



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 19, 2020

CONTACT: Alicia McCauley, amccauley@cchr.nyc.gov, 212-416-0105

**NYC COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS LAUNCHES PUBLIC EDUCATION
CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT ANTI-SEMITISM AND SUPPORT JEWISH
COMMUNITIES**

The campaign will run in local community print and digital platforms, as well as Commission social media channels.

NEW YORK—The NYC Commission on Human Rights is launching a new campaign to combat religious harassment and discrimination in housing, the workplace and in all public places, and to underscore the City’s support for Jewish communities. The campaign responds to a rise in anti-Semitism in New York City, in surrounding communities, and around the country, and affirms the rights of all Jewish New Yorkers to be treated with dignity and respect. The campaign also provides information on how to report harassment and discrimination to the Commission.

“Every New Yorker has the right to practice their religion, celebrate with loved ones, and be who they are proudly and without fear of harassment, discrimination, or violence,” said **Carmelyn P. Malalis, Chair and Commissioner of the NYC Commission on Human Rights**. “The alarming rate of anti-Semitic incidents in New York City — and the violent attacks in nearby communities like Jersey City, NJ and Monsey, NY— are unacceptable. The NYC Commission on Human Rights rejects anti-Semitism and we are committed to eradicating this bigotry wherever it exists. New York City is a city for all of us. Its strength lies in its diversity, in how we come together to celebrate and look out for one another.”



Full-page ads will appear in several Orthodox and Hasidic Jewish print outlets: Hamodia, Jewish Press, and Mishpacha. The Commission will also invest in paid digital placements in Jewish Week. The ads will also reach a broad audience on the Commission’s social media channels through paid posts.

Anti- Semitism has **no place** **in** **New York** **City.**

Religious harassment and discrimination is illegal **in housing, the workplace, and in all public places.** If someone harasses or discriminates against you based on your religion, report it to the Commission on Human Rights by calling 311. If you have been hurt or threatened with violence, report it to the NYPD or 911.

NYC Commission on
Human Rights
Carmelyn P. Malalis, Chair/Commissioner

“I applaud the NYC Commission on Human Rights for sending a strong message that acts of hate perpetrated against the Jewish community have no place in this great city,” said **Human**

Rights Commissioner Jonathan Greenspun. “New York City has a long and storied history of religious tolerance and acceptance and we thrive on our diverse backgrounds. We will never tolerate a climate where wearing a yarmulke in public makes anyone a target.”

The campaign reflects some of the diversity of Jewish New Yorkers and includes those who have faced the brunt of recent anti-Semitic attacks—Hasidic and Orthodox Jewish people. The images and copy affirm Jewish New Yorkers as an essential part of the fabric of New York City and invite non-Jewish New Yorkers to stand in solidarity against anti-Semitism and support their Jewish neighbors.

“An attack on one of us is an attack on all of us,” said **Human Rights Commissioner Sharon Kleinbaum, Senior Rabbi, Congregation Beit Simchat Torah.** “I am proud to stand with my fellow New Yorkers to condemn antisemitism, racism, homophobia, Islamophobia, sexism and all forms of bigotry. We choose love and solidarity with our fellow Jews and with our fellow human beings. We work for a world where all human beings are free to live as they wish, proud and unafraid. We thank the NYC Commission on Human Rights for their efforts against anti-Semitism, and we look forward to continued campaigns by the City and State of New York to ensure that the Big Apple is peaceful and hate-free.”

Following a wave of increased bias incidents in 2016, the Commission re-launched its Bias Response Team in December of that year. In the years since, the Commission has responded to an increasing number of bias incidents. These responses focus on building community solidarity and stability in the aftermath of a bias incident. Among other strategies, this work has included hosting visibility events and actions to highlight unity, canvassing neighborhoods and small businesses to educate the neighborhood about the NYC Human Rights Law, and partnering with sister City agencies, community-based organizations, faith groups, and elected officials to raise awareness about issues facing targeted communities. In the first six months of Fiscal Year 2020, the Commission has provided such responses to 18 anti-Semitic bias incidents, up 39% from 2019.

The advertising campaign continues the Commission’s long-standing commitment to combating anti-Semitism and religious-based harassment and discrimination. The Commission ran a similar campaign in 2017 called #IAMuslimNYC in support of Muslim New Yorkers facing violence, anti-Muslim religious discrimination, and bias incidents, escalated by anti-Muslim rhetoric and policies at the federal level.

The Commission has increased its presence and deepened its relationships with Jewish communities over the past several years. In 2017, recognizing anti-Semitism as a unique form of oppression and discrimination, the Commission hired a Jewish Communities Liaison. The Jewish Communities Liaison is tasked with establishing and cultivating the Commission’s relationships with Jewish organizations and community leaders. With the spread of anti-Semitic hate and violence across the City, the Jewish Communities Liaison is developing youth human rights curriculum to address anti-Semitism. The curriculum will examine the historical roots of anti-Semitism and its effects on Jewish people through the present day, as well as provide information to understand Jewish cultural and religious experiences. The program will also demonstrate how anti-Semitism connects to other forms of prejudice and violence against

other oppressed groups and offers historical examples of diverse communities working in coalition to address anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination. The Commission plans on offering this unique curriculum to young people in partner organizations and schools later this year.

In addition, after an uptick of anti-Semitic bias-based incidents throughout 2019, the Commission:

- Trained the Rego Park Parent Association of P.S. 139 in Queens on the NYC Human Rights Law after the school's playground was vandalized with anti-Semitic graffiti.
- Canvassed Borough Park, Brooklyn after Hasidic Jewish community members were being targeted and egged. The Commission distributed materials and educated community members about religious protections under the NYC Human Rights Law.
- Co-sponsored the One Crown Heights Neighborhood Festival aimed at fostering intergroup relations and understanding with partner City agencies, Jewish community groups, and elected officials including the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, the Crown Heights Community Council, and the Jewish Children's Museum.
- Hosted a bystander intervention training in response to a Jewish LGBTQI advocate facing anti-Semitic and homophobic harassment in a Manhattan subway station. The Commission organized the training with the Anti-Violence Project, the LGBT Center, Jews for Racial & Economic Justice, and Congregation Beit Simchat Torah.
- Organized New York City's 3rd annual Interfaith Seder for Immigrant and Refugee Justice. The 2019 Seder was held at Union Temple of Brooklyn with over 200 attendees and joined by dozens of co-sponsors including the NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, Arab American Family Support Center, Kolot Chayeinu, the Interfaith Center of New York, T'ruah, Sadhana, the New York Immigration Coalition, and Repair the World Brooklyn.
- Partnered with JCC Harlem, Kehillat Harlem, and Harlem Havruta to sponsor the 2nd annual community Sukkot celebration in Morningside Park.
- Spoke at Union Temple of Brooklyn, along with a dozen Jewish faith leaders, to honor the lives lost at the Tree of Life Synagogue 100 days after the tragedy.

In addition to sustained community engagement, since 2015, the Commission's Law Enforcement Bureau has filed 27 cases alleging anti-Semitic discrimination or harassment in housing, in the workplace, and in places of public accommodation.

If you have witnessed or experienced religious harassment or discrimination in New York City you can report the incident by calling 311 and asking for "Human Rights" or online at

NYC.gov/HumanRights. Commission staff speak over 30 languages and reports can be filed anonymously. If you have been hurt or threatened with violence, report it to the New York Police Department (NYPD) or call 911.

###

“At a time when there are so many efforts to divide us, New York City continues to stand united against hate and anti-semitism,” said **Bitta Mostofi, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs**. “Freedom of religion is a human right, and no one should ever feel afraid of retaliation for exercising that right and embracing their identity. I commend the NYC Commission on Human Rights for its advocacy for our Jewish communities and its unwavering commitment to ensuring the rights of all New Yorkers are protected.”

“The NYC Commission on Human Rights deserves our appreciation for acknowledging the sharp increase over the past few months and years in anti-Semitic hate crimes, particularly acts of violence against Orthodox and Hasidic Jews; and for taking concrete action designed to combat those crimes. In frightening times like these, it is reassuring to know that the governmental entity charged with protecting our most basic freedoms is focusing special attention on the cancer of Jew-hatred. Agudath Israel of America looks forward to working closely with the Commission as it implements its ambitious agenda in the weeks and months ahead.” – **Rabbi David Zwiebel, Executive Vice President, Agudath Israel of America**

“We are grateful to Mayor Bill de Blasio and the New York City Commission on Human Rights for working to identify and face this very real issue head-on. Working together with community leaders is the right approach for achieving success in this truly worthy campaign. The BPJCC is pleased to be able to serve as a partner in making sure all New Yorkers feel safe and at home.” – **Rabbi Avi Greenstein, CEO of the Boro Park Jewish Community Council**

“Jewish New Yorkers are frustrated that we continue to face increased antisemitic threats and violent attacks — no one should live in fear of proudly being who they are. Only by shining a light onto those who would use hate to divide our communities can we bring this wave of violence to an end. The NYC Commission on Human Rights is sending a strong message that our strength and our safety lie in our solidarity. By refusing to be divided, we can realize our vision of a city and a country where everyone experiences freedom, fairness, and belonging, no matter what we look like or where we come from.” – **Stosh Cotler, Chief Executive Officer, Bend the Arc: Jewish Action**

“Hate violence is rising in our city. Jewish, Muslim, Black and Brown, immigrant, and LGBTQ communities — all of us have a shared interest in defeating anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, racism, homophobia & transphobia, and all forms of identity-based violence. We need approaches that *prevent* violence through education and community-building, *interrupt* violence through community-based upstander/bystander trainings and rapid response at the local level, and *repair* damage through restorative justice, counseling, and peer-support. The NYC Against Hate coalition is proud to partner with the NYC Commission on

Human Rights in generating solutions that put our communities at the center.” – **Leo Ferguson, Movement Building Organizer, Jews for Racial & Economic Justice**

“T’ruah thanks the NYC Commission on Human Rights for their commitment to addressing antisemitism in New York. As an organization representing more than 2000 rabbis in the US and Canada, including more than 200 in the New York City area, we are alarmed by the increase in attacks on Jews and on synagogues. We stand with all New Yorkers committed to wiping out hatred in our city in working to ensure that this diverse city is a place that is safe for all of us, regardless of religion, ethnicity, race, national origin, gender or gender presentation, sexual orientation, or immigration status, and regardless of what we are wearing or where we pray.” – **Rabbi Jill Jacobs, Executive Director, T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights**

“It's very helpful when the City of New York demonstrates that it takes anti-Semitism, of all forms, seriously. An ad campaign can lead to tangible change and it also shows to the Jewish Community that they are not alone.” – **Yossi Gestetner, Co-Founder, Orthodox Jewish Public Affairs Council**

“We New Yorkers have been blessed with a mayor who is a living testament to what progressive tolerance should look like. It's not about what's currently fashionable to tolerate that drives him, it's absolute acceptance for all humans. I have watched him many times up close in the last twenty years and we New Yorkers have a real role model to follow. It is no surprise to me that under his leadership, the NYC Commission on Human Rights is doing unprecedented outreach and spending resources in local and ethnic media that are read in neighborhoods that suffered the brunt of recent anti-Semitic attacks. And needless to say, the Commission is working hard to combat hate in the city with all their new initiatives on how victims of hate can report incidents.” – **Alexander Rapaport, Executive Director, Masbia Soup Kitchen Network**

“It is really encouraging to see the Commission on Human Rights make this issue a priority. This effort makes a really strong statement that the City of New York stands with its Chasidic residents.” – **Rabbi Eli Cohen, Crown Heights Jewish Community Council**

“The entire Reform Movement is united against the antisemitic attacks that have taken place in and around New York City. It is essential that the government act to stop antisemitic violence, and I appreciate concrete steps being taken by NYC Commission on Human Rights to address this bigotry through public education. The Union for Reform Judaism is committed to building a world of justice and compassion, and that includes a New York City in which all people are free to live without fear. This new campaign will help move us in that direction.” – **Rabbi Rick Jacobs, President of the Union for Reform Judaism**

“We have become accustomed to saying ‘Never Again’ as we mark the 75th anniversary of the Soviet Union’s liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp in Poland. But anti-Semitism is an old and perverse hatred that unfortunately is on the march once again and it must be directly faced with more than words; it must be faced with a unified determination and the measures necessary to eradicate it.” – **Rabbi Mendy Mirocznik, President of the Council of Jewish Organizations of Staten Island**

“Keshet stands with Commissioner Malalis and her team in their efforts to not only eradicate antisemitism, racism, transphobia, homophobia, anti-Muslim bigotry, sexism, ableism, and all forms of unlawful discrimination, but to engage meaningfully with the diversity of Jewish communities in NYC. The Commission's multi-pronged strategy -- to combat bias, celebrate communities, and build trust - is a model for our nation.” – **Seth M. Marnin, Board Chair of Keshet**

“The rise in antisemitic violence and intolerance in our city threatens us all. I commend the New York City Commission on Human Rights campaign in support for and solidarity with Jewish New Yorkers. As Jews, we know that our safety is interconnected with the safety of all New Yorkers, and we call upon all New Yorkers to stand up against antisemitism as we must stand together against racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and all other forms of hate and violence that plague our city. This is how we will be safer, together.” – **Rabbi Rachel Timoner, Senior Rabbi, Congregation Beth Elohim, Brooklyn**

“Following the recent increase in antisemitic attacks and incidents in New York, education and community outreach are more important than ever. I am pleased that the City of New York is taking steps to ensure the Jewish community feels safe and supported, and to reinforce the fact that every sect of Jewish belief is an important part of the city’s diverse fabric.” – **Rabbi Joy Levitt, Executive Director, Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan.**

“I stand in solidarity with my Jewish brothers and sisters against all forms of hate and anti-Semitism. In light of the recent hate-filled incidents targeting the Jewish community, I am thankful for the New York City Commission on Human Rights initiative to educate the public toward respect and affirmation of all of humanity. This campaign is the embodiment of Dr. King's words that "darkness does not drive out darkness, only light can do that." I hope that the light of education in this campaign will drive out the rising hate and anti-Semitism within our community.” – **Rev. Charles O. Galbreath, Senior Pastor of Clarendon Road Church**

“I am proud to stand with the NYC Commission on Human Rights in their efforts to combat anti-Semitism and bigotry. Every citizen has the right to practice their religion without living in fear of scrutiny, discrimination, or violence. We must protect New York’s minority communities from hateful attacks and eradicate all forms of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, and racism that perpetuate oppression in New York City.” – **Human Rights Commissioner Faiza Patel, Co-Director of the Brennan Center’s Liberty and National Security Program**

“I applaud the NYC Commission on Human Rights for launching this campaign to address anti-Semitism and promote support for Jewish communities. My hope is that other cities in our nation will replicate this important initiative that reminds us to treat all with dignity and respect. We are better together.” – **Human Rights Commissioner Guillermo Chacón, President of the Latino Commission on AIDS and Founder of the Hispanic Health Network**

“As the rising tide of national violence has made abundantly clear, we are a nation and city that continues to struggle with its past – with our deep-seated fears and biases against people who are Jewish, immigrants, the ancestors of slaves, Islamic people, LGBTQ+ people, people of color, women, and more. Our failure to address these abuses has left us acutely vulnerable when these concerns are repeatedly and brutishly unearthed. But anger, anguish, and sadness has not, is not,

and will not, be enough. Solutions cannot be found in increased policing or in stronger hate crimes laws. These too often preserve a culture that remains steeped in oppression and violence. While so many of us are being assaulted, erased, and reconfigured, we cannot hope to facilitate authentic change predicated on punishment. In response, the Commission on Human Rights has instead taken a step toward healing by naming the power and inequity of these relationships and supporting insight and growth rather than punishment. This is the authentic spirit of our New York City.” – **Human Rights Commissioner Carrie Davis, Healthcare and Management Consultant**

“Anti-Semitism impacts Americans of all backgrounds. I recently joined thousands of New Yorkers marching against anti-Semitism. Truly, together united - we can fight hateful bigotry. We've witnessed how destructive and divisive hate, racism or religious and ethnic bigotry has been in our own American past. Our present and our future must vigorously embrace diversity and inclusion principals for all people living in our country. I join my sisters and brothers in taking a stand against anti-Semitism.” – **Human Rights Commissioner Rockwell Chin, Esq.**

“The NYC Commission of Human Rights stands with Jewish New Yorkers and their allies in defending New Yorkers from acts of anti-Semitism, not only in denouncement of hate crimes but in bringing leaders to the tables, both Jewish and Gentile, to develop the strategies that will prevent anti-Semitic acts and foster a community of mutual respect and safety, in our schools, houses of worship and neighborhoods. Let us continue to stand with each other, so that no one will fall.” – **Human Rights Commissioner Reverend Terry Troia, President and CEO of Project Hospitality**