

## Boston councilor condemns shootings

By Michael Norton and Matt Murphy

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BOSTON -- A veteran Boston city councilor on Sunday condemned the assassination-style killings Saturday afternoon of two New York City police officers while saying he fears more violence against police officers.

Councilor Charles Yancey extended condolences to the families of officers Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos, who were killed by 28-year-old Ismaaiyl Abdullah Brinsley in Brooklyn.

The killings were reportedly carried out as retribution for the deaths of Eric Garner and Michael Brown, two black men who were killed during encounters with white police officers. Grand juries in New York and Missouri did not bring indictments against police in either case, sparking mass protests around the country.

Brinsley also reportedly shot his former girlfriend in Baltimore before traveling to Brooklyn, then killed himself after ambushing and shooting the officers.

In a press release stating the councilor's condemnation of the deaths, Yancey said, "The majority of police officers in the nation are decent, law-abiding people who risk their lives every day to assist in providing public safety for complete strangers."

His office reported in addition that Yancey "fears that the country may see an escalation in vigilantism against innocent police officers if grand juries and local prosecutors continue exonerating police officers who are accused of using excessive force against unarmed black men and other civilians.

Yancey cited statistics from the Cato Institute's National Police Misconduct Reporting Project showing that 1,575 law-enforcement officers were involved in excessive-force reports in 2010. About 1,660 officers were killed in the line of duty in the U.S between 2002 and 2012, according to Yancey.

The Mattapan councilor touted his support for community policing and sponsorship of an ordinance requiring the city to pay for officers' bulletproof vests, as well as a proposal to mandate use of GPS technology and automatic external defibrillators on public-safety vehicles.

With emotions running hot after the shootings, state Rep. Marc Lombardo took to Twitter on Saturday night and wrote: "Looks like that piece of trash Al Sharpton got what he wanted. What a tragedy #PrayersforNYPD."

The Billerica Republican later deleted the "emotional" Tweet, calling it "stupid and unfair," but not before receiving a barrage of negative comments on social media.

The Rev. Al Sharpton has encouraged peaceful protests in cities around the country, including New York, after the deaths of Brown and Garner, but has condemned the cop killings and on Sunday called for peace.

Several media outlets reported that Sharpton received death threats after the shooting, and that he has turned them over to the FBI for investigation.

During an appearance on WGBH radio Friday, Boston Police Commissioner William Evans said demonstrators in Boston have been "very cooperative" and "very respectful."

Evans called the video of Garner's chokehold death "troubling" and also suggested a "better system" that would allow more information for the public about why grand juries make their decisions.

"I hate the fact that we're all painted because of these two incidents," Evans said. "We try our damndest to make sure we are partners in the community. I think that has set us back tremendously, and I don't think we deserve it."

On Sunday afternoon, at a Christmas party for city children, Evans called the shootings of the New York officers a "terrible tragedy" and a "sad day for law enforcement," according to The Boston Globe.

"At this time, we have stepped up patrols, several officers backing each other up at calls, but unless we get something in the area of a specific threat, we're going to continue to do what we do and officers will be responding to each others' calls, just making sure we have each others' backs," Evans said, according to the Globe.

In a statement regarding the New York officer shootings, Darnell William, president of the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts, said Monday, "Two wrongs never make a right. It was wrong not to find an indictment, and it was wrong to take the life of two police officers. Violence only begets violence. We must solve these problems with advocacy, change and determination. Our heartfelt prayers are extended to these families, and we denounce this kind of reaction." "When we stay within the bounds of the law, change will come. We must not lose faith or hope in this noble quest."

Yancey called attacks on police "an attack on the community," and said "it's never appropriate for anyone, whether police or civilian, to use excessive force on another human being."