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JCRC of Greater Washington Decries Vandalism, Spicer's Comments on Holocaust and Chemical Weapons

Following anti-Semitic graffiti spray-painted on the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia in Fairfax and vandalism at the Little River United Church of Christ in Annandale, as well as White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer's insensitive comments about the Holocaust, the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington issued the following statement:

This week, as Jews worldwide celebrate Passover, our Festival of Freedom, we are pained and angered that yet another local Jewish institution has been targeted with anti-Semitic vandalism, and that a church in the same community was similarly attacked with Islamophobic graffiti. Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are part of the same toxic brew of bigotry that threatens to undermine our democracy and our diverse and welcoming communities. This type of behavior cannot be tolerated. We stand in solidarity with the church that was vandalized and with our Christian and Muslim neighbors, and reiterate our deep commitment to advocating for laws and public policies that preserve America's identity as a country where all may live and worship freely without fear.

We are grateful to the Fairfax County Police Department for the quick arrest of a suspect in both incidents. We hope that these hate crimes will be prosecuted to the fullest-extent of the law.

These attacks took place during the same week that White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer, in a display of ignorance of history and insensitivity to the Jewish community, minimized the horror of the Holocaust by falsely stating that, unlike Syrian President Bashir al-Assad, Adolf Hitler did not use chemical weapons. Mr. Spicer's comment ignores that the Nazis murdered Jews — many of whom were Germans — and others during the Shoah with poison gas administered in extermination camps (not "Holocaust centers") throughout Eastern and Central Europe.

We acknowledge and appreciate Mr. Spicer's public apology for his outrageous analogy and statement, but we also note that this is not the first time that this administration has infuriated and alienated the American Jewish community by minimizing in some way the genocidal intent of the Nazi regime to exterminate the Jewish people. This cannot continue.

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The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) is the public affairs and community relations arm of The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington representing over 100 Jewish organizations and synagogues throughout DC, Maryland, and Virginia. The JCRC focuses on government relations, Israel advocacy, inter-group relations, and social justice.