

## **Statement from the National Interfaith Council of Sweden on the “Refuse to Hate” campaign**

All over the world, violent acts are carried out in the name of religion. In Sweden, Jewish institutions, churches and mosques are subjected to vandalism and criminal damage, and people suffer harassment and physical attacks for wearing their religious symbols. This is unacceptable in a society that defends each person’s right to their beliefs and to express and practice their religion.

As representatives of various religions and faith communities in Sweden, we strongly reject aggression, hatred and violence with religious overtones, both when we are the targets and when it stems from our own communities. We would instead like to highlight the opportunities created by religions to contribute towards social and democratic development in Sweden and around the world. Our religions are based on principles that emphasise honesty, justice, the importance of caring for others and the pursuit of the common good. People of different faiths may have contrasting beliefs, but they are united in their endeavour to achieve good in society. We want to show our support for religious freedom and **Refuse to Hate!**

Everyone, believers and non-believers, has a duty to defend democratic society’s freedom of religion and belief. Members of different communities want to support one another’s right to practice their faith. We also want to encourage political representatives, government agencies, organisations in civil society and everyone who is a defender of justice and peace to stand up and show their support for **Refuse to Hate!**

Representatives from the various religions in Sweden are united in their position on religious hostility, hatred towards Muslims and anti-Semitism. This text has been adopted by the National Interfaith Council of Sweden, which functions as a national forum for religious leaders. We, the undersigned, want to use this appeal as a call to action to encourage demonstrations of solidarity: **Refuse to Hate!**

### **Let’s pass on the baton!**

For the National Interfaith Council of Sweden on 22 December 2014

#### **Elvir Gigovic**

Muslim Council of Sweden

#### **Mustafa Setkic**

Imam, Bosnian Islamic

#### **Trudy Fredriksson**

Swedish Buddhist Cooperation

#### **Örjan Widegren**

Swedish Bahá’í

#### **Genzabra Salwan Alkhammas**

Mandaeen-Sabian Society

#### **Maynard Gerber**

Official Council of Swedish Jewish Communities

#### **Antje Jackélen**

Archbishop of the Church of Sweden

#### **Anders Arborelius**

Bishop, Catholic Diocese of Stockholm

#### **Helena Hummasten**

Muslim Council of Sweden

#### **Haider Ibrahim**

Community Islamic Shia Society

#### **Bhante Dhammaratana**

Council Swedish Buddhist Cooperation Council

#### **Sudhagar Ragupathy**

Assembly Hindu Society

#### **Jaspal Singh**

Swedish Sikh Community

#### **Karin Wiborn**

Secretary-General, Christian Council of Sweden

#### **Benjamin Atas**

Archbishop of the Syrian Orthodox Church

#### **Pelle Hörnmark**

Director Swedish Pentecostal Fellowship