

Mayor Eric Adams Holds Vigil for Victims of Buffalo Mass Shooting

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Mayor Eric Adams: Please, please take your seat. You know, I say it over and over again, you don't stand for me, I stand for you. I just want to thank Bishop Brown for such a short notice, allowing us to come in, and just acknowledge the lives of our fellow human beings. And I want to thank the powerful words from all those who came forward, particularly to Pastor Bernard. Thank you so much.

Mayor Adams: Brothers, you know that song, just, boy.

Mayor Adams: It scares me that I'm not scared. No matter what they throw at me, I'm just standing. Just standing. Just standing. Even when they look like me. And they just want to break me down. And they just don't know. I just keep hearing mommy say, "Baby, you got this. You got this." And she must have told you to play that song today. You know, this moment is so important. To be the mayor of the most important city in the most important country, and doing things that everyone who came before me was too afraid to do.

Mayor Adams: And so I don't understand the larger conversations, but here's what I do know. I was late getting here tonight because I was at Lincoln Hospital with the parents of young Kyhara, an 11-year-old baby. Mother said that she doesn't even allow her to go outdoors because she's just afraid. Kyhara was the victim of a drive-by shooting. And I went to the hospital and I prayed with them. The doctors stated that they were going to work on her throughout the night. My staff had just leaned over to me and said that we lost her. And I've knocked on many doors in my life to tell mothers and fathers that their babies were not coming home. They never ask or felt differently based on what demonic spirit took that child. It doesn't matter if it's a racist that's shot in Buffalo, or if it's a person that discharged the bullet that carved the highway of death that took this baby.

Mayor Adams: We must deal with this terrorist act that happened in Buffalo that took 10 innocent people merely because of their ethnicity, merely because of who they were. But I say this over and over again. We have to be consistent. Because if you take the life of young Kyhara merely because of where she lived, you're no less demonic than a person that took the life of those 10 innocent people in Buffalo.

Mayor Adams: That mother, she mourned. And if you were to close your eyes and listen to the mourns in Buffalo who lost their loved ones, you would not be able to distinguish between the two different groups, because pain is pain. And the premature taking of the life of an innocent person is felt, and it doesn't dissipate based on where you are geographically or who the person is that took your loved one. It's the same. That's what this mission is about. And there are many rivers that feed the sea of violence. The river of the madness and sickness of social media that continues to give people this energy of hatred and destruction. What happened in Buffalo is no different than the sickness of social media that has music telling our young people to go after each other and shoot each other. It's no different. It's no difference.

Mayor Adams: And so all of us are going to play a role on these different rivers. And I'm not going to do every role. Each one of us will have a river we must dam. And I know mine. I must protect the innocent people of this city. And I'm not going to apologize for doing that. I must make sure that this baby can't continue to lose their lives in this city. And yes, we're going to sit in the courtroom and we're going to call for justice in Buffalo. We're going to make sure this terrorist is taken care of. But I must make sure that young Kyharas on Buffalo Avenue in Brooklyn can get to school safely. That's my obligation. That's my responsibility. And I respect all those who are going to take other rivers and dam them, so we can stop this sea of violence. But I'm focused on my river. My river is to stop the flow of guns into my community and in my city. That's my river. That's my river.

Mayor Adams: My river is to give people a hand to end violence and give them the tools they need to end violence. That's my river. But let's be clear. If you don't take the services I'm providing and what I'm giving for you so you can turn your life around, then I believe in the prison ministry.

Mayor Adams: This must stop. This must stop. When Jordan was born, I remember being in the Hackensack Hospital. And I saw his skull pierce his mother's womb. And the doctor reached over to start the process of his delivery. I pushed her hand aside and

said, "I'm going to be the first person to touch my son." There's something about giving birth to your children. The umbilical cord may be cut, but the emotional cord remains a lifetime. And each time a mother hears of another child dying this way, they hold their stomachs. Because you don't have to be your baby that came through your womb to feel the pain of a mother that loses a child.

Mayor Adams: And I cannot thank you enough for coming out tonight, and just coming together, and say, "We matter." The therapeutic healing that is taking place tonight. You may not be able to go to Buffalo, but your prayers for the families mean so much to the families. And I ask us all to pray for that 11 year old baby, and all of these children that we are losing.

Mayor Adams: Every night, every night my phone goes off. Another child shot, every night. I'm going to stand. And all I'm asking you, stand with me.

[Applause]