



*The Society of Foreign Consuls in New York, Inc.*



## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **The Society of Foreign Consuls and New York City Bar Association Co-Host Immigration Panel: “Navigating Shifts in Immigration Policy”**

**New York, April 10, 2025** –The Society of Foreign Consuls in New York (SoFC) in collaboration with the New York City Bar Association, hosted a panel discussion titled **“Navigating Shifts in Immigration Policy”**, convening distinguished voices from the diplomatic and legal communities for an evening of critical dialogue and exchange. The event was held at the City Bar’s headquarters and welcomed approximately 120 attendees, including members of the Consular Corps representing 30 countries and leaders from the legal sector, including top immigration law practitioners, judges, and leaders from Bar Associations.

The evening began with opening remarks by Muhammad U. Faridi, President of the NYC Bar Association, who welcomed the diplomatic and legal communities to the Bar Association's historic building. *“The NYC Bar Association is proud to serve as a platform for cross-sector conversations that impact the lives of so many in our city,”* he said. *“We recognize the vital role played by Consulates in navigating these complex immigration issues alongside the legal profession. In these uncertain times, collaboration between our communities is more important than ever, so we can better serve and protect the rights and dignity of immigrants in New York.”* He added, *“Tonight’s gathering forms a powerful collaboration between the Society of Foreign Consuls and the New York City Bar Association. A partnership that reflects our shared commitment to justice, inclusivity, dialogue, and the dignity of immigrant communities.”*

In his address, H.E. Amir Farid Abu Hasan, President of SoFC and Consul General of Malaysia, emphasized the vital role of the consulates in supporting their diaspora. *“As diplomats, we are not here to question the decisions of the federal government,”* he stated. *“Rather, we seek to understand the legal and policy ramifications of new immigration rulings so we can better advise and serve our communities. Immigration issues are complicated – and this forum brings together two vital professions, diplomats and legal experts, to build bridges and share knowledge.”*

The event showcased two insightful panel sessions that delved into the evolving landscape of U.S. immigration policy and its implications for foreign nationals and diaspora communities in New York. The first panel, moderated by Jeremy Robbins, Executive Director of the American Immigration Council (AIC), brought together:

- Manuel Castro, Commissioner, NYC Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA)
- H.E. Vladimir Bozovic, Consul General of Serbia
- H.E. Oswaldo Del Aguila, Consul General of Peru



Discussions centered on the City's status as a sanctuary, the latest challenges in immigration enforcement, and the resources available to immigrant communities. Key topics included return travel issues, rights during ICE encounters, asylum procedures, and legal pathways for detainees.

The second panel, moderated by Benjamin Johnson, Executive Director of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), featured:

- Cyrus Mehta, Founder, Cyrus D. Mehta & Partners PLLC
- Prof. Lenni Benson, New York Law School
- Rebekah Wolf, Director, Immigration Justice Campaign

This session provided legal context and responses to the issues raised by the Consular Corps, focusing on how evolving federal policies intersect with constitutional rights, legal protections, and the consular community's ability to offer timely assistance.

The event reinforced the ongoing partnership between SoFC and local institutions like the New York City Bar Association, highlighting a shared commitment to fostering mutual understanding and improving the lives of immigrant communities in New York – a true melting pot of global citizens. This timely collaboration also forms part of the SoFC's ongoing efforts to commemorate its 100th anniversary this year, celebrating a century of diplomatic presence, service, and engagement in New York City.

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For more information about the event or to inquire about future initiatives, please contact the Society of Foreign Consuls at:

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