

CBS Mornings

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7:35:49 a.m. [TEASE]

10 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Ahead; FDNY Commissioner Steps Down]

TONY DOKOUPIL: Hours after Zohran Mamdani won the New York mayoral election, the city's fire commissioner announces his resignation. Now, he's talking about it for the first time and only on *CBS Mornings*. Stay with us.

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7:33:32 a.m.

4 minutes and 45 seconds

DOKOUPIL: Taking a turn to public safety in New York with the largest police and fire departments in the country and a more than \$100 billion budget, New York is a very tough city to govern and it can be even more so when incoming Mayor Zohran Mamdani has apologized for past calls to defund the police. Last week, in a closely-watched decision, Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch said she had accepted the mayor-elect's offer to stay in her job, but Fire Commissioner Robert Tucker announced his resignation effective December 19, hours after Mamdani was elected. Both leaders are Jewish and in his first interview since deciding to leave, Tucker told me his faith is one of the reasons he decided to quit. [TO TUCKER] Talking about police and public safety has been a little bit awkward for mayor-elect Mamdani because of some of his past comments. Does he have some work to do still in winning over the support of first responders in New York?

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Only on; FDNY Commissioner on Why He's Decided to Resign]

ROBERT TUCKER: Yeah, I think he has a tremendous amount of work to do and I think it's work well worth doing.

DOKOUPIL: While Robert Tucker's police counterpart Jessica Tisch is staying on –

TUCKER: I respect her for the decision to stay and I know she respects me for my decision to leave.

DOKOUPIL: – the fire commissioner submitted this brief letter of resignation one day after Zohran Mamdani won New York City's mayoral election. [TO TUCKER] To what extent is this decision of yours about being a Jewish new Yorker?

TUCKER: Yeah, I think it's a factor, no doubt, and I don't want to tell you that it's the only factor, but I believe that the things that I have heard the mayor say would make it difficult for me to continue on in – in such a senior executive role in the administration.

DOKOUPIL: Mamdani's political rise has been taken as an ominous sign by many Jewish leaders –

RABBI ANGELA BUCHDAHL: Zohran Mamdani has contributed to a mainstreaming of some of the most abhorrent anti-Semitism.

DOKOUPIL: – who point to, among other things, his opposition to Israel as a Jewish state.

TUCKER: Look, it's a complicated, emotional decision to leave, but ideologically there's no doubt that the mayor and I disagree on some very fundamental things to me.

DOKOUPIL: Tucker and others aren't convinced by the mayor-elect's words of reassurance.

ZOHRAN MAMDANI [on 11/04/25]: I will be the mayor who doesn't just protect Jewish New Yorkers, but also celebrates and cherishes is them.

TUCKER: More importantly than hearing it, we want to see it. And, you know, there was an example very recently on the Upper East Side.

DOKOUPIL: Park East Synagogue.

TUCKER: Yeah, Park East Synagogue.

DOKOUPIL: In a protest last week outside a synagogue hosting an event to support Jewish immigration to Israel, activists shouted threats. A Mamdani spokesperson was later quoted saying he "discouraged the language," adding, in an apparent nod of support to the protesters, that "these sacred spaces should not be used to promote activities in violation of international law."

TUCKER: You know, I don't know that the public has heard appropriately from him.

DOKOUPIL [TO TUCKER]: What could have done?

TUCKER: Look, I think he could have come out very quickly and condemned the behavior and some of the rhetoric, but, again, I –

DOKOUPIL [TO TUCKER] And by not doing it what are your concerns?

TUCKER: – yeah, I'm less worried about what he didn't do and more worried about him, you know, realizing the – the enormity of his job.

DOKOUPIL: Inside headquarters in Brooklyn –

TUCKER: This is the nucleus of how we run the department.

DOKOUPIL: – where the FDNY coordinates responses to emergencies across America’s biggest city. [TO TUCKER] You’re going to miss this?

TUCKER: Very much.

DOKOUPIL: Tucker says they’re still waiting for outreach from Mamdani.

TUCKER: I haven’t had any personal conversations with the mayor-elect, I haven’t heard from anyone in his incoming administration nor has the department and so, I only hope that – that that is not an indicator of their feelings about the FDNY. I’d like to think they think everything is going so well here that they don’t need to transition so fast.

DOKOUPIL: Well, things are going well at the fire department. I mean, look, it’s a great department. I want to point out that Robert Tucker the commissioner there -- he loves his job.

NATE BURLESON: Yeah.

DOKOUPIL: He loves the people he is working with in general and it was clearly an emotional personal decision.

GAYLE KING: Yeah.

BURLESON: He even said that.

DOKOUPIL: He mostly wants to focus on the positive and is wishing Mamdani all the best, all the success in the world. You can tell he didn’t really want to get into it –

KING: Yes.

DOKOUPIL: – but he felt he deserved people a little more of an explanation for why he’s stepping away at this particular time.

KING: I admire that he spoke up the way he did and said this isn’t for me at this time.

BURLESON: Yeah.

KING: It’s okay.

BURLESON: Alright, coming up, one of the –

DOKOUPIL: Oh, wait, I should add we asked the Mamdani campaign for comment. We did not hear back.

KING: Okay!

DOKOUPIL: So, yeah.

BURLESON: Alright, we'll see if they return your call.