

BIOGRAPHY

KASARI GOVENDER

Meet the Commissioner

Kasari Govender took office as B.C.'s first independent Human Rights Commissioner on September 3, 2019. Her role is to lead the promotion and protection of human rights in British Columbia through the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner.

Govender has devoted her life to promoting human rights, with a focus on the rights of those most marginalized and vulnerable. She is passionate about using her skills as a lawyer and community builder to create a more equal and just B.C. She has worked closely with organizations and communities promoting gender equality, Indigenous rights, children's rights, the rights of people with disabilities and the rights of migrant communities.

From 2008 until 2019, Govender held leadership positions at West Coast LEAF, including as Executive Director from 2011. She has co-authored a number of key reports and articles, and speaks widely on issues such as violence against women, access to justice, balancing human rights and regulating hate speech. Earlier work includes pivotal roles in establishing the Rise Women's Legal Centre, a non-profit legal clinic in British Columbia.

Govender earned her law degree from the University of Victoria and her Master's Degree in International Human Rights Law from the University of Oxford, U.K. She was a member of the board of the University of Victoria, Pivot Legal Society, the Coalition for Public Legal Services, and the Society for Children and Youth. She has taught as an Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of British Columbia and as an instructor at Simon Fraser University. In 2019, her work was recognized by the Women Lawyer's Forum with their Award of Excellence.

In addition to her role as Human Rights Commissioner, Govender is a mother, an aunt, a daughter and a sister.