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COUNTRY'S LARGEST CHRISTIAN ECUMENICAL ORGANIZATION CONDEMNS PRESIDENT TRUMP TARGETING MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) strongly condemns President Trump's executive order suspending refugee resettlement for 120 days, indefinitely suspending the admission of Syrian refugees, and suspending entry from Muslim and Arab majority countries for at least 90 days. The United States was founded on the principles of welcoming the refugee and immigrant and guaranteeing freedom of religion. EMO urges our elected officials and all people of goodwill to remain true to these foundational American values.

For nearly 40 years, EMO has been resettling refugees fleeing persecution and violence, seeking safety in the United States—just as refugees and immigrants have done throughout the history of the United States. Refusing sanctuary to those who are suffering goes against the very foundations of our democracy, and certainly the foundations of our religious traditions to “welcome the stranger.” It also puts at risk those refugees who have already secured safety within our borders by marginalizing these communities. We affirm the dignity of every human being and state firmly that to deny safety to Muslims or any others based on their religion or birthplace strips them of their sacred personhood and is an affront to human decency.

At a press conference held today at Augustana Lutheran Church in northeast Portland, Jan Musgrove Elfers, EMO executive director, gave the following statement:

Today, persecution and violence drives people from their homes throughout the world, including in countries where those who are forced to flee are overwhelmingly Muslim. Mothers, fathers and children are facing, through no fault of their own, dire dangers and horrors. In Syria alone, civilians are targeted by chemical weapons and subject to arbitrary arrests, torture, kidnappings and executions. Children are conscripted to be soldiers. To turn our backs on their unspeakable suffering is unconscionable and goes against the very foundations of our democracy, and certainly against the foundations of our religious traditions. It puts at risk those refugees who

MEMBER DENOMINATIONS

African Methodist Episcopal Church ■ American Baptist Churches of Oregon ■ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ■ Christian Methodist Episcopal Church ■ Church of the Brethren ■ Community of Christ
Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon ■ Episcopal Diocese of Oregon ■ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ■ Greek Orthodox Church ■ Presbyterian Church (USA)—Presbytery of the Cascades
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) ■ Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland ■ United Church of Christ ■ United Methodist Church ■ Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

have already secured safety within our borders by marginalizing these communities. We state firmly that to deny safety to Muslims or any others based on their religion or birthplace strips them of their sacred personhood and is an affront to human decency.

A line has been drawn. It is our sacred responsibility to rise up and to uphold the dignity of all people created in the image of God. We stand today on the right side of history, on the shoulders of those men and women in our history who spoke up and acted out against bigotry, xenophobia and discrimination. Our very souls and the soul of this nation are at stake, should we look the other way when such a grave injustice is being done. The moral fabric of this nation depends on brave people speaking out with clarity; declaring that an injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. For we know that when one community suffers we all suffer—we are bound together in our humanity.

Our scriptures implore us to love our neighbors and to seek justice for all. As people of faith, this is not an option—it is God’s command to us. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated, “There comes a time when one must take a position which is neither safe, politic nor popular; but one must take it because it is right.” Today we take a stand for what is right.

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.

Since the 1970s, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon has welcomed and assisted our new neighbors as they arrive in the Portland metro area. Our Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees (SOAR), an affiliate of Church World Service, resettles hundreds of refugees a year. SOAR links sponsors—congregations, friends or community organizations—with refugees before they arrive in the United States, and helps sponsors to welcome and assist the refugees in their adjustment to a new life in the Portland metro area.