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Statement on Violence in Charlottesville

For too long, “justice” and “equity” have served as abstract principles, national aspirations that had almost reached fruition. As a foundation firmly rooted in racial justice, we know these aspirations are not yet concrete realities for communities of color. Hate crimes persist and the legacy of oppression continues to shape our institutions and systems today.

The extreme violence in Charlottesville and recent vandalism of the New England Holocaust Museum are a clarion call to action for our nation: It is time for those who stand for equality to stand up. It is time for us to stand strong against white supremacy, cowardly nationalism and anti-Semitism with vociferous admonition. It is time for us to stand together.

Desmond Tutu once said, “If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.” During times like these, individuals and institutions must take a clear stand against white supremacy. The actions of this small yet vocal movement of hate cannot—and will not—be condoned, excused or swept under the rug. Now more than ever, we must acknowledge and embrace the shared humanity of all people. We must resolve to keep each other safe and supported. Most of all, we must stay the course and not become complacent.

To our community partners in Boston, Chelsea, and across the nation who fight daily against racial intolerance, we stand with you and thank you for your bold leadership, unwavering courage, and incomparable commitment to justice.

—Jocelyn Sargent, Executive Director, Hyams Foundation