



## **Muslim-Jewish Coalition Expresses Outrage at Tragic Murders in Pittsburgh Synagogue**

October 28, 2018 – New York – The Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council (MJAC) is shocked and outraged by the horrendous act of terror committed inside the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on Saturday. The attacker, who was apprehended by law enforcement, killed at least eleven people and injured six others during Shabbat morning prayer services.

“To murder innocent people during a prayer service is a crime beyond imagination,” said MJAC Co-Chair Farooq Kathwari. “As we mourn the victims, we must redouble our efforts to eradicate anti-Semitism and all forms of hatred and bigotry that could lead someone to commit such a heinous act. Confronting the recent rise in hate crimes has been the primary focus for our Council’s activities, and clearly there is still much work to do.”

The assailant has been charged with two counts of hate crimes by federal prosecutors due to reported activity on social media and statements during the murderous act in which he expressed his intention to kill Jews. A synagogue located in the historically Jewish Squirrel Hill neighborhood, Tree of Life had been participating in a national initiative to raise awareness about refugees during Shabbat services. The program, organized by HIAS, appears to have been among the shooter’s motivations for attacking the Jewish worshippers. The shooter reposted remarks that called both Jews and Muslims evil and railed against Jews helping Muslims enter the United States, an apparent reference to the refugee shabbat event.

“Our hearts are with the families who lost loved ones at the Tree of Life Synagogue this Shabbat,” said MJAC Co-Chair Stanley Bergman. “This unconscionable act is a sobering reminder that unchecked hatred of the other can easily devolve into menacing violence. The Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council recognizes that an attack that singles out one religion is an attack against all Americans who seek to practice their faith free from fear.”

The Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council, founded nearly two years ago, brings together 46 civil society, religious, and business leaders from across the United States to advocate for domestic policy issues of common concern. It has played an active role in the passage of hate crime legislation. The American Jewish Committee (AJC) and the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) are its co-conveners. The Council has eight regional affiliates across the United States, in Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, New Jersey, New York, Philadelphia, South Florida, and Washington, D.C.