

**\*\*\*MEDIA ADVISORY\*\*\***

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**AMID JAIL CRISIS, CITY AND STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS TO VISIT RIKERS ISLAND,  
DEMAND IMMEDIATE DECARCERATION**

*FOLLOWING A SPATE OF DEATHS CAUSED BY UNSAFE AND ILLEGAL CONDITIONS,  
OFFICIALS TO DEMAND REDUCED JAIL POPULATION*

**NEW YORK**— A contingent of 11 elected officials will visit Rikers Island on Monday, September 13 at 9 AM. Following their visit, they will hold a press conference to discuss the illegal and unsafe conditions in the jail, and call on the city and State governments to use every tool at their disposal to immediately release people from the extreme and dangerous conditions at Rikers. The press conference is scheduled for **Monday, September 13 at 1 PM** and will be held just outside Rikers Island, on the corner of 19th Avenue and Hazen Street in Queens. The elected officials will be joined by public defenders and Min. Dr. Victoria Phillips of the Jails Action Coalition.

**When:**

- Jail visit (b-roll opportunity only): Monday, September 13th at 9 AM
- Press conference: Monday, September 13th at 1 PM

**Where:**

- Jail visit (b-roll opportunity only): Elected officials will gather at the Rikers Island parking lot on Hazen Street before the bridge to Rikers, where they will announce their visit to Correction Officers
- Press conference: On the corner of 19th Avenue and Hazen Street in Queens (by the Rikers sign)

**Who:** Speakers at the press conference include:

- **Senator Alessandra Biaggi**, Senate District 34
- **Senator Jabari Brisport**, Senate District 25
- **Senator Jessica Ramos**, Senate District 13
- **Senator Julia Salazar**, Senate District 18
- **Assemblymember Kenny Burgos**, Assembly District 85
- **Assemblymember Emily Gallagher**, Assembly District 50
- **Assemblymember Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas**, Assembly District 34
- **Assemblymember Zohran Mamdani**, Assembly District 36
- **Assemblymember Marcela Mitaynes**, Assembly District 51
- **Assemblymember Amanda Septimo**, Assembly District 84
- **Assemblymember Phara Souffrant Forrest**, Assembly District 57
- **Tiffany Cabán**, Democratic Nominee, City Council District 22
- **Alice Fontier**, Managing Director, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem
- **Min. Dr. Victoria Phillips**, Jails Action Coalition

**What:** The conditions on Rikers Island are dangerous and illegal, and releasing people from the jails to alleviate the stress on a deeply flawed and inhumane system is a matter of life and death. The jail itself is dangerously overcrowded, with a population that has surged to more than 6,000 people, above pre-pandemic levels.

The deadly Delta variant continues to threaten the lives of incarcerated New Yorkers, a threat exacerbated by the failure of DOC staff to ensure people have access to basic human needs. Their refusal has left incarcerated people without adequate food, medical attention, or access to other basic services that the City is legally and ethically required to provide. Clients are missing court appearances, being denied access to counsel, being denied any chance to go outside for recreation for months on end, and being subjected to a broken and inhumane intake process: rather than being processed and housed within hours, newly incarcerated people are caught in a limbo, held in squalid conditions in intake for weeks on end.

These violations are manifesting in unimaginable suffering and a wave of deaths on Rikers. Nine people have died in DOC custody this year, and three on Rikers in the past month, with self-harm [reaching](#) an alarming rate of 95 incidents per 1,000 people.

The elected officials are visiting Rikers Island to witness these conditions first-hand and to call for immediate decarceration. These demands include:

- Calling on prosecutors and judges to use their discretion to both reduce the number of people sent to jail and release people currently held in the city jails, including a drastic reduction in and elimination of cash bail.
- Calling on the Mayor to use his authority under Correction Law Article 6-A to grant work release to people serving sentences in city jails, just as he did at the onset of the pandemic.
- Calling on the Mayor to take all available measures to address the staff absenteeism, and alleviate the staffing crisis principally by reducing the number of incarcerated people, thereby reducing need.
- Calling on the Governor to sign the Less is More Act, which would drastically reduce the number of people held in jails and prisons by reforming New York's punitive parole system.

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