

*About 25 NYU students protested outside, some in orange jumpsuits, when former NYPD commissioner Raymond Kelly and former Attorney General Michael Mukasey spoke on a panel at an NYU-affiliated film screening of CIA-vetted torture film, "Zero Dark Thirty."*

**Ray Kelly** spent several years engaging in warrantless spying of Muslim students - including those at NYU and communities around the East Coast. Kelly is also responsible for the "Stop & Frisk" program, rife with racial discrimination and widely condemned as means of harassing people of color in New York. Despite Kelly's history of mistreating NYU community members, NYU Law is nonetheless placing its stamp of approval on his visit through its affiliation with the Forum.

While at the White House, **Michael Mukasey** promoted the presidential power to launch war. He decreed that the federal statutes against torture do not apply to the military.

*More of the background to the protest is described in the article below.*

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By John Ambrosio

From [Washington Square News](#) | Original Article

A group of professors, students and community members from NYU and NYU School of Law are circulating an open letter to the NYU administration, urging them to divest from the Forum on Law, Culture and Society, which is currently hosted by NYU Law.

The letter, which was first submitted on Oct. 20, has been signed by 11 professors, 26 members of the community, 46 students and a coalition of groups from NYU and the surrounding community. The FOLCS hosts speaking engagements and film screenings. The signatories are calling on the university to terminate its relationship with the forum as they said

it gives a platform for individuals whose views are incompatible with those of the NYU community.

“As members of the community committed to anti-racism, civil rights and the rule of law, we find NYU’s affiliation with the Forum to be antithetical to the University’s commitment to ‘embracing diversity,’” the letter read. “By supporting the Forum, the University is promoting individuals complicit in misconduct, rights violations and possible war crimes — including warrantless spying on NYU students.”

The signatories took particular issue with FOLCS director Thane Rosenbaum, and pointed to an opinion piece he wrote for the Wall Street Journal in July that said Palestinians lost their rights as citizens when they voted for Hamas in the 2006 Gazan elections.

The letter also criticized several speakers and events hosted by the FOLCS, which they accused of hate-speech and of promoting anti-Muslim policies.

On Oct. 25, a group of signatories, including first-year NYU Law student and Anti-FOLCS Coalition organizer Amith Gupta, picketed outside the NYU Law Library, where the FOLCS was hosting a screening and Q&A session for “Zero Dark Thirty.” Gupta said two of the guest speakers at the event — former NYPD commissioner Raymond Kelly and former Attorney General Michael Mukasey — had concerning backgrounds.

“[Kelly] not only spied on students at NYU Law, but he also spied on Muslim students all throughout the eastern seaboard, and he’s also responsible for the stop-and-frisk policy,” Gupta said. “And then on top of that they brought Michael Mukasey, who was one of the torture lawyers for the Bush administration who basically helped legalize torture under that administration.”

The panel also featured Faiza Patel, co-director of the Brennan Center’s Liberty and National Security Program.

The university responded to the criticism of FOLCS and said the freedom to express unpopular

opinions was vital to education.

“Certain individuals may disagree with, or even be offended by, some of the ideas presented,” an Oct. 27 statement from the law school read. “They are entitled to express their views, just as the people who organize and participate in the programming are entitled to express theirs. That free exchange of ideas is a fundamental principle of our University.”

Gupta added that a group of NYU Law students are planning to meet with NYU Law dean Trevor Morrison to discuss their concerns. While a date for the meeting has not been set, Gupta said he was hopeful that the university would consider divesting from FOLCS.

“My view is the NYU Law made a very big mistake welcoming the Forum onto campus, but they’re open to recognizing that there are a lot of concerns in the community, and hopefully they’ll reassess their relationship with the Forum,” Gupta said.