

CORONAVIRUS

## NY attorney general launches hotline for people to report discrimination related to coronavirus

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— "No one should live in fear for their life because of who they are, what they look like, or where they come from," said New York Attorney General Letitia James, pictured last year, Spencer Platt / Getty Images file

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**By Natasha Roy**

New York State Attorney General Letitia James has launched a hotline for New Yorkers to report hate crimes and discrimination amid rising reports of anti-Asian harassment amid the coronavirus outbreak.

James' office said in a statement that the hotline, which started March 23 and will continue indefinitely, will help provide resources to victims and could lead to civil investigations. Local law enforcement is ultimately responsible for any criminal prosecution.

"No one should live in fear for their life because of who they are, what they look like, or where they come from," James said in a statement.

Asians across the globe have reported experiencing xenophobia as a result of coronavirus fears, with several incidents [involving physical harassment](#). [President Donald Trump](#) and other Republicans have referred to the coronavirus as the "Wuhan virus" or "Chinese virus," saying that it's not racist to do so since that's where the outbreak started. But experts say such remarks could be fueling real-life acts of discrimination.

John C. Yang, president and executive director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC, told NBC Asian America in the past that Trump's repeated use of the phrase could have a dangerous impact.

"I absolutely think that words used by him matter," he said. "Certainly use of this term by him and others even in the last couple of weeks have led to a noticeable incline in hate incidents that we are seeing. I do think that there is a correlation."

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New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo have [both denounced hate against Asian Americans](#). De Blasio said the harassment is “unacceptable,” and Cuomo said he was “disgusted” by the reports.

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Last week, the California-based Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council and the Chinese for Affirmative Action also [launched an online reporting center](#) for Asians to disclose instances of bias and hate, with the hope of providing victims with legal assistance and connecting them to resources such as school districts and law enforcement.

New Yorkers looking to report hate crimes and bias incidents can email the Attorney General’s Civil Rights Bureau or call 1-800-771-7755. 

— Natasha Roy



Natasha Roy is an intern with NBC News Digital.

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