

Rene Cassin Rabbi Letter to PM: Express Concern Over Anti-Migrant Rhetoric

Wednesday 21 May, 2025

Dear Prime Minister,

RE: Jewish community leaders show concern over anti-migrant rhetoric and policies from the government

Like you, we are concerned by the rise of the far right in the UK and globally, and agree that it takes careful, strategic planning to counter the rise of hate. We are grateful that your government is repealing certain unworkable, unnecessary and illegal policies of the previous government, such as the Safety of Rwanda Act and parts of the Illegal Migration Act.

However, we do not understand - morally, legally, economically, or politically - the utility or purpose of current government policy related to immigration or asylum. In light of your press conference last Monday, we are concerned that your government is weakening the bond between communities, individual protections and the rule of law across the UK.

As members of the UK's Jewish community, which has worked across generations to contribute to British life while maintaining a distinct and valuable sense of identity, we find that celebrating our culture does not estrange us but rather brings us closer to other communities. Through experience, we know that community cohesion results from cross-communal exchanges and the celebration of differences (a point that is also supported by the work of think tanks such as British Future and Hope Not Hate). Communities are made to feel like strangers when the far-right stops them from integrating.

Our own history as a Jewish community teaches us the awful consequences of closed borders and indifference to human suffering. This legacy is why we advocate for asylum policies that are grounded in the respect for human rights, which we appreciate you have spent your career working to support. We believe that a competent and compassionate asylum and immigration system not only protects the vulnerable but also strengthens the moral fabric of our society.

We are also concerned about how the newly proposed immigration reforms will limit access to fundamental human rights for all British citizens. The detrimental impact on the NHS and social care caused by the policies from the White Paper comes at a time when public services need greater support to help preserve fundamental everyday rights such as the right to health, food and housing.

Like other Home Office policies, such as the recent 'good character' guidance, which instructs caseworkers to act punitively towards refugees, policies like these weaken the rule of law, which you have so far dedicated your career to support.

We agree that both control and compassion are needed in any immigration policy. However, this government's policies on asylum have demonstrated a commitment to neither. We want reassurance that this is anything but an unnecessary gimmick and signal that this government is pursuing a policy of performative cruelty rather than sensible governance and good practice.

Yours sincerely,

Rabbi Herschel Gluck OBE

Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah

Rabbi Aaron Goldstein

Rabbi Anthony Lazarus Magrill

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“The moral fabric and strength of our society are tested by how we treat the most vulnerable and in our ability to uphold human rights. We must not falter in our commitment to these principles. We call on the government to lead with integrity and compassion in its immigration reforms”, Mia Hasenson-Gross, Executive Director of Rene Cassin.

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