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Contact:

Marian Bishay
Coptic Orthodox Diocese
(714) 349-1011
marian@bishaylaw.com

Contact:
Marium Mohiuddin
Muslim Public Affairs Council
(323) 258-6722 / (512) 657-7819
marium@mpac.org

COPTIC CHRISTIANS & MUSLIMS TO HOLD JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE MONDAY IN LA

(Los Angeles – 9/15/12) – On Monday, Sept. 17, 2012 at 11 a.m. PST, the Muslim Public Affairs Council and the Coptic Orthodox Church, Diocese of Los Angeles, will hold a press conference to stand together in strongly condemning all violent reactions that have been playing out over the past several days in the Middle East.

SEE: "MPAC Condemns Attacks on U.S. Embassies, Calls for Protection of All U.S. Personnel" (mpac.org)

ALSO SEE: "Urgent Press Release: Diocese Condemns Inflammatory Film against Islam and Resulting Violence" (lacopts.org)

His Grace Bishop Serapion, Bishop of the Diocese of Los Angeles and MPAC Senior Adviser Dr. Maher Hathout will talk about the importance of the faith community standing together in light of the spreading attacks and rising tensions sparked by the film, "Innocence of Muslims."

"Our religions teach us to respond to hate speech with good speech and good work," Dr. Hathout said. "The behavior exhibited does not speak for the majority of Muslims and are the actions of a small group. This irrational behavior can not be allowed to spread, and this movie cannot be allowed to dictate our actions."

"The actions of a few ignorant individuals do not represent the collective Diaspora Copts, nor do they represent the collective Muslim community," Bishop Serapion said. "As Christians, we are proud of our core values that teach love and respect of others and we must act with accordance to our beliefs. It is in moments like these that we stand with those who share a common respect of all religions and love of humanity."

In a statement to be released at the press conference on Monday, the two religious leaders will expand on the following: "We collectively condemn desecration directed at any religion, namely in the form of the anti-Muslim film 'Innocence of Muslims.' We condemn any attacks against religious communities, Coptic or Muslim in particular, both in Egypt and the United States."

Coptic Christian and Muslim leaders in Los Angeles have been meeting for the purposes of peacemaking and mutual understanding.

WHAT: **MUSLIM AND COPTIC LEADERS CONFERENCE**

WHEN: Monday, Sept. 17, 2012, at 11 a.m. PST

WHO: **Dr. Maher Hathout**, Senior Adviser of the Muslim Public Affairs Council
His Grace Bishop Serapion Head of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Los Angeles, Southern California and Hawaii

WHERE: Steps of Los Angeles City Hall
(200 North Spring Street Los Angeles)

The Coptic Orthodox Church is the largest church in the Middle East, with approximately 12 million faithful in Egypt. The Coptic Orthodox Christian Diocese of Los Angeles is led by His Grace Bishop Serapion, who serves under the blessing of the head of the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Patriarchate in Alexandria, Egypt.

Founded in 1988, MPAC is a public service agency working for the civil rights of American Muslims, for the integration of Islam into American pluralism, and for a positive, constructive relationship between American Muslims and their representatives.

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