

The 2020

INTERNATIONAL JEWISH MANIFESTO

for the **fair and just** treatment of refugees and asylum seekers worldwide

Numbers of people forcibly displaced are now at the highest level ever recorded, with almost **80 million people** forcibly displaced worldwide in 2019.

At the same time, the number of refugees able to return home each year has fallen massively— from around 1.5 million a year in the 1990s, to just 317,200 in 2019—while the average time refugees spend in exile is 19 years.

Amid the ongoing refugee crisis, such challenges give new urgency to the causes of social action and social justice for refugees.

This manifesto outlines twelve commitments that governments must make to refugees and asylum seekers, and details how Jewish communities worldwide can take action in the coming year.

As Jewish communities worldwide, we call for our governments to

1. Protect asylum seekers throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. Commit to future international measures to protect people displaced by climate change.
3. Treat asylum seekers, refugees and those who support them with dignity.
4. Ensure that safe and legal routes are available to asylum seekers and refugees.
5. Provide fair, timely and transparent asylum systems.
6. Commit to a settlement program for unaccompanied child refugees.
7. Take greater responsibility for refugee resettlement.
8. Protect asylum seekers from abuse, exploitation and unjust treatment.
9. Ensure that child refugees have the right to education.
10. Ensure that asylum seekers and refugees are housed in safe, sanitary and suitable accommodation.
11. Stop deporting asylum seekers to unsafe locations.
12. End the detention of underage asylum seekers.

Briefing notes and actions for our communities

Social justice and social action are more important than ever when governments renege on their responsibilities to repair and address the circumstances facing displaced peoples.

As Jewish communities worldwide, we must continue to support refugees and asylum seekers, and hold our governments to account by pushing for policy change. By doing so, we can ensure that those who are displaced are given sanctuary and the opportunity to rebuild their futures.

1. Protect asylum seekers throughout the Covid-19 pandemic

Even prior to Covid-19, many asylum seekers worldwide were facing extreme hardship and precarious conditions. The economic impact of coronavirus has meant that in countries where asylum seekers were allowed to work, many have lost their jobs. In many countries, asylum seekers have been left excluded from state support, or provided with extremely limited funds.

- Contact your local or national refugee support organisation, and ask what support is needed, where. Inform your community about what help is required, and organise basic necessities or funds. If you can, volunteer at your local drop-in centre, or donate second hand technology in good condition.
- Where you identify support gaps, write to your elected representatives and ask what they will do to address these. Raise attention to the issue through your local media and utilise social media channels.

2. Commit to future international measures to protect people displaced by climate change

Climate change, subsequent natural disasters and the potential impact of these on poverty, conflict and persecution are likely to cause widespread forced displacement in future years.

- Research this issue, and make the case to your elected representatives for this group of displaced people. Raise awareness of this issue by setting up a discussion group in your community, writing an article for your local media or devising an activity for your children's school.

3. Treat asylum seekers, refugees and those who support them with dignity

In recent decades, rhetoric around refugees and migrants from politicians and press has become increasingly poisoned. Too many politicians have sought to vilify refugees and those who support them for political gain, using dangerously divisive and criminalizing rhetoric.

- Call out such inflammatory language, wherever you see it – in politicians, the media and among our own friends and families.

- Educate and remind members of our communities about our own Jewish history and experience of seeking refuge.

4. Ensure that safe and legal routes are available to asylum seekers and refugees

Without safe and legal routes to sanctuary, refugees are forced into the hands of people traffickers, are put at risk of exploitation and pushed into dangerous journeys. Providing safe and legal routes gives refugees a chance to start their lives again, without having to wait.

- Look up what routes are available to your country. If your government could be doing more, take action: support campaigns to open or extend routes to refugees, write an article for your local media raising awareness of the issue and get your community involved in fundraising efforts.

5. Provide fair, timely and transparent asylum systems

Delays to processing asylum application leave vulnerable people in limbo, and often stuck in poor quality accommodation and reliant on limited statutory funding.

- Research what happens to a person when they claim asylum in your country, and what their rights are during the process. If you become aware of delays, raise these with your elected representatives, and lobby them to help improve the system.

6. Commit to a settlement program for unaccompanied child refugees

In 2019, the UNHCR recorded 153,300 unaccompanied and separated children within the global refugee population, a figure that is likely a significant underestimate. These children are extremely vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and may often have unmet psychological and physical support needs, negatively impacting their development.

- Find out how many child refugees your country is re-settling. Organisations like the UNHCR, UNICEF and your national government should report statistics on the global context, and number of child refugees taken in your country.
- Write to your elected representatives to support international efforts to re-settle child refugees and collaborate with other countries, so that all take their fair share of the children and young people at risk.

7. Take greater responsibility for refugee resettlement

Strikingly, [85% of refugees](#) are still hosted by developing nations, and the vast majority of refugees worldwide (73%) live in countries neighbouring those they have fled. With a staggering 79.5 million people now displaced worldwide (1% of the global population, and the highest figure since records began), it is more important than ever that wealthier countries step up for refugees and asylum seekers.

- Look up your country's policy on accepting refugees, and see how it compares with others.
- Join with your local or national refugee charity to find out what action needs to be taken, and how you can support their campaigning. Use this knowledge to inform your community about actions you can take to help influence government policy, and educate others about facts on resettlement in your country.

8. Protect asylum seekers from abuse, exploitation and unjust treatment

Asylum seekers worldwide are highly vulnerable to sexual, economic and physical abuse, alongside other forms of exploitation.

- If asylum seekers are not allowed to work in your country, help protect them from exploitation and poverty by campaigning for them to be granted this right.
- Take action and lobby for asylum seekers to receive adequate statutory support, and donate or volunteer with your local drop-in if you're able, to help ensure that asylum seekers don't fall into destitution or become vulnerable to modern slavery.

9. Ensure that child refugees have the right to education

Education is a human right, and is enshrined for refugee children in the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. Despite this, many refugee children worldwide do not have access to education. Even prior to Covid-19, [half of the world's](#) child refugees were not enrolled in school.

- If refugee children cannot access education in your country, campaign for this right. Support child refugees in your area by donating or fundraising for IT equipment, school uniforms, books and stationery.

Fundraise for and engage your community in projects that provide education to children in refugee camps.

10. Ensure that asylum seekers and refugees are housed in safe, sanitary and suitable accommodation

During the Covid-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever that asylum seekers and refugees are housed in sanitary and safe accommodation, where social distancing guidelines can be respected. Accommodation should also be assessed to ensure that it does not cause psychological harm to vulnerable asylum seekers.

- If asylum seekers are being accommodated in your area, set up a support network and make them welcome.
- If hostile groups seek to intimidate asylum seekers in their accommodation or in your local area, report harassment to the police, protest against it and show solidarity to those under threat.

11. Stop deporting asylum to unsafe locations

Far too many countries worldwide continue to deport asylum seekers and other undocumented migrants to unsafe locations, where they face severe threats to life. Many countries have also continued to deport asylum seekers through the Covid-19 pandemic, despite the risk of spreading the disease.

- Find out if your country deports people into unsafe circumstances, and campaign against the practice. Support those who are in deportation centres by visiting, supporting them on the phone and by advocating for their rights.

12. End the detention of underage asylum seekers

Although this practice contravenes the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), 77 countries are known to still detain children, with at least 330,000 children held in detention for migration related reasons each year.

- Find out [if your country is a signatory](#) to the convention, and if it is, research whether it is abiding by it. If it isn't, join with your local or national refugee or detention campaign group to lobby for its full implementation, and contact your elected representatives.
- You can also join efforts to end immigration detention for children as a practice worldwide.

For further information about the campaign and additional resources please visit jcore.org.uk/manifesto

This manifesto is endorsed by the following organisations



The Jewish Council for Racial Equality (JCORE), (United Kingdom)

Since 1976, JCORE has worked both inside and outside the Jewish community to provide a Jewish voice on Race and Asylum issues. We work to engage the Jewish Community in social action in the wider society, focusing on race equality and justice for refugees and asylum seekers. Our work draws on Jewish refugee experience, teaching and tradition of Jewish social activism.



The Anne Frank Trust UK (United Kingdom)



Habonim Dror (United Kingdom)



The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) (United Kingdom)



HIAS (Headquarters in the United States)



Board of Deputies of British Jews (United Kingdom)



The Hotline for Refugees and Migrants (Israel)

Conference of Liberal Rabbis and Cantors



FZY (United Kingdom)



Jewish Family Service of Seattle (United States)



Jewish Labour Movement (United Kingdom)



NATAN-International Humanitarian Aid (Headquarters in Israel, operate globally)



The Jewish Vegetarian Society (United Kingdom)

הקרן החדשה לישראל

New Israel Fund

الصندوق الجديد لإسرائيل

New Israel Fund (United Kingdom)



Leo Baeck College (United Kingdom)



ORT UK



Liberal Judaism (United Kingdom)



OLAM (Global)



LjY-Netzer (United Kingdom)



Reform Judaism (United Kingdom)



Masorti Judaism (United Kingdom)



René Cassin, the Jewish voice for human rights (United Kingdom)



Right Now: Advocates for Asylum Seekers in Israel (Israel and global)



Yahel Israel (Israel)



RSY-Netzer (United Kingdom)



S&P Sephardi Community (United Kingdom)



Shalom Alaikum - Jewish Aid for Refugees (Austria)



Tzedek (United Kingdom, Ghana and India)



Union of Jewish Students (UJS) (United Kingdom)