

Elderly Sikh-American brutally assaulted in US

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Chicago: An elderly Sikh-American man was brutally injured and called "terrorist" and "Bin Laden" in an apparent hate crime case in Chicago, just days before the US commemorates the anniversary of the September 11 attacks.

Inderjit Singh Mukker was assaulted on Tuesday when the assailant pulled up to his car yelling racial slurs, including, "Terrorist, go back to your country, Bin Laden!"

Mukker, a US citizen and father of two, was on his way to a grocery store and was repeatedly cut off by a driver. He pulled over to the side of the road to let him pass but the driver instead pulled in front of his car and aggressively approached Mukker's vehicle, according to information by the Sikh Coalition, a community-based organisation said.

The assailant then reached into the car and repeatedly punched Mukker in the face, causing him to lose consciousness, bleed profusely and suffer a fractured cheekbone and a laceration to his cheek.

He was rushed to a nearby hospital where he received six stitches, treatment for lacerations, bruising and swelling. The suspect is in custody.

"No American should be afraid to practise their faith in our country," Mukker said.

"I'm thankful for the authorities' swift response to apprehend the individual but without this being fully investigated as a hate crime, we risk ignoring the horrific pattern of intolerance, abuse and violence that Sikhs and other minority communities in this country continue to face."

The Sikh Coalition's Legal Director Harsimran Kaur said the group believes that Mukker was "targeted and assaulted because of his Sikh religious appearance, race or national origin."

"We request an immediate investigation and call on local and federal agencies to investigate this attack as a hate crime," Kaur said.

Sikh Coalition said the attack, on the eve of the 9/11 anniversary, is just the latest in a line of violent attacks on Sikhs in America.

Last August, Sandeep Singh, a Sikh father in New York City, was run over and dragged 30 feet after being called a "terrorist."

In 2012, a gunman walked into a Sikh house of worship and shot and killed six innocent Sikh victims in Oak Creek, Wisconsin.

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