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Press conference against Islamophobia

As hatred and bigotry spread like wildfire, Portland faith and civic leaders will take a strong stand against
Islamophobia and all forms of racism on **Wednesday, Dec. 16, at 10 a.m. at a press conference at**
Portland City Hall.

The press conference will include a diverse group of leaders who have over many years courageously
fought for human rights. Among them are Rabbi Joey Wolf of Havurah, Shalom Synagogue; Mary Jo Tully,
chancellor of the Catholic Archdiocese of Portland; Wajdi Said, president of the Muslim Educational Trust;
and Jan Musgrove Elfers, interim executive director of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. They will call on
every one of us to show our support for Portland’s Muslim community and do all we can to ensure that
Islamophobia and other forms of racism have no place in our city.

The press conference will take place against the backdrop of the attacks in Paris and San Bernardino and
their aftermath. These attacks have caused shock waves in our communities. They are being used by some as
a pretext for instilling a frightening climate that turns every Muslim into a potential suspect. Many Muslim
citizens in our community live in a heightened state of fear of verbal or physical attack.

“At times like these,” says Wajdi Said, “when many are sowing seeds of division and fear, it is heartening
to know that there are good people in Portland taking a stand to uphold equal rights for all people.”

“The fight against Islamophobia is necessary to defend our democratic freedoms and human rights,” adds
Kayse Jama, executive director of the Center for Intercultural Organizing. “We affirm the universality of the
anti-racist struggle and, through it, equality in law, respect and dignity of all human beings.”

Following the press conference, the Portland City Council will meet at 2 p.m. at City Hall and is
expected to pass a resolution condemning Islamophobia.
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of Christian denominations, congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, environmental ministry and public policy advocacy.