The Practice of Profiling: Community Impact & Recommendations

Overview of *The Practice of Profiling: Community Impact and Recommendations*

Public policies implemented since the attacks of September 11th continue to uniquely affect South Asians living in America. As these issue briefs demonstrate, profiling of South Asians occurs routinely through the use of airport screening protocols, surveillance at places of worship and of organizations and charities, border control practices, and local law enforcement efforts that target immigrants. Since September 11th, the U.S. government has justified the use of such tactics under the guise of national security. Yet, the impact of these tactics over the past nine years show that the use of profiling systemically weakens our country's national security, wastes government resources, undermines public trust, and tramples on fundamental American principles.

These issue briefs summarize the most relevant post-September 11th profiling tactics that continue to negatively affect the South Asian community. In particular, these include profiling at the airports and borders; surveillance and monitoring; and immigration-related measures that target individuals from certain countries. The briefs detail community impact, identify resources, and provide recommendations to policymakers.

> ### Voices Against Profiling
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> *"Racial profiling is simply not good law enforcement."*
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> *- U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder (May 2010)*

What is profiling and why doesn't it work?

Profiling is a law enforcement tactic that connects individuals to crimes based on characteristics unrelated to criminal conduct, such as race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, and perceived immigration status. Federal, state, and local law enforcement officials often use race or national origin as predictors of criminal activity. Historical examples include the use of racial profiling when stopping African-American motorists or to interrogate Latino travelers.

Profiling based on race, religion, national origin, ethnicity and perceived immigration status is not an effective tactic to identify criminals. In many cases, law enforcement agents miss the real criminals by focusing on a race-based profile rather than looking for signs of unusual behavior. In fact, in the post-September 11th context, many of the individuals charged with terrorist activity have not been from Muslim-majority countries. Jose Padilla, Richard Reid and more recently, "Jihad Jane", are all examples of individuals who do not fit the "Muslim terrorist" profile that law enforcement agencies have been using over the past nine years.

Moreover, the use of profiling has tremendous consequences on communities that are being targeted by such tactics. Community members begin to lose trust in government agencies and feel wary about reporting criminal activity that they have been subjected to or have witnessed. Law enforcement agents find that their connections and contacts to communities being profiled are weakened. And, the rates of people of color and immigrants who are incarcerated, detained, and deported due to the use of profiling tactics begin to increase.

saalt Strengthening South Asian Communities in America

About the South Asian community

U.S. Census Bureau from 2008 shows that approximately 2.8 million South Asians live in the United States. The South Asian community comprises of individuals with ancestry from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indian, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. The community also includes members of the South Asian diaspora – past generations of South Asians who originally settled in many areas around the work including the Caribbean (Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad & Tobago), Africa (Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda), Canada, Europe, the Middle East, and other parts of Asia and the Pacific Islands (Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore).

South Asians are diverse in terms of immigration and socioeconomic status. The majority of South Asians who live in the United States are foreign-born, with over 75% of the population born outside of the United States. South Asians possess a range of immigration statuses, including undocumented immigrants; student and worker visa holders and their dependents; legal permanent residents; and naturalized and native-born.

About SAALT

South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) is a national, nonpartisan non-profit organization that elevates the voices and perspectives of South Asian individuals and organizations to build a more just and inclusive society in the United States. SAALT's strategies include conducting public policy analysis and advocacy; building partnerships with South Asian organizations and allies; mobilizing communities to take action; and developing leadership for social change. SAALT works with a base of individual members and advocates, and a network of 39 community-based organizations that provide direct services, organize and advocate on behalf of South Asians in the United States.

SAALT denounces the use of profiling based on ethnicity, national origin, nationality, religion, race, and immigration status. Especially since September 11th, South Asians, Sikhs Muslims, and Arab Americans have been subjected to policies that are based in profiling by federal, state and local law enforcement activities. SAALT works closely with partner organizations to identify the impact of profiling tactics and advocate against their utilization.

For more information about SAALT, visit www.saalt.org or contact us info@saalt.org.