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## **Mayor Mamdani welcomes Archbishop Elpidophoros, Greek American leaders for Greek Independence Day at Gracie Mansion**



New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani hosted His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, Greek American leaders, and members of the Greek American Community at Gracie Mansion on May 5, 2026, for a reception marking Greek Independence Day.



In his remarks, His Eminence expressed his gratitude and appreciation to Mayor Mamdani for his “personal, and the City’s recognition, of this National Holiday of Greek People around the world.” “The Hellenes of New York City,” His Eminence continued, “deeply appreciate your familiarity with our community, and with the way you have embraced our traditions - religious and civic.”

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The annual gathering at Gracie Mansion, the mayoral residence of New York City, brought together civic officials, diplomats, clergy, educators, organizational leaders and representatives of the Omogeneia for a celebration of the 205th anniversary of the beginning of Greece’s struggle for independence in 1821.

Archbishop Elpidophoros described Greek Independence Day as both a national and spiritual commemoration, rooted in the history of March 25, 1821, and the Feast of the Annunciation: “The Immortal Heroes of 1821 fought for and gained this liberty and paved the way for the Democracy that Greece and Cyprus know today - a legacy from the patrimony of our ancient Hellenic roots, just one of our gifts to the world,” Archbishop Elpidophoros said.

His Eminence noted that, through the ministry and leadership of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, the Church continues to serve as a spiritual and

cultural home for the breadth of the Greek American community in New York City: “Our community values education, service, professional excellence, loyalty to one another, and a deep commitment to the common good, inspired by the enduring Christian calling to love our neighbor. Every neighbor,” Archbishop Elpidophoros said.

> Watch: Archbishop Elpidophoros’s full speech at the Gracie Mansion reception


“I just want to say personally thank you to you, your Eminence, for the warm embrace that you have extended to me and to so many others, and the ways in which you shine a light on what it can look like to live out the words of scripture in the language of caring for thy neighbor,” Mayor Mamdani responded.

Mamdani, who represented Astoria and Long Island City in the New York State Assembly before becoming mayor, spoke of the deep imprint of Greek Americans on the life of New York City. He pointed to the democratic traditions cherished by the city and nation, and to the everyday cultural presence of the Greek community, from the streets of Astoria to its restaurants, schools, houses of worship and civic institutions.

> Watch: NYC Mayor Mamdani’s remarks to Greek Americans at Gracie Mansion reception

The mayor said the contributions of Greek New Yorkers could be felt throughout the city, including in public service. He recalled Detective Anastasios Tsakos, the 14-year NYPD veteran who died in the line of duty and whose memory was honored last week with a street naming in Astoria, the neighborhood where he grew up.

Mamdani also struck a lighter note, recalling the lasting pride Greeks continue to take in the national team’s historic Euro 2004 victory. (Mayor Mamdani posted this video on X the occasion of the bicentennial of the Greek Independence Day, March 25.) Though Giorgos Karagounis and Angelos Charisteas were not present, the mayor said that their names still summon memories of the headers and goals that helped make that championship one of the enduring legends of modern sport.

Happy [#GreekIndependenceDay](#) to all my Greek brothers, sisters, family beyond the binary, and Angelos Charisteas himself. [#200Years](#)   
[pic.twitter.com/xOilJuyOyj](https://pic.twitter.com/xOilJuyOyj)

— Zohran Kwame Mamdani (@ZohranKMamdani) [March 25, 2021](#)

“I have been struck by the communal spirit that stretches from New York City to

Athens, that officials from Greece make it a point of traveling to New York City to be with the diaspora for the divine liturgy. There's a sense of "philia", or brotherly love, that fills Fifth Avenue during the Greek Independence Day parade. And the solidarity among Greek New Yorkers of all ages, across all experiences, it reminds me that independence is not something that is ever achieved alone. Independence, wherever it has been won, whether in Greece, whether in America, whether across the world, it is the work of the people."

The mayor connected the celebration of Greek independence to the work of city government, saying that his administration is committed to listening to New Yorkers and expanding the conditions that allow people to live with dignity. Speaking as both mayor and former representative of one of the country's most visible Greek American neighborhoods, Mamdani recalled Greek-owned businesses and friendships from his years in Queens.



The gathering represented the fourth meeting between Mayor Mamdani and Archbishop Elpidophoros since the mayor's inauguration in January.

Iphigenia Kanara, Consul General of Greece in New York spoke at the start of the event. Other guests: Kyriakos Pogiatzis, Consul General of Cyprus in New York; Ambassador Aglaia Balta, Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations; and Ambassador Maria Michail, Permanent Representative of Cyprus to

the United Nations, attended alongside community leaders and representatives from various organizations, among them the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association, the Federation of Cypriot American Organizations, the Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York, the Hellenic American Chamber of Commerce, the Hellenic Lawyers Association, the Hellenic Medical Society, Leadership 100, the National Hellenic Student Association, and leaders of Greek parochial and charter schools throughout New York.

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