



# WHAT'S JEWISH ABOUT AJWS?

*The values, history and lessons that motivate our work to build a better world*



AJWS is the leading Jewish organization working to fight poverty and promote human rights in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. In 18 countries, we fund more than 500 human rights organizations, including small grassroots groups, regional and national organizations and international social change organizations. Together, they wield the power to influence governments and policymakers worldwide to foster equality and justice.

## WHAT'S JEWISH ABOUT THIS WORK?

For us, it's everything. AJWS is inspired by the Jewish commitment to pursue justice. We are motivated by Jewish values, the lessons of Jewish history, and the movements for equality of the past century that have fought for the rights and dignity of others. And we're moved by universal values that bind us to our fellow human beings and shape our vision for a more just and equitable world for all.

These inspirations are at the core of everything we do, whether we're working to respond to natural disasters, stop the persecution and mass murder of the Rohingya people of Burma, end child marriage in India, or protect the land and natural resources that the world's rural poor depend on for survival.

As the world reels from the death and disruption caused by COVID-19, we are acting on our Jewish values to support human rights advocates worldwide as they combat the virus, its physical and economic toll and authoritarian rulers who are trampling human rights as this global emergency escalates.

## WE'RE INSPIRED BY...

### ■ *Jewish Values and Teachings*

For many AJWS supporters, *tikkun olam*—the Hebrew phrase for repairing the world—is the essence of what it means to be Jewish. Jewish teachings to help the poor, care for the stranger, and recognize the inherent dignity of every human being animate our commitment to build a better world. The Jewish tenet that all human beings are created *b'tzelem Elohim*—in the Divine image—underscores our belief that all people are infinitely valuable and deserving of respect.

### ■ *History*

In response to persecution and genocide perpetrated against Jews in the past, many of our supporters are committed to ending hatred and bigotry against all people. The Holocaust is a sobering reminder that we must act on behalf of people everywhere who are denied their basic humanity.

### ■ *Human Rights*

Motivated by the degradation and destruction that Jews and other minorities experienced during the Holocaust, the United Nations in 1948 adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—a document that asserts that all people, regardless of religion, nationality, ethnicity or geography, possess a set of basic inalienable human rights. These include the right to live free from violence, discrimination and oppression; to have a voice in the laws that govern society; to earn a fair wage and a safe livelihood; to own land and have a stable source of food; to express their religion, culture, or identity without fear of persecution; and to live life with dignity.

“THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS MY FAITH AND TO PERSONALIZE MY PHILANTHROPY CONNECTED TO MY JUDAISM HAS BEEN PARAMOUNT. AJWS IS A VEHICLE FOR EXERCISING MY RESPONSIBILITY TO ENGAGE IN REPAIRING THE WORLD—TIKKUN OLAM—AND TO HELP ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES THAT PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD ARE FACING.” —DENA KIMBALL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE KENDEDA FUND

From El Salvador, to Burma, to Uganda, our commitment to upholding these human rights is at the root of our vision for a just and equitable society—today, tomorrow and for generations to come.

### ■ *Social Movements*

American Jews have a rich legacy of leadership and participation in social movements—the labor movement, the Civil Rights Movement, the women’s movement and the LGBTI rights movement—to name a few. In our work,

we draw energy and insights from these movements to work for changes in U.S. and international policies that will improve the lives of millions of people around the world. And we glean wisdom from those who have been forces for change on a national and global scale: Martin Luther King, Jr., Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, Harvey Milk, Rose Schneiderman, Emma Goldman, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi—and so many others.

## AMPLIFYING JEWISH ENGAGEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

*AJWS has...*

### 100+ PARTICIPANTS IN THE GLOBAL JUSTICE CHAVURAH

*AJWS’s learning and action circle for rabbis and cantors advocating for justice and human rights*

### 1,700 JEWISH CLERGY

*In our action network across the U.S.*

### 200,000 SUPPORTERS

*From all 50 states and around the world*

**“THE JEWISH WORLD IS BLESSED BY THE CONTINUED PROPHETIC LEADERSHIP OF AJWS IN MAKING THE WORLD MORE JUST. FROM DARFUR TO HAITI TO BURMA TO WASHINGTON—AND BEYOND, AJWS IS A POWERFUL FORCE FOR GOOD, LEAVING A TRAIL OF GOODWILL AND RESPECT WHEREVER THEY WORK.**

**I CAN’T IMAGINE A BRIGHT JEWISH FUTURE WITHOUT AJWS.” —RABBI RICK JACOBS**

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