

NEWS ADVISORY

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Brutal Attack of Latino Men in Mulino Seen as Hate Crime, Racist Backlash
Immigrant and Community Organizations call for Protection and Vigilance

Event: News Conference
Date: Friday, June 1, 2007
Hour: 11 am
Site: 2817 NE Alberta, Mural of La Sirenita Restaurant

In response to the aggression suffered by Edwin Gonzalez and Alex Guzman last Thursday night in Mulino at the hands of several dozen youth, and other disturbing incidents reminded by the sprayed swastikas on the mural of a Portland Mexican restaurant, leaders of immigrant communities and social justice organizations are issuing statements, concurrent with a sense of urgency that a group of advocates for just immigration law reform are imploring the Oregon Congressional delegation for public comments and support on key issues of the proposed legislation.

Brief statements will be given by spokespersons noted below among others 1) joining the call for stepped up vigilance and protections for all communities in the State of Oregon and an end to hate crimes and racial tensions provoked by misinformation about the pending legislation and bigotry towards immigrant communities; 2) promoting the public vigil slated for Sunday, June 3 at 6 pm at Carnegie Center Park in Oregon City.

Speakers: Marco Mejia, News Conference Moderator, American Friends Service Committee, 503 740 8035 Aeryca Steinbauer, CAUSA 503 984 6816 Thach Nguyen, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO) 503 889 6920 Kayse JAMA, Center for Intercultural Organizing 503 287 4117 Barbara Byrd, Secretary-Treasurer, AFL-CIO

Other leaders from faith communities, social justice organizations, and immigrant communities are slated to comment as well.

Statement:

We are saddened by the news of the brutal attack suffered by two Latino men at the hands of 30 white youth in Wagon Wheel Park, in Mulino, Oregon. We would like to believe that this is an isolated case, but all of the information points to a strong anti-immigrant sentiment that dangerously threatens to perpetuate even more violent situations.

Regardless of the legal outcomes for the guilty youth, it is evident that in each beating, in each shooting, in each act of aggression, in each introduced amendment of the law, exists an irrational hate against a very vulnerable community. The attacks by the police in Los Angeles, the attempts to promote punitive laws, this attack by the 30 youth in Mulino illustrates this type of vitriol.

The immigration phenomenon is a complex issue coupled with deep political and economic roots which begs urgent understanding. Simplifying this issue by removing its attendant causes and consequences has resulted in undemocratic and inhumane policies. Then these erroneous policies are put into practice

and undergird violent act by radical groups like the Minute Men, or by persons like the youth who assaulted the Latinos in Mulino.

Our Congressional representatives have a great responsibility in honoring the history of this country and the enormous contribution by the immigrant workers of the past, as well as now remembering the immigrant workers of the present. It is not terrorism when an immigrant seeks better living conditions while working in secret. On the contrary, it is survival. As human beings we must be in solidarity with the people most in need.

Therefore, as representatives of the organizations issuing this statement, we:

- 1) Strongly condemn these acts and call for the appropriate authorities to protect the immigrant communities.
- 2) Call for all community groups, union, churches and communities of faith, professional organizations, to also condemn these types of violent acts.
- 3) Call for urgent coordination by all people to be ready to respond to such situations in their towns and cities throughout the state of Oregon
- 4) Promise to be protagonists in seeking viable solutions to these types of situations, and being proactive in educations the wider public through our community activities.

Comunicado de Prensa.

Con profunda tristeza y consternación hemos recibido la noticia del ataque brutal que dos latinos han sufrido por parte de 30 jóvenes blancos en el parque Wagon Wheel de la Ciudad de Mulino. Quisiéramos creer que éste es un ataque aislado, pero todas las circunstancias parecen indicar que existe un fuerte sentimiento en contra de los inmigrantes que peligrosamente amenaza escalar hacia situaciones más violentas.

Independientemente de las consecuencias legales hacia los culpables, es evidente que en cada golpe, en cada disparo, en cada agresión, en cada propuesta de ley, existe un odio irracional en contra de una comunidad muy vulnerable. Los ataques de la policía de Los Angeles, las intenciones de promover leyes más duras, éste ataque de 30 jóvenes hacia dos latinos, son sólo muestras de ese odio.

El fenómeno de la migración es un problema muy complejo que tiene raíces políticas y económicas profundas que es urgente precisar. El obviar la comprensión de ese fenómeno, de sus causas y consecuencias deriva en políticas antidemocráticas y antihumanas. Esas políticas equivocadas luego son llevadas a la práctica en acciones violentas por grupos radicales como los Minute Man, o por individuos como los que atacaron a los dos latinos en la ciudad de Mulino.

Los Congresistas y Representantes tienen una gran responsabilidad con la historia porque al reconocer la enorme contribución de los trabajadores inmigrantes a este país, no pueden olvidar a los inmigrantes actuales. El emigrar en busca de mejores condiciones de vida y trabajar en muchas de las veces a escondidas no es terrorismo, por el contrario, es supervivencia. Como seres humanos debemos ser solidarios con los más necesitados.

Las organizaciones firmantes:

1. Condenamos enérgicamente estos hechos y hacemos un llamado a las autoridades correspondientes a proteger a la comunidad inmigrante.
2. Hacemos un llamado a todas las organizaciones comunitarias, sindicatos, iglesias, organizaciones profesionales, etc. a que se pronuncien en contra de estos hechos violentos.
3. Hacemos un llamado urgente a todos los individuos de la comunidad a que se organicen. Sólo organizados podremos dar respuestas inmediatas y efectivas antes estos ataque de odio.
4. Nos comprometemos a ser protagonistas en la búsqueda de soluciones viables a este tipo de problemas. Tales soluciones conllevan la educación de la comunidad a través de nuestras actividades comunitarias.

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