

**March 18, 2024**

**The South Asian Legal Defense Fund's Statement Regarding:  
Response to "NYPD Ousts Vendors Selling Islamic Goods Just  
Before Ramadan" | THE CITY – NYC News**

The recent [actions taken by the NYPD against Bangladeshi street vendors in Jackson Heights, Queens](#) are deeply troubling. The forced removal of these vendors just days before the start of Ramadan, a significant time for their business and community engagement, is particularly egregious.

We condemn the heavy-handed tactics employed by law enforcement, which have resulted in the loss of income for many vendors and created a climate of fear and uncertainty. The threat of arrest and the imposition of hefty fines only exacerbate the already challenging circumstances faced by these hardworking individuals.

We stand in solidarity with the street vendors and advocates who are calling for a just alternative to police crackdowns. The proposal to transfer oversight of street vending from the NYPD to the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) in 2021 was a step in the right direction. By shifting responsibility to an agency better equipped to handle vendor issues with sensitivity and fairness, we can ensure the rights and livelihoods of vendors are protected. Mayor Eric Adams' decision last year to move enforcement to the Department of Sanitation has been described as regressive and harmful by the [Street Vendor Project](#), which through direct legal representation, small business training, organizing support, leadership development, and strategic legislative advocacy, builds power and community among vendors.

Furthermore, we support [Councilmember Pierina Ana Sanchez's bill to increase the issuance of merchandise vendor licenses](#), addressing the longstanding issue of limited opportunities for vendors to obtain proper licensure. Access to these licenses is essential for vendors like MD Nasir Uddin, Mohammad Ashraful Biswas, and others who are trying to support their families and contribute to their communities through lawful means.

It is time for the city to prioritize the well-being of street vendors and recognize their valuable contributions to our neighborhoods. We call on City officials to take swift and decisive action to address the injustices faced by Bangladeshi street vendors in Jackson Heights and to implement policies that promote fairness, equity, and respect for all.

Sincerely,

**The South Asian Legal Defense Fund**