

February 28, 2017

The Honorable Michael Copeland
Mayor of the City of Olathe
100 E. Santa Fe Street
Olathe, KS 66061
[mcpeland@olatheks.org](mailto:mcopeland@olatheks.org)

Stephen M. Howe
Johnson County District Attorney
District Attorney's Office
100 N. Kansas Avenue
P.O. Box 728
Olathe, KS 66051
steve.howe@jocogov.org

Dear Mayor Copeland and District Attorney Howe:

The undersigned advocacy, civil rights, community, and faith-based groups are deeply saddened and troubled by a tragic shooting that killed one Indian man, and injured two others on February 22, 2017. We write to express deep concern about this attack, and respectfully urge you to direct your police department to investigate objectively, thoroughly, and efficiently to ensure that justice is served for the victims and their families.

According to media reports, Adam W. Purinton allegedly opened fire on Wednesday at a local establishment in Olathe killing Srinivas Kuchibhotla, a Garmin engineer from India. Mr. Kuchibhotla's friend and colleague, Alok Madasani, also from India, and another patron suffered injuries. At least [one witness has reported](#) they heard the shooter yell "get out of my country" and other racial slurs before opening fire. Another witness heard the suspect [say he killed two Middle Eastern men](#) before he was taken into custody.

At a time when hate crimes against South Asians, Arabs, Middle Easterners, and Muslims are occurring at alarming rates across the country, law enforcement officials must take these types of threats and crimes seriously. Faith communities have also recently been victims of violent attacks:

- There have been a series of threats sent to Jewish Community Centers across the country;
- Over 100 headstones were vandalized at one of the oldest Jewish cemeteries in Missouri last weekend; and
- A mosque in Tampa, Florida was intentionally set on fire causing significant damage to a prayer hall.

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The death of Mr. Kuchibhotla comes on the heels of anti-immigrant sentiment and violence that has swept the United States at an alarming rate, and people across the country feel fearful.

We were pleased to hear that the Federal Bureau of Investigation has opened an investigation to determine whether or not this was a hate crime, but we cannot underscore enough the need for both federal and local law enforcement to thoroughly investigate all possible motives underlying this crime. If the investigators conclude that there is evidence to suggest that the shootings of Mr. Kuchibhotla and Mr. Madasani were motivated by bias, federal and state hate crime legislation require that this attack be prosecuted as a hate crime.

Thank you for your consideration and attention. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact Madihha Ahussain at 415-692-4932 or Madihha@muslimadvocates.org.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union of Kansas
Asian American Bar Association of Kansas City
Bend the Arc: A Jewish Partnership for Justice
Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good
Interfaith Center of New York
Military Religious Freedom Foundation
Muslim Advocates
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans
National Council of Jewish Women
National Iranian American Council
National Network of Arab American Communities
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
SABA North America
The Sikh Coalition
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights