

Mamdani placates billionaires with plan to retain NYPD chief

Daniel de Vries
23 October 2025

Zohran Mamdani announced Wednesday that he intends to keep Jessica Tisch on as commissioner of the New York Police Department. The move to retain Tisch, a member of the 43rd richest family in the United States, and currently serving under the corrupt, pro-Trump mayor Eric Adams, illuminates the real class interests Mamdani will serve if elected mayor on November 4.

Keeping Tisch at the helm of the NYPD has been a key demand of New York's corporate and financial elite, who were initially stunned by Mamdani's primary victory over their favored candidate, disgraced former governor Andrew Cuomo. Back in July, as Mamdani was beginning his rightward shift to court sections of the ruling class, Kathryn Wylde of the Partnership for New York, an organized arm of big business in New York City, raised the demand as a means for Mamdani to demonstrate that control of the immense police apparatus would remain in trusted hands.

On Wednesday, Mamdani obliged. His campaign revealed the plan to the *New York Times* ahead of the second and last mayoral debate Wednesday evening, and Mamdani confirmed the news during the event itself. "My administration will be relentless in its pursuit of safety and affordability for every New Yorker, and the delivery of that will require us to put together a team of the best and the brightest," he said. "Commissioner Tisch took on a broken status quo, started to deliver accountability, rooting out corruption and reducing crime across the five boroughs."

Mamdani's rivals, Andrew Cuomo and Republican Curtis Sliwa, both indicated during the debate that they too supported retaining Tisch as NYPD commissioner. While Tisch is by no means the only figure capable of heading the NYPD on behalf of the oligarchy, the

alignment between the Democratic Socialists of America member Mamdani, the establishment Democrat Cuomo and the Republican demagogue Sliwa on the leadership of the repressive apparatus of the government underlines the unity of class interests between the various factions of both parties.

It is no accident that policing has become a major issue in the campaign, although presented in the distorted form of law-and-order hysteria amid historically low crime rates. During the debate, both Cuomo and Sliwa demanded an increase in the massive 33,000 member police force and attacked Mamdani for his previous calls, long since repudiated, to defund the police. The core issue for the ruling class, however, is not public safety but preparations to contain the explosive social conditions over the next four years under conditions of mass anger over Trump's advancing dictatorship and growing social inequality. With the Tisch announcement, Mamdani is signaling that he is fully committed to the NYPD's essential class function, the defense of the profit system.

With less than two weeks to go before election day, Mamdani currently holds a commanding lead in the polls, maintaining a 10 to 25 percent lead over Cuomo even after the current mayor, Eric Adams, dropped out of the race. Sliwa is a distant third, with under 20 percent in all the major polls.

The debates, both on Wednesday and last week, did little to shift this overall picture. Cuomo, who has a long record as a stooge of the billionaires, continued his lackluster campaign centered on right-wing attacks on Mamdani. Cuomo desperately attempted to smear Mamdani as a sympathizer of Islamic extremism while assailing as unaffordable Mamdani's modest proposals for freezes on rent-regulated apartments, free childcare, and increases in the minimum wage—a ludicrous

proposition in a city that is home to 123 billionaires, a fact that Mamdani refused to raise.

However, the most striking feature of the debates was Mamdani's continued rightward shift to court Wall Street, the corporate establishment and Zionists. A case in point was Mamdani's conciliatory responses to the repeated efforts to portray him as endangering the safety of Jewish New Yorkers.

Rather than take up how both political parties are using the charge of antisemitism to suppress opposition to Israeli genocide in Gaza, Mamdani pivoted to claim that he would govern for all New Yorkers, including those who "may have concerns or opposition to the positions I've shared about Israel and Palestine."

Asked at last week's debate if Hamas should lay down their weapons, Mamdani answered, "of course." Under conditions where Israel, backed by the US, has already killed more than 67,000 Palestinians, including 20,000 children, damaged or destroyed virtually all buildings in Gaza, and intentionally triggered a famine, Mamdani's support for the unilateral disarmament of Hamas as demanded by Israel is a recipe for total ethnic cleansing.

However, perhaps the clearest indication of the political role that Mamdani will play comes out in his response to Trump.

The day before Wednesday's debate, Trump unleashed the ICE Gestapo in a violent crackdown on immigrant vendors in downtown Manhattan. Masked ICE agents in military fatigues, joined by ATF, FBI and other federal forces, rampaged through Canal Street, abducting at least 13 people, including four US citizens.

Agents used batons and pepper spray against vendors, backed by military-grade armored trucks. Crowds quickly formed and, by that evening, hundreds gathered outside the federal building in lower Manhattan to protest the Gestapo raid.

Trump's actions in the heart of Manhattan were intended to send a message—a preview of what is to come, particularly if Mamdani wins the election. Trump and administration officials have denounced the Democratic candidate in hysterical terms, threatening federal intervention in the city if he were to become mayor.

Wednesday's debate opened with the candidates asked to address the ICE raid and Trump's threats

against the city. "Look, Donald Trump ran on three promises," Mamdani said. "He ran on creating the single largest deportation force in American history. He ran on going after his political enemies. And he ran on lowering the cost of living. If he wants to talk to me about the third piece of that agenda, I will always be ready and willing. But if he wants to talk about how to pursue the first and second piece of that agenda at the expense of New Yorkers, I will fight him every single step of the way."

Mamdani's pledge to work with Trump on affordability, even as the president is erecting a police state, is an extraordinary admission of political bankruptcy. In both debates, Mamdani refused to use the terms dictatorship, authoritarianism or fascism. He made no mention of the "No Kings" protests last weekend, at which more than 100,000 took to the streets in New York City alone, let alone calling for a mass mobilization of workers to repel Trump.

Mamdani's political function throughout the campaign has been to appeal to the large numbers of workers and young people who are bitterly opposed to both Trump and the Democratic Party establishment, and to contain that opposition within the two capitalist parties. His marked shift to the right since the primary reflects the fundamental class position of his candidacy and the Democratic Party. For those looking for a viable means of opposing dictatorship and inequality, it will not be found in Zohran Mamdani. He is laying a political trap.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact