

Religious Leaders Call For NYPD Reforms

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Community organizers and religious leaders from various faiths came together in front of City Hall to mark International Human Rights Day by calling for increased oversight of the New York Police Department.

Advocates say that the use of controversial police practices such as stop-and-frisk and monitoring of Muslims demonstrate the need to reform public safety in communities of color.

They have called for the passage of a package of legislation called the Community Safety Act that includes a measure that would create a new inspector general to oversee the NYPD who would make recommendations about policy.

The police have said that their tactics make the city safer. Mayor Michael M. Bloomberg is firmly opposed to the [Community Safety Act](#) .

“The Muslim community is under siege,” said Imam Ayub Abdul-Baki, of the Islamic Leadership Council of Metropolitan New York, at today’s rally. “We are insecure about dealing with police officers in our community ... We are not sure if they are protecting or victimizing us.”

Faizah N. Ali, a 27-year-old coordinator for civic engagement from the Arab American Association of New York, said she became motivated to work on police accountability after news reports last year that the [NYPD was monitoring Muslims](#) .

“In a democratic society, part of our job is to hold our leaders accountable,” she said.

Ali explained that the unity among the various religious and ethnic groups at City Hall was part of an effort to emphasize the need for social justice in police practices. “We are a set of diverse New Yorkers looking for the police to treat everyone with dignity and respect,” she said.

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