

INDIA: Delhi violence: Can't bear to look at my photograph, says man at centre of vicious assault caught on camera

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On his way home, Mohammad Zubair was accosted by a mob wielding wooden sticks and iron rods. He said he was beaten up viciously, even though he begged the men to stop, before the pain took over and he fell unconscious.

Zubair was accosted by a mob wielding wooden sticks and iron rods in Chand Bagh on Monday. (Source: Reuters)

New Delhi: A packet of halwa and parathas for his children "this was the first thing on Mohammad Zubair's mind when he stepped out of his house in Chand Bagh on Monday. On his way home, Zubair was accosted by a mob wielding wooden sticks and iron rods. He said he was beaten up viciously, even though he begged the men to stop, before the pain took over and he fell unconscious.

Photos of the brutal assault on Zubair were captured by a Reuters photographer and shared widely on Tuesday.

The next thing Zubair remembered is waking up at GTB Hospital. He does not remember much about the attack, but the photograph brings up painful memories. "They beat me till they broke me. I begged them and they beat me some more, viciously. They made communally charged slurs and took (BJP leader) Kapil Mishra's name. I don't remember much. I just hoped my children were safe. I can't bear to look at my photograph, my legs shiver with pain," Zubair told The Indian Express.

Zubair had left his house on Monday morning to attend a local dua ka namaaz and was caught by protesters who, as per eyewitnesses, kept assaulting him with wooden sticks and iron rods till he lost consciousness. He sustained injuries to his head, arms, shoulders and legs. He has since been discharged from GTB Hospital and is being nursed back to health by his cousins in Inderpuri.

A mob attacks a person at Khajuri Khas crossing in Delhi on Tuesday. (Express Photo: Praveen Khanna)

A father of two daughters, aged five and two, and a son aged four, Zubair feared for their safety and shifted them to his village in UP.

He was supposed to pick up his wife, who was at a family wedding, before he was attacked.

"My wife and children are far away from all of this now. I am not a political person at all. I was just attending the local dua ki namaaz and returning home with sweets for my children. I thought it would make them happy. I don't know when I will see them," said Zubair. A Class IX passout, Zubair works as a labourer and earns around Rs 15,000 a month.

At his home two-room set house in Chand Bagh, his younger brother has locked himself and the rest of the family inside.

Their elderly mother was afraid every time she heard a commotion outside, while several children ran into their bedrooms and peeked through the curtains every now and then.

His brother and other family members have not been able to meet Zubair, fearing for their own safety. His brother lashed out at people asking him to file a police complaint.

“File a complaint against who? A mob? We are small people! We have nothing to do with the protests. We have now been sucked into it. It is a fight for survival now,” said his brother, who does not wish to be named.

Zubair is yet to come to terms with what happened on Monday afternoon: “I have Hindu friends and it pains me that it turned out like this.”

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