

# NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

# TESTIMONY OF JOCELYN E. STRAUBER COMMISSIONER, NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATION

CONCERNING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 PRELIMINARY BUDGET
AND THE FISCAL 2023 PRELIMINARY MAYOR'S MANAGEMENT REPORT

TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2023

Good afternoon. My name is Jocelyn Strauber and I have the privilege of serving as the Commissioner of the Department of Investigation ("DOI"). Thank you, Chair Brewer, and the members of the Committee on Oversight and Investigations for holding today's hearing on DOI's Fiscal 2024 Preliminary Budget and for inviting me to testify. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today about DOI's work over the past year and how I plan to ensure that we can continue to effectively fulfill our mission in the future.

Over the past year, I have worked with my executive team to chart a clear path forward for DOI as we, like other City agencies, navigate fiscal and staffing challenges. My goal is to ensure that we continue to conduct investigations and make recommendations that have a meaningful impact — furthering transparency, improving City government, and ensuring that the City's most vulnerable are well and equitably served by City agencies.

These principles are the foundation of DOI's work, and are as important today as they were 150 years ago when DOI was established.

While our staffing and budgetary realities are complex and challenging, we have used them as an opportunity to think creatively about our work and to make our processes more efficient. At each investigative stage, from intake onward, my goal is to focus DOI's resources on the most significant matters, where we anticipate either a criminal referral or significant policy and procedural recommendations, and to take targeted investigative steps as efficiently as possible so that we can promptly complete our investigations and issue any recommendations. To accomplish this, we have:

- Restructured our case review process to facilitate even closer oversight of ongoing investigations by our Inspectors General and Executive Team;
- Deployed our Data Analytics Unit to more quickly assess the extent of potential misconduct, with a focus on significant monetary loss, and to proactively identify potential red flags for further investigation;
- Refocused the Inspectors General and their teams on the writing of public reports and streamlining that process and we are on track to issue more reports this year;
- Implemented an in-house Investigative Officer Training Academy to train junior investigators at the beginning of their tenure to ensure consistent excellent work product agency-wide;
- Improved our recruitment efforts by cementing our relationships at local law schools and area colleges and universities, expanding our participation in career fairs, and increasing the range of on-line recruiting platforms where we post positions, among other efforts;
- Strengthened retention by implementing a promotional structure that provides investigators with advancement opportunities and a mentorship program that assigns newly-hired investigatormentees to veteran investigator-mentors;
- Maintained a robust, year-round intern program and participated in the Civil Service Pathways Fellowship Program and the Mayor's new Legal Fellows program;
- Deepened our relationships with prosecutors and law enforcement partners; and
- Fostered more solid relationships and better communication with City agencies and City Hall, because their leadership plays a critical role in our anti-corruption mission.

Today I will discuss DOI's budget and staffing numbers, our work this past year, and my vision for the future.

## **DOI's FY 2024 Preliminary Budget**

DOI's Fiscal Year 2024 Preliminary Budget is \$45.27 million: \$23.87 million for personal services and \$21.40 million for other than personal services. DOI anticipates receiving an additional \$1.6 million dollars in Intra-City funds from other agencies that support a portion of our staffing at the start of Fiscal 2024. The total Fiscal 2024 budget will support 465 employees – 315 funded by DOI's budget, and the remainder through the Memoranda of Understanding ("MOU") arrangements with other City agencies and public authorities, including the New York City Housing Authority ("NYCHA") and NYC Health + Hospitals.

The Fiscal 2024 budget is approximately ten percent less than our current Fiscal 2023 budget. It is important to note that in the past two fiscal years, 86 budgeted positions have been cut from DOI's budget (about 21 percent of our staff), resulting in over \$7 million in cost savings for the City. The recent 50 percent vacancy reduction in the January 2023 Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG), hit DOI particularly hard because we already had a high vacancy rate due to difficulties in hiring and retaining staff over the past several years. DOI is staff-driven, not program-driven, so our PEG cuts principally impact our headcount.

I am extremely grateful for the Council's support last year for DOI to receive an additional 18 positions that were included in DOI's adopted budget for Fiscal 2023. That funding was not baselined, unfortunately, and was for Fiscal Year 2023 only. Therefore, we were not able to hire for those positions. DOI's need for that investigator headcount remains, as I will discuss in a moment.

## The Year in Review

This past year has been an incredibly rewarding experience as Commissioner of DOI. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with DOI's committed, talented, and rigorous staff every day. They are the true heart of this agency. The range of oversight work that they do is astounding — pursuing corruption, fraud, waste, and a range of other misconduct. They build cases that lead to prosecutions, as well as disciplinary and administrative action, and they develop policy and procedural recommendations for reform, and teach our fellow City employees about their important role in DOI's anti-corruption work.

In 2022, DOI conducted an array of investigations with our prosecuting and law enforcement partners and with the cooperation of many City agencies. Let me tell you about some of that work:

• The City's jails are, and have been, a key focus for DOI. Our work to identify and impede the flow of contraband into the City's jails, which destabilizes the environment and jeopardizes the lives of officers and persons in custody, led to convictions of two City Correction Officers who accepted bribes in exchange for smuggling cell phones and narcotics to members of the Bloods gang incarcerated on Rikers Island.

Another DOI investigation led to charges against a Correction Captain and three Correction Officers for reckless endangerment, in connection with an inmate's 2019 suicide attempt. Another investigation resulted in federal fraud charges against three Correction Officers for lying to the Department of Correction in order to take over a year of sick leave amid the staffing crisis on Rikers Island.

DOI's work with our prosecuting partners and the Department of Correction to expose wrongdoing that undermines safety in our City's jails is very much ongoing.

DOI investigates construction-related fatalities that involve potential criminal conduct. In 2022, our investigations led to a Flatbush landlord's conviction and six-month jail sentence in connection with the death of a tenant in a fire at an illegally subdivided Brooklyn apartment building. Another investigation resulted in charges against a construction company and its owner for allegedly causing the death of a five-year-old girl struck by portions of a wall constructed in violation of the City Building Code. And another investigation resulted in charges against a Brooklyn scaffolding

company and its foreperson for reckless endangerment and criminal mischief in a scaffolding collapse that left a woman seriously injured.

- DOI protects the wages of workers on City projects and assists in returning stolen wages to those workers. One wage-theft investigation resulted in charges against a Long Island man who allegedly stole thousands of dollars in a kickback scheme victimizing workers on a School Construction Authority project in Queens; another resulted in charges against an electrical company for allegedly stealing \$1.7 million in worker wages on school and NYCHA projects. In one prevailing wage case, our investigation resulted in the return of \$900,000 to 200 NYCHA construction workers denied the prevailing wage rate by an electrical contractor.
- Other criminal investigations led to charges involving theft from the City's pension fund and a \$5.4 million scheme to defraud a City program for homeless veterans.
- DOI's investigations lead to impactful results, deterring future wrongdoing and returning funds to the City. This year, for example, a former CEO of a City-funded nonprofit was convicted of a bribery and kickback conspiracy involving contractors of his nonprofit and received a 27-month federal prison sentence; four defendants pled guilty to a \$400,000 fraud involving the COVID-19 hotel room isolation program; one New Jersey man pled guilty to a scheme to defraud the City during the pandemic of tens of millions of dollars; and a City Parks and Recreation contractor pled guilty to a \$1 million insurance fraud and is now required to pay \$1.2 million in restitution and is barred from certain City contracts.

These are some of the highlights of our publicly-announced investigations, providing insight into a slice of what DOI does. In 2022, DOI had an active investigative docket of more than 1,500 cases; we reached nearly 47,000 City employees through our corruption-prevention module, webinars and in-person lectures; and we collected nearly \$2 million for the City as a result of our investigations. We continued to shrink the backlog of our background investigations, closing 928 more investigations. Currently, DOI has 795 remaining background investigations, a sharp decrease from the 2019 high of 6,500, and our work to close those investigations continues.

#### **Moving DOI Forward**

DOI's active headcount was 546 in Fiscal 2020 and today it is 412. Decreases in headcount are not the only challenge; DOI has just over 60 vacant positions as we sit here today. These positions include investigators, auditors and attorneys — critical staff for the work that we do. DOI is actively recruiting to fill these vacancies through our ramped-up recruitment efforts. But, even when we fill them, we will have 84 fewer people working at DOI than we had four years ago, which, given our size, has an undeniable impact.

To address this issue, we are, as I said initially, seeking to be more targeted and efficient, to use our investigative resources as effectively as possible, and to prioritize matters of greatest impact. However, our workload remains steady with many key indicators in Calendar Year 2022 staying level or increasing, such as complaints made to DOI, our active investigative docket, and the number of cases opened and closed. I believe that to fully fulfill our mission, and to operationalize certain measures intended to promote efficiency, DOI will need more staff in our investigative squads and in other areas across the agency.

Our plan calls for 30 additional baselined headcount, a total cost of \$1.7 million. This includes hiring personnel to handle certain administrative tasks, so that our investigators who currently do that work can focus fully on their investigations. To do so, DOI will expand our centralized Complaint Intake Unit, adding five new administrative staff members dedicated to receiving and documenting complaints. Currently, our investigators spend up to 20 percent of their time each year on complaint intake tasks, time better directed to moving their investigations forward.

Our plan also calls for hiring four data entry clerks to handle the input of extensive investigative data into DOI systems. This work is currently handled by our data analysts, investigators, and auditors, detracting from the time spent on analytical investigative work. These hires will benefit DOI's Data Analytics Unit in particular. That Unit was established in Fiscal Year 2021 and supports the squads' proactive and other investigations by doing deep dives into various data sources, mapping information, and conducting analysis to identify corruption-related red flags and potential patterns of misconduct. To give just one example, the Unit is involved in our in-depth examination of City-funded provider contracts at the Department of Homeless Services.

Another component of the plan is to hire 20 additional staff to support our investigations — principally confidential investigators, but also auditors, lawyers, and others with specialized expertise. We will deploy these new staff across our squads, with six going to Squad 10 which oversees the four agencies that handle some of the City's largest capital projects, namely the departments of Transportation, Environmental Protection, Design and Construction and Parks and Recreation. The vast amount of capital projects these agencies manage – collectively more than \$6.76 billion – was the reason DOI established Squad 10 to oversee this group of agencies. That Squad has not been fully staffed to date which has hampered its ability to strategically establish its docket. The Council recognized the importance of this work last year and advocated for positions to be used, in part, to fully staff this Unit. However, as I mentioned earlier, because the positions were not baselined, DOI could not fill them.

Two of the 20 investigators would be dedicated to DOI's Vendor Integrity Unit that oversees the agency's Integrity Monitor Program. This Program enables the City to enter into or continue contracts with companies that might otherwise be precluded from doing business with the City because of integrity issues and also proactively monitors large-scale City capital projects. There are currently ten monitorships in place, an increase from prior years, and we anticipate at least three more coming online in the next year, including a monitor for the Borough-Based Jails program.

While human capital is the lifeblood of our agency, our investigators' work is supported by critical technological infrastructure. This year, DOI plans to purchase a new Case Management System and is requesting \$700,000 in capital funding to do so. Our current system, which is over a decade old, lacks key functionalities, including readily accessible records and case files, streamlined export capability for production of discovery, and the ability to easily generate statistical and other information.

We are thankful to OMB for considering these requests and we look forward to continuing our productive conversations with them about our needs.

# Conclusion

DOI is proud to protect the City's funding and services, and the City's dedicated workforce, from those corrupt actors who would deplete City resources and unfairly undermine the reputation of all City workers. I thank you for your support of our mission and our staff, and for considering our plans to ensure that DOI can continue to fulfill that mission as we embark on our next 150 years.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to take any questions you may have.



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# Written Testimony of Ivey Dyson Counsel, Liberty & National Security Program Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law<sup>1</sup>

# Before the New York City Council Committee on Oversight and Investigations March 7, 2023

Good afternoon, Chair Brewer and members of the Committee on Oversight and Investigations. My name is Ivey Dyson, and I am counsel in the Liberty and National Security Program at the Brennan Center for Justice.

The Brennan Center is a nonpartisan law and policy institute that seeks to improve our systems of democracy and justice. As a part of our focus on government oversight and accountability, we advocated for the creation of an Inspector General for the NYPD in 2013.<sup>2</sup>

The Inspector General (IG), which sits under the Department of Investigation (DOI), was created to provide a systematic review of NYPD policies and practices via thorough investigations and reporting. But while New Yorkers continue to fund the IG's important mission, this funding has not resulted in adequate and timely oversight of the NYPD.

Despite producing valuable reports in its early years,<sup>3</sup> the office's output has fallen off significantly, and it appears that it is not being given sufficient attention and priority. City Council should ensure the issues facing the NYPD IG are resolved so that its funds can be used to affect its mandate.

I will now highlight three of those issues.

# ISSUES FACING THE NYPD INSPECTOR GENERAL

First, the Inspector General position has been left vacant since late 2021, when Philip Eure left the post, with Jeanene Barrett currently holding the role of Acting IG.<sup>4</sup> And the current job posting

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The opinions expressed in this testimony are only those of the Brennan Center and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the NYU School of Law.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See Faiza Patel and Andrew Sullivan, A Proposal for an NYPD Inspector General, Brennan Center for Justice, October 9, 2012, https://www.brennancenter.org/media/313/download.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), "Inspector General for the NYPD; IG-NYPD Reports," accessed March 7, 2023, https://www.nyc.gov/site/doi/oignypd/reports.page.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> DOI, "DOI's Inspector General for NYPD," accessed March 7, 2023, https://www.nyc.gov/site/oignypd/about/biography.page; and Ashley Southall, "Prosecutor Loses Police Watchdog Offer Over Harassment Allegations," New York Times, August 18, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/18/nyregion/prosecutor-police-watchdog-harassment.html.

requires only four years of post-graduate experience.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the office's staff has fallen by almost half, from 38 employees in 2017 to around 20 today, even though its personnel budget has increased to \$3.4 million.<sup>6</sup>

Second, the IG has faced challenges in accessing NYPD records. This is due in part to the NYPD's position that the IG's investigatory authority is narrower than DOI's broad powers to compel testimony and obtain documents from other city agencies. As a result, the NYPD has frequently restricted the IG's access to records and interfered with witness interviews.

Finally, the number and quality of IG reports has significantly declined, likely as a result of low staffing and support. From 2015 to 2019, the IG published 16 reports. But since 2020, the office has published only two.<sup>9</sup>

There is no doubt that the NYPD's policing practices, which often harm communities of color, still require robust and timely oversight. These practices include the NYPD's protest response, <sup>10</sup> the department's continued maintenance of its gang database, <sup>11</sup> and increased use of surveillance technologies. <sup>12</sup>

## WHAT THE CITY COUNCIL CAN DO

The City Council must ensure that the IG can effectively oversee the NYPD. To start, the City Council should call a special hearing with the DOI Commissioner and IG to seek more information about these challenges. Second, the City Council should consider amendments to the IG statute that would (i) ensure that any vacancy in the Inspector General position is timely replaced, (ii) provide more transparency on the IG's operational issues, and (iii) bolster the IG's authority to access information.

Thank you for your attention.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> City of New York, "Inspector General: Department of Investigation Job Posting Notice," November 10, 2022, <a href="https://al27-jobs.nyc.gov/pse/nycjobs/EMPLQYEE/HRMS/e/HRS\_HRAM\_FL.HRS\_CG\_SEARCH\_FL.GBL?Page=HRS\_APP\_JBPST\_FL\_&Action=U&FOCUS=Applicant&SiteId=1&JobOpeningId=549686&PostingSeq=1&.">https://al27-jobs.nyc.gov/pse/nycjobs/EMPLQYEE/HRMS/e/HRS\_HRAM\_FL.HRS\_CG\_SEARCH\_FL.GBL?Page=HRS\_APP\_JBPST\_FL\_&Action=U&FOCUS=Applicant&SiteId=1&JobOpeningId=549686&PostingSeq=1&.</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Checkbook NYC (Office of the Comptroller, City of New York), "Transaction #1: Expense Budget," Accessed March 7, 2023, <a href="https://www.checkbooknyc.com/smart\_search/citywide?search\_term=NYPD%20OIG\*!\*domain=budget\*!\*agency\_name=depart\_ment%2Bof%2Binvestigation\*!\*expense\_category\_name=full%2Bvear%2Bpositions\*!\*facet\_year\_array=2023; and Topher Sanders, "Inspecting the NYPD 'Puzzle Palace," *ProPublica*, April 15, 2021, <a href="https://www.propublica.org/article/inspecting-the-nypd-puzzle-palace.">https://www.propublica.org/article/inspecting-the-nypd-puzzle-palace.</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> DOI, "Reporting Obligation," accessed March 7, 2023, <a href="https://www.nvc.gov/site/doi/report/reporting-obligation.page">https://www.nvc.gov/site/doi/report/reporting-obligation.page</a>; and Margaret Garnett, <a href="https://www.nvc.gov/sasets/doi/reports/pdf/2020/DOIRpt.NYPD%20Reponse.%20GeorgeFloy.d%320Protests.12.18.2020.pdf">https://www.nvc.gov/sasets/doi/reports/pdf/2020/DOIRpt.NYPD%20Reponse.%20GeorgeFloy.d%320Protests.12.18.2020.pdf</a>.

<sup>8</sup> Sanders, "Inspecting the NYPD".

<sup>9</sup> DOI, "IG-NYPD Reports".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Gwynne Hogan and Jake Offenhartz, "City agrees to pay \$21.5K each to protesters trapped by NYPD during 2020 protest, per new settlement," March 1, 2023, <a href="https://gothamist.com/news/protesters-trapped-by-nypd-during-2020-black-lives-matter-protest-will-get-215k-each-according-to-new-settlement">https://gothamist.com/news/protesters-trapped-by-nypd-during-2020-black-lives-matter-protest-will-get-215k-each-according-to-new-settlement</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Kim, "City Investigations Chief Says NYPD's Gang Database will Be Released 'Within this Year," April 11, 2022, https://gothamist.com/news/city-investigations-chief-says-nypds-gang-database-will-be-released-within-this-year.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Brennan Center for Justice, "The Public Oversight of Surveillance Technology (POST) Act: A Resource Page," *Brennan Center for Justice*, last updated March 5, 2021, <a href="https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/public-oversight-surveillance-technology-post-act-resource-page">https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/public-oversight-surveillance-technology-post-act-resource-page</a>.



## **TESTIMONY OF:**

GRASSROOTS ADVOCATES FOR NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS & SOLUTIONS (G.A.N.G.S. COALITION)

Presented by Judith A. Greene before the New York City Council Committee on Oversight & Investigations

Hearing on Budget and Oversight on the Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2024

Department of Investigation

March 7, 2023

Grassroots Advocates for Neighborhood Groups and Solutions is a city-wide coalition of community activists, civil rights attorneys, law professors and academic scholars. The organizational membership includes Brooklyn Defender Services; The Immigrant Defense Project; Justice Strategies; LatinoJustice PRLDEF; The Legal Aid Society; The Policing & Social Justice Project at Brooklyn College and the Surveillance and Technology Oversight Project (STOP).

My personal concerns about effective accountability by law enforcement agencies began more than 40 years ago when, as Director of Women's Resources for the San Francisco Sheriff's Department, I directed an investigation of physical and

sexual abuse of women at the hands of the city's police officers. Subsequently I have served as Director of Court Programs at the Vera Institute of Justice, a Research Fellow at the University of Minnesota Law School, a Research Associate for the RAND Corporation and a Senior Soros Justice Fellow. I founded Justice Strategies in 1999, becoming a member of the GANGS Coalition in 2017.

On May 16, 2017, the Coalition sent a letter to Philip Eure, then Inspector General for the NYPD, expressing concerns about the police department's reliance on large-scale military-style gang raids to attempt to control violent crime, and about the surveillance methods being used by NYPD to classify and track young people as gang members. In that context we expressed particular alarm about the gang database (the so-called "Criminal Group Database") and the use of data-mining software and fake social media accounts as tools to spy on people, some of whom may have no record of criminal activity and almost all of whom are non-white.

The importance of our request cannot be overstated. Investigations by oversight agencies in other jurisdictions have shown that use of gang databases by police is highly problematic. Criteria for inclusion are vague and over-broad. Database entries typically include wild inaccuracies. Information is shared broadly with other agencies, jeopardizing the status of immigrants and adversely affecting access to basic public services and employment opportunities for all. The result of being labeled a gang member can include police harassment, increased surveillance, loss of housing, risk of detention and deportation for undocumented people, and prosecution in complex conspiracy cases under laws designed for members of the Mafia.

We requested that the office investigate and report on the issues we were raising. Subsequent meetings and communications with the Inspector General and his staff were substantive and cordial. More than a year had passed by with no further contact, however, when we got word that Mark Peters — then Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigations, the City agency that houses the OIG-NYPD — had blocked investigation of the gang database.

We took our concerns to members of the city council who had been instrumental in establishment of the OIG-NYPD. On August 27, 2018, Brad Lander and Jumaane Williams sent a letter to Commissioners Peters and Eure requesting that the

investigation be taken up and outlining a series of detailed questions for the inquiry:

- What are the standards and protocols for entry and removal of individuals from the database? Who is authorized to enter individuals, and how are they trained and supervised in this work?
- How does the NYPD define, identify, or demarcate a group of individuals as a gang for entry into the gang database? Does the database draw distinctions between different kinds of groups (e.g., "gangs," "sets," "crews" or "cliques")?
- How many individuals are entered into the database even though they have no underlying criminal predicate?
- Does the database record differentiations between membership, affiliation or association with a particular gang?
- How can an individual find out whether they are in the database? How can an individual seek to be removed from the database?
- How are parents of minors who are placed in the database informed?
- What are the standards and protocols for initiating and conducting surveillance or other law enforcement actions of those in the database?
   Who authorizes these actions, and with what standards?
- How is information about individuals shared with other criminal justice agencies for use in bail determination, criminal prosecution, sentencing, corrections or other aspects of criminal justice case processing? What are the standards and protocols for such actions?
- Are the data shared or disseminated to anyone outside the NYPD? Is there
  dissemination to the FBI, or to federal immigration authorities? To any noncriminal justice city agencies, e.g. NYCHA or CUNY?
- Are periodic audits conducted to insure the accuracy and relevance of the data?
- What due process, human rights, civil liberty and/or privacy protections are in place to avoid misclassification of individuals and/or prevent misuse of the data?
- Is the operation of the database in compliance with relevant federal, state, and local guidelines, including the prohibition on bias-based profiling passed by the City Council as Local Law 71 of 2013?

We understand that the August 2018 letter helped to move things forward, yet many more months passed by with no indication about when — or if — a report would be forthcoming.

On December 6, 2019 an additional letter was sent to the OIG-NYPD. This one was signed by 16 members of the New York State Assembly, three New York State Senators and three more members of the New York City Council. These public officials cited the two and a half year delay in responding to our original request and asked a set of questions that somewhat broadened the scope of the inquiry:

- How is the NYPD using social media to collect intelligence? Are police
  officers misrepresenting themselves through fake social media accounts?
  What investigative safeguards are in place to distinguish between actual
  criminal involvement and youthful boasting and symbolic posturing?
- How is the NYPD using large scale data mining software? Is the police department sharing or using information obtained through private technology, like Palantir, in collaboration with district attorneys or federal law enforcement officials?
- How are members of specialized units that deal with gangs (i.e. gang squad) selected? Do those members have more arrests and more claims of misconduct and/or use of force than other officers?
- What processes are there to ensure that people who are removed from the gang database are not simply put into another database?
- Is there bias in the labeling of some youth criminal activity as "gang related" and thus included in this database?
- Does the NYPD share gang information with any outside agencies? Does the NYPD share any information with Homeland Security or Immigrations and Customs Enforcement?

On April 11, 2022, I testified on behalf of the Coalition before the City Council's Committee on Oversight & Investigations and the Committee on Public Safety, recounting these developments. We asserted that a fully functioning OIG-NYPD is needed as a vital source of information and insight for the City Council as you set policy for and oversee operations of the NYPD.

At that same hearing Department of Investigations Commissioner Joceylyn Strauber assured your committee members that the gangs database report would be released "by the end of the year."

On September 20, 2022, a letter highlighting the need for release of the findings of the database research was sent to Jeanene Barrett, the Acting Inspector General, signed by over 30 New York City advocacy groups.

On November 18, 2022, 16 city council members sent a letter to Ms. Barrett urging her to publish the report.

Today, nearly six years after making our original request, we come before you to express our dismay and anger. We wish to make it clear that over the course of dealing with this matter, we have found no reason to believe that the fault lay at the doorstep of Inspector General Eure, Acting Inspector General Barrett, or their staff. We understand that an investigation <u>was</u> undertaken, and that a report <u>has</u> been compiled, yet it has never been released.

For the second time our Coalition urges you to consider the retooling of the OIG-NYPD to provide it with the independence it needs, with sufficient power to compel compliance of NYPD staff and access to all relevant City employees, facilities, documents, files, records and data that are necessary to perform its duties. And we call on the Inspector General's Office to commit to releasing the report on gang policing and to ignore any undue political pressure that may seek to prevent transparency.

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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