Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 17, 2026

The Honorable Todd W. Blanche
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Kashyap Patel
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20535

Mr. Charles Neil Floyd
Acting U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Washington
700 Stewart Street, Suite 5220
Seattle, WA 98101

Dear Attorney General Blanche, Director Patel, and Acting United States Attorney Floyd:

We write to urge you to immediately investigate the November 7, 2026 disruption of a public Diwali celebration in Seattle by Jake Lang and Thomas Allen as a potential federal hate crime and to look at all options to hold these individuals accountable for an ongoing pattern of hateful conduct across the country. We also ask for a briefing on this matter and on a plan to prevent further instances of hate against Hindu, Indian American, and South Asian American communities. Lastly, we urge the Department of Justice (DOJ) to re-invest in its Community Relations Service (CRS), the agency that was established by the Civil Rights Act to help communities resolve conflict and that has been decimated by the Trump Administration.[1]

On Saturday, November 7, thousands of people gathered at the Seattle Center Armory for *Diwali: Lights of India*, a free public festival of music, dance, food, art, and culture celebrating the festival of lights. During a cultural dance performance, extremist activists Jake Lang and Thomas Allen entered the venue with American flags and signs containing a racial slur, "Deport All Dot Heads," and reading "Stop Hindu Replacement of Christians."[2] Within moments, festivalgoers from all backgrounds and event security confronted the two men and escorted them out of the building.

The events in Seattle follow a troubling series of threats against South Asian communities across the country. In July, an Indian Muslim mall worker in Utah was repeatedly stabbed in an attack

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[1] Scott MacFarlane, *As Protests Build in Minneapolis and Portland, Justice Department has scrapped its "Peacemakers" Office*, CBS NEWS (Jan. 11, 2026, 19:55 ET), https://www.cbsnews.com/news/justice-department-peacemakers-office-scrapped/.

[2] Emma Marsden, *Seattle Diwali Celebration Disrupted by 'Vile and Racist' Protest*, NEWSWEEK (Nov. 8, 2026, 12:25 ET), https://www.newsweek.com/seattle-diwali-celebration-disrupted-by-vile-and-racist-protest-12683227.

federal prosecutors have charged as a hate crime.[3] In September, a Sikh truck driver was stabbed 17 times at a Wyoming rest stop.[4] On October 3, bricks were thrown through the windows of a Hindu temple in Ohio while priests and devotees prayed inside.[5] On October 11, a 19-year-old was arrested for allegedly planning a mass shooting at the Sri Venkateswara Swami Temple in Aurora, Illinois.[6] This fear is also reaching daily life: A September 2026 study by the Center for the Study of Organized Hate identified more than 542,000 anti-South Asian hateful posts on X between January 2025 and June 2026.[7] One in four Indian Americans report being called a slur since 2025, and nearly one in five have avoided wearing Indian dress in public.[8] These developments reflect a sustained and escalating pattern of hostility toward Indian American and South Asian American communities, including Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Jews, and Christians.

Mr. Lang's disruption, in particular, is part of a broader pattern of reckless and criminal conduct. Federal prosecutors charged him with assaulting police officers in the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, including allegedly striking officers with a baseball bat.[9] A federal judge ordered him detained before trial, citing the strength of the evidence and his stated willingness to use violence in the future,[10] and he remained in custody for about four years until President Trump pardoned him on his first day back in office. Since then, Mr. Lang has been charged in D.C. Superior Court with threatening a Metropolitan Police commander, charged with a felony in Minnesota

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[3] Quinn Welsch, *Utah Man Charged With Hate Crime After Attack On Muslim Mall Employee*, COURTHOUSE NEWS SERV. (July 17, 2026), https://www.courthousenews.com/utah-man-charged-with-hate-crime-after-attack-on-muslim-mall-employee/.

[4] Juliana Kim, *A Sikh Truck Driver is Stabbed Amid a Rise in Anti-South Asian Rhetoric*, NPR (Sept. 18, 2027, 13:07 ET), https://www.npr.org/2026/09/17/nx-s1-5971866/truck-driver-attack-wyoming-sikh-south-asian.

[5] Shubhangi Chowdhury, *Ohio Hindu Temple Hit by Brick Attack While Priests, Devotees Were Inside*, AM. BAZAAR (Oct. 3, 2026), https://americanbazaaronline.com/2026/10/03/ohio-hindu-temple-hit-by-brick-attack-while-priests-devotees-were-inside-489291/.

[6] Mark Rivera et al., *Palatine Police Say Mass Shooting Plot Thwarted, Possibly Targeting Aurora House of Worship*, ABC7 CHICAGO (Oct. 14, 2026), https://abc7chicago.com/post/palatine-man-alexandros-paporakis-19-arrested-charged-making-terrorist-threatalleged-aurora-mass-shooting-plot-police/19938541/.

[7] Ctr. for the Study of Organized Hate, *The Rising Tide of Anti-South Asian Hate in the United States* (Sept. 2026), https://www.csohate.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/The-Rising-Tide-of-Anti-South-Asian-Hate-in-the-United-States-1.pdf.

[8] Milan Vaishnav et al., *Indian Americans in a Time of Turbulence: 2026 Survey Results*, CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INT'L PEACE (Feb. 19, 2026), https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2026/02/indian-americans-in-a-time-of-turbulence-2026-survey-results.

[9] James Bickerton, *Freed January 6 Prisoner Launches Bid for Congress*, NEWSWEEK (June 13, 2025, 5:00 ET), https://www.newsweek.com/freed-january-6-prisoner-launches-bid-congress-2084659.

[10] Ryan J. Reilly, *Pardoned Capitol Rioter Who Said Jan. 6 Officer 'Needs to Be Put Down' Is Charged*, NBC NEWS (Mar. 2, 2026, 17:39 ET), https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/jan-6-rioter-jake-lang-arrested-threat-dc-police-officer-rcna261395.

for destroying an ice sculpture protesting U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)[11], and arrested in Texas on a terroristic threat charge.[12]

Mr. Allen's behavior is similarly marked by reckless and criminal conduct. In September 2026, local prosecutors in Portland, Oregon, filed four misdemeanor charges against him, including fourth-degree assault, harassment and two counts of disorderly conduct, following an incident connected to an anti-ICE protest.[13] He was also accused of violating probation related to a separate case, in which he was charged with punching a protester in the face, knocking him unconscious briefly.[14]

In Seattle, both Mr. Lang and Mr. Allen brought forth the so-called "replacement" theory, a false claim that non-white and non-Christian people are brought in to replace white Christian Americans. This same rhetoric has been cited by perpetrators of mass violence in Christchurch, New Zealand; El Paso, Texas; and Buffalo, New York.[15] It also stems from the same hateful rhetoric that casts immigrants as invaders and job thieves, rhetoric that the Trump Administration has broadcasted from its highest offices. When the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) publishes a graphic mocking a Sikh man with the message, "Get off our roads, you don't know how to drive Mr. Singh,"[16] it should come as no surprise that Mr. Lang and Mr. Allen were emboldened to disrupt a cultural celebration and boast a racist sign demanding that Indian Americans be deported.

Their hateful actions may constitute a hate crime under federal civil rights statutes like 18 U.S.C. § 245, which prohibits "willful[]…intimidat[ion]" by "force or threat of force" of "any person because of race, color, religion, or national origin and because" of that person's activity as a patron of public accommodation. Here, Mr. Lang and Mr. Allen willfully disrupted a Diwali celebration and threatened or used force against patrons of the Seattle Center Armory, a facility made available to the general public. Their actions may also constitute a crime under other federal laws, including 18 U.S.C. § 241, which prohibits the oppression or intimidation of any person who exercises "any right…secured…by the Constitution," and 18 U.S.C. § 247, which

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[11] Riley Moser, *Far-Right Influencer Jake Lang Charged With Vandalizing Sculpture on Minnesota Capitol Steps*, CBS NEWS (Mar. 4, 2026, 11:49 CT), https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/jake-lang-arrested-sculpture-minnesota-capitol-vandalism/.

[12] J.D. Miles, *Alleged Threat to Kill Karmelo Anthony Leads to Arrest and Charges After "Headshot" Remark, Court Records Show*, CBS NEWS TEX. (June 18, 2026, 10:23 CT), https://www.cbsnews.com/texas/news/right-wing-activist-jake-lang-threaten-kill-karmelo-anthony-court-records-exclusive/.

[13] Jeff Kirsch, *Multnomah County Issues Arrest Warrant for Right Wing Protester Thomas Allen*, KATU (Sept. 23, 2026, 9:02 PT), https://katu.com/news/local/arrest-warrant-issued-for-right-wing-protester-thomas-allen.

[14] *Id.*

[15] Jason Wilson & Aaron Flanagan, *The Racist 'Great Replacement' Conspiracy Theory Explained*, S. POVERTY L. CTR. (May 17, 2022), https://www.splcenter.org/resources/hatewatch/racist-great-replacement-conspiracy-theory-explained/.

[16] Madeleine Ngo, *D.H.S. Takes Down Post Depicting Sikh Trucker and Optimus Prime*, N.Y. TIMES (Sept. 10, 2026), https://www.nytimes.com/2026/09/10/us/politics/dhs-sikh-optimus-prime.html.

prohibits intentional "obstruct[ion], by force or threat of force" against a person's free exercise of religious beliefs." We urge you to launch investigations into whether Mr. Lang and Mr. Allen's actions violate these laws as well as any other applicable federal statutes.

Rather than combat this rise in hate with more action and resources, this Administration has dramatically reduced DOJ's investigations of hate crimes and decimated its Community Relations Service (CRS) unit, including illegally impounding $15 million of its fiscal year 2026 funding,[17] leaving communities across the country to face these threats without protection.[18] Where CRS once deployed trained conciliators to bring together police, faith leaders, and families after acts of hate, DOJ has cut it from 57 employees to just one.[19] It has also shrunk the team of federal prosecutors who handle hate crimes from roughly 70 attorneys to 26,[20] while simultaneously cancelling hundreds of grants that funded hate crime prevention and tracking.[21] American communities cannot afford a DOJ that steps back from its duty to protect them. CRS must be restored, and hate crimes must once again be treated as the serious federal offenses that they are.[22]

It is vital that those of us entrusted with public offices confront hate wherever it appears. No family should have to wonder whether it is safe to light a lamp, perform a dance, or bring their children to a festival in their own city. That is why we urge you to (1) investigate this incident as a potential federal hate crime and hold Mr. Lang and Mr. Allen accountable for a pattern of hateful conduct across the country, (2) hold a briefing, no later than Friday, December 4, on this incident and on broader efforts to prevent further instances of hateful acts against Indian American and South Asian American communities, and (3) re-prioritize hate crime investigations and restore CRS's pivotal work.

Sincerely,

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[17] U.S. GOV'T ACCOUNTABILITY OFF., B-338788, Impoundment Control Act of 1974: Review of the President's Special Message of September 25, 2026 (2026), available at https://www.gao.gov/assets/900/890546.pdf.
[18] MacFarlane, *supra* note 1.
[19] Letter from Rep. Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on the Judiciary, to Pamela J. Bondi, Att'y Gen., U.S. DEP'T OF JUST. (Mar. 12, 2026), https://democrats-judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/2026-03-12-raskin-to-bondi-doj-re-crs-letter.pdf.
[20] Celine Castronuovo, *Civil Rights Prosecutions Fall Under Trump's Justice Department*, BLOOMBERG L. (Oct. 29, 2026, 4:45 ET), https://news.bloombergtax.com/us-law-week/civil-rights-prosecutions-fall-under-trumps-justice-department.
[21] Sarah Roebuck, *DOJ Cancels Hundreds of Grants for Police, Crime Prevention Initiatives*, POLICE1 (Apr. 25, 2025, 13:07 ET), https://www.police1.com/police-grant-center/doj-cancels-hundreds-of-grants-for-police-crime-prevention-initiatives.
[22] 42 U.S.C. § 2000g-1; 18 U.S.C. § 249.

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