



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 11, 2015

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**National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA) Calls for Federal Department of Justice Investigation on Chapel Hill Shooting that Killed Three American Muslim Students**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA) stands in solidarity with the Chapel Hill, N.C. community in the aftermath of the shooting deaths of three American Muslim students.

While police have not yet determined a motive, suspect Craig Stephen Hick reportedly made comments that condemned all religions on his Facebook page. Chapel Hill Police identified the victims as Deah Shaddy Barakat, 23, Yusor Mohammad, 21, and Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha, 19.

“We are deeply heartbroken by the deaths of these three young students,” said Suman Raghunathan, executive director of South Asian Americans Leading Together, an NCAPA member organization. “While we await additional information on the investigation, it is critical that we examine the crime and the suspect’s motivation to the fullest extent of the law, and with the full weight of federal law enforcement officials’ power. These tragic killings come as hate violence targeting our communities continues to rise. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, anti-Muslim hate crimes in 2014 were at their highest level since 2001.”

“We call on the Department of Justice to investigate this tragic incident as a possible hate crime,” said Gregory Cendana, chair of NCAPA and executive director of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance. “We urge individuals to attend vigils of support occurring nationwide, and we send our sincere condolences to the victims’ families and loved ones. The Chapel Hill community has our support.”

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*The National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), founded in 1996, is a coalition of 34 national Asian Pacific American organizations. Based in Washington D.C., NCAPA serves to represent the interests of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AA & NHPI) communities and to provide a national voice on policy issues and priorities.*