



Dear SABA North America Members,

Today, September 11, 2026, marks the 25th anniversary of a profound tragedy in America, one that forever changed the course of our nation's history. We remember the nearly 3,000 lives lost, honor the heroism and sacrifice of first responders, and reflect on a moment that reshaped America's legal, political, and social landscape for generations. In the years that followed, our nation confronted difficult questions about national security, civil liberties, immigration, and identity, while striving to preserve the democratic values that define us. Twenty-five years later, 9/11 remains both a source of profound sorrow and a reminder of our collective resilience.

The aftermath of 9/11 also brought significant consequences for South Asian, Muslim, Sikh, Arab, and immigrant communities, many of whom experienced heightened discrimination, xenophobia, and bias. It was against this backdrop that SABA North America emerged as a unified voice for South Asian legal professionals and the communities we serve. Formed in the years following 9/11, our organization recognized the urgent need for legal advocacy, civil rights protection, and community leadership at a time when many Americans were experiencing the real-world impact of sweeping social and legal changes. As founding member Sonjui Kumar describes, "The realization that we came to was that in that moment, we were more than a bar organization, we were a key voice for our community, and if we didn't speak up, who would?"

Twenty-five years later, while we have moved the needle forward through our naturalization drives, joined amicus briefs, and advocated by speaking with our Congressional representatives, there remains much work to be done.

Just this week, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security posted an image depicting a fictional South Asian man identified as "Mr. Singh," alongside the message "Self-Deport or Find Out" and the statement, "Get off our roads; you don't know how to drive, Mr. Singh." The post, which was widely criticized by Indian American and Sikh organizations as discriminatory and stereotypical, was subsequently removed. **This is not enough. We demand an apology.**

The timing and nature of this messaging are particularly troubling. In the aftermath of 9/11, hate crimes and acts of violence against South Asian, Muslim, Sikh, Arab, and other immigrant communities rose sharply. Our communities know all too well the consequences when people are reduced to stereotypes based on their name, appearance, faith, or perceived national origin.

We expect more from our government. Those entrusted with enforcing our laws must also uphold the Constitution and the rule of law, and protect the civil rights and equal dignity of everyone in our country, regardless of race, religion, national origin, or immigration status. Government rhetoric matters. It shapes how communities are perceived, how people are treated, and whether individuals feel that they belong and are protected under the law.

The events of this week, occurring as our nation marks the 25th anniversary of 9/11, are a

sobering reminder that the work of SABA North America is not finished. As we approach our own 25th anniversary, we are reminded of why this organization was created and why our voice continues to matter.

SABA North America will continue to advocate for immigrant rights, civil rights, and equal justice under law. We will continue to work with our sister bar organizations including the Sikh Coalition and with our broader legal and community partners to speak out when the rights and dignity of our communities are threatened. We will continue to demonstrate that tragedy can inspire collective action, strengthen institutions, and deepen our commitment to the principles upon which our country was founded.

Together, we are stronger. And together, we must continue to stand for the rule of law, equal protection, and a country in which every person is afforded dignity and justice.

If you are interested in joining SABA North America's Advocacy Committee, please reach out to advocacyus@sabanorthamerica.com and advocacyca@sabanorthamerica.com .

With respect and solidarity,

Lalitha Alladi

President

South Asian Bar Association of North America