



NEWS

**U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
New York District Office**

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NATIONAL WHOLESALE LIQUIDATORS SUED BY EEOC FOR NATIONAL ORIGIN AND RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

EEOC Says Retail Chain Store Abused South Asian Employees

NEW YORK — A West Hempstead, N.Y.-based chain of retail discount stores violated federal law by subjecting South Asian employees to a hostile work environment based on their race, national origin and religion as well as sexual harassment, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit it filed today.

According to the EEOC's suit, South Asian workers at National Wholesale Liquidators, Inc.'s Long Island City location were subjected to constant taunts about their national origin and religion, such as "All Indians are nasty," "Sikhs are thieves," and, "I'm tired of seeing old Indian faces all the time." The EEOC also charges that a female employee was subjected to sexual and religious harassment. The woman, a Sikh, was told by the manager to remove her turban because she "would appear sexier without it." When she refused the manager's repeated sexual advances, the EEOC charged, he told her that she was not permitted to use the bathrooms and would have to wear a diaper to work. The EEOC says the company failed to take appropriate action to address and correct the harassment, even when employees complained.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The EEOC's lawsuit (Civil Action No. 07-CV-2507) was filed in U.S. District Court in the Eastern District of New York on June 21, 2007, after first attempting to reach a voluntary settlement with the employer. The suit seeks monetary relief, an order requiring the company to implement new policies and practices to prevent harassment, training on antidiscrimination laws, posting of notices at the work site and other injunctive relief.

"Apparently this employer didn't mind hiring South Asians, but then turned around and subjected them to verbal abuse because of their national origin," said Spencer H. Lewis, Jr.,

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Page 2

Director of the EEOC's New York District Office. "That's not only illogical and cruel, but outright illegal. Employees have a right under federal law to be free from harassment and other forms of discrimination."

EEOC Trial Attorney Margaret Malloy added, "No employee should have to suffer such degrading and unlawful treatment in the workplace. The EEOC will seek in this lawsuit to obtain compensation for those employees who were harassed and fired, but also to require the company to implement policies and procedures to prevent any future discrimination."

The EEOC enforces federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. Further information about the EEOC is available on its web site at www.eeoc.gov.

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