

Foreign Desk; SECTA

## **In Brooklyn, 9/11 Damage Continues**

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The signs in Midwood, Brooklyn, surfaced slowly at first. Curry packets at the New Apna Bazaar started to accumulate. The line of cars at the Sunoco station began to thin.

And then the crowd dwindled at Friday Prayer at the Makki Mosque on Coney Island Avenue. This, among worshipers once so numerous they prayed on the street for lack of room.

"Now the rooms are empty inside," said Danieyel Yaqoob, 32, a taxi driver who lives in Midwood. "It's hard to live here now. People don't have too many friends like before."

In this heavily Pakistani community, the word "before" begs no further explanation. It refers to a crucial turning point -- Sept. 11, 2001 -- in this neighborhood's modern history, a date that marked the start of an exodus of thousands of Pakistanis and the arrival of a new discomfort in day-to-day living for those who remained.

Arrests, closer scrutiny and an increased threat of deportation have plagued Arabs and Muslims nationwide. In New York, Egyptians, Moroccans, Jordanians and Lebanese have seen numbers of detentions. But no group appears harder hit than the Pakistanis.

Before Sept. 11, an estimated 120,000 Pakistanis lived in Brooklyn, concentrated in Midwood and Brighton Beach. Since then, between 40 and 50 percent have been detained or deported or have left on their own, said Bobby Khan, executive director of the Coney Island Avenue Project, which was formed after the attack to help Arabs and Muslims who were detained.

Some Pakistanis have migrated to Canada, while others have returned home, leaving divided families behind. About 1,000 have been detained, and 80 percent of them have been deported, Mr. Khan said.

"Even with the papers, people are scared of what's going on and they feel it's safer to move somewhere else," said Mohammad Iqbal, 45, who owns the New Apna Bazaar on Coney Island Avenue.

For Mr. Yaqoob and his friend and fellow taxi driver, Mohammed Ihsan, the heightened scrutiny translates to many sad interruptions in routine. The two men used to meet with a group of friends to watch cricket on satellite television.

Now they fear a meeting would suggest subversive behavior, or pique the suspicions of, perhaps, a building superintendent.

"We can't get together," said Mr. Ihsan. "If you're sitting at someone's home, six or seven guys, they'll ask, 'Why are you sitting there?'"

The economic fallout of this exodus, matched with New York's struggling economy, is also widely apparent. Pakistani-owned stores have closed, or are on the brink of going out of business. Mr. Iqbal, whose grocery sells lentils, paprika and other products for Pakistanis as well as kosher and Russian products, said he had seen business drop by half in the last 18 months.

Mr. Yaqoob, the taxi driver, waved a hand south along the shopping strip of Coney Island Avenue. "This used to be all Pakistani stores. Now it's become Russian stores."

The Arab exodus has also surfaced in sudden requests for one-way tickets out of the country, said a travel agent in Downtown Brooklyn.

"When they come, they ask for a one-way ticket because they have to go. We don't ask them any questions," said the travel agent, a 31-year-old Sudanese who spoke on condition of anonymity.

For 18-year-old Sameena Kausar, among the harder things to witness is the drain of fellow students in her Koran class and services at the Makki Mosque.

"It was crowded before," she said. "It's not many people now."

Photo: Mohammad Iqbal, 45, who owns the New Apna Bazaar on Coney Island Avenue, says many Pakistanis have moved because they don't feel safe. Officials say the Pakistani population in the area is down 40 to 50 percent. (Ting-Li

Wang/The New York Times)

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