

ETHIOPIAN COMMUNITY OF CHARLOTTE AND SURROUNDING AREAS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ETHIOPIAN COMMUNITY OF CHARLOTTE URGENTLY CALLS ALL CHARLOTTEANS TO COME TOGETHER TOWARDS PEACEFUL DIALOGUE ABOUT IMMIGRANTS

Charlotte, NC. **December 3, 2015** The Ethiopian Community Association of Charlotte and Surrounding Areas (ECAC) is deeply saddened by the recent horrific attacks in San Bernardino, CA and is urging the Charlotte community to continue being a beacon of peaceful dialogue.

“When shocking attacks like the senseless massacre in California occur, it is especially important for us as a community to come together,” said Mr. Naod Sergew, a member of the leadership of ECAC. He continued, “As angry as we all are, it is vital to not give in to the forces that aim to divide us.”

The ECAC community and its friends are still grappling with the recent incident in Charlotte involving a member of the Charlotte community and a fellow Ethiopian-American, Mr. Samson Woldemichael.

Mr. Woldemicheal, a hard-working member of the community and known simply as “Sammy”, was a driver for Uber who was verbally and physically attacked by a customer he was dropping off on November 16, 2015. The incident, as has been widely reported around the world by various media outlets, was preceded by the customer asking Sammy whether he was a muslim. Sammy, who happens to be a Christian, stated so; however, the individual proceeded to hit him and further threatened to kill him with a gun. ECAC is grateful for the Charlotte Police Department's active investigation of this clear hate crime.

The ECAC and its members express their heartfelt sympathies to the San Bernardino community and to those who have lost loved ones. It condemns the violence perpetrated on our fellow citizens and will continue to foster friendship and cooperation between different communities. ECAC further expects our elected leaders, our police and community and faith leaders to convey the importance of building bridges through dialogue and avoid any tendency to paint broad groups with a single brush.

“The immigrants we know love America and Americans,” added Mr. Sergew of ECAC. “And in many instances have chosen to become naturalized US citizens who contribute in many positive ways to the mosaic of their communities.”

As details emerge on what happened in California, ECAC encourages both members of the Ethiopian community and the broader Charlotte community to be vigilant that their words and actions promote the tenets of our great city.

About ECAC: The Ethiopian Community of Charlotte & Surrounding Areas is a non-profit (501) (c) (3) community-based organization established in Charlotte, North Carolina in September 1998. The Association is committed to serving the growing Ethiopian and Ethiopian-American population of the greater Charlotte area to empower and enable individuals to successfully integrate and pursue their dreams in their new country and become contributing members of society.

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