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Media Announcement

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bay Area Middle Eastern Jews Condemns Iranian Law forcing Jews, Christians and others to wear colored badge

Iranian Jewish spokespersons available for on-the-record comment

‘National Uniform Law’ authorized by Iranian parliament includes clause obligating Iranian Jews to wear yellow ribbon; Christians, other minority members to wear colored ribbons as well. The purpose for the law is to prevent Muslims from becoming "unclean" by accidentally shaking the hands of non-Muslims in public.

Statement from JIMENA:

It is with great distress we have received the news that the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran has passed legislation that would require non-Muslim minorities to don color-coded badges identifying individuals' religious affiliation. JIMENA condemns this outrageous legislation and urges Iran's supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, to reject this law.

Some have likened this law to the yellow star Jews were forced to wear in Nazi-occupied Europe during World War Two. In fact, the Nazis did not invent this system of identification, but rather inherited it from Christendom, which required Jews to wear yellow badges in the Middle Ages. But, Christianity in fact borrowed the concept from medieval Islamic law, called the laws of the *dhimmi*, which required non-Muslims of that era to wear various colored badges and, at times, special hats or clothing.

Iran is home to some 25,000 Jews, 130,000 Christians, and 30,000 Zoroastrians.

It is inconceivable that in the 21st century we would see the revival of such a medieval caste system by a country that is concurrently pursuing nuclear weapons. We call upon all world leaders to condemn this outrage, and to place the Iranian issue on the top of the international agenda and to pressure Iran to abandon this blatantly discriminatory policy.

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JIMENA's mission is to advocate and educate about the history and plight of the Jews indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa.

JIMENA is a financially independent project of the San Francisco-based Jewish Community Relations Council