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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **HRC CONDEMNS VIOLENCE AGAINST ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES**

**CALIFORNIA, MARCH 2021** — The Housing Rights Center (HRC) is extremely concerned about the increase in racist violence against Asian Americans across the country, and urges Southern California residents to be vigilant about standing up to hate against individuals of all nationalities and skin colors.

HRC provides services to individuals who have been affected by housing-related hate violence and other forms of housing discrimination. HRC counsels victims of discrimination about their rights, investigates incidents, and refers victims to government agencies or attorneys for litigation and enforcement as needed. Additionally, HRC provides education and outreach to individuals and organizations on housing-related hate crimes and other forms of housing discrimination.

In the year since the COVID-19 pandemic began, more than 3,000 hate crimes have been reported against Asian Americans and many more are feared to have been unreported. A recent Harris poll found that 75 percent of Asian Americans fear becoming victimized by racist incidents, fueled in part by inflammatory political rhetoric and racial scapegoating. Targeted attacks escalated ahead of the Lunar New Year and the Day of Remembrance for Japanese American internment, including the murder of 84-year-old Vicha Ratanapakdee in San Francisco.

The recent spate of xenophobic rhetoric and hate crimes echoes the long history of state-sanctioned racism faced by Asian and Pacific Islanders in the United States and California. Following the expiration of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act barring immigration from China, California's 1913 Alien Land Law prohibited Asian residents from purchasing land; shortly thereafter, Los Angeles' Chinatown was splintered to make way for Union (train) Station and the 101 Freeway. Last week commemorated the 79<sup>th</sup> anniversary of U.S. Executive Order 9066 mandating the imprisonment

of Japanese Americans in concentration camps, including two in California. The legacy of policies that displaced, excluded, and endangered Asian communities continues to shape our society.

Today, California state law protects the right to be free from hate speech and violence, as well as discrimination in housing and employment. HRC reminds the public that it is illegal to deny someone a housing opportunity because they are Asian; to segregate Asian residents to parts of a building or neighborhood; and to harass or use slurs against current or potential tenants of Asian descent, among other forms of discrimination.

Finally, while this article addresses the rise in the incidents against one group that consists of many different countries of origin and ethnicities, these protections are extended to persons of all races, ethnicities and national origins.

Please contact the Housing Rights Center if you witness or experience discrimination, bias, hate speech, or violence against any race, ethnicity or national origin. Reports can be made to our hotline at 1-800-477-5977 (TTY: 1-213-201-0867), by email at [info@housingrightscenter.org](mailto:info@housingrightscenter.org), or on our website at [www.housingrightscenter.org/help](http://www.housingrightscenter.org/help).

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*The Housing Rights Center is a non-profit organization established in 1968 to actively support and promote equal opportunity and freedom of residence to all persons without regard to their race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, familial status, disability, marital status, ancestry, age, source of income, or other characteristics protected by law. HRC engages in activities including outreach and education, testing and investigation, and legal advocacy to identify barriers to fair housing and to counteract and eliminate discriminatory housing practices in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.*

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