

Uber rape survivor files 36-page lawsuit in US court against the taxi company



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A 25-year-old Indian woman, raped by an Uber driver in New Delhi last month, has filed a lawsuit against the taxi service company in a US court arguing that it does not adequately screen its drivers and its “negligence and fraud” lead to her being sexually assaulted and humiliated.

The woman has not been named in the 36-page lawsuit filed in the California federal court against the San Francisco-based firm and has been identified only as ‘Jane Doe’.

She is seeking an unspecified amount of damages that should be determined at a jury trial and compensation for the “physical and monetary” harm and for harm to her “professional and personal reputations” the assault caused her.

She is also seeking a permanent injunction directing that Uber take all affirmative steps necessary to remedy the effects of the unlawful conduct alleged in the lawsuit and to “prevent repeated occurrences in the future.”

Following the filing of the lawsuit, the victim’s lawyer, prominent New York Attorney Douglas Wigdor said Uber’s focus on its “bottom line over the safety of its passengers has resulted in what can only be described as modern day electronic hitchhiking.”

“...We intend to hold Uber responsible for the significant physical and emotional harm it has caused to our client, while simultaneously seeking a court order mandating that Uber initiate certain safety precautions that they appear unwilling to do voluntarily,” he said.

Wigdor hoped that the lawsuit would bring about positive change that will ultimately protect people worldwide who are unaware of the “serious risks of entering into an Uber car.”

Jeanne Christensen, a partner at the Wigdor law firm, said Uber executives’ decisions to cut costs at the expense of customer safety forced the young woman to “pay the ultimate cost.”

“Her brutal rape by an Uber driver who was a known repeat sexual predator was a result of a global Uber policy that has far-reaching consequences. We intend to hold Uber accountable for violence that could easily have been avoided had even a minimal background check been conducted,” Christensen said.

Wigdor added that the lawsuit seeks to “slam the brakes” on Uber’s reckless worldwide expansion at the “unfortunate expense of basic customer safety.” It demanded that Uber must implement necessary safety measures including opening dedicated 24/7 customer support centres in every city that it operates in, requiring all its drivers to install GPS tracking systems and tamper-proof video cameras and providing female drivers.

It said Uber’s “negligence, fraud and other unlawful actions” caused the woman’s sexual assault, which has “humiliated, degraded, violated and robbed” her of her dignity.