaken Identity, Sikhs Pay a Price for Turbans."⁷ Though the message sympathizes with Sikh Americans as wrongful targets, implicit in the message is that there are in fact, legitimate targets of attack.

During the emotionally charged days after the terrorist attacks, some members of the media could have been more sensitive to the precarious situation of the Arab Americans, South Asian

A Northern California Perspective

*By Rosaline Chan
Asian Law Caucus*

The San Francisco Bay Area has not been exempt from incidents of hate and ignorance. On September 12, 2001, an Arab American Muslim woman at a local Bay Area community college was chased out of her classroom by fellow classmates as her professor verbally harassed her, using racial epithets and discriminatory language aimed at her religious beliefs. Earlier that day, this same woman was stopped and searched by a police officer on campus for no apparent reason. This incident is exemplary of many other complaints that poured into Bay Area law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and civil rights groups soon after the events of September 11th.

The Bay Area community has responded to the sharp increase in bias-motivated incidents since September 11th by organizing support networks, legal resources, and direct assistance programs for those in need. Immediately after September 11th, the Asian Law Caucus, along with local bar associations and other community organizations, hosted a training session attended by over 300 people aimed at advocating for victims of backlash, hate violence, and discrimination. The Muslim and Arab community came together to form the Grassroots Organizers from the Muslim and Arab Community (GOMAC) to provide grief counseling, translation services as well as escorts for those afraid of leaving their home. These are but a few of the many support services provided for victims of backlash.

Americans, Muslim Americans, and Sikh Americans—many of whom lived in daily fear of their lives.

The Response by Government and Law Enforcement to 9-11

Ethnic immigrant communities have often faced a backlash whenever there has been a real or perceived threat to the national security of the U.S. For example, when in 1996, a federal building in Oklahoma City was bombed, Congress simultaneously enacted anti-terrorist legislation with anti-immigrant legislation—the inconspicuous inference being that immigrants are strongly connected with terrorism or other types of anti-patriotic activities. This occurred despite considerable evidence that the terrorist in that case was, in fact, neither Arab American, nor Muslim, nor was he even an immigrant.

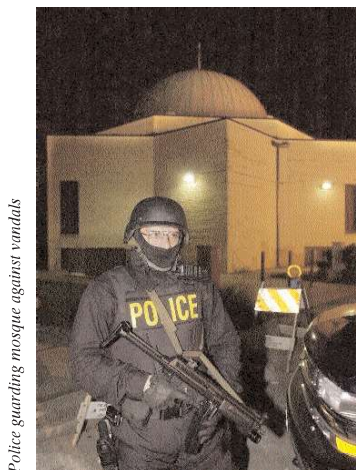
The most notorious example of this type of inference in American history took the form of the Japanese internment during World War II, when 120,000 Japanese Americans were taken from their homes and placed in internment camps.

Recognizing the potential for individual vigilantism and backlash against targeted communities, President Bush made a plea against such action, saying, “Those who feel like they can intimidate our fellow citizens to take out their anger don’t represent the best of America.”⁸

In stark contrast, Representative John C. Cooksey (R-Monroe) referred to Arab Americans and South Asian Americans as “towel heads” who need to be racially profiled, stating, “If I see someone [who] comes in that’s got a diaper on his head and a fan belt wrapped around the diaper on his head, that guy needs to be pulled over.”⁹

Leaders of the anti-immigrant caucus in Congress, such as Thomas G. Tancredo (R-Colorado), sought to exploit fears stemming from the terrorist attacks by calling for severe restrictions on immigration policy, even though all of the hijackers were temporary visitors to the U.S., and none were seeking permanent residency.

While the public is influenced by what government officials say, the actions they take are



Police guarding mosque against vandals

AP Wide World Photos

far more consequential. The following sections will examine the actions taken by various sectors of government and law enforcement, pointing out both the positive and negative aspects of the policies and initiatives that were enacted after the terrorist attacks.

The Department of Justice

After September 11th, Attorney General Ashcroft and FBI Director Mueller also issued statements condemning the backlash incidents. On October 16, 2001, Attorney General Ashcroft met with Sikh American, Arab American, and Muslim American leaders to hear their concerns. Around that time, the Department of Justice (DOJ) also began actively investigating and prosecuting hate crimes and other discrimination cases against Arab Americans, South Asian Americans, Muslims, Sikhs, and other targeted groups. Over 170 cases are pending, and the DOJ has announced that they will be pursuing federal prosecution in three cases.

Yet, at the same time, the DOJ has been taking actions that are directly at odds with their statements condemning the backlash. Immediately following September 11th, the DOJ rounded up and imprisoned over a thousand individuals, denying them access to attorneys and to their families, without even charging them with a specific crime. The common thread among the targeted individuals was the fact that a large number were of Arab and South Asian descent.

The DOJ urged the public to report neighbors, co-workers, friends and anyone else who

appeared to be “suspicious” through a special 1-800 number, resulting in multiple raids of innocent people’s homes. Unfortunately, since September 11th, those that fall under suspicion in the eyes of many Americans have been individuals who appear to Arab or Muslim.

Moreover, DOJ initiated legislation that sends disturbing signals to the American public, making a sharp demarcation as to who is “us” and who is “them.” The USA Patriot Act, a bill that sped through Congress, gives federal law enforcement sweeping new powers that seek to side-step constitutional guarantees of due process, especially with regard to immigrants. Examples of the dramatic expansion of government powers under the Patriot Act include the secret searches of private residences and businesses, the deportation of individuals for membership dues or donations made to organizations that the government designates as terrorist groups, the detention of persons based upon the Attorney General’s suspicion that they may be involved with or have information on terrorist activity, and the indefinite detention of immigrants.

On November 9, 2001, Attorney General Ashcroft announced a “voluntary” program to interview over 5,000 Arab Americans who are not yet citizens as part of the DOJ’s investigation—reinforcing the view that these immigrants should be presumed guilty of some type of crime, whatever it may be. The DOJ then followed with a program to intensify efforts to deport immigrants in violation of federal immigration laws, prioritizing the deportation of Arab Americans. The detention process presently utilized by the DOJ arouses suspicion of criminal wrongdoing among the detainees’ employers, colleagues and community members, and the process itself presumes guilt (see Notable Case on Hasnain Javed).

Attorney General Ashcroft has instituted policies to encourage eavesdropping on conversations between attorneys and their clients, in direct violation of the rules meant to protect rights to due process and to counsel. Furthermore, undocumented immigrants who require assistance from the DOJ, including hate crime victims, may also risk deportation, as federal agencies have begun to coordinate their

efforts more closely with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

Following September 11th, the DOJ also asked universities around the nation to violate personal privacy standards set by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which bars colleges from releasing students' personal information without their written consent. Requests have been made for information in student files, including family financial information, for students from select racial and ethnic groups. Some schools, such as Auburn University in Montgomery, Alabama, have expressed concern about violations to FERPA, but most have appeared to freely comply – some without even informing the student.¹⁰

Rather than responding to the legitimate concerns that were raised regarding breaches to the Constitution by the new DOJ policies, the Attorney General Ashcroft attacked his critics at a congressional hearing in December 2001, stating that they were in league with the terrorists.¹¹

The Department of Transportation

Like Arab Americans and Muslims, South Asian Americans have reported being selectively targeted for stops and searches, particularly at airports. The media has reported stories of innocent persons alleging that they were searched, denied boarding, or asked to leave an aircraft because the passengers and crew did not feel comfortable with their presence.

With the firm belief that the U.S. government plays a key role in influencing private sector policies, NAPALC organized a meeting on racial profiling issues with the Secretary of the Department of Transportation (DOT) in October 2001. Present at the meeting were various APA, Sikh, Muslim, and Arab American leaders. NAPALC commends DOT Secretary Norm Mineta for publicly speaking out against racial profiling in airports.

During the meeting, Sikh American leaders noted their concerns about the actions taken by

airline pilots, and they provided recommendations to the Secretary regarding the need for cultural sensitivity training by all inspection personnel. Of particular concern were the turban searches affecting Sikh American men and the requests for the removal of the veils worn by Sikh American women. The turbans worn by Sikh men, which are sacred articles of faith, cannot be easily removed, and under the Sikh religion, women are not permitted to remove their veils in public. Sikh American leaders reported incidents where inspection personnel have demanded that Sikh travelers remove their turbans or veils in open areas. In some cases, turbans were allegedly even poked and mishandled during the search.

Since September 11th, the DOT has issued a formal policy statement to officials throughout the airline industry entitled, "Carrying Out Transportation Inspection and Safety Responsibilities in a Nondiscriminatory Manner." The statement's guidelines strictly prohibit the selection of any person for further search by inspection personnel solely for the reason of wearing a turban.

Other Federal Agencies

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights held a hearing in October 2001 concerning the impact of 9-11-related immigration policies on immigrant communities. NAPALC testified at the hearing, raising the issue of hate crimes, as well as concern about discrimination in employment, housing, and other arenas.

Other federal agencies, including the Department of Education (DOE), the Department of Labor (DOL), and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), have also issued public statements and held press conferences, alerting the public that they are monitoring complaints of discrimination. Many federal agencies, including the DOE, have been receptive to undergoing cultural sensitivity training led by Arab American and Sikh American groups, although the extent to which top level officials and regional employees receive the training is still unclear.

A Southern California Perspective

By Bonnie Tang

Asian Pacific American Legal Center

The South Asian American, Arab American, Muslim American, and Sikh American populations in Southern California were also inundated by a wave of hate crimes and hate incidents. The range of bias acts ranged from verbal assaults to physical attacks to arson. Hate incidents most often occurred in business settings, such as the incident involving a Sikh American merchant in Northridge, CA, who was beaten with metal poles while the attackers referred to him as Osama Bin Laden. Indicative of a region with a ubiquitous car culture, a large number of bias incidents also occurred on public roads and highways.

In response to the post 9-11 backlash, the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC) sponsored hate crimes trainings, collaborated extensively with community organizations and human relations commissions, and directly assisted numerous victims of bias incidents. In the two months following 9-11, APALC conducted 14 trainings to educate individuals on how to report hate crimes and how to assist victims. Only two days after the terrorist attacks, APALC spearheaded CommUNITY's United for A Hate Free Tomorrow. Originally planned as a second anniversary commemoration for Joseph Iletto and the North Valley Jewish Community Center hate crime victims, the event, which drew a cross-cultural, inter-generational audience of almost 200 participants, provided an opportune time to collectively urge for racial harmony and peace in light of the terrorists attacks.

To assist primarily South Asian American, Arab American, Muslim American, and Sikh American clients, APALC also established the 9-11 Legal Response Network (LRN), a network of attorneys, community activists, and others who are dedicated to providing legal counsel, victim assistance, and advocacy. LRN has helped numerous individuals who have experienced hate crimes or hate incidents, housing and employment discrimination, immigration issues or other bias directly stemming from the events of 9-11.

State Government and Local Law Enforcement

Various state government officials have also taken important actions following the September 11th terrorist attacks. For example, on September 24, 2001, Massachusetts Attorney General, Tom Reilly, filed the first civil rights order since the attacks, charging three teenagers with a hate crime. The teens allegedly fire-bombed a convenience store owned by an Indian American man who they believed to be of Arab descent.

"Acts of hate motivated by racism against those of Arab descent or the Muslim religion or any ethnic background will not be tolerated," said Reilly in a press release. "I plan to use this office's criminal and civil authority to the fullest extent to punish those who impede any individual's right to live free of threats, harassment or violence based on their ethnicity or religion."¹²

Across the country, each U.S. Attorney's Office decides whether to involve local agencies in the interviews, and police departments have responded differently to requests for their assistance. For instance, the Police Department in Portland, Oregon refused to take part in the DOJ's request to participate in the interviews, saying that doing so would violate state privacy laws, even though State Attorney General Hardy Myers ruled otherwise in November 2001.¹³

"Because local agencies don't fall under the supervision of the Department of Justice, they have the right to decline," said Justice Department spokeswoman, Susan Dryden.¹⁴

Rather than send investigators out knocking on doors, law enforcement officials in Michigan sent out hundreds of letters in November 2001 to young Middle Eastern men who have come to the U.S. on temporary visas in the last two

years, inviting them to make appointments for interviews, rather than going door-to-door.¹⁵

“The letters represent a conscious decision by our district to initiate contact with the people who will be interviewed in the manner that will be least intrusive,” said Jeffrey Collins, the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan, which is home to the nation’s largest concentration of Arab Americans.¹⁶

Yet, many local government and law enforcement agencies, including the ones in the Tampa, Florida area are cooperating fully with the DOJ’s request to question men from the Middle East about their political and religious sympathies, despite objections by civil libertarians and Arab American groups.¹⁷

The Response by the APA Community to 9-11

On September 11th, the paradigm of all Americans, including Asian Pacific Americans, shifted. The terrible loss of lives at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and the grief suffered by the families of the victims struck at the heart of the nation’s people—both immigrants and non-immigrants alike.

Regardless of race, religion, ethnicity or country of origin, everyone has grieved and has shared the same fears about the future. Immigrants were drawn to the U.S. for the opportunity to raise their families in peace, to provide them with economic security, and to advance their children’s lives through education. Like all Americans, immigrants share the fear that the terrorist attacks may hinder the American ideals of freedom and liberty for all.



Vigil at the Japanese American memorial

Members of the APA community have responded to the tragedy as any other American would. All across the country, members from the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, Hmong, and South Asian communities have held rallies to speak out against the terrorist attacks and the ensuing backlash against Arab Americans, South Asian Americans, Muslims, and Sikhs. These communities have also held vigils to remember the victims of September 11th, set up fundraisers to help the families of the victims, and organized forums to promote greater dialogue and discussion over the surge in hate crimes following the attacks. The Sikh American community, in particular, has taken the lead in providing diversity and sensitivity training to government, law enforcement, and airport officials.

Asian Pacific Americans in the U.S. carry a special burden—namely the presumption they are not truly Americans. Despite the number of generations that some APAs have lived in the U.S., many are regarded as perpetual foreigners. Even prior to September 11th, APAs faced the challenge of not always being seen as equal stakeholders in the political, economic, and social landscape of America. During a heightened national security threat, the challenge becomes even more difficult, often because of the mistrust and suspicion by which immigrant and minority groups are viewed.

Lessons from the Japanese American Internment

An Arab American cab driver had a sobering question for NAPALC’s Executive Director, Karen K. Narasaki, as she made her way to a press conference at the Japanese American memorial a week after September 11th.

“How were the Japanese Americans treated in the internment camps during WWII?” he asked. When Narasaki asked why he posed the question, he replied, “I just want to be prepared for what may happen in the future.”

The cab driver was not alone in drawing a parallel between the Japanese American intern-

ment and the experiences largely borne by Arab Americans, South Asian Americans, Muslim Americans, and Sikh Americans in the aftermath of September 11th.

Many Japanese Americans today still remember when President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 after the attacks by Japanese bombers on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The Order forced 120,000 Japanese Americans to sell their businesses and to abandon their homes for desolate internment camps for the duration of World War II, despite the fact that the U.S. government had no evidence to prove that the internees were disloyal.



May 18, 1942

Since September 11th, Japanese Americans have actively spoken out against the backlash directed at Arab Americans, South Asian Americans, Muslims, and Sikhs. Mike Honda (D-California), a Japanese American congressman and former internee, joined with fellow Congressman Christopher Shays (R-Connecticut) to introduce a resolution condemning bigotry and violence against Sikh Americans in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. On September 19, 2001, Japanese American veterans hosted Arab Americans at an event calling for unity at the Japanese American War Memorial in Washington, DC. More than 40 organizations and 200 diverse community leaders participated in the rally. A little over a week later, Nikkei for Civil Rights and Redress (NCCR) organized a candlelight vigil attended by 250 people in the Little Tokyo Area of Los Angeles to speak out against the terrorist attacks, to honor those who died on September 11th, and to condemn the scapegoating of Arab Americans and Muslims.

The Japanese American internment was a dark side of American history, where an individ-

ual's ethnic background was used as a proxy for government action against a perceived enemy and potential threat. In this case, hopefully we will learn from the mistakes made in history, rather than repeat them.

Conclusion

In light of the events that have occurred since September 11th, NAPALC and its Affiliates call for full compliance by law enforcement agencies to the Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990 and reaffirm support for the passage of the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act (LLEEA) of 2001, a measure that would broadly expand existing federal hate crime legislation.

Although the media has been responsible in its coverage of the national tragedy in some aspects, NAPALC and its Affiliates believe that it can do more by improving its reporting of race, national origin, and religion in news stories. Members of the media must also be more sensitive to both the explicit *and* implicit messages that they put out.

While the statements made by government and law enforcement officials to denounce any and all bias-motivated incidents can provide a good start, it is not enough to present the American public with platitudes. NAPALC and its Affiliates issue a challenge to all leaders to follow through on their statements with actions that condemn rather than support racial profiling and discrimination.

As individuals who must work with diverse communities, government and law enforcement officials at all levels must receive diversity and sensitivity training. Furthermore, federal, state, and local agencies must do all that they can to decrease the level of discrimination in housing education, transportation, and business. If necessary, Congress should hold agencies accountable for addressing the backlash through hearings and other means.

NAPALC and its Affiliates believe that the government must not sacrifice civil liberties nor create policies that place immigrants under suspicion in the name of protecting national security. Doing so would undermine the sanctity of the U.S. Constitution and the American ideals of freedom, justice, and liberty for all.

Synopses of Notable Cases After September 11th



Balbir Singh Sodhi
Mesa, Arizona

On September 15, 2001, a gunman shot and killed 49-year-old Balbir Singh Sodhi as he was outside doing landscaping work at a gas station. The gunman fired several shots at the victim while shouting, "I stand for America all the way!" Sodhi's death is one of the first known bias-motivated murders related to the September 11th terrorist attacks.

The same gunman then drove to a second gas station and shot at a Lebanese American clerk. Next, he drove to the residence of a family of Afghan descent and fired several shots. No one was injured in these two shooting incidents.

When the police arrested the alleged suspect at his home, he screamed, "I am a patriot!" The Maricopa County Attorney's Office has since charged the suspect with first degree murder, three counts of drive-by shooting, three counts of attempted first degree murder, and three counts of endanger-

ment. While Arizona does not have state-level hate crimes legislation, the law does allow the court to consider the motivation for a killing as an aggravating factor in sentencing.

Immediately following Sodhi's murder, the Arizona Attorney General's Office and the local District Attorney's Office worked together to set up a hotline encouraging residents to report bias-motivated threats, assaults, and vandalism. A special prosecutor was also appointed to pursue future hate crime cases.

Sodhi, who is Indian American, moved to the U.S. ten years ago, working as a taxi driver in San Francisco before joining his brother in Phoenix. He is the father of three sons, ages 22, 24, and 27. Sodhi was planning to return to India in November to live with his youngest son and wife.

Mesa's Chapter of the United Way presented Sodhi's son with a check for \$48,200, which was raised in a fundraising drive for the victims of the attacks related to September 11th. A staff attorney from the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund traveled to Phoenix to meet with the family in order to offer legal assistance and support.

Waqar Hasan
Dallas, Texas

Waqar Hasan, a 46-year-old Pakistani American grocer was murdered on September 15, 2001 while working at Mom's

Grocery, a Pleasant Grove, Texas store that he partially owned. While making a sandwich in the deli area not protected by bulletproof glass, he was shot in the right side of his face. Since there was no evidence of robbery or of a struggle, the police have notified the FBI, who is investigating the incident as a hate crime.

Hasan left Pakistan more than 11 years ago. He followed his family to the U.S. after a gunman pressed the barrel of a pistol against his head on the streets of Karachi.

Hasan had lived in New Jersey for 10 years, but he recently moved to Texas in order to establish a small business. He is survived by his wife and four daughters, ages 11, 13, 15 and 17. His family was living in New Jersey at the time of Hasan's death, but his wife and daughters had been planning on reuniting with him soon. According to his family, Hasan loved the U.S. and was working on becoming a citizen.

"They came in search of the same American dream we all strive to attain," said New Jersey Congressman, Frank Pellone, who condemned the murder and praised the Hasan family. "It is unimaginable that a select few Americans choose to divide [a united America] by resorting to bigotry and intolerance."

The Southeast Dallas Chamber of Commerce has offered a \$2,500 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of Hasan's killer.



Swaran Kaur Bhullar
San Diego, California

On the way to a local video rental store, a 51-year-old South Asian American woman named Swaran Kaur Bhullar stopped her vehicle at a red light. Two men on a motorcycle pulled open her car door and attacked the victim while yelling, "This is what you get for what you've done to us! I'm going to slash your throat!" Although she used her arms to shield and protect herself, Bhullar was stabbed twice in the head.

The suspects fled upon hearing another car arrive at the scene, and Bhullar was rushed to and treated at a local hospital. The incident occurred just weeks after the terrorist attacks. The victim, who is Sikh American and a mother of three grown children, believes that the attackers had mistaken her for a Muslim.

Although there have been collaborative efforts to assist the police in identifying the perpetrators, the suspects in the case remain at large. Local law enforcement, as well as organizations such as the Union of Pan Asian Communities and the Greater San Diego Community of Indian Americans united publicly in a stance against hate crimes. Local law enforcement has since released a composite sketch of the assailants. Crime

Stoppers reenacted the crime on video, and a \$1,000 reward was offered for information leading to the arrest of the suspects.

Hasnain Javed
Wiggins, Mississippi

"I was crying. I was terrified," said Hasnain Javed.

Those were Javed's recollections about his ordeal resulting from a bus trip from Houston to New York after visiting family members in September 2001. Javed, a 20-year-old Pakistani college student, was held for three days for carrying an expired visa. Initially detained in Alabama, he was shipped off to a Stone County correctional facility in Mississippi, where inmates beat him as prison guards allegedly ignored his cries for help.

In a large prison cell, he was called "Bin Laden," stripped naked, and beaten so badly that his eardrum was ruptured, his tooth chipped, and his ribs fractured as a result of the assault.

According to Javed, four guards came to the cell after 20 to 25 minutes into the beating. He alleges that the guards just stood in the doorway and did nothing to help. The local Sheriff's Department claims that Javed may have provoked the attack by the other prisoners, but he strongly denies these claims.

After the assault, Javed was taken to a nurse and was treated with Motrin but was not permitted to see a doctor. He was then placed in a small solitary

cell. After posting a \$5,000 bond, he was transferred to the INS office in New Orleans.

New Orleans civil rights attorney, Mary Howell, has requested that the FBI investigate the incident as a hate crime. Presently, there is some confusion as to whether the FBI or the County Sheriff's Department has jurisdiction in the case.

The case raises questions about the practice of detaining hard-core felons with those charged with immigration violations. While the INS has a policy against locking up violent criminals with people who have expired visas, immigrant rights advocates say this policy is often violated.

A federal immigration judge has since ruled that Javed, who overstayed his visa, must leave the country by April 16, 2002. As a result, he faces possible deportation before the investigation is complete.

New York City's Taxi Cab Drivers
New York, New York

In the first two weeks following September 11th, the *New York City Taxi Worker's Alliance*, a grassroots organization serving yellow-medallion drivers, received several reports of bias-motivated incidents. Two medallion taxis belonging to Muslim drivers were set on fire in the Bronx, two drivers in Manhattan were assaulted and suffered injuries, and nine livery cars parked in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn were vandalized.

A month later, two organizations reported another incident involving a Bangladeshi American driver who was physically assaulted by ten men. After the assailants in the case had surrounded the vehicle belonging to the victim, he exited his cab to flag down a New York City Police Department squad car, whereupon the suspects fled the scene. The assailants returned after the police left the victim at the scene without filing a police report. As a result of the subsequent assault, the victim was hospitalized and remained unconscious for three days. Over half of the city's medallion cab drivers are of Arab or South Asian descent. Many did not work in the first few weeks after September 11th, as news of attacks against cab drivers

spread throughout the city. Drivers who had to work began to cover up the pictures and names on their special cab drivers' licenses, risking a ticket from the Taxi Limousine Commission.

Some drivers purchased American flags to drape on their taxis in an attempt to protect themselves from attacks. Despite these efforts, cab drivers of Arab and South Asian descent were singled out and attacked. In addition, patrons routinely turned away from drivers who they perceived as being Arab, South Asian, or Muslim.

Further aggravating the situation, the downturn of the economy in New York following September 11th had a devastat-

ing impact on the taxi industry, as tourism in the city came to a virtual halt. With continued traffic restrictions in lower Manhattan, as well as a severe drop in business at hotels, restaurants, airports, and Broadway shows, many cab drivers have suffered tremendous financial losses since September 11th. Those that suffered most greatly were the drivers who leased their cabs on a daily basis and paid for gasoline at their own expense. In response to the hardships suffered by the city's cab drivers, the NYC Taxi Workers Alliance has set up legal clinics for those seeking legal assistance with matters such as disaster victim compensation and 9-11-related discrimination.

Selected Racial Profiling Incidents Involving APAs after September 11th

FBI agents broke down the door of a 39-year-old Pakistani American man and entered his house with guns drawn, followed by members of a hazardous materials team in moon suits and gas masks. The agents were acting on a tip related to the federal anthrax investigation. The victim, who holds multiple advanced degrees, stated that he had never been involved in any type of trouble before this incident.

Chester, Pennsylvania

A Pakistani American man and his nephew were removed from a Carnival Cruise Lines Ship and detained by FBI and INS officials because the name of one of the men resembled that of a bombing suspect. Officials later determined that the men had no ties to terrorism.

Miami, Florida

A Sikh American man was pulled off a train by police, handcuffed, and questioned for eight hours about the terrorist attacks. The 28-year-old high-tech executive wears a turban, a long, flowing beard, and a kirpan, which is a ceremonial knife that serves as a religious symbol. Authorities later released him after charging him with a misdemeanor for carrying a knife.

Providence, Rhode Island

A Pakistani American man parked his rental car in a Burger King parking lot, when the employees exited the restaurant and began to stare at him. Seconds later, three vehicles from the local police department surrounded him on all sides. The officers handcuffed him, searched his rental car, and detained him, whereupon he was interrogated by FBI agents. His request for an attorney was denied. Subsequently, he was incarcerated for 35 days and charged with not returning his rental car on time.

Buffalo, New York

Selected Anti-APA Incidents After September 11th

The following chronological list briefly shows some of the anti-APA incidents that occurred between September 11 to December 11, 2001. To view information on these and other anti-APA incidents, go to http://www.napalc.org/programs/antiviolence/Terror_attacks/911_Intro2.htm on the NAPALC website.

SEPTEMBER

A Pakistani American woman reported to the media that two teenagers in a jeep tailed, blocked and followed her car. The drivers gestured with their hands as if they were aiming imaginary pistols at the woman, and said “go back to your country, wherever you came from.” The woman, who had her 8-month-old son in the car, said she feared for her life and the life of her child.

Augusta, Georgia

The two-year old daughter of a South Asian American man was playing outside her apartment complex, when a number of teenagers started to pelt her with stones while yelling racial slurs.

Woodbridge, New Jersey

A 66-year-old Indian American man was shot with a pellet gun and chased down by three white teens who beat him with a baseball bat.

Richmond Hill, New York

A Sikh house of worship was the target of arson as bottles filled with gasoline were hurled into the temple’s windows.

Cleveland, Ohio

A 28-year old-Pakistani American man was hospitalized after he was badly beaten and kicked by three men as he attempted to enter a gas station to visit a friend who worked in the station’s convenience store.

Tulsa, Oklahoma

A male 47-year-old Indian American convenience store operator was threatened by a man who came into the store and yelled at him, saying, “You must go back to your country.” The perpetrator also reportedly asked the victim whether he knew people involved in the terrorist attacks on the East Coast and whether they conspired so he could raise gasoline prices. A man was arrested in relation to the case and charged with disorderly conduct as a hate crime.

Union Grove, Wisconsin

A female Indian American owner of a gas station was threatened by two men who claimed that they would firebomb her property. According to the men, she was “one of those f**king Arabs” and her property needed to be destroyed to “send a message to all the Arabs.”

Troy, Illinois

An Indian American-owned convenience store was the target of arson when three teenagers set it on fire by throwing a molotov cocktail through the store window. The teens were apprehended and charged with assault with the intent to murder, possession of infernal machine, malicious and willful burning, and committing a hate crime. The local police chief vowed not to take the incident lightly, especially because there were people working in a pizza parlor attached to the store when the fire started.

Somerset, Massachusetts

A Pakistani American woman was nearly run over by a car driven by an inebriated 76-year-old white male in the parking lot of a shopping mall. The man jumped out of his car and screamed that he was “doing this for his country” and that he was “going to kill her.” The assailant was arrested and charged with first-degree reckless endangerment, a hate crime.

Huntington, New York

An Indian American owner of a convenience store found a note taped to the door that read: “Leave this country, or you will die.” The note also contained a crudely drawn skull-and-crossbones. According to the note, the perpetrator thought that he was targeting a Muslim.

St. Petersburg, Florida

A male Pakistani American worker at a convenience store was threatened at gunpoint by an off-duty police officer. The officer pointed a gun at the victim in the parking lot of the store, threatened his life, referred to him as “Arabic,” then drove away in a pickup truck. The suspect was arrested after turning himself in to the local police. He was charged with aggravated assault, terrorist threats, ethnic intimidation, harassment, and reckless endangerment.

Lower Merion, Pennsylvania

A Sikh temple was vandalized by a man who demanded that a religious flag be taken down. When he was turned away, he returned, blocking the temple gates with a tractor and trailer, then desecrated the temple’s holy pool by jumping into it.

Sacramento, California

An Indian American man was attacked by three men as he was leaving his apartment. A police spokesperson said that “three people jumped on him. They knocked him down and covered his eyes then beat on him.” After addressing him with an expletive, the men further threatened him, saying, “We are going to cut you like you cut our people.”

Tulsa, Arizona

A Sikh American couple was selling ice cream from their truck when they were chased and threatened by a man wielding a baseball bat. The assailant, who believed the couple to be of Afghan descent, will face two felony counts during his arraignment.

Fullerton, California

A 26-year old Indian American man and a white male friend were physically assaulted by a man who referred to the Indian American victim as a “dirty Arab.” The white male friend was stabbed in the ensuing brawl and remains hospitalized in critical condition.

San Francisco, California

A 52-year-old Pakistani American shopkeeper was threatened by an identified assailant at his convenience store. On the day before the incident, the assailant had entered the store to ask the victim if he knew Osama bin Laden. Then, on the following day, the assailant attempted to use his credit card to pay for a soda and a pack of cigarettes. When the storeowner informed him of a \$5 minimum policy for credit card purchases, the assailant picked up several more bottles of soda, slammed them down on the counter, and shouted, “Go back to Pakistan before I kill you!” The perpetrator was charged with threatening, breach of peace, interfering with a police officer, and intimidation based on bigotry or bias.

Norwich, Connecticut

A South Asian American woman was walking to her car in the parking lot of a store when three male assailants came from behind and pushed her into a car. They then punched her in the stomach and elbowed her in the back. The assailants stated, “that’s what you people deserve,” before running away.

Eagen, Minnesota

A male Indian American gas station attendant was approached by a white male who asked him whether he was from Pakistan or Afghanistan. When the attendant said he was from India, the man replied, “Good, because if you were Pakistani or Afghan, I would have killed you.” The man then lifted his shirt and revealed a knife tucked in his waistband. A few hours later, six white males approached the same attendant and tried to lure him outside the store.

Keyport, New Jersey

A Sikh American man was driving along a highway when he was violently targeted by a white male driving a truck. The driver of the truck began to drive aggressively while pointing his finger towards the victim and pretending to shoot. The assailant then rolled down the window of his truck and proceeded to point a rifle at the victim. The victim immediately hit the gas pedal and sped forward. The assailant fired one shot before driving away from the victim.

Frederick, Maryland

A Pakistani American man’s home was burned to the ground. Earlier in the day, the victim had received threatening phone calls telling him to “Get the hell out of here and go back to your own country!,” to which he had responded, “This is my country! Why don’t you go somewhere else?” The victim then left for work, thinking he had been targeted by prank callers. When he later returned home, he found his house on fire. The suspects had broken in through the back door and had set fire to all corners of the house from the inside. The arson incident is now under investigation.

Anaheim, California

OCTOBER

A Pakistani American man was threatened with death by an assailant over the phone. The assailant, who randomly selected the victim’s name phone book because it appeared to be an “Arab-sounding” name, faces federal charges by the U.S. Attorney’s Office.

Detroit, Michigan

A 39-year-old Indian American man was walking along a street when he was hit on the head with a baseball bat by two white male assailants shouting ethnic slurs. The victim momentarily lost consciousness after the attack and went to the hospital so that his head wounds could be treated.

San Diego, California

A 47-year-old Sikh American man was attacked by a man with a cane in the lobby of his motel. The attacker shouted, “You still here? Go to Allah!” and knocked the victim unconscious with two blows from the cane. The victim required nine stitches as a result of his injuries, and the assailant was arrested and charged with second-degree assault.

Seattle, Washington

A 38-year-old Pakistani American man was kicked, punched, and knocked unconscious by three unknown assailants. The victim had initially been approached by the three assailants in front of his grocery store, when one of them said, “You look like Osama bin Laden. Are you from Pakistan?” The assault occurred after the victim answered, “Originally, yes.” He was hospitalized as a result of his wounds.

Park Slope, New York

A Chinese American woman was sexually assaulted by three white males, who yelled, “Go back to Osama,” as she was walking in the vicinity of Ohio State University.

Columbus, Ohio

NOVEMBER

An interfaith religious center, where many of the area’s Sikhs meet to worship, suffered extensive damage in a fire set by unknown arsonists. State and federal authorities are investigating the incident as a possible hate crime. Temple officials have publicly stated their belief that the fire was a deliberate attempt to target Sikhs after the September 11th terrorist attacks.

Palermo, New York

A 20-year-old male Pakistani international student was detained on a visa violation following an INS raid on a Greyhound bus. While in custody at a county correctional facility, the victim was stripped naked and brutally beaten by inmates who referred to him as “Bin Laden” and threatened to kill him. The assault resulted in a ruptured eardrum, a broken tooth, and fractured ribs. The victim claimed that the officers at the correctional facility made no attempt to assist him despite his cries for help.

Stone County, Mississippi

DECEMBER

A Sikh American man was beaten by two men with metal poles at his liquor store. The victim attempted to explain that he was Sikh and had no association with the accused terrorist, but the assailants continued with the assault. The victim was hospitalized for several hours with head injuries.

Northridge, California

A male Indian American owner of a delicatessen was savagely beaten and robbed and his store torched in what police believe to be a hate crime. The attack occurred as the victim was opening up his deli in the early morning. While attacking the victim, the assailants yelled, “Go back to your country, go back to Pakistan, go back to Afghanistan,” according to local police officials.

Suffolk, New York

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