

# Fresno police investigate beating of Sikh man as hate crime

By Troy Pope  
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A Sikh man was attacked Saturday morning west of Highway 99 in what Fresno police are investigating as a hate crime – the latest such attack on a Sikh resident in the Fresno area.

Around 6:30 a.m., Amrik Singh Bal, 68, was waiting alone for a ride to work in the cold, 30-degree fog on Shields Avenue between Brawley and Blythe avenues.

Bal wore a blue turban and has a white beard, said Ike Iqbal S. Grewal, member of the Sikh Council of Central California.

Two white males stopped their car in front of Bal and started yelling obscenities at him, said Fresno police Sgt. Greg Noll. Fearing for his safety, Bal attempted to cross the street. It was then that the suspects backed up their car, hitting Bal with their back bumper, Noll said.

Then the two got out of the car and attacked Bal – striking him in the face and upper body.

During the assault, one of the suspects yelled “Why are you here?”

Bal fell to the ground and hit his head.

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Ike Iqbal S. Grewal, member of the Sikh Council of Central California

The suspects fled west on Shields Avenue, police said. Bal suffered moderate abrasions to his nose and right hand. He was transported to Community Regional Medical Center, where it was determined that he had a broken collar bone.

Grewal said the suspects only fled when they heard another vehicle approaching in the fog.

“Sikhs have been mistaken for terrorists and radicals and continue to suffer after 9/11,” Grewal said. “This is the latest episode of what Sikhs have been enduring when they are very peace-loving and hard-working citizens of this great country and not members of al-Qaida or ISIS or any other radical group.”

This is not the first time Fresno police have investigated an attack on a Sikh man as a hate crime. In May 2013, 82-year-old Piara Singh was attacked outside the Nanaksar Sikh Temple in south Fresno by a man who later allegedly made inflammatory comments about Muslims.

The alleged assailant, Gilbert Garcia Jr., later pleaded no contest to a hate crime and was sentenced to 13 years in state prison.

Noll said police have started a hate-related criminal investigation into the attack on Bal.

A detective is working the case in an attempt to identify the suspects involved, Noll said. “The Fresno police will be conferring with additional resources to include the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI in an attempt to solve this case.”

Anyone with information on this case is asked to call Crime Stoppers at [559-498-7867](tel:559-498-7867).

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