

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

City and County of San Francisco

Daniel Lurie, Mayor

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

March 26, 2026, 5:00 PM

San Francisco City Hall, Room 416

1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place

San Francisco, CA 94102

COMMISSIONERS

Hasib Emran, Chair

Leah Pimentel, Vice Chair

Eric Chang, Commissioner

Mark Kelleher, Commissioner

Monroe Lace, Commissioner

Sarah Montoya, Commissioner

Irene Yee Riley, Commissioner

Amerika Sanchez, Commissioner

Robert Sandoval, Commissioner

Michael Sweet, Commissioner

Rosie Williams, Commissioner

Mawuli Tugbenyoh

Executive Director, San Francisco Human Rights Commission

Human Rights Commission Final Meeting Minutes – March 26, 2026

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF COMMISSIONERS

Chair Hasib Emran called the meeting to order at approximately 5:04 PM.

Commission Secretary Lepe conducted roll call and confirmed a quorum.

Roll Call:

Secretary Lepe conducted roll call.

Present:

1. Hasib Emran
2. Eric Chang
3. Monroe Lace
4. Irene Yee Riley
5. America Sanchez
6. Robert Sandoval
7. Rosie Williams (Arrived 5:14)

Absent:

1. Leah Pimentel
2. Mark Kelleher
3. Sarah Montoya
4. Michael Sweet

Quorum: Secretary Lepe confirmed that a quorum was established, and the meeting proceeded.

Land Acknowledgment:

Commissioner Sandoval delivered the Ramaytush Ohlone Land Acknowledgment, recognizing the Ramaytush Ohlone as the original and continuing stewards of the San Francisco Peninsula, and affirming respect for their ancestors, elders, descendants, and ongoing sovereignty.

Announcements:

Commission Secretary Lepe announced meeting location and procedures, including that public comment would be taken on each agenda item, speakers are allotted up to three minutes, remote public comment is no longer accepted, and written comments may be emailed to hrc.commission@sfgov.org at least 24 hours in advance.

2. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT (Discussion Item)

No members of the public spoke during general public comment.

Public comment was closed.

3. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 12, 2026 MEETING (Discussion and Possible Action Item)

Chair Emran opened the item for public comment on the March 12, 2026 meeting minutes.

No members of the public spoke.

Public comment was closed.

Chair Emran asked whether commissioners had any edits or revisions to the minutes and, seeing none, moved to action.

Commissioner Robert Sandoval moved to adopt the March 12, 2026 meeting minutes.

Commissioner Amerika Sanchez seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. INCARCERATED DEMOGRAPHICS REPORT (Discussion Item)

Chair Emran introduced the item and said the Commission has a responsibility to examine the civil and human rights of people in custody, review data about who is in the jail system, and assess conditions, services, and accountability.

Katherine Johnson, Undersheriff, San Francisco Sheriff's Office, presented an overview of jail operations, infrastructure history, and incarcerated population demographics.

Katherine Johnson explained that San Francisco currently operates two housing jails, described the rehabilitation and reopening of the annex dormitory facility, and said the Sheriff's Office had to expand capacity after the City declined state funding for a replacement jail in 2015.

Katherine Johnson said the Sheriff's Office conducts security and strip searches to protect life and maintain safety for incarcerated people, staff, visitors, and volunteers, while also preserving programming that supports family connection.

Katherine Johnson reported that on the June 17, 2025 census date, the most common charges among the jail population were murder and attempted murder, while only a very small number of people were incarcerated solely for misdemeanor drug offenses.

Katherine Johnson stated that 97 percent of the jail population was charged with felony offenses, 92 percent were male, 40 percent were San Francisco residents, 36 percent were ages 25 to 34, and 41 percent were Black.

Katherine Johnson said that 80 percent of incarcerated people had more than one booking and that nearly 31 percent had been booked ten or more times, demonstrating repeated contact with the jail system.

Katherine Johnson explained that the Sheriff's Office offers family, educational, vocational, behavioral health, faith-based, and reentry programming, and said program participation had increased significantly from 2023 to 2025.

Katherine Johnson described changes made to women's housing, including separating women into two housing units to improve programming access and conditions, and noted that women-specific and TGM-inclusive services include resiliency, seeking safety, and therapy dog programming.

Chair Emran opened the item for public comment.

No members of the public spoke.

Public comment was closed.

Commissioner Williams thanked Katherine Johnson and the Sheriff's Office for hosting commissioners during a jail visit, praised the compassion and care shown to the Commission, and asked for more information about the length of time people remain in the jail system.

Katherine Johnson said length of stay is largely determined by court proceedings and charging decisions rather than by the Sheriff's Office and offered to provide the Commission with the most recent quarterly reports.

Commissioner Williams said commissioners heard from women in custody about very long stays in jail and expressed interest in working with the Sheriff's Office and other agencies to help move cases faster.

Katherine Johnson responded that long stays are generally tied to the seriousness of the offense, especially serious and violent charges.

Commissioner Riley asked why the City and County refused the 2015 state grant for a new jail facility.

Katherine Johnson said the project required a matching county contribution and was intended to create a more humane facility with stronger mental health and substance use treatment capacity, but she could not speak to the exact reasons the Board declined to accept and expend the funds.

Commissioner Sanchez asked for clarification about the reassignment of women's housing units and whether women with mental health or intake needs had been moved elsewhere.

Katherine Johnson explained that all women remained at 425 7th Street, with one unit designated for intake, administrative separation, and women with mental health needs, and another unit designated for general population women and women's programming.

Commissioner Sanchez said the prior arrangement had made programming difficult and underscored the importance of separating the women's units.

Commissioner Williams asked what programs are uniquely available to women and requested a walkthrough of what happens when someone enters and exits jail.

Katherine Johnson said women-specific programming includes women's health, parenting classes, trauma-informed support, seeking safety, and therapy dog services.

Katherine Johnson explained that the intake process includes search, medical triage, booking, classification, and housing assignment, while release includes identity verification, return of clothing, checking for warrants, and transportation assistance during nighttime hours when needed.

Chair Emran asked how reentry planning works for people from outside San Francisco and how the Sheriff's Office prevents rival gang members from interacting.

Katherine Johnson said residency does not affect access to programming or services, that housing and reentry planning are based on individual need, and that classification tools and keep-separate designations are used to keep rival gang members apart in housing and transport.

Chair Emran also asked about safeguards for incarcerated people who fear retaliation for filing grievances.

Katherine Johnson said retaliation complaints are now directed to Internal Affairs and forwarded to the Department of Police Accountability for independent investigation under the Sheriff's existing agreement.

Commissioner Sanchez asked how a person could file a complaint after being released.

Katherine Johnson said formerly incarcerated individuals may contact the Department of Police Accountability directly and noted that the Sheriff's Office is updating written materials and videos to explain complaint procedures.

Commissioner Williams observed that the Human Rights Commission's phone number appears in the orientation materials and asked what other opportunities existed for incarcerated people to contact the Commission.

Katherine Johnson said the Sheriff's Office was willing to include additional Human Rights Commission contact information through orientation materials, videos, signs, and tablet messaging.

Commissioner Williams requested a future hearing with the court system and the Sheriff's Office regarding long jail stays, especially for women.

Katherine Johnson agreed to provide additional data, including data specific to women, and said the Sheriff's Office would be willing to participate in a future hearing.

Commissioner Riley asked whether San Francisco bears incarceration costs for people whose primary residence is outside the City.

Katherine Johnson explained that people charged in San Francisco are housed in San Francisco while their matters are adjudicated here, regardless of where they live.

Chair Emran thanked Katherine Johnson and closed the item.

5. FROM RECOGNITION TO IMPACT: AFGHAN-AMERICAN VOICES FOR EQUITY, ACCESS, AND INCLUSIVITY (Discussion Item)

Chair Emran recognized Nowruz and the first Afghan-American Heritage Month in California, described the significance of the moment for Afghan-American communities, and said the item was intended to move from recognition to impact.

Zuhal Bahaduri, Executive Director of 5 Pillars Organization, described the organization's refugee resettlement work in the Bay Area and Northern California and said it has supported more than 5,000 families through culturally responsive services, wellness-centered programs, education, and digital access.

Zuhal Bahaduri said the recognition of Afghan-American Heritage Month was the result of years of community advocacy at the local and state levels and emphasized that community organizations help families navigate systems and rebuild their lives with dignity.

Arash Azizzada, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Afghans for a Better Tomorrow, said his organization was created in response to the 2021 evacuation crisis and now focuses on advocacy, capacity building, and direct services for newly arrived Afghans.

Arash Azzada said Afghan-American Heritage Month reflects the community's civic, political, business, and cultural contributions across California and thanked the Commission for creating space to recognize that impact.

Mustafa Babak, Co-Founder and Executive Director of The Afghan-American Foundation, said the Foundation works to ensure Afghan-Americans are supported, seen, heard, and represented through policy advocacy, cultural preservation, and public education.

Mustafa Babak said the Foundation's work includes immigration advocacy, economic inclusion, employer cultural competency training, and efforts to build the civic and narrative infrastructure needed for Afghan-Americans to move from invisibility to participation and influence.

Omar Aziz, speaking on behalf of the Afghan-American Community Organization, said the organization was founded in the Bay Area in 2015 and now focuses on academic and professional development, community building and advocacy, humanitarian work in Afghanistan, and legal education and outreach.

Omar Aziz said Afghan-American families are facing significant legal and immigration challenges and that AACO provides scholarships, conferences, rights education, and legal outreach to support families during a difficult period.

Secretary Lepe facilitated the remote presentations, helped troubleshoot remote access, and displayed Omar Aziz's presentation slides.

Joseph Azam was listed on the agenda but did not speak during the meeting.

Chair Emran opened the item for public comment.

No members of the public spoke.

Public comment was closed.

Chair Emran asked how easy or difficult it is for newly arrived Afghans to navigate housing, healthcare, education, and other city services.

Zuhal Bahaduri said the process is extremely difficult and explained that her organization walks beside families, identifies urgent needs, and directly helps them complete applications and navigate county systems.

Mustafa Babak added that the refugee resettlement infrastructure had been weakened over time and was not prepared for the scale of Afghan arrivals after 2021.

Chair Emran asked what the City could do better to support housing stability and prevent displacement in Afghan-American communities.

Mustafa Babak said meaningful employment, recertification opportunities for skilled professionals, and investment in children and youth would most improve long-term stability.

Chair Emran asked what young Afghan-Americans, including students, are experiencing and hoping for.

Omar Aziz said many young Afghan-Americans are balancing financial hardship and family responsibilities while still aspiring to become doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, and other professionals.

Chair Emran asked how important cultural spaces and events like Nowruz are in helping Afghan-Americans feel a sense of belonging.

Mustafa Babak said public recognition of Afghan culture and identity helps families heal from trauma, feel accepted, and see the United States as home.

Commissioner Riley asked about the size of the Afghan-American population in San Francisco.

Chair Emran said the community is present across the city in businesses, transportation work, and everyday neighborhood life and emphasized that the discussion was meant to bring more visibility to that presence.

Commissioner Sandoval asked how the organizations address trauma and mental health needs.

Zuhal Bahaduri said 5 Pillars works with county behavioral health partners and culturally appropriate providers, uses the language of wellness to reduce stigma, and creates trusted spaces where women and families can feel comfortable seeking support.

Mustafa Babak said public agencies should invest in culturally appropriate mental health services that meet refugee families where they are, including direct outreach in the neighborhoods where Afghan families live.

Commissioner Williams congratulated the presenters on the first Afghan-American Heritage Month in California and asked specifically how organizations are supporting Afghan women.

Zuhal Bahaduri said her organization listens closely to women's stated needs, creates women-centered support spaces, and partners with women providers who speak the language and understand the culture.

Commissioner Williams asked which women are participating in those programs.

Zuhal Bahaduri said participants include single mothers, widows, divorced women, married women, and young women from a variety of life circumstances.

Commissioner Williams reflected on the severe repression of women in Afghanistan and praised Afghan women for their resilience and leadership.

Omar Aziz added that women have been leading strongly in AACO's scholarship and conference programs and noted that all recent scholarship recipients were young Afghan women.

Chair Emran thanked the presenters and closed the item.

6. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT AND DEPARTMENT UPDATES (Discussion Item)

Mawuli Tugbenyoh, Executive Director, congratulated the Afghan-American presenters and the Department on the Status of Women on Women's History Month programming and noted HRC's support for recent related events.

Director Tugbenyoh reported that there had been ten homicides in the city as of March 22 and said HRC is participating in a cross-city violence reduction strategy to improve coordination around violence prevention.

Director Tugbenyoh reported that after a woman was detained by federal immigration authorities at SFO, HRC received multiple reports of alleged violations of the City's sanctuary city law and would proceed with investigation when supported by signed letters of inquiry.

Director Tugbenyoh updated the Commission on the Board of Supervisors hearing regarding the Commission Streamlining Task Force recommendations and noted that Chair Emran had submitted a letter rejecting the proposed changes affecting HRC.

Director Tugbenyoh reported that grants staff continue working to move grantees into contract, that a request for proposals had closed for intermediary foundation partners, and that the department remains committed to strengthening the nonprofit ecosystem serving historically marginalized communities.

Director Tugbenyoh said HRC is developing procedures to implement newly granted authority to investigate notary fraud affecting immigrant communities and summarized ongoing anti-discrimination casework involving housing, disability accommodations, and eviction defense.

Director Tugbenyoh announced that applications for Opportunities for All are open, congratulated Commissioner Sanchez for appearing on KQED Forum, and shared that HRC is partnering on upcoming Black Maternal Health Week events.

Chair Emran opened the item for public comment.

No members of the public spoke.

Public comment was closed.

Commissioner Chang requested that HRC investigate the March 22 detention of Angelina Lopez and her daughter Wendy at SFO to determine whether any City employees violated the sanctuary city ordinance and also requested a future hearing regarding the increase in alleged sanctuary city complaints and recent investigation outcomes.

Commissioner Chang moved that HRC investigators look into the March 22 detention to determine whether there was a violation of San Francisco's sanctuary city ordinance by any City employees.

Commissioner Sandoval seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Chang then moved for a future hearing on the increase in complaints related to alleged sanctuary city law violations, including the outcomes of recent investigations.

Commissioner Sanchez seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Williams asked what factors may be contributing to the increase in homicides and whether the Commission could later review the strategies being developed by the violence reduction table.

Director Tugbenyoh said there are many possible factors, including losses in funding for community-serving organizations, and offered to return to the Commission with a summer violence prevention presentation.

Chair Emran thanked Commissioners Chang and Williams for raising the sanctuary and violence issues and connected the discussion to broader fears within immigrant communities.

Chair Emran closed the item.

7. COMMISSIONER ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNITY (Discussion Item)

Chair Emran reported that he attended a Women's History Month celebration in the Rotunda hosted in partnership with HRC, the Department on the Status of Women, Supervisor Myrna Melgar, Mayor Daniel Lurie, and District Attorney Brooke Jenkins.

Commissioner Sandoval reported that he attended an event in Sacramento honoring Dr. Pamela Tate as Woman of the Year and thanked Chair Emran for inviting him to a recent iftar event that he described as one of his favorite events of the year.

Commissioner Lace said HRC had been active in his school community, thanked Director Tugbenyoh and Chair Emran for visiting Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Academic Middle School, described a new girls group launched in partnership with HRC staff, and praised Opportunities for All for creating career pathways for students.

Commissioner Riley reported attending several community fundraisers and gala events, including events at the Asian Art Museum, Community Youth Center, and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, and said those gatherings highlighted youth development and cross-sector collaboration.

Chair Emran recognized Commissioner Riley's birthday and announced an upcoming Tenderloin Eid street fair on March 28.

Chair Emran opened the item for public comment.

No members of the public spoke.

Public comment was closed.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Emran invited commissioners to adjourn the meeting in memory of anyone they wished to recognize and then offered brief remarks acknowledging a recent pedestrian incident involving an SFMTA bus and expressing support for survivors of abuse who had recently spoken publicly in California political life.

Chair Emran also recognized United Farm Workers Day and said the broader movement for dignity and equality must continue.

Commissioner Robert Sandoval moved to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Riley seconded the motion.

The motion carried by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 6:59 PM.

Prepared by:

Jessica Lepe, Commission Secretary, SF Human Rights Commission

Dreissy Sop Reyes, Commission Secretary Aide, SF Human Rights Commission

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