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**DARCEL D. CLARK**  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY, BRONX COUNTY

198 EAST 161ST STREET  
BRONX, N.Y. 10451  
(718) 590-2234

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## **BRONX DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE OPENS "RIKERS ISLAND PROSECUTION BUREAU" ON RIKERS ISLAND**

**Bronx DA Darcel D. Clark and DOC Commissioner Joseph Ponte Inaugurate Satellite Office**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark, joined by New York City Department of Correction Commissioner Joseph Ponte, today officially opened the Bronx District Attorney's Rikers Island Prosecution Bureau on Rikers Island, ensuring faster prosecution of jailhouse crimes to make the facility safer for staff, inmates and visitors.

District Attorney Clark was also joined by elected officials and correction system stakeholders to launch the new Bureau, which represents the first time the Bronx District Attorney's Office — which has jurisdiction over Rikers Island — will have a physical presence there.

District Attorney Clark said, "Improving conditions for everyone on Rikers Island is an integral part of improving and revitalizing the criminal justice system. This humble trailer stands as a bold signal that the Bronx District Attorney's Office means business, and it shows that we are working side by side with the front line of the Department of Correction to make the city safer by making Rikers Island safer.

"We are already conducting investigations of the gang violence, contraband smuggling and other organized criminal activities that drive much of the slashings and assaults on the Island. This Bureau also collaborates with our Gangs/Major Case and Public Integrity Bureaus to penetrate the criminal network in the jails that reaches beyond the walls to every neighborhood in the city."

Mayor de Blasio said, "We're always working to make our jails safer. While inmate assaults on staff are down 17% this year, having prosecutors on the Island will improve our ability to deepen this important progress. We look forward to the results of a deeper partnership between the Department of Correction and the prosecutors who fight for justice when our corrections officers are attacked."

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Commissioner Ponte said, “The opening of this bureau represents the deepening of our partnership with DA Clark and her staff – one that is integral to the culture of safety we are establishing on Rikers. In 2015, we created a dedicated arrest unit that since has nearly doubled inmate arrests; our new evidence section ensures that evidence collected at our crime scenes is properly catalogued and stored. Together with the DA, we will restore swift and certain justice to ‘New York’s toughest precinct.’”

The Rikers Island Prosecution Bureau—part of the District Attorney’s Investigations Division—is headed by Deanna Logan, Chief, assisted by Deputy Chief James Brennan and Supervisor Sonya Tennell. It currently has a staff of fourteen, including Assistant District Attorneys, Detective Investigators and administrative staff, working with Department of Correction personnel to conduct investigations in real time. The legal team will continue to expand.

The Bureau was made possible by \$1.842 million in funding, part of \$11.5 million in extra funding for the Bronx District Attorney’s Office allocated by Mayor de Blasio in the City Budget. The support of the New York City Council’s Public Safety Committee was instrumental.

Elizabeth Glazer, director of the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, said, “Today, with the opening of a dedicated Rikers Island prosecution bureau, New York City is taking an important step to continue reducing violence in our city’s jails. Prosecuting cases based on incidents that occur in jail is particularly time-consuming and complex. The new Rikers Island Bureau will support the joint efforts of the Bronx District Attorney’s office and the Department of Correction as they work closely together to address incidents expeditiously and effectively. Focusing enforcement resources on reducing violence in jails is a key piece of the administration’s larger strategy to support targeted prosecution strategies that will drive down the City’s remaining violent crime.”

DOI Commissioner Mark G. Peters said, “The Rikers Island Prosecution Bureau is an important step forward in addressing the violence and corruption that takes place at the City’s main jail complex. DOI’s partnership with the Bronx District Attorney’s Office includes the many investigations we do together that expose and stop crimes, such as contraband smuggling and inmate assaults, and extends to an attorney DOI has assigned to the Bronx District Attorney’s Office to focus on these significant issues.”

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City Council Member Vanessa Gibson, Chair of the Council’s Committee on Public Safety, said, “Establishing a Rikers Island Prosecution Bureau is a giant step forward in our collective goal to root out violence and corruption on Rikers Island. This on-island bureau sends an important message: violence on the island will not be tolerated and those continuing illegal operations within the walls of Rikers will face serious consequences.

I applaud Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark for her leadership and I am proud to have led the discussion with my Council Colleagues to secure the funding necessary for this on-island bureau.”

Elias Husamudeen, Correction Officers Benevolent Association president, said, “Expanding the District Attorney's presence at Rikers Island from one prosecutor to an entirely new bureau located at Rikers is a welcomed sea change. The COBA has pushed vigorously for this unit to be formed and after years of neglect, we applaud DA Clark for finally making this vision a reality. The assaults on our officers must be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law and we're hopeful this new unit will assist in doing that.”

City Council Member Rory I. Lancman (D-Queens) said, “Violence and corruption is all too prevalent at Rikers Island, and the creation of the Bronx District Attorney’s Office Rikers Island Prosecution Bureau is an important step towards ending the misconduct there.”

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