



Indian Diaspora Council

Indian Diaspora Council International

Shared heritage, aspirations and interests

www.indiandiasporacouncil.org

Post Office Box 650523 New York 11365 USA

PRESS RELEASE

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IDC CONDEMNS ATTACK ON PREGNANT AUSTRALIAN WOMAN

The Indian Diaspora Council International (**IDC**) joins with other organizations, agencies, groups, individuals and institutions locally and worldwide in expressing strong and unequivocal condemnation of the brutal, shocking attack on a pregnant Australian woman, Ms. Rana Haider, who was punched and kicked on 20th November 2019 in Parramatta, Australia.

Horrifying security camera videos show the moment the attacker, identified as Stipe Lozina, allegedly made a negative remark about Muslims before lunging at Ms. Haider. After several frenzied punches by the attacker, Ms. Haider fell to the ground and the assailant stomped on her before being wrestled away by bystanders. He has been refused bail and will remain behind bars for the next month, according to the Police.

The Police said the suspect has been charged with "assault occasioning actual bodily harm and affray" while Ms. Haider was taken to hospital and later discharged. Police declined to comment on the attacker's motives, but left open the possibility of additional charges against him.

Ms Haider, who said she was born and raised in Sydney, Australia, thanked the people who came to her assistance. "I want to see a world where people defend one another against cowardly acts like this and band together to protect the victims. We cannot allow behaviour like this to become the norm and sit silent," she wrote. "I have experienced occurrences of verbal abuse and hate from other Australians in the past but I have never thought that physical abuse of this nature could happen to me," Rana Haider said in a statement shared on Twitter by the *Australasian Muslim Times*, a community newspaper.

"If it were not for the brave actions of these members of the community in stopping the assault, the victim may very well have sustained much more serious injuries," said police inspector Luke Sywenkyj.

Rateb Jneid, president of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, said:

"This was clearly a racist and Islamophobic attack and we expect it to be treated as such."

The attack came just days after a report by researchers at Charles Sturt Univ. found Islamophobia in Australia was "a continuous phenomenon" and women wearing a headscarf are especially at risk. Of 113 female victims who reported being physically intimidated or harassed, researchers found 96% were wearing headscarves.

IDC considers this a despicable and reprehensible act, an unjustified criminal action directed at an innocent person regardless of religion, race or ethnic origin. **IDC** joins with community organizations and agencies in support of quick condemnation and community solidarity for justice. We share the pain and anguish of our brethren and sisters in Australia and globally, and we support all efforts to prevent similar attacks in the future. **IDC** supports national dialogue at local and national levels to resolve conflicts and misplaced perceptions which can lead to such tragedies. **IDC** shares in the belief that such callous and uncivilized crimes perpetrated against innocent people must not diminish the desire and courage to live peacefully with dignity and respect.

For more information contact: Ashook Ramsaran at AshookRamsaran@gmail.com Mobile (USA) +1 917 519 5783

Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC), established in 1997, is an international non-profit organization with global affiliates and membership in 21 countries with the objective to embrace, engage and enhance the shared heritage, aspirations and interests of persons of Indian origin with optimum inclusivity.