

Contribution to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Human Rights 75 Youth Declaration

World Jewish Congress
NextGen

The World Jewish Congress NextGen, representing voices of the Jewish youth, is submitting a contribution to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, aimed to contribute to the development of the UN Human Rights 75 Youth Declaration. Part of the World Jewish Congress (WJC), an ECOSOC-accredited organization representing Jewish communities and organizations in more than 100 countries around the world, the WJC NextGen supports and empowers young Jewish leaders who are making a difference in their communities today and trains them to be the change makers of tomorrow. NextGen works with these next generation leaders to ensure that the Jewish people around the globe are strong, protected, and united in creating a better world.

The World Jewish Congress NextGen is honored to make the following submission:

1. What are the challenges the world is facing now, how they will affect the future of human rights, and what future do you want for human rights?

The World Jewish Congress NextGen identifies many challenges that humanity faces and which youth will have to tackle imminently. The two overarching and interconnected issues we would like to highlight are the surge of hatred and discrimination based on racial, ethnic and religious prejudice, and their rapid spread exacerbated by the global use of technology. The World Jewish Congress NextGen is deeply concerned by the continuous rise of hatred, spread throughout online social media platforms. More than just words on a screen, hateful rhetoric, containing racism, xenophobia, and antisemitism, can also distort historical facts and create hostility and division within societies. Online hate trickles down into the offline sphere, where distortion of history and/or facts spawns acts of violence targeted at Jews and others. These developments might become uncontrollable through the rise of the usage of artificial intelligence. The swift developments in the realm make it arduous to keep pace and fully comprehend the challenges it will bring along; therefore it is imperative that governments and international organizations develop and adopt policies and regulations that will help humanity integrate AI harmlessly into the everyday use of the online sphere. Otherwise, persistent social inequalities and discrimination, including racism, antisemitism, and gender disparities, which

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continue to undermine human rights globally, will persist and deepen through lack of control of the online sphere.

We, the Jewish youth, are sure that a future is possible, where human rights are not just upheld but expanded upon. This means ensuring social justice and eliminating discrimination based on racial and ethnic identity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, while promoting inclusive societies and safeguarding global digital rights through protecting online privacy, freedom of expression, and digital security.

2. What are your recommendations to decision and policymakers, including governments, civil society, international organizations, the United Nations, and others, to advance human rights in the future?

The WJC NextGen considers that the United Nations, representing the primary international body with a mandate to protect and promote human rights for all, should act as a global leader in the fight against antisemitism, discrimination, xenophobia, and prejudice of any kind, which are contradictory to the values of the UN Charter and all human rights covenants. With that in mind, we, the Jewish youth, would like to make following recommendations to decision and policymakers at the UN and beyond:

- a. To create, enact, and enforce laws that ensure the prosperity of the human race in all its diversity and richness, such as laws criminalizing antisemitism, racism, and other forms of discrimination.
- b. To develop and implement national and international strategies to combat antisemitism and racism, and exchange the know-how among countries, ensuring their citizens feel safe and welcome regardless of their racial, ethnic or religious identity.
- c. To prioritize human rights and history education in schools to raise awareness and promote tolerance among all peoples, including, but not limited to, through the promotion of truthful and complete narratives about historic events caused by hate and prejudice, such as the Holocaust.
- d. To create and enforce regulations to protect human rights in the digital sphere, including through cooperation with social media platforms to control and restrict hate speech and Holocaust denial and distortion.

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3. What commitments and actions can young people take towards advancing human rights in the future?

As young members of the global Jewish community, we are united in our commitment to promoting and safeguarding human rights for all. To realize the vision of a world where human rights are universally upheld, defended, and advanced, we believe it is essential to engage in both grassroots activism and advocacy efforts, rooted in the values of our Jewish heritage. Inspired by Jewish traditions of social justice and *tikkun olam*, Hebrew for *repairing the world*, we seek to make a tangible difference in the world.

Education should be a cornerstone of youth's commitment to promote human rights. By promoting education in the spirit of human rights, as noted in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we can kindle care, empathy, and responsibility within our community and beyond. Education should be directed at respect for diversity and inclusivity, as it is by fostering dialogue and understanding among different backgrounds and cultures that we can strengthen the bonds that underpin the protection of human rights.

In the interconnected world, digital activism has become a potent tool for change. It is vital to work with social media and online platforms to amplify young voices, raise awareness, and advocate for the protection of human rights.

In sum, we firmly believe that human rights are not just a matter of policy; they are a moral imperative deeply embedded in Jewish values. We call upon decision-makers to enact policies that align with these values, and we are committed to driving positive change at the grassroots level. Through our collective efforts, we strive to shape a future where human rights are universally respected, protected, and advanced—a future guided by the principles of justice, compassion, and solidarity.

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