

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 7, 2023, 5:20 PM
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS APPEARS LIVE ON MSNBC'S
"POLITICSNATION WITH AL SHARPTON"**

Reverend Al Sharpton: Welcome back to PoliticsNation. This week as head of the National Action Network, I sat down with the mayor of New York, the state Attorney General, and several other high-ranking Black state and city officials to address public safety here in New York. The New York Times is reporting a 22 percent spike in arrests driven by major crime in the city in the last year, despite a notable drop in shootings and murder.

Joining me now, New York Mayor Eric Adams, a Democrat. First of all, thank you for being with us, Mr. Mayor, and thank you for joining us here on this show. And thanks again for joining us in the summit at National Action Network this week, along with that historic slate of Black elected officials to address public safety, which you ran for mayor pledging to improve. And the Times is reporting that homicides last year saw an 11 percent drop from 2021, the fewest since 2019.

But at the same time, the city has seen what New York Police Department classifies as major crimes, especially robberies, burglaries, and grand larcenies, drive arrests up by 22 percent last year from 2021. And as mayor, you've tried to have the balance to take both on with an unprecedented number of Blacks in political office. I said it on Thursday night at the summit, and I'll say it again.

As one who used to run behind Adam Clayton Powell when I was 12 and 13, and I became youth director for Shirley Chisholm's presidential campaign when I was 18, they never dreamed we'd have Blacks being the speaker of the New York State Assembly, the majority leader of the New York State Senate, the New York State attorney general, the mayor of New York, the police commissioner, the chancellor of schools, district attorney in two counties all at the same time. And we must work together to deal with crime and reform at the same time. No one has pushed that harder and stronger than you.

Mayor Eric Adams: Thanks so much, Reverend, for even coming together. There was a common denominator, as Attorney General James pointed out. You were there throughout the years when many of us were running for office, being a part of the original founding of the National Action Network, one of the board members, that I sat on.

So, because there was a level of comfortability that all of us had, and we've interacted with you throughout the years, it was easy when you stated, "Let's get in the room and let's have a real conversation." And this is a conversation that is not only local, but national. You look at the four major cities in America. Los Angeles, New York, Houston, Chicago, African American mayors. And 11 of the major cities are mayors of color.

So in the room, we had leaders of color here in New York City, and it's only a microcosm. That's what's happening across the country, and we have to be honest. And I bring a uniqueness to this conversation as the mayor, as a former law enforcement person, retiring as a captain, but also as an advocate. 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care, we were a leading voice to push against aggressive police behavior.

So, I know we must have intervention and prevention. The long-term things, prevention, we are putting in place in an unprecedented way in our administration, but we cannot continue to deny the intervention. People are dying right now, and we must make sure the recidivism that we experience of those who have violence is addressed, and that is my goal in this legislative cycle.

Reverend Sharpton: Now, one of the things that... As you mentioned, you've spent 25 years in law enforcement as a policeman rising up to captain. Andrea Stewart-Cousins, who's the majority leader in the New York State Senate, represents a district that has to deal with crime and a need of reform. Carl Heastie, the speaker, the same. The attorney general of the state.

For all people, they have to deal with this balance. And they get maligned unfairly, and you certainly do by some of the media either way. And I think leadership is to gather together in a historic way, saying we may disagree on some points, but we have to get together and deal what our constituents expect, and that's safety and to have our civil liberties protected at the same time.

Mayor Adams: So true, so true. And one of the biggest mistakes I believe we made last year in 2022, is that we allowed others to really hijack our narrative. That we were unable to come together as Black and brown leaders, Eric Gonzalez and others, and really look at the historical feeders of crimes. The State Assembly, Carl and Andrea, the leaders in both houses, as well as the governor, we did amazing things such as increasing Earned Income Tax Credit, leaning into NYCHA and the NYCHA Land Trust, what we're doing for childcare and young people in foster care.

We have done unprecedented movement towards dealing with the long-term feeder of crimes, but we allowed our message to be hijacked because we disagreed on one area. I believe in a dangerousness standard. There were many that were in Albany who did not believe in that, and that's fine. We could come back and talk about how do we turn this around, and that's what we're going to do in 2023.

We've made it clear we're going to go behind doors, have real conversations based on how do we stop the feeders of crime, and how do we deal with some of the immediate violence that the recidivist dangerous people are doing. We have about 1,600 people who have been arrested

repeatedly for dangerous crimes. We need to zero-in on them and make sure that their impact on the public safety of this city is addressed.

Reverend Sharpton: And we deal with it from all sides. Jumaane Williams, a public advocate also in the room. Everybody talking what they believe, not giving up for anything that they don't believe, but finding common ground for the good of the people.

You brought up other issues, and while there's still time, let me bring up another issue. Your city has become one of a handful led by Democrats targeted by Republican governors to transport unwanted migrants from their state. This week you revealed that Democratic Governor Jared Polis of Colorado, which has seen a surge of migrants over the past month, is now planning to bus at least some of those migrants to New York.

The governor insists that the move is in part to help those migrants reach their final destination, and because the state's resources to deal with the problems are increasingly limited. Of course, your city's resources to deal with the problems are also limited. To the extent that you were reported as exploring legal action against Texas Republican Governor Greg Abbott for busing migrants to New York last year. Will you respond to Democratic governors the same way?

Mayor Adams: Yes, yes. I want to be clear. This is unfair, what is happening to American cities. The mayor of Denver, the mayor of Chicago, Washington, the mayor of Houston, the mayor of New York, we should not be experiencing this and this is just unfair to our constituents. It is compelling us to take resources from our cities that are already devastated by the pandemic, and we should not be addressing this national problem.

I just got off the phone with the governor of Colorado and shared my concern. I'm really concerned about how this took place, and how buses and migrants arrived at our cities. I was joined by Mayor Lightfoot from Chicago, and we will take whatever action no matter what governor's office carries out what we believe is unfair. And we're looking into those potential legal actions to see how we can make sure this stops happening to our city.

Rev., this should not be happening to El Paso. It should not be happening anywhere in our country that local municipalities are having to address this issue. This is a national problem, and it must have a national response with our lawmakers in Washington and in the White House. And I want to tip my hat up to Senator Schumer and Leader Jeffries on how they coordinated to get resources in the omnibus bill, but this does not solve this national border crisis that we are facing.

Reverend Sharpton: All right. Thank you for being with us. New York City Mayor Eric Adams. Thank you again for being with us.

Mayor Adams: Thank you.

###