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**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS APPEARS ON PBS' "NEWSHOUR"**

**Geoff Bennett:** New York City Mayor Eric Adams took office a year ago with a focus on driving down crime. His first year in City Hall was marked by challenges, from the Covid pandemic to a homelessness crisis and an economic downturn. The mayor has just released a new \$103 billion budget proposal for the city. It's a reflection of his priorities, including housing and public safety as he shapes his second year in office. Mayor Adams joins us now from New York. Mayor Eric Adams, welcome to the NewsHour.

**Mayor Eric Adams:** Thank you very much. It's good being on with you.

**Bennett:** And I want to start with the request you issued today to New York State to help with the burden, the influx of migrants, asylum seekers who have found their way to your city. More than 800 asylum seekers arrived in one day last week, more than 36,000 since this past spring. How has this affected the city's social safety net, and how do you aim to address it?

**Mayor Adams:** It is a major impact not only to our safety net but also our recovery coming after the pandemic and making sure we could provide the basic services for everyday New Yorkers. As you indicated, 36,000 people showed up on our doorsteps, and we did what any New Yorker would do. We provided for them not only housing, a place for them to sleep, with food, healthcare, we educated a substantial number of children, and we are also providing the necessary mental health support that is needed. But we need help. And that is why we're calling on the national government to not put this burden on our cities. El Paso should not be going through this. Washington, Houston, New York, none of our small or large cities should be experiencing this.

**Bennett:** New York City, as you well know, has always been a city of immigrants. You have said that you want New York to remain a sanctuary city. How has that perspective changed, if at all, given the number of governors from red states and even from Colorado, a blue state, who have bused migrants to New York, some of them trying to make political points. But you have said before that that has really pushed the city to the breaking point.

**Mayor Adams:** No, and that's so true. And we should be clear that prior to this current crisis, New York State was already receiving a large number of migrants and asylum seekers. This has always been the gateway for those who want to experience the American dream. But that dream should not turn into a nightmare when you're placed on buses without necessary care, no Covid testing, lack of proper food, and just rest to take care of your basic human needs. That is not who we are as Americans. And I was extremely disappointed when the governor of Colorado joined the red states and sent buses here to New York. We had a conversation with him, and he has agreed to work with us and coordinate to make sure that we add our voices to the national government solving this problem in a real way, a decompression strategy that the entire country could absorb this influx.

**Bennett:** Let's shift our focus a bit and talk about crime. You focused your attention most intensely on public safety your first year in office. Last year, New York saw a major drop in shootings and homicides, but robberies and burglaries drove a 22 percent increase in overall major crime in New York City. What are you going to do to tackle that?

**Mayor Adams:** Well, if you go back to February, we were looking at a 40 percent increase. We were moving in the wrong direction from the time of the end of 2021, and we knew we had to turn it around. And we did a series of things, including putting in place an anti-gun unit, going after our subway safety plan to make sure people were actually safe and feeling safe, and then going after some of those drivers of crimes. And we saw a different direction in the last six months of the year. We saw a crime start to tick down. We removed over 7,000 guns off our streets, a 27-year-high in gun arrests. We went after ghost guns and substantial increase, but we also looked at how do we do preventive measures because police can't do it alone. And that is why we put in place real initiatives to prevent people from going down the pathways of crime. We're going to continue that. I can't take my hat off enough for Commissioner Keechant Sewell. She put a good team together, and they executed a well thought out plan.

**Bennett:** A few months ago, you announced an effort to remove people with severe untreated mental illness from the city streets and subways by directing police and first responders, emergency medical personnel to hospitalize people deemed too mentally ill to care for themselves even when they pose no threats to other people. Help us understand how you see this issue. Do you see it as a public health issue or as a policing issue? Because there are advocates who point out that the city really needs to approach this issue from a health and housing standpoint, not a policing standpoint.

**Mayor Adams:** Think about that for a moment. We cannot be so idealistic that we're not realistic. Of course, you need a short term, midterm, long term. Far too many people took that announcement that we put in place as stating anyone with a mental health illness would be automatically compelled to go to a medical facility, and that was just untrue. And I'm so glad you laid out the plan exactly the way we did it. If you are an individual that you cannot take care of your basic needs, then you are a danger to yourself. That is an obligation and a humane obligation for us to take care of these individuals.

I spent January and February visiting many people on the streets, living in camps and encampments, living in their own human waste, drug paraphernalia, schizophrenic, bipolar. How could I, as a mayor, walk past them? And so whoever's calling for the status quo is just stating that we should do something inhumane. And this is not a police-led initiative. This is led by

outreach workers and mental health professionals. People want to paint it as though we're telling police to do this, and no, we're not. We are stating if we come together and combine our forces and give clarity on what our outreach workers can do, we can start saving the lives of individuals.

**Bennett:** Well, what do you say to those medical professionals who say there aren't enough beds for psychiatric patients and police who are worried that it puts them in a precarious situation if they're not trained in how to deal with some of these encounters?

**Mayor Adams:** I say they're right. I think my health professionals are right. There are not enough beds. That's why the governor announced, during her State of the State, her allocation of looking to open 1,000 more beds. That's why we're speaking with our private hospitals and state we need you also to step up and assist us in accomplishing this task. And that's why even when I ran for office, I stood with our nurses and stated that we have to get the beds back online, that we took offline after the Covid pandemic.

And to my police officers, you're right, police officers. If we send you out there without the proper training, we are doing something unjust to you with a lack of clarity. That's not what we're doing. We're training our police officers exactly what to look for. We're also utilizing technologies such as what we do with telemedicine so that those mental health professionals can see and give some good information to take someone in for an observation. And this is the right thing to do. New Yorkers know that. We can't continue to watch people all over our country, not only in New York, live on streets when we know they can't make the right medical decisions for themselves.

**Bennett:** New York City Mayor Eric Adams. Mr. Mayor, thanks for your time. We appreciate it.

**Mayor Adams:** Thank you. Take care.

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