

U.S. EQUAL
EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITY
COMMISSION

DEPARTMENT OF
JUSTICE

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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<http://www.eeoc.gov/>

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Joint Statement Against Employment Discrimination in the Aftermath of the September 11 Terrorist Attacks

Since the September 11 terrorist attacks, we have seen compassion and respect for people of all faiths, races, and national and ethnic origins in workplaces throughout our country. One month after the attacks, President Bush noted with gratitude this "outpouring of compassion for people within our own country," recognizing that individuals of many religions stand side-by-side in America.

Nonetheless, we continue to receive reports of incidents of harassment, discrimination, and violence in the workplace against individuals who are, or are perceived to be, Arab, Muslim, Middle Eastern, South Asian, or Sikh. When people are singled out for unfair treatment or are harassed based on their national origin, immigration status, ethnicity, or religious affiliation, practices, or manner of dress, we must act quickly to address and redress these acts of discrimination.

As leaders within the principal federal agencies responsible for enforcing the laws against discrimination in employment, we are issuing this joint statement to reaffirm the federal government's commitment to the civil rights of all working people in our fight against terrorism. These agencies - the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs of the Department of Labor - together continue to intensify their efforts to combat discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, national origin, or immigration status in the workplace.

To that end, we are encouraging victims to come forward so that we can promptly investigate their complaints. The aftermath of September 11 has demonstrated the need for our agencies to make extensive and wide-ranging efforts to provide public education, information, and guidance. We have instructed those who work in our agencies to take prompt and appropriate action in response to complaints of employment discrimination relating to the events of September 11 and

the ongoing fight against terrorism. We are committed to taking all necessary action to protect the civil rights of all of our working people.

The first step is preventing discrimination before it occurs. Many employers, labor organizations, and employee groups have taken swift action already. We commend those who have sent out the message that discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated in their workplaces, and urge all employers to communicate and enforce workplace policies against harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. Employers also should encourage employees to report any improper conduct through internal complaint mechanisms or to appropriate federal agencies. Additionally, we ask those employers who have been charged with discrimination to resolve these matters voluntarily in cooperation with our agencies.

These efforts are of vital importance to individuals of all races, ethnicities, national origins, and religions in workplaces throughout the country. In the President's words, that which "makes our nation so strong and that will ultimately defeat terrorist activity is our willingness to tolerate people of different faiths, different opinions, different colors, within the fabric of our society." It is this diversity and inclusiveness that strengthens our country and guarantees our future prosperity. Together we can make our workplaces models of respect and understanding. And in this way we do our part to defeat those forces that seek to undermine the American way of life. Individuals who wish to file a complaint of employment discrimination should call the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at 1-800-669-4000 (allegations involving employers of fifteen or more employees); the Department of Justice's Office of Special Counsel Worker Hotline at 1-800-255-7688 (national origin allegations against employers with four to fourteen employees and citizenship or immigration status allegations against all employers); or the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs at 1-888-376-3227 (allegations against federal government contractors).

_____/s/_____
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