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GANGS COALITION RESPONDS TO NYPD-IG GANG POLICING REPORT

Report Confirms Persistent Racial Disparities, Policy Failures, and Need for Passage of Intro 798

New York, NY — The G.A.N.G.S. Coalition, alongside advocates, legal experts, elected officials, and directly impacted New Yorkers, is renewing its call for the passage of Intro 798 following a new report from the NYC Department of Investigation’s Office of the Inspector General for the NYPD (OIG-NYPD). The report confirms what community members have long known — the NYPD’s Criminal Group Database (“Gang Database”) continues to perpetuate racial profiling, lack transparency, and operate without meaningful oversight or accountability.

The Oct. 15, 2025 OIG-NYPD report found that, while the NYPD has made limited changes since DOI’s 2023 investigation, the database still overwhelmingly targets Black and Latino New Yorkers between 18 and 34 years old. Young people of color are therefore subjected to disproportionate police surveillance resulting in an increased risk of criminal legal system involvement. As of this month, 8,563 people remain

listed — a 39% drop from 2022, but with the same racially-skewed demographics. The report revealed that the NYPD failed to notify any parents of minors added to the database, despite policies requiring notice within 60 days, continues to allow officers partial access to sealed arrest information, and has not established the required multilevel review process to verify entries or renewals.

A Database Beyond Repair

The OIG-NYPD's findings detail widespread delays in review cycles, boilerplate justifications for labeling individuals as "gang-affiliated," and programming errors that left minors in the database years past required review dates. Even after the NYPD's so-called reforms, **98% of listed individuals remain Black or Latino**. By the NYPD's own admission, the vast majority of people listed in the Database have no felony convictions and no involvement in gun violence.

The report also issues 13 new recommendations, including requirements for training, audits, and documentation of all renewals – all further evidence that NYPD's prior assurances of compliance were premature and incomplete.

Intro 798: A Legislative Solution

Intro 798, currently before the **NYC Council Committee on Public Safety**, would:

- **Abolish the NYPD's Criminal Group Database** and prohibit the creation of any replacement tracking system;
- **Require notification and access to records** for individuals previously included; and
- **Mandate a public awareness campaign** to inform New Yorkers of their rights.

Background

Since 2013, the NYPD has used the so-called Gang Database to label tens of thousands of New Yorkers — some as young as 13 — as alleged gang members. These designations can influence policing, prosecutions, housing, education, and immigration status. The G.A.N.G.S. Coalition was formed to end this discriminatory system and replace it with community-based safety solutions rooted in transparency and accountability.

The G.A.N.G.S. Coalition includes Black Attorneys of Legal Aid, Brooklyn Defenders, Bronx Connect, Center for Court Innovation, Common Justice, El Puente, Freedom Agenda, LatinoJustice PRLDEF, Legal Aid Society, the Legal Defense Fund, Policing and Social Justice Project, Neighborhood Defender Services, Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (S.T.O.P.), We Build the Block, and Youth Represents.

Quotes:

“At a time when ICE's potential access to law enforcement data raises the risk levels for vulnerable communities, the Office of the Inspector General found that the NYPD's gang database continues to inflict serious harm: relying on sealed, off-limits arrest information, failing to notify parents when adding

minors despite a 2023 policy, allowing some people to remain in the database for years beyond their required review dates, and keeping minors listed because they turned eighteen before review," **said Comptroller Brad Lander.** "These practices overwhelmingly affect Black and Latine New Yorkers and undermine fairness and public trust. A database that violates people's legal rights and perpetuates systemic racial bias should be replaced with a more transparent and accountable approach once and for all."

"While the DOI report highlights some progress, it also reveals how much of the NYPD's resources are being spent disproportionately surveilling Black and Brown young adults across our city. Over 98% of those listed in the Criminal Group Database are men of color, often included without charges, convictions, or notification." **NYC Council Member Althea Stevens emphasizes,** "At a time when individuals nationwide are being detained or deported for being misidentified as 'gang members,' we must return to a vision of safety that protects and not punishes our communities. I will continue to fight to pass Int. 798 to fully abolish the Gang Database and redirect these resources toward programs that empower, not surveil, our youth, and build real safety rooted in trust, equity, and opportunity."

"It is deeply concerning that both the NYPD and, seemingly, the Office of the Inspector General, continue to disregard the wealth of available data, community narratives, and academic research demonstrating that so-called 'gang policing' undermines, rather than enhances, public safety. When those in positions of authority choose political expedience and optics over courage and accountability, they reveal that the well-being and safety of our communities has never been their true priority." **said Dana Rachlin, Executive Director of WBTB.** "While we are disappointed by the hypocrisy, neglect, and incompetence reflected in this report, we are not surprised. These failures have become predictable hallmarks of policymaking in this area. Nevertheless, we remain steadfast in our commitment to building genuine systems of health and safety that serve all of New York City's young people."

"This report confirms what the clients we serve have long known: the NYPD's gang database is a discriminatory dragnet that targets New Yorkers of color," said **Anthony Posada, Supervising Attorney with the Community Justice Unit at The Legal Aid Society.** "Black and Brown New Yorkers remain disproportionately surveilled and catalogued, proving the system is still broken and unconstitutional despite minor reforms. That's why, along with co-counsel, we filed a federal civil rights lawsuit to end it. True public safety cannot rely on databases that harm our communities by violating the rights and dignity of the people we serve."

"This report once again lays bare what young Black and Brown New Yorkers have lived for years, the NYPD's so-called Criminal Group Database doesn't protect our communities, it profiles them," **said Obi Afriyie, Community Organizer at the Legal Defense Fund.** "Even as the NYPD claims progress, this system still funnels young people, some as young as sixteen, into lifelong surveillance and suspicion based on bias, not behavior. It separates families, criminalizes culture, and stamps a target on Black and Latino youth who deserve investment, not monitoring. Real safety starts when the City Council finally ends this harmful database by passing Intro 798 and chooses care and opportunity over criminalization."

"The OIG's report merely tinkers with the database, while ignoring the safety of New Yorkers who are labeled as gang members based on entirely lawful conduct, such as social media posts," said **Babe**

Howell, a Professor at CUNY School of Law who studies gang databases. “The label is imposed without due process and based on legal conduct. The database includes many New Yorkers who are not gang members. While the OIG's approach seemed irresponsible in 2023, today it is indefensible. In 2025, Trump has issued an Executive Order naming gangs as terrorist groups and used the Alien Enemies Act to remove gang-labeled individuals to CECOT in El Salvador. Ignoring the danger posed by the NYPD's Criminal Group Database in the current climate is an abdication of the OIG's oversight duty. The gang database must be abolished.”

“Two years ago, the Inspector General bashed NYPD for maintaining a ‘gang database’ that was 98% Black and Latinx. Two years later, the Inspector General has found that the database is still 98% Black and Latinx, just a little smaller,” said **Jason Taper, Legal Fellow at the Surveillance Technology Oversight Project.** “NYPD still uses this database to target 98% Black and Latinx youth as ‘gang members’ without any evidence of any crime. The database cannot be reformed. It must be abolished.”

“As public defenders, we have seen how the NYPD’s secret watchlist targets Black and brown youth, fuels harassment, makes young people fearful of any police interaction, and is undeniably rooted in racial bias,” said **Talia Kamran, Attorney with Brooklyn Defenders’ Seizure and Surveillance Defense Project.** “The OIG’s latest report illustrates what we have long known - reforming the database will not make it less harmful. We urge the City Council to pass Intro. 798 to abolish the NYPD’s Criminal Group database and invest in proven solutions for community safety, such as youth centers, mentorship programming, and community-based violence interruption programs.”

“Unfortunately the OIG’s Office has chosen to emphasize technical procedural changes rather than address the core issues of the harms caused by the database. These harms have only increased as federal officials have increasingly pressured local officials to hand over information and cooperate with federal police to assist the Trump agenda of mass deportations and the criminalization of his political enemies,” said **Alex S. Vitale Professor at Brooklyn College and Coordinator of the Policing and Social Justice Project.** The NYPD’s continued use of this database endangers thousands of New Yorkers of Color despite the fact that the NYPD has admitted before the City Council that they have no independent evidence that the database contributes to public safety.”