

MACLC

Muslim American Civil Liberties Coalition

MACLC Calling for Resignation of Police Commissioner Kelly in Jan. 26 City Hall Press Conference

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PRESS CONFERENCE, TOMORROW 1/26, 11:00 AM, STEPS OF CITY HALL

Muslim Civil Liberties Coalition Calls for Resignation of Police Commissioner Kelly

Demands City Council Institute Community Control & Oversight Mechanism Over the NYPD

January 25, 2012 (New York, NY) -- In the wake of revelations about NYPD's involvement in production of an anti-Muslim propaganda film, the Muslim American Civil Liberties Coalition (MACLC) calls for the resignation of Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly and the Deputy Commissioner of Public Affairs Paul Browne. Kelly's and Browne's admission of their involvement in the production of *The Third Jihad* marks the blatant bigotry and lack of transparency that permeates the NYPD's approach to New York's Muslim communities. MACLC demands that the City Council institute an independent community control and oversight mechanism for the NYPD. MACLC further calls on the NYPD to retrain all 1500 officers who watched *The Third Jihad* during cadet training.

In early 2011, MACLC contacted the NYPD regarding the use of the *The Third Jihad* in cadet training, only to have the NYPD deny its role in training of cadets. However, police documents obtained by a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request now reveal that the film was shown to nearly 1500 officers during police training. Only after the film's producer identified for the *New York Times* the date on which Kelly was interviewed for the film, did Kelly and Browne admit to participation in the film.

Taken in context of the Associated Press's reporting about the NYPD's extensive surveillance programs--which literally map Muslim communities, and all aspects of Muslim life in New York City--it is now clear that the NYPD's dealings with New York's diverse Muslim communities are based on bigotry and blanket suspicion.

"NYPD officials should not have permitted and actively participated in the screening and creation of such hateful propaganda produced by a special interest organization," said Nermeen Arastu, staff attorney at the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF), a

member of MACLC. "The NYPD must retrain all 1500 officers who watched *The Third Jihad* during cadet training. The NYPD treats all Muslim communities in this city as suspicious. It is imperative for the City Council to institute an oversight mechanism over the NYPD."

Shown to NYPD officers, *The Third Jihad* portrays Muslims as engaged in a "1400 year war" to "infiltrate and dominate America." The film includes inflammatory imagery, including people who appear to be Muslim engaging in acts of terrorism, car bombs exploding, executed children, and repeated images of an Islamic flag flying over the White House. Elected officials and a coalition of interfaith voices have vehemently denounced its use. MACLC has sent several letters requesting a prompt investigation into how such materials came to be widely disseminated in trainings and demanded transparency on the existing counter-terrorism training materials in use. The NYPD has not meaningfully responded. While the NYPD claims to have discontinued use of the film, a spokesperson told the *New York Times* that it has no plans to correct false impressions set by it.

The film was produced by The Clarion Fund, an anti-Muslim nonprofit organization, which produced a similar 2008 video entitled *Obsession: Radical Islam's War Against the West* that it distributed through swing states in the last presidential election. The Clarion Fund currently counts among its supporters Sheldon Adelson, who donated millions to a super PAC that backs Newt Gingrich.

"Under Kelly's watch, the NYPD has developed an approach to policing counterterrorism that seems to start from a place of suspicion for New Yorkers with any identifying Muslim characteristics," said Amna Akbar, Supervising Attorney at the CLEAR program (Creating Law Enforcement Accountability & Responsibility), and Adjunct Professor at CUNY School of Law. "It is unethical and illegal for the NYPD to conflate religion, race, and national origin with suspicion for terrorism. The NYPD needs to make some serious changes to its divisive and troubled approach to Muslim communities."

MACLC calls for the resignation of Kelly and Browne; for the City Council to investigate the matter and to institute an effective and meaningful community control and oversight mechanism; and for the retraining of all cadets who watched *The Third Jihad*.

MACLC is a New York-based coalition of citizens, community and faith leaders, organizers, advocates, attorneys, and organizations. MACLC aims to give voice to absent perspectives on issues of national security, counterterrorism, law enforcement, and civil rights, especially as they impact Muslim communities in post-9/11 New York City.

PRESS CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Event: Press Conference by MACLC Calling for Resignation of of Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly and the Deputy Commissioner of Public Affairs Paul Browne

Time: 11 am, Thursday, January 26, 2012

Location: Steps of City Hall, New York City

Submitted on behalf of Muslim American Civil Liberties Coalition members:

Abdelhafid Djemil
Muslim American Society of New York

Aisha Al-Adawiya and Sarah Sayeed
Women In Islam, Inc.

Asim Rehman
Muslim Bar Association of New York

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Professors Ramzi Kassem & Amna Akbar
CLEAR - Creating Law Enforcement Accountability & Responsibility City University of New York School of Law

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Islamic Circle of North America - NY

Endorsed by:

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Defending Dissent Foundation

Alicia Godsberg
Peace Action New York State

Shahid Comrade
Pakistan USA Freedom Forum

Beena Ahmad
The National Lawyers Guild-NY Muslim Defense Committee

Naomi Paz Greenberg
NY Quarterly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Robina Niaz
Turning Point for Women & Families

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