



**Commission On
Human Rights**

New York City Commission on Human Rights

22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007
212-306-7450 | 212-416-0197
www.nyc.gov/site/ochr

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CONTACT: press@cchr.nyc.gov, (212) 416-0250

**NYC COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS SPEAKS AT UNITED NATIONS
ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS ACCOUNTABILITY**

NEW YORK, NY — Last week, the New York City Commission on Human Rights participated in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the United Nations in Geneva, demonstrating how local governments can lead on human rights both at home and on the world stage.

The Commission's participation marks a historic milestone as local agencies and officials joined together to speak about the United States's human rights record and commitments. JoAnn Kamuf Ward, Deputy Commissioner of Policy and External Affairs, represented the Commission to emphasize every person's right to live with dignity and respect.

"I am proud to represent a local government agency that is committed to human rights," **said JoAnn Kamuf Ward, Deputy Commissioner of Policy and External Affairs at the NYC Commission on Human Rights.** "The NYC Commission on Human Rights has spent over 80 years preventing and responding to discrimination in housing, employment, and public spaces. Our work – born out of bias and violence – seeks to uphold legal protections by investigating complaints, developing policy guidance, and empowering New Yorkers to know and exercise their rights. By taking action in partnership with the communities we serve, we address challenges, protect vulnerable communities, and exemplify human rights principles every day."

During the UPR, Deputy Commissioner Kamuf Ward highlighted the Commission's work to protect transgender, gender nonconforming, non-binary, and intersex New Yorkers and the ongoing fight to advance racial justice. The Commission is using its legal enforcement tools to uphold the City Human Rights Law, as well as developing trainings and engagement tactics to meet the moment in a city where there are broader efforts to advance truth, reconciliation, and reparations guided by global human rights principles. The Commission was pleased to speak alongside other local leaders, including:

- **Larry Krasner**, Philadelphia District Attorney
- **Brandon Johnson**, Mayor of Chicago
- **Dorene Lorenz**, Chairperson for the Alaska Commission for Human Rights
- **Holly Mitchell**, Los Angeles County Supervisor
- **Robin Toma**, Executive Director of the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations

Their participation underscored the longstanding role of state and local governments in protecting fundamental rights. The discussion, moderated by Jamil Dakwar of the ACLU's



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Human Rights Program and featuring Alisa Warren, President of the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies, emphasized that state and local agencies have human rights obligations, enshrined in global agreements, like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Anyone in New York City who feels they have experienced or witnessed discrimination can reach out to the Commission by calling 212-416-0197, filling out the online form, or visiting one of the Commission's offices.

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The New York City Commission on Human Rights is the agency responsible for enforcing the NYC Human Rights Law, one of the most comprehensive civil rights laws in the nation. The Commission works to promote equality and combat discrimination in New York City through law enforcement, community relations, and public education.