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For More Information, Contact:
Kristy Gonowon, NFALA President
president@nfala.com

NFALA STATEMENT AGAINST ANTI-ASIAN HATE

(Chicago, IL) – The National Filipino American Lawyers Association (NFALA) is appalled and alarmed at the upsurge of anti-Asian racist violence, harassment, and discrimination. We mourn for the victims of these hate-fueled crimes and their families and feel the terror that these incidents have inflicted on Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities throughout the nation. At the same time, NFALA is inspired by the rising tide of AAPI activism and community action to combat hate and the growing fight for change.

The United States has a long history of bigotry and scapegoating of Asian Americans. Beyond doubt, xenophobic rhetoric by politicians and the media seeking to blame the COVID-19 pandemic on China has let loose a new wave of racism against Asian Americans during the past year, including Filipino Americans. Stop AAPI Hate reported that, from March 19, 2020 to February 28, 2021, they received complaints of nearly 3,800 anti-Asian incidents. Chinese Americans are the largest ethnic group that reported experiencing hate, followed by Korean Americans, Vietnamese Americans, and Filipino Americans.

The particular tragedy of recent events is that they have targeted vulnerable segments of our communities. This past week, in New York City, a 65-year-old Fil-Am woman, Vilma Kari, was hospitalized with serious injuries after she was accosted on her way to church, kicked in the stomach, knocked to the ground, and repeatedly stomped on her face. In the Bay Area, a wave of brutal attacks against Asian American seniors has left one dead and others badly injured.

Further, the recent horrific shootings in Atlanta, Georgia, targeted Asian spas and resulted in the tragic killings of eight people, including six Asian American women. That the public continues to debate the specific motivations of the shooter is disappointing. These killings are part of a bigger picture of bigotry. This bigger picture includes a long history of the sexual exploitation of Asian American women within the United States. This bigger picture also includes the increasing targeting of Asian American women: Among the nearly 3,800 Anti-Asian incidents received by Stop AAPI hate this past year, most of them were against women. As Professor Russell Jeung has stated, “There is an intersectional dynamic going on that others may perceive both Asians and women and Asian women as easier targets.”

While our communities have suffered much over the past year, we have also seen an encouraging rise of activism and community action born from these tragedies. We are inspired by the strength of the victims, including Ms. Kari, who has committed to supporting other victims and helping organizations that raise awareness and work to prevent anti-Asian American hate crimes, and Xiao Zhen Xie, who was attacked in San Francisco and has insisted that donations that she has received be given to the Asian American community to combat racism. We are grateful to the volunteers that have stepped up to escort fearful elders on walks and errands and the communities that have rallied and raised funds for victims. We also commend the work of organizations such as Stop AAPI Hate and Asian Americans Advancing Justice.

In the wake of these tragedies, NFALA supports legislation that seeks to address hate crimes. The introduction of the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act that expedites the review of COVID-19 hate crimes and the soon to be introduced National Opposition to Hate, Assault, and Threats to Equality (NO HATE) Act gives us hope that meaningful change is achievable.

Crimes against AAPIs are terrible, tragic, and entirely unacceptable. They push our communities to the edge. But they have not and will not bend or break us. We will continue to stand in support of the AAPI community across the country. We are emboldened by this cause and embrace the fight against hate.

To report a hate incident and help the efforts of Stop AAPI Hate, AAAJ, and other advocates to monitor hate incidents across the country, please complete forms at [Stop AAPI Hate](#) and [Asian Americans Advancing Justice](#).

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NFALA is the national voice for the Filipino American legal profession. It advocates for justice, civil rights, and equal opportunity for the Filipino American community. It cultivates high standards of integrity and professionalism among its members and strives for the advancement and success of Filipino Americans within the profession. NFALA is a family, comprised of members throughout the United States, with the shared goal of increasing its national growth, impact, and visibility while also celebrating its members' cultural heritage.

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