

## **CONTAMINATED WATER SCANDAL AT JACOB RIIS HOUSES: RESIDENTS SPEAK OUT AND REFUSE TO ACCEPT NYCHA'S COVER-UP**

In Jacob Riis Houses, residents have been complaining about cloudy water making them sick since at least early August. On September 2nd, the city government announced that the water at Riis Houses had tested positive for arsenic, told residents not to drink it, and started giving out bottled water. Then on Friday, September 9th, city officials and NYCHA CEO Greg Russ came to speak at a meeting for Riis residents and proclaimed that the positive arsenic test result was false—a lab mistake—and that the water was safe to drink and had been safe all along. But the hundreds of residents at this meeting weren't having it. The room erupted in protest, with people shouting down Greg Russ and city officials and demanding real answers, not a cover-up. They know from getting sick from the water and from getting rashes after taking showers that, even if it's not arsenic, something's been wrong with the water.

Ever since the report about arsenic in the water, NYCHA, Mayor Eric Adams, and the city government have been more concerned with appearances—looking like they are doing something—than with treating the residents of Jacob Riis Houses as human beings. Residents have been left to fend for themselves with no concern for their health or accurate information about the situation. On September 10th, Eric Adams pulled a PR stunt by drinking a glass of water at the Jacob Riis Houses, trying to quell the righteous anger of residents. That same day, residents of Riis Houses calling into NYCHA were still being told NOT to drink or cook with the water. The city government is no longer distributing bottled water to residents, leaving them to deal with the problem on their own.

Outraged over the water scandal and the years of disrepair and neglect, residents of Jacob Riis Houses met on September 10th and decided to organize a protest with *Dare to Struggle*. On September 14th, 35 people gathered in front of the management offices of Jacob Riis and marched through the projects. Residents spoke out on the mic to expose what they have been going through. The father of Gavin Cintron, a young man who died on September 8th, said "My son was 23 years old, he did not deserve this. He was a professional skateboarder, and he was perfectly healthy before this whole thing blew up. I need answers! I need to know what happened to my son!" He also said that "it's not a coincidence that my neighbors and the children of my neighbors are sick. We got kids throwing up, we got dogs passing away. My dog is sick, she has to go to the vet. My other neighbor has a rash on the back of her neck that looks like she got burned. Every morning I look inside the [bath] tub and I see a whole bunch of black stuff." Another resident who spoke said that "they are killing us little by little."

## **GREG RUSS STEPS DOWN AS CEO OF NYCHA BUT REMAINS ON BOARD**

On September 15th, it was announced that Greg Russ would be stepping down as CEO of NYCHA. While it wasn't explicitly stated, it's no doubt that Russ stepping down is due to the scandal over the water at Jacob Riis Houses and the resistance of residents to NYCHA's cover-up. This is testament to what people can achieve when we stand up and refuse to accept the mistreatment of those in power. It is a real victory, but only a partial one: Greg Russ is still on the Board of Directors of NYCHA. **He needs to be FIRED COMPLETELY, not just removed of a title!** No longer should he be able to dictate policy that destroys and displaces people as he's done all over the country!

One person at the protest said that "When that meeting happened last Friday, I saw something that I very rarely see, and I saw NYCHA kinda buckling. Their knees started shaking! [...] That's the kind of fire that it's going to take for them to do what they're supposed to do [...] **Y'all gotta keep throwing blows at NYCHA!**"

**CONTINUED**

(Demands, Queensbridge, Donate,  
Getting Involved, and Contact Information)



**Now is the time to get organized to keep throwing blows at NYCHA!  
Residents of Jacob Riis are continuing this struggle.**

**They have the following demands:**

- Independent and Fully Transparent Testing NOW!
- Fix the Water and the Lack of Gas at Jacob Riis!
- Fire Greg Russ! (for real this time!)
- No NYCHA Privatization!

## IT'S NOT JUST AT RIIS HOUSES THAT RESIDENTS AIN'T HAVING IT

On September 7th at the Queensbridge housing projects, NYC Comptroller Brad Lander hosted a "NYCHA Accountability Roundtable" with "Resident Powered Audits" supposedly to find out about the problems NYCHA residents are dealing with. However, all the blowhard careerist Lander could talk about was locks on the front doors, proving himself utterly clueless about all the water damage, mold, peeling lead paint, holes in the walls, broken appliances, roach and rodent infestations, etc., which he could have found out about just by talking to a NYCHA resident for five minutes. Worse yet, he offered zero plans to actually fix any of these problems. Resident after resident confronted Lander. One resident said "Why do we constantly have to bring this to your attention? Why is somebody not doing they job? They getting paid!" Let's keep refusing to let these government officials pretend they care just so they can get votes and never offer solutions.

**Jacob Riis residents protesting on October 14th**



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## GET INVOLVED

Get in touch with us to document the problems and repairs needed in your apartment, join with and organize No NYCHA Privatization Committees, and get copies of this bulletin to distribute in your building. Use the hashtag #NYCHANeglect on social media to expose the ways NYCHA is mistreating residents.

**Contact Dare to Struggle:**

@daretostrugglenyc on Instagram

@daretostruggle\_ on Twitter

Facebook: <https://bit.ly/3BnJf89>

Email: [daretostrugglenyc@protonmail.com](mailto:daretostrugglenyc@protonmail.com)