

## JCRC-NY Statement on the Mass Shooting at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Synagogue

***“Anyone who destroys a life is considered as if he destroyed an entire world.”***

- Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5

Worlds were senselessly destroyed today. We are outraged by the horrific and hateful mass murder of 11 of our brothers and sisters who were gathered for a celebratory Shabbat prayer service at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Synagogue. What began as a place of holiness was transformed into one of fear, vulnerability and death. We mourn those who were killed, and our prayers are with the wounded and survivors, all innocent victims of a blatantly anti-Semitic attack.

We are deeply grateful to the first responders who ran towards the bullets and prevented the carnage from getting worse. Additionally, we thank the New York Police Department, the FBI, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the New York State Troopers and others throughout the metropolitan area for swiftly mobilizing today to protect our Jewish institutions and remaining vigilant on our behalf.

Recent events and a documented rise in anti-Semitic incidents reinforce our ongoing concern that hatred and violence can stem from many sources and motivations. Many varieties of anti-Semitism are not unique to one political party, one faith group, or one community, but can be found throughout civil society. Its pervasiveness underscores that when one group or faith is at risk, we are all at risk.

History has shown that inflammatory rhetoric can lead to unimaginable consequences. Public discourse not only requires civility and respect, it demands it for the soul of our country and the safety of our communities. Our country must come together to end this toxic divide and prevent further dehumanization and baseless hatred. We hold those public officials and leaders who continue to traffic in reckless speech responsible for its tragic consequences.

We are encouraged by the messages of solidarity, hope and revulsion to anti-Semitism which have been offered by many public officials, faith leaders, and community members. Such statements reassure us of the basic goodness of our neighbors and our nation. We shall not allow extremist hatemongers to tear at the fabric of our nation.

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