



Multifaith Press Conference
Response to President Trump's Anti-Muslim Tweets
December 1st, 2017
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Exactly one year ago today, many of us stood here—at the Islamic Center—for a meeting of Los Angeles clergy leaders called Sacred Resistance and Sanctuary, an attempt to carve out a strategic response to the targeting of minority communities. The clergy present were predominantly Latino. A leader from the Muslim community rose and greeted guests with words that penetrated the depths of my being: “Our message to the immigrant community,” he said, “YOU ARE SAFE HERE. We will wrap our arms of love and protection around you.”

Think about that. A Muslim community leader, in the immediate aftermath of the election, standing before a room of Latino clergy, promising to protect and defend their most vulnerable from threat of deportation.

I have thought often of that moment over the past year—it was clearly what Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel would have called high moral grandeur.

And over the past year, the clergy and leadership of this city have courageously and lovingly stood with and for one another as each of our communities has in turn been targeted, shamed, threatened.

Today, we are back in this room because the person who sits in the most powerful office in the world has again used his power to spread incendiary propaganda that will only inspire hatred and fuel violence, this time against the Muslim community.

And now, just like after #Charlottesville, hate groups that have operated on the fringes of society have been promoted and given credibility by the President of the United States.

We must not downplay the danger of this reckless act.

1. We fear that this will inevitably likely lead to a spike in anti-Muslim hate crimes. helping to surface latent anti-Muslim sentiment here and in Europe.
2. We fear that our ability to address the real threats of violent extremism will be severely undermined by the promulgation of this hateful and discredited material.
3. We know that this will only further divide this country, increasing the sense of vulnerability already felt by the Muslim and other minority communities.

I speak to you today as a rabbi and as a Jew. My people knows all too well the dangers of fascistic regimes that rise to power through stigmatization and scapegoating of vulnerable minority populations.

We will not shrug this off as yet another reckless act from a reckless administration. Instead, we say today to the Muslim community: we meant it when we promised to use all of the spiritual, political and intellectual resources we possess to ally with and protect one another in these perilous times. YOU ARE SAFE HERE. We will wrap our arms of love and protection around you.