

Ms. Letitia James
Office of the Public Advocate
1 Centre Street
15th Floor North
New York, NY 10007
September 15, 2015

Dear Ms. James,

We the undersigned—a diverse group of advocacy, faith, and interfaith groups based in New York and from across the country—write in support of Talat Hamdani, who for 14 long years has been lobbying the City to properly honor her son, Salman Hamdani, an NYPD cadet who died in service on September 11, 2001.

Salman sacrificed his own life trying to save people trapped in the North Tower of the World Trade Center. As the tower stood in flames and others rushed out, Salman, who was also a trained emergency medical technician, rushed in. Regretfully, he was not recognized by the National September 11th Memorial, by the NYPD, or by the Mayor for his heroics as an NYPD cadet. We are writing to ask that you use the power of your office to fix this longstanding injustice.

At the September 11th Memorial, Salman's name does not appear in the section designated for police officers—it has been relegated instead to the “unaffiliated” portion near the perimeter of the South Tower. At the Police Memorial Lobby at One Police Plaza there is no plaque for Salman. At the NYPD Memorial in Battery Park there is no recognition for him. Even at the Cadet Academy in Flushing, there is no mention of his sacrifice.

The only official recognition of Salman's heroism comes from Community Board 11, which renamed the Hamdanis' old block, a section of 205th Street near 35th Avenue in Bayside, after him. This tribute, however, is one bestowed on *all* first responders, not just those affiliated with the NYPD. What we seek—what Mrs. Hamdani seeks—is recognition from the City that Salman was not just a victim of the September 11th attacks and an unaffiliated first responder, but an NYPD cadet who died a hero.

Mrs. Hamdani spent years petitioning former Mayor Bloomberg and former NYPD Commissioner Kelly on this issue. But nothing came of her efforts. She needs your help now in convincing Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Bratton to correct the error of their predecessors' ways.

In your inaugural address you spoke of leaving behind the “gilded age of inequality.” Salman Hamdani made a sacrifice few others would make. However, in the first few days after the September 11th attacks—before his heroism was known—media outlets openly speculated that he may have been one of the perpetrators of the attacks, merely because he was a Muslim and a Pakistani-American. That is to say, Salman was himself one of the victims of the gilded age of inequality. We ask that

you now support Mrs. Hamdani in securing the recognition Salman clearly deserves. We ask, that is, for you to honor your words with action.

If you have further questions or would like more information, please contact Adil Haq at Muslim Advocates (adil@muslimadvocates.org; 415-315-9087).

Yours sincerely,

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Arab American Association of New York
Arab American Institute
DRUM – Desis Rising Up & Moving
The Interfaith Center of New York
The Interfaith Alliance
Islamic Center of Long Island
Islamic Circle of North America
Majlis Ashura (Islamic Leadership Council) of New York
Muslim Advocates
The Muslim American Society of New York
Muslim Bar Association of New York
Muslim Community Network
Muslim Public Affairs Council
National Disaster Interfaiths Network
National Network for Arab American Communities
New York Disaster Interfaith Services
NYPD Muslim Officers Society
September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows
The Sikh Coalition
South Asian Americans Leading Together
T'Ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
Women in Islam, Inc.
Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality