

Democrats urge New York City Mayor Eric Adams to resign

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18 February 2025

The admission by the Trump administration that it has a quid pro quo with New York City's Democratic Mayor Eric Adams to dismiss federal corruption charges against him in exchange for his allowing Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) full rein to arrest and deport immigrant workers has thrown the Democratic Party into a deep crisis.

On Tuesday, Democratic Governor Kathy Hochul met with several city officials who have called for Adams's resignation as well as top Democratic leaders such as House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, who announced later in the day that he would not seek the resignation of the mayor. Hochul also met in person and remotely with a number of state and local politicians and long-time supporters of Adams, such as the Reverend Al Sharpton. Hochul has the ability, under the New York State Constitution, to remove Adams from office.

The speaker of the New York City Council, Adrienne Adams, who met with Hochul, City Comptroller Brad Lander, and Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, as well as New York state Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, have all urged Mayor Adams to resign.

Lander, a candidate for mayor in the November election, has also called for the formation of a Mayoral Inability Committee, which, under a statute in the City Charter, can remove a mayor from office.

Last Friday, four of the city's eight deputy mayors—Maria Torres-Springer, Meera Joshi, Anne Williams-Isom and Chauncey Parker—who are among Adams' closest political associates, resigned from office as the mayor's rotten deal became clear.

The affair has its origins in Adams' efforts to curry favor with the new Trump Administration with the aim of obtaining a pardon from the president. This included a visit to Trump at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida on January 17 and getting a last-minute invitation to the January 20 inauguration. Adams's lawyers also held meetings with Trump officials in which they proposed some sort of deal.

The Adams administration has been slowly hemorrhaging

its leading functionaries since September 2024, when federal prosecutors in Manhattan charged Adams with accepting bribes, such as luxury travel junkets and illegal campaign contributions, in exchange for influencing city officials to approve the opening of Turkey's new consulate despite safety concerns. Other city officials were investigated or arrested for crimes related to the Adams case and a raft of resignations, including that of Schools Chancellor David Banks, followed.

Adams is in a precarious position. Not only does he still stand a chance of being convicted, but he is seeking reelection in November, an issue that is usually decided by the winner of the Democratic primary in June. Currently, in a field dominated by so-called "progressives" of various stripes, including DSA member Zohran Mamdani, the front-runner, although he has not publicly declared his candidacy, is former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, who resigned from office in 2021 over allegations of corruption and sexual harassment.

Adams has attempted to uphold his part of the bargain with Trump by issuing a memo that allows city officials to open city property to ICE, including homeless shelters and schools. Last week, Adams issued a directive allowing ICE onto the vast prison complex of Rikers Island, which houses thousands of inmates, including those who have not yet gone to trial.

Last week, Attorney General Pam Bondi and acting Deputy Attorney General Emil Bove III ordered federal prosecutors to dismiss the charges against Adams. The Trump administration did nothing to hide the quid pro quo character of the transaction. Bove wrote in a memorandum to Danielle Sassoon, the US attorney for the Southern District of New York, the office which filed the charges against Adams, "that continuing these proceedings would interfere with the defendant's ability to govern in New York City, which poses unacceptable threats to public safety, national security, and related federal immigration initiatives and policies."

The affair came to a head after Sassoon, a recent Trump

appointee and member of the right-wing Federalist Society, resigned on Thursday, denouncing the quid pro quo between Adams and Trump. She wrote to Bove in her resignation letter, “It is a breathtaking and dangerous precedent to reward Adams’s opportunistic and shifting commitments on immigration and other policy matters with dismissal of a criminal indictment...”

Six other federal attorneys associated with the corruption case who also refused to dismiss the charges resigned in protest, including the lead prosecutor in the case, Hagan Scotten. On Friday, Bove was finally able to find attorneys in the Department of Justice’s Public Integrity Section who agreed to dismiss the charges.

On Wednesday, the presiding judge in the Adams case, Dale E. Ho of the Federal District Court in Manhattan, a Biden appointee, will hold a hearing to decide if the charges should be withdrawn.

Calls for Adams’s removal or resignation by elements in the Democratic Party have increased in the last two days and it remains a possibility that he will be forced from office. Some sources have speculated that he may switch parties and run in the mayoral election as a Republican. To do so, he would have to file with the city’s Board of Elections by Friday.

The Trump administration is attempting not only to impose its reactionary policies on the city, but also to create as much havoc as it can in the New York state and city governments, long strongholds of the Democratic Party.

The crisis, nevertheless, is one of the Democratic Party’s own making. Adams, a former NYC cop, has parroted the Republicans’ open hostility to immigrants, especially since the influx of many thousands of asylum seekers into New York City after April 2022. Famously declaring in 2023 that migrants were destroying New York City, he has sought to exclude migrant workers from city shelters, house them in unbearable conditions, and ship them out of the city.

None of the four deputy mayors who resigned ever sought to contradict Adams’s anti-immigrant policy, and there was not a whisper of opposition to any of his policies in their joint letter of resignation. Quite the contrary. In August 2024, for example, when migrants in New York were forced to set up tent encampments because Adams had expelled them from city shelters, Anne Williams-Isom told the media, “We’re not trying to be heavy-handed, but if you’ve had your time [in a shelter], you’ve had your case management, and you have to leave, you have to really move on.”

Adams is not an outlier in his party. The Democrats provided crucial support this year for passage of the Laken Riley Act. As the WSWS noted, “The act would require federal immigration police to detain immigrants—without access to bail—if they are convicted or simply accused of

burglary, theft, larceny or any shoplifting-related offenses. Under the act, an undocumented child falsely arrested for shoplifting by a vindictive police officer would be subject to mandatory detention, likely at a remote ‘for-profit’ prison facility that could be located hundreds of miles away from his family.”

Biden, moreover, issued his executive order of June last year that effectively abolished the right to asylum at the US-Mexico border.

While the Trump regime is seeking to implement fascistic policies, the way was prepared by the Democratic Party over many decades of enrichment of the oligarchy that is now seeking through Trump to demolish the democratic rights of the working class.

The political crisis in New York City has had an impact on a working class population that is hostile to ICE raids—particularly in the public school system—and is living under deteriorating social conditions, with record-high numbers of homeless, unaffordable housing, rising prices and underfunded mass transit. Adams is roundly despised by millions of New Yorkers. But the Democratic Party, as in the rest of the United States, represents the main political impediment to a struggle against Trump. Democratic politicians in the city have collaborated with Trump, in part by backing Adams, or have served as accomplices through their silence and cowardice.

Not one political figure, including the leaders of the DSA and the trade unions, has called for mass demonstrations or industrial action of any sort to stop Trump’s stated goals of arresting and deporting immigrant workers and their families, as well as slashing the federal workforce, to which many thousands in the city belong.



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