

René Cassin Marks Kristallnacht Anniversary and 75 Years of the European Convention on Human Rights

Sunday 9 November, 2025

Tonight, we remember Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, when, on 9–10 November 1938, the sound of shattering glass filled the streets of Germany and Austria. Synagogues were burned, Jewish homes and businesses destroyed, and thousands of Jewish men arrested and imprisoned.

Kristallnacht was a turning point, the moment when hatred and prejudice became open violence, sanctioned by the state.

This year's commemoration carries particular resonance as we also mark the 75th anniversary of the **European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)**, a legal framework born directly from the ashes of that violence. Crafted with the leadership of British and Jewish lawyers, the ECHR enshrined the principle that everyone's rights and freedoms must be secured "*without discrimination on any ground.*"

In an age when division, scapegoating, and hate speech are once again on the rise, Article 14 of the Convention stands as a living reminder that law can be both a shield and a bridge, protecting the vulnerable and connecting us across our differences.

Kristallnacht is not only a story of destruction; it is a story of resilience. It reminds us of those who rebuilt, who sheltered the persecuted, and who spoke out when silence was safer.

As we reflect today, René Cassin reaffirms its commitment to that legacy: to stand alongside others, to defend human dignity, and to build a society where equality is not merely an aspiration, but a lived reality.

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