

New York State Association of Chiefs of Police, Inc.

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Press Release

April 10, 2018

The members of the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police would like to express their concern about a guest speaker appearing at Niagara University New York on April 11th, 2018. The guest speaker, Sekou Odinga (previously known as Nathanael Burns), is described in the college announcement as being “Persecuted as a member of the Panther 21 and the Black Liberation Army, Odinga spent thirty-three years behind bars as a U.S. held political prisoner of war.” In fact, Mr. Odinga was a member of a violent terrorist group responsible for a number of robberies and the murder of two Nyack, New York police officers (one white and one black officer) and a security guard during a Brinks truck robbery in Nanuet, New York in 1981. The evidence in the Brinks case against Mr. Odinga was overwhelming. He was convicted in 1984 and sentenced to a consecutive twenty-five years to life state sentence and a forty-year federal sentence. Mr. Odinga was released from prison on November 25, 2014. In today’s world, he would be rightly labeled a domestic terrorist.

In the view of the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police, offering any platform, especially at a prestigious institution of higher learning, for a person such as Mr. Odinga to espouse his version of contrary rhetoric is not a responsible act. Although we agree that contrary points of view are necessary for our society to grow, the viewpoints of Mr. Odinga are beyond the acceptable civil discourse that is beneficial to our society. His past actions not only dishonor the officers who died on that horrible day in 1981, but all police officers in our country that work so hard every day and sacrifice so much to keep our society safe. To anyone who would think that this hard-core domestic terrorist is going to be a valuable contributor to society, we would dispute that claim.