

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT relative to investigating the swatting incident that occurred on Wednesday, August 12, 2020 targeting Dr. Melina Abdullah, the co-founder of Black Lives Matter LA.

Recommendation for Council action pursuant to Motion (Harris-Dawson - Wesson - Price - Rodriguez):

DIRECT the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) to report to City Council, the Mayor, and public within 21 days on the swatting incident that occurred on Wednesday, August 12, 2020 targeting Dr. Melina Abdullah, the co-founder of Black Lives Matter LA with said report to include information on what occurred, the nature of the false 911 call, any information on the suspect or suspects and if their actions were politically motivated, and background on LAPD's investigation into this matter.

Fiscal Impact Statement Submitted: Neither the City Administrative Officer nor the Chief Legislative Analyst has completed a financial analysis of this report.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

Summary:

On August 25, 2020, your Committee considered a Motion (Harris-Dawson - Wesson - Price - Rodriguez) relative to investigating the swatting incident that occurred on Wednesday, August 12, 2020 targeting Dr. Melina Abdullah, the co-founder of Black Lives Matter LA. According to the Motion, on the morning of August 12, 2020, the LAPD received a 911 call alleging that an armed individual was holding hostages in the home of Dr. Melina Abdullah, the co-founder of Black Lives Matter LA and a prominent activist against police misconduct in Los Angeles. Several police officers swarmed her street with guns drawn in response to a potential hostage situation, only to find out that there was no one being held hostage. This call resulted in a significant response by LAPD, who were met by a baffled and terrified Dr. Abdullah, who had no idea why armed police officers were outside of her family's home. After their response, LAPD was able to determine that this call was likely a 'swatting' call targeting Dr. Abdullah and her family.

"Swatting" calls are false reports, usually alleging a violent act has occurred or armed criminals are at the scene, that are made by individuals seeking to draw a large armed police response to the home of an unsuspecting victim. In this case, the LAPD was able to determine the call was false and leave the scene. However, not all swatting calls end this way and there have been incidents where people have been injured or killed. This incident is particularly troubling, as it targeted a prominent activist against police misconduct, and may have been conducted by an individual trying to silence her. We are fortunate to live in a country that protects the right to protest- Angelenos should be confident that their protesting won't lead to violent retribution from police or the general public. The LAPD should report promptly on this incident and its ongoing investigation into the matter. After consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to recommend approval of the Motion. This matter is now transmitted to Council for its consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

MEMBER VOTE

RODRIGUEZ: YES

O'FARRELL: YES

BUSCAINO: YES

RYU: YES

LEE: YES

ARL

8/25/20

-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-