10 die in a week of devastating house fires in New York

Daniel de Vries
6 November 2026

A deadly blaze tore through a residential building in Brooklyn, New York, Thursday morning, killing six people and injuring nine. The fatal fire is the second in a week, following the deaths of four people in a Bronx apartment on Wednesday, October 28.

According to a press briefing by Mayor Zohran Mamdani and Fire Department officials, Thursday's three-alarm fire broke out at 653 58th Street in the Sunset Park neighborhood. The FDNY received the initial call at 1:39 a.m. and arrived just over 3 minutes later to find a fast-growing, intense fire blowing out every window.

Six died in the blaze, all adults. Four victims were found dead upon the FDNY's arrival, while two others died later after being transported to local hospitals. Firefighters managed to rescue four survivors from the burning building. Alongside the civilian injuries, three firefighters and two police officers suffered minor injuries while responding to the emergency.

Crews controlled the fire by 4:28 a.m., preventing the flames from spreading and engulfing the entire block of attached wooden row houses. The fire displaced eight residents from neighboring buildings, who have been temporarily relocated to hotels. Fire officials are investigating the cause, which remains unknown. Firefighters removed a charred e-bike from the home, and investigators will examine its lithium-ion battery as a possible cause.

The Sunset Park tragedy closely resembles the horrific blaze that occurred just a week prior in the Mott Haven neighborhood of the Bronx. Shortly before 1:00 a.m. on Wednesday, October 28, an e-bike battery burst into flames inside an 11th-floor apartment at the Patterson Houses, a public housing complex operated by the New York City Housing Authority. The rapidly expanding fire immediately blocked the apartment's front door, trapping the family inside.

The fire claimed the lives of four family members: 33-year-old mother Syida Adam and three boys, ages 11, 15, and 16. The family's 37-year-old father, Courtney Maine, who worked at a local car wash, was gravely injured and remains hospitalized.

Both locations where the fires broke out are working-class neighborhoods. Sunset Park is home to Chinese and Latin American immigrant enclaves, while Mott Haven remains one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city.

Over the past decade, New York City has seen a severe divergence between the cost of living and the resources available to the working class. While the citywide median asking rent has risen over that period by roughly 30 percent to a record high of over $3,700 a month, wages for workers have flatlined.

Under such conditions, many New Yorkers are effectively priced out of safe living arrangements. Those relying on public housing face the consequences of decades of systemic underfunding and deferred maintenance. In the private sector, residents are frequently forced to subdivide apartments, move into illegal cellar units, or pack multiple families into single residences to afford skyrocketing housing costs.

The deaths over the past week are the most recent in a recurring pattern of working-class New Yorkers paying with their lives for the city's housing inequality. Every year, around 70 to 100 people die in fires in New York City. The city's single deadliest fire in recent history was the January 2022 blaze at the Twin Parks high-rise in the Bronx, which killed 17 people, many of them West African immigrants. That tragedy was a direct result of a landlord's failure to provide adequate winter heating, forcing tenants to rely on a space heater that sparked the blaze, while broken self-closing doors

© World Socialist Web Site

allowed lethal smoke to spread unchecked.

Today, the dangers of overcrowded and substandard housing are compounded by the risk of fire from lithium-ion batteries used in e-bikes and e-scooters. Mayor Zohran Mamdani, appearing on *Morning Joe* Thursday morning, pointed to the proliferation of e-bike-related fires—400 so far this year in New York City—and issued a vague call for tougher enforcement and action.

Despite a citywide ban on sales, the non-certified, damaged or heavily modified batteries that pose the largest fire risk remain in common use. There are no prohibitions nationally on the sale of such products. For many, including the tens of thousands of gig delivery workers on the city's streets, high housing and transportation costs combined with low wages leave little room for the high upfront cost of safer e-bikes and batteries. Workers turn to dangerous batteries overwhelmingly out of economic necessity.

Meanwhile, the multibillion-dollar app companies that control the delivery industry shift all capital costs entirely onto the workers. With it, they shift the fire risks to residential homes.

On Thursday morning Mamdani offered nothing more than lip service to these issues. "We have to recognize why working New Yorkers are relying on these devices, and we must ensure that the transition to micro-mobility doesn't come at the cost of working-class lives," he said on *Morning Joe*.

Yet over the last 10 months since he took office, the affordability crisis has continued to deepen. Median asking rents were 4.5 percent higher in the third quarter of 2026 compared to the same time last year, rising alongside food and energy prices. Mamdani and the Democratic Party are incapable of addressing the root cause of these deadly fires because they seek to prevent any challenge to the profit system itself.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site