

rené cassin

the jewish voice for human rights

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



"THE ONE WHO DOES NOT REMEMBER HISTORY IS BOUND TO LIVE THROUGH IT AGAIN"
GEORGE SANTAYANA



WELCOME FROM OUR CHAIR

Dear Reader

René Cassin's stated vision is of a world where **"everyone fully enjoys all their human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights"**.

Everyone, fully, all.

The words deliberately echo those of the Universal Declaration itself. Its preamble proclaims it "... a **common standard** of achievement for **all peoples and all nations**". Its first article states "**[a]ll human beings** are born free and equal in dignity and rights" and its second begins "**[e]veryone** is entitled to **all the rights and freedoms** set forth in this Declaration".

"Everyone, Everywhere, All at Once" was an acclaimed Hollywood film released this year – but it could equally be a description of the Universal Declaration's scope.

And, as the charity named after its co-author, the sheer range of our work in 2022 has reflected the Declaration's insistence on the universality and ubiquity of human rights.

We worked to highlight the genocidal oppression of Uyghur Muslims in China. And we urged our supporters to help those fleeing Russian aggression in Ukraine.

Here at home, we highlighted the vital importance of the UK's human rights framework, but we also called for its meaningful extension to socio-economic rights via our Right to Food campaign.

We joined partnerships working to alleviate the plight of refugees, counter the scourge of hate crime, and create a safer environment for women and girls.

Our educational work saw us running workshops on spotting the signs of exploitation of asylum-seekers, publishing a resource on the Jewish legacy of human rights, and continuing to support a cohort of Jewish human rights activists through our Ambassador Programme.

Most of our work is carefully planned and scheduled. But we are also nimble enough to respond to crises and unexpected events – such as the invasion of Ukraine in February or the sudden and appalling overcrowding at the Manston asylum centre in November.

"Everyone, Everywhere, All at Once" sums up human rights. And it sums up our ambitions to bring a Jewish perspective in advocating for the rights of other minorities, and to serve as a reminder that human rights instruments, like the Universal Declaration, have been largely created by Jewish lawyers reflecting Jewish values and experience.

Those ambitions are only constrained by finite resources, and René Cassin will be working to build on the generous support given to us by individuals and organisations in 2022 to achieve even greater things in the future.

Danny Silverstone

Chair of Board of Trustees



OUR YEAR WORKING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

January – we launch the second cohort in our Ambassador Programme – an enriching leadership-oriented initiative to empower young Jewish human rights activists

February – we campaign against the ‘Genocide Games’, the Beijing Winter Olympics

March – we note the government’s ‘unjust, unlawful and inadequate’ response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, and urge our supporters to help those fleeing the fighting

April – we begin our ‘Judith Social Justice Series’ of talks about human rights, safety, and support for marginalised groups

May – we launch the ‘Jewish Food Rights Declaration’ representing the community’s support for a Right to Food

June – we mark Refugee Week with a series of events comparing past Jewish experience with that of today’s refugees

July – we meet MPs in Parliament to give them the perspective of a Jewish human rights organisation

August – we make the case for the Human Rights Act’s importance in helping ‘ordinary people in their everyday lives’

September – we mark the Jewish New Year with a detailed human rights briefing for the Jewish Community

October – we stand for tolerance and human rights during Hate Crime Awareness Week

November – our ‘16 Days of Activism’ against gender-based violence calls for safety for all women

December – our Human Rights Shabbat celebrates the Jewish legacy of human rights

Why 'René Cassin'?

We are proud to take our name from Nobel Laureate and French-Jewish Jurist Monsieur René Cassin, who was one of the principal drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and served as President of the European Court of Human Rights.

He was a lifelong advocate of international human rights protection and understood that, because of the Holocaust, it was vital that there was a strong and clear Jewish voice for human rights.

"...there is no task of safeguarding human rights more urgent than that of foreseeing such outrages and preventing them."

Monsieur René Cassin, Nobel Lecture, 11 December 1968

Our Vision, Mission and Values

Our **vision** is of a world where:

- **everyone fully enjoys all their human rights** as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- **members of the Jewish community are actively engaged** in promoting and protecting these rights, both within the community and in concert with stakeholders outside of the community

Our **mission** is to promote and protect the universal rights of all people, drawing on Jewish experiences and values.

We will:

- **remake a compelling case** for human rights values
- **campaign for change** in defined human rights areas through a combination of advocacy, policy analysis, public campaigning and education
- **lead and grow** a group of committed Jewish human rights advocates
- **maximise our capacity** to work effectively

Our **values** – underpinning all the work we do:

- **Solidarity** – human rights belong to us all, so we stand for the rights of everyone, everywhere
- **Judaism** – we are inspired by Jewish values and experience
- **Collaboration** – our work is not isolated, but intertwined with the efforts of others, so we nurture and mobilise relationships
- **Empowerment** – we turn today's Jewish activists into tomorrow's leaders
- **Legacy** – we are determined to create a legacy worthy of our namesake Monsieur René Cassin

OUR WORK

As ‘the Jewish voice for human rights’ René Cassin works:

- within the Jewish community – building support for human rights values amongst British Jews
- in the wider community – bringing a Jewish perspective to human rights debates, especially on issues affecting vulnerable minorities

We work via advocacy, policy analysis, public campaigning and education, focusing on key issues that strongly resonate with Jewish experience.

Genocide

Dignity and respect are the core values that human rights aim to uphold. And there can be no greater affront to those values than the blanket persecution of people because of who they are and what they believe. We built on the Uyghur People’s Tribunal’s [judgment](#) published on 9 December 2021 that “the tribunal is satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the People’s Republic of China, by the imposition of measures to destroy a significant part of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang as such, has committed genocide” to frame our Uyghur campaign in 2022.

In the lead-up to the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, we pointed out the obvious resonance with the Berlin Olympics of 1936 in [a piece for Jewish News](#). We emphasised those parallels in social media campaigns aimed at the International Olympic Committee and commercial sponsors, and we worked to ensure that the games are remembered as the ‘[Genocide Games](#)’. And to re-iterate the human costs of such brutality, we organised [What If? The Holocaust, Uyghur Genocide and our moral responsibility today](#), a moving discussion between a Jewish grandfather and granddaughter and a Uyghur father and daughter.

We remained committed to keeping China’s treatment of its Uyghur Muslims in the spotlight. During London Fashion Week in June [we joined a wide coalition](#) to highlight the fact that the Chinese cotton industry uses Uyghur forced labour on a truly massive scale – globally, one in five cotton garments is most likely tainted by Uyghur slavery. We are asking corporations to urgently audit their supply chains and governments to ban imports produced by slave labour.

Board of Deputies of British Jews
@BoardofDeputies

We are calling on companies to ensure that they are not supporting or benefiting from the pervasive and extensive forced labour of the Uyghur population and other Turkic and Muslim-majority peoples, perpetrated by the Chinese government.

Learn more at: enduyghurforcedlabour.org

René Cassin ❤️ @Rene.Cassin · Jun 10, 2022

Slavery is fundamental to the narrative of the Jewish people - we have a responsibility to challenge fashion and apparel companies to remove #Uyghur #forcedlabor from their supply chains #ForcedLaborFashion enduyghurforcedlabour.org

ON LONDON FASHION WEEK 11-13 JUNE

TOGETHER WITH OVER 400 ORGANISATIONS, AND AS PART OF THE 'COALITION TO END UYGHUR FORCED LABOUR', WE ARE CALLING ON LEADING COMPANIES:

To ensure that they are not supporting or benefiting from the prevalent forced labour of the Uyghur population and other Turkic and Muslim-majority peoples, perpetrated by the Chinese government.

To exit the Uyghur Region at every level of their supply chains, from raw materials to finished products, to prevent the use of forced labour of Uyghurs and other groups in other facilities, and to end relationships with suppliers supporting the forced labour system.

2:44 PM · Jun 13, 2022

15 Reposts 27 Likes

On a very human level we were delighted to help produce and launch [Under the Mulberry Tree](#) – a collection of reflections from the Uyghur diaspora. The whole project was conceived and overseen by Emily Zinkin, a graduate of the René Cassin [Fellowship Programme](#) – something that speaks volumes for the value of our educational programmes and our ever-deepening [relationship with the UK Uyghur community](#).



In November, René Cassin was one of the co-sponsors of the [International Uyghur Forum](#) in Brussels, where our director took part in a panel on the role faith communities have in showing solidarity and acts of support with the Uyghur people.

We marked Hanukkah in December by [asking our supporters to take action](#) against the use of Uyghur forced labour in products on our high streets.

The Hostile Environment

Shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, [our statement](#) noted the UK government's '*unjust, unlawful and inadequate*' response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, and [urged our supporters to help](#) those fleeing the fighting. We highlighted the reality that many of the refugees who do make it to the UK then have to contend with a government-engendered 'hostile environment' that the [Nationality and Borders Bill](#) would only make worse. The Bill punishes any refugee who arrives by a so-called 'illegal' route. Also extremely concerning were proposals to forcibly remove asylum seekers to Rwanda. As we said [in our statement](#), sending vulnerable people to Rwanda is "... *inhumane, dangerous, and ineffective*", and we urged supporters [to get involved](#) both on the specific issue of Rwanda and the '[hostile environment](#)' more broadly.

Wherever their origins, destitute asylum-seekers are in danger of falling prey to modern slavery. In February, we ran two workshops for those working in synagogue drop-in centres – giving advice on how to [spot the signs](#) of exploitation, and [how to help](#) those affected to safety.



In June we marked a successful Refugee Week, where we ran a series of events including: [The war in Ukraine and crisis for modern slavery victims](#); Learning from refugee experiences; and [The campaign to shut down Hassockfield Detention Centre](#).

In November René Cassin co-organised a Jewish bloc demonstration outside Manston immigration processing centre in solidarity with thousands detained there in inhumane conditions as part of the UK's wider hostile environment towards migrants and refugees. Similarly, in December, we facilitated a Jewish bloc in the faith vigil at Hassockfield.



Also in December we [submitted evidence](#) to Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights' enquiry into the state of asylum system. Our submission expressed "our grave concerns about the state of asylum seekers rights today", particularly on the issues of: the lack of 'safe routes', offshore processing, immigration detention, and trafficking and slavery.

"It has been fantastic working with René Cassin on the campaign to stop Derwentside detention centre from opening. Their amplification of the campaign, and help in reaching new audiences, has been invaluable. Now that Derwentside has unfortunately opened, we know that we can continue to count on René Cassin's support and solidarity to shut it down"
– Gemma, Women for Refugee Women

Discrimination and Hate Speech

For this year's Hate Crime Awareness Week, we launched a targeted social media campaign addressing the different forms of hate crime in the UK, enhancing the work of partner organisations and the unique value of Jewish support.



Remaking the Case for Human Rights

We brought our unique Jewish perspective to partnerships working to defend the Human Rights Act. Our social media campaign "[Because of our Human Rights Act](#)" emphasised how the Act helps ordinary people in their everyday lives. As [reported in Jewish News](#), we coordinated a high-level [interfaith letter](#) to the Prime Minister, reiterating the Act's importance, and we made a [detailed submission](#) to the government's consultation, backing it up with a piece – '[Hands off our Human Rights Act!](#)' – in Jewish News.

In July, [we met MPs at Westminster](#) and reiterated our message that human rights, and the Human Rights Act more specifically, are a legacy of the Holocaust and history shows why we need it.

In September we marked Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, by publishing [Human Rights Under Attack](#) – a detailed briefing for the Jewish community.

"Thanks so much – this is really useful, very powerful and very persuasive" – **Denis, Friends of the Earth on our Human Rights Act briefing**

Social Justice and the Right to Food

In 2022 we launched the [Judith Social Justice Series](#) of events (*Disabled Women's Experiences of Hate Crime; When the Police Fail to Protect Women; Women in Immigration Detention; Disability Rights*), delivered by specialist organisations working to support, protect and advocate for marginalised groups.

With the deepening cost of living crisis, food poverty has become a far from marginal issue. On 28 May we marked [World Hunger Day](#) by launching our [Jewish Food Rights Declaration](#), representing a united Jewish voice on the need to enshrine the right to food in UK law, concluding “*Judaism values dignity – enshrining the Right to Food promotes dignity and liberty for all ... our message is clear: enforceable food rights are needed so that Government is accountable for ensuring that nobody goes hungry*”.

On 19 November we marked Mitzvah Day by releasing [a short film](#) outlining what we can all do to support a Right to Food in UK law.

Women's Rights

René Cassin has long worked to tackle inequality, discrimination, hate and misogyny. With ongoing struggles experienced by women of marginalised groups such as Roma women and migrant women, women victims of domestic abuse, disabled women and women of faith, René Cassin is highlighting these issues and the values that drive us to ensure that all women are protected from violence.

We continued to rely on a strong Jewish women's voice to garner [support for the full ratification](#) of the Istanbul Convention, and in particular for migrant women affected by gender violence.

We have [responded](#) to the Government's public consultation on sexual harassment, following guidance from leading sector partners. This action is a continuation of our work supporting women's rights to be safe, and free from fear of harassment and violence.

In November we launched our [16 Days of Activism](#) on violence against women and girls, with the theme of 'ensuring safety for all women', reaching out to our Jewish and sector partners to inform and take action for a life of safety and dignity for all women and girls in the UK.

The culmination of our 16 Days programme was our event [Roma Women Speak Up](#) at which Roma activists Rosamaria Cisneros and Yassmin

Vilcekova celebrated Roma and Sinti women, and gave an insight into their experiences in the UK's current hostile environment to migration.



EDUCATION

We launched the [second cohort of our Ambassador's Programme](#) and celebrated their graduation on 29 June where Ambassadors presented their personal impact projects, which included: setting up website on the importance of accepting disabilities; an educational resource for Jewish students on the Uyghur genocide; information sheets for schools on period poverty, immigration detention and misogyny; and an animated educational film on the Uyghurs.

We continued to deliver sessions at schools, synagogues, universities and youth movements looking at human rights through a Jewish lens and strengthening their human rights activism.

For this year's Human Rights Shabbat, our chosen topic was celebrating the Jewish legacy of human rights. To help communities, groups and individuals mark Human Rights Shabbat, we produced a [resource](#) including facts and useful information on some of the most pertinent human rights issues in the UK today, a collection of Jewish texts and references, and suggested actions.

As 2022 drew to a close, we presented sessions at Limmud conferences in the UK ([Jewish Voices Beyond the Food Bank](#)) and Finland (*Uyghur Persecution and Responsibility to Act and Human Rights as a Legacy of the Holocaust: the case of the war in Ukraine*).

"Always an immense pleasure to do anything in association with Rene Cassin – I feel so lucky to be involved with such a brilliant organization" – **Margaret, speaker at René Cassin event**

HOW YOU CAN HELP

René Cassin relies on its supporters for the funds to carry on its vital work.

Please help ensure our voice is heard loudly and clearly by supporting us:

- **Make a donation** – you can make a one-off gift through our website at www.renecassin.org/donate
- Better still, **become a 'Friend of René Cassin'** by making a monthly donation (via the 'I'd like to give regularly' option) www.renecassin.org/donate
- Become an **Individual Patron** or **Corporate Supporter** – email the office for further details info@renecassin.org
- **Get involved in our campaigns** – visit our website for more details
- **Attend our events** – www.renecassin.org/category/events/
- **Volunteer with us** – email info@renecassin.org
- **Sign up for our newsletter** at www.renecassin.org
- **Follow us** on Twitter twitter.com/Rene_Cassin and Instagram www.instagram.com/rene.cassin/ and **like us** on Facebook www.facebook.com/renecassin
- **Tell your friends, family and colleagues about our work**

"I love the work you are doing. Really appreciate your emails and actions. I only wish I had more time at the moment to contribute more to your excellent mission, but as I can't, I wanted to make this regular donation as one of my favourite organisations advancing human rights" – **Cindy, René Cassin supporter**



FINANCE

Revenue and Support 2022

Donations & legacies	129,012
Charitable activities	5,000
Investment income	42
Total revenue and support	134,054

Expenditure 2022

Charitable activities	150,488
Costs of raising voluntary income	813
Support costs	1,822
Total expenditure	153,123

Many thanks to our supporters

Anglo Jewish Association
 Humanitarian Trust
 Judith Trust
 SC & ME Morlands Charitable Trust
 Pears Foundation
 Sybil Shine Memorial Trust

And to our individual **Patrons** (who give £1,000 or more annually) and **Friends** (who make regular donations)

OUR PEOPLE

Our Staff

Mia Hasenson-Gross	Executive Director
Rachel Vogler	Campaigns Officer
Esther Raffell	Campaigns Officer
Debora Singer	Human Rights Act Campaign Lead (volunteer)
Lucja Jastrzebska	Communications Officer (from October 2022)
Sam Watson	Development Manager

Our Trustees

Daniel Silverstone	Chair
Jeff Highfield	Treasurer
Justin Abbott Chalew	
Lauren Keiles	
Danielle Mason	
Jonathan Metzger	
Abigail Morris	
Rachel Zaltzman	

Honorary Ambassador

Dr Annette Lawson OBE

Our Advisory Council

Sylvie Bacquet	Professor Noam Lubell
Rabbi Professor Tony Bayfield CBE	Dr. Kishan Manocha
Rabbi Dr. Naftali Brawer	Rabbi David Mason
Professor Geraldine van Bueren KC	Vicki Prais
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Daniel Kingsley	Dr. Reuven Ziegler
Professor Francesca Klug OBE	

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

René Cassin is a UK charity registered on 5 January 2007 (number 1117472 as CCJO ReneCassin) and governed by a constitution amended 9 September 2013.

The charity is governed by the board of trustees listed on the previous page. Our constitution stipulates that there must be a minimum of three trustees at any time. There is no maximum limit to the number of trustees.

René Cassin complies with all applicable UK law in recruiting and selecting new trustees to join its board. Trustees are normally elected by the members (who are the current trustees) of René Cassin at a general meeting. Trustees are appointed on the basis of specific skills, experience and knowledge that will enable them to make a contribution to the management of the charity. These skills, experience and knowledge are first identified in the annual skills audit. When there is a specific gap identified, or a trustee with specific skills, experience and knowledge is approaching retirement, then a posting seeking to recruit a new trustee will be placed on a variety of independent voluntary sector websites, print or online publications. During the recruitment and selection process, René Cassin will ensure that prospective new trustees are eligible to act, do not have any conflicts of interest, and understand their responsibilities and René Cassin's work. In particular, René Cassin pays heed to Charity Commission Guidance CC3: *The Essential Trustee: What You Need to Know, What You Need to Do*.

René Cassin's board meets every two months to oversee the work of the charity, which the board delegates to its small staff team. All policies, such as risk register and safeguarding, are reviewed regularly and are up to date.

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