Statement of Mee Moua, president and executive director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC on Islamophobic and Xenophobic Rhetoric and Violence

“We condemn Islamophobia and the hateful rhetoric directed at our Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian communities during the aftermath of the San Bernardino tragedy.

This tragedy is no excuse for violence or prejudice. We have experienced what happens when we do not govern in accordance with our nation’s core values of fairness and equality. Injustices arise, among them the Chinese Exclusion Act and the mass incarceration of over 110,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry into internment camps during World War II. This cannot happen ever again. We will fight to ensure America does not close its doors to those seeking safety, opportunity and freedom.

Now is a time for all of us to come together to oppose violence and challenge Islamophobic attitudes. We each have a duty to speak out and intervene when we witness someone being harassed because of their religion or national origin. We must reach out to Muslim friends and offer support, and begin conversations with family and friends about their fears and what constitutes an appropriate response. Let’s channel our energy toward tackling real problems and solutions so every American is safe.

We call upon the public and our elected leaders to reject Islamophobia and ensure that Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian communities are a protected and respected part of our America.”