

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**ALEXANDRIA PROTESTS WHITE SUPREMACY, DEMANDS SANCTUARY FOR IMMIGRANTS**

*Alexandria, Virginia – February 14, 2017* – Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Northern Virginia and other members of the local community will be holding a rally in Old Town’s Market Square on Tuesday, February 14, beginning at 6:00pm, to demand that Alexandria be made a sanctuary for immigrants and refugees, not white supremacy.

In January, infamous white nationalist Richard Spencer announced that he would be converting a residential space in Old Town Alexandria into an “office-salon” for white supremacists calling themselves “alt-Right,” “a private space where people in the movement can make videos, throw parties (there’s an outdoor patio) and work on the nascent website,” according to an article published by *The Atlantic*. The white nationalist ideology of Richard Spencer, the National Policy Institute, and his “alt-Right” website are tracked and documented by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Since the inauguration, the new presidential administration began targeting immigrants and visitors from predominantly Muslim countries with a travel ban. Immigration authorities launched massive a series of intensive home and business raids, traffic stops, and checkpoints across the country, including in Alexandria, Annandale, and other parts of northern Virginia.

Northern Virginia has also experienced an uptick in white supremacist flyering by hate groups such as New Order. Some Alexandria businesses where #inclusiveALX and #EveryoneIsWelcome posters are displayed have reported to SURJ that white men are entering the premises, asking for information about the business owners, and providing false information about themselves.

“Now is a time when our neighbors who are immigrants and people of color are increasingly vulnerable to *both* personal and institutional attack,” said Cat Clark, an organizer and activist with SURJ Northern Virginia and an Alexandria resident. “It is time for all Alexandrians, and all Virginians, to actively resist white supremacy and xenophobia, *both* interpersonal and systemic. We demand that our city be made a sanctuary for immigrants and refugees rather than white supremacy.”

The City of Alexandria created a “Statement of Inclusiveness” in November of 2016. While some local racial justice activists consider it a good start, SURJ Northern Virginia is concerned that the statement does not actually protect the most vulnerable members of our community. When the city says it “will protect the security of its community,” this protection extends to already privileged white supremacists such as Richard Spencer rather than immigrants and refugees. The city does not have to enforce federal immigration laws or detain residents without warrant and should actively refuse to do so.

SURJ Northern Virginia is a chapter of Showing Up for Racial Justice, a national network of groups and individuals organizing white people for racial justice. Through community organizing, mobilizing, and education, SURJ moves white people to act as part of a multi-racial majority for justice with passion and accountability. SURJ works to connect people across the country while supporting and collaborating with local and national racial justice organizing efforts. SURJ provides a space to build relationships, skills and political analysis to act for change.

Contact:  
surjnova@gmail.com  
202-596-5385

###