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Sent: Friday, December 26, 2014 11:00 AM
To: Judith Bronfman
Subject: STATEMENT ON POLICE AND COMMUNITY BY HON. GALE A. BREWER, MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT



Gale Brewer

Manhattan Borough President

Dear Friends,

It was a terrible and unforgettable moment for all of us: two police officers assassinated by a madman on a murder spree, a city in shock and disbelief. Coming amidst ten days of street protests over the lack of indictment in the Eric Garner case, the deaths of the officers seemed to turn the mood of the city on its head: one claim of injustice cruelly and murderously doubled by another. No heartfelt New Yorker could avoid being deeply moved and sobered by this confluence of events, nor by the anguish now shared by both the Garner family and the families of the police officers.

At the same time, we must not allow a gunman from another state on a killing spree, a person afflicted with mental illness, hardened by a cruel childhood and prison violence, filled with hatred of the police and bent on vengeance, to fill us with unreasoning fear or imagine that his actions reflect the temper of the New York we have worked so hard to create over the past 30 years. Elected officials have a special responsibility during times of trauma- the Mayor most of all - and in the aftermath of the Garner decision and the police murders, Borough President of Brooklyn Eric Adams. He not only stepped forward to assert his voice of long experience as a police officer, but also his moral authority as the elected voice of all the residents of Brooklyn. Governor Cuomo has also lent his powerful voice to a "societal deep breath" and a "cooling off period."

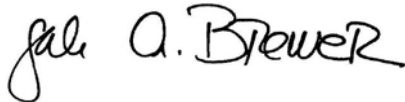
As part of my own effort to reach out to all parties since the Garner decision, and to seek common ground among so many conflicting cries for compassion and justice, I joined Eric Adams and Borough President Ruben Diaz of the Bronx at the site of the police murders to express our horror, our condolences, and our support for the Police Department in a moment of extreme duress. In addition to that stand, I have joined with hundreds of New Yorkers in a prayer vigil at Union Theological Seminary for the fallen officers and their families, and to seek there for the wisdom to reflect and act wisely in the midst of so much anger and so much suffering- an appeal echoed across the city by religious leaders of all denominations. And just last week I traveled to Staten Island to have supper with Mr. Garner's mother, Mrs. Carr, and to gain a deeper understanding of her remarkable strength and clear-headedness, and her appeals on behalf of the memory of her son for peaceful protest and reasoned justice for all.

While we mourn the strife and deaths that have so deeply wounded our city's sense of unity, and sobered all of us during this season of light and hope, we must not suppose that there is nothing we could have done to alter the course of events that led to the death of Mr. Garner and the murder of officers Ramos and Liu. The only way to heal the city in the aftermath, and prevent worse to come, is for people of reason and compassion to prevail over the demagogues and haters. There is work ahead for all of us:

- to master our own rage and fear;
- to listen as well as speak;
- and, to seek practical remedies for so many of the underlying causes that brought the city to this pass, including:
 - an insistence on deeper integration of policy and community;
 - an end to the criminalization of non-violent offenses;
 - early intervention mental health services for youth;
 - reform of the juvenile justice system;
 - and most of all, a commitment by the citizens and elected officials alike that - as in the wake of 9/11 - rage and vengence must give way to grieving and healing, and soon enough to acceptance and forgiveness.

I hope we are ready to have conversations about race and community, and I intend to organize such discussions in Manhattan. I pledge to work toward that, and each of these goals, and welcome all of you who wish to join me.

Thank you.



Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President

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