

Symbolic 9/11 Pen Handed to Al-Qaeda Lawyer

New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani is facing backlash after a pen used to sign a 9/11 order was handed to a man who once represented an al-Qaeda operative.

After signing the order for a September 11, 2001, remembrance ceremony, Mamdani handed the pen to NYPD Commissioner Jessica Tisch and asked her to give it to chief counsel Ramzi Kassem, who represented the brother-in-law of one of the flight hijackers of American Airlines Flight 77, which crashed into the Pentagon.

Michael Alcaza, a retired detective and adjunct professor at John Jay College, told The New York Post, "It was calculated."



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"It happened during a ceremony meant to be about the victims, and no one else. 9/11 families didn't come to City Hall to watch Mamdani spotlight someone whose work intersects with the very ideology that took their loved ones," Alcaza said. "Commissioner Jessica Tisch was reduced to a prop rather than acknowledging her role as the leader of the NYPD."

Kassem represented Ahmed al-Darbi, who pleaded guilty to war-crime charges linked to al-Qaeda plots. Al-Darbi's sister was married to hijacker Khalid al-Mihdhar.

Mamdani's office told the outlet that Kassem was present at the signing because he and his team assisted in writing the orders as part of his role as chief counsel.

Despite petitions urging Mamdani not to appear for the 9/11 remembrance ceremony, the mayor has pledged to be present.

"I'm proud to be the mayor of this city. I love this city. I love this country. And what I want this week to be a focus on is on the families whose loved ones were stolen from them 25 years ago in the horrific act of terror of September 11th, and a focus also on the first responders who gave everything they could to this city and to the people who came together to try and help their fellow New Yorkers," he said.

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