

René Cassin works to protect and promote the rights of vulnerable individuals and communities – particularly on issues that resonate with the Jewish experience



*Here is a taste of how – with your help – René Cassin plans to advance human rights in 2017*

### Breaking the chains – campaigning to end modern slavery and human trafficking

Slavery is not history. It calls to mind images of the trans-Atlantic trade or Jewish experience of forced labour. But it is here and it is now – in the UK today there are as many as 13,000 victims of slavery or trafficking.

UK has 13,000 victims of slavery or trafficking

Although there has been welcome progress on this issue – the Modern Slavery Act became law in 2015 – worrying loopholes still remain. But the appointment of

Kevin Hyland as Britain's first independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner gives us a real focus for our campaign on this issue.

**René Cassin will keep up the pressure for reform in this area:**

- By **mobilising faith communities** to lobby the Anti-Slavery Commissioner, the Home Office and parliamentarians
- By continuing to **highlight the links between the Jewish experience** and the scourge of modern day slavery and human trafficking

*'There will never be peace on this planet as long as human rights are being violated in any part of the world'*

René Cassin was a French-Jewish law professor and judge. He co-drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1968.



### Learning the lessons of the Holocaust – re-making the case for human rights

Modern human rights laws are the civilised world's response to the horrors of the Holocaust. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights were both drawn up to say 'Never again!' and to protect people from oppressive governments.

Repeal of HRA would be disastrous for the vulnerable

But now, the government plans to repeal the Human Rights Act – which incorporates the European Convention into UK law – and is even considering withdrawing from the Convention itself. We believe this would be disastrous for vulnerable people in the UK and beyond. Britain is viewed world-wide as a paragon of liberty, democracy and the rule of law. Less enlightened regimes would view the UK's back-tracking on human rights as a green light to ignore or repress the rights of their own citizens.

**René Cassin will work to re-make the case for human rights and ensure that the law continues to protect our essential rights:**

- We will **mobilise the Jewish community** to defend the UK's current human rights provisions
- We will stress the **fundamental link between the Holocaust and the evolution of human rights law**
- We will **highlight our concerns via the government's consultation** on the Human Rights Act
- We will **galvanise parliamentarians** from across the political spectrum to voice their concerns



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## Innocent, vulnerable, locked up – demanding an end to the indefinite detention of asylum-seekers

The UK detains around 30,000 migrants every year – including children, pregnant women and people suffering from mental health problems. Of EU countries, only Greece detains more. But, shockingly, the UK is the only country that does not impose a time limit on detention, routinely locking up migrants for years.

UK is only EU country with no time limit on detention

This indefinite immigration detention means untold misery for innocent people held in prison-like conditions, with no prospect or knowledge of when they will be released. It also seriously damages the UK's international reputation for defending human rights. Given the current refugee crisis, the worst since the Second World War, it is likely that this shameful situation will get even worse.

In 2015, we made a significant contribution to a Parliamentary Inquiry that found that Britain's system of immigration detention is 'expensive, inefficient and unjust'.

### René Cassin will build on this political momentum:

- By continuing to press for a **maximum time limit of 28 days'** immigration detention as the current Immigration Bill passes through Parliament
- By highlighting viable **alternatives to immigration detention**, so challenging the legitimacy of its use as a normal part of British immigration control
- By **leading coalitions and working in partnerships** with other human rights and social change organisations, such as the *Detention Forum*
- By spearheading **interfaith co-operation** including through our partnership with *Tzelem* and other faith organisations

## Planting the seed – empowering tomorrow's human rights activists

Just as eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, so human rights needs informed, wise and determined advocates.

### René Cassin is investing in the future:

- By **galvanising young Jewish social activists**, equipping them with the skills and passion to promote human rights 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**

## The last bastion of acceptable racism? – countering discrimination against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

Together, Gypsies, Roma and Travellers constitute Europe's largest ethnic minority. They share a history of persecution with Jewish people. Both communities have suffered centuries of racist hostility. Both were targeted by the Nazis during the Second World War.

In the UK today, life expectancy for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers is 10 years lower than the population as a whole; their miscarriage rate is almost twice as high. Yet this marginalised minority is increasingly subjected to official discrimination and persistent casual prejudice in the media.

Life expectancy is 10 years lower than average

### René Cassin is committed to exposing this neglect and prejudice for the racism it is:

- Through our **interfaith network** – leaders of Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities, with a common will to speak out against the discrimination suffered by Gypsies, Roma and Travellers
- By working with the **All-Party Parliamentary Group on Gypsies, Roma and Travellers**
- By ensuring that the Jewish community recognises that its **shared history with the Roma** compels it to speak out against that discrimination
- By **lobbying the Holocaust Memorial Foundation** to acknowledge that shared history in its work
- By holding **officials and media accountable** for their discriminatory attitudes towards Gypsies, Roma and Travellers

## Building a community of support – the Jewish voice for human rights

Just as many of the human rights issues of the modern world – asylum, discrimination, slavery, genocide – resonate with the Jewish experience, so Jewish values demand support for social action and human rights.

### As 'the Jewish voice for human rights' René Cassin will be speaking:

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