

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 1, 2021

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APANO condemns pandemic-linked anti-Asian hate and bias incidents

Recent anti-Asian, anti-Muslim incidents are unacceptable. We must root out hate and bias to keep Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities safe during the pandemic.

Portland, OR -- APANO is appalled by the recent incidents of anti-Asian and anti-Muslim violence in the Portland area, and we condemn the hate and racism fueling these attacks. The incidents include Asian American community members who were physically attacked while using public transit on [December 15th](#) and [January 22nd](#). Race was named by the perpetrators of these assaults, as it was in a [January 22nd](#) incident involving anti-Muslim slurs and intimidation at a gas station in Southeast Portland. Many Asian-owned businesses along 82nd Avenue and in the Jade District have also recently reported incidents of vandalism.

As an organization that unites Asians and Pacific Islanders to advance equity, we believe there is no place for this kind of violence and hatred in our community, and we extend our wishes for healing and support to those who have been affected.

These incidents underscore what Asian American and other leaders have been warning:

Words matter. The increase of hateful, racist rhetoric targeting Asian Americans during the COVID pandemic creates real harm. Since the start of the pandemic, we have condemned the use of phrases like the “China virus” and attempts by national and local leaders to scapegoat Asian Americans in the face of a global pandemic that has disproportionately affected Black, Indigenous, Pacific Islander, Latinx, and other people of color and that we must address collectively.

In the past year, we have seen these sentiments translate into a spike of hate and bias incidents against Asian Americans. Nationally, more than [2,500](#) incidents have been reported to Stop AAPI Hate between March and August 2020, with hundreds more reported since. The Oregon Department of Justice bias hotline has received [68 reports](#) from Asian Americans since January 2020. Recently, we saw how years of dangerous rhetoric culminated into a violent insurrection at our nation’s capital. This is why it’s critical that we call out racist language. Leaders like Clackamas County Commissioner Mark Shull must be held accountable, including resigning where warranted, for their anti-Muslim and anti-trans [messages](#).

“A year into the pandemic, at a time when we all need to do our part to keep each other safe, it is unacceptable that Asian Americans continue to be targeted and experience these harms,” says Duncan Hwang, Associate Director of APANO. “It is up to all of us to root out these bigoted, racist sentiments that sow divides and make our communities unsafe.”

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders continue to be disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Pacific Islanders have among the highest case rates in Oregon, and AAPIs are among the essential workers and small business owners who have been affected by this pandemic. Culturally relevant and accessible resources are needed to support AAPIs through this crisis, as our communities also experience heightened levels of hate and bias.

We are encouraged by national and local leaders who are proactively addressing this issue. At the federal level, President Biden issued a [memo](#) last week condemning the federal government's role in spreading anti-Asian bias and directing his administration to eliminate biased language and assist in data collection and reporting. Locally, Multnomah County District Attorney Mike Schmidt is addressing these incidents as racially motivated hate crimes.

As leaders address hate, we call for a focus on and investment in transformative justice.

We do not need more law enforcement. Police do not prevent these crimes and too often community members do not report incidents to them due to language or other barriers or fears of immigration enforcement. As we saw on January 6th, members of law enforcement can sometimes embolden and enact white supremacist violence. AAPIs need community-centered solutions that prioritize healing for survivors of hate crimes. Our communities need holistic tools besides incarceration to help transform the bigotry underlying such violence. We continue to uplift the calls of Unite Oregon and Imagine Black to divest from the police and invest in the health of Black and Indigenous communities of color.

We create safer communities by addressing words, jokes, slights, and comments that underlie these more violent actions. It is incumbent on all of us to do this. [Hollaback!](#), in partnership with Asian Americans Advancing Justice, offers resources and trainings for bystander interventions. When these incidents do occur, there should be a culturally responsive, survivor-centered system where people can report them and where appropriate support for those affected by harassment are made available.

Community members who have been impacted by a bias-driven incident can refer to APANO and Portland United Against Hate's (PUAH) "[Resilience to Hate Resource Guide.](#)" Incidents can be reported to PUAH at www.reporthatepdx.com, the Oregon Department of Justice's Bias Response Hotline at 1-844-924-BIAS, 711 for Oregon Relay, or at StandAgainstHate.Oregon.gov. The "Resilience to Hate Resource Guide" also has references for mental health and victim support resources.

About APANO

APANO unites Asians and Pacific Islanders to build power, develop leaders, and advance equity through organizing, advocacy, community development, and cultural work. We envision a just world where Asians and Pacific Islanders and communities who share our aspirations and struggles have the power, resources, and voice to determine our own futures, and where we work in solidarity to drive political, social, economic, and cultural change. Learn more at www.apano.org.

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