

## London Elections 2024:

### René Cassin asks Candidates to Make the Case for Human Rights

Elections are due to take place on Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> May, for the Mayor of London and the London Assembly. Occurring in the run-up to the upcoming general election, this election provides an indicator to parliamentary parties of what will resonate with the electorate.

Given the increasingly hostile environment and dangerous disregard for human rights law that the UK has drifted towards in recent years, we see this as an opportunity to state the case for human rights and to demand they are reflected by those in power.

The Mayoral elections will use the first-past-the-post system for the first time, meaning – unlike in previous elections – you may only vote for a single candidate. At the same time, you will be able to elect a [London Assembly member](#), who has the power to amend the mayor's budget and can scrutinise the mayor's political activities.

#### A Safe City for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

As British Jews, much of our community found a safe home in London after escaping war and persecution in other countries. In London, we found a city which allowed and encouraged the Jewish community to thrive.

It is of particular concern that this welcoming spirit has been damaged in recent years and refugees and asylum seekers are experiencing a hostile environment when looking for safety in the UK.

We ask candidates to:

- Advocate for inclusive policies and protection against discrimination for those seeking asylum and refugees.
- Support humane and compassionate community-based alternatives to detention for refugees and asylum seekers.
- Support the successful integration of refugees into London, including access to housing, education, healthcare, and employment opportunities.
- Promote a positive perception of refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants in local communities.

#### A Right to Food City

The cost-of-living crisis has exacerbated food insecurity in London as it has across the whole of the UK. One in six adult Londoners experiences food insecurity and one in seven parents reports their child going hungry. No one deserves to go hungry.

Together with initiatives across the UK, we aim to encourage local councils and authorities to implement sustainable, long-term solutions such as community gardens and kitchens, food cooperatives, and universal free school meals.

We ask candidates to:

- Support the development of [London's Right to Food](#) boroughs.
- Support a motion in the London Assembly declaring economic, social, and cultural rights as human rights.
- Support and expand London's free school meals programme.

### A City Which Stands up to Modern Slavery

Whilst we are aware of London's need to transition to a green city, we are concerned about the proportion of the green industry that uses forced labour in product supply chains. This is most acute in the solar panel and electric vehicle industries. It is estimated that [40 per cent](#) of UK solar farms are built using panels made by forced labour in the Xinjiang Uyghur region of China.

We ask candidates to:

- Ensure that companies contracted by London authorities do not use forced labour in their supply chains.
- Remind firms that their environmental commitments are coupled with a responsibility to not support modern slavery.
- Lead London to become a safe place for survivors of modern slavery and trafficking.

### A City Which Tackles Hate Crime

As Jews we are aware of the stark and unprecedented rise of antisemitism in the UK over the past half-year. We are also worried about the rise in anti-Muslim racism and see this year as an important moment to demonstrate solidarity with other minority communities.

London is a city where gender-based discrimination, antisemitism, anti-Muslim racism, anti-Black racism, and marginalisation of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities is far too common.

We ask candidates to:

- Amplify the voices of communities affected by hate.
- Provide spaces for and take part in cross-communal events and forums.
- Encourage and facilitate informal education programmes encouraging sensitivity between cultural, religious, and ethnic groups at schools.
- Stand up for the rights of ordinary people (including minority groups) against power perpetuating hate and violence.

## A City Which Stands for Human Rights

As a response to the Holocaust, and a framework in-part pioneered by Jewish lawyers, human rights have a central importance to the Jewish community. In recent years, the respect that our elected politicians, and indeed many within society, have for the internationally legally binding universal standards for human rights has been regressing.

Any move to withdrawing from the European Convention on Human Rights or weakening the UK's Human Rights Act could severely undermine human rights and cause serious damage to the most vulnerable among us. We ask our local candidates to protect equality and the role of key international instruments within our society.

We ask candidates to:

- Seek to promote the UK staying signed in to the ECHR as well as other international human rights conventions and treaties.
- Seek to calm the demonisation of human rights institutions and present them in an accurate fashion.
- Defend the positive obligations afforded by human rights law on public authorities to protect people from harm.
- Ensure sensitive policing of peaceful protests.

## About René Cassin

René Cassin works to promote and protect universal rights drawing on Jewish experience and Jewish values. René Cassin works **within the Jewish community** – by building support for human rights values amongst British Jews, and in the **wider community** – by bringing the authority of a Jewish perspective on issues that resonate with Jewish experience. Founded in 2000, René Cassin has a dedicated staff team, supported by an engaged Board of Trustees, an expert Advisory Council and a wider group of alumni, volunteers and supporters.

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