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NEWS RELEASE

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Former Attorney General and Supreme Court Justice Jim Jones said today that “Idaho has a moral responsibility to welcome Middle Eastern refugees into our good-hearted state.” In post-retirement remarks to the Twin Falls Rotary Club, Jones said the obligation arose because the United States helped initiate the refugee crisis by invading Iraq and creating great instability in the Middle East. Jones emphasized that the remarks were his own and that he no longer spoke for the Idaho court system.

“The invasion of Iraq set off a chain of events that resulted in the Syrian civil war, which produced the greatest refugee crisis in recent history. Since the United States was a large contributor to the refugee crisis in the Middle East, we can’t simply turn our backs on these unfortunate people. We have a moral responsibility to take in some of the people we helped to misplace.”

Jones said “a number of so-called news organizations have engaged in fear-mongering in order to portray refugees, and particularly those from Syria, as a danger to our country. Breitbart News, World Net Daily and others have played fast and loose with the truth and should not be regarded as credible. They have unfairly attacked the College of Southern Idaho refugee program, Twin Falls government officials, and Chobani, which has been a wonderful addition to the community. We should not tolerate this type of conduct by outsiders.”

Jones commended the CSI Refugee Center for its work in settling refugees in the Magic Valley. “I have gotten to know some of the people who were settled here and found them to be good patriotic people with a strong work ethic.”

Jones said the chance of Syrian refugees being disguised terrorist is almost nonexistent. “If a terrorist wanted to get into this country, he could do it much quicker and with less vetting by getting a tourist or student visa. Refugees from all countries, and particularly those from Syria, are subjected to careful screening. If one would take the time to get to know our refugee community, it would become clear that they just want what we all do—to live and raise their families in a safe environment. Many of the Syrian refugees have been subjected to unspeakable horrors—constant shelling by the Assad regime or the Russians, murder of their family members, or torture. The United States and Idaho should step forward to give these people refuge.”

Jones, who served a tour of duty with the US Army in Vietnam in 1968-1969, said he had lived and worked with South Vietnamese soldiers who were refugees from North Vietnam. “They

were good human beings. When South Vietnam fell in 1975 and waves of Vietnam refugees sought shelter in America, we heard dire and misplaced warnings of the woe that they would bring to our country. Those warnings are similar to those that Breitbart and others are spewing out today about Middle East refugees. The Vietnamese refugees have been a credit to our country and so will those people who are now seeking refuge here.”

Jones noted that the U.S. has taken in less than 20,000 Syrian refugees to date. Turkey has admitted about 2.7 million, Lebanon over 1 million, Jordan around 1 million, Iraqi Kurdistan about 1.4 million. “Based on the role the U. S. played in destabilizing the Middle East, we have done very little to protect these unfortunate people.”