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# NEW YORK NEWS

The Voice of People

From New York

## Pipeline Dispute Escalates

Zelensky accuses EU allies of pressuring Ukraine over Russian oil transit

John Paul

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has accused some European allies of attempting to "blackmail" Ukraine into reopening the Soviet-era Druzhba oil pipeline, which carries Russian crude to Hungary and Slovakia through Ukrainian territory. The pipeline has been out of operation since January, when Ukraine said it was damaged during Russian air strikes.

While the European Union has urged Kyiv to repair the line and allow inspectors to examine the damage, Zelensky argued that restoring Russian oil transit would undermine the sanctions imposed on Moscow following its invasion of Ukraine. "We either sell Russian oil or we don't," Zelensky told reporters in Kyiv, adding that forcing Ukraine to resume transit effectively weakens the sanctions regime. The dispute has grown more complicated as Hungary, led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, continues to block both new EU sanctions against Russia and a proposed €90 billion (\$103 billion) financial package intended to support Ukraine's war effort. The disagreement highlights increasing tensions within Europe over energy security and economic pressure on Russia, particularly as the war in Ukraine continues and global energy markets remain volatile. Zelensky warned that easing restrictions on Russian oil would ultimately strengthen Moscow's economy while weakening international efforts to isolate it.



Photo: File photo of part of the Druzhba pipeline pictured near Stryi, western Ukraine, in 2009  
Image Source: Bloomberg via Getty Images

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Photo: A tanker anchored in Muscat, Oman near the strait on 7 March Image Source: File Photo Reuters

# Hormuz Crisis Grows

UK considers action to secure Strait of Hormuz

Alexandar Sullivan

Britain is exploring "any options" to help secure the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical energy shipping routes, as tensions escalate in the Middle East conflict involving the United States, Israel, and Iran, according to UK Energy Secretary Ed Miliband. Speaking on BBC

One's "Sunday with Laura Kuennsberg" program, Miliband said reopening the waterway was a global priority but declined to specify what actions the government might take. "You can rest assured that any options that can help to get the strait reopened are being looked at in concert with our allies," he said. The remarks came

after U.S. President Donald Trump warned on Saturday that the channel would be reopened "one way or another," urging nations including the United Kingdom, China, and France to deploy naval forces to the region. The Strait of Hormuz, located between Iran and Oman, carries roughly 20 million barrels of oil daily, representing

nearly 20% of global supply and about \$600 billion in annual energy trade, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Iran has effectively blocked the strait during the ongoing war, with reports indicating that at least 16 vessels have been attacked in recent weeks. Western officials have also raised concerns that naval

mines may have been placed in the passage, further threatening commercial shipping. Miliband suggested that technological solutions such as mine-hunting drones could play a role in securing the route, but emphasized that ending the broader conflict would be the most effective way to restore safe passage.

## HIGHLIGHT

●UK Energy Secretary Ed Miliband says Britain is exploring "any options" to secure the Strait of Hormuz.

●The move follows calls by U.S. President Donald Trump for allied nations to help reopen the key shipping route.

The issue has sparked debate within British politics. Shadow Energy Secretary Claire Coutinho said the UK should consider sending ships or drones if it serves national interests, while Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey urged caution and called for diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the conflict. The disruption has already driven oil prices sharply higher since the war began on February 28, intensifying concerns about global energy supplies and economic stability.

# Democrats Reconsider AIPAC Ties

Shifting political dynamics reshape debate over pro-Israel lobbying



Photo: Daniel Biss attends an event at Federal Plaza in Chicago, Aug. 2025.  
Image Source: E. Jason Wambsgans/Chicago Tribune/Tribune News Service/Getty Images

Lily Anderson

As political attitudes toward Israel evolve within the Democratic Party, a growing number of candidates are distancing themselves from the influential American Israel Public

Affairs Committee (AIPAC), turning the group's role in campaign financing into a flashpoint in several key races. The debate has become especially visible in the Chicago-area congressional primaries, where

Evanston Mayor Daniel Biss is competing for an open U.S. House seat. Biss, whose family has deep personal ties to Israel, has criticized AIPAC's involvement in the race, arguing that large political donations are being used to

shape the outcome. "They can't dismiss my positions that are for justice, for dignity and self-determination for the Palestinian people," Biss said.

## HIGHLIGHT

●Several Democratic candidates are increasingly distancing themselves from AIPAC.

●The debate has intensified ahead of Tuesday's congressional primaries in the Chicago suburbs.

Groups connected to AIPAC, including the United Democracy Project, are expected to spend more than \$20 million in Chicago-area races ahead of the primaries, according to campaign filings. Across the country, the issue has increasingly surfaced on the campaign trail.

Candidates report frequent questions about AIPAC donations at forums and town halls, reflecting a broader shift in Democratic politics as the war in Gaza following the October 7, 2023 attacks continues to shape public opinion. Some Democratic lawmakers warn that the growing controversy risks deepening divisions over U.S.-Israel relations, while critics argue the group's political spending exerts too much influence. AIPAC officials, however, maintain their endorsements are guided by support for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship and broader national security concerns. The debate illustrates how foreign policy, campaign financing, and party identity are increasingly intersecting in American politics ahead of upcoming elections.



# COMMUNITY NEWS



## Manhattan celebrates inauguration of its borough president Brad Hoylman-Sigal

### NYN Desk

Community leaders and residents gathered at Lincoln Center – Alice Tully Hall in Manhattan to celebrate the inauguration of Brad Hoylman-Sigal as Manhattan Borough President, marking a new chapter for the borough's leadership.

The ceremony drew a wide range of public officials and civic figures, including New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli, who

praised Hoylman-Sigal's commitment to strengthening the borough. "Brad is an extraordinary leader committed to building a more affordable and equitable borough for all," DiNapoli said. Attendees described the evening as both inspiring and hopeful for Manhattan's future. Vanessa Tantillo Aronson, who attended the ceremony, said the event highlighted the importance of leadership rooted in community engagement and



Photo: Community leaders gather for Manhattan inauguration ceremony  
Image Source: Online

dedication to residents. Hoylman-Sigal's inauguration underscored a shared vision among city leaders to continue improving quality of life across Manhattan while addressing affordability and equity. Supporters expressed optimism that his administration will work closely with community members and public officials to advance initiatives that strengthen neighborhoods and expand opportunities across the borough.

## State Department lowers cost to give up citizenship



### Staff Reporter

The U.S. State Department has significantly reduced the fee required for Americans to formally renounce their citizenship, cutting the cost by nearly 80% in a move that follows years of legal challenges and advocacy

from expatriate groups. Under a final rule published in the Federal Register on Friday, the fee has been lowered from \$2,350 to \$450. The change took effect the same day, marking a major shift in policy after earlier promises made in 2023 to review the cost.

For years, organizations representing Americans living abroad argued that the high fee created an unfair financial barrier for individuals seeking to relinquish their nationality. The revised amount returns the fee to the level first introduced by the U.S. government in 2010, when citizenship renunciation charges were initially established.

Officials say the adjustment aligns the cost more closely with the administrative services involved in processing renunciation requests. The policy change is expected to ease the process for Americans who choose to formally give up their citizenship, particularly those living overseas who had previously criticized the fee as excessively high.

## MTA backs Hochul's auto insurance reform plan



Photo : MTA Chair Janno Lieber joins Gov. Kathy Hochul promoting a plan to lower car insurance premiums, March 13, 2026.  
Image Source: Marc A. Hermann / MTA

### Senior Reporter

Gov. Kathy Hochul and MTA Chair and CEO Janno Lieber on Friday promoted the governor's proposed auto insurance reforms, arguing the measure could save the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) millions and benefit transit riders across

New York City. Speaking at the Mother Clara Hale Bus Depot in Harlem, officials said the reform could reduce the agency's personal injury insurance payouts by roughly \$50 million each year. Hochul said those savings could be redirected toward improving subway and bus service rather than covering

costly legal settlements. "They're sometimes forced to pay some really outrageous jackpot legal settlements," Hochul said, adding that such payouts divert funds that could otherwise support transit improvements. The governor has framed the proposal as part of a broader effort to curb what she described as "skyrocketing" auto insurance premiums in the state. The legislation would change how liability is determined in crash lawsuits, denying compensation to individuals found more than 50% responsible for an accident. However, critics and safe-streets advocates argue the change could leave some crash victims without compensation for injuries that may affect their ability to work. Meanwhile, some transit advocates note that while \$50 million is significant, it represents only a small fraction of the MTA's roughly \$20 billion annual budget, underscoring the ongoing debate over the proposal's broader impact.



Photo: Healthfirst hosts a colorectal cancer screening and prevention workshop at Saint Barnabas Hospital.  
Image Source: Keke Grant-Floyd

## Bronx seniors learn prevention during Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

### News Correspondent

Residents in the Bronx gathered for a health education workshop hosted by Healthfirst at the Saint Barnabas Hospital (SBH) Health & Wellness Center, highlighting the importance of nutrition and early screening during National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month in March. The event focused on raising awareness about colorectal cancer, which claims nearly 3,000 lives in New York each year, according to the New York State Department of Health. Medical experts and nutrition specialists provided guidance on prevention strategies, emphasizing the role of diet, regular screenings, and early detection. Abbie Gellman, a registered dietitian and director of the SBH Center for Culinary Medicine and Teaching Kitchen, led a cooking demonstration

focused on gut health. She showed participants how to prepare healthier meals such as zucchini muffins, salmon with roasted vegetables, and fiber-rich smoothies while explaining how reducing sugar and increasing fiber can help lower cancer risks. Doctors from SBH Health System, including Dr. Steven Brower and Dr. Michael Polcino, spoke about the rising incidence of colorectal cancer among younger adults and stressed the importance of screenings like colonoscopies before age 45. Community members who attended said the workshop provided valuable information on prevention, nutrition, and maintaining healthier lifestyles. Organizers concluded the event with a raffle and invitations for participants to attend future community cooking and fitness classes.

### Prayer Time IN New York

FAJR	DHUHR	ASR	MAGHRIB	ISHA
05:51	01:04	04:27	07:04	08:19
05:49	01:04	04:27	07:05	08:20
05:47	01:04	04:28	07:06	08:21
05:45	01:04	04:28	07:07	08:22
05:44	01:03	04:29	07:08	08:24
05:42	01:03	04:29	07:09	08:25
05:40	01:03	04:30	07:10	08:26

# OPINION

## RAMADAN SHARPENS OUR SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

– Imam Shamsi Ali

**R**amadan isn't just a personal spiritual journey; it's a catalyst for social awareness. It's about refining our relationships with God and others around us. Fasting awakens us to look beyond our own needs, fostering empathy and compassion. If after a month of fasting we're still oblivious to those suffering around us, surely something's amiss. Ramadan's purpose is to heighten our sensitivity, not numb it. Feeling to Understand Fasting allows us experience hunger, bridging the gap between us and those in need. It's a chance to move beyond statistics and truly grasp

others' struggles. This shared experience sparks genuine understanding and empathy. The Quran emphasizes caring for the vulnerable (see Surah al-Ma'un), and Ramadan reinforces this message. It's a collective training in empathy and social responsibility. From Empathy to Action Ramadan's social awareness must translate into action – through charity, kindness, and service. It's a prime time to give, as hearts are more receptive. The Prophet's generosity, especially



— Imam Shamsi Ali :  
Director, Jamaica Muslim  
Center & President,  
Nusantara Foundation

in Ramadan, sets an example. He was generous, but in the month of Ramadan he became more generous. Fasting should make us more compassionate, not hardened. Building a Caring Society A strong society is built on mutual care. When individuals have a sharp social conscience, justice thrives. Ramadan's awareness, reconnecting us amidst life's distractions. Social responsibility fosters a sense of

unity – we're all connected. Ramadan strengthens this bond through shared spiritual experiences. In closing, Ramadan's goal is to sharpen our conscience, not just regulate our rituals. If we're more responsive to others' needs, more attuned to their struggles, and more willing to give, Ramadan's worked its magic. But if our hearts remain untouched, the lesson's not fully sunk in. A living social conscience is a fruit of mature faith. Let's nurture it beyond Ramadan. When empathy sparks action, and action becomes habit, we build a compassionate society – and that's where true renewal begins.

“

“Ramadan isn't just a personal spiritual journey; it's a catalyst for social awareness.”



Image Source: Online

“

“When empathy sparks action, and action becomes habit, we build a compassionate society – and that's where true renewal begins.”

## Let Peace, Not War, Be the World's Only Path

– Akbar Haider Kiron

**T**he world stands at a crossroads today. The conflict in the Middle East, escalating since the beginning of 2026, has reached a level that makes the fear of a Third World War no longer just a fantasy. Since the US-Israel alliance launched military operations against Iran in late February, the entire region has been ablaze. With Iran's retaliatory strikes and the involvement of Hezbollah and the Houthis, the situation is growing more complex by the day. However, this analysis is not written to support any particular side. As a resident of New York, I understand the feelings of the people here. They do not want this war either, just as the ordinary people of Iran, Israel, and every other nation across the globe do not. This piece revolves around a single question: Where is the path to peace? The Fire of Conflict and Global Concern The conflict reached its peak following the death of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Iran has launched missile attacks on US bases in the Gulf region, while Israel has intensified airstrikes in Lebanon and Syria. UN Secretary-General António

Guterres has warned that these "unlawful attacks" are causing immense suffering across the region and that the situation could spiral out of control at any moment. According to Florence Gaub, an expert at the NATO Defense College, the risk of a Third World War is becoming "increasingly clear" day by day. She states it will not start with the push of a button one day, but will rather approach gradually through "accidents, misinterpreted messages, verbal escalations, and decisions made under pressure." Economic Shockwaves: Ordinary People Bear the Brunt The most significant impact of this conflict has been on the global economy. Iran has targeted the Strait of Hormuz, a vital artery for the world's oil trade. Consequently, the price of crude oil has surged by 15%, crossing the \$100 per barrel mark. Qatar's Energy Minister has warned that if the situation persists, prices could reach \$150.



— Akbar Haider Kiron  
Senior Journalist, New  
York

In New York and across various US states, diesel prices have jumped nearly 15% in a single week, reaching \$4.33 per gallon. Europe faces an energy crisis, while Asia grapples with inflation – in short, ordinary people everywhere are paying a heavy price. Economist Ed Yardeni notes that the surge in oil prices has increased the probability of a recession in the United States from 20% to 35%. The Role of Neutral Powers: Time for Diplomacy Now In this situation, China and Russia have called for a ceasefire. The G7 has convened an emergency meeting and decided to release oil from strategic reserves. But are these steps enough? The UN Secretary-General has stated, "It is time to stop the fighting and return to serious diplomatic negotiations." According to Professor Weng Li-chung, the simultaneous escalation of multiple conflict zones (the Middle

East, Ukraine, South Asia) and the absence of effective stabilizing mechanisms have brought the world to the "brink of complete uncontrollability. Time to Speak Up for Peace Ordinary people in New York do not want war. They know that war means higher taxes, the fear of their children being sent to the military, and rising prices in the market. The ordinary people of Iran also know that war means soaring food prices and a struggle for survival. Wars are instigated by certain interest groups. It is our responsibility – the responsibility of ordinary people – to stop them. Let Us Keep the Flame of Hope Alive The purpose of this analysis is not to assign blame, but to sow the seeds of peace in everyone's hearts. Living in New York, I see that the people here also desire peace. If they lived in Iran, they would desire peace too. So, the question of taking sides does not arise – I am simply on the side of humanity, on the side of peace. It is we who shape the future. Let us choose peace, not war. Now is the time to raise our voices.

# CIVIC

## Faith, Community, and Advocacy at BAAG Iftar 2026

### Leaders Call for Unity and Action on Immigrant Rights in Woodside

**James Anderson**

In a gathering that blended spiritual reflection with civic engagement, the Bangladesh American Advocacy Group (BAAG) hosted its Iftar and Dua Mahfil 2026 on March 10 at Gulshan Terrace in Woodside, New York, bringing together community members, elected officials, and advocacy leaders during the holy month of Ramadan. The event drew a diverse audience of Bangladeshi Americans and local leaders, highlighting the growing civic presence of the diaspora in New York's political landscape. Serving as Guest of Honor, U.S. Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez addressed attendees and spoke candidly about the challenges facing immigrant communities in the United States. Velázquez criticized the anti-immigrant actions of the Trump administration, stating that "America is going through a deep crisis." She urged communities



to stand united in defending their rights as citizens. "We are not just Bangladeshis or members of different communities — we are American citizens. To protect our rights, we must unite and continue our struggle if necessary," she said. Velázquez also noted that although she will not run in the upcoming election, she remains committed to supporting communities in their fight for justice. "I will continue to stand with you and fight for the rights of Americans." Former U.S.



Congressman Jamaal Bowman, who attended as a special guest, echoed similar sentiments, emphasizing the need for collective advocacy. "We must raise our voice for the rights of immigrants,"

Bowman said, calling for government funds not to be used for immigration arrests through ICE but instead to be invested in community development and education. He added that housing, healthcare, home-care services, and community safety are fundamental human rights, stressing the importance of empowering communities to defend those rights. Several public officials and community leaders also addressed the gathering, including New York City Council Member

Shekar Krishnan, Nisha Agarwal, a representative from the New York City Mayor's Office, and First Deputy Commissioner Jagpreet Singh. Among the community speakers were BAAG President Zainal Abedin, BAAG General Secretary Shahana Masum, New York Muslim Action Network's Mir Masum Ali, New York State Comptroller candidate Raj Goel, and several state assembly candidates including Mary Zobaida, Shamsul Haque, Mahtab Khan, Samantha Kattan,

and David Orkin. Additional remarks came from Afaf Nasher, Executive Director of CAIR-New York, and Patriots Bangladesh spokesperson Abdul Qader. The program began with Qur'an recitation by Imran Hossain and Shafik Abedin, followed by a welcome address from Shahana Masum. A video presentation highlighted BAAG's advocacy initiatives, and a special dua was offered before attendees broke their fast together. The evening concluded with closing remarks from BAAG Treasurer Engineer Abdur Rahim, while the program was emceed by young community members Tazrin Rahman and Kazi Tejwar. With strong participation from community organizations, media representatives, and activists, the BAAG Iftar 2026 served as both a spiritual gathering and a platform for civic dialogue—reinforcing the growing voice of Bangladeshi Americans in New York's public life.



# INSPIRATION

## An Evening of Recitation, Reflection, and Fellowship

### Jalalabad Association of America Hosts Ramadan Program at Joya Hall



**Ashley Reed**

In a gathering that blended spiritual devotion with community celebration, the Jalalabad Association of America Inc. hosted the Grand Finale of a Holy Quran Recitation

Competition, followed by an Iftar and Dua Mahfil, on March 10, 2026, at Joya Hall in New York. The event brought together members of the Bangladeshi-American community, families, and young participants for an evening centered



on faith, learning, and unity during the holy month of Ramadan. The program highlighted the importance of nurturing Islamic education among younger generations while strengthening community ties through shared religious observances. The centerpiece of the evening was the grand finale of the Quran recitation

competition, where participants demonstrated their memorization and recitation skills before an audience of community members and supporters. Such competitions are widely regarded as a meaningful way to encourage youth engagement with the Holy Quran while promoting discipline, confidence, and spiritual

growth. Attendees gathered at Joya Hall as the program progressed through recitations and formal proceedings before transitioning into the traditional breaking of the fast. The iftar meal provided an opportunity for families and community leaders to connect, exchange greetings, and reflect on the spiritual significance of Ramadan. Following the iftar, a special dua and prayer session was held, with participants collectively praying for peace, prosperity, and the well-being of the community as well as the broader Muslim ummah. The solemn moment underscored the event's deeper purpose—bringing people together in faith and gratitude. Events such as this reflect the ongoing

role of community organizations like the Jalalabad Association of America Inc. in fostering cultural and religious engagement among Bangladeshi Americans. By combining youth-centered educational initiatives with communal worship and fellowship, the organization continues to provide meaningful spaces where tradition and community identity can thrive. As the evening concluded, the gathering served as a reminder that Ramadan is not only a time of personal reflection but also an opportunity for communities to come together in unity, reinforcing shared values of faith, knowledge, and compassion.



# INSPIRATION

## Bangladeshi Community Gathers for Iftar and Dua in Queens



All photo credit : Tushar Pic

# ADVOCACY

## Advocacy and Faith Intersect at Maryland's Palestine Advocacy Week Coalition of Activists Testify in Annapolis During Ramadan

**William Henry**

During a demanding week at the Maryland State House in Annapolis, advocates, faith leaders, and community organizers gathered for a marathon Palestine Advocacy Week, testifying on a series of legislative proposals related to Palestinian rights and broader international human rights concerns. The effort unfolded during the ongoing Maryland legislative session, with many participants balancing long hours of civic engagement with the spiritual commitments of Ramadan.

Advocates addressed lawmakers on several proposed bills, including measures aimed at repealing Maryland's anti-BDS executive order, introducing Palestinian culture and history into public education, and ending state funding for Maryland nonprofits that support illegal Israeli settlements. Another proposal called on the state to formally condemn what advocates described



as genocide in Gaza, Sudan, and Congo. The hearings stretched late into the evening, at times running past the traditional sunset moment when Muslims break their fast during Ramadan. Participants described the legislative schedule as intense even under normal circumstances. "The legislative session during



Ramadan is next level grueling," one advocate noted, reflecting on the

challenge of maintaining advocacy efforts while fasting throughout the day. Recognizing the circumstances, members of the Legislative Muslim Caucus and the Women's Caucus organized an evening iftar for those participating in the hearings. The gathering provided a brief but meaningful

pause in the day's proceedings, offering activists, lawmakers, and supporters a moment of community and reflection before continuing their work. A notable feature of the advocacy effort was the diversity of voices supporting the legislation. Witnesses included Jewish, Christian, and Muslim advocates, highlighting what

participants described as a growing interfaith coalition advocating for human rights and accountability. Many additional supporters contributed testimony through virtual participation or written submissions. For many involved, the advocacy carried both political and spiritual significance. Activists described balancing civic responsibility with personal faith, especially during the final nights of Ramadan. "These moments of gathering remind us that solidarity is something we practice with one another every day," one participant reflected, emphasizing that the work itself can be seen as a form of devotion and service. As the hearings concluded for the day, advocates expressed determination to continue pushing for legislative action. Their message remained consistent throughout the week: justice, dignity, and accountability are non-negotiable, and the coalition supporting those principles continues to grow.







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# RECOGNITION

## Queens Ceremony Celebrates Masjid Ar-Rahman's Community Impact

### NYPD and Elected Officials Join Residents for Street Co-Naming

**Jessica Morgan**

In a ceremony highlighting the importance of faith-based institutions in neighborhood life, community leaders and residents gathered in Queens, New York, for a street co-naming ceremony honoring Masjid Ar-Rahman, recognizing the mosque's longstanding role in serving and strengthening the local community. The event was attended by NYPD 105th Precinct Captain Moodie, along with elected officials and community members, who came together to commemorate the occasion and celebrate the mosque's enduring presence in the neighborhood. The co-naming marks a symbolic tribute to



Masjid Ar-Rahman, acknowledging the institution's influence in fostering community engagement, spiritual guidance, and social connection. During the ceremony, attendees reflected on the mosque's contributions over the years, noting its role not only as a

place of worship but also as a gathering point for residents and families in the surrounding area. Faith institutions like Masjid Ar-Rahman often serve as important anchors within communities, offering programs, support networks, and opportunities



for dialogue among neighbors of diverse

backgrounds. Representatives from the NYPD 105th Precinct highlighted the significance of recognizing institutions that help build stronger relationships within neighborhoods. Captain Moodie joined community members in marking the occasion,

emphasizing the positive role the mosque continues to play in the area. The street co-naming ceremony served as both a celebration and a moment of reflection for those who have been connected to the mosque over the years. By officially recognizing Masjid Ar-Rahman through the co-naming, city leaders and residents underscored the mosque's lasting presence and its meaningful contribution to the fabric of the community in Queens. For many attendees, the moment represented more than a new street sign—it symbolized respect, recognition, and appreciation for an institution that has helped shape the identity and unity of the neighborhood.



# UNITY

## MAPS New York State Hosts Community Iftar Dinner

Event Highlights Unity and Public Service Leadership



**Emily Parker**

Community leaders, public servants, and local residents gathered for an evening of reflection and fellowship at the MAPS (Muslim Americans in Public

Service New York State) Iftar Dinner, an event that highlighted the spirit of unity, partnership, and civic engagement during the holy month of Ramadan. The gathering brought together individuals



committed to public service and community development across New York, offering a space where participants could break their fast together while strengthening connections across sectors. The event underscored the growing role of Muslim Americans in public service, as well as the importance of collaboration among leaders working to support diverse communities throughout the state. Attendees described the evening as a meaningful opportunity to celebrate shared values while fostering dialogue among professionals and community advocates. One participant noted the significance of the

gathering, describing it as “a wonderful event celebrating community, partnership, and unity,” and expressing appreciation for what they called “a warm and inclusive evening.” The MAPS Iftar Dinner served not only as a religious observance but also as a platform to highlight the contributions of Muslim professionals in government, civic leadership, and public institutions. By bringing together individuals from different backgrounds and fields, the event emphasized the importance of cooperation and mutual understanding in strengthening the broader civic landscape. Throughout the evening, conversations centered on community

collaboration, leadership, and service—values closely aligned with the reflective spirit of Ramadan. Participants shared the traditional iftar meal while exchanging ideas and experiences related to public service and community engagement. As the evening concluded, the gathering stood as a reminder that events like the MAPS New York State Iftar Dinner play an important role in connecting people dedicated to service. Through shared meals and meaningful dialogue, such occasions help reinforce a sense of unity and purpose among those working to support and uplift communities across New York.



## A Night of Reflection and Connection in New Jersey

Annual Iftar Strengthens Ties Between Officials and Communities

**Carlos Stewart**

In a gathering aimed at strengthening relationships across communities, the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General (OAG) joined forces with the New Jersey State Police and the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness to host their annual Ramadan Iftar this week, bringing together community leaders, faith representatives, and public officials from across New Jersey. The event served as both a spiritual observance during the holy month of Ramadan and an opportunity to foster dialogue between state institutions and the diverse communities they serve. By hosting the annual iftar, organizers emphasized



the importance of building trust and understanding through direct engagement and shared experiences.

Participants gathered to break their fast together while discussing issues affecting communities throughout the state.

The evening reflected a broader commitment among public agencies to create open channels of communication with residents from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Officials from the OAG, New Jersey State Police, and the Office of Homeland Security and

Preparedness described the gathering as an opportunity to listen and learn from community voices. In a message shared following the event, organizers noted that the evening served as “a reminder of the bonds we share across faiths and communities here in New Jersey.” The gathering also highlighted the role of Ramadan as a time for reflection, generosity, and unity. Events like this annual iftar provide an environment where people from different professions and faith traditions can come together in a spirit of respect and cooperation. Organizers expressed gratitude for the strong participation of community members and leaders, emphasizing that such gatherings help

strengthen partnerships that are essential for public safety, civic engagement, and mutual understanding. “Grateful for the opportunity to listen, learn, and connect with so many community members and leaders,” officials shared following the event. As the evening concluded, attendees reflected on the significance of the shared meal—not only as a religious observance but also as a meaningful step toward building stronger relationships between public institutions and the communities of New Jersey. The annual iftar continues to serve as an important reminder that dialogue, partnership, and respect remain central to the state’s diverse civic life.



# COMPASSION

## BHALO Hosts Eid Food Distribution with Mayor Zohran Mamdani

### Humanitarian Program Supports Families in Jamaica, Queens

**Noah Presley**

In a gesture of community solidarity ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, the volunteer organization BHALO organized a humanitarian food distribution program in Jamaica, New York, bringing together volunteers, residents, and city leadership to support families preparing for the upcoming holiday. The initiative focused on providing free Eid food packages to members of the local community, ensuring that families could celebrate the festival with dignity and ease. The event drew the attention of city leaders as well, with New York City Mayor Zohran Kwame Mamdani visiting the distribution site and interacting



with organizers and volunteers. Held in the Jamaica neighborhood of Queens, the program reflected the growing role of grassroots community organizations in addressing everyday



needs within immigrant

and multicultural communities across the city. Volunteers from BHALO worked together to distribute food items to residents, many of whom expressed appreciation for the support as

preparations for Eid-ul-Fitr approached. Organizers described the effort as part of their broader mission to stand beside community members and offer assistance where it is most needed. By organizing such initiatives, the group aims to strengthen social bonds and promote a culture of compassion and service within the community. The presence of Mayor Zohran Kwame Mamdani added significance to the event, highlighting the importance of community-led humanitarian programs. His visit underscored the city's recognition of volunteer initiatives that work directly with local residents and support families during important

cultural and religious occasions. As volunteers continued distributing food packages, the atmosphere reflected the spirit of generosity often associated with the end of Ramadan and the celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr. Community members, organizers, and local leaders gathered not only to share resources but also to reinforce a shared commitment to caring for neighbors in need. By organizing the Eid food distribution program, BHALO demonstrated how grassroots efforts can play a meaningful role in strengthening communities across New York City, ensuring that the joy of Eid reaches households throughout Jamaica, Queens.



# FELLOWSHIP

## An Evening of Faith and Fellowship in Queens

Jamaica Bangladeshi Association Brings Together Community and Civic Voices



**Alex Mason**

In a warm display of faith, fellowship, and community engagement, the Jamaica Bangladeshi Association (JBA)



hosted an Iftar and Dua Mahfil on Friday afternoon at Agra Palace on Queens Boulevard

in Queens, New York, bringing together prominent members of the Bangladeshi-

American community for a Ramadan gathering marked by gratitude and solidarity. The event drew a wide range of attendees, including local community leaders, business leaders, and representatives from both print and electronic media, underscoring the association's standing within the broader Bangladeshi diaspora in New York. As guests gathered to break their fast, the evening reflected the spiritual atmosphere of Ramadan while also serving as a space for community connection and mutual appreciation. Welcoming the attendees, JBA President Shah Nawaz, Secretary Syed Rabbi, and Advisor Ahsan Habib expressed their

gratitude to all those present for helping make the occasion a success. Their remarks emphasized the importance of continued unity and participation within the community, especially during Ramadan, when shared meals and prayer often strengthen both social and spiritual bonds. Beyond the iftar meal itself, the gathering functioned as a community meeting point, allowing guests from different professional and social backgrounds to reconnect in a setting shaped by faith and cultural identity. The presence of business leaders and media representatives also highlighted the close relationship between civic, social, and cultural

networks within the Bangladeshi-American community in Queens. The program's dua mahfil added a reflective dimension to the evening, offering attendees an opportunity to join in prayer for peace, well-being, and prosperity. Such moments remain central to Ramadan gatherings, reinforcing values of compassion, gratitude, and collective support. As the event concluded, the Jamaica Bangladeshi Association's iftar stood out not only as a religious observance, but as a meaningful expression of community life in Queens—one that brought together leaders, families, and supporters around a shared table in the spirit of Ramadan.



# FELLOWSHIP

## City leaders join Arab American Association of New York for evening of unity



All photo credit : Neher Siddiquee

# INTERFAITH

## A Shared Table Across Faiths in New York

### COPO Hosts Annual Ramadan Iftar Centered on Unity and Service

**Daniel Matthew**

In a powerful display of interfaith unity and community connection, The Council of Peoples Organization (COPO) hosted its Annual Interfaith Ramadan Iftar Dinner in New York, bringing together seniors, elected officials, faith leaders, and law enforcement for an evening centered on reflection, fellowship, and shared purpose. Held at the COPO Older Adult Center Halal, the gathering was organized by COPO directors Mohammad Razvi and Raja Hasan Raza. The event reflected the group's longstanding effort to create spaces where diverse communities can come together during the holy month of Ramadan. According to COPO, the evening united members of the Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, and Christian communities, underscoring the broader interfaith spirit that defined the program. The dinner drew a notable group of



public officials and civic leaders, including NYC Councilmember Farah Louis, NYC Councilmember Inna Vernikov, Assemblymember Robert Carroll, and NYPD Deputy Chief



Richard Taylor. Also in attendance were Mark

Myers Apple, head of the Bridges Organization, representatives from the Brooklyn Borough President's office, and local community leaders including Raja Azad Gul, Raheela Pervez, and Chaudhry Pervez

Akhtar. A defining feature of the evening was the strong participation of seniors from the COPO Older Adult Center, whose presence helped make the gathering a meaningful and large

community event. Their involvement highlighted the center's role not only as a service hub for older adults, but also as a place where broader community ties can be strengthened through shared cultural and religious observances. In a statement after the event, COPO said it was honored to host its OAC Annual Interfaith Iftar, describing the evening as one that brought the community together during Ramadan. The organization noted that the program was made possible with the support of its dedicated staff and thanked attendees for joining in the spirit of unity. By convening leaders and residents from different backgrounds around a shared table, COPO once again demonstrated how community institutions can build bridges across faiths and generations. The annual iftar served not only as a Ramadan observance, but also as a reminder that New York's strength continues to rest in its diversity, dialogue, and solidarity.



# INTERFAITH

## Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, and Christian Communities Join in New York




**DISTRICT 39  
INTERFAITH  
IMMIGRATION  
SUMMIT**

*Organizing Neighborhood  
Solidarity Against Mass  
Deportation*

**Sunday, March 22nd  
1:30 PM - 5:00 PM**

**Register Here:**  
*Location provided  
upon registration*




**ICNY**  
Interfaith Center of New York



**Shahana  
Hanif**  
CITY COUNCIL MEMBER  
DISTRICT 39

ALL photo Credit : COPO

# ENGAGEMENT

## Unity and Reflection at JBBA's 20th Annual Iftar Dinner

Community Leaders and Public Officials Celebrate Ramadan in Queens

Issac Andrew

In a gathering that blended faith, community leadership, and civic engagement, the Jackson Heights Bangladesh Business Association of New York (JBBA) hosted its 20th Annual Iftar Dinner on March 12, 2026, at Shanai Restaurant & Party Hall in Jackson Heights, New York. The event brought together elected officials, business leaders, and members of the Bangladeshi-American community to observe the spirit of Ramadan while strengthening community bonds. The evening program ran from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM and was co-sponsored by New York City Comptroller Mark Levine, who attended as the chief guest. Also present as special guests were U.S. Congresswoman Grace Meng, New York State Assemblyman and State Senate



candidate Steven Raga, and New York City Council Member Shekar Krishnan. Their participation highlighted the growing civic presence and influence of the Bangladeshi business community in Queens and across New York City. The program was presided over by JBBA Chairman Shah M. Nawaz, while JBBA

জ্যাকসন হাইটস বাংলাদেশী বিজনেস এসোসিয়েশন অফ এন ওয়াই  
JACKSON HEIGHTS BANGLADESHI BUSINESS ASSOCIATION OF NY

Member Secretary Fahad Solaiman served as the moderator and coordinator of the evening's proceedings. Speakers at the event reflected on the spiritual significance of Ramadan, emphasizing how fasting encourages self-discipline, compassion, and a deeper sense of social

responsibility. Community leaders associated with the organization were also present, including Member Secretary Gias Ahmed, Convener Abul Fazal Dedarul Islam, and Chief Advisor Moin Chowdhury, along with several co-conveners and coordinators who

helped organize the annual gathering. Their efforts ensured the smooth coordination of what has become a longstanding Ramadan tradition for the community. Throughout the evening, speakers called on the community to work collectively for the greater good while promoting unity, harmony, and

cooperation within the Bangladeshi diaspora and the broader New York community. The gathering also served as an opportunity for business leaders, public officials, and residents to engage in conversation and strengthen partnerships. Concluding the program, JBBA General Secretary Fahad Solaiman expressed sincere appreciation to all distinguished guests, community leaders, and participants for attending the event. He noted that gatherings like the JBBA Annual Iftar Dinner play an important role in fostering friendship, solidarity, and brotherhood among community members. As attendees broke their fast together, the evening reflected both the spiritual values of Ramadan and the vibrant civic life of the Bangladeshi-American community in Jackson Heights.



# ENGAGEMENT

## NYC Comptroller Mark Levine and Elected Officials Join Bangladeshi Business Leaders



All Photo Credit : Tushar Pic

# INSIGHT

## Alumni Delegation Completes Special Virginia Tour

FBI New York Citizens Academy Alumni Association traveled for a scheduled Quantico visit

**Marcos Alonso**

Members of the FBI New York Citizens Academy Alumni Association recently completed a special multi-day trip to the Washington, D.C. area, highlighted by a members-only visit to Quantico, Virginia, that offered an in-depth look at federal training and forensic operations. According to the official itinerary, the trip ran from March 10 through March 12, 2026, with participants checking in at the Residence Inn by Marriott in Washington, D.C. before the main tour day on March 11. The visit was limited to association members, underscoring the exclusive nature of the program. The schedule required participants to arrange their own transportation to FBI Headquarters in Washington, where a bus picked up the group outside 10th and Pennsylvania Avenue



and departed promptly in the morning. The tour itself ran from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., plus transit time, and began at the FBI Laboratory. There, participants received a presentation on the lab's mission, forensic capabilities, and scientific disciplines,

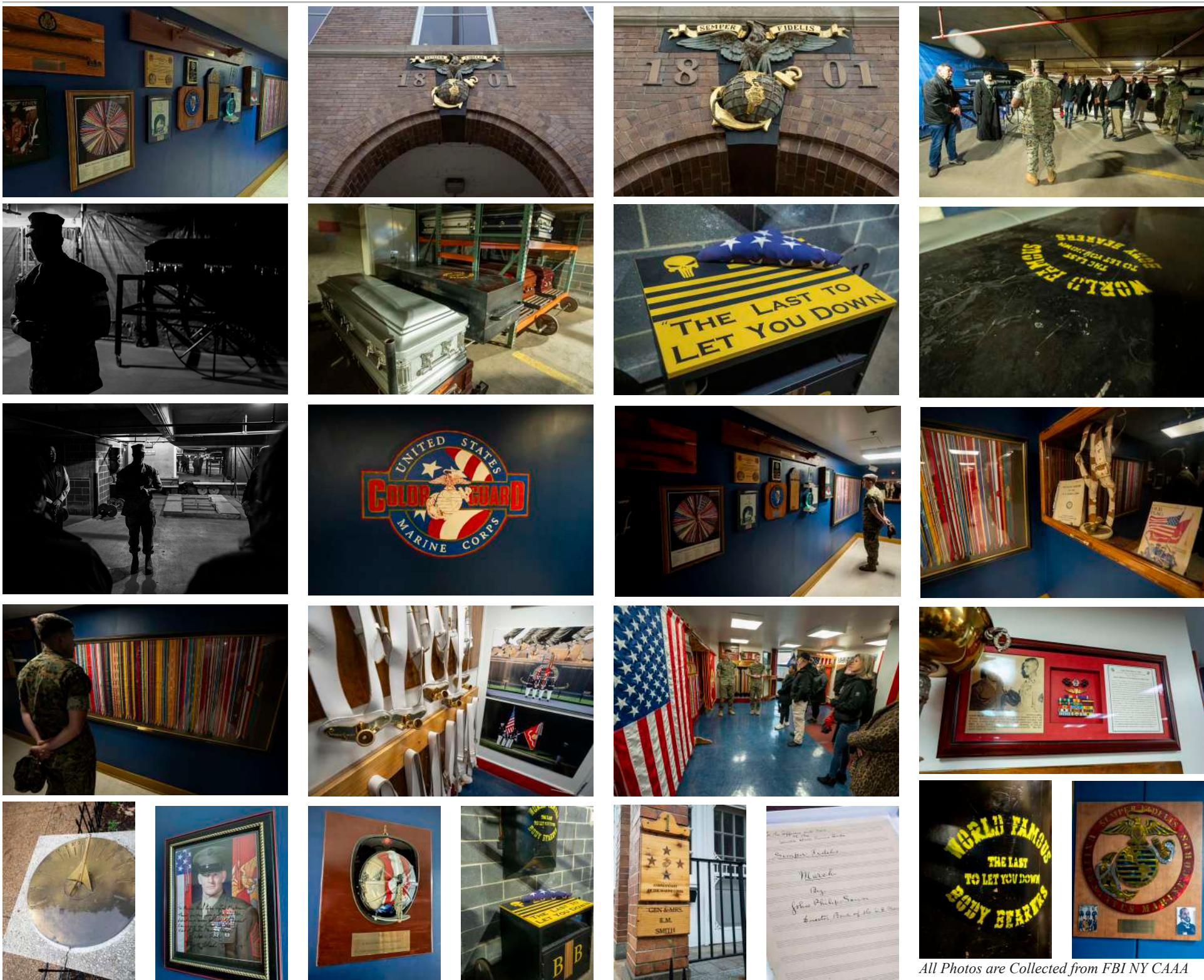


followed by a guided visit to selected

laboratory areas. The remainder of the day took place at the FBI Academy/ Training Division, where attendees were scheduled to learn about academy history, training programs for new agents and intelligence analysts, and key sites including

Hogan's Alley, fitness training areas, and firearms ranges. The program also included a presentation by a subject matter expert. The guidelines show that the visit was carefully structured, with mandatory group transportation, required government-issued

identification, advance security screening, and a full-day attendance requirement because the site is a secure facility. Participants were also advised to wear business-casual clothing and closed-toe shoes because of extensive walking and standing during the tour. The broader itinerary reflected both educational and networking elements. In addition to the main visit, members had plans for a chapter dinner in Washington, D.C. on March 11, followed by a tour of Marine Barracks Washington on March 12. Taken together, the trip offered alumni members a rare opportunity to deepen their understanding of federal operations, reconnect with fellow graduates, and take part in a carefully coordinated experience designed specifically for the New York chapter.



All Photos are Collected from FBI NY CAAA



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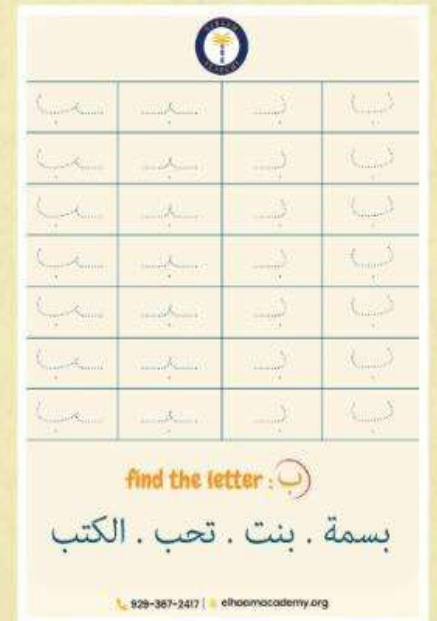
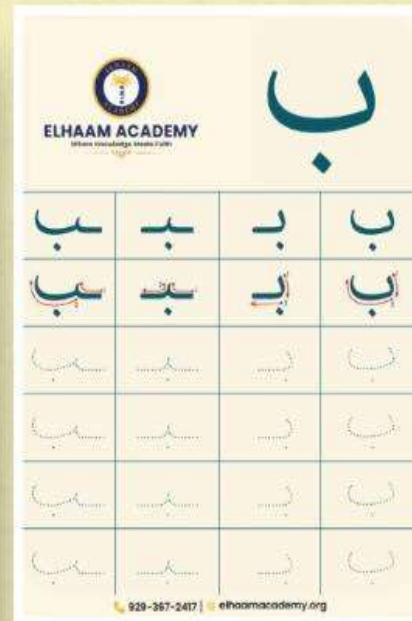
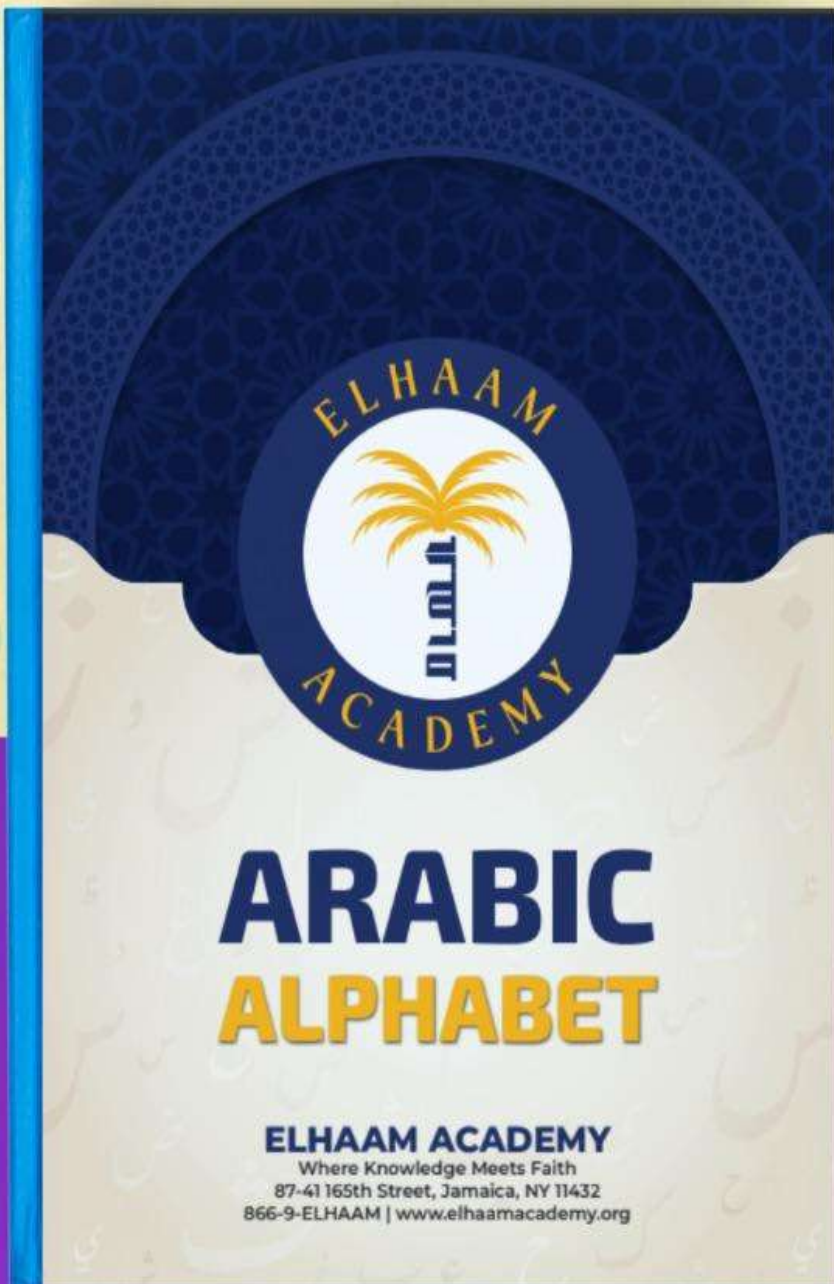
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# Hate Speech Meets Resistance

## Social media posts spark renewed debate over Islamophobia



Photo: Online attacks on Muslims trigger calls for unity  
Source: Online posts



Image Source

### Amkel Nourush

A fresh exchange on social media has underscored how openly anti-Muslim rhetoric continues to circulate online — and how public officials and community leaders are increasingly pushing back against it.

The posts shown in the attached images contrast two sharply different responses. In one, Congresswoman Grace Meng condemned Islamophobia as “disgraceful and frankly un-American,” while in another, Mayor Zohran Mamdani rejected

inflammatory rhetoric aimed at Muslims and New Yorkers. Together, the responses reflect a broader reality: social media remains a space where hostility can spread quickly, but also where solidarity can be made visible. Community voices

joined that defense. Commenting on Meng’s post, Imam Muhammad Shahidullah wrote, “Islam teaches peace, mercy, and respect for all people—there is no place for hate in our faith.” He added that Muslim Americans are part of the fabric of New York City, describing them as neighbors, educators, business owners, leaders, and first responders. The exchange highlights more than a political disagreement. It shows how digital rhetoric can shape public attitudes toward an entire community — and why rebutting Islamophobia publicly matters. For many Muslim New Yorkers, such statements of support serve not only as symbolic gestures, but as a reminder that hate should never be allowed to stand unchallenged.

# Judge Blocks Fed Investigation

## Court rules Justice Department lacked evidence against Jerome Powell

### Nassr Al Shams

A U.S. federal judge has blocked an attempt by the Department of Justice to investigate the Federal Reserve, ruling that prosecutors failed to present any credible evidence of wrongdoing by Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell. In a sharply worded decision, Judge James Boasberg concluded that the subpoenas issued by U.S.

Attorney Jeanine Pirro were likely intended to pressure Powell rather than pursue a legitimate criminal inquiry. The ruling said the government had provided “essentially zero evidence” suggesting Powell committed a crime. The investigation had focused on alleged cost overruns tied to renovations at Federal Reserve offices and Powell’s testimony

before Congress. Powell had previously argued that the probe was politically motivated and designed to push the central bank to lower interest rates, a demand frequently made by President Donald Trump. Pirro, who was appointed U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia last year, criticized the ruling and announced plans to appeal, calling the

decision “wrong on its face.” The case has intensified debate over the independence of the Federal Reserve, particularly as Powell’s term as chair is set to end in May. Political tensions surrounding the investigation could also complicate confirmation plans for Kevin Warsh, whom Trump nominated earlier this year to replace Powell.

# New Cholesterol Guidelines

## Doctors urge earlier treatment to prevent heart disease

### Adrian Smith

Millions of Americans may need to consider starting cholesterol-lowering medications earlier in life, according to updated medical guidelines released by the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association. The new recommendations suggest that adults as young as 30 years old with high LDL cholesterol levels—often called “bad cholesterol”—should consider statin therapy alongside lifestyle changes such as healthier diets and exercise. The guidance shifts focus from



Photo: Statins work by lowering LDL cholesterol which can build up in the arteries over time.  
Image Source: Lauren Hurley/PA/AP

traditional 10-year risk estimates to evaluating a person’s 30-year risk of cardiovascular disease. Dr. Jennifer Haythe of NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center said the change reflects

growing evidence that reducing cholesterol exposure earlier in life can prevent plaque buildup in arteries. “Longer duration of reduced LDL exposure translates to less plaque accumulation,” she

explained. Experts estimate that the new criteria could affect millions of Americans between ages 30 and 44. Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States, with one death occurring approximately every 34 seconds. For some patients, the new guidance may be lifesaving. Gigi Gari Campos, who suffered a heart attack at age 34, said earlier treatment might have changed her health journey. Her experience underscores the growing emphasis on prevention and early intervention in cardiovascular care.



Photo: Mya, three, was observed while playing with AI-powered toy Gabbo from Curio  
Image Source: BBC

# AI Toys Raise Safety Concerns

## Researchers warn interactive toys may confuse young children

### Julian Alvez

Researchers are urging stronger regulation of AI-powered toys for young children after a study by the University of Cambridge found that some interactive toys can misunderstand toddlers’ emotions and respond in confusing ways. The research observed how children ages three to five interacted with an AI toy called Gabbo, which uses a voice-activated chatbot powered by OpenAI technology. While parents hoped the toy might help build language and communication skills, researchers found many children struggled to interact with it effectively. In some cases, the toy responded awkwardly or failed to recognize

emotional cues. When one child said, “I’m sad,” the toy replied cheerfully, encouraging continued play instead of acknowledging the emotion. According to co-author Dr. Emily Goodacre, such responses could leave children feeling unsupported during a crucial stage of social development. Professor Jenny Gibson, a developmental psychologist at Cambridge, said the focus on toy safety must expand beyond physical risks to include “psychological safety.” The study’s authors recommend closer oversight of AI products marketed to young children and advise parents to supervise their use carefully while reviewing privacy and safety settings.

# United Strengthen Top-Four Bid

## Manchester United defeat Aston Villa 3-1 at Old Trafford

### Charles Lewis

Manchester United strengthened their push for a Champions League place with a decisive 3-1 victory over Aston Villa at Old Trafford on Sunday, maintaining their hold on third place in the Premier League standings. After a quiet first half, Casemiro opened the scoring in the 53rd minute, heading in a corner delivered by Bruno Fernandes. Villa responded in the 64th minute when Ross Barkley fired a powerful strike past United goalkeeper Senne Lammens to level the match. United regained control soon after. Matheus Cunha restored the

lead in the 71st minute, finishing a precise pass from Fernandes, before substitute Benjamin Sesko sealed the victory with a deflected goal in the 81st minute. The match also marked a milestone for Fernandes, whose two assists took him to 100 assists in all competitions for Manchester United since joining the club in 2020, surpassing David Beckham’s single-season assist record. Under interim manager Michael Carrick, United have now recorded seven wins in nine matches, boosting confidence in their quest for a top-four finish and a return to Europe’s premier club competition.



Photo: Matheus Cunha scores United’s second goal against Aston Villa at Old Trafford  
Image Source: Lewis Storey/Getty Images