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**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\***

***On the One-Year Anniversary of Collapsed Bronx Building, Legal Aid  
Calls on Landlords to Expedite Reconstruction***

***While Legal Aid Attorneys Have Secured Critical Repairs for Most  
Tenants To Move Back In, Families from the Six Collapsed Units  
Remain Displaced***

**(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society** calls on the landlords of 1915 Billingsley Terrace – the Bronx building that partially collapsed one year ago on December 11, 2023 – to expedite the reconstruction of the collapsed section of the building and restore units to their original layouts and square footage so that all displaced families can return to their homes.

The Legal Aid Society’s Housing Justice Unit-Group Advocacy team, with the support of NYC Council Member Pierina Sanchez, has secured critical repairs necessary to move almost all tenants back into their homes. However, many repairs remain outstanding and the six rent-stabilized units destroyed in the collapse have yet to be rebuilt. It is critical that landlords David Kleiner, Yonah Roth, and Binyomin Herzl take immediate action to complete the repairs and restore these units, in compliance with a Court Order secured by Legal Aid.

The Court Order required the landlords to rebuild the units – which are currently uninhabitable and missing an entire corner, at least one whole room per unit – by May 30, 2024. When the landlords failed to do so, Legal Aid filed a Contempt Motion to enforce the Court Order. Now, the landlords have obtained all necessary permits, yet construction on the collapsed apartments continues to be stalled.

Last month, the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) released a [report](#) that confirmed that the collapse at 1915 Billingsley Terrace was caused primarily by the reckless actions of the engineer of record and the general contractor.

“It is unacceptable that the collapsed apartments remain uninhabitable one year after this entirely preventable calamity, and that the tenants who reside in these units are forced to live in temporary housing where family members are crammed inside,” said **Zoe Kheyman, Staff Attorney in the Housing Justice Unit – Group Advocacy Practice at The Legal Aid Society**. “The landlords and the City must take immediate action to expedite the reconstruction of these homes so the families can finally return home and move on with their lives.”

“New York City is in a housing crisis. If you lose your apartment today, you won’t find another one tomorrow. Nowhere is that more salient than at 1915 Billingsley, where today marks the one year anniversary of the displacement of over 170 people following a partial building collapse,” said **NYC Council Member Pierina Sanchez**. “Even as we have worked to stabilize over 50 families, passed Int. 904 to move the City from a reactive approach to a proactive one, and secured millions to increase Department of Buildings’ inspectorial capacity, families have still struggled to find permanent homes. I thank and applaud Legal Aid Society for their fight on behalf of these tenants and urge the owners to comply with the judge’s order to correct and rebuild the collapsed units of this property.”

Moreover, the City should prioritize the restoration of these rent-regulated apartments given how New York City’s rent-stabilized housing stock continues to [decline each year](#), leaving more individuals and families without viable housing options amid [historically high](#) market-rate rent prices.

### **Background:**

On February 5, 2024, The Legal Aid Society filed a [lawsuit](#) against the landlords of 1915 Billingsley Terrace seeking immediate repairs to over 144 housing violations, more than half of which were classified as hazardous. The litigation also sought to lift a partial vacate order to allow displaced tenants to return to their homes, force the landlords to rebuild the collapsed section of the building, and restore units to their original layouts and square footage.

The Respondents in the lawsuit are landlords David Kleiner, Yonah Roth, 1915 Realty LLC, and Binyomin Herzl. The lawsuit also names the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB), the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH).

The dangerous conditions included an outage of cooking gas to the entire building, harmful construction dust in common areas, an overall lack of janitorial services in the building, and infestations of cockroaches, rats, and mice in common areas and inside individual apartments.

Moreover, the landlords engaged in blatantly illegal behavior that harassed and endangered the tenants by forcing them to sign agreements stipulating that the conditions in their apartments were fully repaired, despite the deplorable conditions, in exchange for receiving the keys to their apartments.

The landlords also failed to provide adequate security for the building. Despite the vacated units allegedly having been secured by the landlord, when the tenants returned to their apartments, they found that looters had gained access to the units and had robbed tenants' personal belongings. The tenants reported the looting directly to the landlord and filed police reports.

The Legal Aid Society obtained an Order to Correct, issued by the Bronx Housing Court, that requires the repairs of individual apartment conditions, as well as common area conditions in the building. The landlords have corrected some of the conditions but many still remain. The Order to Correct also requires the owners to repair and reconstruct the collapsed section of the building. This also remains undone.

While The Legal Aid Society was able to assist almost all of the tenants affected by the vacate order relocate from NYC shelters into temporary apartments, they remain displaced from their permanent homes. The case is currently pending before the Bronx Housing Court, where the owner is required to provide periodic updates on the status of the reconstruction.

Prior to the partial collapse in December 2023, the landlords were on notice since at least 2014 that the façade of the building was “unsafe” and in violation of the law. A DOB filing described “cracked brick, vertical cracks at sills and water tables, loose and damaged mortar, a slightly bowed section of parapet and cracks at the parapet interior.”

The work of The Legal Aid Society's Citywide Housing Justice Unit – Group Advocacy is supported by the City's Human Resource Administration (HRA).

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*The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For nearly 150 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. [www.legalaidnyc.org](http://www.legalaidnyc.org)*