

Testimony of Dana Sussman
Deputy Commissioner for Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs
New York City Commission on Human Rights
Before the Committee on Civil and Human Rights
October 15, 2018

Good morning Chair Eugene and Council Members on the Committee for Civil and Human Rights. I am Dana Sussman, Deputy Commissioner for Intergovernmental Affairs and Policy, at the New York City Commission on Human Rights. Thank you for convening today's hearing on discrimination faced by Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh ("MASAJS") New Yorkers, a topic of great and focused concern at the Commission. As you may be aware, the Commission undertook a survey of these communities in the fall of 2017 and published a report earlier this year announcing the findings of the survey. I have provided the Committee with copies of the report and fact sheet, which are also available on our website. I am pleased to share with you today how the survey was developed and implemented, and provide a summary of the survey results and next steps. I will also highlight the Commission's outreach and enforcement efforts as it relates to these communities. I am incredibly proud to be joined by several key members of the Commission's staff who were integral in the development of the survey and in engaging with communities across New York City to ensure the survey reached as many people as possible. Here with me today is Edwin Tablada, Advisor, Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs. Also here from the Commission is Widad Hassan, Lead Advisor for Muslim, Arab, and South Asian Communities, Beth Miller, Liaison to Jewish Communities, Jo Kaur, Chief EEO Officer and Policy Counsel, who also leads our outreach to Sikh communities, and Christelle Onwu, Lead Advisor for African Communities.

After the 2016 Presidential election, in late 2016 and early 2017, the Commission convened a series of roundtable conversations with community leaders and organizations, including immigrants' rights advocates, workers' rights groups, LGBTQ advocates, faith leaders, and racial justice advocates. As we witnessed the rise of hateful rhetoric on the federal level, we observed an increase in bias incidents nationally and in New York City, and organizations reported increases in calls and complaints. The Commission determined that an affirmative survey of MASAJS communities in New York City was needed to better understand what was happening on the ground.

While the Commission recognizes that many marginalized groups in New York City are vulnerable to harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate, the MASAJS groups were selected because the Commission had identified, as a direct result of these roundtable discussions, that these groups had been experiencing heightened risk of these types of incidents. The research project was animated by anti-Muslim rhetoric and policies at the national level, including overt racism against Arab and South Asian communities. Anti-Semitic vandalism and reports of harassment and bullying that emerged early in the project led to the inclusion of Jewish communities. During the community engagement process, Sikh community leaders advocated for their inclusion as a group separate from those already identified, given their distinct visible identity and vulnerability to discrimination and hate.

As the agency charged with enforcing the City's anti-harassment and anti-discrimination protections, and mandated by statute to issue reports, hold hearings, and convene discussions and dialogue to facilitate positive intergroup relations, the Commission was well-positioned to work with community groups to develop a survey that captured diverse groups' experiences with discrimination and bias incidents. In fact, the Commission had undertaken a survey of Muslim New Yorkers in the aftermath of 9/11, and issued a report in 2003, reporting that over two-thirds of survey respondents experienced one or more incidents of bias and/or discrimination in the aftermath of 9/11. The Commission felt that it was necessary to revisit that work and expand upon it, given the current political climate.

The survey was designed and implemented following 15 focus groups coordinated in collaboration with a dozen community-based organizations. The Commission partnered with Strength in Numbers Consulting Group, Inc., a small M/WBE-certified social justice research and evaluation firm located in New York City that specializes in working with the most marginalized groups to do participatory research projects driven by community needs and accountability to those most affected by the work. The Commission partnered with over 150 community groups, faith leaders, City agencies, and elected officials, to disseminate the survey and reach community members. The survey was conducted in nine languages (English, French, Bengali, Punjabi, Arabic, Russian, Hindi, Urdu, and Yiddish) over a three-month period (October – December 2017) in all five boroughs. The survey was made available to participants in print and online, including in a mobile-friendly format. Commission staff were stationed at houses of worship, community centers, colleges, legal services providers, and other partner organizations with iPads and hard copy surveys in multiple languages to assist community members in completing the survey.

WHO TOOK THE SURVEY?

Over 3,100 qualified respondents (3,105) took the survey. The majority (50.4%) were Muslim; nearly one third (31.5%) were Jewish, with over one in four (28.6%) being South Asian American, and 14.5% being Arab American. About one in ten (10.3%) were Sikh.

KEY FINDINGS

The Commission's report found high levels of bias harassment, discrimination, and physical assaults experienced by MASAJIS communities leading up to and following the 2016 presidential election. The report also revealed that victims of such acts are reporting them at low rates. The key findings from the report are highlighted on the one-page fact sheet I have provided to you. I will read the key findings into the record.

- Nearly two in five (38.7%) survey respondents reported experiencing verbal harassment, one in ten (8.8%) reported being the victim of physical assault, and nearly one in six (16.6%) said they experienced some form of racial, religious, or ethnic discrimination-related problem in their employment in either a current job or while seeking a job.
- One in four (27%) Muslim Arab women who wear a hijab reported being intentionally pushed or shoved on a subway platform.

- Sikh New Yorkers under the age of 35 have nearly twice the chance of experiencing verbal harassment than other survey respondents.
- 80 percent of Jewish survey respondents said they were “very” or “somewhat” negatively impacted by anti-Semitic vandalism or property damage.
- One in five (19 percent) South Asian survey respondents said they had experienced employment discrimination.
- Overall, nearly 71 percent of survey respondents said they did not report bias incidents to a community-based organization, a faith-based organization, the Commission, or the NYPD, citing concerns their reports would not being taken seriously, fear of retaliation, and because previous reporting did not result in action.
- In addition, Muslim and Sikh respondents were more likely to be told not to wear religious clothing in the workplace, and Muslim respondents were most likely to indicate that they had been prevented from observing their religion at work.

In May 2018, the Commission released the report with fact sheets summarizing the key findings in the nine survey languages. The Commission also launched a social media campaign promoting the report and how to reach the Commission to file a complaint. The campaign garnered 3 million impressions or views generated across platforms and 14,000 visits to survey project landing page on the Commission website. Over 500 reports/fact sheets have been downloaded and distributed.

Consistent with the experiences reflected in the report, the Commission’s Law Enforcement Bureau fielded nearly 1,000 inquiries alleging discrimination based on immigration status, national origin, race, and religion in Fiscal Year 2018 and filed nearly 400 complaints of discrimination under the same protected categories.

ONGOING COMMISSION ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2017, the Commission relaunched its multilingual Bias Response Team – a Commission initiative that originated in the early 1990s – in response to widely reported increases in bias incidents, discrimination, and acts of hate. In Fiscal Year 2018, the Commission significantly expanded this work by hiring two dedicated Human Rights Specialists to serve as Bias Response Investigators. The Commission’s Bias Response Team now quickly mobilizes in the immediate aftermath of incidents of bias or hate with a range of different responses, including: ensuring Commission staff are visible and present at the site of the incident with material about people’s rights as well as services the Commission provides; connecting with community leaders and affected parties; providing programming and on-site legal intake; and engaging with the community about an appropriate agency response.

In Fiscal Year 2018, the Bias Response Team responded to 146 bias incidents – a greater than 200% increase compared to the previous fiscal year. The Commission both strategically responds to and tracks these bias incidents, and this tracking effort will enhance its responses in the future. A few of the Commission’s bias response actions include:

- In August 2017, a condominium in Sunnyside Queens was vandalized with Nazi signs and other hateful symbols in its lobby. The Commission mobilized a Day of Action and press conference with Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer and other City agencies.
- In September 2017, a home in Riverdale was vandalized with a swastika on its doorway. It was quickly discovered that the perpetrator was a local teenager. The Commission alerted Bronx Community Board 8, and the Commission made a presentation to the Board's Youth Committee about the City Human Rights Law and protections under the Law.
- In January 2018, a group of girls in downtown Brooklyn attacked a Muslim woman, calling her a terrorist and spitting on her. Members of the Commission met with victim to inform her of her options to file a complaint with the Commission. The Commission also organized a Day of Visibility near the site of the incident occurred, sharing materials on protections for Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim.
- In March 2018, racist, anti-Black pictures were distributed on social media at a college campus. The Commission conducted outreach to the victims, elected officials, community leaders and Campus officers, and distributed literature in the community.

The Commission continues to increase its focused community outreach to observant religious communities, and seeks to ensure a consistent Commission presence at community-based resource fairs, forums, and events to share information about what the Commission does and what to expect if community members report experiences with discrimination and harassment. For example, in response to the rise in anti-Muslim rhetoric leading to the 2016 election and, later, the announcement of the Trump Administration's travel bans primarily targeting Muslim-majority countries, the Commission collaborated with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) on providing outreach and education about the most updated developments, New Yorkers' rights, and relevant City resources. More precisely, the two agencies cross-trained frontline staff to ensure that the agencies were educated on both immigration issues and anti-discrimination to better address inquiries related to the policies announced. MOIA created public-facing materials to inform New Yorkers about the latest travel ban developments and how to connect to free legal help and other resources and the Commission developed materials in multiple languages regarding religious discrimination and harassment protections. Together with MOIA and faith and community groups, the Commission participated in major outreach events in communities highlighting information about the travel bans and protections for vulnerable communities.

The Commission convenes events intended to lift up the experiences of New Yorkers of diverse faiths and bring communities together, while also educating community members on their rights and City resources and provides know your rights workshops for diverse communities. For example, over the last three years the Commission, MOIA, and the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit have hosted the City's Iftar in the City, the largest outdoor Iftar in New York City, to celebrate and support the City's diverse Muslim communities in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. This year's Iftar, which was held in the heart of Jackson Heights, Queens and was attended by more than 600 people and centered on celebrating the resiliency of immigrant communities.

This spring, the Commission co-hosted an Interfaith Seder for Immigrant and Refugee Rights with the Center for Faith and Community Partnerships, which brought together attendees from diverse faiths and ethnicities to share in the re-telling of the Jewish story of Passover and its liberation narrative and discuss what people throughout the City can do to support and protect immigrant and refugee communities in New York, which welcomed 130 attendees across many faiths. The Commission partnered on an Interfaith Diwali Celebration with the Bronx's diverse South Asian and Indo-Caribbean communities, which was attended by over 300 people and co-hosted by the Vishnu Mandir, a local Hindu temple in which faith and community leaders from Hindu, Sikh, Jain and Buddhist communities came together to deliver a message of peace and unity. And the Commission coordinated the City's first-ever Vaisakhi celebration sponsored celebrate and bring awareness to the City's Sikh communities.

The Commission regularly deploys mobile legal clinics in which lawyers from the Commission's Law Enforcement Bureau meet with community members where they are most comfortable, in their communities, at community-based organizations, or at houses of worship, to assess potential cases and collect information at the initial stage of a case. The following cases are examples of the Law Enforcement Bureau's work in this area.

- The Commission required a bank to pay nearly \$40,000 in damages and penalties after they denied a Muslim employee an accommodation to observe her religion.
- The Commission required a Dunkin Donuts to pay an employee \$7,000 and attend a training on the City Human Rights Law after a manager used a derogatory term in reference to the employee's national origin who is Egyptian.
- The Commission launched an investigation into a vendor at JFK airport after they openly disparaged Muslim employees on an intercom and denied them an accommodation to pray during Ramadan.

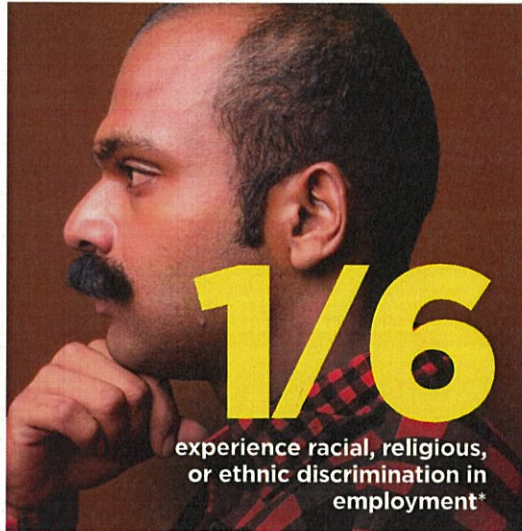
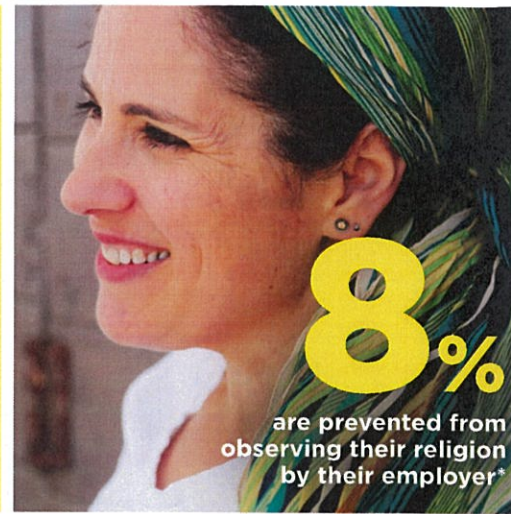
As a direct follow-up to the report, the Commission is partnering with seven community-based organizations to pilot the Commission Referral Network, in which staff from the partner organizations will be trained on how to identify potential violations of the City Human Rights Law and refer cases directly to the Commission. The Commission has developed a Referral Network toolkit and is hosting the first meeting of Referral Network organizations this month.

As recommended in the report, the Commission is in the process of training City and Mayoral staff on the City Human Rights Law and the survey results so that they are better equipped to identify potential violations of the Law and refer cases directly to the Commission. To date, we have provided our Human Rights Law 101 to the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, the City's mental health first aid workers, and plan to offer it, along with our workshop on "Understanding Muslim Experiences and Combatting Anti-Muslim Bias," to other Mayoral staff and outreach staff at other City agencies. The Commission is also exploring ways to expand education around Jewish and Sikh awareness and the religious discrimination faced by these communities.

Thank you for convening this hearing today on this important issue. I look forward to your questions.

APPROXIMATELY **71%** OF MUSLIM, ARAB, SOUTH ASIAN, JEWISH, AND SIKH NEW YORKERS DON'T REPORT DISCRIMINATION WHEN IT HAPPENS.*

DON'T BE AFRAID TO REPORT IT!



WE CAN HELP.

If you have experienced or witnessed discrimination, bias or harassment at work, home, or in public places, report it to the NYC Commission on Human Rights at **718-722-3131** or **NYC.gov/HumanRights**

*Based on a NYC Commission on Human Rights survey report from June 2018

XENOPHOBIA, ISLAMOPHOBIA, AND ANTI-SEMITISM IN NYC LEADING UP TO AND FOLLOWING THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: A REPORT ON DISCRIMINATION, BIAS, AND ACTS OF HATE EXPERIENCED BY MUSLIM, ARAB, SOUTH ASIAN, JEWISH, AND SIKH NEW YORKERS



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Bill de Blasio,
Mayor

**Commission on
Human Rights**

Carmelyn P. Malalis,
Chair/Commissioner



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About the New York City Commission on Human Rights

The New York City Commission on Human Rights (the “Commission”), led by Chair and Commissioner Carmelyn P. Malalis, is the City agency responsible for enforcing the New York City Human Rights Law (the “City Human Rights Law”), one of the most comprehensive anti-discrimination laws in the country. The City Human Rights Law prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations based on race, color, religion/creed, age, national origin, alienage or citizenship status, gender (including sexual harassment), gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, military service, marital status, and partnership status. In addition, the City Human Rights Law affords protection against discrimination in employment based on unemployment status, arrest or conviction record, credit history, caregiver status, and status as a victim of domestic violence, stalking, and sex offenses. In housing, there are additional protections based on lawful occupation, family status, any lawful source of income, and status as a victim of domestic violence, stalking, and sex offenses. The City Human Rights Law also prohibits retaliation, discriminatory harassment, and bias-based profiling by law enforcement.

The Commission has three primary divisions: The Law Enforcement Bureau (“LEB”), the Community Relations Bureau (“CRB”), and the Office of the Chairperson. LEB is responsible for the intake, investigation, and prosecution of City Human Rights Law violations, including those that raise systemic violations. CRB, through borough-based Community Service Centers in all five boroughs, helps cultivate understanding and respect among the City’s many diverse communities through pre-complaint interventions, conferences, workshops, and training sessions, among other initiatives. The Office of the Chairperson houses the legislative, regulatory, policy, and adjudicatory functions of the Commission and convenes meetings with the agency’s commissioners.

If you have experienced or witnessed discrimination, bias, or harassment at work, home, or in public spaces report it to the NYC Commission on Human Rights at (718) 722-3131.

About Strength in Numbers Consulting Group

Strength in Numbers Consulting Group, Inc. (www.sincg.com) is a small MWBE-certified social justice research and evaluation firm located in New York City. Strength in Numbers Consulting Group specializes in working with the most marginalized groups to do participatory research projects driven by community needs and accountability to those most affected by the work. Strength in Numbers wishes to thank Kevin Montiel and J. Andrew Graber for their diligent support and data checking.

Message from the Chair and Commissioner Carmelyn P. Malalis



When I joined the NYC Commission on Human Rights in 2015, I made it a priority to lift up the experiences of New Yorkers particularly vulnerable to discrimination and harassment. With this directive in mind, the Commission has

made concerted efforts in the last three years to reach out to communities that have historically had difficult or distant relationships with government, as well as to communities that have often lacked visibility or resources. In this current historical moment, our approach stands in stark contrast to the actions taken by the federal government since January 2017, which have been directed at vilifying and excluding these communities, contracting their rights, and in some instances, erasing any mention of their existence.

With more and more people looking to local government to support and stand up for communities marginalized by the federal government's rollbacks to civil rights or targeted by its xenophobic bans, the Commission has sought to center these communities' narratives through forums and events located at the hearts of these communities. We have launched

inclusive public education campaigns intended to combat the erasure of these communities and doubled down on our aggressive civil law enforcement efforts by our Law Enforcement Bureau. By the end of 2016, reports to the agency had increased by over 60%, and we recognized that the Commission had to use absolutely every tool at its disposal to help empower these communities and call out and address discrimination and harassment in all its forms, from everyday microaggressions to physical acts of hate violence. To that end, in 2017, we resurrected one of the Commission's most historically impactful tools - data collection and reporting - by undertaking research projects that fulfill its mandate to study the problems of prejudice, intolerance, bigotry, and discrimination and issuing our findings in reports that can be utilized by the Commission to more effectively combat bias and can be shared with the public so that communities can pull from useful data when seeking funding and other resources.

This survey project represents one of our first efforts in this area under my leadership. Alarmed by upward trends in incidents of bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate impacting Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh New Yorkers, we initiated a study to give us more insight into what these communities were experiencing, where they were experiencing it, and what steps they were taking in response. In addition, it was important to us that we be able to identify actions that the Commission, other public entities, community based organizations, faith groups, and others could take in order to address the issues that emerged from the survey project.

Our hope is that this report and those that follow will serve as a resource for our partners in government and communities across the City, allowing us to reduce the frequency of these incidents and empowering community members to report them to appropriate entities. The survey process itself has already enabled us to expand and strengthen our relationships with Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh organizations and their members, a development we hope will make the Commission an even more effective partner in City Human Rights Law enforcement, community outreach, and policy engagement. We have also gathered data to support conclusions that human rights advocates have surmised, but have been under attack by groups intent on maintaining white supremacy. For example, as the report notes, Black Muslims surveyed as part of this study reported experiences with employment discrimination and physical violence with particularly high frequency. This finding is just one item that we hope to explore this year as part of the Commission's increased focus on racial justice and, specifically, anti-Black racism.

It is difficult to overstate the challenges facing so many New Yorkers in this current climate. Xenophobic, Islamophobic, racist and anti-Semitic hate groups and individuals have been unabashed in revealing their long-standing patterns of racial oppression and religious discrimination. Xenophobic immigration policies, including discriminatory travel bans threaten local families with roots across the globe.

Amidst this dispiriting landscape, the human rights warriors at the Commission and I remain

steadfast in our commitment to doing everything we can to counter these encroachments on dignity, respect, and inclusion. To report discrimination and harassment, call 311 or the Commission's Infoline at (718) 722-3131 and to report a hate crime to the NYC Police Department, call 911. We are confident that by working with our agency, community, faith-based, and other partners, we will be able to advance the goals of equity and justice that are at the heart of our mission. I hope you continue this work with us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carmelyn P. Malalis', written in a cursive style.

Carmelyn P. Malalis,
Chair and Commissioner

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the findings of a survey conducted by the New York City Commission on Human Rights in which the Commission surveyed 3,105 Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh New Yorkers about their experiences of bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate between July 2016 and late 2017, a timeframe that encapsulates the climate pre- and post-election and the aftermath of Federal news announcements threatening some of these and other communities, including a travel ban affecting Muslim majority countries, ending the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and attempting to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) program for millions of immigrants living in the United States.

The report is the first of its kind in New York City to rigorously document the experiences of these communities across a wide variety of topics, including experiences of bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate as well as whether and how these groups report those experiences and outcomes. The survey also reflects an extensive input process. Commission staff who liaise with these communities and a wide variety of community stakeholders—including direct service providers, faith-based organizations, and advocacy groups—were consulted and provided critical input throughout the survey process. To address the experiences of individuals and their obstacles in reporting bias incidents, the report also lays out action steps to address bias and harassment experienced by individuals as well as recommendations on how to encourage victims to report incidents to the Commission.

KEY FINDINGS:

Not surprisingly, the survey found that Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh New Yorkers experience high rates of bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate.

- Nearly two in five (38.7%) survey respondents had experienced “verbal harassment, threats or taunting referring to race, ethnicity or religion,” with one in four (26.6%) reporting they had experienced it more than once.
- Roughly one in ten (8.8%) survey respondents had experienced physical assault that they knew or suspected was a “result of race, ethnicity or religion.”
- Nearly one in six (16.6%) survey respondents experienced some form of racial, religious, or ethnic discrimination-related problem in their employment in either a current job or while seeking a job.
- Highly visible members of these communities, including people of color and those who wear religious clothing are particularly at risk for verbal harassment, threats, physical assault, and employment discrimination.
- Over one in ten (10.5%) survey respondents indicated that they had experienced property damage or vandalism.
- Nearly one in seven (13.9%) survey respondents experienced being unfairly denied services at a business because of race, ethnicity or religion.
- When asked about discrimination in public accommodations, survey respondents most frequently identified being followed by a security guard or salesperson in a store (17.5%)

and being purposefully pushed or shoved on a subway platform (13.6%).

Rates of reporting bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate to community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, the Commission, the NYPD, or elsewhere remain low.

- Overall, less than one in three (29.2%) survey respondents who experienced discrimination or harassment reported at least one bias incident to a community-based organization, a faith-based organization, the Commission, the NYPD, or somewhere else.
- The most common place where verbal harassment (8.1%) and physical assault (18.4%) were reported was to the NYPD.
- About three in ten (29.1%) survey respondents who experienced any employment discrimination reported it to a community-based organization, faith-based organization, the Commission, or elsewhere.
- Barriers to reporting included believing no one would take the report seriously (23.5%), concerns about reprisal or other bad consequences when reporting physical assault (11.2%), and actual attempts to report that were not taken seriously (9.2%).

Experiences of bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate can have serious consequences for the mental health of those who experience them.

- Over half (51.3%) of those who experienced being unfairly fired and over one third (36.7%) of those who experienced physical assault

screened positive for probable depression.

- More than one in four (26.2%) survey respondents who experienced being verbally harassed were associated with increased odds of depression.
- More than one in three (36.6%) survey respondents that had their religious clothing forcibly removed were associated with depression.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION:

- Create a network of community- and faith-based organizations for those who experience bias-related harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate to the Commission.
- Partner to refer cases with organizations to encourage increased philanthropic support for community-based and faith-based organizations that serve and support local communities of Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh New Yorkers to connect clients to the Commission, other City agencies, and other organizations that can provide legal, mental health, and other forms of support.
- Investigate the experiences of Black New Yorkers, whom the findings indicate had heightened experiences of physical violence and employment discrimination.
- Plan and develop a bystander-intervention training for delivery to City employees who work directly with the public on how to de-escalate bias incidents and what resources to offer those who have been involved in such incidents.

- Address the mental health needs of Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh New Yorkers to combat the negative impacts of the bias incidents covered in this report.
- Focus outreach and legal resources on impacted communities in order to educate New Yorkers about their rights, and encourage vulnerable communities to report incidents to the Commission, including:
 - Creating a workshop for vulnerable communities developed by the Commission's Bias Response Team that highlights the full spectrum of incidents, outlines the Commission's resources, and explains the various options for reporting.
 - Undertaking more focused community outreach to religious communities, especially those who are highly visible and often targeted for bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate.
 - Continuing the deployment of mobile clinics with attorneys and process intakes onsite at community-based and faith-based organizations.
 - Continuing public outreach to organizations through media campaigns, community events, days-of-action, and resource fairs to educate people about their rights under the law and how to report discriminatory acts and experiences.

for community members to seek and get help in order to ensure their rights are protected.

These findings are intended to be used by the Commission and other City agencies, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, policy makers, elected officials, and City residents. The report highlights ways

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INTRODUCTION

In 2003, the New York City Commission on Human Rights (the “Commission”) published a report entitled “Discrimination Against Muslims, Arabs and South Asians in New York City since 9/11” using data collected by the Commission after observing an increase in complaints to the NYPD Hate Crimes Task Force following the attacks on the World Trade Center. This study found that 69% of the 956 respondents had experienced one or more incidents of bias and/or discrimination; of those, the most common type of incident respondents indicated in the survey was bias-related harassment (37%), followed by employment discrimination (26%). Nearly four in five (79%) said their lives were negatively affected by 9/11.¹

In 2016 and 2017, pre- and post-2016 Presidential Election, the Commission observed an increase in such reports from similar communities by the media and through advocacy organizations. As a direct result of community consultations convened by the Commission in late 2016 and early 2017, and in response to the lack of comprehensive local data about the scope and frequency of bias-motivated harassment, discrimination, and violence across at-risk communities throughout the City and the perceived underreporting of such incidents, the Commission began to develop its survey project initiative for groups being unfairly targeted by the wave of negative national rhetoric that characterized the 2016 election cycle—Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh (MASAJS) New Yorkers (“the Survey”).

While many marginalized groups in New York City are vulnerable to bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate, the MASAJS groups were selected because the Commission had identified, as a direct result of roundtable discussions and listening sessions with community leaders and members conducted in late 2016 and early 2017, that these groups have been experiencing heightened risk of these types of incidents. The research project was animated by reports of anti-Muslim

rhetoric and climate, including racism against Arab and South Asian communities (MASA is a common acronym used to describe Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities). Anti-Semitic vandalism and reports of harassment and bullying that emerged early in the project led to the inclusion of Jewish communities. During the community engagement process, Sikh community leaders advocated for their inclusion as a group separate from those already identified, given their distinct visible identity and vulnerability to discrimination and hate. Specifically, in the post-9/11 context, Sikh communities have been targets of Islamophobic and xenophobic violence, so they were added as well.

GLOSSARY

Focus group respondents had strong feelings about how language is used to describe their own and others’ identities. The research consultants and advisors at the Commission have created this guide to understanding how language describing identities is used in this report:

- With the exception of those who selected “African American”, we refer to national origin without commenting on citizenship or identity as “American”
- When we use shorter labels to refer to race, ethnicity, or religion, we use the full description in the first instance and the shorter title thereafter
- Regions of the world are defined using the 2017 United Nations country categorization, although “West Asia” is referred to here by its more commonly used term “Middle East”
- Respondents who identified as Arab for the purposes of the survey are also included in the category “Arab, Middle Eastern and Central Asian”; when referring to Arab respondents, the word “Arab” is used. When referring to the larger group, “Arab, Middle Eastern and Central Asian” is used
- Respondents who identified as South Asian for the purposes of the survey are also included in the larger category of “South, Southeast and East Asian”

¹ The Commission did not study the experience of these populations between that report (2001-2002) and this report (2016-2017) even though increases in number of bias incidents may have happened during this period of time.

HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

This report is written with a wide variety of audiences in mind who may wish to use it in many different ways. Some terms used here and some ways of talking about survey data may be more familiar to some audiences than others.

Readers will notice that the authors of this report sometimes use statistics when comparing one group to another. These are often phrased as “Group A was more likely to report this outcome than other respondents (X% vs. Y%). The numbers in the parenthesis refer to the prevalence of the outcome (sometimes called the “frequency” with which respondents reported this outcome) group A (X%) compared to the respondents who are not members of group A. Most often, group A will be a religious or ethnic group or other demographic category. Sometimes the comparison will be made within people who experienced some sort of incident of interest to this report compared to those who did not experience that incident. For example, the report states “Experiences of verbal harassment were also associated with increased odds of depression, with over one quarter of those who had been verbally harassed screening positive for probable depression compared to less than one in six of those who had not been harassed (26.2% vs. 14.4%).”

Many readers will wonder whether this means that verbal harassment causes depression. Because this survey is one snapshot in time, the report cannot establish whether the verbal harassment existed prior to depression. However, given the existing researchⁱ on the association between bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate and subsequent experiences of depression and the lack of literature suggesting depression causes verbal harassment, it is not unreasonable to consider that it may be more likely that verbal harassment causes depression, rather than that the two co-occur but have no causal relationship. The report nonetheless follows the scientific convention of using the word “association” rather than “cause”, allowing readers to draw some of their own conclusions about causality.

Some readers will wonder whether these comparisons are “statistically significant.” All comparisons using the phrase “more than”, “less than”, “more prevalent” or “more likely” are significant at the .10 level or less. Statistical significance refers to the certainty with which we can understand that the difference is not due to chance; thus a statistic with $p=.10$ has a 10% likelihood of being wrong due to chance. More details about how statistics were tested and selected for publication are included in Appendix I.



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PURPOSE AND GOALS

The survey was designed to quantify MASAJS New Yorkers' experiences of verbal harassment, physical assault, bullying, and discrimination in employment, public accommodations, and other contexts that can be reasonably attributed to racial, ethnic, or religious bias. It was also intended to quantify reporting of those bias incidents and characterize the outcomes experienced by those who had experienced them.

Most important, the survey findings were intended to be used to make recommendations to City agencies, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, policy makers, elected officials, and city residents in general about how to keep themselves and others safe during a time of increased complaints of bias incidents.

Estimating the Size of Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh Communities in NYC

It is difficult to estimate the size of the population of Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh communities in New York City. According to the Asian American Federation, the top neighborhoods for people of South Asian descent include those in City Council Districts 23, 24, 25, 28 and 32, which are all in Queens (especially the Southern and Eastern parts of Queens)ⁱⁱ. The largest percentage of Muslims are also in Queens (5%), while Arabs are more prevalent in Staten Island (2.7%) and Brooklyn (1.5%) than in other boroughs. Jewish religious affiliation is most common in Brooklyn (11%) and Manhattan (8%)^{iv}. As of 2008, the most recent year for which estimates are available, the Sikh Coalition suggests that there are 50,000 Sikhs in New York City, or approximately 0.6% of the residents of the City^v.

Estimate	Foreign-Born South Asian ^{*vi}	Arab Ancestry Number ^{vi}	Arab Ancestry Percentage ⁱⁱⁱ	Jewish Religious Affiliation in New York City ^{iv}	Muslim Religious Affiliation in New York City ^{iv}
NYC	280,556	103,649	1.21%	7%	3%
Bronx	18,723	11,489	0.79%	2%	2%
Brooklyn	70,120	39,460	1.50%	11%	4%
Manhattan	24,767	16,431	1.00%	8%	1%
Queens	155,436	23,581	1.01%	4%	5%
Staten Island	11,510	12,688	2.67%	2%	6%

* Includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan and "Other South Central Asia".



METHODS

The study began with a review of scholarly literature and community-based research as well as testimonials gathered by the Commission on bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate against MASAJIS communities. In addition to the literature review, topics for inquiry were suggested by community consultations, including 15 focus groups. The focus groups resulted in design of a survey; data collection occurred from October 12 - December 4, 2017. The survey asked Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh New Yorkers age 16 and older about their experiences of bias incidents, whether or not (and to whom) they reported those incidents, how they were treated in public accommodations, and details of their religious observance and demographic information. All incidents were asked about with reference to the timeframe “July 2016 to the present”, so findings refer to approximately 15 months of time.



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ASKING SENSITIVE QUESTIONS ABOUT IDENTITY

Gender, Sexual Orientation, Race, Ethnicity, and Religion

Respondents could select as many genders and racial and ethnic identities as they felt applied to them.

Because race, ethnicity, and religion defined the sample for this survey, the first question on the survey was about whether the survey respondent identified as Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and/or Sikh. Respondents could check all that applied to them. Follow up questions for Jewish and Muslim respondents asked whether there was a particular branch of their religion they were affiliated with, and which, but respondents were not required to select a specific branch.

Because people may identify with more than one race or ethnicity, follow up questions were asked about other racial or ethnic groups to whom the respondent might belong, and respondents could select all answers that applied to them in the online version of the survey, these answers were then used to present the most relevant follow-up questions about race, ethnicity, and religion. For example, South Asian respondents received a set of follow up questions about race and ethnicity that included a preselected “Asian or Asian American” box. Those who identified as Jewish were asked follow up questions about the branch of Judaism they follow, if any, and similar questions were asked of Muslim respondents, while those who had not yet indicated a religion were asked about other religions.

In cover sheets for focus groups, many respondents declined to answer questions about their sexual orientation. The researchers and advisors at the Commission decided to test an alternative version of a question about sexual orientation, asking first if respondents identified as heterosexual or straight, something else, or preferred not to say. Those who identified as “something else” were asked follow up questions.

The survey covered participants’ experiences across multiple areas of city life. It included a screener to assure the respondent was Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and/or Sikh, lived in one of the five boroughs of New York City, and

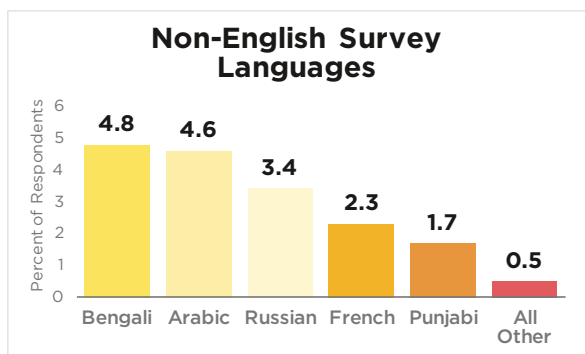
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was age 16 and older, demographic information (other religion, race, and ethnicity information, gender identity, sexual orientation, income, nativity, and nativity of parents), and several types of incidents that were commonly recalled by focus groups: verbal harassment; physical assault; harassment of family and friends; property damage, and discrimination in public accommodations and in employment; reporting and other climate issues. This report includes information about the demographics of the respondents as well as general trends with respect to the type, frequency, and reporting of incidents. Information about interactions in specific settings will be shared in a future report.

The survey was intended to take an intersectional approach; that is, to collect sufficient data to understand not only the experiences of being Muslim, Arab, Jewish, and Sikh but also their experiences as individuals with multiple identities (such as gender, age, race, and religion).

As such, survey questions were analyzed in relation to one another (bivariate and multivariate analysis) as well as on their own.

The complete survey, taken by 79.6% of respondents, was available online and a shorter version, taken by the remaining 20.4%, was available on paper. The survey was administered in nine languages.² Over four in five (82.8%) respondents took the survey in English, with smaller numbers taking it in Bengali (4.8%), Arabic (4.6%), Russian (3.4%), French (2.3%), Punjabi (1.7%), and other languages.



² Additional languages included Hindi, Urdu, and Yiddish. The percentage of respondents taking the survey in these languages is not displayed due to small sample sizes. For further information about sample size criteria, see Appendix I.

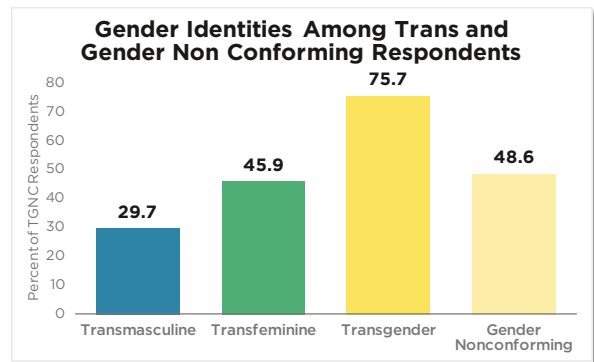
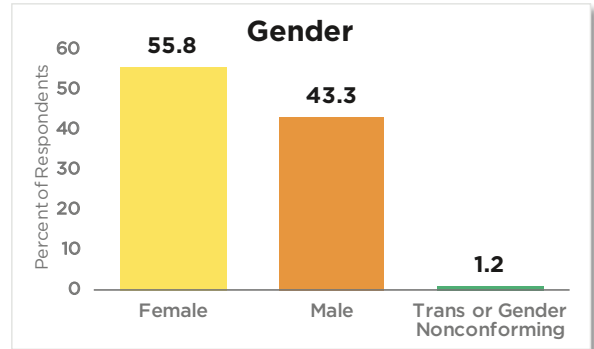
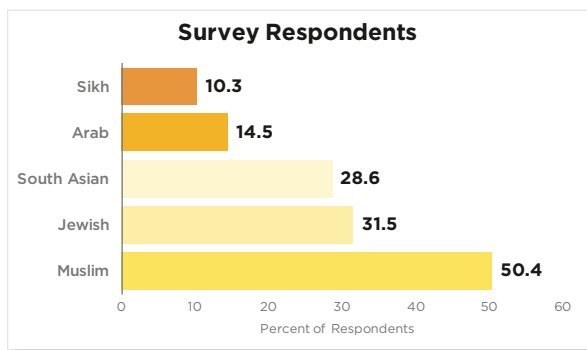
For more information about the methods used in the survey, please see Appendix I.

The respondents who took the survey on paper were much more likely to take it in a non-English language. They were older, more likely to be foreign born, and were more likely to indicate that they spoke English “not well” or “not well at all.” They were also slightly more likely to be men or boys, Black or Arab and Muslim. They disproportionately lived in the Bronx.

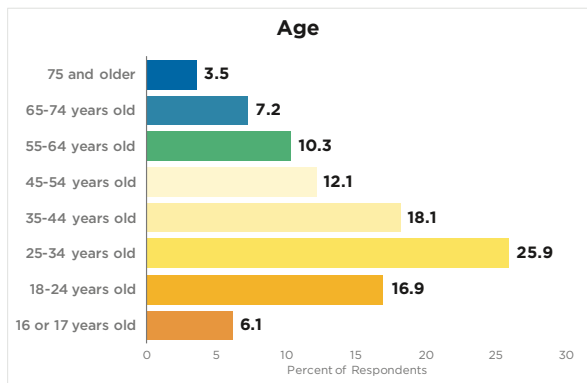


WHO TOOK THE SURVEY?

Over three thousand qualified respondents (3,105) took the survey. The majority (50.4%) were Muslim.³ Nearly one third (31.5%) were Jewish, with over one in four (28.6%) being South Asian American, and 14.5% being Arab American. About one in ten (10.3%) were Sikh.



New Yorkers of all ages took the survey, with 6.1% being 16 or 17 years old and over one in ten (10.7%) being sixty-five years or older. The largest group of respondents were individuals age 25-34 years old (25.9%).



Just over half (55.8%) of respondents were female, 43.3% were male, and 1.2% were trans and/or gender nonconforming.

Among those who provided valid information about sexual orientation, 87.0% identified as heterosexual or straight. The most prevalent sexual orientation other than heterosexual or straight was queer (4.8%), followed by bisexual (3.9%), gay or homosexual (3.6%), and lesbian (1.8%).

Nearly three in ten respondents (29.2%) had children under 18 living with them. Of those children, 62.5% were enrolled in public school.

Respondents age 24 and under were asked if they had been enrolled in high school at a public school at any time since July 2016. 50.5% of those who were 16 or 17 had been as had 23.8% of 18-24 year olds.

Education, Income, and Employment

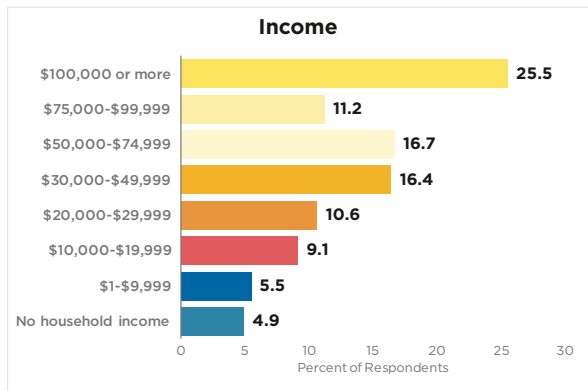
About one in five respondents age 25 or older had a high school degree, GED, or less education (20.1%), while 27.4% had a four-year college

³ Respondents could select more than one category of eligibility for the survey; thus, percentages add up to more than 100.

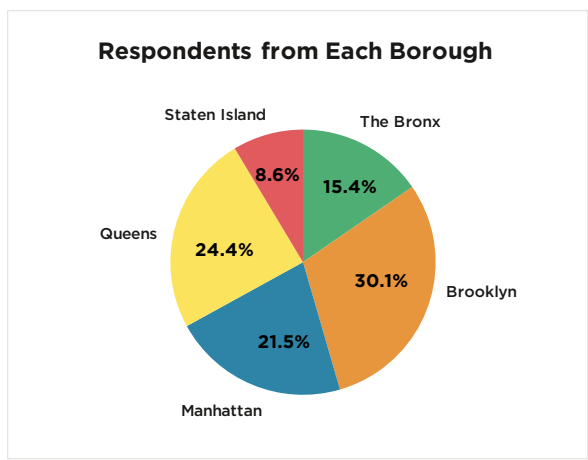
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degree and a further 36.2% had a master’s degree, doctorate, or equivalent professional degree. Over half (53.8%) of those over age 18 and under age 65 were employed fulltime, while nearly one in five (19.4%) were employed part time.

About one in five respondents was low income, with 19.5% reporting incomes below \$20,000 in 2016. About one in four (25.5%) had incomes above \$100,000.



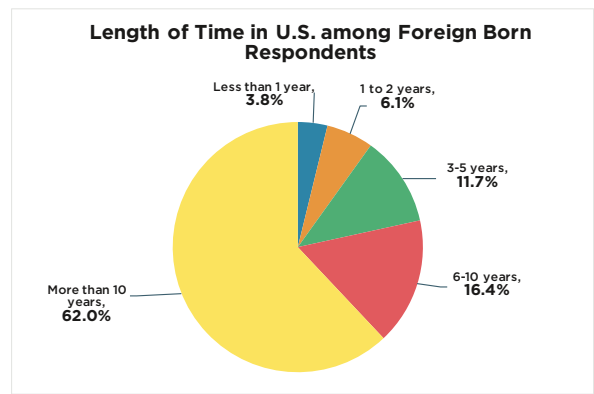
Geography, National Origin, and English Language Proficiency



The largest number of respondents came from Brooklyn (30.1%), with a further 24.4% from Queens, and smaller numbers from Manhattan (21.5%), the Bronx (15.4%), and Staten Island (8.6%). No group recruited for the survey was evenly distributed throughout the five boroughs. For example, 61.6% of Arab American respondents lived in Brooklyn, as did about one

third (32.1%) of Muslims. Nearly half (49.0%) of South Asian respondents lived in Queens (more than any other borough) as did 60.1% of Sikh respondents. Jewish respondents most frequently said they lived in Brooklyn (37.2%) or Manhattan (37.0%).

Over half (56.7%) of respondents were foreign born and over one in ten (12.3%) spoke English “not well” or “not well at all.”



Of those who were foreign born, about three out of five (62.0%) had been in the United States for more than ten years. About four percent (3.8%) had been in the United States for under one year. Of those who were foreign born, the largest number were from South Asia (60.2%), while smaller numbers were from the Middle East and North Africa (15.7%) and Sub Saharan Africa (7.1%).

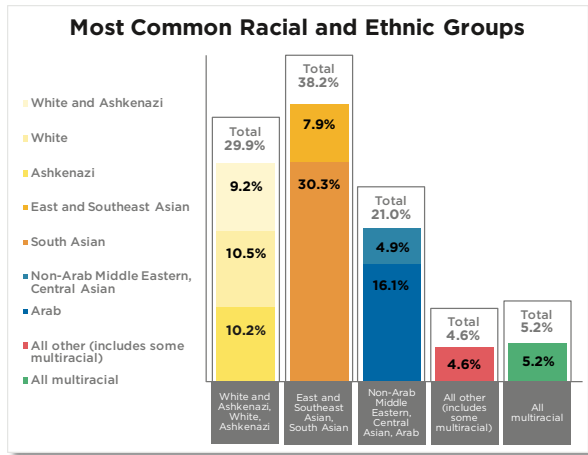
Of those that were US born, about seven in ten (71.7%) had at least one foreign born parent.

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND RELIGION IN THE SURVEY

The most common racial and ethnic groups were South Asian (28.6%), Arab American, Middle Eastern or Central Asian (20.9%, of whom 76.6% were Arab), white (19.5%), Ashkenazi (19.4%), and Black/African American (11.9%).



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In addition to the 50.4% who identified as Muslim, the 31.5% who were Jewish, and the 10.3% who were Sikh, 2.7% were Hindu, 0.9% were Christian, and many also identified as not religious, atheist, or as other religions (this question was asked only in the online version of the survey).

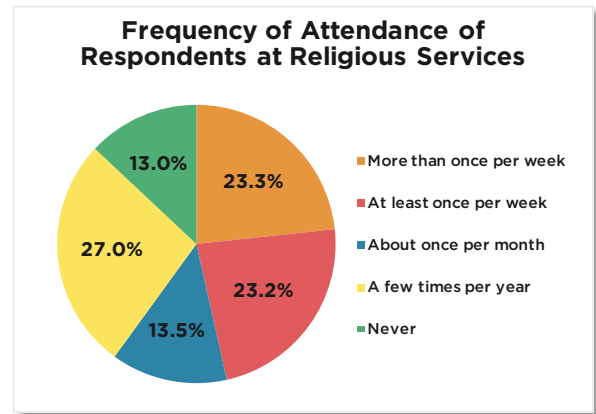
Among Jewish respondents, many identified as not religious (or secular) Jews (24.6%), as Reform (18.3%), Conservative (17.1%) or religious without a specific branch of affiliation (15.3%). Others belonged to more observant groups, such as Orthodox (12.0%) and Hasidic (2.4%) groups.

The most prevalent branch of Islam selected by respondents was Sunni (64.0%), with smaller numbers having no specific branch of affiliation (20.9%), with smaller numbers selecting Shia (3.8%) or Nation of Islam (3.7%) as their affiliation.

Nearly all (95.8%) of the respondents who identified as Black, African American, or African were also Muslim. Nearly five in six Arab American, Middle Eastern or Central Asian respondents were Muslim (84.7%), as were about six in ten (58.2%) of South Asian respondents.

Respondents to the survey varied in their level of religious observance, with about two in five

never attending services (13.0%) or attending a few times per year (27.0%), while nearly half (46.5%) attended once per week or more often. Muslim respondents were more likely than those of other religions to say they attended religious services once per week or more often (57.7%) than other respondents (34.8%).



Orthodox (80.7%) and Hasidic (64.7%) respondents more commonly responded that they attended services at least once per week compared to other branches of Judaism reflected in the survey, while Muslims who did not affiliate with any specific branch of religion, Sunni Muslims, and Nation of Islam respondents were all similarly likely to attend once per week or more often.

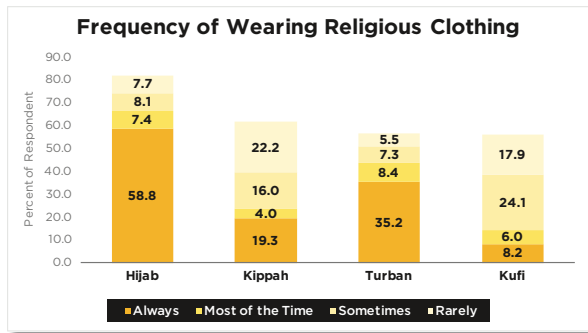
Respondents to the online survey were asked if they wore four types of religious clothing outside of their home.⁴ Muslim women were asked how frequently they wore a hijab and Muslim men were asked the same question about the kufi. Sikh men and women were asked how frequently they wore a turban and Jewish men, a kippah or yarmulke (please note that all percentages are calculated among those who were asked about each religious garment, not among the total sample).

The religious clothing most frequently indicated by respondents was the hijab, with four out of five (82.0%) Muslim women respondents saying they wore it on at least some occasions, and 58.8% saying that they always wore it.

⁴ Focus groups suggested these four types of clothing were the most highly visible to potentially hostile strangers. While there are many other types of religious clothing, it was decided that using four indicators rather than a comprehensive list would be the most efficient and effective way to understand how visibility affected experiences of bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate.

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Similar percentages said they wore a kippah or yarmulke (61.5%), turban (56.4%), or kufi (56.2%). A greater proportion of those who wore a turban said that they always wore it (35.2%) than the kippah or kufi, while the kippah was most frequently stated as worn “rarely” (22.2%) compared to the turban (5.5%) and kufi (17.9%).



VERBAL HARASSMENT

Nearly two in five (38.7%) survey respondents had experienced “verbal harassment, threats or taunting referring to race, ethnicity or religion.” Of those who answered questions about the frequency with which they experienced verbal harassment since July 2016, about one in four (26.6%) had experienced it more than once.

Arab (49.7% vs. 36.8% non-Arab) and South Asian respondents (41.9% vs. 37.4% non-South Asian) were more likely to say they had experienced verbal harassment than non-Arab and non-South Asian respondents. Among religious groups, Sikh (48.6% vs. 37.6% non-Sikh) and Muslim (42.0% vs. 35.4% non-Muslim) respondents were more likely to say they experienced verbal harassment. Arab Muslims were 71% more likely to say they had experienced verbal harassment than respondents who were neither Arab nor Muslim (50.1% vs. 37.0%). **A Sikh young person (under 35) has nearly twice the chance of experiencing verbal harassment compared to other respondents (55.0% vs. 29.3%). Jewish respondents who were highly observant were more likely than other Jewish respondents to experience verbal harassment;** for example, those who attend services more than once per week were more likely than those who never attend (39.2% vs. 21.0%) to say they had experienced verbal harassment. Nearly half (48.4%) of those who wore any

religious garments discussed in the survey had experienced verbal harassment, compared to 34.2% who did not wear religious garments.

Transgender respondents frequently indicated experiences of verbal harassment (55.6%); male and female respondents did not differ from one another in their responses about the frequency of verbal harassment. Experiences of verbal harassment were more common among younger respondents; for example, 57.8% of 16-17 year olds said this had occurred, as did 46.8% of 25-34 year olds, while 17.9% of those age 65-74 responded that they had experienced verbal harassment.

PHYSICAL ASSAULT

Just under one in ten (8.8%) respondents had experienced a “physical assault that you know or suspect is a result of race, ethnicity or religion.” Black respondents were more likely to say they had experienced physical assault than were those of other racial and ethnic backgrounds (12.6% vs. 7.7%). Arab (10.0%) and South Asian (9.8%) respondents also reported physical assault more frequently than other racial and ethnic groups, but the difference was not statistically significant. While information about the location of the assault was not collected, respondents who live in the Bronx were more likely (14.0%) than residents of all other boroughs (7.8%) to experience physical assault.

Overall, survey respondents who were men or boys were more likely to say they had experienced physical assault than women or girls (11.0% vs. 6.9%). Nearly three in ten (29.7%) of trans and gender nonconforming respondents had been physically assaulted.

In terms of religion, elevated numbers of Muslim (12.7%) and Sikh (13.7%) respondents who were men or boys had experienced physical assault. Respondents who wore religious clothing were also at elevated risk (12.3% vs. 6.7%) compared to those who did not.

Black, predominantly Muslim, women living in the Bronx were at notably high risk for bias motivated assaults, with fully one in five (19.4%) having experienced physical assault.

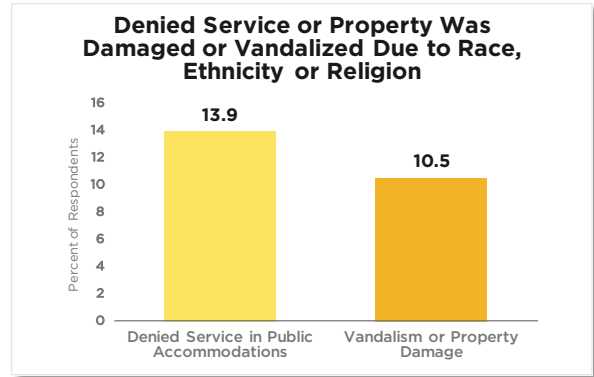
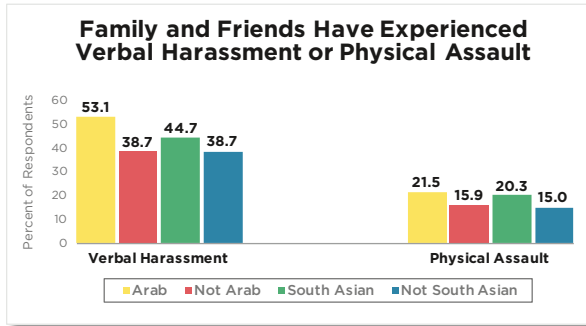


HARASSMENT OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS

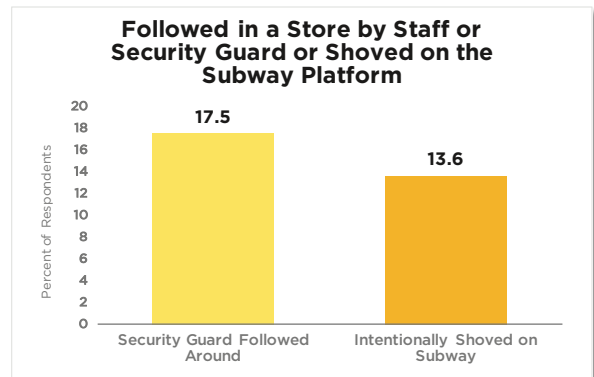
Over two in five respondents (40.6%) had a family member or close friend who had experienced verbal harassment within the past fifteen months.

About one in six respondents had experienced a close family member or friend being physically assaulted (16.7%).

Arab and South Asian respondents, more frequently responded that they had experienced both harassment and assault among their friends and families than their non-Arab and non-South Asian counterparts (see graph below).



Respondents were also asked about two incidents that were frequently discussed in focus groups: being followed by a “security guard or salesperson in a store” (17.5%) and being purposefully pushed or shoved on a subway platform (13.6%). These questions were not asked specifically about race, ethnicity, or religion; however, the prevalence of each varied by race and religion.



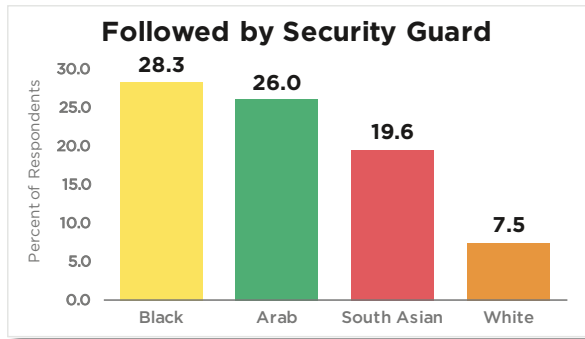
PROPERTY DAMAGE AND DISCRIMINATION IN PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

All respondents who took the online survey were asked about how frequently they had experienced “property damage or vandalism with words or images targeting your race, ethnicity or religion” within the timeframe of the survey and over one in ten indicated that they had (10.5%). They were also asked if they had been “unfairly denied services at a business because of race, ethnicity or religion” within the timeframe of the survey, which about one in seven had (13.9%).

More Muslim (17.9%) and Sikh (18.0%) respondents, particularly those Sikhs who wore turbans (23.0%) indicated they had been denied service compared to other groups.

For example, Black (28.3%), Arab (26.0%), and South Asian (19.6%) respondents were much more likely than white respondents (7.5%) to say they had been followed by a security guard, as were Muslim (22.7%) and Sikh (22.6%) respondents compared to other religions (11.2%). Respondents who stated that they wore religious clothing were also more likely to say that they had been followed by a security guard (22.6% vs. 14.6%) compared with those that did not.

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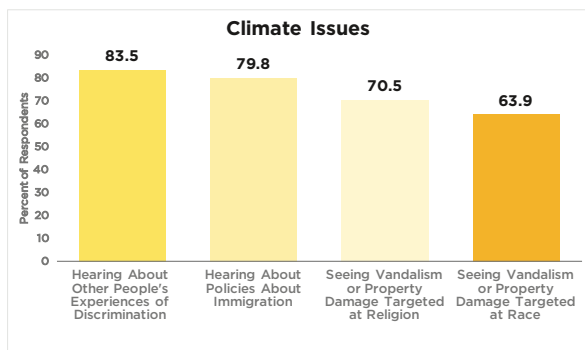


While Muslim respondents had only slightly above average experiences of being shoved on a subway platform (16.0% vs. 11.7%), those who identified themselves as Arab (20.4% vs. 12.5%) and wore religious clothing (18.7% vs. 9.4%) were far more likely to experience this, especially if they were women, **meaning that more than one in four Muslim Arab women wearing a hijab had been pushed or shoved intentionally on a subway platform (27.4%).**

Finally, those who said they wore religious clothing were asked if anyone had tried to forcibly remove that clothing (5.8%). Sikh respondents more frequently agreed that this had happened to them than those of other religions (11.2% vs. 4.9%) who wore religious clothing.

OTHER CLIMATE ISSUES

In addition to asking about direct experiences of bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate, the survey asked respondents to indicate how bothered they were by a variety of indicators of the general climate of New York City with regards to discrimination, immigration, and vandalism.

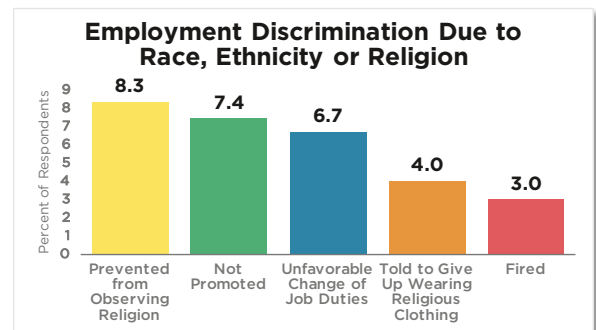


Respondents were also asked how much each of the following bothered them: hearing about other people's experiences of discrimination (83.5%), hearing about policies about immigration (79.8%), and seeing vandalism or property damage targeted at their own race (63.9%) or religion (70.5%). Responses refer to those who were "very" or "somewhat" bothered.

Jewish respondents were more likely to say that they were "very" or "somewhat" bothered by vandalism or property damage targeting religion (80.4% vs. 64.8% non-Jewish), while Arab (70.0% vs. 63.0% non-Arab) and Muslim (66.7% vs. 61.8% non-Muslim) respondents were more likely to say that they were very or somewhat bothered by vandalism or property damage targeting race.

Younger respondents and respondents who were women or girls were also more likely to say they were bothered by each of these things.

EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION



About one in six respondents had experienced some form of racial, religious, or ethnic discrimination-related problem in their employment (16.6%) in either a current job or while seeking a job within the past 15 months.

For example, 8.3% had been prevented from observing their religion and 4.0% had been told they must give up wearing religious clothing in order to keep their job. Three percent of employed respondents said that they had been fired because of race, ethnicity, or religion, while 6.7% had their job duties changed and 7.4% were not promoted.

South Asian (19.4%) and Muslim (18.7%) respondents were more likely to respond that they



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had experienced employment discrimination of some kind than were non-South Asian (15.4%) and non-Muslim respondents (14.8%), as were those who wear religious clothing (19.4% vs. 15.0%) and those who were under age 35 (19.0% vs. 14.1%). Respondents who lived in the Bronx were also more likely to respond that they had experienced employment discrimination (20.8% vs. 15.8% non-Bronx residents) compared with those in other boroughs.

Muslim and Sikh respondents composed nearly the entire sample of those who had been told to give up wearing religious clothing, and Muslim respondents were most likely to indicate that they had been prevented from observing their religion at work (10.2% vs. 6.6%). **Being fired due to race, ethnicity, or religion was indicated more often among Black (5.4% vs. 2.6%), Muslim (4.5 vs. 1.7%), and foreign born (4.1% vs 1.3%) respondents compared to those who were not Black, not Muslim, or not foreign born.**

Among respondents who indicated they were seeking a job at some time since July 2016, nearly one in four (23.6%) had not been hired because of race, ethnicity, or religion, while 8.6% of job seekers who wore religious clothing had been told by a prospective employer that they must give it up if they wished to take a job. **Not being hired because of race, ethnicity, or religion was more common among Orthodox and Hasidic Jewish respondents compared to respondents who were not Orthodox or Hasidic (55.6% vs. 22.8%).**

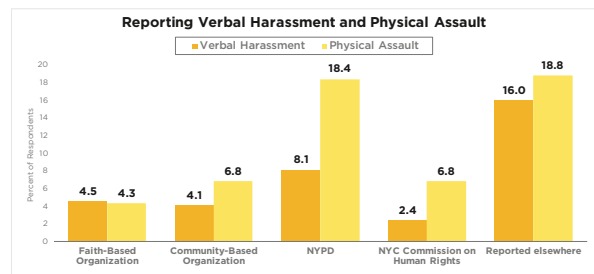
REPORTING BIAS HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, AND ACTS OF HATE

Nearly one in three (29.2%) of those who had experienced verbal harassment, physical assault, being fired, not being promoted, having job duties changed, being unfairly not hired, or being told to give up wearing religious garments reported at least one bias incident to a community-based organization, a faith-based organization, the Commission, the NYPD, or somewhere else.

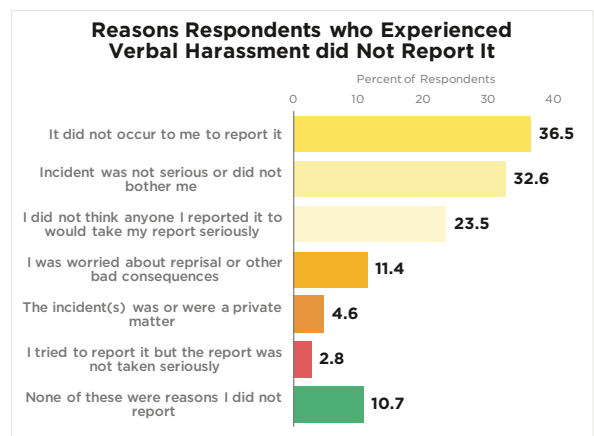
REPORTING VERBAL HARASSMENT AND PHYSICAL ASSAULT

Although far fewer survey respondents indicated that they had experienced physical assault than experienced verbal harassment, a larger proportion of those who had been assaulted reported it (27.3% vs. 38.4%). The NYPD was the most common place to report physical assault (18.4%).

The most common place where verbal harassment (8.1%) and physical assault (18.4%) were reported was to the NYPD. Similar proportions of people experiencing verbal harassment (4.5%) and physical assault (4.3%) reported to a faith-based organization, while more reported physical assault to community-based organizations (6.8% vs. 4.1%) and to the Commission (6.3% vs. 2.4%) than reported verbal harassment to these respective places.

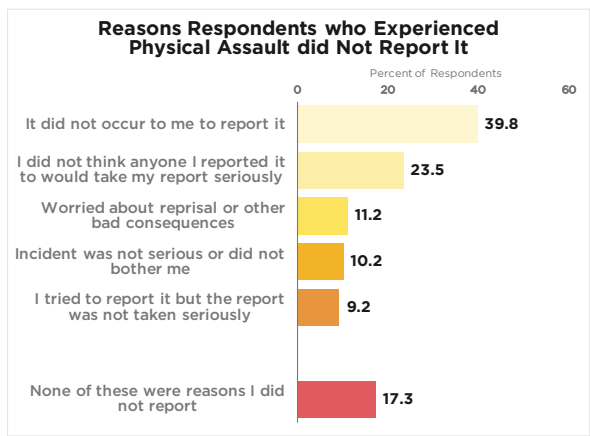


Among those who had experienced at least one incident, **Sikh respondents were also less likely to report any incident (21.4% vs. 30.2% non-Sikh) and to report verbal abuse (19.6% vs. 28.2% non-Sikh).**



Xenophobia, Islamophobia, and Anti-Semitism in NYC Leading Up to and Following the 2016 Presidential Election: A Report on Discrimination, Bias, and Acts of Hate Experienced by Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh New Yorkers

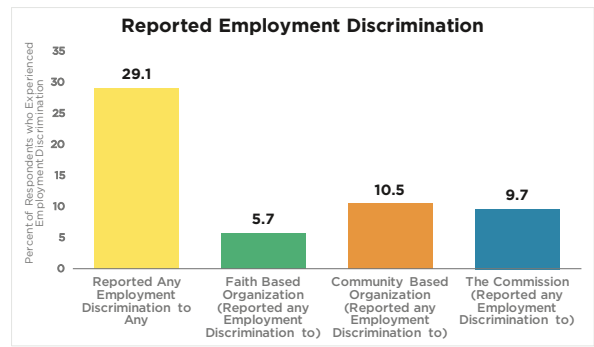
Respondents who indicated that they had experienced verbal harassment or physical assault and had not reported it to any group were asked the reasons they did not report these things. The top reason selected was that it had not occurred to the respondent to report it; however, while the second most prevalent reason for not reporting verbal harassment was that it was not serious, nearly one in four who did not report verbal assault or physical assault thought no one would take them seriously (23.5%). About one in ten were worried about reprisal or other bad consequences among those who had experienced but did not report verbal harassment (11.4%) and physical assault (11.2%).



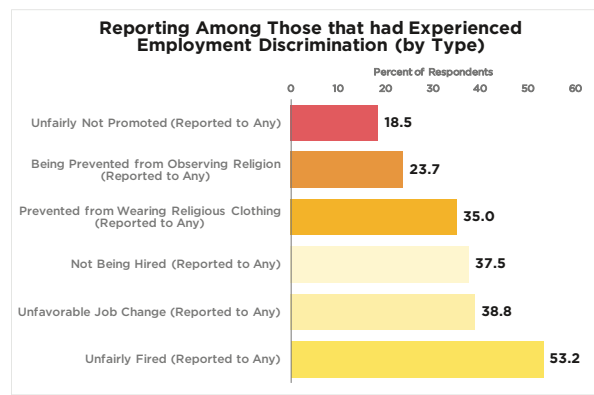
REPORTING EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION

About three in ten of those who had experienced any employment discrimination reported it to a community-based organization, faith-based organization, the Commission, or elsewhere (29.1%).

Fewer than one in ten of those who responded that they had experienced any kind of employment related bias reported it to the Commission (9.7%).



A larger percentage of respondents who had experienced being fired (53.2%) reported it compared to each of the other types of employment discrimination, followed by forced job changes (38.8%) and being prevented from wearing religious clothing (35.0%).



About one third (34.0%) of those who had been unfairly fired reported to the Commission, while slightly fewer reported to a faith-based organization or community-based organization (29.8%).

Among those who had experienced employment discrimination, white people were more likely to report it (40.0% vs. 26.7% non-white). **Those who were under age 35 were less likely to report employment discrimination compared to those age 35 or older (21.9% vs. 38.2%).** Respondents who lived in Queens were less likely to report employment discrimination compared to those of other boroughs (18.2% vs 32.3%).

About two in five respondents who said they had experienced unfairly not being promoted (42.5%) or having an unfavorable job change (40.6%) said that they did not report these

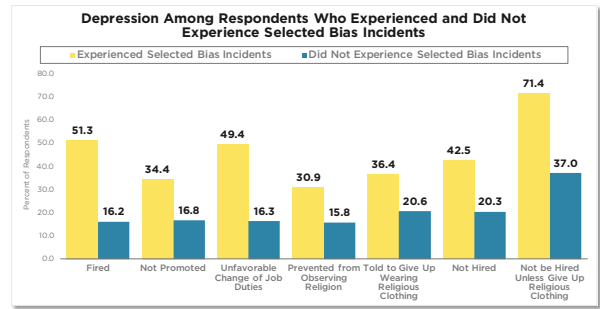
Xenophobia, Islamophobia, and Anti-Semitism in NYC Leading Up to and Following the 2016 Presidential Election: A Report on Discrimination, Bias, and Acts of Hate Experienced by Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh New Yorkers

things because they were concerned about reprisal or other bad consequences.

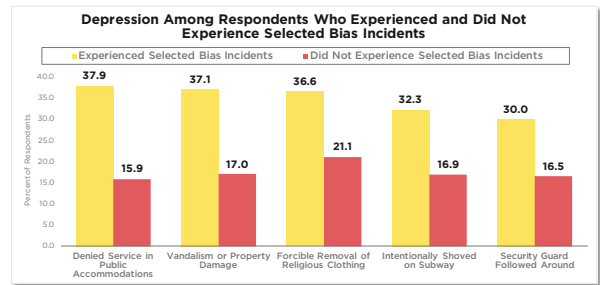
NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF BIAS INCIDENTS

All of the bias incidents described in this report were associated with experiences of depression.⁵ **Fully half of those who had been fired because of race, ethnicity, or religion selected answers that indicate depression (51.3%) compared to just 16.2% of those who had not.**

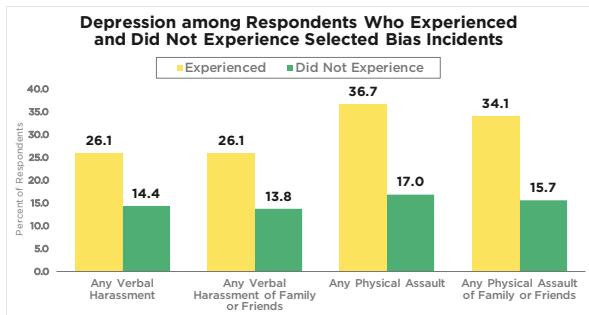
Those who experienced employment discrimination of any kind were more likely to screen positive for probable depression (33.8% vs. 15.1%).



Discrimination in public accommodations (37.9% vs. 15.9%) and experiences of bias harassment and discrimination such as experiencing vandalism or property damage targeted at your race, ethnicity, or religion (37.1% vs. 17.0%) were also associated with depression.



Among those who wore religious clothing, having it forcibly removed was associated with depression (36.6% vs. 21.1%).



Experiences of verbal harassment were also associated with increased odds of depression, with over one quarter of those who had been verbally harassed screening positive for probable depression compared to less than one in six of those who had not been harassed (26.2% vs. 14.4%) and with physical assault (36.7% vs. 17.0%).

⁵ The depression screener used in the survey is the Patient Health Questionnaire 2 item measure (PHQ-2). For more details, see Appendix 1. The score ranges from 0 to 6 and the cutoff for “probable depression” is >=3. The two questions ask respondents how frequently they felt “little interest or pleasure in doing things” or “down, depressed or hopeless” in the last two weeks. The screener has a sensitivity of 83% and a specificity of 92% for major depression.

CONCLUSIONS



2018 Vaisakhi celebration. Photo credit: Adrienne Nicole Productions

Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh New Yorkers experience unacceptably high rates of bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate. Nearly two in five (38.7%) survey respondents had experienced verbal harassment, while 8.8% had experienced physical assault. Highly visible members of these communities, including people of color and those who wear religious clothing are particularly at risk. This suggests that in addition to existing mechanisms for preventing these incidents, widespread training in evidence-based, effective bystander intervention programs should be increased.

Meanwhile, rates of reporting remain low. Even serious, bias-motivated physical assaults are reported by just over one in four who experienced them (27.3%). Barriers to reporting include believing no one would take the report seriously (23.5%) of those who experienced physical assault and did not report it, concern about reprisal or other bad consequences (11.2%), and trying to report but not being taken seriously (9.2%). This suggests how vital it is to educate communities, particularly those who under-report, about the importance of reporting, creating reporting mechanisms based in community organizations, and improving responses to any reports of bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate by city agencies and others.

Experiences of bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate can have serious consequences

for the mental health of those who experience them, with over half (51.3%) of those who experienced being unfairly fired and over one third of those who experienced physical assault (36.7%) screening positive for probable depression. This highlights the significance of training front line workers who take reports of these events in Mental Health First Aid or another training shown to be effective at reducing mental health symptoms related to trauma and increasing the network of affordable, accessible mental health services available for those who experience bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

As with most surveys of bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate, this survey relies on self-reporting. It wasn't designed to ask for a description of the location of an incident or for a detailed description of any specific incident because the level of analysis is the recent experience of individual people, not individual incidents. Unlike surveys that follow the same individuals over years and explore their experiences over that time, this survey captures experiences at a single moment. For this and other reasons, this survey does not definitively state what factors cause what outcomes. Instead, as noted above, it notes associations between phenomena.



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ACTION STEPS



2017 Iftar in the City. Photo credit: Adrienne Nicole Productions

The data in this report shows the frequency of incidents of bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate experienced by members of the surveyed communities during the time period the study took place. Our current national climate, in which racist, Islamophobic, xenophobic, anti-Semitic, and anti-immigrant rhetoric is increasingly normalized worsens this situation and makes it a daily life struggle for these communities. At the same time, the survey results uncovered barriers to reporting that prevent members of these communities from accessing resources that address incidents of discrimination and harassment and prevent further incidents from occurring. Furthermore, the mental health implications cannot be ignored. These findings throw into sharp relief studies undertaken by academic researchers demonstrating that experiences with discrimination are not merely unpleasant, fleeting indignities but rather consistent features of interactions among individuals and with public and private entities that have an ongoing negative impact on targeted groups.



I. Ongoing Commission Actions



2018 Interfaith Seder. Photo credit: Kelly Williams Photography

In recent years, the Commission has already been deploying a range of initiatives and strategies to help address the challenges faced by these communities. As the national climate has deteriorated, the Commission has brought its communications, outreach, and enforcement power to bear to counter biased rhetoric and actions. Based on the results of these surveys, in coming months, the agency will redouble these efforts and target them as necessary.

Some of these initiatives include:

- **Deployment of mobile clinics** where agency attorneys process discrimination complaints onsite at community-based and faith-based organizations.
- **Promoting messaging across multiple platforms that challenges racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism, highlights the full spectrum of bias incidents, and encourages reporting to the agency.** In the past, the Commission has developed ground-breaking campaigns such as “You Have Rights NYC” that specifically feature common instances of immigrant, religious, and race discrimination in the Trump era and can use such past efforts as a model for messaging and resources for ongoing outreach.
- **Highlighting of positive outcomes in discrimination cases.** The Commission regularly publicizes in media and at events positive case outcomes, such as damages awarded, penalties assessed, or restorative measures undertaken. The Commission plans to continue to do so with a particular focus on cases involving the types of bias incidents referenced in this report. This will help to illustrate for the public the benefits of reporting, encouraging members of targeted communities to consider coming forward.

II. Recommendations for Future Action



2018 Interfaith Seder. Photo credit: Kelly Williams Photography

While the steps outlined above are important parts of a strategy for addressing the disturbing trends in harassment and discrimination documented in this report, further action is

Xenophobia, Islamophobia, and Anti-Semitism in NYC Leading Up to and Following the 2016 Presidential Election: A Report on Discrimination, Bias, and Acts of Hate Experienced by Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh New Yorkers

necessary. Below we outline additional steps for implementation by stakeholders who are interested in partnering with the City government and the Commission to reduce the frequency and impact of these incidents.



2018 Interfaith Seder. Photo credit: Kelly Williams Photography

Focus outreach and legal resources on impacted communities in order to educate New Yorkers about their rights and encourage vulnerable communities to report incidents to the Commission, by:

- **Creating a workshop for vulnerable communities** developed by the Commission's Bias Response Team that highlights the full spectrum of incidents, outlines the Commission's resources, and explains the various options for reporting. The presentation will also highlight positive outcomes of discrimination cases to encourage reporting from affected communities and will be shared with individuals in impacted communities and community organizations that serve them.
- **Partnering with community and faith-based organizations to build a referral network for those who experience bias-related harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate.** Many New Yorkers are still reluctant to report directly to government entities. To address this, the Commission would develop partnerships with trusted community and faith-based organizations who are likely to be the first point of contact for community members who have experienced discrimination, bias, or acts of hate. The Commission would train and equip these organizations with the information needed to identify and refer potential violations of the City Human Rights Law to the agency for further screening and investigation.

- **Developing a bystander-intervention training** for delivery to City employees who work directly with the public. Such a training would educate frontline workers on how to de-escalate bias incidents and what resources to offer those who have been involved in such incidents. The Commission could partner with one of the many organizations that have already developed such curriculum when resources are available.
- **Undertaking more focused community outreach to observant religious communities.** Given the findings relating to the targeting of religiously observant individuals, especially those who due to their highly visible religious observance are often targeted for bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate, the City government should assess and increase outreach public services available to faith and community organizations serving such populations and ensure a consistent presence in such communities.
- **Ensuring a consistent Commission presence at community-based resource fairs or events** to share information about what the Commission does and what to expect if they report experiences with discrimination and harassment.
- **Offer City and Mayoral staff training about the City Human Rights Law and the experiences of communities surveyed in this report.** Commission-led trainings should include information on recent trends relating to bias incidents and applicable protections under the City Human Rights Law.
- **Prioritizing continued research efforts at the Commission with a particular attention to intersectional experiences and their intrinsic vulnerabilities.** The Commission would expand the scope of research projects, like this one, that explore forms of bigotry and their impact. Such explorations should focus on intersectional experiences such those of LGBTQ religious or black religious New Yorkers.
- **Continuing the dialogue with communities and organizations to track how they have utilized the findings from the survey.** The Commission would work with communities and organizations serving MASAJIS communities to track how the data collected in the survey has been applied in fundraising, advocacy, and organizing efforts.



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2017 Iftar in the City. Photo credit: Adrienne Nicole Productions



2018 Vaisakhi celebration. Photo credit: Adrienne Nicole Productions

Investigating the experiences of Black New Yorkers. While the subsample of Black New Yorkers in this survey is far from representative of all Black New Yorkers, findings concerning their particular experiences of physical violence and employment discrimination demand further research. The Commission should, through qualitative or quantitative research, further investigate the particular experiences of African, African-American, Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Latinx, and other New Yorkers who identify as Black or as having African ancestry. Such a process would help to elucidate how discrimination based on race, religion, and other categories combine to result in the particular vulnerabilities that are documented in this study as well as other experiences that may be unique to New Yorkers from these groups. Such research could also explore how changes in the national political and social landscape in recent years have impacted the broader community of Black New Yorkers.

Partnering with fundraising organizations to encourage increased support from philanthropies for community-based and faith-based organizations that service and support local communities of Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh New Yorkers. Such funding could include resources for more frontline staff to conduct outreach on these issues and connect staff to the Commission, City agencies, and other organizations that can provide legal, mental health, and other forms of support.

Creating steady opportunities to hear more from Sikh communities, in light of survey findings suggesting that members of these communities are least likely to report that they had experienced bias incidents compared to the other groups surveyed. This could involve tracking and monitoring bias incidents against these specific communities and efforts to better understand why they are less likely to report bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate. This can be explored through town halls, round tables, listening sessions and other community focused events. These forms of consistent, highly-visible engagement can encourage New Yorkers in Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish and Sikh communities to bring their concerns to the attention of the Commission or a faith or community based organization.

Address the mental health needs of Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh New Yorkers to combat the negative impacts of the bias incidents covered in this report. The Commission will work alongside ThriveNYC to figure out ways to support Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh Communities impacted by discrimination and bias incidents.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The New York City Commission on Human Rights thanks the many faith leaders, elected officials, organizers, advocates, and community groups that helped distribute the survey so widely. Our deepest gratitude is owed to the community members who shared their experiences of bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate. Specifically, we want to acknowledge the following individuals and organizations for their outreach efforts:

#GetOrganized Brooklyn, Adhikaar, African Advisory Council of the Bronx, African Communities Together, African Life Center, African Muslim Youth NY, African Services Committee, Al Haram Masjid, Al-Noor High School, An-Noor Social Center, Arab American Association of NY, Arab American Family Support Center, Asian Anti-Violence Network, Asser Levy Park, Avodah, Murad Awawdeh, Baba Makhan Shah Lubana Gurdwara Sikh Center, Bait'ul Aman Islamic Center, Bangla Bazar Jame Masjid, Bangladesh Heritage American Inc., Bangladeshi-American Community Council, Beit Al-Maqdis, BlueCross BlueShield Community Center, B'nai Jeshurun, Brighton Beach Neighborhood Association, Bronx Community College - African Students Association, Bronx Immigration Partnership, Bronx Islamic Cultural Center, Brookdale Village Senior Center, Center Against Domestic Violence, Center for Constitutional Rights, Chhaya Community Development Corporation, Club 76 Senior Center, Columbia School of Social Work Asian Pacific Islander Caucus, Columbia University Sewa, Community Info Days at Tappan Park, Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, Council of Peoples Organization (COPO), Council on American Islamic Relations NY, Crown Heights Central, Crown Heights Community Mediation Center, CUNY CLEAR, Desi Senior Center, Khader El-Yateem, El Centro, Footsteps, Jonathan Greenspun, Gurdwara Sikh Cultural Society, Harlem Havruta, Hazon, Hostos College, Humanity in Action, India Home, International Community High School - Bronx, Islamic Center at NYU, Islamic Center of North America Mosque, Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) - Queens Center, Islamic Mission of America/ Dawood Mosque, Islamic Society of Bay Ridge, Jahajee Sisters- Indo Caribbean Alliance, Jamaica Muslim Center, Jamaica Muslim Center - Masjid Al-Mamoor, Sabeeh Jameel, Jewish Association Serving the Aging (JASA), Jewish Community Center of Bensonhurst, Jewish Community Center of Harlem, Jewish Community Center of Staten Island, Jewish Community Relations Council of New York (JCRC-NY), Jewish Queer Youth (JQY), Jewish Theological Seminary, Jewish Voice for Peace - NYC, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ), John Jay College of Criminal Justice - African Students Association, Kehilat Sephardim of Ahavat Achim, Keshet, Kolot Chayeinu/Voices of Our Lives, Lab/Shul, Khalid Latif, Madina Masjid Islamic Council of America, Manhattan Sikh Association, Maria's Senior Day Center, Marlene Meyerson Jewish Community Center of Manhattan,

Masjid Al-Ihsan, Masjid Aqsa-SALAM, Masjid At-Taqwa, Masjid Rahmah, Muslim American Society NY, MAS Youth Center, MPower Change, Muslim Community Network, Muslim Sisters of Staten Island, National Domestic Workers Alliance, Neighborhood Housing Services, New York Immigration Coalition, Pan African Community Development Initiative, Faiza Patel, Parkchester Library New York Public Library, Peace December, Preet Kaur Viridi, Queens College Hillel, Queens College Muslim Students Association, Queens Solidarity Coalition, Rama Issa-Ibrahim, Repair the World NYC, Pinny Ringel, Riverdale Children's Theater, Sadhana, Sakhi for South Asian Women, Sapna NYC, Sauti Yetu Center for African Women and Families, Amanda (Miryem-Khaye) Seigel, Sephardic Community Center, Shetu Inc., Shir HaMaalot, Shri Guru Ravi Dass Temple, Sikh Association of State in Staten Island, Sikh Coalition, Sikh Cultural Society, Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College, South Asian Youth Action, Southeast Queens Muslim Collective, Amandeep Singh, Simran Jeet Singh, Staten Island Housing Court, Staten Island NFP Association, Inc., Syed Enterprises Inc, Tarab, Temple Emanu-El of Staten Island, Temple Israel, The Caribbean Equality Project, The City College of New York, The Pavilions at Tyson Lane, T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, UJA-Federation of New York, United Sikh Association at Baruch College, United Sikh Association at NYU, Weekly Bangalee, WomanKind, Women for Afghan Women, Yankasa Association, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, YMCA New American Welcome Center, Boro Park YM-YWHA, Central Queens YM-YWHA, Samuel Field YM-YWHA, Shorefront YM-YWHA of Brighton-Manhattan Beach, The Riverdale YM-YWHA, Public Advocate Letitia James, Assembly Member Pamela Harris, Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, Council Member Brad Lander, Council Member Carlos Menchaca, Council Member Daneek Miller, Council Member Daniel Dromm, Council Member Jumaane Williams, Council Member Debi Rose, Council Member Justin Brannan, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, Mayor's Office for International Affairs, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, NYC Commission on Gender Equity, NYC Department of Probation, Public Advocate Letitia James, Queens Borough President Melinda Katz.

We acknowledge that many Commission staff contributed to this project and helped the survey reach so many communities in the City. We offer specific appreciation to Harbani Ahuja, Carmen Boon, Kajori Chaudhuri, Widad Hassan, Seth Hoy, Jo Kaur, Alexander Korkhov, Rosa Lee, Beth Miller, Christelle Onwu, Sapna Raj, Rasel Rahman, Brittny-Jade Saunders, Dana Sussman, Edwin Tablada, and Andrew Teixeira.



APPENDIX 1

EXTENDED METHODOLOGY REPORT

Depression Screener: The score ranges from 0 to 6 and the cutoff for “probable depression” is ≥ 3 . The two questions ask respondents how frequently they felt “little interest or pleasure in doing things” or “down, depressed or hopeless” in the last two weeks. The screener has a sensitivity of 83% and a specificity of 92% for major depression. The depression screener used in the survey is the Patient Health Questionnaire 2 item measure (PHQ-2).^{vii}

Sample Size Criteria: During the consultation phase of this project, it was agreed that statistics with fewer than 20 respondents in the denominator and five in the numerator would not be shared publicly. This is for two reasons: first, it was of the upmost importance that no one could figure out who took the survey and how they responded. Second, statistics based upon very small numbers are unreliable.

Comparative Statistics: There were far more comparative statistics of interest to this report than could be discussed in a short document such as this one. The comparative statistics selected for inclusion were not only those which reached the level of statistical significance, but which also had *real-world*, practical significance and which showed *large* differences.

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Bill de Blasio,
Mayor

Carmelyn P. Malalis,
Chair/Commissioner



STRENGTH IN NUMBERS
CONSULTING GROUP



FOR THE RECORD

**Testimony to New York City Council on
Discrimination Against MASAJIS Communities
October 15th, 2018**

MCN (Muslim Community Network) presents this testimony to the New York City Council on the prevalence of discrimination against Muslims, specifically youth, in our city and our national at large. A quick background on MCN was founded in 2003 by a network of clergy, educators, activists, and community leaders responding to the urgent needs of Muslim New Yorkers following 9/11. MCN's constituents are primarily 1st and 2nd generation immigrants of color and native African- American Muslims based in all five boroughs. Many are immigrants coming from countries where democracy is weak and even peaceful demonstrators risk arrest. Others do not feel comfortable expressing themselves in English and do not know how to articulate their needs and effectively advocate for their rights and interests. MCN found that because of these cultural and language barriers, youth are also left with few examples of effective Muslim leadership and there are virtually no formal leadership development programs targeting Muslim youth in New York City. MCN responds to these challenges through our unique programs: youth leadership development, community education, community service and cross-cultural education, and civic engagement.

STORY OF AN 8 YEAR OLD BOY FACING DISCRIMINATION AT THE AIRPORT

To share with you the stories of discrimination our communities face, let me begin with a story of an 8 year old boy traveling with his mother and brother who was pulled to the side in the security and asked for his fingers to be tested. They ran a brush over his finger and tested it under a machine. His mother did not bat an eyelid, as she had been through this very same screening multiple times, however the fear, panic and questions from her 8 year old son, made her realize the extent to which authorities are abusing their power to harass certain communities. The 8 year old boy has no knowledge of why his mother is patted down and asked to run her fingers over a brush for as long as they have travelled. But he notices that he is the only child that has been pulled aside and asked to be tested. The singling out of young children from certain backgrounds and with certain names by authorities is discriminatory and harassment and has long lasting mental implications for the youth in our community. It teaches them that they are considered guilty until they are proven innocent. Those of us that lived through 9/11 may be able to unfairly somehow explain the reasoning behind it, but for these young children, there is no explanation to give as to why they are being discriminated against and selected when they are living their normal lives.

STORY OF A YOUNG LADY FACING DISCRIMINATION AT THE AIRPORT

There was a young lady who wears a hijab (scarf on her head) and a long gown when she goes out. Before relaying her story, the young lady asked for advice on what she was supposed to do if she was in a situation where she felt she was being harassed by a person of authority where she could not use the self-defense techniques our instructors were going to teach. Her story involved traveling with her mother at the airport. As this young lady whose age would be early 20s, was passing though the security line she was pulled to the side for an extra screening. She did not cause the alarm to go off on the machine so there was no clear

reason as to why she was selected other than it being a “random” search. She left all her belongings with her mother and was taken to a back room with the officer. As the young lady continued with her story of how the officer patted her down, she broke into tears, recalling the extent of the pat down and how they left no nook untouched on her body. She expressed how she felt violated with how thorough the search was on all parts of her body and how she was petrified alone in the room with the officer with no phone and no one else around. She reiterated how she did not cause the machine alarm to ring so there was no reason for her to be taken away in this manner.

Stories of people with a Muslim name being selected for random search are not hard to find. Most of us have experienced it multiple times in the past 15 years and add the extra time into our travel time. However, the extent of the extra screening where ladies and men and feeling violated by authorities in power shows the extent to which the discriminatory searches are impacting the community. This narrative of the victim Muslim woman who needs a self defense class, leads to an unfair impact on our young women in schools, who feel exhausted with the narrative and targeted whenever the conversation of women’s rights is brought up. One of the teachers at a public school who we met through our diversity education program expressed how her female students were extremely upset when she used Iran as an example to discuss women’s rights. This is not to say that Iran or any other country does not have rights issues, but to show the mental impact of the same narrative coming at those who identify with that culture. The teachers at schools that we have met do not intend to discriminate against their students, but they need to have the resources easily available to them to not continue to build into the narrative of the Muslim engineer who may be making a bomb, and the Muslim woman who has no rights. It is extremely burdensome for our youth to only be connected to a single stereotypical narrative when their communities are just as diverse and contribute just as much in all areas as other communities. Schools need to do a better job of ensuring that they build curriculums that are reflective of all communities and inclusive of everyone’s backgrounds. By not doing so they unintentionally discriminate against those who are being represented in certain ways.

OUR RESPONSE

MCN is working to change these negative narratives of Muslims that are projected from the media, movies, elected officials, educators, and the general public. Our diversity education presentations goes into NYC public schools and teaches students, parents, and educators how to meet the needs of Muslim students and be sensitive to their religious background. Last year, we presented to over 1,000 students. Our MNYC program works with high school Muslim students to teach them the importance of civic engagement to help them feel empowered and show them how they can influence public policy through their activism. One school in Harlem presented a project on the effects of gentrification in the neighborhood, while another in Brooklyn worked on a project to help bring recycling to their school. Our NYBridge program pairs high school male students to mentors who can help guide them through their career and build their self-confidence. Our community civic education programs, brings critical resources like self-defense workshops to communities who feel threatened and harassed. These classes have over 2,000 people on the waiting list, mostly female, who want to learn ways to protect themselves. Our MCN Serves is our community service program that shows the good will of Muslims who want to give back to their communities; whether by feeding the needy at the Holy Trinity Church on the upper east side, or to provide a meal for tired parents at the NICU at Bellevue hospital, or to pack toys for children in need during the Eid holidays. With all of this work, we continue to need city investment and funding to help us grow and expand on each of these initiatives, so as to build a society that respects all of its diverse communities.

The New York City Council
Committee on Civil and Human Rights

October 15, 2018 Hearing

RE: Oversight - Discrimination Against MASAJIS Communities

Testimony presented by Giselle Klapper, Staff Attorney with the Sikh Coalition:

Thank you Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee:

My name is Giselle Klapper, and I am a staff attorney with the Sikh Coalition. The Sikh Coalition is a nonprofit and nonpartisan national community-based civil rights organization. Our goal is to work towards a world where Sikhs and other religious minorities in America are able to practice their faith freely, without bias and discrimination. Our team addresses issues of bias and discrimination on a daily basis.

As you may be aware, Sikhs wear an external uniform to unify and bind them to the beliefs of the religion and to remind them of their commitment to Sikh teachings at all times. According to the requirements of the Sikh faith, observant Sikhs maintain unshorn hair, including facial hair, and wear turbans. In North America, the majority of those who wear turbans are Sikhs. As a result, recurring media images of alleged terrorists and negative portrayals of men in turbans have created an environment in which Sikhs are regularly singled out for bias harassment, discrimination, and acts of hate. Their distinct visible identity makes Sikhs vulnerable to discrimination and hate way too often, in many different forums including the workplace, schools and in interactions with law enforcement.

Sikh children in schools experience threats, name-calling, teasing, physical, cyber and verbal bullying. They are called "Bin Laden", "terrorist" and other derogatory names by fellow students, and in some cases, by school staff and faculty members. 50% of Sikh children experience bullying. For turbaned Sikh students, that number climbs to 67%. Over the 2017-2018 school year, the Sikh Coalition's legal team reviewed almost double the number of school bullying cases than the previous three years combined.

Sikh New Yorkers who wear turbans are frequently subject to workplace discrimination. As indicated by the NYC Commission on Human Rights' report released in June 2018 - the second such report the Commission has released - Muslim and Sikh respondents compose nearly the entire sample of those who had been told to give up wearing their identifiable religious clothing in order to keep their job.

The survey also found that a Sikh young person under the age of 35 has nearly twice the chance of experiencing verbal harassment compared to other respondents. It also found that wearing religious clothing elevated the risk of experiencing physical assault. The Sikh Coalition has received information



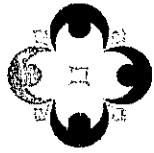
indicating that in the first 3 months of this year alone, Sikhs were victimized by hate and bias-based incidents on average once per week. Sikhs were told to “go back to their country”, that they “do not belong here”, and they were physically assaulted while driving taxis or engaging in everyday activities. These acts of hate took place here in New York City, and across the country.

We also see discrimination in public accommodations. Survey respondents who wear religious clothing were more likely to have been followed by a security guard than those who did not wear religious clothing. Even among the communities who wear religious clothing, Sikh respondents reported having someone trying to forcibly remove their religious clothing more frequently than other groups. Clearly, this is a group which continues to endure unprecedented levels of discrimination in many different areas which the general public may take for granted. For that reason we strongly believe that mandated cultural competency and implicit bias training is crucial for schools and employers to include in their annual employee training programs - so the perpetrators of these hate incidents recognize the impact of their actions.

We also want to bring to the attention of the Committee the issue of under-reporting. As indicated by the Commission’s survey, among those who have experienced at least one incident of bias harassment, discrimination or hate, members of the Sikh community were the least likely to report those incidents. This is why we believe that tracking and monitoring bias incidents against the Sikh community and other religious minorities is crucial. We need to make an effort to better understand why Sikhs are less likely to report bias incidents. This can be achieved through more town halls, round tables, listening sessions and other community-focused events. Through these forms of interactive engagement, a more trusting relationship can be built between members of the Sikh community and government agencies, and Sikhs will be encouraged to voice their concerns. The Commission recognizes these concerns and addressed the first by partnering with community organizations like ours to visit more houses of worship to collect data. In addition, they hosted the first-ever Vaisakhi celebration in April as a way to build deeper relationships with the community.

We applaud the Commission’s forward-thinking approach to dealing with the types of issues that the Sikh community struggles with. We know that budgets can be tight, however we are here today to underscore for this Committee the importance of the Commission’s continued efforts and resources to be placed with marginalized minority groups like the Sikh community, who rely on the Commission’s work and collection of this type of data to proactively deal with discrimination. Continuing to advocate for local agencies to categorize and track anti-Sikh bias is the only way to recognize the impact these incidents have on both the Sikh community and the broader community. Only with accurate data will other government agencies be able to allocate appropriate resources to combat the problem of hate and bias, including cultural competency training for city workers and those tasked with investigating these incidents, as well as creating an environment where those who are subject to these crimes feel comfortable reporting what has happened to them. Accurate data and statistics on bias, bigotry and discriminatory backlash remains critical to the work we do to better combat and prevent hate in New York City, and in America. We appreciate your commitment to obtaining this data and we hope to see that continue.

Thank you.



CAIR
NEW YORK

Council on American-Islamic Relations

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**STATEMENT OF
ALBERT FOX CAHN, ESQ.
LEGAL DIRECTOR
COUNCIL ON AMERICAN-ISLAMIC RELATIONS, NEW YORK, INC.**

**BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON CIVIL RIGHTS
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL**

**FOR A HEARING CONCERNING,
OVERSIGHT - DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MASAJIS (MUSLIM, ARAB,
SOUTH ASIAN, JEWISH, AND SIKH) COMMUNITIES**

**PRESENTED
October 15, 2018**

Good afternoon, my name is Albert Fox Cahn, and I serve as the Legal Director for the New York Chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (“CAIR-NY”). CAIR-NY is a leading civil rights advocacy organization for the Muslim community here in New York City and across New York State. I am proud to testify today in continued support of our colleagues at the New York City Commission on Human Rights (the “Commission”) and their indispensable work to counter discrimination and harassment. Moreover, I applaud Chair Eugene for calling for today’s hearing on this vital topic.¹

New York City faces few tasks as urgent as countering the surge in ethnic and religious discrimination that CAIR-NY and our partners at the Commission target each and every day. The reality is stark. According to CAIR-NY’s data, from 2015 to 2017, anti-Muslim harassment, discrimination, and hate crimes increased a staggering 974%.² Behind each of these statistics is a heartbreaking story; lives forever changed by hate. New Yorkers who are fired for simply asking for a place to pray during their breaks, or who have to endure abuse and degradation for wearing a beard or head-covering.

But that nearly ten-fold increase fails to capture the stories of so many who continue to suffer in silence. According to the Commission’s June report documenting bias harassment and acts of hate against Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh New Yorkers, 71% of targeted New Yorkers never report harassment or discrimination. This sort of survey is an indispensable tool for advocates, helping us document the landscape of harassment and discrimination; helping show the scale of the problems we face. The Commission’s landmark survey also found that nearly one in five Muslim women report being intentionally shoved on subway platforms, and one in ten Muslim New Yorkers are blocked from practicing their faith in the workplace, as the law allows.

This climate is truly unprecedented, as we witness elected officials at the highest levels of the federal government normalize anti-Muslim bigotry. Additionally, the last years saw the growth of anti-Muslim hate groups, which nearly tripled in 2016 according to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), and have continued to increase another 13% through 2017 to a total of 114 hate groups.³

We see increasing numbers of Muslim New Yorkers encounter hatred and discrimination in the classroom, workplace, and even on our public streets. Throughout this trying time, the New York City Commission on Human Rights has been a leading supporter of Muslim New Yorkers generally and our work at CAIR-NY specifically. They have partnered with our organization for a variety of

¹ NYC Commission on Human Rights, *Xenophobia, Islamophobia, and Anti-Semitism in NYC Leading Up to and Following the 2016 Presidential Election: A Report on Discrimination, Bias, and Acts of Hate Experienced by Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh New Yorkers*, June 2018, available at

https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/cchr/downloads/pdf/publications/MASAJS_Report.pdf [2018 Commission Report].

² The 974% figure is obtained by combining the 2016 and 2017 data reporting 560% and 74% increases in anti-Muslim bias incidents. See CAIR-NY Press Release, dated May 9, 2017, available at <http://www.cair-ny.org/news/2017/5/10/press-release-civil-rights-report-2017> [2017 CAIR Civil Rights Report]; CAIR-NY Press Release, dated March 5, 2018, “CAIR-NY Reports 74% Increase in Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes Since Trump’s Election”, available at <http://www.cair-ny.org/news/2018/3/5/cair-ny-reports-74-increase-in-anti-muslim-hate-crimes-since-trumps-election> [2018 CAIR-NY Hate Crimes Report].

³ Southern Poverty Law Center, Anti-Muslim Groups 2010-2017, available at <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/anti-muslim>.

projects, including the I Am Muslim NYC solidarity campaign and their recent religious and ethnic discrimination survey.

President Trump’s anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rhetoric has driven countless New Yorkers into the shadows. Discriminatory policies like the Muslim Bans and repeal of DACA make many undocumented Muslim victims unwilling to report their discrimination or harassment.

These broader efforts to silence marginalized communities makes the Commission’s information-gathering and reporting function even more crucial. As the Commission’s June report showcases, it truly has a unique capability to engage in the sort of city-wide data collection that we now need more than ever. Without broad-based surveys and other tools, we’ll never hear from so many of the most vulnerable victims of harassment and hate.

Since President Trump’s first Muslim Ban, Commission staffers stood side-by-side with CAIR-NY and other community advocates to tell Muslim New Yorkers that our city will continue to defend them against bias and discrimination. This June, Commissioner Malalis said of the June Supreme Court decision upholding the Muslim Ban that “In New York City, we cannot and will not let fear, xenophobia, or bias against Muslim and other religious communities become the norm.”⁴

I’m so proud to live in a City that makes such a promise, and I call on the Council to do its part to ensure that New York lives up to those words. The Commission’s work is only likely to increase in the coming months and years, and community activists will depend on the Commission’s unique capability to help us counter this surge in discrimination. I hope that the Council will treat this work as the urgent priority that it truly is.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Council and the Commission to make sure that New York continues to lead the country in our pro-active response to harassment and discrimination.

⁴ Statement from Commissioner Carmelyn P. Malalis Regarding Supreme Court Decision Upholding Muslim Travel Ban, June 26, 2018, available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/cchr/media/2018-press-releases.page>.



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Rawaa Nancy Albilal, President and CEO

I am honored to be here as we mark this critical moment in amplifying the voices of the marginalized and in fighting to end discrimination against all communities, particularly the Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh communities.

Thank you to the New York City Commission on Human Rights for your commitment to uplifting voices, addressing acts of discrimination and hate, and building a peaceful, inclusive city where all people, regardless of background, culture, or religious beliefs can thrive.

At the Arab-American Family Support Center, we have strengthened immigrant and refugee families since 1994 by promoting wellbeing, preventing violence, getting families ready to learn, work, and succeed, and amplifying the voices of marginalized populations. We have witnessed a rise in acts of hate against our community members in the last several years, which has a direct impact on their mental and physical wellbeing, particularly on the most vulnerable among us - our children. This past year, many of our program participants contributed to the findings in the NYC Commission on Human Rights' report, which enumerated a number of disturbing statistics about the reality many Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh communities face daily. 40% of those surveyed reported being verbally harassed, 9% had been physically assaulted, and 20 % were discriminated at work. One in four women wearing a hijab reported being intentionally shoved on a subway platform.

At the Arab-American Family Support Center, our trauma-informed staff hear many of these stories first-hand. Our community members turn to us when their children are afraid to go to school for fear of being bullied, when their hijabs are ripped off, and when they are taunted in the streets. We have held the hands and supported those who have had hateful words spray painted on their cars and homes and as young men and women are denied job after job because of their names. We have assured these community members that New York City will come together to fight for the diversity that makes this city rich and vibrant.

Today, I join the conversation in honor of all of those brave enough to share these horrible experiences with us and for those who are suffering in silence. We are committed to ending discrimination, xenophobia, othering, and all forms of oppression, for good! We must prioritize culturally and linguistically competent services that support individuals in the wake of acts of hate and we must make it clear that these instances will not be tolerated.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

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Name: Dana Sussman

Address: DC for Policy + IAA

I represent: CCHR

Address: _____

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Name: Edwin Tablaka

Address: Adviser for Policy + IAA

I represent: CCHR

Address: _____

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Date: 10-15-2018

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rawaa Nancy Albihal

Address: 150 Court St Brooklyn

I represent: The Arab-American Family

Address: Support Center

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Date: 10/15/2018

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Giselle KLAPPER

Address: 50 Broad St. Suite 504, New York, NY 10004

I represent: The Sikh Coalition

Address: 50 Broad St. Suite 504, New York, NY 10004

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Name: RABBI ELI COHEN

Address: _____

I represent: CROWN HEIGHTS JEWISH COMMUNITY

Address: CONNELT

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Date: 10-15-2018

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Name: Albert Fox CINC

Address: 40-01 20th AVE, 11105

I represent: CAIR-NY

Address: _____

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rama Issa-Ibrahim

Address: _____

I represent: Arab American Association of NY

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: 10/15/11

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Aniza Nawabi

Address: Muslim Community Network

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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