

Hate Crime Inquiry Opened Into Vandalism of Sikh Temple in California

By LIAM STACKDEC. 9, 2015

The police in Buena Park, Calif., said on Wednesday that they had opened a hate crimes investigation into the vandalism of a Sikh house of worship after its members found expletive-laced graffiti referencing Islam and the Islamic State just days after the San Bernardino terrorist attack.

The graffiti was discovered on Sunday morning on the walls of the parking lot of the Gurdwara Singh Sabha as well as on a tractor-trailer parked there, said Jaspreet Singh, a board member of the temple.

“The graffiti had gang codes and a racial slur and profanity in reference to ISIS and Islam, which was misspelled,” Mr. Singh said. He said community members believed it was backlash for the mass shooting at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, which is only about 50 miles away.

“We are shocked by this incident and are concerned about our safety,” he said. “We are definitely scared now.”

Gurjot Kaur, a lawyer for the Sikh Coalition, an advocacy group that is representing the Gurdwara Singh Sabha, said in a statement that the group believed the vandalism constituted a hate crime. “We believe that the Gurdwara Singh Sabha was vandalized because it is a Sikh house of worship,” she said.

Cpl. Bret Carter, a spokesman for the Buena Park Police Department, said the department was committed to keeping the Sikh community safe in the wake of the San Bernardino attack.

Photo



Credit

Sikh Coalition

“The writing, because of what it is and because of the history of Sikhs being targeted in the past for retaliation after terrorist attacks, we are investigating it,” he said. “We want to take extra precautions to determine if this is a hate crime.”

Corporal Carter said the investigation was complicated because the truck, where the explicitly anti-Islam portion of