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## STATEMENT FROM BOBBIN SINGH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OREGON JUSTICE RESOURCE CENTER

“Portland’s public leaders have too often demonstrated hostility to civil rights and to protestors seeking to advance racial justice. This is a failure of leadership. They should reflect on how their false demonization of protesters helped to create and fuel the ideas that appear to have led to these victims being shot and killed. They should also consider how their failure to protect protestors from harm by police has contributed to unwillingness to cooperate with police.

Protestors for Black Lives and for civil rights generally in Portland have long feared that they could become victims of gun violence by those opposed to them on ideological grounds. Protestors have been targeted by rhetoric from certain politicians and media commentators as well as physically harmed and abused by Portland Police and by far-right extremists while police did nothing. Tragically, we have now seen the violent attack protestors predicted take place.

Moreover, we are profoundly disturbed about the lack of information being shared by police and the City against the backdrop of this hostility and the attempts by some to frame protestors as aggressors or supposedly responsible for their own victimization. The lack of transparency in this case of lethal violence against the protestors is illustrative of a larger cultural issue with PPB of bias against racial justice and civil rights advocates, which Mayor Wheeler seems unwilling to confront. For too long, we have allowed officials like Mayor Wheeler to try to convince us that it is too disruptive or not practical to openly confront white supremacy. For too long, we have feared political, economic, and social retribution for challenging the status quo. However, the cost of maintaining this distortion of reality is too severe. The protests and frustrations we are witnessing are nothing more than a commonsense, natural reaction.

Mayor Wheeler continues to believe that platitudes, pragmatism, or more “law and order” are what is needed to navigate this moment and therefore completely misunderstands or purposely misconstrues the enormity of the racial injustice issues we are facing and devalues the trauma experienced by Black and Brown Portlanders. Over the past years, the steep erosion of credibility of Mayor Wheeler as it relates to his oversight of PPB has rendered him impotent as a leader and ineffectual in creating the changes the community is demanding. We previously called for Mayor Wheeler to resign and for there to be an immediate change in leadership at PPB, and today I once again renew that call. If he truly cares about the well-being of this city, Mayor Wheeler should immediately resign and the leadership of PPB must be dismantled and replaced.”