

# Transcript: Mayor Eric Adams Hosts a Russian-Speaking American Community Reception

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Video available at: [https://youtu.be/-g83k\\_Q1lyM](https://youtu.be/-g83k_Q1lyM)

**Commissioner Fred Kreizman, Mayor's Community Affairs Unit:** Hi. [Speaking in Russian]. Truly a pleasure to welcome all of you to the 20th year anniversary of the Russian-speaking American heritage event at Gracie Mansion. It's a time to celebrate the diversity of the Russian-speaking community of New York. As a proud Carpathian whose family immigrated from the former Soviet Union, they came to New York, which was and continues to be a beacon for immigrants around the world. I'm proud that our mayor recognizes this community since it's the third largest immigrant language spoken in New York. Whether you're from Ukraine, Russia, Belorussia, Moldova, Azerbaijan. If you're Bukharian, Uzbek, or Gorsky, we're all proud New Yorkers. Thank you.

**Commissioner Kreizman:** This is a community that has contributed in all fields of arts, journalism, medicine, law, engineering, politics, and every sector. This community values law enforcement and the importance of education. The mayor's proud to have members of this community in the administration like Anastasia Yaskova at CAU helped organize this event, Kazimir Vilenchik, a Belarussian who is also the first deputy commissioner in the Buildings Department, your CAU commissioner, and Ed Mermelstein, the commissioner of the Mayor's Office of International Affairs. At this time, I call Commissioner Mermelstein to come to the stage and deliver a remark. Thank you.

**Commissioner Edward Mermelstein, Mayor's Office of International Affairs:** Thank you, commissioner. I'm very honored to be here, especially because this is the 20th anniversary of this celebration at Gracie. Like all of you, New York City has given me a lot and I am eager to repay the city by serving as the commissioner for international

affairs and do the work daily to connect our great city to the world. I am a proud Ukrainian-American and most of all, a proud New Yorker. My family and I came to the United States as a refugee. I was a little boy and the city and country opened its doors for us. We found a community, and we were able to – sorry – and we were able to rebuild our lives and pursue our dreams. I was reminded today how lucky we are to live in this great, great city, New York City, the greatest city in the world. And being that we're in the greatest city in the world, we deserve the greatest mayor. So I'd like to introduce him, the 110th mayor of New York City, Eric Adams.

**Mayor Eric Adams:** Thank you so much, Ed, and thank all of you for coming out today as we really lift up our Russian-speaking community. As Ed shared his story, we also shared a story of so many others. I want to, before I speak, bring forth my partners in government. Both have their own stories of coming here and enjoying the prosperity of this great country and great city. First, my good friend, the Councilman Ari Kagan. Ari.

[...]

**Mayor Adams:** And another amazing councilwoman with an amazing story, an amazing journey, Councilwoman Mercedes Narcisse from the councilmanic 46th district.

[...]

**Mayor Adams:** Thank you. Thank you. So why are we here? Why do we do this? I want you to tell me what group I am talking about. Come to America. Sometimes we leave a family member at home, take any job so you can provide for your family, go to school, open a business, work hard to enjoy the American dream. When I define those characteristics, you will find it difficult to say what immigrant group I'm talking about because that's the pathway we all experienced. That is the pathway that we've all gone through. It doesn't matter if you're Russian-speaking, if you speak Creole from Haiti, if you speak Mandarin from China, if you're from South America, Central America or overseas, you come to this country because it's a country of opportunity and possibilities.

**Mayor Adams:** But as the councilwoman stated, there's something unique about this country. This is one of the only countries where you are asked not to abandon your homeland. We want you to bring your culture, your experience here, and be part of the American experience because it's the dash between our names that is our secret

weapon, that dash, African dash American, Haitian dash American, Russian-speaking dash American, Uzbekistan, all of the dashes that come together, we can never lose those dashes. So you contribute to this greatness of this country by bringing your culture, your language, your dance, your food. Everything you bring makes this country great. So it doesn't matter if it's in Borough Park, Brighton Beach, Queens, no matter where you go, the Russian-speaking community has contributed to the greatness of this city.

**Mayor Adams:** We are here on the lawn of Gracie Mansion to say the mansion we call New York was built by you and those other immigrant groups who came to this country, every, every immigrant group that contributes to the greatness of this city. No matter who you are, we all came from somewhere. We all came from somewhere. So as I say all the time, if someone ever tells you to go back to your country, you tell them you will when they go back to theirs because we all came from somewhere. That is what America is. It's a combination of coming from somewhere to make this some place where we can raise healthy children and families.

**Mayor Adams:** My message to you, let's all be unified in supporting our police. Let's send a message across this city. Public safety is the prerequisite to prosperity and we can have public safety in justice. Our officers have placed themselves in harm's way. They water the tree of freedom and safety with their blood every day so we can sit under the shade and not deal with the hot sun of violence. It is our obligation and responsibility. In your newspapers, take ads in support of the police. On billboards, take ads. On your radio station, talk about it. Everywhere we go, we state three things, we support the police. That's what we do. So as we deal with the violence across the water, we know conflicts that play out on the international stage, play out on the streets of our city. We are so diverse. We come from all over the globe.

**Mayor Adams:** There's nothing that can happen globally that won't impact New York City. Our hearts go out to our Ukrainian brothers and sisters. Many will come here to New York City. That's why we allocated \$2 million to assist those who are here that we will be receiving them and those who are coming. We have a history of extending our welcome to those who flee violence and tyranny and it's not going to stop. This is a city where we know that we are obligated to display the humanity that defines us as a city. So today I thank all of my Russian-speaking brothers and sisters in the celebration of this day. Oleg, I'm going to have some Russian water. There's much to eat. Enjoy each other. Enjoy the view and again, on behalf of Gracie Mansion and the City of New York,

we appreciate you. We thank you. Let's continue to lift up our city. Thank you very much.

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