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Anti-Asian Hate Crimes In The Age of Coronavirus

By Dean Meminger Manhattan

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The videos have been posted on social media, people from the Asian community attacked, harassed, and blamed for the Coronavirus.

New York Attorney General Letitia James says, enough already.

"This pandemic will not give anyone an excuse to be a racist or xenophobic or bias or attack any individual based on their ethnicity or race. It will not be tolerated in New York State," said James.

James has started a hotline to combat Coronavirus Hate Crimes. She encourages Asian Americans to call up if they've been attacked or discriminated against.

"We have heard reports of an Asian woman in Brooklyn being told go back to China, get your temperature checked, you need to leave and then she was robbed. We've heard reports of an Asian man in Queens who was harassed by an individual that yelled 'where's your mask,'" said James.

James says she will bring civil charges against anyone committing discrimination and she'll ask local district attorneys to bring criminal charges when appropriate.

The NYPD says so far it doesn't have any confirmed hate crime complaints from the Asian community, but investigations are ongoing.

Queens State Senator John Liu says his office has received complaints from constituents. He blames President Trump in part.

"I will say that the so-called president certainly doesn't help things when he repeatedly and intentionally characterizes COVID-19 as the Chinese virus," said Liu.

Thursday evening, President Trump said he stands with the Asian American community but added, "I talk about the Chinese virus and I mean it. That's where it came from," said Trump.

Liu says people in his community are afraid, but they still need to go to work and shop.

"Continue to do so but with increased vigilance be aware of what's going on around you, who's around. If possible go with somebody else in your family," said Liu.

Although Attorney General James is encouraging the Asian American community to reach out for help, she says anyone can call the hotline.

"We also heard of an incident involving a car dealer where a car dealer would not service a member of the Jewish community, again blaming them for the coronavirus," said James.

The Attorney General's Hate Crimes Hotline is 1-800-771-7755.

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