

NO MORE VIOLENT RACIST POLICE EXCHANGES: ATLANTA OUT OF GILEE

A coalition of Atlanta scholars, faith leaders, civil rights organizations, and human rights activists have called upon Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms to end the Atlanta Police Department's participation in the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange (GILEE),¹ a privately-controlled police exchange program founded in 1992.

GILEE arranges for law enforcement officials to train with foreign governments that engage in racial profiling, mass surveillance, arbitrary detention, violence against protesters, sexism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia.

During the 2017 mayoral campaign, Mayor Bottoms agreed to freeze APD's participation in GILEE and meet with concerned community members.² Here's why police exchanges like GILEE threaten Atlanta residents:

Fact #1: GILEE Works with and Legitimizes Foreign Governments That Violate Human Rights:

- China, where a surveillance state imprisons one million Uighur Muslims in concentration camps.³
- Egypt, where the police have opened fire on protesters, killing nearly 1,000 demonstrators in a single day, tortured dissidents, and subjected female protesters to "virginity tests."⁴
- Hungary, where Jewish activists are harassed and threatened⁵ by a far-right government that has sought to whitewash Hungary's World War II collaboration with Nazi Germany.⁶
- Israel, GILEE's original and primary partner, whose military and police forces collaborate to hold millions of Palestinians under an illegal occupation, open fire on protesters,⁷ collectively punish entire cities,⁸ and subject residents of African descent to racial discrimination,⁹ among other human rights abuses.¹⁰
- Uzbekistan, which has raided churches,¹¹ arrested women for wearing hijabs,¹² used forced labor in cotton fields as punishment,¹³ and subjected men accused of being gay to "rectal examinations."¹⁴

Fact #2: GILEE Teaches Racism and Islamophobia: Former GBI Director Vernon Keenan has said that GILEE taught him "the primary threat to democratic countries was terrorism by radical Islam."¹⁵ GILEE's founding director, Robert Friedmann, has repeatedly used the program to smear Arabs and Muslims:

- *"The problem is, because of the First Amendment, the FBI won't go into mosques."*¹⁶
- *"...from within Islamic sources, and I'm talking about the leadership, varied as it is, there has not been a single unequivocal condemnation of September 11th."*¹⁷
- *"Meanwhile self-styled Arab-American advocacy groups continue to support terror while focusing their efforts on mounting frivolous complaints about violations of their "rights."*¹⁸
- *"There is no Islamophobia. There is knife-o-phobia."*²⁰

Fact #3 GILEE Propagates Rightwing Political Extremism

The GILEE website features extremist articles²⁴ that advocate for the Iraq War,²⁵ call for bombing Iran,²⁶ smear Arab-Americans,²⁷ and repeatedly slander Jimmy Carter: condemning him as "one of the worst presidents,"²⁸ arguing he should have never received a Nobel Peace Prize,²⁹ calling him and other anti-war activists "appeasers,"³⁰ and calling for him to be labeled a "supporter of genocide."³¹

Fact #4: GILEE Promotes Dangerous Policing Tactics

Under the guise of teaching "urban policing" and "counter-terrorism,"³⁶ GILEE teaches police officials the tactics of militarized police forces that treat communities as enemies. GILEE has taught that officers should inspire fear by "racking" their firearms when they unholster them,³⁷ flash their vehicle's blue lights when patrolling neighborhoods,³⁸ and limit free speech by targeting "incitement."³⁹

The militarization of police forces has already endangered communities across this country. In Georgia, the number of fatal police shootings nearly doubled from 2017 to 2018.⁴⁰ Foreign police exchanges make a bad problem worse. That is why several cities have ended police exchanges like GILEE.⁴¹

We therefore call on Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms to:

- Bar the Atlanta Police Department from participating in GILEE and any similar police exchanges with governments that spread bigotry or violate human rights, including China, Egypt, Hungary and Israel.
- Promote real public safety by investing resources in affordable housing, health care, education, and a livable wage for all workers.

Citations on reverse.

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- ³ “China Events of 2017,” [Human Rights Watch World Report 2018](#). January 2018.
- ⁴ Kato, Miwa. “Women of Egypt,” [The Cairo Review of Global Affairs](#). 2017.
- ⁵ “Hungary’s Viktor Orban Fosters Anti-Semitism,” [The Jerusalem Post](#). July 29, 2018.
- ⁶ “Orban Has Gone Too Far,” [Carnegie Europe](#), July 19, 2012.
- ⁷ “Israelis May Have Committed Crimes Against Humanity in Gaza Protest, U.N. Says”. [New York Times](#). Feb. 28, 2019.
- ⁸ “Israel’s Indiscriminate Attack on Shujaiya,” [Opinio Juris](#), Aug. 27, 2014.
- ⁹ Israel imposes ‘apartheid regime’ on Palestinians: U.N. report.
- ¹⁰ “Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories,” [Amnesty International](#). 2018.
- ¹¹ “Where in the World is the Worst Place to be a Christian?” [The Guardian](#). July 27, 2015.
- ¹² “Uzbek Imam Sacked After Urging President To Allow Hijabs, Beards,” [Reuters](#). Sep. 10, 2018.
- ¹³ “World Report 2018: Uzbekistan,” [Human Rights Watch](#). 2018.
- ¹⁴ “Uzbekistan: Gay Couple Arrested for Engaging in Illegal Relations,” [EurasiaNet](#). Dec. 4, 2017.
- ¹⁵ “Video: Mr. Vernon M. Keenan,” [International Institute of Counter-Terrorism](#). YouTube. Sep. 9, 2007.
- ¹⁶ Simonton, Anna. “Inside GILEE...” [Mondoweiss](#). January 5, 2016.
- ¹⁷ Friedmann, R. “Shifting Sands of Terrorism.” [ICTJ](#). Sep. 10, 2015
- ¹⁸ Friedmann, Robert. “Wannsee, Oslo, Geneva.” [GILEE](#). Pg. 5. Dec. 7, 2003.
- ²⁰ Simonton, Anna. “Inside GILEE...” [Mondoweiss](#). January 5, 2016.
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- ²⁶ Friedmann, Robert. “To Bomb or Not To Bomb—Is That the Question?” [GILEE](#). Sep. 24, 2012.
- ²⁷ Friedmann, Robert. “Wannsee, Oslo, Geneva.” [GILEE](#). Pg. 5. Dec. 7, 2003.
- ²⁸ Friedmann, Robert. “Wannsee, Oslo, Geneva.” [GILEE](#). Pg. 5. Dec. 7, 2003.
- ²⁹ Friedmann, Robert. “A History of Dubious Nobel Peace Prizes,” [GILEE](#). November 4, 2005.
- ³⁰ Friedmann, Robert. “A History of Dubious Nobel Peace Prizes,” [GILEE](#). November 4, 2005.
- ³¹ Friedmann, Robert. “Wannsee, Oslo, Geneva.” [GILEE](#). Pg. 5. Dec. 7, 2003.
- ³⁶ “Transcript: GILEE Legislation Meeting Interview with GILEE Executive Director Steve Heaton and GSU Police Chief Joseph Spillane,” [Georgia State University Student Senate](#). April 10, 2019.
- ³⁷ “Transcript: GILEE Legislation Meeting Interview with GILEE Executive Director Steve Heaton and GSU Police Chief Joseph Spillane,” [Georgia State University Student Senate](#). April 10, 2019.
- ³⁸ “Transcript: GILEE Legislation Meeting Interview with GILEE Executive Director Steve Heaton and GSU Police Chief Joseph Spillane,” [Georgia State University Student Senate](#). April 10, 2019.
- ³⁹ “Transcript: GILEE Legislation Meeting Interview with GILEE Executive Director Steve Heaton and GSU Police Chief Joseph Spillane,” [Georgia State University Student Senate](#). April 10, 2019.
- ⁴⁰ Kruger, Ryan. “2018 marks deadliest year for shootings involving police in Georgia,” [11Alive](#). Dec. 26, 2018.
- ⁴¹ “Durham Votes to Prohibit International Police Exchanges”, [WRAL](#), Apr. 16, 2018.