

EMPOWERED / IMPERILED

The Rise of South Asian Representation and Anti-South Asian Racism

STOP
AAPI
HATE

REPORT SUMMARY | OCTOBER 2024

Anti-Asian American and anti-Pacific Islander (anti-AA/PI) hate is a problem that deeply affects South Asian Americans. South Asian communities include people with ancestry from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. This is a summary of "[Empowered/Imperiled](#)," a compilation of recent research from Stop AAPI Hate and its research partners on anti-South Asian hate. We also include first-hand accounts reported to [Stop AAPI Hate's reporting center](#) to show the parallels between hate experienced online and in person.¹

Rise in Online Hate and Threats of Violence

Stop AAPI Hate commissioned [Moonshot](#), a group that monitors online Domestic Violent Extremist (DVE) spaces, to conduct an analysis of online anti-AA/PI hate from January 2023 to August 2024. They found that:

- Among AA/PI groups, South Asian communities were the target of the highest volume of online hostility. Of anti-Asian hate terms, **60% were anti-South Asian and the volume of these slurs doubled in this period.**
- South Asian Americans were unfairly accused of being **unclean** and **stealing jobs** from white Americans. They were also affected by increased hate directed at Muslims.
- **Online threats of violence towards Asian communities reached their highest levels in August 2024**, with 973 threats observed in this month alone—75% of which were directed at South Asian communities.
- The rise in threats of violence coincided with the political rise of **Kamala Harris and Usha Vance**, both of whom have Indian heritage.

"I was in [a fast food restaurant] today in [city]. Around the corner there was a guy, and, as I was walking by, outta nowhere that guy was like, 'Where are you guys from? India?' Then he proceeded to say, '**India is a slimy country**' and '**go back to India**' not once but multiple times."

— *Man, Nepalese, Southern U.S., 2024*

"A stranger walked up to [my sister], started walking next to her, and started yelling at her, '**Are you voting for that b-tch**,' '**Are you voting for the b-tch, Kamala Harris**,' '**You b-tches always stick together**.' ... He kept following her, yelling louder, '**You b-tches shouldn't even be in this country ... this is the USA**.'"

— *Woman, South Asian, Eastern U.S., 2024*

¹ We only share stories which we have been given consent to share anonymously. To preserve anonymity, we only identify geographies, whether a region, state, or city, where there is an AA/PI population of at least 20,000 based on the 2020 U.S. Census. Stories are in people's own words, but we lightly edit for clarity.

High Prevalence of Hate on the Ground

Turning from online hate to in-person hate acts, nationally-representative surveys conducted by Stop AAPI Hate with [NORC at the University of Chicago](#), a nonpartisan and independent research organization, revealed that there has been a high prevalence of on the ground hate acts² and civil rights violations³ targeting South Asian Americans.

- 43% of South Asian adults [surveyed](#) said they experienced a hate act due to their race, ethnicity, or nationality in 2023.**
This included harassment, physical harm, institutional discrimination, and property damage. 45% of those who experienced hate said it had negative effects on their health, while 37% needed support but did not receive it.
- 48% of South Asian adults [surveyed](#) said they experienced discrimination that could constitute a potential civil rights violation in their lifetime** with the vast majority saying it was due to their race, ethnicity, or national origin. Only 11% of South Asian Americans have reported a potential civil rights violation to a formal agency. The majority of South Asian Americans (67%) believe new civil rights laws are needed to prevent and reduce discrimination against AA/PI people.
- In the face of these challenges, South Asian adults [surveyed](#) are primed to take action to combat racism.** 91% believe in the importance of cross-racial solidarity to combat racism, while 89% are optimistic that AA/PIs have the power to end discrimination through collective or political action. Additionally, 73% participated in activities to reduce or resist racism in 2023.

"I was verbally assaulted at the bus station when a random woman told me that she will 'beat me up' and when I didn't respond, she proclaimed that 'she will follow me home' and that I should be scared as an '[immigrant b-tch](#).'

– Woman, Indian, Eastern U.S., 2023

"[The hotel staff] refused to provide any alternatives [when the toilet in our room was not working]. ... [A guy at the front desk] started yelling at me to '[go back to my country](#)'. And he '[wants to see my visa or he will call the police](#)'. I heard them say, '[I hate these people](#)'. Needless to say we packed our bags right away and got out of the hotel. We were feeling unsafe..."

– Man, Indian, Pennsylvania, 2022

² Stop AAPI Hate uses the term "hate act" to refer to any event motivated by bias or prejudice, whether explicit or implicit, against a person or group's actual or perceived identity(ies) that inflicts individual or community harm. This includes hate crimes, like bias-motivated assault, murder, arson, and vandalism, and non-criminal hate incidents, like calling someone a racial slur or bias-motivated refusal of service at a business.

³ A civil rights violation is an event motivated by bias or prejudice that violates civil rights laws which prohibit discrimination on the basis of a protected characteristic (e.g., race, sex, religion) in a specific context (e.g., education, employment).