



Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council Statement

on President's Condemnation of Hate Crimes

March 1, 2017 – New York – We agree with the President's assertion in his speech at the Joint Session of Congress that "we are a country that stands united in condemning hate and evil in all its forms." Our organization exemplifies that idea – the Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council was established to unite the voices of our communities in condemning and combating hate crimes, anti-Semitism, and anti-Muslim bigotry.

That is why we call on the President not only to continue denouncing crimes against people of faith because of their faith, but also to take concrete steps to ensure that these crimes are investigated and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Hate crimes against Jews and Muslims because of their religion are on the rise. In the past six weeks, mosques in the states of Washington, Florida, and Texas have been burned in arson attacks. Bomb threats against Jewish community centers, which began in January, are continuing, and two Jewish cemeteries have been vandalized. Prompt and unambiguous condemnation of such crimes reassure the affected communities and reinforce the notion that such actions are unacceptable, a message that the President needs to reiterate more actively and forcefully.

We urge the President to take two measures immediately. First, instruct the Attorney General to prioritize investigation and prosecution of hate crimes, and the U.S. attorneys throughout the country to engage more closely with affected communities and state and local law enforcement on hate crimes cases. Second, ensure that funding for the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice is strengthened in the administration's 2017 budget submission to Congress. The Civil Rights Division of DOJ must have the resources to respond to the rise in hate crimes by increasing its engagement with states and localities in upholding the nation's civil rights laws.

Working together, the states and the federal government can enforce the laws and reverse the rise in hate crimes. That will require presidential leadership. We look forward to working with the President, the administration and the U.S. Congress in implementing these important steps so that we may continue to protect all Americans, regardless of their race, religion or ethnicity.