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Summary of Post-9/11 Incidents of Violence and Discrimination Against Sikhs in America

Who Are Sikhs?

- Sikhism is the fifth-largest organized religion in the world, with a following of approximately twenty-five million Sikhs worldwide, and at least 700,000 in the United States. The Sikh religion was founded in Punjab, India.
- Sikhs wear turbans to cover their uncut hair, as required by their religion. Although Sikhs have faced discrimination since they first immigrated to America in the early twentieth century, acts of discrimination and hate crimes against Sikhs have increased exponentially since post-9/11.

Acts of Violence and Hate Crimes

- **September 15, 2001 – Mesa, AZ**: Balbir Singh Sodhi is shot outside his gas station by Frank Silva Roque. Roque's coworker later testifies at trial that Roque said he wanted to shoot some "ragheads."
- **October 2001 – San Diego, CA**: While stopped at a red light, two men on a motorcycle pull up next to Swaranjit Kaur Bhullar's car and stab her, saying, "This is what you get for what you've done to us."
- **February 19, 2002 – Palermo, NY**: Gurdwara (Sikh temple) Gobind Sadan is burned down by teens, who later told authorities they thought the temple was named "Go Bin Laden."
- **May 20, 2003 – Phoenix, AZ**: 52-year-old Avtar Singh was shot and wounded after two men pulled up and said, "Go back to where you belong."
- **March 13, 2004 – Fresno, CA**: A gurdwara is vandalized with racist graffiti: "Rags Go Home" and "It's Not Your Country."
- **July 2006 – San Jose, CA**: Iqbal Singh, 66, is stabbed in the neck while standing in front of his home. The assailant stated he wanted to "kill a Taliban."
- **July 2007 – Sacramento, CA**: Satendar Singh dies four days after being attacked at a local park by individuals who reportedly yelled xenophobic, anti-religious, and homophobic remarks to him and his friends.
- **September 15, 2007 – Burtonsville, MD**: Two Sikh American men are attacked and assaulted as they were walking near their home.
- **April 11, 2008 – Bryan, TX**: A Sikh graduate student at Texas A & M University is approached by an unknown male who called the student a "terrorist" and made other disparaging and racist remarks. The student was then attacked and had his turban forcibly knocked off of his head.
- **May 12, 2008 – Highstown, NJ**: A high school student sets fire to a Sikh boy's *patka*, which is the equivalent of a turban for young Sikh boys, while at the school.
- **November 28, 2010 – Sacramento, CA**: Harbhajan Singh, a cab driver, is brutally assaulted by two passengers. One of the attackers shouted expletives and called him Osama bin Laden. Singh received several stitches on his head and other parts of his body and sustained bruising along his rib cage and bone chips in his nose.
- **March 4, 2011 – Elk Grove, CA**: Two elderly Sikh American men, Gurmej Singh Atwal and Surinder Singh, are shot during their daily afternoon walk.
- **February 6, 2012 – Sterling Heights, MI**: A gurdwara is vandalized and defaced. The graffiti included vulgar language, racial epithets, the use of what appears to be a cross, a large drawing of a gun, and references to the attacks of September 11th.
- **February 28, 2012 – Sterling, VA**: A Sikh family receives a letter containing death threats addressed to "Turban Family," reading *"We ask you to leave the country as soon as possible otherwise one of our people is going to shoot you dead."*