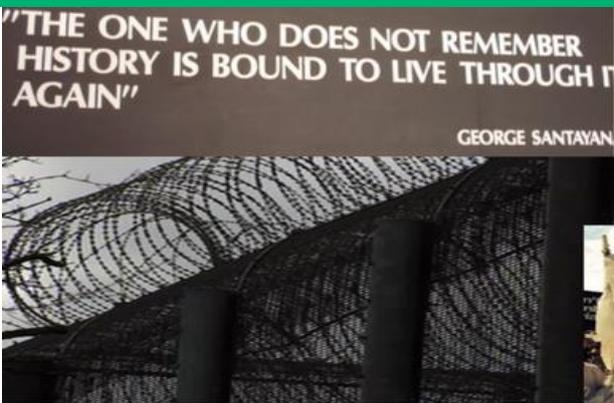


ANNUAL REPORT 2017




THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF Human Rights

Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law.

Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

A common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge.

The General Assembly Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations.



WELCOME FROM OUR CHAIR

Dear Reader

The mantra “Think globally, act locally” is said to have originated in the burgeoning environmentalist movements of the sixties and seventies. But the sentiment behind it was not new. Thirty years earlier, as the world struggled to come to terms with the atrocities of the Second World War, early human rights pioneers adopted the same philosophy.

We take our name from Monsieur René Cassin, the French Jew who was the principal drafter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 2018, we will mark the 70th anniversary of the UDHR. We will celebrate the Declaration’s vision – of globally recognised rights for all people – and remember its origins as a response to the horrors of the Holocaust, a world united in saying that never again would it stand by and allow such inhumanity to happen.

The UDHR was clearly an example of thinking globally. Eleanor Roosevelt, Cassin’s colleague on the Declaration’s drafting committee, famously characterised it as “A Magna Carta for all humanity”. But she also urged activists to act locally. “Where”, she asked “do human rights begin? In small places, close to home. The world of the individual person”. Citing neighbourhood, school, college, factory, farm or office, she argued “Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

In our own way, we have continued to follow this philosophy. Thinking globally, by advocating adherence to international human rights standards like the UDHR and the European Convention on Human Rights, and by convening a high-level roundtable to discuss the future development of human rights. But also acting locally, adding to Eleanor Roosevelt’s ‘small places, close to home’ the immigration detention centre, where asylum-seekers are held indefinitely; the carwash or nail bar, where modern slavery is rife; and the Travellers’ encampment, whose inhabitants suffer vilification, discrimination and deprivation.

We are living through volatile and uncertain times. With commentators routinely drawing parallels with the intolerance and nationalism of the 1930s and 1940s, René Cassin’s ‘Jewish voice for human rights’ – calling for universal values in ignored and overlooked places close to home – has never been more relevant or more necessary.

Danny Silverstone

Chair of Trustee Board

THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS

This year René Cassin:

- Brought together the Chief Rabbi and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Kevin Hyland, to discuss a Jewish communal response to *"the shocking reality of modern slavery happening in plain sight"*
- Promoted Jewish solidarity and mutual support for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities suffering discrimination and hate crime
- Advocated for more humane alternatives to the UK's current policy of indefinite detention of asylum-seekers
- Helped victims of slavery and human trafficking furnish and decorate their homes
- Examined the future of human rights, by organising a seminar of campaigners, Jewish community leaders, lawyers, academics, legal commentators and funders
- Launched our 'Human Rights Thought for the Week', looking at the annual cycle of weekly Torah readings from a human rights perspective
- Held a packed public meeting where Shadow Brexit Secretary Keir Starmer was quizzed about the human rights implications of the UK leaving the EU
- Ensured that human rights were at the forefront of the General Election debate, with our analysis of the manifestos and key questions for all candidates

Why 'René Cassin'?

We are proud to take our name from Nobel Laureate and French 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 and Mission

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

How we 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

OUR WORK

René Cassin builds on Monsieur Cassin's legacy – by working to protect and promote universal human rights. We do this through advocacy, policy analysis, public campaigning and education.

Our campaigning work currently focuses on four key issues which strongly resonate with the Jewish experience:

- **Protecting human rights provisions in the UK**
- **Modern slavery and human trafficking**
- **Hate crime and discrimination against Gypsies, Roma and Travellers**
- **Asylum and immigration detention**

Our campaigns are complemented by our educational and outreach programmes within the Jewish community.

CAMPAIGNS

Learning the lessons of the Holocaust – remaking the case for human rights values

Human rights are under threat. The post-war consensus that human rights are an essential bulwark protecting individuals and minorities from an overarching state – reached in reaction to the abuses of Nazi Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union – is now fracturing. Populist nationalism is on the rise – and human rights, as a liberal and internationalist project, are increasingly viewed with indifference or antagonism.

In response, René Cassin is determined to remake the case for human rights values by bringing a uniquely Jewish contribution to the debate. To that end, in 2017 we launched a new three-year strategy with a core purpose “...to rebuild a human rights centred narrative, to ensure that future generations have human rights to defend”.

Defending the European Convention on Human Rights

In February, we wrote to the Prime Minister to ask her to reconsider her previously stated intention to withdraw the UK from the European Convention on Human Rights. We pointed out that international human rights treaties like the ECHR were developed in response to the atrocities committed by the Nazis, and that withdrawal would send a signal to repressive regimes worldwide that the UK does not value an internationalist approach to human rights.

We received a response from Home Office Minister, Baroness Anelay, who wrote that “[t]he Government has no plans to withdraw from the ECHR” and that “[t]he UK respects and seeks to bolster the rules based international system; we depend on its strength and integrity”.

Our correspondence was reported in the [Jewish Chronicle](#) on 8 February 2017.

Vote for human rights – reacting to a snap election

Like just about everyone else, we were surprised by the Prime Minister’s announcement of a June General Election. But not for long. We used the election as an opportunity to stress the importance of human rights to all candidates. We analysed each of the parties’ manifestos from a human rights perspective and formulated five key questions for prospective MPs:

- Will you commit to the European Convention on Human Rights and support the Human Rights Act?
- Will you commit to protecting existing equality and human rights laws when we leave the EU?
- Do you agree that it is time for a time limit on immigration detention?
- Will you work with us to improve the lives of survivors of modern day slavery in the UK?
- How will you address hate crime and discrimination faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller members of your constituency?

Getting on the front foot – where now for human rights?

Immediately after the election, we brought together leading campaigners, Jewish community leaders, lawyers, academics, legal commentators and funders to discuss – under Chatham House rules – the future of human rights. We invited *Times* columnist David Aaronovitch to get things underway by giving his thoughts on the issue.

The roundtable noted that the zeitgeist around human rights had moved from initial enthusiasm, through indifference, to current hostility. In response, our task should be

- to re-iterate the universal principles and values of the founding human rights conventions
- look to frame social and economic rights within such a universalistic approach – bringing poverty and marginalised communities into the mainstream of human rights advocacy

And not forgetting Brexit

With thoughts on a more immediate future, we invited Shadow Brexit Secretary and one-time leading human rights lawyer, Keir Starmer, to discuss the human rights implications of the UK leaving the EU with BBC journalist Jo Coburn. The event drew a lively and engaged audience who (in Keir’s own words) “put him through his paces” in a “great debate”.

Elsewhere on Brexit, we joined 30 other organisations to express concern that the Government's Withdrawal Bill would lead to a loss of protections, rights and accountability for people in the UK, notably:

- loss of rights – a number of rights were either explicitly excluded or it was not clear how minimum standards of protection would be ensured; and
- Parliamentary scrutiny – the Bill gave significant power to ministers rather than Parliament, with its associated processes for scrutiny and consideration of the views of civil society.

'The great human rights issue of our time' – solidarity with victims of slavery and human trafficking

In the UK today there are as many as 13,000 victims of slavery or trafficking, prompting Theresa May to call it 'the great human rights issue of our time'. Although the Modern Slavery Act 2015 represents welcome progress on this issue, we are concerned that the legislation does too little to address the needs of victims of a crime that appears to be even more widespread and pernicious than originally thought.

'Once we were slaves' – the Chief Rabbi speaks out

In September [we organised a meeting](#) between the Chief Rabbi and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Kevin Hyland, to discuss "*the shocking reality of modern slavery happening in plain sight*". And, to coincide with International Human Rights Day in December, the Chief Rabbi appealed to the Jewish community in a hard-hitting [comment piece in the Jewish Chronicle](#): " ... slavery demands our urgent attention. If we do nothing, we remain a part of the problem, but, if we act, we can begin to end the scourge of modern-day slavery."

'I cried for joy' – practical help for victims

As well as enlisting the spiritual support of the Jewish Community, René Cassin has lent a hand in a more practical way. Working in partnership with the Reform youth movement, RSY-Netzer, we raised money for Sheffield's Snowdrop Project which helps refurbish otherwise dilapidated accommodation for victims of human trafficking – thus providing them with an environment in which they are able to recover from their ordeal. As Ivana, one of Snowdrop's beneficiaries said: "*I cried from joy, I couldn't believe my eyes that that was my house. My children were so very happy.*"

Keeping the spotlight on slavery

Our annual 'Human Writes' essay competition asked entrants if they agreed with Theresa May's assessment that slavery is 'the great human rights issue of our time'.

Our competition winners, Will Bordell and Ben Cartwright, have continued to provide expert and timely analysis of the issues via a series of blogs on our website:

- In [Who is at the centre of Britain's Modern Slavery Act?](#) (April 2017) Will finds that current legislation is more concerned with captors than their victims; and in August, notes that the [media has the same perspective](#)
- In [Freedom – or Freefall?](#) (July 2017) he argues that lack of support puts slavery and trafficking survivors at risk, a theme that [he revisited in August](#)
- [More must be done to combat human trafficking in hotels](#) urges Ben in August 2017
- And, in November, he finds that [domestic progress is undermined by international failures](#)

Standing up to hostility and hate – countering discrimination against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

Gypsies, Roma and Travellers share a history of persecution with Jewish people. Both were targeted by the Nazis during the Second World War, having suffered centuries of racism and hostility. Today, the UK's Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities are subjected to discrimination from officials and casual prejudice in the media. And – in another injustice shared with Jews – since the EU referendum, they are suffering a marked rise in hate crime.

Shoulder to shoulder – René Cassin promoting inter-communal solidarity

In March, in an initiative to mark International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, we organised a roundtable meeting between Jewish and GRT communal organisations. The meeting explored the challenges that each community faced, what misconceptions and prejudices each sought to counter, and the potential for working together to provide mutual support.

The Board of Deputies was one of the participants in the roundtable. In May, its updated *Jewish Manifesto*, announced that it “... is working with René Cassin to raise awareness of the racism and other challenges faced by the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Britain.”

And in October, René Cassin organised a series of events with GRT communities in Leeds, to discuss coordinated action to counter the hostility and hate each community endured. Our Leeds visit attracted the attention of both the [Jewish Chronicle](#) and the [Jewish News](#).

Small, but significant, victories ...

- **GRT children and the Youth Justice System** – in 2016, René Cassin joined with the Irish Chaplaincy and the Traveller Movement to call for youth justice reform. Specifically, we asked that the Youth Justice Board should begin to

monitor the GRT children, as a first step to addressing by their over-representation in the system. In March 2017, we heard that our demand had been met – and that the monitoring we had asked for would begin in October.

- **Hate Crime equalisation** – equality before the law is a key human rights value. But, hate crimes aimed at disabled or LGBT+ individuals attract more lenient sentences than those based on race or religion. In July, René Cassin was one of 75 organisations calling on the Government to redress this anomaly. We were pleased to receive a positive response from the Solicitor General, who told Parliament “...we very much hope that, as soon as possible, we can craft a suitable response to get the law right”.

‘Time for a Time Limit’ – calling for an end to indefinite immigration detention

‘Indefinite detention’ sounds like a practice from a brutal dictatorship or a dystopian novel. But, here in the UK, asylum-seekers are routinely detained without knowing how long they will be locked up. The UK is the only country in Europe not to set itself a limit on how long it holds asylum-seekers in prison-like detention centres.

René Cassin has continued to lead the Jewish community’s demand, through the [#Time4aTimeLimit](#) campaign, for a maximum time limit for immigration detention.

Applying pressure for change

Throughout 2017 we have played a key role – bringing our uniquely Jewish perspective – to the umbrella campaign group, The Detention Forum.

On 14 March we attended a key Parliamentary debate on ‘[Detention of Vulnerable Persons](#)’ which pressed the Immigration Minister to meet with groups with expertise in the conditions in the UK’s immigration detention centres, and to consider more humane and less costly alternatives to detention.

As outlined in the ‘Human Rights’ section above, the issue of an immigration detention time limit was central to our analysis of the party manifestos and our key questions for candidates during the General Election campaign.

Highlighting the human cost of immigration detention

In January, our Campaigns and Programmes Manager, Sam Grant told [Jewish News](#) about the human cost of indefinite detention in a week that a man had died in a detention centre. He quoted a member of Freed Voices – a group of experts by experience of detention – “... this is not really surprising to anyone who has experienced indefinite detention first-hand. Detention kills your mind, it kills your soul...and sometimes it just kills”.

And the plight of a particularly vulnerable group of detainees – LGBT individuals – was highlighted in a [research project](#) by our intern Emma Falley in July. LGBT detainees “... have a particularly harrowing experience in detention centres”, their treatment with regards to mental health, physical well-being and access to medicine is “abysmal”, and they face “discrimination and abuse not only from other detainees, but from members of staff as well”. How could the situation be improved? Better staff training, less use of solitary confinement, and a process that recognises the complexity of LGBT claims are among Emma's recommendations. But, ultimately, in a conclusion that applies to immigration detention across the board, she notes: “It is clear that the UK should and could invest and pilot community alternatives to detention, it would be cheaper and, more importantly, more humane”.

EDUCATION

Planting the seed – empowering tomorrow’s human rights activists

Education is “... the most powerful vector in advancing the cause of human rights”. This is the view of Monsieur René Cassin, as reported by his biographers. In these uncertain times, we share his conviction that human rights will continue to need well-informed, wise and determined advocates.

In that spirit, we are investing in the future:

- By galvanising Jewish social activists, equipping them with the skills and passion to promote social justice and human rights both locally and globally
- By ensuring that school students and Jewish youth activists learn that human rights are the civilised world's response to the horrors of the Holocaust

René Cassin Anglo-Jewish Association Fellowship Programme

This year-long programme is the centre-piece of our educational work. Each year we select a small cohort for an intensive immersion in the history, philosophy and practicalities of human rights. The programme's highlight is a trip to Budapest – where Hungary's repressive regime is making the necessity of human rights advocacy ever more urgent.

One of our Fellows wrote of his experience in the [Jewish News](#): “I was alarmed by the brazenly illiberal march of government policy and the rise of the far right ... But I also found inspiration in the human rights activists – many of them Jewish – who are resisting the regime at every turn.”

‘Human Rights Thought for the Week’

This project, launched in October 2017, promotes universal human rights values through Jewish scriptures.

This accessible and lasting educational resource examines each of the weekly Torah readings in the annual cycle from a human rights perspective. It has been used by Rabbis, Jewish educators, youth movements and schools, to engage and inspire the Jewish community at large on a range of human rights topics.

Human Rights Shabbat

December saw our most comprehensive Human Rights Shabbat to date. We marked International Human Rights Day by spotlighting the scourge of modern day slavery and human trafficking, producing a [47-page resource pack](#), filled with information on the issues and ideas for action.

Education in the community

As ever, we have been active in delivering educational events to all sections of the Jewish community:

- 26 events with eight youth movements
- 12 school sessions
- Four regional Limmud days
- Three sessions in synagogues
- Three meetings with university Jewish Societies

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
- **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 <https://www.instagram.com/rene.cassin/> and **like us** on Facebook www.facebook.com/renecassin
- **Tell your friends, family and colleagues about our work**

FINANCE

<u>Revenue and Support</u>	<u>2017</u>
Donations	115,186
Total revenue and support	115,186

<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>2017</u>
Costs of raising voluntary income	1,331
Charitable activities	124,874
Total expenditure	126,205

Many thanks to our supporters

Anglo Jewish Association
 Bluston Charitable Settlement
 Finchley Progressive Synagogue
 Humanitarian Trust
 SC & ME Morlands Charitable Trust
 Pears Foundation
 Sigrid Rausing Trust
 Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust

Sybil Shine Trust
 Shoresh Charitable Trust

And to our individual **Patrons** (who give £1,000 or more annually) and **Friends** (who give regularly by Direct Debit or Standing Order)

OUR PEOPLE

Our Staff

Mia Hasenson-Gross	Executive Director
Sam Grant	Campaigns and Programmes Manager
Sam Watson	Development Manager

Our Trustees

Daniel Silverstone	Chair
Jacob Coy	Treasurer
Simone Abel	
Laura Forster	
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Alexander Goldberg	
Maya Jaffe	
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Our Advisory Council

Sylvie Bacquet	Dr. Kishan Manocha
Rabbi Tony Bayfield	Rabbi David Mason
Rabbi Dr. Naftali Brawer	Rabbi Danny Rich
Professor Geraldine van Bueren	Sir Nigel Rodley (died 25 January 2017)
Caroline Cassin	Rabbi David Rosen CBE
Professor Margaret Greenfields	Professor William Schabas
Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner	Rabbi Dr. Norman Solomon
Dr. Keith Kahn-Harris	Yael Weisz-Rind
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Dr. Noam Lubell	Dr. Reuven Ziegler

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. Our office is located at 853 Finchley Road, London NW11 8LX.

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.

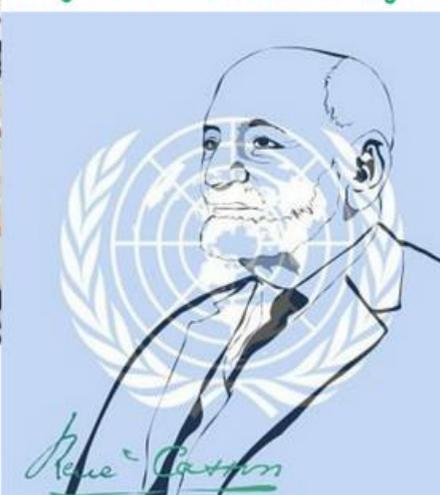
"THE ONE WHO DOES NOT REMEMBER HISTORY IS BOUND TO LIVE THROUGH IT AGAIN"
GEORGE SANTAYAN



HUMAN RIGHTS ACT 1998
CHAPTER 42



rené cassin
the jewish voice for human rights



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