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**TRANSCRIPT FROM FRIDAY, AUGUST 12, 2022: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS DELIVERS
REMARKS AT PAKISTANI FLAG RAISING**

Commissioner Manuel Castro, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs: Thank you so much, Arthur. And thank you so much to the Bowling Green Association for this tremendous partnership because it allows us to uplift and celebrate our immigrant communities here in New York. And I am so proud that today, for the first time in our great city, we will be raising Pakistani's flag to celebrate our Pakistani community here in New York. And so, now, to begin our program, I would like to invite Farhan Ali to start us off with a Quranic recitation.

[...]

Commissioner Castro: And now, I would like to invite Jabaran Akram, proud public servant, community member, and the most dapper person at 253 Broadway.

[...]

Commissioner Castro: Thank you so much. And now, before I hand off to our commissioner, I'd like to acknowledge the presence of Assembly Member Robert Carroll, who's here joining us today. And I believe Assembly Member Weprin will be joining us shortly as well. And now, it is my great honor to introduce to you a great colleague, friend, and great person, our great OATH commissioner, Commissioner Rehman.

Commissioner Asim Rehman, Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings: Thanks. Good afternoon, everyone. It's really great to be with you here today. My name is Asim Rehman. I'm the commissioner and chief administrative law judge of OATH, the New York City Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings. I'm thrilled to be here with a variety of colleagues. We have Commissioner Castro whose work has been tireless, him and his staff, for the immigrant communities of New York City. We have the Honorable Consulate General for Pakistan Ayesha Ali, a trailblazer in her own right. We'll be joined by the mayor, Eric Adams, who has proven through his actions his commitment to diversity. And part of that proof is in his appointments, and I'm standing here today as the first Pakistani commissioner appointed in his administration because of his own commitment to diversity.

Commissioner Rehman: Now, I had some remarks that I had prepared last night. Some of them were even maybe funny. They were about these five Paisa coin couplings that I'm wearing. But when I woke up this morning, I had different thoughts. When I woke up this morning, I was thinking of four individuals. I was thinking of four men, four Muslim men, three of them Pakistani whose lives were taken from them senselessly and brutally in New Mexico. We should remember them. And while I'm an attorney and I do believe innocent until proven guilty, the current thinking is that these men were targeted because of their Shia beliefs. This is sad and this is wrong, and we should remember them. And so, while today is a day to celebrate the raising of the flag, we should also remember that we have members of our Pakistani American family who are mourning.

Commissioner Rehman: Now, in this darkness, however, I am still hopeful. I have great hope and there are things that give me hope. And one of those things that gives me hope is this — New York City. New York City is an example for the country and for the world of embracing tolerance, of embracing diversity. Everyone can learn a lesson from what we do here in New York City.

Commissioner Rehman: And the other thing that gives me hope is this flag that we're about to raise, the flag of Pakistan. Because for those of you who don't know, the Pakistan flag has a green field, and the green field symbolizes the Muslim community. But the Pakistan flag also has a white field, and the white field symbolizes the minorities in Pakistan. So while all nations have a long way to go, Pakistan's flag is a symbol of diversity and tolerance. And that is something we celebrate today.

Commissioner Rehman: And so today I'm proud to be standing with all of you. And as we raise these two flags, I say, God bless America. And I say, Pakistan Zindabad. Thank you.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you so much, commissioner. It's a great honor to serve alongside you in this administration. And now I'd like to introduce our honorable Consul General Ayesha Ali.

[...]

Commissioner Castro: Thank you so much, consul general. My colleague, Commissioner Mermelstein could not join us today, but he certainly sends you his best. Commissioner Mermelstein usually joins me for these events. And now please join me in welcoming the American Pakistani Advocacy Group organizer, Ali Rashid.

[...]

Deputy Inspector Adeel Rana, Police Department: As-salamu alaykum. Like Jennifer said, Pakistan.

Audience: Zindabad.

Deputy Inspector Rana: Pakistan.

Audience: Zindabad.

Deputy Inspector Rana: You know, it's a proud moment. Thank you, Ali. Thank you for the assembly members, always supporting us and making sure that we're making history all the time. Council general, thank you for all your input, you serve the community so well. The Pakistani-American community is a flourishing community because of all the people's hard work.

Deputy Inspector Rana: We have a lot of individuals in the Police Department. We have an organization that's called the Pakistani American Law Enforcement Society. The president's here. We are leading by example. We are leading and flourishing and just like any other immigrant community, we're coming here to represent our culture, our religion, and our beliefs, and making sure that we have the same seat as anybody else. And we are proud American, and we're going to make sure that we fight and we represent everyone.

Deputy Inspector Rana: So, thank you again, Ali, thank you for everyone that's coming here for a historical moment and it is really not only just making historical strides, but also representing and making sure we make examples for our next generation, so thank you very much.

[...]

Commissioner Castro: Thank you, Ali, and thank you so much [inaudible] for the shirt. Just want to say, this is a historic and a tremendous moment for all New Yorkers, and it is my honor to be here as your commissioner of immigrant affairs. But I especially want to thank all the community organizations and community leaders here today. Please, a round of applause for everyone who has joined us here today.

Commissioner Castro: And now it is my honor to introduce to you our leader and champion to all New Yorkers and all immigrants, the mayor of the City of New York, Mayor Eric Adams.

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you. Thank you so much. And we have been here, I want to thank the Bowling Green Association. We have been here a number of times throughout the years, but this year we have raised more flags for more countries that have members of their country here in New York. And it is really commendable that you have been intentional of saying that the flags that fly here give respect to those who are in this country. It's so important. The uniqueness of America is that America looks towards you, not to abandon your homeland, but to embrace your homeland. We want the fusion of both cultures. And that dash that sits between our names and country is what makes up our secret weapon. Pakistani-American, Chinese-American, Dominican-American, Haitian-American, African-American, German, Jewish, Polish, Indonesian, all of it's the same. If we take that dash away, we took away the secret weapon of America and we must lift and protect that dash to make sure we always be the country that we want it to be. That's why we're here today. When you raise the flag in Bowling Green, at the center of our economic strength, it sends a message across the entire globe that we don't say no to asylum seekers and those who come to this country. We have open arms and we welcome there because no matter who you are, you came from somewhere, you came to America — it

may have been one generation, two generations, or 20 generations — all of us came from somewhere. So if anyone ever states, "You go back to your country," you tell them, you will when they go back to theirs. Because we all came from somewhere and that is what makes America great.

Mayor Adams: And so Commissioner Castro is representative of that energy and spirit, a dreamer. A dreamer came to this country and struggled with his family, and now he's a commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. And when you look at the history of Pakistan, 75 years ago Pakistan reached its independence and Pakistan was formed when British left South Asia after decades of struggle. The rich pride in history of the country is lived out in our community and no one knows it better than I do. I spent so much time in Little Pakistan in Brooklyn as the Brooklyn borough president — the food, the music, the culture, the friendship that has brought me into City Hall. People like my good brother, Bahe. Bahe volunteers with Muslims Giving Back, giving out food and clothing and other items to those who are homeless. But also our first Muslim and Pakistani commissioner that's here with us right now, Commissioner Rehman. He is the first chief administrative law judge of the Office of Administrative Trials, and here is the first to occupy that position as a Pakistanian and as a Muslim, making history every day of being inclusive in our city.

Mayor Adams: And so, as we raise this flag, let's raise our pride. Let's raise a symbol. I know there are visitors here who come to the Bowl all the time, but we need to be clear on this, New York City is America's city. This is the place to be. There's no place greater in diversity and strength and power in this city. If New York does well, America does well and the globe does well. We will cycle out of COVID, we will move our city forward, but we can only do it together, and today when we lift this flag, we're lifting our spirits of the renewal energy of New York City. New York is invincible. America's invincible. We are invincible together. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you, Mayor Adams, and now we will begin the flag raising ceremony first by celebrating with the American National Anthem and the raising of the flag by Mayor Eric Adams and his team.

Commissioner Castro: Big round of applause again. Thank you everyone for joining us today. That concludes our flag raising ceremony. If you'd like a picture with the mayor, please approach us and we'll do our best.

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