

Organizer speaks on youth march

NEW YORK (AP) — In his first public comments since the Million Youth March, Khallid Abdul Muhammad said he never wanted any trouble and blamed police for starting the violence that ended the rally.

"I believe I kept them from stampeding," Muhammad told *The Village Voice*. "I believe it was my divine duty not to incite a riot, not to turn my people against the police because I had told them all along, at every press conference we had before the march, to be courteous and respectful to each other, and even to the police."

The Sept. 5 rally, attended by about 6,000 people in Harlem, was peaceful until some in the crowd threw bottles and other debris as police took over the stage to enforce a court-ordered end at 4 p.m.

Just before police moved in, Muhammad delivered a



KHALLID MUHAMMAD

venomous speech filled with criticism of police, Jews and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. He urged the crowd to use the officers' own weapons against them "if they so much as touch you."

Muhammad, who has not made any public comments since the march, said his remarks that day were intended only as a warning.

"I wanted to warn my

people, to prepare them, to calm them," said Muhammad, who was interviewed at a "safe house" somewhere in North America, the *Voice* said.

Sixteen cops and five civilians were injured. Police Commissioner Howard Safir blamed Muhammad for the violence and accused him of trying to incite a riot. Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau has said his office is investigating.

Muhammad told the *Voice* that he left the stage at exactly 4 p.m. "I stepped away from the mike and we cleared the stage completely," Muhammad said. "We were down the steps, feet just hitting the ground, and that's when we saw them attack the back of the stage."

Muhammad said he was escorted through the crowd by his security personnel but stayed in the area urging people to stay calm.

Mixed Race

(Continued from Page 14)

and 27,738 people have been approved. Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom has ordered an inquiry to look at ways of speeding things up.

Government officials believe the District Six project may provide the boost that land reform needs, while also healing the wound left by one of the most notorious of forced removals.

"If District Six gets off the ground it will be a huge boost for the reconciliation process in the whole country," said Terence Fife, land affairs director for the Western Cape province.

With a national election looming next year, a high-profile effort to rebuild District Six may also deflect criticism by rival parties that the African National Congress has not done enough to restore land to its former owners.

Rebuilding District Six finally got the green light after a deal was signed in September among former residents, the Cape Town City Council and the Department of Land Affairs.

District Six's fame lay in the fact that many whites, blacks and Indians lived there, even though it was predominantly a

"colored" neighborhood, meaning people of mixed race lived there.

"Color didn't mean anything in District Six," Ebrahim, education officer at the District Six museum, said proudly.

"We were poor, but when we had no food each one of us would go to any house — Jew, African or white — and people would give us something to eat. We just grew up like that."

This tolerant atmosphere made it a target for planners advocating a system of racial segregation. The first removals started in 1966 and were completed 15 years later.

Now gray-haired, Ebrahim was a young father of two in 1974 when he was told to leave the neighborhood his family had lived in for generations. Like other people of mixed race, Ebrahim was forced to move into a specially built township far from the center of town.

Just before his home was pulled down, he ran into the building and grabbed the number plate.

The rusty plaque from long-gone Caledon Street, bearing the numerals "247," is all that remains of his house.

Despite occupying a prime city center

(See *Mixed Race*, Page 19)

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