

**MAABO:** Good morning. My name is Maabo Tsheko and this is my colleague Cameron MacKay. Thank you for this opportunity to testify regarding adolescents in New York jails. We are here on behalf the Juvenile Justice Project of CUNY School of Law's International Women's Human Rights Clinic. This project collaborates with legal, academic, and community-based organizations throughout the U.S., encouraging compliance with human rights laws and standards for youth.

Along with the many New York City community organizations working for rights and dignity for youth, IWHR believes that minimizing or phasing out the use of imprisonment and jails and increasing available educational and developmental services will best serve young people. Additionally, this would increase New York's adherence to widely accepted international human rights standards regarding youth in conflict with the law. We will briefly highlight some of these standards now, and more detail can be found in our written submission.

First and foremost we wish to emphasize that the guiding principle under international human rights standards, is that confinement should be used only as a last resort and for the minimum period possible. Rehabilitation, restorative justice, and social reintegration should remain central in the administration of juvenile justice. Repression and retribution have no place.

**Cameron:** International standards make clear that youth under 18 should never be treated as adults in administration of justice nor in detention, and that they should be held separately from adults. In addition, international and regional human rights bodies encourage governments to apply juvenile justice rules and regulations to persons aged 18 up to at least 21.

When youth are deprived of their liberty, under human rights standards, conditions of confinement must serve their unique developmental needs. Age appropriate special protections, such as specialized staff and facilities, should ensure their rights to fulfilling education, recreation, nutrition appropriate for growing adolescents, full physical and mental health care, and to life and physical integrity. These protections prohibit the use of violence and of solitary confinement, and call on governments to facilitate access to justice for detained people who suffer abuses.

We recommend the city of New York meet or exceed minimum human rights standards with regard to youth in conflict with the law, including by ending reliance on incarceration; by expanding community-based, social program alternatives to incarceration; by improving access to education, programming,

recreation and physical and mental health care for all detained youth; by ensuring full abolition of solitary confinement; by facilitating youths' access to justice for abuses committed against them; and by expanding access to youth-oriented programming and policies for 18 to 21 year-olds in conflict with law.

Again, you will find more detailed information in our written testimony.

Thank you.