

US lawmakers condemn brutal police assault on Indian

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JPNN/Lalit K Jha /Washington / Feb 14, 2015/The brutal police assault on a 57-year-old Indian man in Alabama that left him partially paralysed, has been described as "horrible and tragic" by influential US lawmakers who said there are reasons to be concerned over incidents against South Asians in the country. "This week's incident in Alabama that left an Indian grandfather visiting his American family partially paralysed is horrible and tragic," said Congressman Ami Bera,

Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans. "I'm glad officials have acted quickly to respond and that the FBI has opened an investigation," said Bera, the only Indian American in the current Congress. "Moving forward, we must come together as a nation to tackle the very real issues our minority communities face, and to rebuild trust and understanding among law enforcement agencies and the diverse communities that they serve," he said. Democratic Congresswoman from New York Grace Meng expressed her concern over the incident in Madison city in which Sureshbhai Patel was partially paralysed by a police officer accused of using excessive force on February 6. "The episode in Madison, Alabama is very disturbing," she said. "We will be watching closely to see what happens with this case, and we hope and pray that Sureshbhai Patel recovers from his injury. We have reason to be concerned over this and other recent incidents that may be directed towards the Muslim and South Asian communities," she said.

"Nobody in our society must ever be subjected to hate and violence. All Americans have a responsibility to raise their voice and condemn bigotry when and wherever it occurs. "Our fight against intolerance must continue until all hate crimes are a thing of the past," Meng said as Indian Americans across the country continued to express outrage at the incident in Madison city of Alabama state last week. "Treatment that was meted to Sureshbhai was inhuman and tragic," said Sampat Shivangi, national president of Indian American Forum for Political Awareness. In an open letter to President Barack Obama, Shivangi sought justice for Patel.

"What a tragedy in a land of Lincoln and Martin Luther King! Looks like President Obama spoke too soon on racial intolerance in the world we live in, the other day in Washington, DC at a National Prayer meeting," he said. Eminent Indian American attorney from New York, Ravi Batra has volunteered to offer his services to the family of Patel so that he gets justice from the city of Madison. "Alabama, the site of the infamous Selma March, a march that shocked America and President Lyndon Baines Johnson to pass the Civil Rights laws, including, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, has much to atone for before it can be free of its evil and inhuman

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*past. Seems, some of its racist ghosts are alive and well in positions of authority," Batra said indicating that this was a racist attack. He said action needs to be taken against other police officers too who were at the scene of the incident and did not do anything to prevent the unjustified assault and use of force on Patel.*Agency