

Diallo settlement: \$3 million and NYPD apology

By J. Zamgba Browne
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NEW YORK — Kadiatou and Saikou Diallo, parents of slain African immigrant Amadou Diallo, seem ready to take the \$3 million settlement with the city over the brutal death of their son by four trigger-happy cops and run.

But critics of the city have said not so fast. Councilman Charles Barron said that the family should have at least been compensated with \$1 million for each of the 41 bullets fired at Amadou.

"This is absurd. It is the second miscarriage of justice I have seen in this case," said Barron, referring specifically to the acquittal of the four cops, Kenneth Boss, Sean Carroll, Edward McMellon and Richard Murphy.

Barron said that these officers should have been doing major jail time or the city should be kicking out major dollars to compensate the families of police brutality victims. He called the \$3 mil-

lion settlement "chump change" and said that it's a gross insult.

Rep. Charles Rangel (D-New York) disagreed sharply. He said that the settlement would "soothe the family's pain" over Amadou's death. "At the very least, it is an unspoken but critical concession by the city that members of the NYPD and not the victim were culpable in the death of an innocent young man," he declared.

The Harlem lawmaker stressed that nothing the family might have requested would have been enough to replace Amadou, but from the beginning they appealed only for justice. Rangel also said that the settlement closes a chapter but not the book on the Diallo case.

"While New Yorkers have embraced the Diallo family, the cause of justice cries out for them to realize their son's dream of living in America, which he believed would nurture his ambitions for the future," he added.

Rangel had nothing but praise for Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who supported the financial settlement. However, he said that if Bloomberg wishes to close the book on this tragedy he should urge Gov. George Pataki to support efforts to make the family's stay in the U.S. permanent.

Anthony Gair, the lawyer who represented the family, said the settlement is appropriate.

"This the highest amount of money ever paid by the city for the death of a single man with no dependent," said attorney Gair in a telephone interview. However, he underscored that the Diallo case is a glaring example of what he described as the "unfairness" of New York's wrongful death law, which is limited to pecuniary loss and "clearly values the life of the wealthy far and above that of the poor."

"It is time that the state Legislature seriously under-

takes efforts to amend this onerous and unfair law, which, without question, makes a class distinction in awarding damages for wrongful death," Gair declared.

Assemblyman Adam Clayton Powell IV said the settlement is no cause for celebration because "no amount of money will ever erase the loud noise of 41 shots fired at an innocent unarmed person."

The Rev. Herbert Daughtry, pastor the House of the Lord Church in Brooklyn, said he wasn't too sure if any amount of money can compensate the family.

"I hope that the money offered the family will enable them to continue their good work as well as repay them for some of the large amount of resources they had to expend," said Daughtry.

Amadou's parents said they were glad to obtain closure to the case and know that by seeing it through a successful conclusion they

have effected many positive changes in the manner in

which the NYPD conducts itself.



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