

USA: Statement on Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooting

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NNU Statement on Synagogue Shooting: ‘End Hate Speech in Wave of Racist/Anti-Semitic Attacks’.

WASHINGTON - In the wake of the heinous assault on a Pittsburgh synagogue Saturday, and other attacks of the past week, National Nurses United (NNU) today joined with Americans across the country in calling for an end to hate speech and other rhetoric that enables and emboldens racist and anti-Semitic violence and threats.

"Nurses care for those harmed by the perpetrators of hate speech and violence. No society can be called truly democratic where physical and mental safety are threatened due to race, religion, nationality or ethnicity," said Deborah Burger, RN, NNU co-president.

"The Pittsburgh murders, which have been characterized as the first anti-Jewish pogrom in U.S. history, must be viewed in tandem with the killing of two African-Americans in a Kentucky Kroger store and the mailing of pipe bombs to critics of President Trump, many of them Jewish and African-American," added NNU Executive Director Bonnie Castillo, RN.

NNU has long stressed that personal safety is also a health issue, as are the effects of racially and anti-Semitic motivated shootings and violence on families. In addition to the loss of life and injury, there are also long-term consequences that can erode the mental and physical health of affected family members and entire communities for years.

"Sadly, the past two weeks is only the latest wave in an appalling increase in incidents of anti-Semitic and racist violence, threats, and vandalism that are encouraged by inflammatory rhetoric, including by the President who should be a voice of calm and unity, not a promoter of racial division," Burger said.

"At this time of crisis, our nation needs real leadership to unify all of us against these horrific attacks, not pandering to division and creating a toxic climate of fear," said Castillo. She also urged Americans to make a statement by voting in the upcoming elections, reminding voters that "our democracy must not be extinguished by these profound attacks on the principles of justice that we hold dear."

Specifically, NNU criticized the President's racist characterizations of Mexicans, immigrants, African Americans, and Muslims, use of anti-Semitic and racist code words like "globalists" (a covert anti-Semitic stereotype) and labeling the African American candidate for Florida governor Andrew Gillum as a "thief," as well as encouraging violence in campaign rallies, and repeated depictions of the media the "true enemy of the people."

Equally alarming, said Burger, has been the depiction by the President and a number of candidates in campaign ads of an alleged "invasion" of a "caravan" of Central American families seeking asylum

in the U.S. from horrific violence and threats at home as being “funded” by George Soros. Media reports have suggested that such rhetoric directly influenced the Pittsburgh mass murderer.

“All the inflammatory rhetoric causes enormous harm to our civil society, and undermines the integrity of our elections and our political system,” Castillo said.

“As a nation,” Castillo concluded, “we would do well to recall the words and advice of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., that have never been more relevant than today, with a goal ‘to create a beloved community (that) will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.’”

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National Nurses United (NNU)

P.S.

• Common Dreams.org, October 30, 2018:

<https://www.commondreams.org/newswire/2018/10/29/nnu-statement-synagogue-shooting-end-hate-speech-wave-racistanti-semitic-attacks?cd-origin=rss&utm>