

Beat: News

## New York City Youth Rally for Human Rights and Demand Change

### United for Upcoming Human Rights Day

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Source: UN News

Hundreds of passionate and innovative teenagers from New York schools gathered at the United Nations Headquarters on Wednesday to address pressing human rights issues. The event, organized by the UN human rights office (OHCHR) and the New York City Mayor's Office, served as a call to action for youth ahead of the 75th anniversary of Human Rights Day on Sunday.

Ilze Brands Kehris, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, emphasized the importance of youth involvement in effecting positive change. She recognized that in today's polarized world, the creativity and energy of young people are essential for driving meaningful transformations. Kehris told the more than 500 students in attendance, "You're not only the leaders of tomorrow, you're the leaders of today."

During the event, students showcased their research findings, shedding light on the challenges posed by inadequate funding for mental health programs, lack of diversity in education, systematic racism, and the specific difficulties faced by homeless youth. To amplify their message, students from the non-profit People's Theatre Project delivered a powerful performance titled "Take it Seriously," portraying the impact of mental health stressors on high school students, including pressures from peers, family, and media.

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One student highlighted the insufficiency of funding for mental health support services in schools, while another drew attention to the detriment of systematic racism on young students. The discussions also addressed rising fees for public schools and the denial of access to drop-in homeless shelters for overnight stays. One student passionately stated, "Children shouldn't have to change for the system. The system should change for them."

The event culminated in a powerful moment of collective condemnation, as 500 students shouted "Shame" to denounce collective punishment, state-sanctioned violence, and silence. This unified call for change resonated with the audience, eliciting cheers and applause.

Annabel Palma, Chair and Commissioner of the NYC Commission on Human Rights, emphasized the significance of this milestone commemoration and the event's role in amplifying diverse voices. As a lifelong resident of the Bronx, Palma believes that by giving their best to each other and to the city, New Yorkers can work together to build a stronger and more inclusive community.

The event served as a timely precursor to Human Rights Day on 10 December, providing a platform for young people to express their concerns and demand action. As the world commemorates the 75th anniversary of Human Rights Day, the voices of these New York City youth are a reminder that the fight for human rights is ongoing and requires the engagement of all generations.

\*This article is based on a UN Press release citing UN News as the source.\*

Source: [UN News](<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/12/1144482>)

**Article online:**

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-23912/new-york-city-youth-rally-for-human-rights-and-demand-change.html>

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