

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2026
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ADVISORY: Media invited to Commissioner's live discussion on press freedom, ft. UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression – June 2

Vancouver B.C. – B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner is hosting the fifth livestreamed conversation in the [Beyond the Headlines](#) series, which will cover a human rights issue that is increasingly in jeopardy for people across B.C., Canada and the world: press freedom and democracy.

On June 2, Commissioner Kasari Govender will sit down with United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression Irene Kahn for a conversation on the role of press freedom, freedom of expression and our right to access information as it relates to our democracy and human rights in British Columbia.

Media and public are invited to watch the 90-minute discussion via Zoom or livestreamed on the Commissioner's website beginning at 10 a.m. PDT. Those who register and join the Zoom webinar will be able to ask questions during the event that may be answered live.

Following the release of the Commissioner's Report of the Inquiry into the exclusion of media from the April 2023 Hastings decampment, called [Un\(media\)ted](#), this discussion will address how a free press is essential to ensuring we have a shared understanding of facts and experiences that allows us to make informed political decisions. In this timely and important conversation, the Special Rapporteur and Commissioner will also discuss the right to reliable information and freedom of expression in the context of the digital age of information.

- WHO:** Kasari Govender, B.C.'s independent Human Rights Commissioner
Irene Kahn, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression
- WHAT:** Beyond the headlines: A conversation on press freedom, the rights to information and expression, and democracy
- WHEN:** Tuesday, June 2, 2026
10 a.m.–11:30 a.m. PDT
- WHERE:** Via a Zoom webinar and streaming live via bchumanrights.ca/beyond-the-headlines
- REGISTER:** To register for the Zoom webinar, visit: [webinar registration](#)

Beyond the Headlines resources

[Beyond the Headlines](#) is a series of conversations with leaders and changemakers about key issues facing people in British Columbia. Watch the first four Beyond the Headlines episodes:

- [The toxic drug crisis](#) with Lisa Lapointe and Jonny Morris
- [Housing and Human Rights](#) with Marie-Josée Houle, Federal Housing Advocate
- [Migrant Workers' Rights](#) with Ketty Nivyabandi, Secretary General for Amnesty International Canada's English-Speaking section

- [Gender identity and expression](#) with Jessica Love, author and illustrator of *Julián is a Mermaid*, and Georgia Franklin, Provincial Coordinator of the BC Summer Reading Club

[Un\(media\)ted: Report of the Inquiry into the exclusion of media during the April 2023 Hastings decampment](#)

Media contact

For more information or to request an interview with Commissioner Kasari Govender, please contact media@bchumanrights.ca or 604-306-7369.

Media kit

[Visit our media kit](#) for images of Commissioner Kasari Govender, pronunciation guidance, bios and more.

About BCOHRC

BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner exists to address the root causes of inequality, [discrimination](#) and injustice in B.C. by shifting laws, policies, practices and cultures. We do this work through education, research, advocacy, inquiry and monitoring. Learn more at: bchumanrights.ca

About the Commissioner

Kasari Govender began her work as B.C.'s first independent human rights commissioner in September 2019. As an independent officer of the Legislature, Commissioner Govender is uniquely positioned to ensure human rights in B.C. are protected, respected and advanced on a systemic level. Her work through BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner has included public inquiries into experiences of hate in the [pandemic](#) and detentions under the *Adult Guardianship Act*, a report on systemic discrimination in policing, community embedded research about a range of human rights issues experienced by people living in British Columbia, public awareness campaigns about [ableism](#) and [racism](#) and guidance to government that, among other things, informed the creation of both the *Anti-Racism Data Act* and the *Anti-Racism Act*. Commissioner Govender was reappointed for a second term beginning in September 2024.

About Irene Kahn

Irene Khan was appointed as [UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression](#) in June 2020 and is the first woman to hold this mandate. An internationally recognized advocate for human rights, gender equality and social justice, she was Secretary-General of Amnesty International from 2001 to 2009 and Director-General of the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) from 2010 to 2019. Ms. Khan is affiliated with the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, and has been Consulting Editor of the Daily Star, Bangladesh's largest English newspaper.

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