

**Press Release:**

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**Jews and Partners Gather in New Haven on Chanukah  
to Challenge Islamophobia and Fight Against Racism**

New Haven, CT (Dec. 21, 2016)— Jews gathered in downtown New Haven to protest Islamophobia and racism, as part of an effort to rekindle their commitment to justice in different cities across the country to mark the eight days of Chanukah. Jewish community members joined with Muslims, Christians and friends of all faiths to vigil against Islamophobia and racism singing seasonal songs and holding signs in the shape of a menorah describing commitments to fighting injustice.

Shelly Altman, co-chair began by saying, “Chanukah is celebrated in Jewish communities as a celebration of light in a time of turmoil. We all need that reminder now more than ever. As a Jewish organization, we find particular meaning in linking our holiday cycle to our work for justice. It is traditional to light your chanukiah in the window so all can benefit from its light. We hold our commitments in the public square so all likewise might benefit.”

In the wake of the election, Islamophobia and racism in the United States, both on interpersonal and systemic levels, have been accelerating. Existing policies like heightened surveillance and policing of Muslims and other communities of color, U.S. state violence against communities of color both domestically and internationally will be augmented by even more blatantly racist and discriminatory policies proposed by President-elect Donald Trump, including anti-Muslim immigration policies.)

Ahead of the holiday of Chanukah, Jewish community members, representatives of the Muslim Coalition of Connecticut (MCCT) and friends of all faiths came together to shine a light on our commitment to challenge the racism, white supremacy, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and militarism that are increasing in our country and throughout the world. Holding signs in the shape of a menorah, community members read out commitments, which included: “We refuse to be silent about anti-Muslim and racist hate speech and hate crimes. We condemn state surveillance of the Muslim community. We support indigenous rights and the resistance led by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to protect their land and water. We fully stand with the vision for black lives platform.”

“I am here today to stand together, Jews and Muslims, Native Americans and all of us who are and were immigrants, refugees and so-called illegal residents, to build community and to work for Peace and Justice, in our city, in our country, and in the West Bank and Gaza, with Palestinians and with Israelis. I am here today to help light the way towards fearlessness, friendship and freedom,” said activist Ellen Rubin of New Haven.

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*Jewish Voice for Peace ([www.jvp.org](http://www.jvp.org)) is a national, grassroots organization inspired by Jewish tradition to work for a just and lasting peace according to principles of human rights, equality, and international law for all the people of Israel and Palestine. Jewish Voice for Peace has over 200,000 online supporters, over 60 chapters, a youth wing, a Rabbinic Council, an Artist Council, an Academic Advisory Council, and an Advisory Board made up of leading U.S. intellectuals and artists. The Network Against Islamophobia, a project of JVP, was created to serve as a resource to, and to work in partnership with, JVP chapters and other groups across the country committed to challenging Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism.*