BACKLASH, VIOLENCE,
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS &
DISCRIMINATION
IN SAN FRANCISCO
IN THE WAKE OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

A Report by:
Human Rights Commission
City and County of San Francisco
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September 2002
Thank You

To the many people who contributed to the preparation of this Report

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface .................................................................................................................. 4
Authority .............................................................................................................. 5
Objectives ............................................................................................................ 5
Methodology ........................................................................................................ 6
Excerpts of public testimony ................................................................................ 6
Findings ................................................................................................................ 10
Recommendations ............................................................................................... 11
Appendices ........................................................................................................... 13

**Appendix A.** Resolution entitled *Policy Statement on Discrimination Against Arab Americans, Muslim Americans and People of Middle Eastern Descent* adopted by the Human Rights Commission on September 13, 2001.

**Appendix B.** *Help Stop Hate Crimes* brochure published and circulated throughout San Francisco by the Human Rights Commission.

**Appendix C.** Public Hearing Flyer

**Appendix D.** Public Hearing Agenda

**Appendix E.** Newspaper Coverage of the Hearing
Preface

Within hours following the tragic September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission began to receive complaints of anti Arab and anti Muslim attacks, threats and harassment. In the weeks following 9/11, a sharp rise in incidences of violence and discrimination against people perceived as Middle Eastern were reported across the United States. San Francisco, although traditionally a city of diversity, tolerance and refuge, was not immune from this backlash.

According to the California Attorney General’s office, an average of five hate crimes per day were reported to California law enforcement prior to 9/11 and the primary targets were African Americans. In the weeks following 9/11, reported hate crimes jumped to more than twenty a day and the primary targets were Arab Americans, Muslims and people so perceived including Sikhs. In San Francisco, the monthly average reported hate crimes from January through August 2001 was 13 and the number of hate crimes reported in September of 2001 was 52.

Fortunately, hate crime reports to law enforcement started to decline in November of 2001. However, the Human Rights Commission continued to receive reports of violence, discrimination and harassment that were not reflected in official records because victims fearing retaliation and revictimization were reluctant to report them. Many victims relayed a sense of futility where the perpetrator was a passerby or the harassment, though injurious, would not likely constitute a crime.

Crimes and discrimination motivated by racial or other animus injure the immediate victims, their families and communities and threaten the entire social fabric of our city. There is therefore a need to ensure that all those who live, visit or have business dealings in San Francisco are treated with dignity, fairness and due process of law regardless of national origin or background. This need combined with demands for investigation into numerous complaints of mistreatment and harassment prompted the San Francisco Human Rights Commission and the Board of Supervisors’ Economic Vitality, Small Business and Social Policy Committee to hold a joint public hearing entitled Backlash, Violence, Human Rights Violations & Discrimination in San Francisco In The Wake of September 11, 2001.
Authority

The San Francisco Human Rights Commission and the Board of Supervisors' Economic Vitality, Small Business and Social Policy Committee held a joint public Hearing on January 10, 2002, and the Human Rights Commission prepared this Report in September of 2002 under the jurisdiction of Chapter 12A of the San Francisco Administrative Code, which reads in part:

"The Commission shall have the power and duty to:

(a) Study, investigate, mediate and hold public hearings on community-wide problems arising in this City and County which may result in inter-group tensions or discrimination."

The San Francisco Human Rights Commission is a City Department that was established in 1964 by City Ordinance to help ease inter group tensions. The Department became a Charter Commission in 1990 and provides leadership and advocacy to secure, protect and promote human rights for all people in San Francisco.

Under Rule 2.10 of the Rules of Order of the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco a Supervisor may introduce a request for a committee hearing on a subject matter. The work of the Economic Vitality, Small Business, and Social Policy Committee included economic development, employment and training, small business preservation, tourism, consumer protection, seniors, the disabled, delinquency prevention, children and their families, general assistance discrimination and human rights.

Objectives

The objectives of the January 10, 2002 Hearing were:

A. To learn about the post September 11 experiences of Arabs, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, West Asians and those so perceived.
B. To solicit testimony from Arab, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, South Asian, and West Asian communities for purposes of identifying the nature of discrimination against individuals and communities or organizations.
C. To prepare findings, documenting the results of the public hearing.
D. To propose appropriate recommendations and solutions to alleviate discrimination against Arabs, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, West Asians and those so perceived.
E. To assist in the implementation of the proposed recommendations.
Methodology

At the recommendation of Arab, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and South Asian community representatives, the Human Rights Commission and Board of Supervisors’ Economic Vitality, Small Business and Social Policy Committee determined that a public hearing was necessary to investigate the extent of backlash, violence, human rights violations and discrimination in San Francisco in the wake of September 11. The Commission and Committee determined that a report of the hearing with findings and recommendations would be issued.

The Human Rights Commission and Board of Supervisors’ Economic Vitality, Small Business and Social Policy Committee staff held a series of planning meetings to decide the key areas for which testimony would be solicited and to identify the most appropriate speakers for each of the areas of concern. The joint bodies directed staff and interns to perform the necessary logistics for the hearing. Personnel solicited attendance and testimony by flyer, letter and phone. They invited the media and sent letters to community members and organizations, city department heads, elected officials, and state and federal agencies.

People from Arab, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, South Asian and West Asian communities were essential participants in this process. Community representatives helped define patterns of discrimination and publicized the hearing by word of mouth. Many invited speakers were community activists and representatives of community based organizations.

The public hearing was held in the Board of Supervisors’ chambers in San Francisco’s City Hall on January 10, 2002. It lasted over 4 ½ hours. Approximately 260 people attended, including members of the public; elected officials; news reporters; journalists; and representatives from city departments, state and federal agencies. A total of 55 people testified and a total of 5 individuals submitted written testimony. Those testifying were asked to limit their time to three minutes.

Excerpts of Public Testimony

Representatives from Alliance of South Asians Taking Action (ASATA) American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Arab American Anti Discrimination Committee (ADAC), Arab American Attorney Association, INS Watch, Intergroup Clearinghouse, Islamic Networks Inc., Islamic Society of San Francisco, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, Muslims of the Bay Area, National Lawyers Guild, and South Asian Bar Association of Northern California, testified about discrimination against Arabs, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, West Asians and those so perceived.

There were numerous first-person accounts of discrimination. Individuals offered testimony about arbitrary airport security checks, store vandalism, property damage, death threats, and other forms of harassment including discriminatory law enforcement by the
FBI, INS and police. There were complaints of discrimination in the employment, retail, housing, education, and health care sectors. The following are but a few examples of the testimony offered at the hearing:

- A Yemeni man of Muslim faith who became a U.S. citizen in 1996 filed a complaint with the Human Rights Commission and testified that he had worked as a janitor for a building maintenance company for over a year. Before September 11 he was harassed and threatened because of his Muslim beliefs and practices. The harassment caused him such severe stress that by midsummer of 2001 he felt he had no alternative but to quit his job. He then filed a police report because of the threats. He also filed discrimination complaints with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing, the Labor Relations Board, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

On October 1, 2001, the Muslim Yemeni American received a visit from an FBI agent who questioned him about his religion and Osama bin Laden. The agent showed him a list that contained three names and asked if he recognized any of the names. They were people who worked for his former employer. The agent stated that the three had contacted the FBI and said that the former Yemeni employee was a “terrorist.” He told the agent that he was being retaliated against because he filed the discrimination complaints. The Yemeni man showed the agent copies of his complaints. The whole ordeal had made him more afraid and he started having difficulty breathing. The agent asked him to step outside for some fresh air, but he was too scared. He refused to leave his apartment for two days. This man is the sole provider for his wife and five children who still reside in Yemen. He has been afraid to tell his family of the harassment because he knows it will upset them.

- Another account of discrimination and harassment reported at the hearing involved an Arab American man of Palestinian descent who alleged that he suffered retail and police discrimination and harassment. He testified that on September 29, 2001, he went to a well-known coffeehouse to get a cup of coffee. When it was his turn to be served, a white male employee gave him a dirty look, turned his back and walked away. He asked the employee about the expression and requested a cup of coffee several times but the employee did not respond at all. Another employee turned to the Palestinian man and said “You can't talk to my partner like that, we are not going to serve you coffee.” This employee then asked him to leave the store.

At this point, the Palestinian man demanded to speak to the manager. The manager was a white female and told him that he should leave the store because he was not speaking appropriately to her employees. She refused to hear his side of the story. He asked her if there was a video camera in the store so that she could see for herself what happened. She refused this request as well. Again, he stated that all he wanted was a cup of coffee. She told him that he was not getting a cup of coffee and that he had to leave.
Frustrated, the Palestinian American asked her to call the police or give him a cup of coffee. Within minutes, two white male police officers arrived at the coffeehouse and immediately grabbed him, took him outside, and searched him. The first officer asked him where his gun and knife were located. The same officer also asked him why he had large sums of money in his pockets. He explained that he was a taxi cab driver. The officer then asked for his identification and ran a check on him. He told the officer he was very upset about the treatment he received from the officer and that the officer should have heard both sides of the story before dragging him outside and treating him like a criminal.

The cab driver asked if he could make a report of discrimination against the coffeehouse and the police department. He also asked for the officers' badge numbers. Instead of providing the badge numbers, the first officer told the second officer to write the man a ticket for double parking. The second officer tried to calm the taxi driver and stated that his partner was just mad. The Palestinian American told the second officer that all he wanted was a cup of coffee, that he was the one that requested police assistance, and that he should not have been dragged around like an animal.

Aside from harassment in employment and public accommodations, some of the most widely publicized discrimination in San Francisco targeted Arab-American owned businesses. One Arab-American merchant in a middle-class neighborhood had a brick thrown through his window and shortly thereafter was forced out of business entirely. This shopkeeper who had been a citizen since 1996, was so traumatized that he contemplated leaving the country entirely.

Another storeowner reported ongoing harassment that started on the morning of September 11th. A person came into his store and yelled at him, his wife and two-year-old daughter, “Arab terrorists, look what you have done. You all have to die.” Later, the family received threatening phone calls and the store was vandalized with garbage, eggs, and graffiti such as “Arab terrorists go home.” The storeowner testified that he was already home. He told the assembled that he came here in search of the American dream of liberty.

The store owner who was advised to go home referred to America as “the land that has seen my two daughter[s] being born,” and reported that all the harassment was nothing compared to hearing his five-year-old daughter recount that she had been called a terrorist on the school playground. Barely able to contain tears, the storekeeper said, “I was devastated.” Many at the hearing were prepared to hear about harassment in schools but were especially dismayed that it occurred as early as kindergarten.

A counselor at the Arab Cultural Center in San Francisco offered testimony on the abuses suffered by Arab-American and Muslim students in the San Francisco School District. On September 12th, a Palestinian student was beaten and school officials did not punish the responsible student. According to the counselor, many students reported
that they were taunted in school corridors, spat on and accosted with epithets such as “terrorist” and “bin Laden.” Several girls and young women wearing the hijab or head scarves reported that their scarves were yanked from their heads. The counselor reported that students in one school made and circulated printouts listing Arab and Muslim students and substituting the last name bin Laden for the correct surname of each student.

- Perhaps most disturbing to those who expect more of teachers, the counselor reported that in an ESL class discussing the events of 9/11, an Iraqi boy offered that “America not deserve this.” The teacher heard “America deserve this.” The counselor testified: “So great was the teacher’s counter-transference that she made no attempt at verification but went immediately to the principal. The student was interrogated, but fortunately a written diary entry confirmed his version of the comment and saved him from further harassment.”

- Amidst grim reports of student harassment, there was also some encouraging testimony about student cooperation. A South Asian Sikh woman who coordinates a school program for a local agency dedicated to preventing hate violence reported that much of the pro-active work that has occurred in response to the backlash against targeted communities has been youth-led and organized. The program coordinator testified that student groups and youth programs have taken the lead in ensuring safety and protection for one another.
Findings

Based on the joint public hearing conducted by the San Francisco Human Rights Commission and the Board of Supervisors’ Economic Vitality, Small Business and Social Policy Committee on January 10, 2002, entitled *Backlash, Violence, Human Rights Violations & Discrimination in San Francisco in the Wake of September 11, 2001*, and having considered verbal and written testimony from Arabs (people who originate from the Middle East, North Africa or West Asia where the primary language is Arabic) Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, West Asians (including people of Iranian descent) and those so perceived, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission hereby finds:

1. That communities and people most affected by the post 9/11 backlash include Arabs, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, West Asians, immigrants, people of color and those so perceived.

2. That conditions predating 9/11 helped create the enormous level of impact after 9/11. Specifically, the history of discrimination and hostility fueled by lack of knowledge about Arabs, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, and West Asians coupled with negative stereotyping in the media, by politicians etc., particularly of Arabs and Muslims, created the conditions necessary for the crisis.

3. That Arabs, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, West Asians and those so perceived had significant fear for their safety after 9/11.

4. That some law enforcement and government played an enormous role in creating or exacerbating fear and mistrust after 9/11. For example, after 9/11 68% of Americans and many law enforcement officials openly expressed support for racial profiling of Arabs and Muslims and those so perceived. This was based on the incorrect belief that identifying an Arab or a Muslim was one way to detect a terrorist. Racial profiling led to increased tension, fear and mistrust. Fearing revictimization, hate violence victims were reticent to seek assistance from local law enforcement.

5. That extraordinary powers seized by the executive branch at the federal level via the U.S. Patriot Act, secret investigations and evidence collection after 9/11 exacerbated fears and encouraged bigotry.

6. There is an absence of visible representation of Arabs, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, and West Asians at every level of City government. There is also a lack of language proficiency in Arabic, Farsi, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu both within City departments and community-based organizations. There is therefore a lack of culturally appropriate and accessible direct and indirect services for the targeted communities, particularly for recent immigrants. Services include crisis, law enforcement, legal, medical and mental health services.
7. That there is little to no accurate data collection about Arab, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, South Asian and West Asian populations in San Francisco. City departments and government agencies such as the Housing Authority, Human Resources, Police Department, Public Health, and Unified School District are therefore unable to determine the degree of a problem or the current level of need for services. There is a particular lack of knowledge about the needs of recent immigrants.

8. That there is a need for training and education in all City services about Arabs, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, West Asians and hate violence.

9. That schools play an important role in preventing and responding to hate. However, the focus must not be just on educating students but also educators and administrators.

10. That there is a disturbing pattern of backlash, human rights violations and discrimination in the wake of September 11 at the San Francisco airport. Arab, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, South Asian and West Asian passengers and those so perceived are frequently singled out for interrogation in the guise of random security checks.

11. That because of a long history of discrimination, particularly against immigrants, there was a lack of infrastructure and organizational development within the targeted communities, which made the response more complicated.

Recommendations

1. That the City hire and integrate persons who are drawn from the Arab, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, South Asian and West Asian communities with Arabic, Farsi, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu language proficiency into all aspects and levels of City government.

2. That the City establish, through hiring practices and training, culturally and linguistically appropriate programs and services in all City departments.

3. That the City establish a data collection policy specifically identifying and tracking Arabs, South Asians and West Asians in all aspects of City government. Where appropriate, data collection should be broken down further by ethnicity and/or national origin. This would be used solely to better evaluate the need for services in the respective communities and to allocate resources accordingly. Data should never be used for law enforcement or harassment purposes.

4. That the City affirm its policies barring racial profiling in all forms of law enforcement.

5. That the City support a resolution reaffirming the City of Refuge Ordinance. The resolution should affirm that San Francisco is an INS raid free zone and that the City will spend no resources enforcing federal immigration laws.
6. That the City affirm its stand against the Patriot Act, secret evidence collection and broad powers grabbed by the executive branch of the federal government at the expense of the rights and liberties of all Americans and other persons residing in the United States of America.

7. That the City spend no resource and not cooperate with the FBI or any other federal agency to implement any program or policy that specifically targets for investigation, detention, or any other action amounting to harassment members of Arab, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, South Asian or West Asian communities based solely on membership in such community. The City's efforts in combating terrorism should be culturally, racially and religiously neutral.

8. That the City reaffirm its position that there be no citizenship requirements for airport screeners.

9. That the City support and fund community-based hate crimes and discrimination training and education for all elected and appointed City officials and City employees including law enforcement, health workers, housing advocates, 911 operators and personnel of city-sponsored/funded programs. Training must be culturally specific to Arabs, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians and West Asians. Members of the respective communities should participate in the development and presentation of the trainings.

10. That all 911 operators/dispatchers, and SFPD beat officers and supervisors, including sergeants, lieutenants, captains and commanders, whose role it is to refer cases to the Hate Crimes Unit receive increased training to evaluate and classify reported incidents consistent with applicable law. 911 operators should, as time permits, ask victims why they feel they have been targeted.

11. That the Police Department broaden its relationship with and increase its knowledge of the communities that have been targeted since 9/11.

12. That the City fund a multi-level public education campaign to raise cultural awareness about Arabs, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, and West Asians including public service announcements on TV, radio newspapers and by images on public transportation and billboards.

13. That the City fund and support community based services and programs that are providing culturally appropriate hotlines and services for the targeted communities.

14. That the City work with the targeted communities to make culturally appropriate counseling services available for hate crime victims and their families.
15. That the City educate all City employees about available resources for hate crime and discrimination victims.

16. That the City fund and collaborate with the school district for all encompassing cultural awareness training and education of school district staff, teachers and students. We also recommend that the City fund and collaborate with Community College and State University students and administrators for cultural sensitivity training. Training must be culturally specific to Arabs, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians and West Asians. Members of the respective communities should participate in the development and presentation of the trainings.

Appendices

Appendix A. Resolution entitled Policy Statement on Discrimination Against Arab Americans, Muslim Americans and People of Middle Eastern Descent adopted by the Human Rights Commission on September 13, 2001.

Appendix B. Help Stop Hate Crimes brochure published and circulated throughout San Francisco by the Human Rights Commission.

Appendix C. Public Hearing Flyer

Appendix D. Public Hearing Agenda

Appendix E. Newspaper Coverage of the Hearing
APPENDIX A
Policy Statement on Discrimination Against Arab Americans, Muslim Americans and People of Middle Eastern Descent

RESOLUTION

Whereas, the City and County of San Francisco has dedicated resources to promoting and maintaining diversity, tolerance, equal opportunity, equality, and a bias-free, hate-free and attack-free community; and

Whereas, the City and County of San Francisco has affirmed its commitment to developing a discrimination-free community regardless of race, national origin, ancestry, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, height, weight, HIV status, or disability; and

Whereas, the Human Rights Commission of the City and County of San Francisco reiterates its responsibility to work to prevent discrimination in all its forms and prides itself on treating all individuals with dignity and respect; and

Whereas, it is the mission of the Human Rights Commission of the City and County of San Francisco to defuse intergroup hostilities and to promote an atmosphere of reason and tolerance within our communities in the wake of terrorism and catastrophic world events;

And in order to comply with local, state and federal laws that ensure anti-discriminatory policies and practices relating to Arab Americans, Muslim Americans and people of Middle Eastern descent;

Therefore let it be hereby resolved, that the Human Rights Commission of the City and County of San Francisco unequivocally condemns all discrimination and racism directed against Arab Americans, Muslim Americans and people of Middle Eastern descent, and supports the use of all legal authority, and release additional resources as necessary, to prevent and respond to discrimination, hate crimes, and harassment in all forms; and

Furthermore, that the Human Rights Commission of the City and County of San Francisco asserts its dedication to promote full realization of equal opportunity and non-discrimination and to maintain a workplace, community and environment free of discriminatory practices and policies against Arab Americans, Muslim Americans and people of Middle Eastern descent; and

Furthermore, that the Human Rights Commission of the City and County of San Francisco is hereby committed to eliminating discrimination, racism, harassment and bias against Arab Americans, Muslim Americans and people of Middle Eastern descent; and
Furthermore, that the Human Rights Commission of the City and County of San Francisco urges that all San Francisco employers, managers, supervisors, employees, and agents hold themselves accountable to maintain a workplace and environment free of discriminatory practices and policies; to provide any necessary protections and to train police and other officials in dealing with hate crimes; to promote media reporting of attacks and help people understand what to do in the event of an attack; and to provide equal opportunity for Arab Americans, Muslim Americans and people of Middle Eastern descent.

Furthermore, that the Human Rights Commission of the City and County of San Francisco urges the media to report responsibly, and to avoid the stereotyping of Arab Americans, Muslim Americans and people of Middle Eastern descent that has led directly to violence against these communities.

ADOPTED, by the Human Rights Commission of the City and County of San Francisco this 13th day of September, Two Thousand and One.
APPENDIX B
Local Police Stations

IN AN EMERGENCY
DIAL 911

A Central Police Station
766 Vallejo Street
(415) 553-1532

B Southern Police Station
850 Bryant Street
(415) 553-1373

C Bayview Police Station
201 Williams Street
(415) 671-2300

D Mission Police Station
630 Valencia Street
(415) 558-5400

E Northern Police Station
1125 Fillmore Street
(415) 553-1563

F Park Police Station
Kezar Drive & Waller Street
(415) 753-7280

G Richmond Police Station
481 - 8th Avenue
(415) 553-1385

H Ingleside Police Station
1 John Young Lane
(415) 553-1603

I Taraval Police Station
2345 - 24th Avenue
(415) 553-1612

J Tenderloin Police Station
301 Eddy Street
(415) 346-7300

Treasure Island Police Station
410 Avenue of the Palms
(415) 984-0645

What is Hate Crime?

A hate crime is an intentional, violent act against a person(s), because of race, religion, or national origin.

Some examples of hate crimes are:

Aggressive, physical or verbal assaults because of traditional Middle Eastern attire, race, or religion

Vandalism of homes, mosques, or property

Refusal of access to services and public facilities

Discriminatory treatment in employment, school, and public accommodations

San Francisco Human Rights Commission

Ghada Saliba-Malouf,
Commission Chair
25 Van Ness Avenue, #600
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-252-2500 – Phone
415-431-5764 – Fax
415-252-2550 – TDD

Arab Americans and Muslims have been attacked, threatened and harassed in a backlash over the tragic terrorist act of September 11, 2001.

All Americans, including Arab Americans, Muslim Americans, and people of Middle Eastern descent have the right to liberty, to be respected, safe, and free from crimes of violence.

San Francisco Human Rights Commission
A City of Support

The San Francisco Human Rights Commission is committed to educating our diverse communities in practicing patience and tolerance.

The Human Rights Commission shall not tolerate incidents of discrimination and offers support and assistance to its communities.

It is against the law to retaliate against those who come forward to report incidents of hate motivated violence.

If you feel you have experienced a hate crime, or would like to know how you can help the community, a list of services and resources are included in this brochure.

City Services

San Francisco Human Rights Commission
25 Van Ness Avenue, #800 S.F., CA 94102
415-252-2500 – Phone
M-F: 8am – 5pm
Investigates and mediates discrimination complaints in employment, housing, and public accommodations. Provides sensitivity trainings. Mediates community disputes. Liaison between individuals and other agencies/organizations.

District Attorney
Deputy Bassam Totah
Liaison to the Arab-American Community
415-553-1807 – Phone
Providing financial assistance for medical and funeral expenses. Provides referrals to counseling services.

Hate Crimes Unit
Anna Gonzales
415-553-1782 – Phone
Investigates and prosecutes hate crimes.

San Francisco Police Department - Hate Crimes Unit
850 Bryant Street, Rm. 558 S.F., CA 94103
415-553-1782 – Phone
M-F: 8am – 5pm
Investigates crimes against individuals based on race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, national origin or political affiliation of the victim.

San Francisco Department of Public Health
415-781-0500 Mental Health Crisis Line
415-255-3737 Community Mental Health Services Access Line
M-Sun: 24 Hour Phone Lines
Mental health counseling for children and adults.

Community Resources

Albait Al Arabi
655 Geary Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-921-0660
Provides information on civil liberties, immigration services, and translation.

American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
522 Valencia Street
San Francisco, CA 94110
415-861-7444
1-877-282-2288 Bilingual 24-Hour
M-Sun: Hours vary
Provides referrals to pro bono lawyers and psychological services.

American Civil Liberties Union
1683 Mission Street, Suite 460
San Francisco, CA 94103
415-621-2493 – Phone
415-621-2493 x 322 – Hotline
M-F: 9am – 5pm
Provides legal assistance to individuals whose civil liberties or civil rights have been violated.

Arab American Attorneys’ Assoc.
Mr. Khaldoun Baghdadi
Walkup, Melodia, Kelly & Echeverria
650 California Street, 26th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104
415-981-7210 – Phone
M-F: 9am – 5pm
Provides referrals to legal resources.

Arab Cultural Center
2 Plaza Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94116
415-664-2645 – Phone
M-F: 9am – 5pm
Referrals to legal & health services. Offers counseling, social services and cultural activities. Provides educational (continued on next page)

programs in high schools and separate educational programs for adult men & women.

Fair Employment & Housing
455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 7600
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-703-4175 – Phone
M-F: 8am – 5pm
Investigates hate crime complaints and also investigates denials of equal rights in business establishments.

Intergroup Clearinghouse
1125 B Quintara Street
San Francisco, CA 94116
415-564-9410 – Phone
M-Sun: Hours vary
Provides referrals to legal and other community resources. Assists victims in filling out police forms. Provides hate crime trainings. Works with schools on hate crime/violence issues.

Islamic Society of San Francisco
20 Jones Street, 3rd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-863-7997 – Phone
M-Sun: 9am – 5pm
Community liaison—functions as mediator between members of Muslim and non-Muslim community and government agencies. Provides counseling.

Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights
301 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94105
415-543-9444 – Phone
M-F: 9am - 5:30pm
Offers legal services for hate crimes, evictions, school expulsions, government benefits, and asylum.
APPENDIX C
The San Francisco Board of Supervisors’ Social Policy Committee and The San Francisco Human Rights Commission will hold a Joint Hearing on

**Backlash, Violence, Human Rights Violations & Discrimination in San Francisco in the Wake of September 11, 2001.**

The Hearing seeks to solicit testimony from Arab Americans, Muslims, South Asians, people of Middle Eastern descent, immigrants and refugees.

Elected officials, federal agencies, and city departments will be in attendance to address the public’s increasing concerns and provide information on the types of services being offered.

Thursday, January 10, 2002
5:00 p.m.
City Hall, Legislative Chambers, Room 250
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
(Arabic translation services will be available)

For questions, please contact:
Mike Farrah, Supervisor Gavin Newsom’s Office @ (415) 554-5944
Nichole Truax, Human Rights Commission @ (415) 252-2517
APPENDIX D
AGENDA

I. Remarks from Supervisor Gerardo Sandoval

II. Remarks from Chair Ghada Saliba-Malouf

III. Remarks from Supervisor Gavin Newsom

IV. Remarks from Steve Kawa, Mayor’s Deputy Chief of Staff

V. Remarks from Bill Lockyer, California Department of Justice

VI. 5 compelling stories from members of the public
   1. Amatullah Almarwani
   2. Jassi Kaur
   3. Saif Attawa
   4. Michel Shihadeh
   5. Ahmed Abozayd

VII. Remarks from Dennis Hayashi, DFEH

VIII. Remarks from Gerald Buten, FBI Assistant Special Agent in Charge, SF Division

IX. Remarks from Terence Hallinan, District Attorney

X. Remarks from Jimmy Loyce, Deputy Director Department of Public Health

XI. Remarks from Earl Sanders, Assistant Chief of Police Department

XII. Key Areas:
   
   A. Employment:
      • Nagli Kald
      • Nuwafq Sheikha

   B. Housing
      • Gulshan Beyatli

   C. Police, Law Enforcement:
      • Heba Nimir
      • Abdelellah Alhimsi
      • Rachel Swain
D. INS & FBI Detention:
- Robert Ruben
- Father Borzghol
- Cecil Williams
- Dina Shek

E. Hate Crimes:
- Tahir Naim, Robin Clarke, & Sean Fernandez (will all go up together)
- Iman Farajalla
- Jill Tregor
- Sonya Kaleel

F. Education/Schools:
- Ilitisat Jabber
- Maha Eligaindi
- Kanwarpal
- Basil Awad
- Nabila Mango
- Vivek Mittal

G. Access to Services, Health Care, Retail
- Jess Ghannam
- Mark Vermuelen
- Khaledo Baghdadi
- Youmna Chlala

XIII. General Public Comment
- Bill Tomayo
- Linda Li
- Gloria Gunito
- Mona Oddeh
- Ann Lehman
- Ron Dudum

XIV. Closing Remarks from Supervisor Gavin Newsom

XV. Closing Remarks from Chair Ghada Saliba-Malouf

XVI. Closing Remarks from committee members and commissioners
Hate lingers like a bad odor

City, state officials hear the experiences of Arab Americans

By Eric Gershon
City Hall Correspondent

The phone rang at the Islamic Society of San Francisco on Sept. 11 and Amatullah Almarwani answered it as she would any other call. She heard a voice, "a voice so calm, so assured... as it informed me that there was a bullet waiting for my head and that of my child."

When Jasmi Kaur, a Sikh-American and San Franciscan of 20 years, was asked to step from the line at Los Angeles airport with her 13-year-old son on Dec. 31, she assured the inquiring boy that it was a random security check. By the time they reached the plane, they had been removed from the line twice more, while many others sailed on unmolested, and Kaur herself was in doubt.

And Safi Attaya, who runs a grocery at 24th and Douglass streets, suffered indignity when his store was egged, but something far worse when his 5-year-old daughter reported she had been called a terrorist on the playground at school that day.

Since Sept. 11, Arab Americans and people mistaken as being Arabic have endured innumerable injuries of hatred and humiliation, and before a joint meeting of supervisors, state politicians and Human Rights Commissioners they told their stories.

S.F. family hopes for peace in San Jose

By Alex Brown
Of The Examiner Staff

They were spit on, harassed and tormented. Now, two months after the racially motivated attacks began, the al Gazawi family is leaving the Hunters Point Alice Griffith housing projects and moving to San Jose.

Shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks, the al Gazawis were one of the first Arab-American families to detail the extent of the hate crimes being committed in The City, in a revealing interview with The Examiner.

Six-year-old Hassan was spit on by an unidentified Caucasian man. His mother, Jahlia al Husainat, was verbally abused in the street. And later, someone would throw a brick through a window in the family's house, rendering the majority of the family housebound for fear of further attacks.

Jawad, a 51-year-old Iraqi American, filed a report to local police, who in turn notified the eligibility department of the San Francisco Housing Authority.

The result? A move to San Jose.

Please see HATE, A12

Please see MOVE, A12
Hate lingers like a bad odor

Continued from HATE, A1
Thursday night.

Government leaders also used the opportunity to reassure the Arab-American community that the safety of its members has not been forgotten in the four months that have passed since two planes struck the World Trade Center and another the Pentagon.

"I do think we have strong laws in this area," said Attorney General Bill Lockyer, who as a legislator authored the state's hate crimes statute.

In the days immediately following the terrorist attacks, hate crimes reported statewide jumped from an average of five per day to more than 20 per day, Lockyer said, with many more targeting Arab-Americans than usual.

In San Francisco, the Police Department's hate crimes unit normally investigates 20-25 hate crimes a month, but in September received reports of 43 against Muslims alone.

District Attorney Terence Hallinan said his office has brought charges in seven cases so far.

Two people pleaded guilty, one was acquitted, and the other cases are pending.

Although the number of hate crimes reported statewide and in San Francisco has dropped steadily each month since September, officials pledged continued vigilance.

"[Hate crimes] injure not only the victims, but the entire social fabric of our city," Hallinan said.

Noting that the psychological damage of hate crimes lingers long after attacks and threats are made, Ghada Salha-Malouf of the Human Rights Commission said several people who were expected to share their stories Thursday night would not be doing so.

"They are afraid," she said.

Family hopes for peace in San Jose

Continued from MOVE, A1

"After they saw my father in the newspaper, people would recognize him and look badly at him," said Bassim al Gazawi, Jawad's eldest son. "Things were happening to us. My father thought 'that's enough' and they will be happy to move to San Jose. This place was getting bad."

Initially, Bassim was hesitant to speak out, fearing the kind of reprisals his father received after first publicizing the family's plight. "There's not a problem — we're happy," he began.

Little by little, though, Bassim revealed the fear the Gazawis experienced during the past three months, instigated by the repulsive attack on Hassan — who was born in Texas — and punctuated by the smashed window.

three weeks ago.

"Maybe we talked too much to the newspaper and '60 Minutes,'" he said. "It was a scary time. Then we were told we could move to San Jose, so we are hoping things will be good there."

Previously, Jawad told The Examiner: "Just like the animals who committed those crimes in New York do not represent Islam, we understand the people who commit hate crimes against our family do not represent the U.S.A.

"But why do they treat us like animals? We love this country."

Jawad al Gazawi
51-year-old Iraqi American

But why do they treat us like animals? We love this country.

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Victims of hate crimes recount horror stories

Outpouring of post-Sept. 11 traumas in S.F.

By Rachel Gordon
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

Life changed fast for Saif Ataya after the jetliners hijacked by terrorists slammed into the Pentagon and World Trade Center towers four months ago today.

First came the name-calling and death threats. Then the hateful graffiti and vandalism at his small San Francisco store. The breaking point, however, was when his 5-year-old daughter was called a terrorist on her schoolyard.

"I was devastated," said Ataya, an Arab American who runs a corner grocery store in the city's quiet Eureka Valley neighborhood.

Ataya's post-Sept. 11 experience is part of a disturbing trend.

According to figures recited yesterday during a hearing at San Francisco City Hall, the number of hate crimes and cases of discrimination and harassment against Arab Americans and Muslims has soared nationwide since Sept. 11.

Yesterday's hearing before the San Francisco Human Rights Commission and San Francisco supervisors was convened by Supervisor Gavin Newsom to give victims of hate violence and discrimination a chance to tell their stories in public. It also provided an opportunity for law enforcement officials — from the FBI, San Francisco Police Department and the San Francisco district attorney — to promise that these cases have been given a high priority in terms of enforcement and prosecution.

"We have zero tolerance," said District Attorney Terence Hallinan.

Among those testifying was state Attorney General Bill Lockyer, who noted that before Sept. 11, his office logged about five hate crimes a day, with blacks and gays the most frequent victims. Since the terrorist attacks, the number has jumped to 20 a day. Crimes against Arab Americans, Muslims and those perceived to be in those groups accounted for the large increase.

According to national statistics compiled by the San Francisco organization Intergroup Clearinghouse, there have been more than 1,700 cases of discrimination and violence against Arab Americans, Muslims, South Asians and...
Victims apprise panel in S.F. of hateful actions

TRAUMAS
From Page A17

Sikhs since Sept. 11. Six deaths have been reported.

Nearly one-third of the backlash cases were logged in California. Bay Area law enforcement agencies, community groups and civil rights organizations received 338 complaints.

Experts say those numbers probably represent only a sliver of the actual cases of violence, harassment and discrimination, since victims are often reluctant to come forward.

"In the Bay Area, we've had people beaten up so badly that they've ended up in the hospital with concussions," said Jill Tregor, executive director of Inter-group Clearinghouse. "We've had families forced from their housing. We've had kids scared to go to school. Vandalism. Death threats."

Like Ataya, Amatullah Almarwani had a horror story to tell. She said she still goes to bed recalling the phone call she got at the Islamic Center of San Francisco right after the terrorist attacks. A calm voice "informed me that there was a bullet waiting for my head, and the head of my child," she said.

Now, said Almarwani, who works at the Islamic center, fear runs through her community. Fewer people worship in mosques or frequent Arab American businesses. Others testified yesterday that they have been fired from their jobs, evicted from their housing, shunned in stores and victimized by police profiling. Beatings, rocks thrown through windows and verbal taunts have become routine.

"I've had people ask me if I had a bomb on my bus, or if I plan to crash the bus into a building," he said. "I've been called a terrorist and told that I look like Osama bin Laden. I just hope the problem will go away one day."

Victims and their advocates urged officials to do more and recommended programs to inform the public about tolerance, to crack down on offenders, to track hate-based violence, harassment and discrimination, to provide more support services for victims and to make sure that those in authority, such as teachers and cops, take the incidents seriously.

"We are Americans," said Almarwani, "and we are suffering."

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A calm voice
"informed me that there was a bullet waiting for my head, and the head of my child."

AMATULLAH ALMARWANI
Islamic Center of San Francisco