

## Statement regarding Aaron Anthony Cantu's Tort Claim Notice

09/19/2018

“Today, we filed a Tort Claim Notice on behalf of Mr. Cantu, which articulates Mr. Cantu’s intent to file a civil claim for monetary damages and injunctive relief against the City of Portland. Mr. Cantu attended the counter-protest of the violent right-wing supremacist group Patriot Prayer on August 4, 2018, feeling that such hate speech had no place in the City in which he lives and works. Importantly, Mr. Cantu felt compelled to stand in solidarity with the communities the Patriot Prayer intended to terrorize. Mr. Cantu peacefully assembled with others, but was immediately confronted by a heavy police presence trained primarily on the counter-protestors. Mr. Cantu had seen no projectile nor witnessed any violence from the people on the counter protestor side. Further, he had no reason to believe that he was in danger and heard no warnings or orders to disperse before Portland Police discharged their crowd control weapons, specifically, their Aerial Warning/Signaling Munitions (colloquially known as “flash bangs”). As Mr. Cantu was running away, he was struck in the head with a projectile that was fired by the police. Mr. Cantu’s head began to bleed, his eyes became blurry, and he was unable to yell or speak. Regardless, Mr. Cantu kept moving until he reached a bus stop, where he was treated by a local street medic. The Portland Police continued to fire its crowd control weapons and Mr. Cantu was forced to move from the bus stop and out of this dangerous situation. Mr. Cantu eventually was able to get to a hospital. Mr. Cantu suffered traumatic brain injury, likely one that would have been fatal had he not been wearing a bike helmet. The injury caused hemorrhaging and he had a tube inserted in his skull to help drain the bleeding. We want to be clear, Mr. Cantu thought he was going to die.

“The Portland community has been subject to this treatment – nearly exclusively on left-wing protestors – by the Portland Police at protests before. The police’s willingness to use so much lethal force on fleeing protestors represents a new low that needs to be addressed. We hope that with this lawsuit that our client will be able to get the justice he so deserves and more broadly, that we are able to use this as an opportunity to require the Portland Police to overhaul its policies and practices as it relates to its treatment of left-wing protestors. The violence and lethal force experienced by Mr. Cantu is not acceptable and the City of Portland and the Portland Police must be held accountable.”

*Statement attributed to Juan Chavez, Director, Civil Rights Project, Oregon Justice Resource Center*