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**AT ANNUAL INTERFAITH BREAKFAST, MAYOR ADAMS, FAITH
LEADERS LAUNCH CITYWIDE CLERGY COLLECTIVE TO PREVENT GUN
VIOLENCE**

*Collective Backed by \$1.5 Million in State Funding, Will Expand Faith-Led Community
Intervention Programs, Family and Victim Services, and Youth Support Systems to Build Safer,
More Resilient Communities*

Investments and Services Will Target 18 Precincts with High Levels of Gun Violence

NEW YORK — New York City Mayor Eric Adams and a coalition of multifaith leaders from across the city today launched the Citywide Clergy Collective, a group of 272 faith leaders committed to preventing gun violence in New York City, at the administration’s annual interfaith breakfast. Using a \$1.5 million grant from the New York State Department of Criminal Justice, Citywide Clergy Collective members will deliver resources, direct services, and community-building programs to all New Yorkers in all five boroughs as they respond to the needs and traumas that gun violence creates. The programs and services will be run by local faith leaders across the city, with assistance from the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), Office of Neighborhood Safety, Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships, and New York City Police Department (NYPD).

“Public safety is the prerequisite to prosperity, and it takes all of us to deliver a safe city,” said **Mayor Adams**. “That’s why we are bringing together a multid denominational coalition of hundreds of faith leaders with city and state resources so we can prevent gun violence before the shooting starts. Together, we are making systemic investments that will not only lower crime but also help communities heal. We are proud to continue the momentum we’ve built over the first two years of our administration, driving shootings down and making our city safer and more resilient for all New Yorkers.”

“When it comes to public safety, each and every one of us has a role to play in keeping our communities safe. Time and time again, our faith community has been there to answer the call,” said **First Deputy Mayor Sheena Wright**. “As co-chair of the ‘Gun Violence Prevention Task Force,’ we have seen firsthand the power of a prevention-based approach and tackling the root causes of gun violence to keep our city safe. Together, with the help from every sector and community in New York City, we can end the gun violence epidemic.”

“Public safety requires the public — all of our fellow New Yorkers — to look out and care for our neighbors. No one understands this better than our allies in the faith-based community,” said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives Ana Almanzar**. “Our city has seen real progress in stopping violence before it happens in our streets because of targeted investments in our young people, community support, and fearless crisis management system groups who bring peace every day. I applaud our faith-based partners for leading by example and showing the endless possibilities when communities come together for a greater cause.”

“Gun violence is a serious issue, and we must deal with it seriously. The complex challenges of gun violence are multi-faceted and go way beyond the gun,” said **Mayor’s Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships Executive Director Pastor Gilford T. Monroe**. “The partnership that Mayor Adams is leading with the faith community will change the way we deal with the root causes of the violence in this city. Ending gun violence must involve a holistic approach that includes comprehensive collaboration and community planning. This initial investment of \$1.5 million to fund the Citywide Clergy Collective’s faith-led approaches to gun violence prevention is an important aspect in galvanizing our resources towards the high-risk youth and survivors of gun violence.”

“The Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships has been an invaluable partner to DYCD’s Office of Neighborhood Safety,” said **DYCD Commissioner Keith Howard**. “This state grant will strengthen our on-the-ground engagement as well as victim and family support in the neighborhoods most vulnerable to gun violence. DYCD will continue our strong partnership with the NYPD, crisis management system groups, and the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force to support Mayor Adams’ ‘Blueprint to End Gun Violence’ and drive down crime across the city.”

The funds will support three types of programs:

- **Street-Level Engagement:** Increasing and expanding community engagement through clergy walks, street dinners, arts, sports, mentorship, and hotspots programs.
- **Victim Support Services:** Increasing private support of families and survivors of gun violence through prayer vigils, bereavement services, transportation, emergency accommodations, food, and spiritual care.
- **Precinct Engagement:** Connecting with local precincts to support young people with criminal backgrounds, bolstering anti-violence groups, and working with community stakeholders.

In addition to bringing together hundreds of multifaith leaders to prevent gun violence in New York City, the Adams administration has systematically driven down homicides and shootings in New York City through an approach that utilizes both prevention and intervention strategies. This past summer, Mayor Adams’ [Gun Violence Prevention Task Force](#) released “[A Blueprint for Public Safety](#),” outlining a forward-thinking roadmap with upstream solutions to address gun violence throughout the five boroughs. The report built upon all the work the Adams administration has undertaken to reduce gun violence by double digits and culminated months of engagement with communities most impacted by gun violence, including young people, whose feedback was critical in shaping the strategies and recommendations that will ensure the city continues to build on the public safety gains made since January 2022.

Co-chaired by First Deputy Mayor Wright and Man Up! Inc. Founder A.T. Mitchell, the task force represents a multi-agency, cross-sector effort to address the root causes of gun violence and develop recommendations to promote long-term safety across all communities. As part of this effort, more than 50 members of the task force, representing 20 city agencies, engaged roughly 1,500 community residents over the course of spring 2023 through community convenings and youth town halls.

In his first month in office, in January 2022, Mayor Adams released the “[Blueprint to End Gun Violence](#)” — laying out his priorities to immediately address the crisis of guns on New York City streets. In March 2022, Mayor Adams and the NYPD also created Neighborhood Safety Teams to focus on gun violence prevention, and, early in the administration, Mayor Adams funded the city’s Crisis Management System — which brings teams of credible messengers to mediate conflicts on the street and connect high-risk individuals to services that can reduce the long-term risk of violence — [at a record \\$86 million for Fiscal Year 2024](#).

Since the start of the administration in January 2022, the NYPD has also removed more than 14,000 illegal guns from New York City streets.

“Ending the scourge of gun violence will take a whole community effort,” said **U.S. Representative Dan Goldman**. “I’m thankful that faith leaders from across New York City are coming together with one voice to make our city safer. I look forward to working in partnership with them and with the city to implement commonsense gun safety solutions to protect our children, our families, and our communities.”

“I applaud the mayor for prioritizing funding for faith leaders in an effort to reduce gun violence,” said **New York State Assemblymember Monique Chandler-Waterman**. “Since taking office, I created the Assembly District 58 Public Safety Taskforce, which includes our faith leaders and community stakeholders with lived experience to work together to reduce gun violence and support impacted families. As we know, gun violence is a multi-layered issue that requires a multifaceted approach; this new approach by the mayor is definitely a step in the right direction. As the co-chair of the Anti-Gun Violence Subcommittee of the New York State Black Puerto Rican Hispanic Asian Legislative Caucus, I will continue to advocate along with my colleagues in government for more funding to support our local grassroots non-profit organizations and faith leaders. Our goal is to address the epidemic of gun violence and care for families holistically.”

“I extend my support to Mayor Adams and our city’s faith-based leaders as they unveil the Citywide Clergy Collective (C3) to combat the pressing issue of gun violence. With a substantial \$1.5 million grant from the New York State Department of Criminal Justice, this initiative exemplifies the potent collaboration between government, clergy, and community,” said **New York City Councilmember Kevin C. Riley**. “It is imperative to acknowledge the disproportionate impact of gun violence on Black and brown communities, and C3 serves as a commitment to addressing this ongoing systemic disparity. Operating across all five boroughs and targeting 18 precincts with elevated gun violence levels, the expansion of faith-led community intervention programs, family services, and youth support systems is crucial to restoring safety within our communities. As Co-Chair of the Black, Latino and Asian Caucus, I resonate deeply with the continued effort to build partnerships with faith-led and community-based organizations, credible messengers, public safety, and all stakeholders to strengthen communities of color, like the Northeast Bronx, across our entire city.”

“The increasing loss of life due to gun violence in New York City is disheartening and a call for us to do more. The safety of our communities requires the commitment of everyone who lives in it and to be a part of the solution,”

said **Karmacharya Vijah Ramjattan, founder and president, United Madrassi Association Inc.** “New York City is a city of faith and the faithful serve as the backbone of all communities. As an interfaith and Hindu faith leader, I am encouraged by the Clergy Collective initiative, which centers clergy leadership as key stakeholders to aid in ending gun violence. I applaud the mayor’s Office of Faith-based and Community Partnerships team for putting forth a plan to save lives while uniting and building communities through its three core pillars of street level engagement, victim support services, and precinct engagement.”

“We are grateful for the direction of Mayor Adams and his vision to appoint Pastor Gil Monroe to lead interfaith leaders,” said **Bishop Doug Woodall.** “Matthew 24:12 has given us a clear example of lack of love and concern in our communities. With evil seemingly at its peak, the faith-based leadership of New York City has come together as one body and declared our love for each other and the communities we serve is much stronger than the fear that has overwhelmed our communities. Thank you, Mayor Adams, thank you Pastor Gil for leading the charge in 2023. Through much adversity we have made it, and the best is yet to come in 2024, as we stand and declare, ‘Not on my watch and not in my community.’”

“Historically, profound acts of social justice have been spearheaded by the faith community. The word community should evoke a sense of safety and security. Far too often, especially in marginalized communities, it has become a place of fear and trepidation. This fear impacts the way we live, work and seek healthcare,” said **Reverend Dr. Anne Marie Bentsi-Addison, senior director for faith-based initiatives, NYC Health + Hospitals.** “This initiative will serve to help fill the gaps in the amazing work already in place. It will provide the necessary resources to undergird strong corrective action plans in need of such support “The winds of change have begun to blow away the darkness and devastation of gun violence. As leaders of the faith community, it is our responsibility to ensure that the ‘ruah,’ the divine winds continue to blow away the darkness of these times through the impact of our deeds. We are the hands and feet of God here on earth, let us continue to exemplify ‘faith in action.’”

“Unfortunately, gun violence has reached epidemic proportions in America, and so, the Clergy Collective was born to reduce the violence in the communities we serve. The Buddha was clear on violence, ‘All living things fear being put to death. Putting oneself in the place of the other, let no one kill nor cause another to kill,’” said **Reverend James A.**

Lynch, rissho kosei kai, New York Buddhist Dharma Center. “Indeed, it is the positive actions of the Clergy Collective, in which people of goodwill and those of religious conviction help end this modern death cult, and we, together affirmatively state, that all of humanity has been placed on this earth to fulfill the Almighty’s plan of peace on earth and goodwill to man.”

“At a time when there is need for greater investment in community, I commend Mayor Adams and DYCD Commissioner Howard for their visionary leadership in allocating \$1.4 million towards empowering faith leaders in our ongoing battle against gun violence across all five boroughs. It is our goal and life’s work to reduce the violence in the communities we serve, recognizing the profound impact gun violence has on families and the overall well-being of our neighborhoods,” said **Pastor Edward-Richard Hinds, executive director, 67th Precinct Clergy Council “The GodSquad”.** “The establishment of the Clergy Collective is a crucial step

towards proactively engaging our communities through street engagement, victims' services for families, and stronger collaboration with law enforcement, all aimed at deterring further violence. Through collaborative efforts with other vital stakeholders and with the GodSquad, we aspire to be co-producers of public safety. We are optimistic that this strategic investment will contribute to a significant reduction in handgun violence, fostering safer and more resilient communities for all."

"This investment in the faith community confines the mayor's relationship with religious leaders," said **Rabbi Baruch A. Yehudah, spiritual leader, B'nai Adath Kol Beth Yisrael Synagogue and International Israelite Board of Rabbis**. "However, it is and remains one of his best decisions to have those faith leaders working hand and hand with government to save the lives of the citizens of New York City from gun violence, poverty, homelessness, and important other issues. This initiative WILL save lives!"

"'Kevlar' has been called 'the thread that stops bullets,'" said **Reverend David Beidel, president, Urban Hope**. "It can only do so when it is woven together tightly. There are many powerful institutions in our city that care so deeply for our most vulnerable families. The clergy of New York City are so grateful for the C3 crime prevention initiative. It powerfully reflects the dedication of the mayor's office to include the faith-based community as a critical component in the weaving together of a safer city."

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