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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ZOROASTRIANS REACH OUT TO SIKHS IN SOLIDARITY

TORONTO, August 15, 2012 – It is ironic that as Zoroastrian leaders were holding up the Cylinder of Cyrus the Great, the Achemenian from Iran, as a symbol from antiquity of religious freedom and human rights at the 16th North American Zoroastrian Congress in New York, on August 5th, a suspect killed innocent worshippers who were gathering for a reading of the Sikh scriptures at a Gurudwara in Wisconsin.

This was a troubling day not only for Sikh-Americans, but for all peace loving Americans. The response of the Sikh community of meeting violence with love, and praying not only for the families of the victims, but also for the family of the perpetrator of the uncalled violence is an uplifting message.

The selfless response of first responders to this atrocity, speaks highly of the values of the United States, which is built on the foundation of promoting religious freedom, attracting immigrants since its founding as the land of the free and the home of the brave.

We are grateful to the Ambassador of India to the United States, Her Excellency, Mrs. Nirupama Rao for visiting the Sikh Gurudwara in Wisconsin and promoting respect for diversity as a cornerstone in strengthening civil society.

Many members from FEZANA have been reaching out to our Sikh brethren to express heartfelt condolences to the affected families, the congregation of the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin and the wider Sikh community at Interfaith Vigils being held throughout North America.

Zoroastrians and Sikhs share a lot in common. Both faith traditions are monotheistic. One tenet of Sikhism is to take care of the poor and needy as is also taught in the Zoroastrian *Yatha-Ahu-Variyo* prayer. Both traditions take a proactive role in caring for creation. Both promote the idea of likeminded persons working together for humankind, which the Sikhs call *Sangat* and the Zoroastrians call *Hamazori*.

Nationwide Vigils for Oak Creek Sikh Community

Attend or create a candlelight vigil or event near you in remembrance of the victims of the tragic shooting at the Oak Creek Gurudwara. This list will be updated as more events are planned.

<https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msid=215183969110017658637.0004c69f996c59f8bc47b&msa=0>

About Zoroastrians

Zoroastrians serve as effective bridge builders as they see from their own faith, traditions of truth, righteousness, charity, beneficence and respect for creation reflected in traditions of the religions of both the occident and the orient. Zoroastrianism, founded circa 1500 BCE, is believed to have transmitted percepts such as the ultimate victory of good over evil and the resurrection of souls, through Judaism to Christianity, and later to Islam. Zoroastrianism flourished as the imperial religion of three Persian empires, those of the Achaemenians, Parthians and Sasanians, and was the dominant religion from Turkey, and eastward to China during those times. North America's Zoroastrian community includes those who arrived from the Indian subcontinent, known as Parsis, and those who came directly from Iran seeking religious freedom.

About FEZANA

Founded in 1987, FEZANA serves as the coordinating body for 26 Zoroastrian associations and 10 small groups throughout the United States and Canada. FEZANA promotes the study, understanding and practice of the Zoroastrian faith in North America., represents the interests of its member associations, and carries out philanthropic and charitable activities worldwide. The FEZANA Journal, FEZANA's publication of record, circulates to Zoroastrian households in more than 22 countries, as well as to scholars, academicians and religious organizations worldwide. For more information visit: www.fezana.org.