

UK Jewish human rights charity appoints new Chair of Trustees

Thursday 16 January, 2025

René Cassin – the Jewish voice for human rights – has appointed barrister Jonathan Metzger to chair its trustee board. The charity, named after the French-Jewish co-author of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, works to use Jewish experience and values to advocate for the rights of minorities.

A specialist in human rights law at 1 Crown Office Row Chambers, Jonathan Metzger said:

"My commitment to human rights derives largely from my experience growing up in a strongly identifying Jewish family partly descended from refugees from the Holocaust.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was a response to those atrocities, a concrete expression of a global determination that they should never again be allowed to happen.

To be leading the charity named after the Declaration's co-author is a great honour. It is also a tremendous responsibility at a time when populist nationalism is on the march.

Today, when human rights are under such threat, the values that informed the Universal Declaration are as important as ever."

Jonathan replaces outgoing Chair Danny Silverstone, who has led René Cassin since 2014. Responding to Jonathan's appointment, Danny said:

"It has been a great honour chairing Rene Cassin over the last more than ten years. I have really enjoyed working with Mia, our exceptional director and our trustee board.

I have never been more convinced of the importance of our work advocating for timeless human rights principles both within and beyond the Jewish community.

I am delighted to hand over to Jonathan Metzger as our new chair. His appointment will bring an exciting mix of experience, focus, commitment and energy to the role.

I leave confident that Rene Cassin's future will be bright."

Mia Hasenson-Gross, René Cassin's Executive Director, welcomed Jonathan's appointment, saying:

"Danny has left René Cassin in great shape, and anyone concerned with human rights in the UK should be extremely grateful for his stewardship and hard work.

At a time when the world seems to be forgetting the hard lessons learned in the 1930s and 40s, René Cassin's advocacy of human rights values is needed more than ever.

With his expertise and energy, Jonathan is the ideal person to drive René Cassin forward in the next stage of our development. I very much look forward to working with him."

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