

MACLC

Muslim American Civil Liberties Coalition

CIVIL LIBERTIES COALITION SUPPORTS PROPOSAL FOR NYPD INSPECTOR GENERAL Applauds Report by Brennan Center for Justice

(New York, NY, October 15, 2012)—The Muslim American Civil Liberties Coalition (MACLC) enthusiastically supports The Brennan Center for Justice’s proposal for the appointment of an independent New York City Police Department Inspector General. Currently, there is no independent oversight of the NYPD’s expansive intelligence and counterterrorism operations that have increased dramatically since September 11. The result has been a complete disregard of fundamental civil liberties, severely impacting minority communities.

The Brennan Center’s detailed report, “A Proposal for an NYPD Inspector General,” points out that in 2010, the NYPD budget for counter-terrorism and intelligence was over \$100 million, with approximately 1,000 officers employed between the two divisions. The report’s balanced approach also illustrates how the existing oversight mechanisms address only individual officer misconduct and corruption and do not address department wide policies. In this realm, the NYPD essentially functions in similar manner to federal agencies such as the FBI and CIA, yet escapes the oversight mechanisms to which these other entities are subject. The time has come for New York City to usher in a new era of accountability and transparency.

The establishment of oversight is a necessary step towards effectively ending religious and racial profiling by police. The excesses of the NYPD’s stop-and-frisk program and its impact on Black and Latino youths in New York City are now well known and amply documented. Since 2007, MACLC has raised concerns about covert NYPD spying on Muslim communities. Those concerns were confirmed when, just last year, the Associated Press in its Pulitzer Prize winning series detailed these very operations. The NYPD deployed undercover agents across the city and beyond to report on individuals, mosques, restaurants, cafes, restaurants, bookshops, schools, university student groups, and community organizations, all without any indication of criminal activity.

Absent independent and meaningful oversight, we are left only with chance discoveries by investigative journalists reporting on civil liberties violations, or the unlikely scenario that the NYPD chooses to reform internally. The appointment of an Inspector General would begin to ensure that any clandestine activities are conducted in compliance with the law and, when violations do occur, that there is a measure of accountability under clearly articulated standards.

MACLC supports the Brennan Center’s report and calls on the New York City Council and New York State Senate to pass legislation to establish an independent NYPD Inspector General to investigate and oversee the NYPD’s operations and its policies.

MACLC also calls on the civil liberties community and civil society to send a message to Mayor Bloomberg demanding the establishment of an Inspector General as a meaningful and necessary—albeit not sufficient—step towards ending racial and religious profiling by the NYPD.

Submitted on behalf of Muslim American Civil Liberties Coalition members:

Muslim American Society of New York

Women In Islam, Inc.

Muslim Bar Association of New York

Council on American Islamic Relations – New York

The Muslim Public Affairs Council of New York City

DRUM – Desis Rising Up and Moving

Arab American Association of New York

Muslim Consultative Network

Association of Muslim American Lawyers

Muslim Progressive Traditionalist Alliance

CLEAR – Creating Law Enforcement Accountability & Responsibility

Main Street Legal Services, Inc.

City University of New York School of Law