



For Immediate Release

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Tragedy in Pittsburgh

The Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) stands with the Jewish community in this time of tragedy, death, and fear. We condemn the horrific shooting at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh this weekend and urge a cessation of the heated political rhetoric that is giving rise to anti-Semitism, white supremacy, and violence around the country.

Just over three years ago, 9 members of Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC, also died practicing their faith. It is tragic that many faith communities are beginning to feel that they can only gather safely if they provide for armed deterrence from deadly acts of hate from guns and firearms. Houses of worship should not be places where people fear to assemble.

In the last 10 days, we have also seen a black man and woman killed in the Kentucky Kroger and numerous political and religious figures targeted for harm, including the mailing of explosive packages to numerous public officials. We denounce all these heinous acts and call for a response of justice and civility.

[The Industrial Areas Foundation](#) (IAF) is the nation's oldest and largest non-partisan network of 75 Broad Based Community Organizations throughout the United States representing hundreds of thousands of families. We intentionally work in local areas to build a sense of greater community valuing diversity, pluralism, and acting together to build local democracy and public life. This week, we are supporting and organizing local gatherings and vigils of solidarity to stand with our Jewish brothers and sisters.

We know that the current polarized climate doesn't have to be nor should it be normalized. We have demonstrated that people from diverse backgrounds can work together around common agendas that cross racial, ethnic, religious, political, gender and class divides. We are compelled to challenge all of us to stand with Jewish communities throughout the nation in this hour of horror and tragedy.

In this era of hyper-partisanship, we call upon our elected officials, from our nation's capital to our local leaders, to work across party lines in a way that represents our interests and to stop using language that polarizes and encourages those who would use hate as a tool.

Over the long term, our work of organizing and community building for a common good continues. This requires tolerance and acceptance of disagreements from those with a broad spectrum of political and religious beliefs and traditions, and the acknowledgment that we are all responsible for forming a common public life.

We should never forget the words from the Book of Psalms:

*Light shines in the darkness for the upright; *
the righteous are merciful and full of compassion...
For they will never be shaken*
the righteous will be kept in everlasting remembrance*