



For Immediate Release  
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Contact: Abby Stamelman Hocky  
Executive Director  
Interfaith Center of Greater Philadelphia  
T: 215-222-1012 ext. 1  
E: [ash@interfaithcenterpa.org](mailto:ash@interfaithcenterpa.org)

Contact: Rev. Nicole D. Diroff  
Associate Executive Director  
Interfaith Center of Greater Philadelphia  
T: 215-222-1012 ext. 3  
E: [ndd@interfaithcenterpa.org](mailto:ndd@interfaithcenterpa.org)

## JOINT STATEMENT ON THE INCIDENT AT AL AQSA ISLAMIC SOCIETY

Al Aqsa Islamic Society and School are founding and active partners in both the Interfaith Center of Greater Philadelphia and the Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia. Today we stand with Imam Mohamed Shehata and our friends in that community, saddened that they have been victims of a vile act of desecration targeting a sacred place of worship and study. We have known the great beauty, peace, love, and strength that comes from our work together as diverse faith communities. Together we weave bonds that cannot be broken; together we demonstrate that religion can be a force for good; and *together* we continue to publicly affirm our commitment to *Dare to Understand* one another.

We re-dedicate ourselves to the work of dialogue, education, and community-building that seems more urgent each day. We stand united by the following commitment ... and invite the citizens of our region to join us:

We dedicate ourselves as individuals:  
To promote peace in our homes and communities.

We pledge to work with others:  
To eliminate the causes of hatred,  
To honor the dignity of all people.  
**To *Dare to Understand*.**

We pledge to be instruments of God's peace:  
To make our homes and neighborhoods zones of peace, free from fear,  
filled with respect, and marked with deeds of kindness.

Founded in 2004, the Interfaith Center of Greater Philadelphia advances mutual trust, understanding, and cooperation among faith communities, in order to work together for the common good of the region, [www.interfaithcenterpa.org](http://www.interfaithcenterpa.org). Chair of the Board is The Very Reverend Judith A. Sullivan, Dean of the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral.

The Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia, formed in 2006 to unite religious leaders, to build relationships of mutual support, to offer a moral and spiritual voice and to take action on issues of critical concern in our region. Staffed by the Interfaith Center of Greater Philadelphia, the RLC represents more than 30 religious traditions and denominations within our community. It is led by Co-Conveners Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, Rabbi David Straus, Imam Anwar Muhaimin and Bishop Claire Schenot Burkat. Please visit us at [www.interfaithcenterpa.org/rlc](http://www.interfaithcenterpa.org/rlc).