ECAASU’s Response to the Murder of Eight Community Members in Indianapolis

Content Warning: white supremacist violence, murder, gun violence

Washington, DC- The East Coast Asian American Student Union (ECAASU) mourns the loss of eight community members at a FedEx Ground facility in Indianapolis, Indiana on April 16, 2021.

We know that four of the eight victims were Sikh and that the perpetrator was a young white man. While officials have yet to name a motive, executive director of the Sikh Coalition, Satjeet Kaur, expressed, “[The perpetrator] targeted a facility known to be heavily populated by Sikh employees, and the attack is traumatic for our community.”

ECAASU asserts this is a racially and religiously driven act of violence against immigrant, working-class Asian and Asian American communities. The perpetrator, an ex-employee of FedEx, knew the facility and demographics of those who worked there. Further, this shooting occurred during Vaisakhi, a cultural and religious holiday for those of Sikh faith.

We are once again called to remember that this white supremacist violence is neither a new nor isolated phenomenon. This attack specifically targeted Sikhs, a community largely originating from the Indian state of Punjab and the fifth-largest religion globally. As early as 1908, there have been documented racist, xenophobic attacks on South Asian immigrants. South Asian/Americans, in addition to Middle Eastern, North African, and Muslim people have been targeted by increased state surveillance, Islamophobia, and community policing since September 11, 2001, something other Asian groups have not experienced. On August 5, 2012 in Oak Creek, WI, six Sikh community members lost their lives at the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin, a place of worship targeted by a white supremacist.

We name these specific instances to highlight the unique forms of violence different groups within the Asian/American diaspora experience and to emphasize the importance of this tragedy in its own right, not simply as an extension of the recent violence against East Asian communities. Notably, this shooting comes just weeks after the murder of eight community members in Atlanta.
GA, six of whom were Asian/American women - a loss to which nearly all Asian/American organizations responded. ECAASU urges other pan-Asian organizations, non-profits, and advocates to reflect on the issues to which energy is dedicated, the events that receive public response, and subsequently, the communities that are truly represented.

This past week alone also brought:

- the murder of Daunte Wright in Brooklyn Center, MN by a police officer who supposedly mistook her gun for a taser on April 11, 2021
- the release of police bodycam footage showing police shooting unarmed 13-year-old Adam Toledo in Chicago, IL
- the murder of three at a bar in Kenosha, WI on April 18, 2021
- the murder of three in a suspected “domestic event” in Austin, TX on April 18, 2021

In the wake of these many tragedies, ECAASU continues to support the abolition of police and the prison industrial complex in search of liberation for all. Policing and state surveillance does not lead to safe, whole, and healthy communities. Asian/American communities must follow in the footsteps of Black feminist organizers without co-opting decades of labor and vision. We must work alongside other community leaders in solidarity, as violence against our communities will only end when all racist state structures, including police and prisons, are dismantled.

All the while, we encourage our community members to rest, share comfort, and find safety - in whatever form is best for you, your loved ones, and your community. Below, we uplift organizations dedicated to building stronger and safer South Asian and Sikh communities.

**Resources and Ways to Support (Alphabetically Listed)**

Those in **bold** are based in Indianapolis or are working with victims’ loved ones in Indianapolis

- Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM)
  - **GoFundMe**: Indianapolis April 15th Survivors Fund
  - **GoFundMe**: Indianapolis FedEx facility Family Support Fund
  - **GoFundMe**: Sikh FedEx Victims Memorial Fund
  - Jakara Movement
  - Kaur Life
  - Sakhi for South Asian Women

- Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)
  - South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
  - South Asian Mental Health Initiative & Network (SAMHIN)
  - **The Sikh Coalition**