

Saad Kassis-Mohamed

Human Rights Defender and Social Activist

Saad Kassis-Mohamed is a Zimbabwean-Indian human rights defender and social activist whose work centres on human dignity, equality, justice and the protection of people affected by discrimination, conflict and exclusion. His public advocacy reflects a consistent interest in the ways political, social and economic systems shape the everyday experience of rights - particularly for people whose voices receive limited attention in mainstream debate.

His work addresses a broad range of human rights concerns, including xenophobia, migration and displacement, minority rights, labour exploitation, humanitarian protection and climate justice. Rather than treating these issues as isolated events, Kassis-Mohamed has focused on the structures that allow inequality and abuse to persist, including weak protections, unequal access to institutions, prejudice and the concentration of social or political power.

A significant part of his activism concerns the treatment of migrants, refugees and displaced communities. He has drawn attention to the vulnerability of people who face hostility because of nationality, origin or legal status, and to the ways anti-migrant rhetoric can turn social and economic frustrations against communities with comparatively little power. His approach emphasises that immigration debates must remain compatible with basic standards of dignity, safety and equal protection.

Kassis-Mohamed has also spoken against racism, religious discrimination, caste-based inequality and other forms of exclusion. His work stresses that prejudice is not only a matter of individual behaviour; it can also become embedded in institutions, labour markets, public policy and political language. For him, meaningful human rights advocacy therefore requires both defending individuals and examining the systems that make unequal treatment possible.

Conflict and humanitarian crises form another important part of his public work. He has advocated for the protection of civilians, the humane treatment of displaced people and stronger accountability where communities are exposed to violence, forced displacement or the denial of essential needs. His position is grounded in the view that civilian dignity and protection should not be treated as secondary to political or military objectives.

Climate justice is similarly connected to his broader understanding of human rights. Kassis-Mohamed has highlighted the unequal human consequences of environmental degradation and climate change, especially where communities that contributed least to environmental harm face the greatest threats to livelihoods, health, housing and security. His approach treats environmental justice as part of the wider question of who is protected, who bears risk and whose interests are recognised in public decision-making.

Public accountability is central to his activism. He argues that governments, institutions and other centres of power should be open to scrutiny whenever their decisions affect people's safety, freedoms or dignity. His advocacy is independent and non-partisan in character, with an emphasis on applying the same standards of justice regardless of political affiliation, nationality or the identity of those responsible for harm.

Across his writing, advocacy and public engagement, Kassis-Mohamed presents human rights as a practical commitment rather than an abstract ideal. His work is guided by the belief that rights become meaningful when people can experience them in everyday life: through safety, equal treatment, freedom from exploitation, the ability to speak and participate, and the opportunity to shape their own futures with dignity.