

Fact Sheet on Post-9/11 Discrimination and Violence against Sikh Americans

Overview

- Since 9/11, the Sikh Coalition has received thousands of reports from the Sikh community about hate crimes, workplace discrimination, school bullying, and racial and religious profiling.

Hate Crimes

- In the first month after the 9/11 attacks, the Sikh Coalition documented **over 300 cases** of violence and discrimination against Sikh Americans throughout the United States.
- While the FBI recorded over 9000 hate crimes nationwide in 2008 (out of a population of 300 million in the US), **10 percent** of Sikhs in the San Francisco Bay Area reported being the target of hate crimes during the same period according to Sikh Coalition survey of over 1,000 Sikhs in the San Francisco Bay Area.
- Some of the most recent egregious hate attacks include: The **murders of Gurmej Singh Atwal and Surinder Singh** in Elk Grove, CA in March 2011; the **desecration of the Sikh Gurdwara** in Sterling Heights, MI in February 2012, the **hate-motivated death threats mailed to a Sikh family** in Sterling, VA in March 2012; and the **fire-bombing of a Sikh-owned convenience store** in September 2011.

School Bullying

- A 2010 Sikh Coalition survey revealed that **69%** of turban-wearing Sikh students in the Bay Area of San Francisco have suffered bullying and harassment because of their religion and that **30%** of them had been hit or involuntarily touched because of their turbans. These attacks occur because the Sikh articles of faith – in particular, the turban – are associated with terrorism and 9/11.
- Some of the most egregious attacks on Sikh children have included: **Jaskirat Singh's turban being set on fire** by a fellow student in Hightstown, New Jersey in 2008, **Harpal Singh Vacher's hair being forcibly cut** by a fellow student in New York City in 2007, and an **assault on Gurwinder Singh** by fellow students in New York City

Workplace Discrimination

- **12% of Sikhs** in the San Francisco Bay Area have reported suffering employment discrimination, which makes clear that Sikhs are exponentially more likely to suffer employment discrimination than the general population.
- Most recently, **Frank Singh was called a terrorist and fired** by an AutoZone store because he refused to remove his turban in Boston. **Gurpreet Singh was refused a job** because he would not shave his religiously-mandated beard at a Lexus dealership in New Jersey. And **the NYPD still refuses to hire turbaned Sikhs.**
- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 has been misinterpreted in ways that allow employers to **segregate Sikhs from customers** and the general public in the name of corporate image.

Racial and Religious Profiling

- At some airports in the United States, Sikhs are subjected to secondary screening **100 percent** of the time by Transportation Security Administration (TSA) personnel. TSA consistently refuses to audit its screening policies to determine whether Sikh travelers are being profiled.
- The problem of perceived profiling at airports has become so troubling to members of the Sikh community that the Sikh Coalition released a mobile application called FlyRights in April 2012. The application allows Sikhs and people of any community to easily file an official complaint with the TSA in real time, right after an incident occurs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT WWW.SIKHCOALITION.ORG